

# Getting Started with BRI

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Begin by looking through the first tale of BRI Level 1A together. *I See Sam* consists of five grapheme/phoneme correspondences:

‘I’ /I/    ‘m’ /m/    ‘S’, ‘s’ /s/    ‘a’ /a/    ‘ee’ /ee/

Download the **Letter/Sound Cards** for Story 1 from RESOURCES (<https://piperbooks.co.uk/bri-free-resources/>) and cut the five sounds into separate cards. Present each card and say: ‘*The sound is \_\_\_\_\_. What is this sound?*’ Repeat until the child has practised each correspondence several times. It isn’t necessary for the child to remember every sound, as these correspondences will appear repeatedly in the story. You may also want to use a whiteboard on which to write each sound.

When you introduce a sound, try to keep the pronunciation as crisp as possible. For instance, try to pronounce a pure sound for /m/ rather than a sound like ‘mu’.

As a child begins to read *I See Sam*, the instruction should be limited to ‘*Say the sounds and read the word.*’ Model if necessary. For instance, point to *s* and *ee* and say: ‘*The sounds /s/ and /ee/ make the word see.*’ To sound out and read the word *see*, we say *sss* (one second pause) and *ee...see*. ‘*Now you sound out and read the word.*’ Again the objective is to familiarise the child with the how-to of blending, not to teach them to ‘recognise the word’ as a whole.

**BEGINNING STORY 1.** The child **will** struggle and make mistakes while initially reading the story. When a word is missed, resist saying ‘*no*’. Simply point to the word, and repeat: ‘*Say the sounds and read the word.*’ If s/he can’t do it, give the ‘missing’ sound and let the child try again. If, after a few tries, the child is frustrated, supply the word and go on with the story.

Never rush, and don’t make an issue of ‘mistakes’. Let the child and the book do the work! Take as much time as necessary to get through Story 1 the first time. So long as a child is trying hard to use the protocol ‘*Say the sounds and read the word*’ and understands the story, that is all that is required. The brief Factual and Developing Comprehension questions check understanding and offer opportunities for lively discussion.

As with any complex skill, there will be steady improvement with practice. However, a child may read a word, and then a couple of lines later be unable to read that same word. This is common; the child isn’t ‘going backwards’. Patience and encouragement are the most important qualities you bring to a lesson, together with ensuring that the protocol is followed and that ‘overhelping’ is avoided.

As soon as ‘*Say the sounds and read the word*’ becomes second nature, it is preferable to work without sound cards. New sounds can be introduced on a whiteboard or in the context of the story.

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