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Lesson-by-Lesson Instructions for *American Spirit*

Lessons 1 and 2: Vowel Chunks

- Read the passage on the left-hand page together, following the directions carefully. Be prepared to spend a little more time at first until you and your student become familiar with the core activities.
- Lesson 1 introduces vowel chunks. The vowels are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, and sometimes *y* and *w*. A vowel chunk is comprised of a combination of vowels that usually make one sound in a word. Examples are *ea*, *oo*, and *ou*. Focusing on letter patterns in the context of a story helps a student learn the irregular sounds of the English language. A complete list of vowel chunks can be found on the student page.
- Have the student use a yellow pencil or highlighter to mark or circle the vowel chunks. As you move through *American Spirit*, different letter patterns will be assigned different colors. Using these colors consistently will help your student visually learn the spelling patterns. Use the color-coded **Answer Key** in the back of this handbook to make sure the chunking is complete on the left-hand page of the lesson. Keep in mind that the purpose of chunking is to help your student focus on letter patterns and remember them. It is not a skill to be tested. Simply point out any vowel chunks that were overlooked and help your student mark them.
- Even though the same passage is repeated throughout the lesson, the student should mark the vowel chunks each day in order to reinforce the spelling patterns. On the first three days (Parts A–C), after the student has marked the vowel chunks in the passage, have him copy as much of the passage on the right-hand page as he can complete in 10 minutes. Help him mark the vowel chunks on his written copy, using the left-hand page for a guide as needed.
- On Day 4 (Part D), you will dictate the passage for your student to write. Cover the left-hand page in the workbook with a piece of paper and read the story from the **Resources** section in the back of this *Handbook*. Tell the student to relax and not worry; you will provide all punctuation and capitalization and help her with difficult words. You will do this activity for just 10 minutes—no more! Read the passage word by word and have your student continue writing until she struggles with a word. Stop to help, but don't stop the clock. It is important to address misspellings as they occur without worrying about time. After 10 minutes, stop and count the number

of words written *correctly*. You can read more important information about dictation on page 25.

- On Day 5 (Part E), your student will have another opportunity to write the passage from dictation. This dictation is a little different, as you will not tell the student how to spell any words. Instead, challenge him to try difficult words until they look right. The time spent on dictation should still be limited to 10 minutes. You may provide correct punctuation and capitalization. Count and record the number of words spelled correctly, but remember that this is not a test. If the first dictation was completed easily and accurately, you may skip this second dictation.

Answer Key

Sometimes a word has overlapping chunks. For example, a vowel chunk may overlap with a Bossy *r* chunk (*heard*), or a consonant chunk may overlap with an ending (*really*). In the answer key, we have tried to remain consistent with the focus of each lesson. In lessons with multiple chunks, we marked vowel chunks before Bossy *r* chunks, but Bossy *r* chunks before consonant chunks.

If the student chooses a different chunking pattern than the one marked in the answer key, please do not consider it incorrect. Instead, take a moment to talk about the word and the overlap of chunks. You might ask the student which letter pattern he thinks would be most helpful for him to remember and let him mark that one. Remember that the goal is to create a visual memory for non-phonetic words.

2 A-E: Vowel Chunks

A frail little slave girl was sold to the Wheatley family. They named her Phillis after the slave ship that had brought her to Boston. Slaves were not allowed to go to school. The Wheatleys taught Phillis to read and write. She learned very quickly. As a teenager, Phillis Wheatley began writing poems. She was the first African American poet to have her poems printed.

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