

# Succeeding in Reading

*with The Spalding Method*

Teaching Children to  
Read, Write and Spell

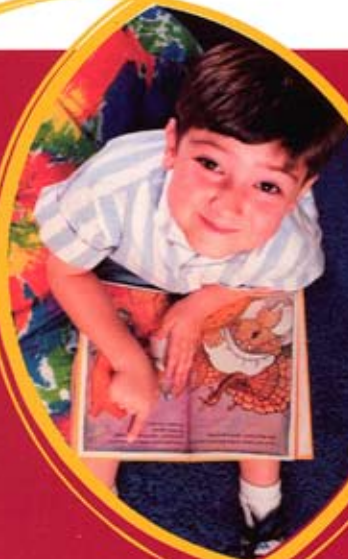


## A Complete Language Arts Approach

The Spalding Method is a total language arts approach that is effective with both general and special education students, including those for whom English is not their first language. The Spalding Method provides explicit, integrated instruction in spelling, writing, listening and reading comprehension. Each daily lesson is integrated around this language arts circle.

## Language Arts Circle



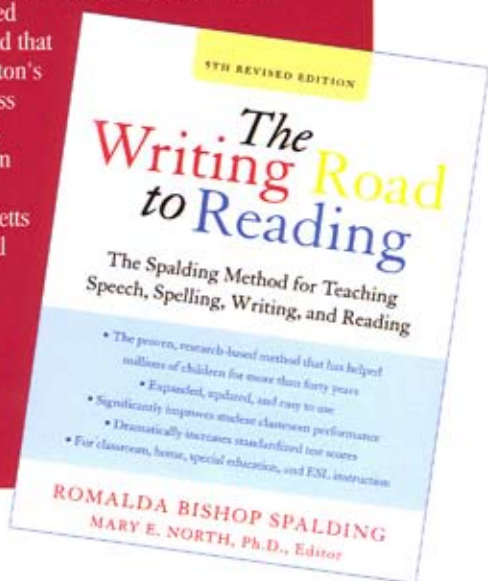


### How It Started

After earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and a master's degree from Columbia University, Romalda Spalding discovered that she was not prepared for teaching all children to read and write successfully.

Her search for a reading method that empowered children to become fluent, thoughtful readers and writers led her in 1938 to the distinguished neurologist Dr. Samuel T. Orton. He specialized in helping dyslexic and other disabled children. Mrs. Spalding soon realized that the children she taught using Dr. Orton's techniques experienced more success than her regular education students.

Drawing on what she learned from Dr. Orton and her own experience working with children at Massachusetts General Hospital, Children's Hospital at Harvard Medical School, and as a classroom teacher in public and private schools, she wrote *The Writing Road to Reading*, first published in 1957.



- The proven, research-based method that has helped millions of children for more than forty years
  - Expanded, updated, and easy to use
- Significantly improves student classroom performance
  - Dramatically increases standardized test scores
- For classroom, home, special education, and ESL instruction

**ROMALDA BISHOP SPALDING**  
MARY E. NORTH, Ph.D., Editor



In 1986, Romalda B. Spalding established the Spalding Education Foundation (now Spalding Education International, or SEI) to perpetuate her Method of teaching language arts, and to maintain the principles and procedures which have made The Spalding Method so effective.

Through ongoing professional development, SEI provides the highest quality literacy instruction to public, private and home educators, and ultimately to all students. Because success in life requires accurate spelling, accomplished writing and skilled reading, our purpose is to bring literacy to students of all ages, regardless of economic status, ethnic diversity, disability, or geography. Today, SEI trains teachers and accredits schools in The Spalding Method, which continues to be validated by current research on the way children learn.

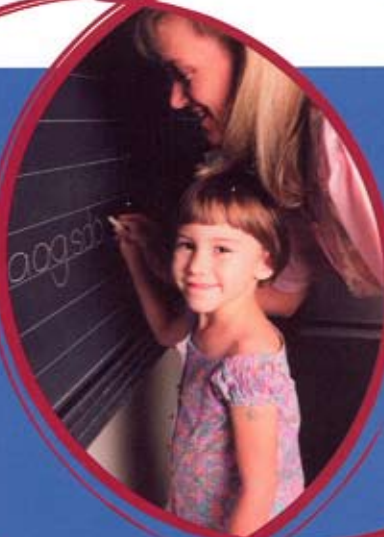
### How The Spalding Method Works

The program begins by teaching children to connect speech to print. Spalding teaches 70 sound-letter units called phonograms. Learning the phonograms is, amazingly, great fun for students of all ages. It does absolute wonders for the self-esteem of those wounded souls suffering from years of reading failure.

After the phonograms are learned, instruction in spelling begins. Spalding uses a list of words compiled by frequency. Instruction is keyed to a child's ability, which is strongly motivating. Easy words are boring; excessively difficult words are discouraging. Words that you can almost but not quite spell are fascinating, and discovering that you can actually figure out how to spell them is cause for jubilation – especially for a child with a history of spelling failure.

The spelling lesson structure is exact. The teacher says a word and the children say the first syllable, or first sound of a one-syllable word. The children write it, then dictate it to the teacher, who writes it on the board. The child progresses systematically through the word. If there is any difficulty, the class discusses the rule involved.





Over the course of spelling, the children learn twenty-nine rules, as needed to spell the words. For example, vowels a, e, o and u usually say their names at the end of a word. Given 70 phonograms and twenty-nine rules, they can spell about 80 percent of English words.

In conjunction with the spelling, a simple marking system is taught. For example, both letters of a two-letter phonogram are underlined. This shows that they go together to form one sound (boat). Little numbers are used to indicate which sound is being used. There are five of these marking conventions.

As soon as the class learns them (which is almost immediately), the students mark the word they have just written. In this way, spelling and marking become a problem-solving seminar, with everyone deeply absorbed in doing some of the best analytical thinking of their lives.

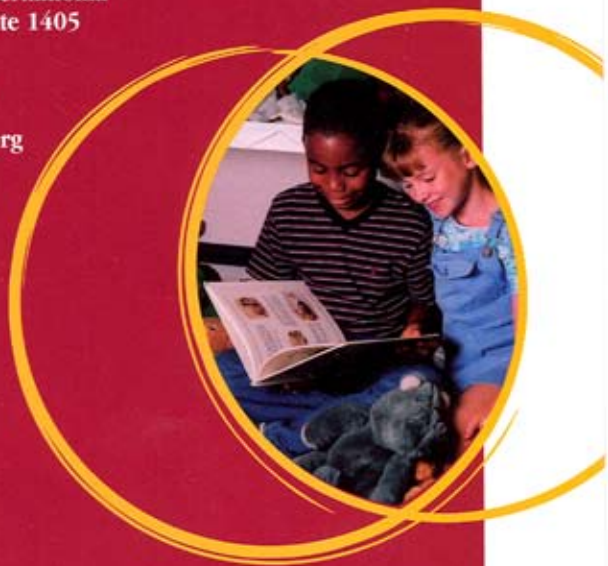
When about 150 words are in the spelling notebooks, reading begins. A major shock for new Spalding teachers is that reading is never taught. It just happens. After practicing phonograms, sequential word analysis, and graphic marking, children can read. They simply pick up a book and start reading. (It is, of course, a pretty exciting day.) They fly right over the basal readers with their impoverished vocabularies, and start in with good children's literature. Because they already know how to decode the words, they start right in thinking and reasoning about content. From the very first day of reading, the emphasis can be on ideas, information, forming inferences, tracing implications, and the like.



## Learn More

Our Mission is to prepare highly qualified teachers and proficient parent educators. SEI maintains an ongoing schedule of training and certification, and sells a broad range of Spalding materials for classrooms and home schooling. For more information or to receive our quarterly newsletter, please call, contact us by email or visit our website, [www.spalding.org](http://www.spalding.org).

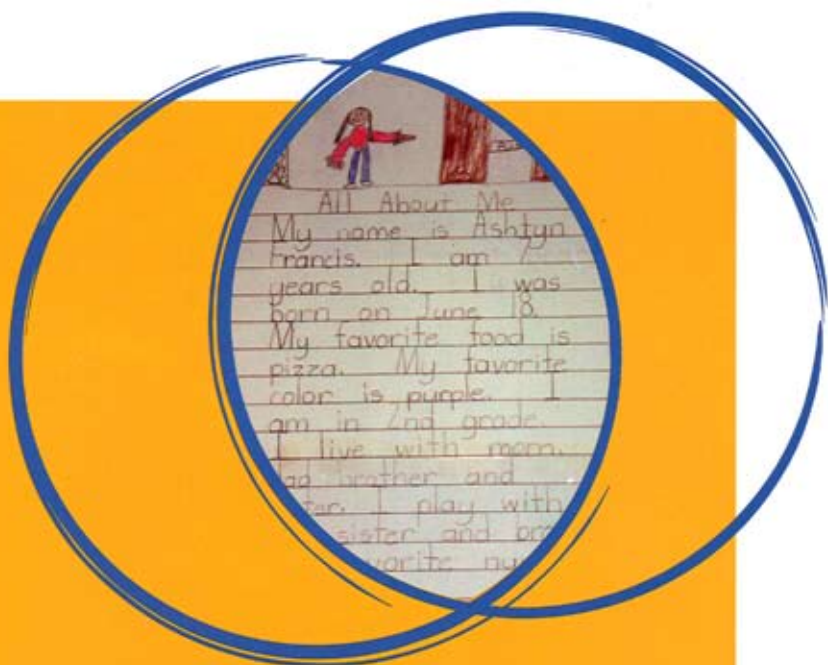
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## Testimonials

In *Schooling*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990, **Dr. Sylvia Farnham-Diggory** explains how Spalding-taught children learn to read almost without knowing it.

"Spalding's most remarkable contribution is her invention of a marking system that enables children to connect spelling rules to reading. The system consists of five simple conventions... Using those conventions, students learn to mark the words they have spelled, in an atmosphere of problem solving. First the words are separated into syllables, and then the syllables are marked... in notebooks, which eventually become personal glossaries filled with hundreds of marked words ... After spelling a word, the student reflects upon it and abstracts both its components and the rules they embody." (pp. 127-128)



**E. McEwan** (1998) *The Principal's Guide to Raising Reading Achievement*, Corwin Press, Inc.

"The Spalding Method ... has withstood the test of time as to effectiveness and has a broad body of research supporting its effectiveness ... The Gallego School in Tucson, Arizona has been a 'Spalding School' for 15 years, a remarkable achievement in a day when innovations appear and vanish overnight. Organized as an alternative back-to-basics school with heavy parental input, the school's students do not come from affluent homes. Rather, 60% of the students receive free lunch and over 80% are Hispanic. The school has, however, consistently ranked at or above the national and state averages on a standardized test ... With all of its teachers trained at the Spalding Education Foundation in Phoenix ... the school enjoys a remarkable consistency of instruction and purpose ..." (p. 63)

**Dr. Susan Moore**, Australian Educator and Researcher, in *Value Added: Literacy, Civics and Ethics in Schools*, Institute of Public Affairs, Victoria, Australia (1996), says:

"At present, no other method is as comprehensive, holistic, and successful. That is why some of the most dedicated speech pathologists, teachers, and primary principals in this country have learned how to implement it..." (pp. 19-22)

