

So, you don't like phonics?

Hands up any of you who don't like English phonics. I can't see your hands, but it certainly sounded like a lot of them went up. Do you think English phonics are a pain? Well, do you know what I think? I agree with you; they are a pain. Believe me, as an English person, learning my own language was not that easy. Of course, speaking it came easily because I'm a native, but the writing part was much more problematic. I'm reminded now of the struggle that it can be to come to understand and remember all the different rules to English phonics. My second grader, who I homeschool, is climbing up the hill of phonics knowledge. He has almost got to the top, but still has a little way to go. It's extremely satisfying, as a mum, to see a child make progress with reading or writing, and to see how, once they know a rule, they can apply it. I'm looking forward to the day when he can read for pleasure. Today, in an effort to help my son get to the top of that reading and writing hill, I went to The Academic Toolbox. It's an amazing shop that supplies teachers and home schoolers with everything: books, DVDs, games, toys, maps, art supplies. You name it, they have it. I didn't have enough time to really look around, but I did manage to find an interesting series called 'Explode The Code' all about phonics. These books give very clear, simple practices of all the phonetic rules that we use in English: vowel combinations, double consonants, endings, beginnings, irregularities, and comprehension. I like the style of the series; the art is simple but cartoonish at the same time. Kids like that. Many of the sentences are funny, and some of the activities are simply to draw a line or a circle to identify a word or its meaning. I'll have to do a podcast some time on the history of English. I think then we can all understand why it is such a mix of different things. Remember, that England, being a small island, was invaded many times by people of many different languages, my ancestors. So, it makes sense that the language has its complexities. Hopefully, my son will like these books as I do. And I also hope that he will quickly learn from them, reach the top of the hill, and then discover what fun English books can be,

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: in an effort to, problematic, comprehension, cartoonish.

1. In an effort to clean the kitchen, he ended up making a real mess.
2. The situation is problematic; there are many possible solutions, but also many risks.
3. His reading is great, but his comprehension is not at the same level.
4. That expensive painting looks too cartoonish to take seriously.

