

To the Student

Hello, and welcome to *City Stories!* This book was created for adult students who are learning to read and who want stories so they can practice reading.

It is not unusual for adults to have trouble reading. In the United States alone, there are 42 million adults who cannot read. If you ever feel lonely in your struggles with reading, please know that you are most definitely *not* alone.

The best way to learn to read is to be part of a reading program that has been proven to work. If you have both a good teacher and a good program, and you are committed to working hard, you will make progress.

Every step you take in your journey to become a better reader will have an impact. I have seen students improve their reading abilities to the point that they are able to

- manage their own bills
- take on-line tests in order to apply for a new job
- get around on public transportation more easily
- feel confident at work with checklists and written messages from their employers
- fill out reports at work
- read to their children or grandchildren
- do well on tests so they can get into new classes
- enter job training programs
- take computer classes
- and so much more!

How This Book Works

City Stories is divided into four levels. The stories in the first level are mostly told with very simple words. These words have short vowels and three sounds in them. These are words like *job* and *hat*

and *shop*. I hope that you practice sounding out these words, rather than memorizing them. It is this ability to blend sounds into words that makes a fluent reader.

The second level still uses words with short vowels, but adds consonant blends: words like *test*, *ring*, and *gift*. The third level uses multi-syllable words, like *admit*, *finish*, and *basketball*. And the fourth level adds words with long vowels, like *mile* and *cake* and *admire*.

Sight Words, Vocabulary, and Expressions

In addition to the words that can be sounded out, there are many sight words. These are commonly used words such as *the*, *who*, and *should* that have unusual or advanced spelling rules. Teachers generally ask students to memorize these words. Your instructor can also go over any expressions or vocabulary words used in the story.

Ideally, before beginning to read each story, you should make sure you are familiar with the sight words used in that story, and that you understand and are comfortable with any expressions or special vocabulary words. You will then be ready to begin reading the story. You may want to read the story several times to get the experience of reading fluently.

After you've read the story, your instructor will probably give you worksheets. These worksheets have exercises to help you further improve your reading ability.

With a strong mind and a determined will—and a great teacher using a proven program—you can work on these stories and improve your reading. Remember that it is in your power. I so respect your determination and desire. And I wish you the success you deserve.

— Larissa Phillips