

# Matt Segall



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B.A, Economics, Oberlin College  
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# A Tool for Research-Backed Reading Practice

Matt Segall, Metis Winter 2021



The background of the slide is a photograph of an open book. The pages are filled with text, which appears to be in Turkish. A semi-transparent blue rectangular overlay covers the middle portion of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text. The overall lighting is soft, and the colors are muted, with the blue overlay being a prominent feature.

# 53%

Of American adults are not considered fully literate  
(PIACC literacy level 2 or lower)




# Reading is Taught Based on Outdated Myth

- “Whole language” approach has been disproven
- Phonic approach supported by research
- What students need are practice passages which
  - maximize the proportion of decodable words based on their current phonic repertoire



# Two Approaches




## Selection

-  Human-written
-  Simple
-  Not customizable

**“By this time the prince was very hungry. The town was just three miles off; but he had such a royal appetite, that he did not like to waste it on bad cookery.”**

**“I’m going to say that they had to be something to see that they were to be a good spirit.”  
“Thank you,” said the little boy.  
“The first time I shall be sure the way that I have no mother to take that strange thing to see the beautiful story.”**

## Generation

-  Fully customizable
-  Grammar & readability
-  Availability

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# Measuring Presence of Phonics

“A screwdriver will help you turn the screw.”

“Can you cut paper with your fingers?”

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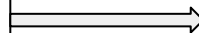


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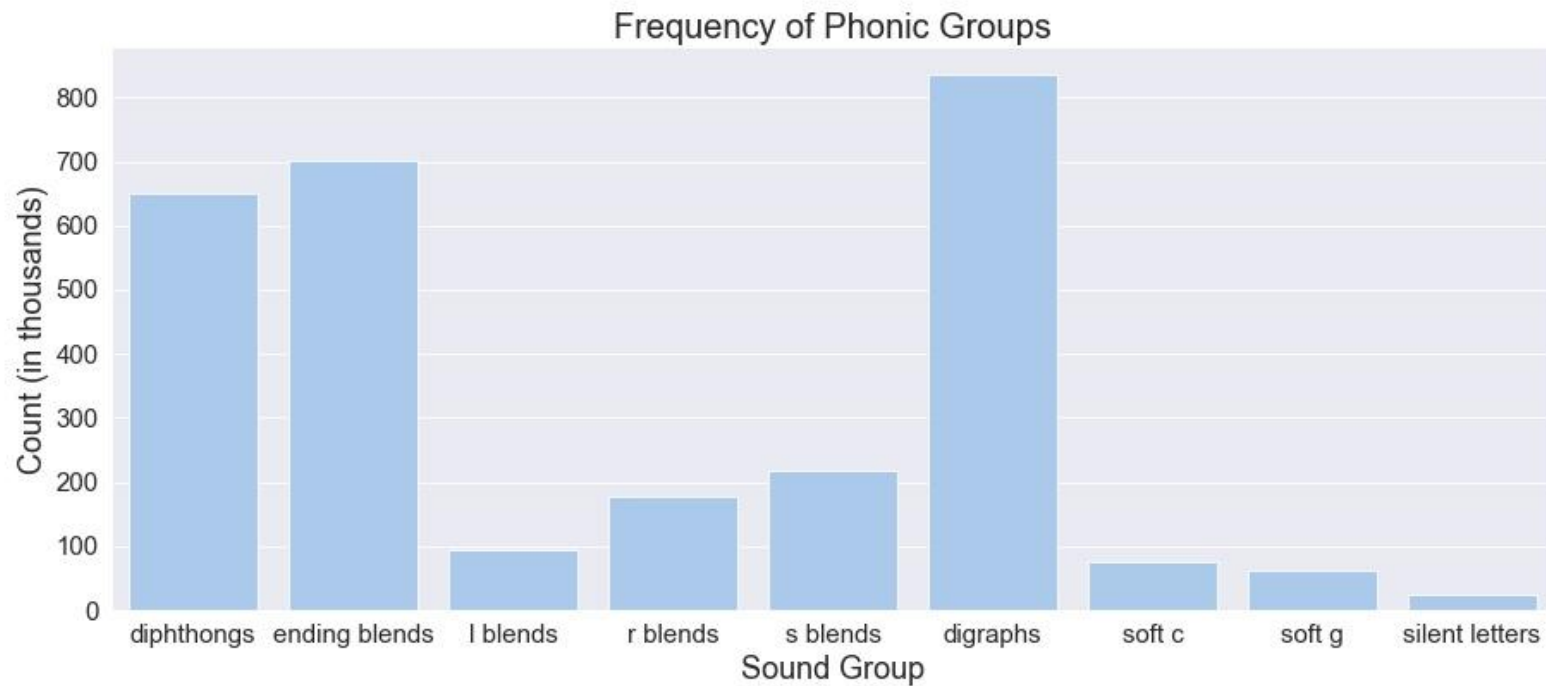
# Measuring Presence of Phonics

“A screwdriver will help **you** turn the screw.”

1/43

“Can **you** cut paper with **your** fingers?”

2/35



# Topics

## Fairy Tale



palace, day, gold, fairy,  
long, good, shall, time,  
away, prince, great, queen,  
went, princess, kind, little,  
said

## Animals



know, great, time, way,  
big, long, frog, green,  
fox, grandfather, old,  
rabbit, little

## Pirate



doctor, long, came, ship,  
thought, hand, silver, sir,  
captain, cried, time,  
know, like

# Topics

## Fairy Tale



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away, **prince**, great,  
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## Animals



know, great, time, way,  
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## Pirate



doctor, long, came, **ship**,  
thought, hand, **silver**, sir,  
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know, like

# Example

**Topic:** animals

**Minimize:** "oo", "ou",  
"ow", "oi", "oy", "aw",  
"au", "ie", "igh", "ay",  
"ee", "ea", "ie"



"**You** can not judge a person's temper by his size. There is more meanness in the head of a weasel than in the whole of a bear. Peter Rabbit. Old Jed Thumper sat in his bull-briar castle in the middle of the Old Pasture, scowling fiercely and muttering to himself. He was very angry, was Old Jed Thumper. He was so angry that presently he stopped muttering and began to chew rapidly on nothing at all but his temper, which is a way angry Rabbits have. The more he chewed his temper, the angrier he grew. He was big and stout and strong and gray. He had lived so long in the Old Pasture that he felt that it belonged to him and that no other Rabbit had any right there unless he said so."

# Push to a Product

- Account for further phonic complexity
  - Combinations of letters can make multiple sounds (mean, head)
  - Sounds can be represented by many letters or combinations (mean, seen)
  - English is full of exceptions, exceptions to exceptions
- Student's vocabularies are limited





# Thank you!

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