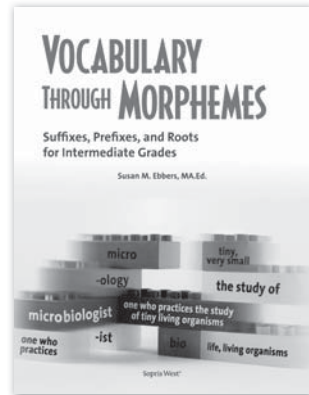
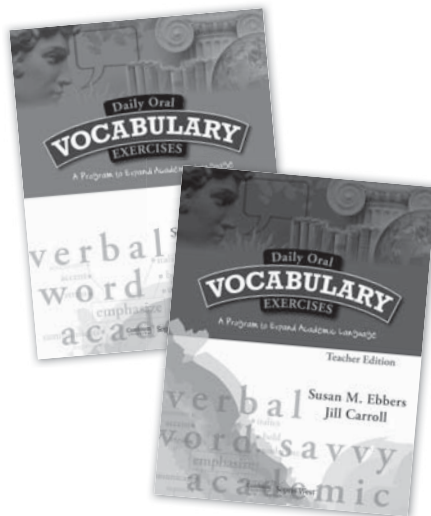


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With Jill Carroll
**Daily Oral Vocabulary
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 in Grades 4–12**

SUPERCHARGED READERS

PROGRAM GUIDE

for Teachers
 by Susan M. Ebbers

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1 2 3 4 5 FRD 13 12 11 10 09

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ISBN10: 1-60697-082-9
 ISBN13: 978-1-60697-082-9

Printed in the United States of America

Published and Distributed by



4093 Specialty Place • Longmont, Colorado 80504
 (303) 651-2829 • www.sopriswest.com

182342/9-09

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Five-Plus-Two Essential Reading Components in <i>Supercharged Readers</i> | 2 |
| Rationale for Using Decodable Readers | 3 |
| Scope and Sequence | 5 |
| <i>Supercharged Readers</i> Instructional Activity Pages | 7 |
| Heart Words: Practice irregular words | 8 |
| Sound & Structure: Practice phonology and morphology | 8 |
| Rapid Review: Review irregular sight words, cumulatively | 9 |
| Supercharged Vocabulary: Practice key meanings | 9 |
| Syntax & Semantics: Practice grammar, meaning, and morphology. | 10 |
| The Chapters: Read and discuss | 13 |
| Look Back: Practice literal comprehension | 14 |
| Follow-Up Activities: Comprehension and vocabulary | 14 |
| Transfer: Graduating from <i>Supercharged Readers</i> to Typical Texts | 15 |
| Appendixes | |
| 1. Fluency Norms | 16 |
| 2. <i>Supercharged Readers</i> Completion Chart. | 18 |
| 3. Research Base of <i>Supercharged Readers</i> | 20 |
| 4. Informational Content in <i>Supercharged Readers</i> | 27 |
| 5. <i>Supercharged Readers</i> Answer Key | 28 |
| References. | 31 |
| About the Author | 36 |
| Acknowledgments | 36 |

Introduction

A supplemental program for advancing readers, the *Supercharged Readers* series includes this program guide and 32 decodable chapter books: narratives, riddles, poetry, and informational texts. Each book has two chapters, but the last book has four chapters, to mark the student's passage from controlled to authentic text. *Supercharged Readers* has two main goals: improved word recognition and improved vocabulary. Many of the books focus on conceptual knowledge of animals, plants, cities, and states—critical to content-area reading. With *Supercharged Readers*, students have the potential to become adept at advanced decoding in a chapter-book format that focuses on vocabulary development, comprehension, and conceptual understanding. The books:

- provide interactive pre- and post-reading instructional activities
- are consumable—students annotate words, morphemes, phrases, etc.
- depict diversity among characters
- include polysyllabic words with vowel teams, *r*-controlled vowels, open syllables, and suffixes and prefixes (morphemes)
- build upon the short-vowel patterns and irregular sight words learned in *Power Readers* (Ebbbers, 2007) or in any similar series
- foster morphological awareness, including structural analysis
- consistently promote vocabulary, including idioms and academic words
- frequently reuse key vocabulary words, in varied form and context
- foster comprehension, text-specific discussions, and critical thinking
- foster content knowledge of animals, states, cities, planets, etc.
- attempt to trigger situational interest, a motivating force

Target Audience

***Supercharged Readers* are designed for:**

- the majority of students in grades 1–2
- students in grades 1–4 needing strategic or intensive reading practice

Five-Plus-Two Essential Reading Components

Supercharged Readers are reflective of research. They were written to support the five components of reading instruction determined by the National Reading Panel to be critical (NICHD, 2000), and to reflect recent research in morphological awareness (Carlisle, 2003; Nagy, 2007) and in interest theory (Hidi, 2006; Silvia, 2003). Thus, by including morphological awareness (MA) and interest theory, *Supercharged Readers* offer a five-plus approach to reading instruction. Collectively, the *Supercharged Readers* series aims to help students become capable, confident, and engaged readers through seven constructs:

1. phonological awareness of words, syllables, and phonemes
2. word recognition and decoding, including structural analysis—breaking words apart by prefix, root or base, and suffix
3. fluency at the word, sentence, and passage level
4. vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions and academic words
5. comprehension, including conceptual background knowledge
6. knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and morphological families
7. interested engagement through a variety of genres

Supercharged Readers include a variety of genres, aiming to ignite interest and develop background knowledge, providing a mixture of narratives, poems, fables, puzzles, riddles, and informational texts. The 32 books in the series include tales of loyalty and courage and informational content about conceptual topics. For example, Book 22, *The Grain Chain*, describes how wheat becomes bread. Of the 32 books, 12 are more-or-less informational. This is important, because content-based reading materials tend to be extremely scarce in less-advantaged elementary schools (Duke, 2000) even though the mental knowledge structures created from reading informational texts is essential to comprehension and cognition (Willingham, 2006).

In addition, each book was written to generate interest. Interest has been called a unique motivational variable that involves cognition and emotion (Hidi, 2006). When in an interested, attentive state of mind, we focus more deeply, and thus comprehend a text better (Hidi, 2001). Further, interest has a reciprocal relationship with self-efficacy (Hidi & Ainley, 2008; Silvia, 2003), so the lure of a decodable text might rest in its ability to promote self-confidence in children otherwise overwhelmed by the complex English code. The *Supercharged Readers* trigger situational interest as much as possible within a constrained format.

Furthermore, the books employ effective principles of teaching and learning, including modeling and scaffolding, as well as incremental and sequential skill development. With encouragement from the teacher, students should gradually transfer their reading skills to trade books and other reading material (Moats, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Note: The research base for *Supercharged Readers* is more fully addressed in Appendix 3.

The Rationale for Using Decodable Readers

Decodable readers have a narrow and limited purpose, so they are not for everyone. It is best to provide students with reading materials that align with their skill. Controlled texts are useful for students who struggle to master the complexities of the English code. A decodable text might hold the interest of an emergent or developing reader who has limited self-efficacy with respect to reading (see Hidi & Ainley, 2008; Silvia, 2003). Thus, the potential power of a decodable text might rest in its ability to promote self-confidence along with decoding skill. If decodable texts are sufficiently engaging, making sense and capturing interest, they will also provide a platform for practice that should result in improved comprehension. It is important to use discrimination when selecting controlled texts. Select engaging and comprehensible texts that align with the phonics lessons and with the student's mastery of the code. As noted in *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, "Well-written and engaging texts that include words that children can decipher give them the chance to apply emerging skills with ease and accuracy" (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 195). Decodable texts are analogous to training wheels, offering a somewhat failsafe learning environment, a medium for practice. As noted by the National Reading Panel, "It is not sufficient just to teach the alphabetic system. Children need practice in applying this knowledge in reading and writing activities" (NICHD, 2000, 2–99). The Panel went on to urge teachers to be mindful of the higher goals of comprehension and transfer of learning, stating, "Educators must keep the end in mind and ensure that children understand the purpose of learning letter-sounds and are able to apply skills in their daily reading and writing activities" (2–135).

Research in decodable texts is incomplete; more study is required to determine the optimal characteristics of the genre. However, some research is promising. For instance, Mesmer (2005) found that highly decodable texts, coupled with phonics instruction, give children greater opportunity to practice newly learned decoding skills with independence and with a feeling of self-efficacy or autonomy. These are important motivational variables that promote interest and

engagement (Hidi & Ainley, 2008). Mesmer concludes, "This study suggests that readers with knowledge of the alphabetic principle, given the same phonics instruction, will apply it more (and with more accuracy and independence) in a highly decodable context" [compared to reading trade books or passages in a basal reader]. Similarly, Juel (1991) observed that beginning readers who read text selections that corresponded to their phonics instruction used more phonologically based word-identification strategies than students who read texts consisting of predominantly sight words.

What about children with reading disabilities? Decodable readers are generally held to be effective for children who struggle to master the code, including children with dyslexia. In discussing dyslexia, Sally Shaywitz (2003) states, "Simple booklets, about twelve-to-twenty-four pages—so-called decodable texts (containing the words with letter-sound patterns that a child has already been taught)—can help him apply his newfound skills by actually reading words in a book" (p. 189). Furthermore, Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, and Seidenberg (2001) list decodable readers among the three essential elements of an effective reading intervention program for students with dyslexia. The authors state:

Given the research, it appears that three main elements are necessary for reading intervention with dyslexics: (a) phonological awareness training, (b) systematic phonics instruction that is linked to spelling, and (c) oral reading practice with decodable texts (p. 45).

Research in decodable texts and reading disabilities is limited, but Pool, Jenkins, and Vadasy (2000) found that 23 first-graders at risk for learning disabilities who received one-to-one tutoring from noncertified tutors for 30 minutes, 4 days a week, for 1 school year significantly outperformed controls on measures of reading, spelling, and decoding. The tutoring included instruction in phonological skills, explicit decoding, writing, spelling, and reading phonetically controlled text [decodable readers]. Moreover, Snider (1997) evaluated the transfer of decoding skills in elementary students with learning disabilities from a code-emphasis program that used controlled text to a literature-based basal reading series consistent with the whole-language approach. The study shows that students transferred decoding skills from the controlled vocabulary to other texts. Logically, the teacher played a role in promoting this type of transfer.

Note: Despite such promising research, one study yielded opposing results. Jenkins, Peyton, Sanders & Vadasy (2004) found little benefit from using decodable books. This surprising finding has not been resolved, but the constrained and unusual language of the books

may have been a factor. An exclusive diet of decodable readers is not advised. Reading award-winning children’s books aloud in a story-time setting can effectively promote vocabulary and comprehension.

Scope and Sequence

The *Supercharged Readers* series is sequential. Succeeding books build upon the syllabic and morphemic principles learned in prior books and upon the irregular “heart words” learned previously (see *Table 1*). In this way, increasingly challenging text becomes accessible. The *Supercharged Readers* also incorporate the heart words and short-vowel patterns learned in *Power Readers* (Ebbers, 2007).

Table 1: *Supercharged Readers* Scope and Sequence

| Supercharged Reader Title | Linguistic Principle | Heart Words |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. The Pigskin | suffix <i>-ed</i> /əd/ (<i>landed</i>) | football, friend, have |
| 2. Trapped! | unstressed suffix <i>-ed</i> /d/ or /t/ (<i>rubbed, hopped</i>) | from, look, water |
| 3. Miss Fudge and Mitch | <i>-dge</i> and <i>-tch</i> (<i>edge, catch</i>) | because, my |
| 4. Guess Which Ball! | <i>-all</i> (<i>ball</i>), compound words (<i>softball</i>) | are, guess, says |
| 5. Ribbit! | two-syllable words with schwa (<i>button</i>) | talk, walk |
| 6. Settle Down! | consonant <i>-le</i> (<i>puzzle</i>) | down, great, you |
| 7. Bart’s Red Car | <i>r</i> -controlled <i>ar</i> /ar/ (<i>star</i>) | they, where |
| 8. Swing, Batter Batter | <i>r</i> -controlled <i>er</i> /ur/ (<i>sister</i>) | goes, who |
| 9. Spring Births | <i>r</i> -controlled <i>ir, ur</i> /ur/ (<i>dirt, curb</i>) | build, built, give, giving |
| 10. Morning Story | <i>r</i> -controlled <i>or, ore</i> /or/ (<i>for, more</i>) | laugh, orange, some, something |
| 11. Boston | silent <i>e</i> : <i>o-e</i> /ō/ (<i>home</i>) | live, people, whole |
| 12. In the Crate | silent <i>e</i> : <i>a-e</i> /ā/ and <i>e-e</i> /ē/ (<i>make, Pete</i>) | love, there |
| 13. Up in the Air | <i>-air</i> and <i>-are</i> (<i>fair, care</i>) | their, through |
| 14. Riddle Time | silent <i>e</i> : <i>i-e</i> /ī/ (<i>bike</i>) | both, does, two |
| 15. What’s the Use? | silent <i>e</i> : <i>u-e</i> /ū/ (<i>cube, flute</i>) | know, useful |

| Supercharged Reader Title | Linguistic Principle | Heart Words |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 16. Saving for Winter | suffix <i>-ed</i> and <i>-ing</i> on long vowel base (<i>stared, staring</i>) | busy, food, work |
| 17. At the Races | soft <i>c</i> and soft <i>g</i> (<i>ice, age</i>) | ocean, one |
| 18. The Great Race | suffix <i>-ed, -ing,</i> and <i>-er</i> on short-vowel base (<i>slipped, slipping, slipper</i>) | trouble, very, been |
| 19. Crewing at the Zoo | vowel team <i>oo</i> and <i>ew</i> /ōō/ (<i>zoo, new</i>) | guard, watch |
| 20. Three Beats | vowel team <i>ee</i> and <i>ea</i> /ē/ (<i>bee, eat</i>) | come, coming, enough |
| 21. Winds Blow | vowel team <i>ow</i> and <i>oa</i> /ō/ (<i>show, oat</i>) | many, move, moving |
| 22. The Grain Chain | vowel team <i>ai</i> and <i>ay</i> /ā/ (<i>rain, day</i>) | bread, field, flour, machine |
| 23. Light and Dark | vowel team <i>ie</i> and <i>igh</i> /ī/ (<i>tie, high</i>) | heart, out, school |
| 24. Shauna’s Drawings | vowel team <i>aw</i> and <i>au</i> /aw/ (<i>saw, fault</i>) | daughter, naughty, tongue |
| 25. How Now Brown Cow | vowel team <i>ow</i> and <i>ou</i> /ou/ (<i>cow, out</i>) | bear, here |
| 26. Artistic Joy | vowel team <i>oi</i> and <i>oy</i> /oy/ (<i>coin, toy</i>) | again, color, picture |
| 27. Flamingo and Buffalo Facts | syllables ending with <i>-o</i> and <i>-oe</i> /ō/ (<i>o-pen, toe</i>) | also, could |
| 28. Hero, Hero | syllables ending with <i>-e</i> /ē/ (<i>be, he-ro</i>) | about, bully, put, want |
| 29. Idaho Horizons | syllables ending with <i>-i</i> and <i>-y</i> /ī/ (<i>si-lent, fly</i>) | hours, toward, would |
| 30. Field Trips with Mr. Matrix | syllables ending with <i>-a</i> /ā/ (<i>a-corn, ta-ble</i>) | group, pull, pulls |
| 31. Our Earth in the Universe | syllables ending with <i>-u</i> /ū/ (<i>u-nit, mu-sic</i>) | answer, earth, our, system |
| 32. Golden Coins | Chapter 1: <i>-oo-</i> (<i>book, wooden</i>). Chapter 2: <i>-ind, -old</i> (<i>find, folder</i>). Chapter 3: <i>-ear-</i> (<i>earn, searching</i>). Chapter 4: <i>-ea-</i> (<i>head, feather</i>). | believe, eyes, straight, thief, woman |

The Supercharged Readers Instructional Activity Pages

Every *Supercharged Reader* follows the same basic order, with little variation. For example, on page 1 of every *Supercharged Reader*, the Heart Words page appears. The other ten activity pages (listed in *Table 2*) also appear in the books in a consistent order, providing a routine. In addition to using the teaching tips provided herein on pages 8–14, follow the specific directions at the bottom of the pages in the 32 books.

Table 2: The *Supercharged Readers* Activities

| Page | Title | Activity |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 1 | Heart Words | Teach the new high-frequency and/or irregular heart words (“I know them by heart!”). |
| 2 | Sound & Structure | Teach the new phonics pattern. (In some of the books, a second phonics pattern is taught.) |
| 3 | Rapid Review | Review heart words (“I know them by heart”) from prior readers and revisit new heart words. Apply the new phonics code and the heart words in a meaningful context. |
| 4 | Supercharged Vocabulary Ch. 1 (or Pt. 1) | Teach key vocabulary for chapter or part one. This is a discussion-oriented page, promoting receptive and productive vocabulary. Encourage students to attempt to decode these challenging words independently, to develop self-efficacy. Provide just enough assistance to enable students to decode it. |
| 5 | Syntax & Semantics | Lesson content varies: multiple meanings, verb tense, semantic word sorting, antonyms, synonyms, prefixes, suffixes, compound words, and morphological word families (e.g., <i>sun</i> , <i>sunny</i> , <i>sunshine</i> , <i>suntan</i>). |
| 6 | Anticipatory Set | Before reading chapter one, discuss the title of the story and the cover illustration. Discuss the questions at the bottom of the page. Activate schema, related vocabulary, and interest. |
| 7-12 | Chapter One (Part One) | Students read the chapter, applying skills learned thus far. Make predictions, discuss, and enjoy! |
| 13 or 14 | Supercharged Vocabulary Ch. 2 (or Pt. 2) | Teach key vocabulary for chapter or part two. <i>See Supercharged Vocabulary notes for chapter or part one, listed above.</i> |

| Page | Title | Activity |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 14-20 | Chapter Two (Part Two) | Before reading the new chapter, discuss the first chapter, prompting recall of characters, events, or information. Then, read chapter two, applying skills learned thus far, including the new supercharged vocabulary. Make predictions. Retell. Summarize. Enjoy. Eventually, read both chapters nonstop. |
| 21 | Look Back | These post-reading pages focus on vocabulary and comprehension. Students practice looking back in the story to check their work. |
| 22 | Follow-Up Activities | This page uses varied approaches to comprehension, including sequencing activities and comprehension questions. Several of the readers include conversational prompts (e.g., “As For Me”). |

Heart Words

“I know them by heart!” Heart words are high-frequency and/or irregular words that students learn by heart. Point out that these words are irregular. That is, they deviate from the alphabetic code (or use a code the students have not yet learned). Point out which letters in the word represent the correct sound and which do not. For example, on the Heart Words page of the first reader, *The Pigskin*, the word *have* is given. The first three letters of *have* do, in fact, represent the alphabetic principal, but the final *-e* may seem out of place because it does not create a long /ā/ sound. As students trace the letters, have them say the letter names. After students trace the words, they read the sentences. Ask students to circle the heart words in each sentence. Practice these words often. They are among the most common in the English language and must be automatically recognized.

Sound & Structure

Before reading the story, teach the new linguistics principle (i.e., the sound and structure) to the point of mastery. Help students isolate the vowel or vowel combinations that represent the new sound. For example, in the first reader, *The Pigskin*, the Sound & Structure activity on page 2 teaches the enunciated suffix *-ed* /əd/. It is essential that students clearly pronounce the target vowel sound and mark the associated letters (circle them, underline them, draw a mark over them, etc.). Provide additional practice, if needed, until students are confident and competent when decoding words with the specific linguistic pattern. Do not read the story until the linguistic code is mastered. This will help develop positive associations with books.