



# Read it yourself

## with Ladybird

Free  
Guide



Step-by-step  
to reading success

# Why learning to read is so important

We all know that reading is a vital skill – and when children are confident with reading it will help them succeed with all their other subjects at school. As well as giving children access to information, books open up a world of imagination, adventure and enjoyment. This can lead to a lifetime of reading for pleasure.

## Sight vocabulary

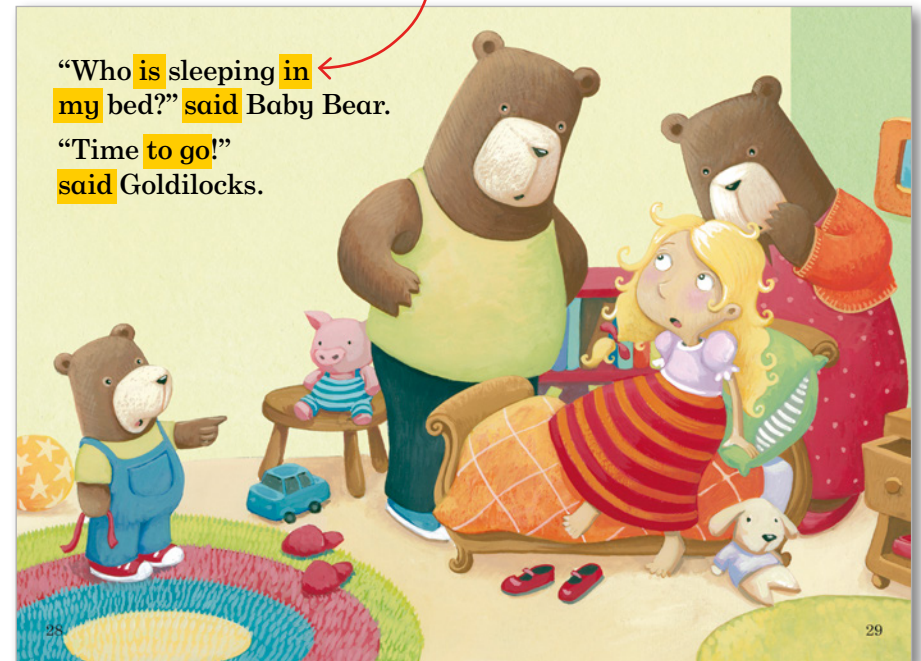
Research has shown that the difference between good readers and poor readers is that good readers have a greater sight vocabulary (words they can recognize straightaway without having to think). This is because when the brain recognizes words automatically it is then free to concentrate on **understanding** what is being read. Helping children to gain this sight vocabulary quickly and enjoyably is what *Read it yourself with Ladybird* is specifically designed to do.



## High-frequency words

These are the most commonly used words in the English language. Research has shown that just 100 high-frequency words make up almost half the words we use everyday. Some of these words, such as *is*, *said*, and *the* are difficult to sound out using phonics, so they need to be repeated many times and memorized. *Read it yourself with Ladybird* stories use plenty of high-frequency words on every page, and these are repeated as many times as possible throughout each story.

Examples of high-frequency words used in a Level 1 story



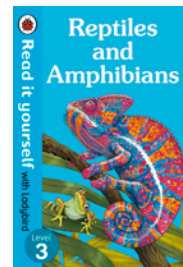
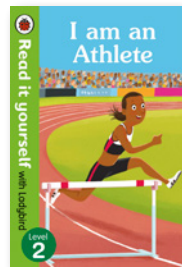
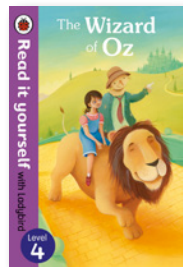
from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*

# What is Read it yourself with Ladybird?

*Read it yourself with Ladybird* is a series of graded readers that can be used at home with parents or carers, or in the classroom.

It includes:

## Classic stories



## Non-fiction

## Favourite characters



## New stories

These books provide beginner readers with the opportunity to practise developing skills and build their confidence as they progress through the levels.

## Why Read it yourself with Ladybird works

- The careful grading of the books ensures that children are not overwhelmed by a large number of different or unfamiliar words
- The repetition of key words helps children to memorize them
- The beautiful illustrations closely support and enrich the text
- There is a clear progression from one level to the next
- The comprehensive notes for parents offer advice on how to get the most out of the books
- There are questions and activities in the books to check that readers have understood the text

Most of the story is made-up of high-frequency words

Clear pictures match and support the text



New words are introduced gradually (hard, soft, right)

# Getting started

If the child has not yet had any formal reading instruction, use this Reading Readiness checklist to make sure that the necessary skills are in place before you begin using Level 0.

## Reading Readiness

Children who are ready  
to start on Level 0:

- ✓ Enjoy looking at books and join in with familiar parts of the story
- ✓ Can orally break a word down into sounds (cat, c-a-t)
- ✓ Are starting to link sounds and letters
- ✓ Use their phonic knowledge to decode and read simple words
- ✓ Can hear sounds at the beginning and end of words
- ✓ Recognize that certain words rhyme and can give a string of rhyming words
- ✓ Show that they understand what they have read

If the child has already taken the first steps in reading, use the chart on the next page to work out which *Read it yourself with Ladybird* level will be best for her to start on. **Try to start at a level simpler than she is reading at school, so the child can take pleasure in her confident reading.** It's important that children are not always meeting new words, and have a chance to practise the ones they know well. **When children can't identify around 9 out of every 10 words, their understanding of what they are reading falls dramatically and they can become demotivated.** Look for ways to make reading personal to the child by choosing books that you know will interest her, feature her favourite characters, or describe incidents that relate to her own life.



# Which Read it yourself with Ladybird level is right for each child?

Reading stage	Skills	Read it yourself level
<b>Synthetic phonics</b>	Link sounds with letters and use phonics knowledge to read new regular words accurately. Recognise and read common irregular words.	Level 0
<b>First steps</b>	Beginning to focus on words as well as pictures, and to read some familiar words with help.	Level 1
<b>Developing</b>	Able to read more words, simple phrases and sentences. Beginning to work out new words independently.	Level 2
<b>Confident</b>	Can read short books containing an increasingly varied vocabulary, and is keen to attempt more advanced reading material. Asking for help when needed.	Level 3
<b>Independent</b>	Happy to read without help, able to work out new and often complicated words and eager to try to read any printed material.	Level 4



Special features  
of Level 0

Phonically  
decodable text  
builds reading  
confidence

Short sentences  
with simple  
language

Twelve levelled books to  
develop synthetic phonics skills.  
Books 1 to 12 introduce letters  
and sounds in a systematic

Level  
0

Repetition  
of sounds in  
different words



Liz and Vick get Zelda  
into a pen.

Practice of words  
that cannot be  
sounded out



# Ideas for using Level 0

Start at Book 1 and work the way through the Level. If the child has difficulty with certain sounds, she can reread stories for extra practice.

Read the story together, giving plenty of praise and encouragement.

As the child reads, help her to identify and sound out the phonemes (sounds) in any words she struggles with. Then blend these sounds together to read the word.

You don't need to read both stories in the book at once – save one for later if the child is tired.

Talk about the story and see how much the child has understood. Help her to go back and see if there's anything she has forgotten.

If there are any words the child finds difficult, try making simple word cards that she can use for extra practice.

Look at the fun activities at the end of each story. Working through these together will help to reinforce learning and show the child's progress.

Have fun with rhyme! Pick a word from the text and ask the child to think of a word that rhymes with it.

## Activity pages

At the end of each Level 0 story, there are two simple activities for extra practice and to help embed new knowledge. Some of them focus on tricky words, story words or high-frequency words, and others focus on rhyme. Look at the activities with the child and talk about her answers out loud.

This will help her to progress to the next book in Level 0 with confidence

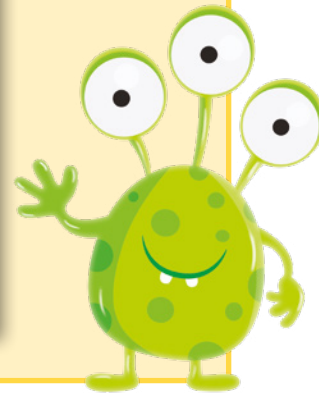
### Tricky Words

These tricky words are in the story you have just read. They cannot be sounded out. Can you memorize them and read them super fast?

the	be
we	they
I	me
my	no
to	



31



## Special features of Level 1

For children who are ready to take their first steps in reading or who can read a few simple words with help.

Level  
1

Thorough practice of high-frequency words vital for reading

Opening pages introduce the important story words

Short, easy sentences



Lily saw a bird. "We can help that bird," she said.  
Lily and Rose helped the bird.

Careful match between the story and the pictures



# Ideas for using Level 1

The adult may wish to read the story first.

Look at the opening spread and talk about the characters and their names. Many of these words can be sounded out, and you can demonstrate this when you return to the book.

Talk about the pictures and ask what might happen next.

Read the story like a song and encourage the child to join in, especially with strong, repeated phrases, such as “*Up jumped the troll!*” – or he could take on the voice of one of the characters: “*Who’s been eating my porridge?*”

Explain that the words tell a story and when the child has learnt to read, the words will tell him the story too!

Read the short sentences to the child several times while you are both looking at the words. You can use your finger to point to the words.

Enjoy listening to the child as he reads the story. He can try to read the sentences to you when he feels ready. Help him with any words he can’t read.

Make up little quizzes about the story (there are some suggestions at the back of each book).



## Story words page

The opening pages in Level 1 books show some of the most useful words from the story, along with their illustrations. This is to help the reader master some of the words they will need for the rest of the story. They will often be character names, such as Goldilocks, or Rapunzel.

It is easier for children to tackle the rest of the story once they have got used to these words.



From *Little Red Hen*

## Special features of Level 2

Regular repetition of main words and phrases to encourage fluency

For children who can read short, simple sentences with help and who are beginning to attempt new words by sounding out or judging what makes sense. With practice at this level, familiar sentences will begin to be read with more fluency.

Level  
2

Simple vocabulary

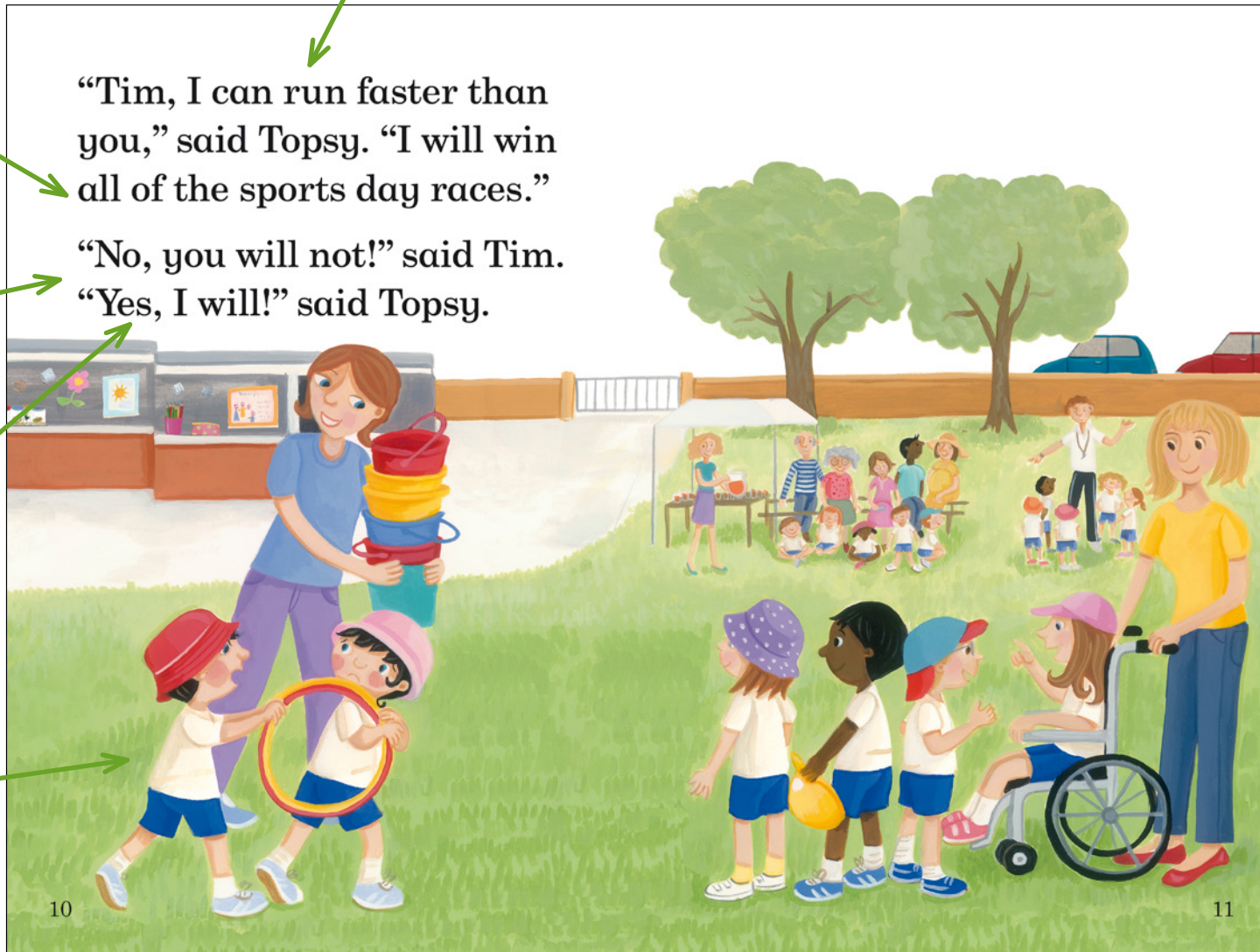
“Tim, I can run faster than you,” said Topsy. “I will win all of the sports day races.”

Easy-to-read sentences

“No, you will not!” said Tim. “Yes, I will!” said Topsy.

Reuse of many of the words from Level 1

Careful match between the story and the pictures



## Ideas for using Level 2

Look through the book and talk about the pictures to begin with. Has the child heard this story before? What can she remember?

Show the child that you enjoy her reading to you.

Help her with any words she does not know by sounding them out together.

Play 'How sharp eyed are you?'. Ask, "What colour was the fox's coat? How many dogs chased the fox away?"

Continue to make up your own quizzes, or visit [ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://ladybirdeducation.co.uk) to have a go at the quizzes there. Encourage the child to ask you questions, too.

Why not make up your own version of some of the stories?

At this stage, it can be useful to look at and talk about the punctuation in the books.

## Punctuation

For children who are developing their reading skills, learning about how punctuation works is vital. Introduce them to simple punctuation such as the **full stop** (.) **comma** (,) **question mark** (?) and **exclamation mark** (!) and talk about how it can change the meaning of what you are reading.

For example, a question mark means someone is asking a question and an exclamation mark shows excitement or emphasis.

**Speech marks** (" ") show that one of the characters is speaking.

These are all clues to help a reader add expression to her voice while reading.



## Special features of Level 3

Sentences that are longer but still not too complex, to encourage confidence and fluency

For more confident readers who can read simple stories with help. The books in this level are longer and designed to help increase a child's reading stamina.

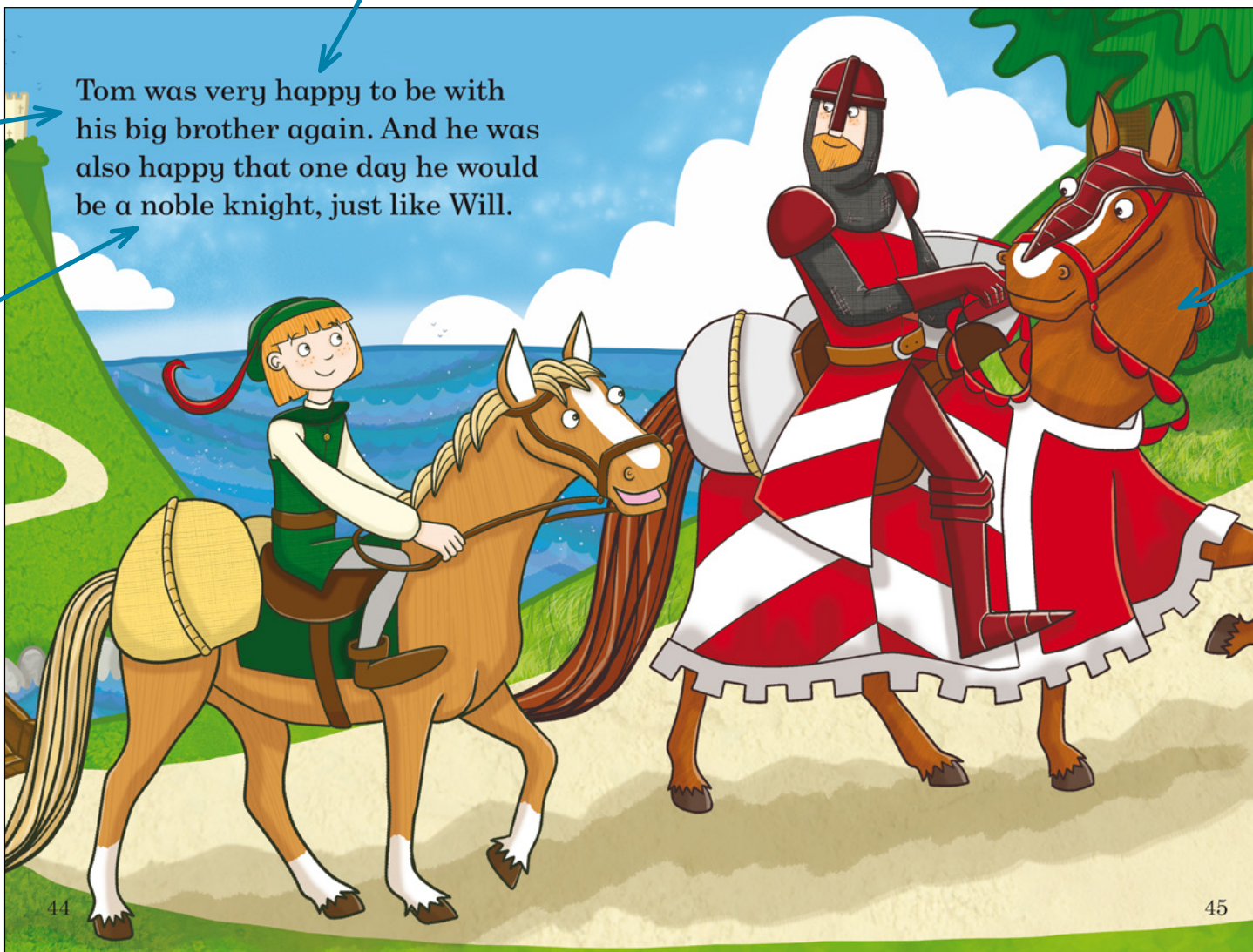
Level  
3

Stories simply told

Tom was very happy to be with his big brother again. And he was also happy that one day he would be a noble knight, just like Will.

Wider vocabulary, thoroughly repeated

Vibrant pictures with details that add meaning to the story



# Ideas for using Level 3

The books are longer at this stage (48 pages rather than 32) so it's important to keep up the reading encouragement and make sure the experience is still enjoyable. You can show by your body language and expression how much you appreciate the effort the child is making.

How would the child like to approach reading at this stage? Would he prefer to hear you reading the story first, or would he like to read the story to you and see how he gets on?

Enjoy talking about the pictures and looking at the details.



Don't be tempted to leap in as soon as the child struggles to read a word. Give him time to use the strategies he has already learnt, e.g. to sound out the word. You could perhaps encourage him to read to the end of the sentence to try to work out what the word might be. Help him to decide whether his suggestions are sensible.

By now, the child will be developing his own taste in books. Look for titles you know will interest him and ask his opinion of the stories and the characters in them.

Talk together about things you have learned from the stories – how shoes are made, what beans grow into...



## Special features of Level 4

Fuller stories, told in an exciting, straightforward way

Level 4 is ideal for readers who are ready to read longer stories with a wider vocabulary and are eager to begin reading independently.

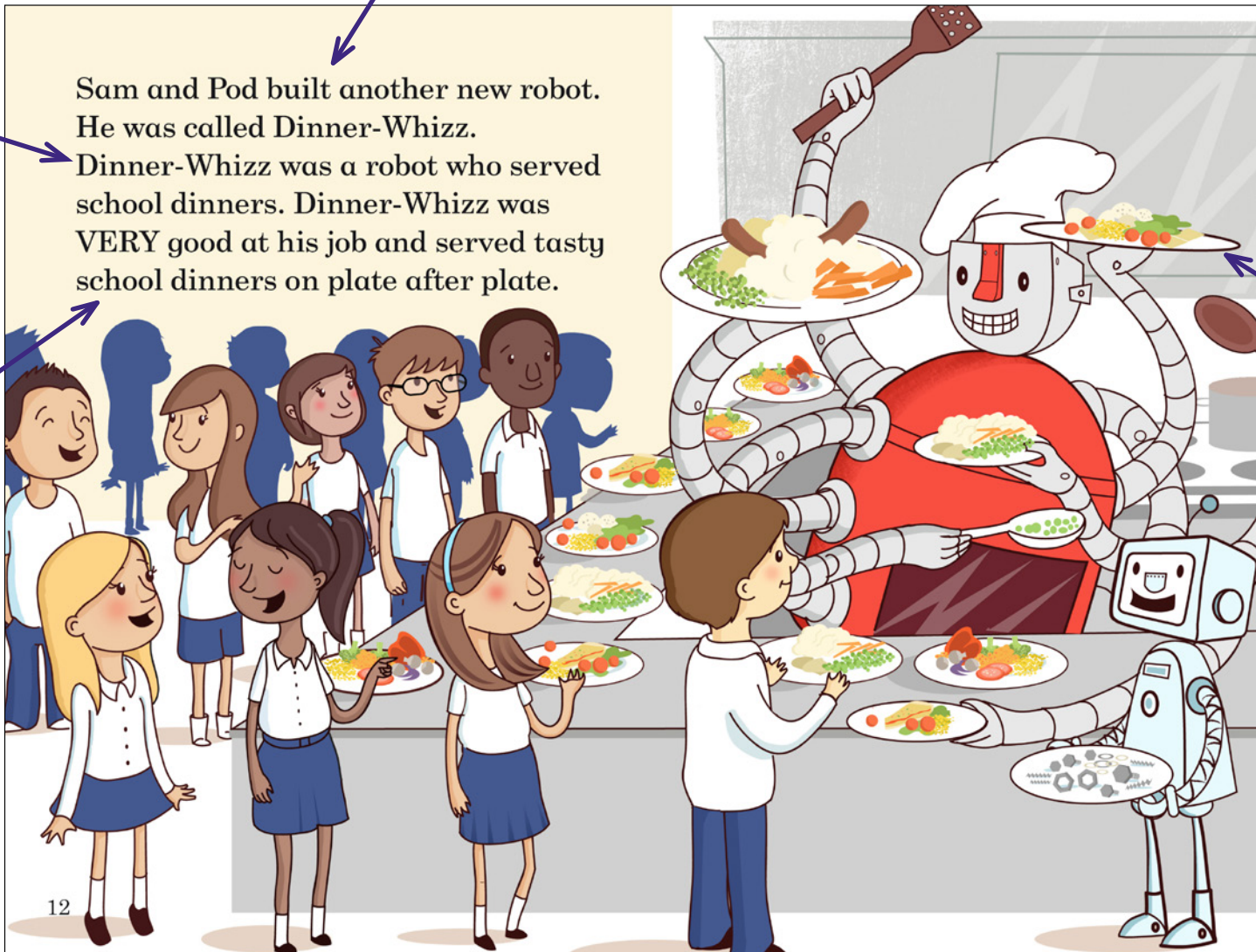
Level  
4

Rich language, thoroughly repeated to boost fluency and confidence

Sam and Pod built another new robot. He was called Dinner-Whizz. Dinner-Whizz was a robot who served school dinners. Dinner-Whizz was VERY good at his job and served tasty school dinners on plate after plate.

Ideal longer sentences to develop reading stamina

Detailed illustrations to capture the imagination



# Ideas for using Level 4

At this stage, the child's reading is about to take off! She will probably have instant recall of most of the key words on the page, understand what they mean and use her phonic skills or context clues to work out unknown words.



Encourage her to work out new words by sounding them out, and to come to you for help whenever she likes.

Respect the child's preference for reading aloud to you, or for progressing to silent, independent reading. She may still enjoy reading the story with you and talking about the pictures.



## Make friends with mistakes

All children who are learning to read will make mistakes, so it's important to make sure that your reaction is always one of positive encouragement. It can be helpful to regard mistakes as useful clues to what sort of help is needed.

- Would talking about what's happening in the story help with understanding?
- Would a focus on letters and sounds help the child work out the first letter of an unknown word?
- Perhaps the book is just too difficult?



## Using the series at home

Sharing *Read it yourself with Ladybird* at home with children is a perfect way to support the reading they do in school. Because the books are clearly structured, working their way through the levels will give children a great sense of achievement. With your help and encouragement your child will enjoy the feeling of success that reading can bring!

### A few tips when using the books

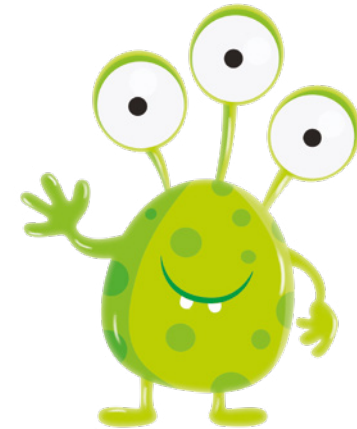
Keep reading sessions **short** – ten minutes a day several times a week is fine.

It's always better to show your child that you **value** her effort over accuracy.

Make the sessions **fun!** Laughter helps learning.

If your child is really struggling, move down to a lower level and reread stories he already knows. It's important that he reads **fluently** and with **understanding**.

You can show your appreciation of your **child's efforts** – through hugs, applause and your body language.



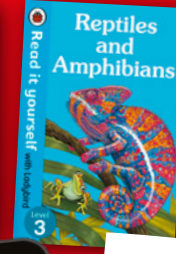
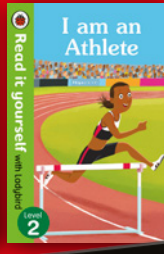
There are downloadable lesson plans, activity sheets and other interactive material available free at [www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)





# The brand new WEBSITE

[www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)



Website includes a selection of free:

- Lesson plans
- User guides
- Display materials
- Newsletter registration for exclusive content
- Downloadable certificate
- Downloadable reward chart

