



A Road Map to Getting Started with SWR

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Since we suggest that a new teacher start a log of her own, it would appear that this is where to start, but actually there is material to read and digest first. So how does one know how and where to start with SWR? The answers are found in the first few pages of SWR, in the introductory section on pages 5-12.

Let's begin with the Table of Contents (pg 5), a pretty important page for understanding the pieces to the puzzle as well as how they all fit together. We all know what a Table of Contents is. That's the problem. As we open the book, we think to ourselves, "Yeah, yeah, the Table of Contents, big deal, keep going." However, if you look carefully at this page, you'll notice that Wanda Sansei, the author, has wisely divided the book into seven main sections that give you the overview of the entire program:

1. GETTING STARTED (pg 6)

This one page is a simple and well laid out overview of what you need to do as a teacher to begin to teach this program. Here are listed the step numbers that go along with each of the preparatory activities, including what step you'll be on when you start the Teacher's Master's Log. With one glance, you'll see that there is work to be done before starting the log at Step #8.

2. INTRODUCTION (pp 7-11)

These pages include the philosophy and background to why and how we teach. This is critical to understanding the program and how it works. This is theory information, not practical step-by-step details. This is part of the "big picture" info. If you're anything like me, you want to dive right into the action. However, if you overlook this part, the action will not make any sense at all. There are only a few pages here. Spend time reading them.

3. SCOPE & SEQUENCE (pg 12)

This one page lays out the entire program. It's an essential page to understand so that you can get the "big picture" and know where you'll start and how you'll proceed. If you don't understand this page, you'll be lost. It's our road map. Too often we skip over this page, and then we get confused by the scenery and looking for landmarks, which were clearly explained back on the road map.

4. BEFORE STARTING WISE GUIDE (Steps 1-11)

How do we prepare for the spelling lists? What must we and our students know before we can begin? Think of these sections as preparing for the road trip. You'll have to get all your travel gear in order (plan before teaching). Depending on your passengers, you might have to study a bit about how to even travel (preparing the senses). There'll be some luggage to be packed (beginning phonograms, handwriting, numbers), and you're going to have to take a look at your vehicle to make sure it's ready for the trip (introducing the Learning Log). Once you've got your gear, you'll be busy organizing your belongings in the car (Consonant/Vowel & Multi-letter Phonogram pages). At last, you're prepared and you're ready to head out on the road.

5. STARTING DICTATION OF SECTIONS A-Z

This step will be similar to the main highway. You'll spend much of your time here, but you'll have lots of stops along the way for the sights you want to see, hands-on museums to explore, and famous people (quotes) to meet. The highway will be the same for all of us (Step #12), but where we start on that highway might differ. Again, depending on our passengers (students), we all have a particular starting point. We must be familiar with the highway and how to travel on it, but we also have to decide where we're starting.

6. AFTER STARTING WISE GUIDE

These steps are basically all the fun places we get to visit on the way. Frankly, we don't have to know too much about them before we start. If we're having trouble figuring out where to put the luggage in the car, then fretting about a stop fifty miles down the road is not really a high priority, is it?

7. APPENDICES

These are the tools we carry with us on our trip.

- **The Senate Hearing Speech** (Appendix A) is the article that reminds us why we want to take this trip and why we don't want to ditch it for a seemingly more convenient travel package.
- **The Diagnostic Spelling Scale** (Appendix B) is part of our pre-trip planning that helps us decide where to get on the highway.
- **The Sample Notebook Reference Pages** (Appendix C) are like illustrated journals from those who have been on this road before. Our journals may look slightly different, but at least we have an idea as to whether we're on the right path.
- **The Summary of the keys to our language** (Appendix D) are like our First Aid kits. We must have those immediately accessible. We will not need them in the beginning, but once questions start coming up, we need to know right where these are.
- **The Lesson Plan ideas** are like Travel Itineraries that others have put together or at least suggestions for building your own.
- **Final matters** (Appendix F) include reference materials that will likely be needed at some point along the way.

Now that we've looked at the overview, what did we learn? There are some steps to go through before we can start the Learning Log. What are they? All we have to do is look at that Scope & Sequence on page 12. It's such an important page, you'll notice that Wanda included it on the inside of the front cover as well so you could find it instantly. Let's look at the first few steps that *everyone* needs to go through at the beginning of each new school year.

Step #1 - PLAN BEFORE TEACHING

Includes ideas for organizing materials and preparing to teach.

Step #2 – PREP THE SENSES (formerly called “Preparing Preschoolers”)

If you're starting with little ones, you may need to park here for a while. If you're starting with an older, remedial student, then this is probably a section you think you can skip over. HOWEVER, I do not

suggest skipping it! Many times I have been problem solving with a mom who is working with an older student that is just not making progress. Come to find out there was a hole in the child's foundation such as phonemic awareness. As soon as the mom worked on this, the child started making better progress. Do you have older students? Skim, but don't skip reading through this step.

Step #3 - READ ALOUD TO ALL AGES

For some, this will be a good encouragement to keep doing what we're doing. For others, they may finally understand why everyone is always recommending this activity.

Step #4 - EVALUATE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL

Skip this step for a beginning K-1 student. Those working with an older student (2nd grade or above) will want to pay special attention to the suggestions here.

Steps #5 & #6 - INTRODUCE THE A-Z PHONOGRAMS WITH HANDWRITING

Again, much depends on the age and skill level of your students whether this step takes 5 minutes or 3 weeks. For the teacher working through the preliminary steps herself, this will involve deciding on how she plans to teach penmanship. Manuscript? Cursive? Italic? Which handwriting program—if any—will she use? Beginning penmanship? Remedial? She must decide, and whatever she chooses, that's how she will write in her Master Teacher's Log once she starts this herself. This is also the point at which she must get familiar with these phonograms for herself. She cannot start the log until she understands the tools she'll be using. Notice also that we're only talking about the phonograms A-Z here, not all 70!

Step #7 - TEACH NUMBERS FROM 0-9

This ties in closely with the previous step. Remedial students will not need to spend time on this, whereas beginning students must know how to read and write the beginning numerals.

Step #8 - INTRODUCE THE LEARNING LOG

For a beginning student, this is more of an anticipatory step. He puts his name on the cover and signs the John Hancock chart, but that's about it. The advanced student using the new formatted Black Learning Log merely writes his name on the cover and puts a tab on the first page for the spelling lists. The teacher will do the same with her book; she needs to look over the log and get familiar with it. She's checking out her vehicle and getting comfortable with its controls, dials, seat adjustments, and so on. There's an Answer Key that goes with the new Black Log available as a free download on our web site. http://swrtraining.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Ans_key_bk_log.pdf

Step #9 - DICTATE THE CONSONANT/VOWEL PAGE

This is where the teacher is going to start constructing her own log. There is scripted dialogue to get her started. She must build this page on her own, think through the concepts presented, chew on the ideas. This is also the first page the student will complete, regardless of which book he's using. It is on this page the first rules and the marking system are introduced. The beginning teacher must navigate her way through the instructions carefully. She must keep in mind her audience. If she's working with a beginning student, then anything that pertains to an advanced student will be moot. Skip those parts for now. The teacher with older students who is going through this material for the first time will need to read

through almost everything. Skip anything that says "Optional" or concepts you'll dive into much further down the road (e.g. box at top of page 53).

Step #10 - START MULTI-LETTER PHONOGRAM PAGE

How much we collect on this page at the beginning will depend on who our passengers will be. If we've got a beginner, we start with the 5 phonograms listed in the Preliminaries of Wise List A (see SWR page 59). If we're working with an older student, there are different ways to handle this page. See the Yahoo Support Group Files for more on this (Files/ Teaching the Phonograms/Order for Teaching Phonograms). You'll notice that on pp 60-61 there is information about how to reinforce the phonograms. Come back to this once you're starting to work on lesson planning. For a teacher who is preparing, the important thing for now is learning the phonograms and building this Reference Page (see pg 62).

Step #11 - DETERMINE PLACEMENT IN WISE GUIDE

Remember our road trip analogy? This is the point at which you decide where you'll be entering the highway. Got a beginning student? That's easy...at List A. Got an older student? Not as easy...much will depend on the diagnostic testing. However, there's more to consider, so look through these pages carefully.

I want to return for a moment to the Scope & Sequence page. Remember I mentioned that we have lots of fun sights and places to visit while on our trip? You know how when you're following a map, you look for the Such-and-Such exit to find that great restaurant Aunt Mabel recommended? If you look at each of the steps on this S&S page, it'll list for you where those exits on the highway can be found. For example, we will visit the Silent Final E Reference Page (Step #17) before we start Spelling List D. See that on the S&S page where #Step 17 is listed? If we want to know when we'll take a detour to visit the library with our beginning readers, all we have to do is scan down to Step #23 and we see that "Assign reading in books" will occur after teaching Wise List I-1. That exit is clearly marked for us.

What about people who are entering the highway with an older student who doesn't start at List A? That's what is so cool about how the WISE Guide and SWR work together! The Preliminaries at the top of each two-page spread in WISE will alert you as to these road signs on your S&S page in SWR. Scared you might miss them? Look at the map in SWR on page 12. Cross-reference yourself to that page in WISE. Take the Silent Final E page for example. Look at Wise List D in WISE (pg 10). See where it tells you to complete the Silent Final E page as part of your Preliminaries? How will the teacher of an older student starting at List M know where to take that exit? Turn to page 84 in WISE and look at the Preliminaries. There is that road sign for that teacher. See how these two books work together?

I hope you're getting the idea here. My point is that you DO NOT want to skip over these first few pages! They are there to help guide you and to start you off correctly on your journey. If you skip them and try to get on the road too fast, then of course you can expect to get lost.



For more information, see our Getting Started series on our web site.

<http://swrtraining.com/swr/getting-started/>

