

Spotlight Review

by Mary Pride

Sing, Spell, Read and Write: Preschool Kit & Kindergarten/Level 1 Combo

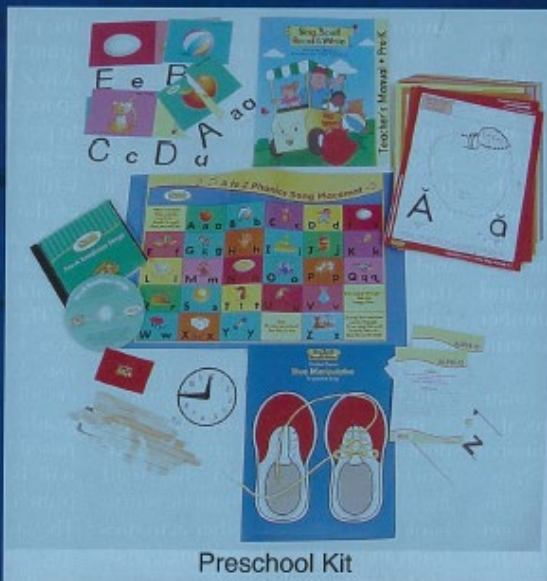


Ages 3-5 (Preschool), 5-6 (Kindergarten), 6-8 (Level 1). Preschool Kit, \$82.72. Kindergarten/Level 1 combo kit, \$284.82.

Sue Dickson's Songs That Teach. 1-855-321-TEACH. SueDickson.com.

Sing, Spell, Read & Write is a phonics program that was so far ahead of its time, the research is only catching up to it now!

The brainchild of Sue Dickson—a warm, energetic classroom teacher who developed and refined the program over 27 years with her own students—SSRW covers *all* the phonics bases, while reaching children though their eyes,



Preschool Kit

ears, hands, and full-body movement.

Decades of research (not to mention the experience of thousands of homeschool families and hundreds of thousands of classroom students) have proven that this systematic approach to phonics is the best way to teach children to read.

And while the main criticism of phonics programs has always been that they aren't very motivational or fun, SSRW is all about the motivation and fun!

Reading success starts with readiness, and that's what the **Preschool Kit** is all about.

The Preschool kit includes

- A classroom-style Teacher's Manual with lesson-by-lesson instructions and activities
- A placemat with the Jolly Trolley raceway on one side and the A to Z Phonics Song on the other side, plus a static-cling Jolly Trolley to move along the raceway steps
- Alphabet cards
- A set of perforated Alph-O "alphabet puzzle" cards, so the child can match each uppercase letter to its lowercase letter
- A CD with the songs for the program
- A set of 139 Readiness Lane activity worksheets
- A set of 104 Alphabet Lane activity worksheets
- Math counting sticks

In addition, you get a cardboard sheet with a pair of shoes pictured, with punched-out holes and real shoelaces for practicing lacing, and a clock with movable handles, for learning to tell time.

The first half of the Preschool raceway, Readiness Lane, teaches colors, shapes, visual discrimination, matching, opposites, classification, sequencing, and seasons. The second half of the raceway, Alphabet Lane, teaches letter shapes and sounds. When you get to the letter D, the first "Math House" activity and song is introduced. By the end of the track, the student will know how to count from 1-10 both forward and backward, know what the number "zero" is about, and be able to write the numbers 0-10.

Since the Preschool teacher's manual was written for classrooms, it is best used as a resource for additional fun activities, to add as time allows and energy permits, and for basic insight into how to teach the program. You can actually work through the entire raceway just using the work-

sheets, which each have directions helpfully scripted right on them.


I know you're anxious to get to part where kids learn to read, so we'll move right along to the super homeschool-friendly **Kindergarten/Level 1 combo kit**.

We used the first edition of this kit with our own children. Not much about SSRW has changed since then,

Level 1 has a raceway track, and six static-cling cars, so you can use it with multiple children at once. The inner track, used with the *Off We Go* workbook, reviews the 26 letters. The outer track, used with the *Raceway Book*, takes kids through all of phonics. By the time they finish, they should be able to read anything written for their age level—and beyond!

Sue Dickson's love of children and her teaching skill shines through everywhere. Her instructional DVD not only explains Level 1 step by step, but shares incredible teaching tips on everything from how to teach kids to hold a pencil, to how to form the letters, to how to pronounce the individual phonics sounds, and on and on. Years of classroom teaching experience distilled into little more than an hour!

This kit is *loaded* with games: three bingo games and two card games. Also included: a CD with delightful songs, used to teach every letter sound and phonics rule in the program; 17 colorful Storybook Readers, that systematically practice the phonics rules taught in the program; a dry-erase placemat with the A to Z Phonics Song on one side and space on the other side for the child to practice writing; a dry-erase marker and eraser; an Assessment Book, with a book-end assessment for each of the 17 Storybook Readers, plus three achievement tests; and an Instructor's Manual that tells you just what to say and do.

The Level 1 Instructor's Manual was written specifically for home use. Every bit of it is helpful. It covers all of language arts for the early grades, in the most charming way possible. With SSRW, your children will be reading, writing, spelling, punctuating, and comprehending. They will be pointing, singing, coloring, cutting, pasting, moving, and *reading!* Recommended. 



Kindergarten/Level 1 Combo Kit

because not much needed to change! The educational heart of the program is still the same.

First, let's talk about the **Kindergarten** portion of the kit.

The *All Aboard* workbook has five activities for each alphabet letter: a phonics song coloring page, an auditory or visual discrimination activity page, a manuscript writing page (children trace the letters), a color/cut/paste page (so important to develop those hands-on skills!), and a My Magazine Picture Page (for pasting a picture from a magazine that begins with the letter sound). There are also Phonics Song Matching Game picture cards to punch out and use to play a game.

In the *On Track* workbook, students color and read little tear-out storybooks. In addition, they read the six kindergarten Phonetic Storybook Readers. Many other activities teach and reinforce beginning blending to form simple words.