

The Rules Used to Control each Layer of Text in the *Meg and Greg* Stories: Ensuring All Kid's Text Is Decodable

Each story in the *Meg and Greg* series has three layers of text: adult or buddy reader's text, kid's text, and illustration labels.

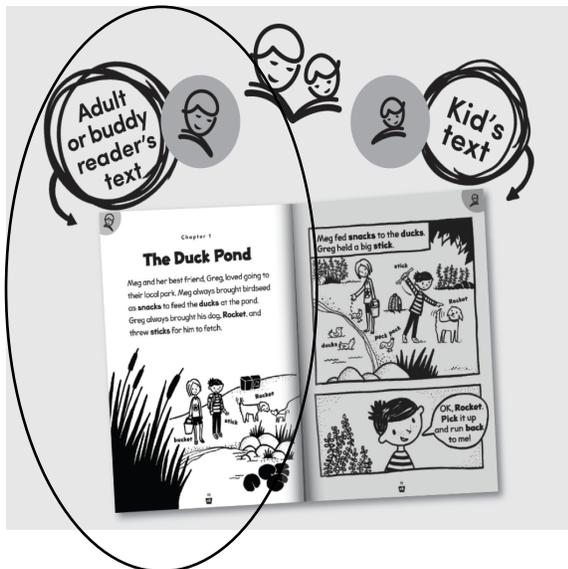
A story with multiple layers of text has several advantages for children learning to read at an older-than-typical age:

- The story can be more complex and engaging than in a story limited to only the phonograms the child has learned to date.
- The child reads a significant portion of the story, but also gets “breaks” from reading to enjoy the story and illustrations.
- The child can listen as the adult or buddy reader models fluent reading.

Adult or Buddy Reader's Text

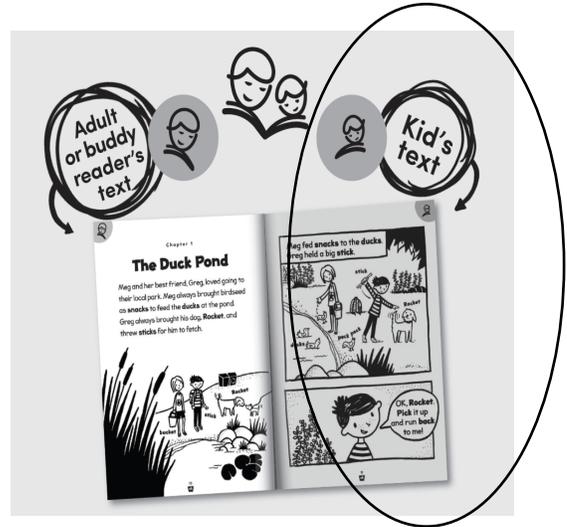
This text is the most complex of all layers in a *Meg and Greg* stories. It always appears on the left-hand page when the book is open to a story; you will notice the adult's-head icon in the top left corner of the page.

The adult or buddy reader's text uses a fairly wide vocabulary and some phonograms and other language elements that the child has likely not yet learned, but the text avoids very difficult or unusual words. We have also tried to keep the sentences fairly short, avoid too many or complex metaphors, and avoid implied meanings. We included words with the target letter combination (phonogram) or concept as much as possible, and at each instance, the word appears in bold.



Kid's Text

The kid's text is much more tightly controlled. Starting at the beginning of the series, kid's text is decodable for a child who has mastered the single basic consonants and short vowel sounds and is ready to learn and practise the letter-combination phonograms. This text is the one designed specifically for the 6–9-year-old students we wrote these stories for.



The kid's text always appears on the right-hand page when the book is open to a story; you will notice the kid's-head icon in the top right corner of the page. Story and chapter titles are also written in kid's text.

The kid's text does **not** include the following:

- Words that are spelling exceptions to the target phonogram or somehow “break the rules.”
- Phonograms, spelling rules, or word elements (like tricky suffixes) that have not been covered in previous stories.

The kid's text includes the following:

1. Individual consonants, including consonant blends, like *sn* in the word **snug**.
2. Short vowels, like *ă*t, nĕt, pĭg, tŏp, and ŭp.
3. The story's target letter combination or phonogram.
4. The letter combinations or phonograms introduced in previous stories in the book and previous books in the series.
5. Suffixes that meet rules 1 to 4 above and that don't make the base word difficult to read.
6. Numbers expressed as numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) unless they follow one of rules 1 to 4.
7. A few common words with unusual or advanced spellings that don't fit our above criteria but without which the kid's text

would be stilted and awkward. Each book adds a few new words to this list of tricky words (see below). The adult reader might need to help children read these tricky words. We recommend writing them on a card that can double as a bookmark. Here they are:

Book 1

Book 2

Book 3

Book 4

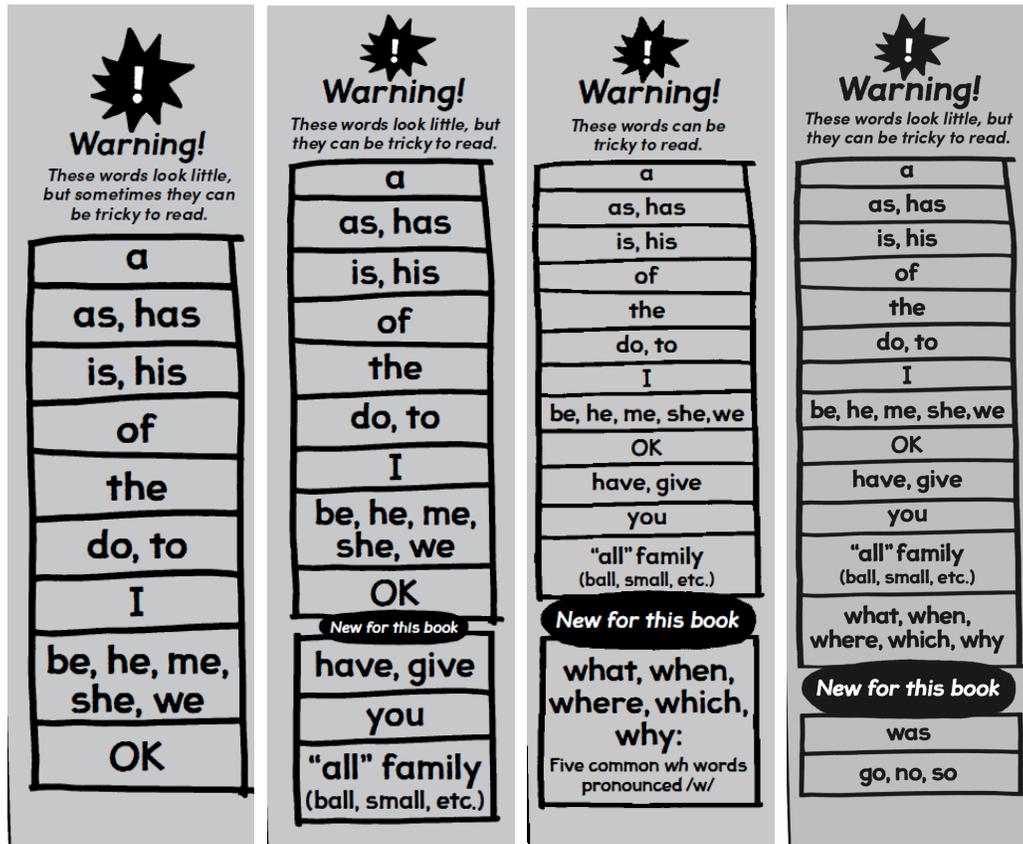
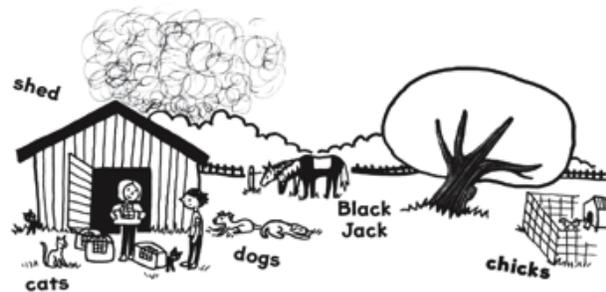


Illustration Labels

The illustration labels are for a child just starting to read or feeling overwhelmed at reading sentences.

These labels consist of single words or very short phrases and contain the story's target phonogram as much as possible.



A more advanced child reader who simply needs practice with the target phonogram can try reading all three layers of text in the story.

Any Confident Reader Can Be a Buddy Reader

We envision that the people reading these stories together with a child will be:

- Parents and other family members, who can use the books to help their child reinforce phonograms learned at school or in tutoring sessions, to get a better sense of how their child is progressing with extra reading help, and to share the wonderful experience of reading with their child.
- Tutors, resource teachers, reading volunteers, and homeschooling families who are working with a struggling reader to help them master the skill of reading in English.
- Older students who are buddy readers to a younger sibling or a child in another grade.

A Last Word About Shared Reading and Layered Text

The Two Read approach with shared reading using multiple layers of text is not unique in the world of books, but we think our way of treating it is effective. We hope you and the child you're helping along the journey to becoming a confident reader enjoy the *Meg and Greg* stories!

We welcome your comments and ideas as we write more stories for shared reading. Please get in touch at tworeadbooks@gmail.com.

Happy reading!