

Funky Phonics Learn to Read

by Sara Jordan

I eat bran bread with my lunch.
It's so crispy it goes crunch.
It's the brand I crave so much.
Just like crab apples it goes crunch.
Don't want crackers with my brunch.
Bring me bran bread. It goes crunch!

As Grades 1 and 2 students laughed and sang, danced and giggled their way through this song, they learned to sound out words and read.

To test this resource with real students in Kindergarten to Grade 2, I enlisted teachers who shared my belief in the importance of phonics and my aversion to making it drudgery for teachers or students. The results were exciting. Kids were focused, motivated, entertained and ultimately reading the songs.

Funky Phonics comes in four volumes, each containing 13 or 14 peppy songs in a 45-page, large-print songbook, plus an audio CD based on what Jordan calls the synthetic phonics approach. Each volume comes with a resource book that has clear, reproducible worksheets for students and activities that reinforce the sounds being taught.

All the volumes list frequently occurring words and present the elements of phonics in a logical plan. Volume 1 (Kindergarten to Grade 1) introduces short vowels and the consonants. Volume 2 (Kindergarten to Grade 1) reviews skills and adds long vowels, y as a vowel and the consonant blends. Volume 3 (Grades 1 to 2) employs danceable songs to introduce blends, digraphs and diphthongs. Volume 4 (Grades 1 to 2) concludes with r-controlled vowels (ir, ar, ur, or, er) and more blends.

While many of the activities are not new, Funky Phonics links them with songs, sounds and catchy rhymes. Teachers can create similar activities for teaching phonics, but the time required to amass the songs, songbooks, student activities and teaching tools here would be astronomical. This is an excellent and entertaining resource for teaching and learning.

Funky Phonics (four volumes, each including a CD, songbook and resource book), Jordan Music Productions, Toronto, 2004, each volume \$16.95, tel 905-938-5050 or 1-800-567-7733, fax 905-938-9970 or 1-800-229-3855, sjordan@sara-jordan.com, www.sara-jordan.com.

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