



Read it yourself

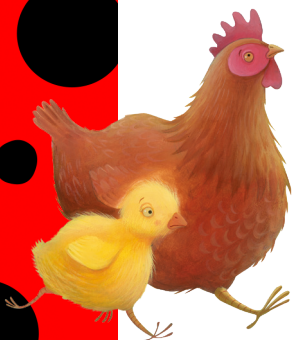
with Ladybird

Free
Guide



Step-by-step
to reading success

Why learning to read is so important



We all know that reading is a vital skill. When children are confident with phonics and reading it will help them succeed with all their other subjects at school. As well as giving children access to information, books open up a world of imagination, adventure and enjoyment. This can lead to a lifetime of reading for pleasure.

Phonics and tricky words

Phonics teaches children to break down words into sounds. By sounding out and blending the word, they can then read and understand it. Read it yourself with Ladybird Level 0 is designed for children learning phonics. At each step, they will meet new sounds and practise reading words that include these sounds. But some tricky common words, such as is, said, and the are difficult to sound out using phonics, so they need to be memorized. Read it yourself with Ladybird stories use plenty of these tricky words and these are repeated as many times as possible throughout each story.

Examples of Phonics and tricky words used in a Level 0 story



Sight vocabulary

As children get more confident with the building blocks of phonics, they will find it easier to sound out words and they will become increasingly familiar with common words. Eventually, they will start to read many words without having to sound them out. This is called sight reading. When the brain can recognize words automatically it is then free to concentrate on **understanding** what is being read. Helping children to gain this sight vocabulary quickly and enjoyably is what Levels 1 to 4 of *Read it yourself with Ladybird* are specifically designed to do.

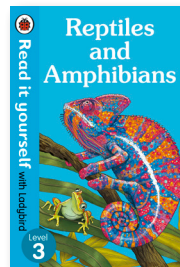
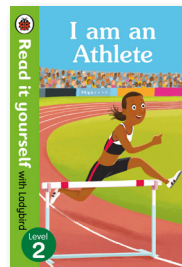


What is Read it yourself with Ladybird?

Read it yourself with Ladybird is a series of graded readers that can be used at home with parents or carers, or in the classroom.

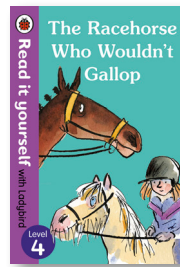
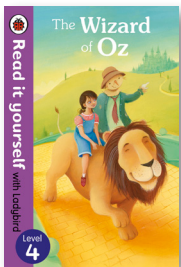
It includes:

Phonics



First reference

Traditional tales



Modern stories

These books provide young readers with the opportunity to practise developing skills and build their confidence as they progress through the levels.

Why Read it yourself with Ladybird works

- The careful grading of the books ensures that children are not overwhelmed by a large number of different or unfamiliar words
- Level 0 books introduce beginner readers to phonics with fully decodable text and essential tricky words
- The repetition of key words helps children to memorize them
- There is a clear progression from one level to the next
- The comprehensive notes for parents offer advice on how to get the most out of the books
- There are questions and activities in the books to check that readers have understood the text

Clear pictures match and support the text

The story is made up of decodable and tricky words.



Repeated words encourage sight reading.

Getting started

If your child has not yet had any formal reading instruction, use this checklist to make sure that they have key skills for them to get the most out of Level 0.

Reading readiness

Children who are ready
to start on Level 0:

- ✓ Enjoy looking at books and join in with familiar parts of the story
- ✓ Can orally break a word down into sounds (cat, c-a-t)
- ✓ Are starting to link sounds and letters
- ✓ Use their phonic knowledge to decode and read simple words
- ✓ Can hear sounds at the beginning and end of words
- ✓ Recognize that certain words rhyme and can give a string of rhyming words
- ✓ Show that they understand what they have read

If your child has already taken the first steps in reading, use the chart on the next page to work out which *Read it yourself with Ladybird* level will be best for them to start on. **Try to start at a level simpler than they are reading at school, so the child can take pleasure in reading confidently.** It's important that children are not always meeting new sounds and words, and have a chance to practise the ones they know well. **When children can't identify around 9 out of every 10 words, their understanding of what they are reading falls dramatically and they can become demotivated.** Look for ways to make reading personal to your child by choosing books together that you know will interest them, feature their favourite characters, or describe incidents that relate to their own life.



Which Read it yourself with Ladybird level is right for each child?

| Reading stage | Skills | Read it yourself level |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| First synthetic phonics | Link letters with sounds and use phonics to read new simple words accurately. Recognize and read first tricky words. | Level 0 |
| First steps | Begin to focus on words as well as pictures, and to read more words with some help. | Level 1 |
| Developing | Able to read more words, simple phrases and sentences. Begin to work out new words independently. | Level 2 |
| Confident | Can read short books containing an increasingly varied vocabulary, and is keen to attempt more advanced reading material. Ask for help when needed. | Level 3 |
| Independent | Happy to read without help, able to work out new and often complicated words, and eager to try to read independently. | Level 4 |



Special features of Level 0

Phonically
decodable text
builds reading
confidence

Repetition
of sounds in
different words



Short sentences
with simple
language

Liz and Vick get Zelda
into a pen.



Twelve levelled books to
develop synthetic phonics skills.
Books 1 to 12 introduce letters and
sounds in a systematic order.

Level
0

Practice of words
that cannot be
sounded out

Ideas for using Level 0

Start at Step 1 and work the way through the Level. If your child has difficulty with certain sounds, they can reread stories for extra practice.

Read the story together, giving plenty of praise and encouragement.

You don't need to read both stories in the book at once – save one for later if your child is tired.

As your child reads, help them to identify and sound out the phonemes (sounds) in any words they struggle with. Then blend these sounds together to read the word.

Talk about the story and see how much your child has understood. Go back together and see if there's anything they have forgotten.

If there are any words your child finds difficult, try making simple word cards that they can use for extra practice.

Look at the fun activities at the end of each story. Working through these together will help to reinforce learning and show your child's progress.

Have fun with rhyme!
Pick a word from the text and ask your child to think of a word that rhymes with it.

Activity pages

At the end of each Level 0 story, there are two simple activities for extra practice and to help embed new knowledge. The activities focus on tricky words, story words or high-frequency words. Look at the activities with your child and talk about their answers.

This will help them to progress to the next book in Level 0 with confidence.

Tricky Words

These tricky words are in the story you have just read. They cannot be sounded out. Can you memorize them and read them super fast?

| | |
|-----|------|
| the | be |
| we | they |
| I | me |
| my | no |
| to | |



31

Story Words

Can you match each word with its rhyming pair?



tune



eat



feet



book



look



moon

16

Special features of Level 1

Thorough practice of
high-frequency words
vital for reading

For children who are ready
to take their first steps in
reading or who can read a
few simple words with help.

Level
1

Lily saw a bird. "We can
help that bird," she said.

Lily and Rose helped
the bird.

Short sentences

Careful match
between the
story and the
pictures



Ideas for using Level 1

You may wish to read the story to your child first.

Look at the first double page and talk about the characters and their names. Many of these words can be sounded out, and you can demonstrate this when you return to the book.

Talk about the pictures and ask what might happen next.

Read the story like a song and encourage your child to join in, especially with strong, repeated phrases, such as *"Up jumped the troll!"* – or they could take on the voice of one of the characters: *"Who's been eating my porridge?"*

Enjoy listening to your child reading the story. They can try to read the sentences to you when they feel ready. Help them with any words they can't read.

Read the short sentences to your child several times while you are both looking at the words. You can use your finger to point and decode the words.

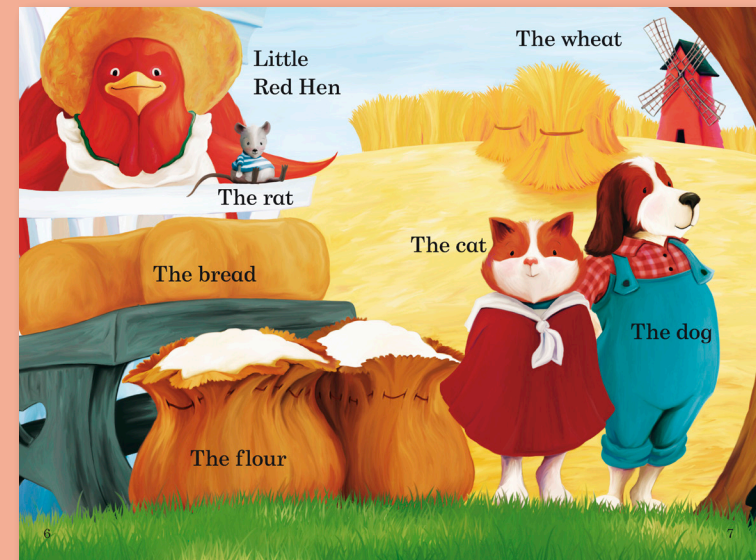
Make up little quizzes about the story (there are some suggestions at the back of each book).



Story words page

The opening pages in Level 1 books show some of the most useful words from the story, along with their illustrations. This is to help the reader master some of the words they will need for the rest of the story. They will often be character names, such as Goldilocks, Peppa or Rapunzel.

It is easier for children to tackle the rest of the story once they have got used to these words.



Special features of Level 2

Regular repetition of main
words and phrases to
encourage fluency

For children who can read short, simple sentences
with help and who are beginning to attempt
new words by sounding out or judging what
makes sense. With practice at this level, familiar
sentences will begin to be read with more fluency.

Level
2

Simple vocabulary

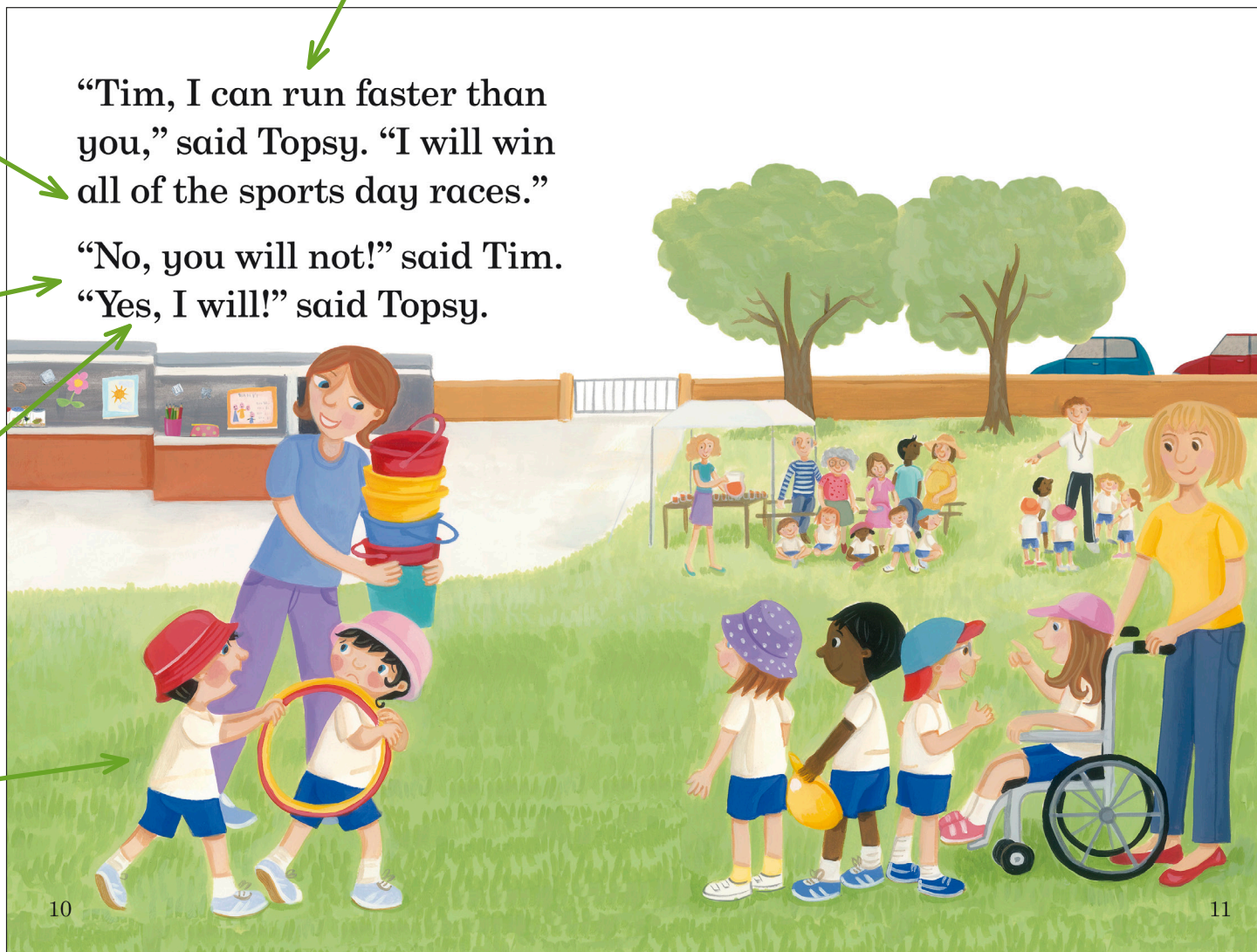
Easy-to-read
sentences

Reuse of many
of the words
from Level 1

Careful match
between the
story and the
pictures

“Tim, I can run faster than
you,” said Topsy. “I will win
all of the sports day races.”

“No, you will not!” said Tim.
“Yes, I will!” said Topsy.



10

11

Ideas for using Level 2

Look through the book and talk about the pictures to begin with. Has your child heard this story before? What can they remember?

Show your child that you enjoy them reading to you.

Help them with any words they do not know by sounding them out together.

Play 'How sharp eyed are you?'. Take it in turns to ask, "What colour was the fox's coat? How many dogs chased the fox away?"

Continue to make up your own quizzes, or visit ladybirdeducation.co.uk to have a go at the quizzes there. Encourage your child to ask you questions, too.

Why not make up your own version of some of the stories?

At this stage, it can be useful to look at and talk about the punctuation in the books.

Punctuation

For children who are developing their reading skills, learning about how punctuation works is vital. Introduce them to simple punctuation such as the **full stop** (.) **comma** (,) **question mark** (?) and **exclamation mark** (!) and talk about how it can change the meaning of what you are reading.

For example, a question mark means someone is asking a question and an exclamation mark shows excitement or emphasis.

Speech marks (" ") show that one of the characters is speaking.

These are all clues to help a reader understand the story and add expression to their voice while reading.



Special features of Level 3

Sentences that are longer but still not too complex, to encourage confidence and fluency

For more confident readers who can read simple stories with help. The books in this level are longer and designed to help increase a child's reading stamina.

Level
3

Stories simply told

Tom was very happy to be with his big brother again. And he was also happy that one day he would be a noble knight, just like Will.

Wider vocabulary, thoroughly repeated

Vibrant pictures with details that add meaning to the story



Ideas for using Level 3

The books are longer at this stage (48 pages rather than 32) so it's important to keep up the reading encouragement and make sure the experience is still enjoyable. You can show by your body language and expression how much you appreciate the effort your child is making.

How would your child like to approach reading at this stage? Would they prefer to hear you reading the story first, or would they like to read the story to you and see how they get on?

Enjoy talking about the pictures and looking at the details.



Don't be tempted to leap in as soon as your child struggles to read a word. Give them time to use the strategies they have already learnt, e.g. to sound out the word. You could perhaps encourage them to read to the end of the sentence to try to work out what the word might be. Help them to decide whether their suggestions are sensible.

By now, your child will be developing their own taste in books. Look for titles you know will interest them and ask their opinion of the stories and the characters in them.

Talk together about things you have learned from the stories – how shoes are made, what beans grow into...



Special features of Level 4

Fuller stories, told in an exciting, straightforward way

Level 4 is ideal for readers who are ready to read longer stories with a wider vocabulary and are eager to begin reading independently.

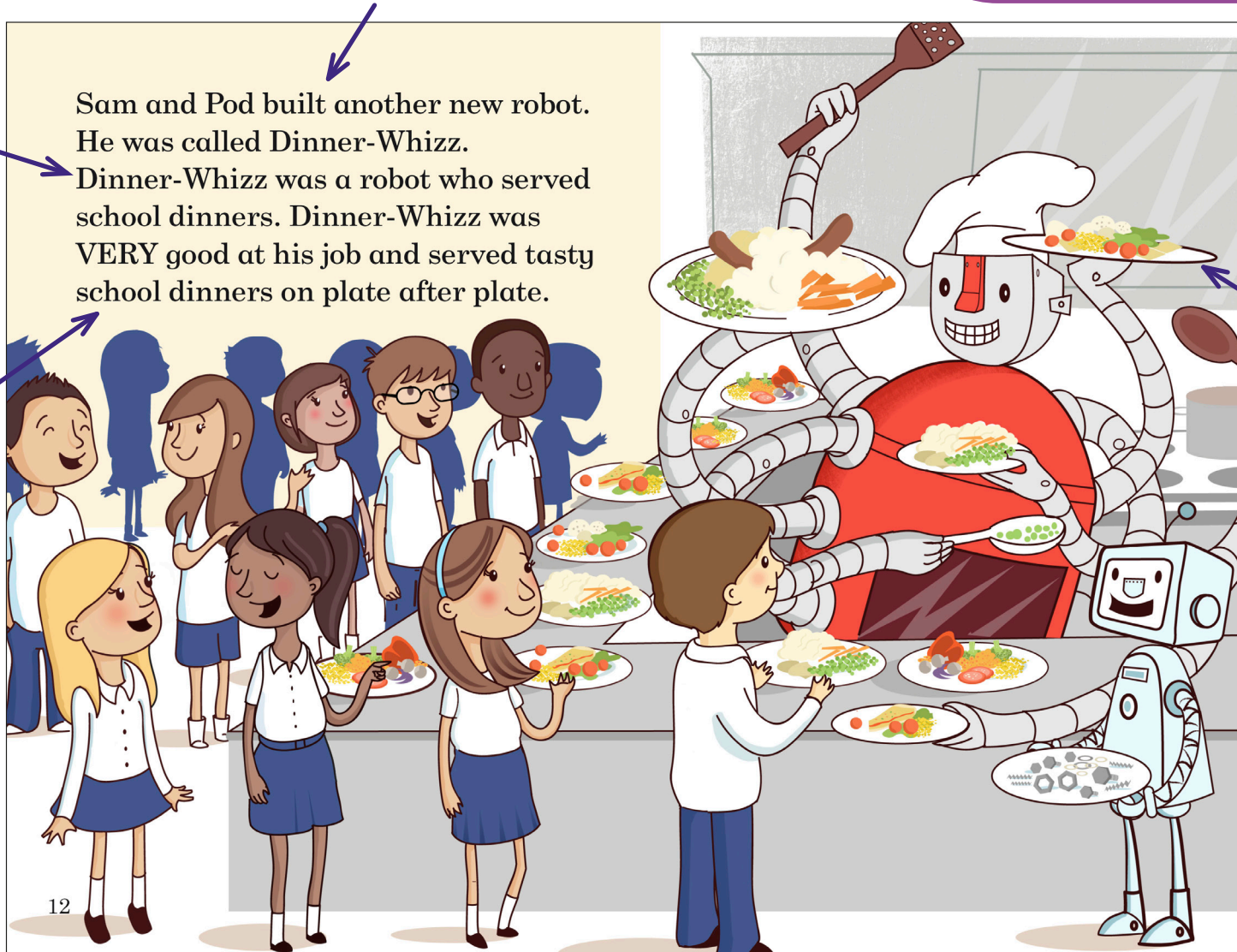
Level
4

Rich language, thoroughly repeated to boost fluency and confidence

Sam and Pod built another new robot. He was called Dinner-Whizz. Dinner-Whizz was a robot who served school dinners. Dinner-Whizz was VERY good at his job and served tasty school dinners on plate after plate.

Ideal longer sentences to develop reading stamina

Detailed illustrations to capture the imagination



Ideas for using Level 4

At this stage, your child's reading is about to take off! They will probably have instant recall of most of the key words on the page, understand what they mean and use phonic skills or context clues to work out unknown words.



Encourage them to work out new words by sounding them out, and to come to you for help whenever they like.

Respect your child's preference for reading aloud to you, or for progressing to silent, independent reading. They may still enjoy reading the story with you and talking about the pictures.



Make friends with mistakes

All children who are learning to read will make mistakes, so it's important to make sure that your reaction is always one of positive encouragement. It can be helpful to regard mistakes as useful clues to what sort of help is needed.

- Would talking about what's happening in the story help with understanding?
- Would a focus on letters and sounds help your child work out an unknown word?
- Perhaps your child is not quite ready for this book or they need a little extra help and encouragement.
- Mistakes are an essential part of learning. If we knew it all and made no mistakes, there would be nothing exciting to learn!



Using the series at home

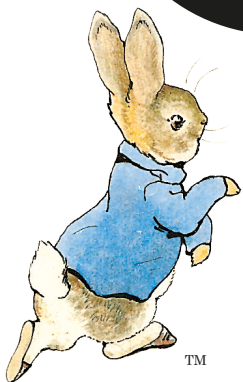
Sharing *Read it yourself with Ladybird* at home with children is a perfect way to support the reading they do in school. Because the books are clearly structured, working their way through the levels will give children a great sense of achievement. With your help and encouragement your child will enjoy the feeling of success that reading can bring!

A few tips when using the books

Keep reading sessions **short** – ten minutes a day several times a week is fine.



It's always better to show your child that you value their **effort** over accuracy.

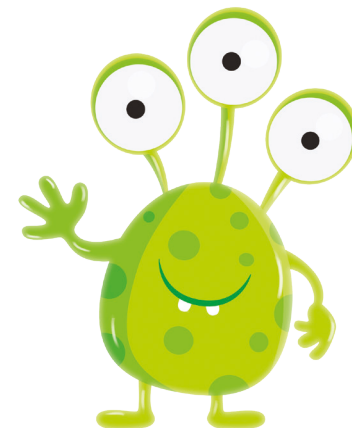


Make the sessions **fun!** Laughter helps learning.



If your child is really struggling, move down to a lower level and reread stories they already know. It's important that they read **fluently** and with **understanding**.

You can show your appreciation of your **child's efforts** – through hugs, praise and your body language.

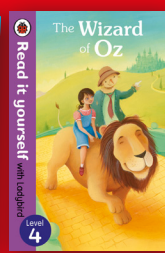
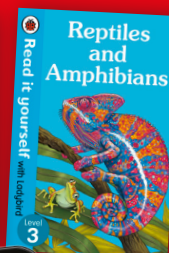
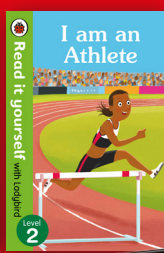
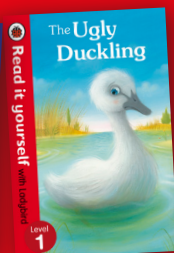


There are downloadable lesson plans, activity sheets and other interactive material available free at www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk



The brand new WEBSITE

www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk



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- Free user guides
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