




Secret Code Actions™

A Resource to Support
Learning to Read and Spell
the English Language
(Teacher Edition)



Nancy Young B.A., M.Ed.
Art by Dean Stanton

Key for *Secret Code Actions*[™] Teacher Edition

This book focuses on the sounds and symbols of the English alphabetic code. To help teachers understand the information presented, special markings are used to identify certain features of the concepts being addressed. These features are explained in the key below.

Throughout this book, specific terms describe aspects of the code. Some terms are defined in the key. Additional information about these terms, and other terms used in the book, can be found in the Glossary at the end of the book. Throughout the book, keywords are in **bold** and example words or answers in *italics*.

This	Means	For Example
//	The slashes on either side of a letter indicate a unique speech sound that can be heard/isolated in English words. This speech sound is called a <i>phoneme</i> (“phone” = sound). The number of phonemes varies with English dialect (also called accent). Most Canadians have 43 phonemes in their speech, but Americans generally have 44.	The word <i>sat</i> has 3 speech sounds (phonemes): /s/ /ă/ /t/ The word <i>stretch</i> has 5 speech sounds (phonemes): /s/ /t/ /r/ /ě/ /ch/
< >	The angled brackets on either side of one or more letters indicate the written symbol, or spelling, for a speech sound. A speech sound (phoneme) may be represented by more than one symbol. A written symbol for a phoneme is called a <i>grapheme</i> (“graph” = written). This book presents 88 common graphemes.	The word <i>sat</i> is spelled using 3 symbols (graphemes): <s> <a> <t> The word <i>stretch</i> is spelled using 5 symbols (graphemes): <s> <t> <r> <e> <tch>
/ă/	The scoop on top of a vowel letter located inside slashes indicates that the vowel makes a “short” sound. The first sound heard as you say each of the following words is a “short” vowel sound: apple , eddy , icky , opera , up . These are the most common vowel sounds in the English language.	The word <i>cat</i> has 3 phonemes, and the vowel makes a “short a” sound: /k/ /ă/ /t/ The word <i>breath</i> has 4 phonemes, and the vowel makes a “short e” sound: /b/ /r/ /ě/ /th/
/ā/	The line above a vowel letter located inside slashes indicates that the vowel makes a “long” vowel sound. The second sound heard as you say each of the following words is a “long” vowel sound: cake , beach , high , boat , cube , zoom .	The word <i>take</i> has 3 phonemes, and the vowel makes a “long a” sound: /t/ /ā/ /k/ The word <i>break</i> has 4 phonemes, and the vowel makes a “long a” sound: /b/ /r/ /ā/ /k/
/ʊ/	An unusual shape in slashes indicates a “short” vowel sound /ʊ/ (found in far fewer words than the five other “short” vowel sounds).	The word <i>push</i> has 3 phonemes, and the vowel makes the /ʊ/ sound: /p/ /ʊ/ /sh/ The word <i>wood</i> has 3 phonemes, and the vowel makes the /ʊ/ sound: /w/ /ʊ/ /d/

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Art by Dean Stanton**

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This book is dedicated -

To my amazing family
Randy, Rod, Clare, Byron and Natalie
without whose constant support
and help in countless ways
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And

To Gillian and Tannis
two incredibly impressive Canadian teenagers
who represent
both the challenge of dyslexia
and the huge strengths
that many people with dyslexia have to offer
when given the opportunity.

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“*There is no point in describing the delights of reading to children if they are not provided with the means to get there.*”

- Stanislas Dehaene, *Reading in the Brain*

Introduction

Reading is the most important skill a child will learn at school. Poor reading skills have been directly linked to academic underachievement and failure at school, as well as prolonged difficulties throughout adulthood. Research has shown that 40% of learners are at risk for reading failure if they do not receive explicit, systematic and sequential instruction. For readers of English, this entails learning the English alphabetic code.

Secret Code Actions™ is a tool to support teachers as they teach the English code. Not a program in itself, *Secret Code Actions* provides a snapshot of the most common elements of the English code. It is a resource created to empower teachers and learners with knowledge of the foundational components that underlie reading and spelling mastery.

Secret Code Actions goes further than giving information about the code; this tool provides memorization techniques for the fundamental principles of the code. By presenting unique and engaging kinesthetic mnemonics, *Secret Code Actions* allows learners to combine skill mastery with fun movements. Some of the advantages of using kinesthetic mnemonics to learn and practice specific elements of the code include:

- Most learners require many repetitions in order to master components of the English code. The *Secret Code Actions* kinesthetic mnemonics provide unobtrusive ways for those who need more repetition (particularly students with dyslexia) to achieve skill mastery, while enabling all learners to have fun in the learning process.
- All children need more opportunities to be physically active. The creative kinesthetic mnemonics and related activities presented in *Secret Code Actions* encourage learners to get out of their chairs while practicing essential reading and spelling skills.
- Intentional movement can be especially beneficial for children with attention regulation issues.

Secret Code Actions is designed to enhance any reading and spelling program for every teacher – regardless of whether they are brand new to teaching reading and spelling or experienced in the delivery of explicit evidence-based instruction to students with severe dyslexia. This easy-to-follow reference tool is written and organized to be user-friendly and includes fun, creative visuals. Although designed to be a resource for teachers to use where and when they need it, the **Guide to Using Secret Code Actions** gives recommendations on how to weave this tool into reading and spelling instruction and practice.

Secret Code Actions is organized into five chapters, each beginning with an index for that chapter and an overview of the respective chapter. The chapters separate the book into the following areas:

1. **Phoneme-to-Grapheme:** 43 speech sounds and their spelling options.
2. **Grapheme-to-Phoneme:** 88 spelling patterns and the corresponding speech sounds they can symbolize.
3. **Syllables:** The six syllable types plus syllabication guidelines.
4. **MOTTs** (MOTT stands for **most of the time**): Rules and generalizations.
5. **Putting Actions Together:** Methods for combining *Secret Code Actions* in the classroom, gym, or on the playing field.

Each page of *Secret Code Actions* is presented in a simple format, but every detail has been carefully chosen in order to maximize learning. Short and powerful, **Secret Code Detective Clues and Alerts** are organized into the areas that extensive research has shown to be integral to reading and spelling instruction: **Sounding** (Phonology), **Spelling** (Orthography), and **Meaning** (Morphology, Semantics and Syntax). To further support teachers and engage learners, **Detective Enrichment** presents investigative opportunities that can either be woven into instruction for all learners, or studied separately by advanced learners.

Numerous books, articles and websites were referred to in the creation of this book. These are listed at the end of the book, under **Resources**.

Secret Code Actions is supported both by clinical practice and evidence-based research. Many of the unique kinesthetic mnemonics were developed during my years spent teaching bright and active students to read and spell, both in the classroom and in private practice. My Master of Education studies focused on the research that grounds this tool. A synopsis of the research and my full literature review are both available upon request.

In the time it has taken to produce this resource, more and more research has supported the need for children to be more physically active. Many schools now have mandated daily physical activity (beyond physical education classes). At the same time, classroom teachers, many with limited knowledge of the English code, are continuing to struggle to address reading and spelling issues. *Secret Code Actions* fills the gap between these needs.

May this resource book extend, solidify and enrich the knowledge of both teachers and students – and bring fun and laughter into the learning process!

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A General Guide to Using *Secret Code Actions*™

Use what you need, whenever you need it!

The English code at your fingertips.

Use this book at any time for quick access to information on the English code.

Bring intentional movement into any reading and spelling program.

Integrate *Secret Code Actions* kinesthetic mnemonics based on your program's sequence; they are designed to complement both direct-instruction and discovery approaches.

Not sure what an evidence-based sequence looks like? See examples at SecretCodeActions.com (Teacher Edition link)



Example 1:

If using a direct instruction approach, add the related kinesthetic mnemonic to your explicit instruction procedures and your practicing routine.

Example 2:

If using a word sorting or intentional discovery approach, teach the related kinesthetic mnemonic once the concepts have been “discovered,” to enable students to use common keywords and movements during practice.

Extend multisensory instruction to encompass purposeful movement at any stage of the learning process.

Add the *Secret Code Actions* kinesthetic mnemonics to your reading and spelling lessons or practice, no matter which foundational components are the focus of instruction or what medium is being used.

Teaching phoneme-to-grapheme or grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences:

- During instruction, have students hear, say, see and write the phoneme or grapheme of focus based on your program’s approach and sequence, weaving purposeful movement into the process by using *Secret Code Actions* keyword(s) and movement(s).
- As part of the practicing routine, have students perform the *Secret Code Actions* movement(s) for the phoneme or grapheme of focus while chanting the Elaboration or Silly Story (concepts learned so far), exaggerating the phoneme of focus in the keywords.
- As more concepts are learned, add activities from Chapter 5 to your practicing routine to provide the unobtrusive repetition necessary for many students (especially those with dyslexia).

Note: Programs vary in the initial instructional direction when teaching phoneme-to-grapheme and grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences. The cross-referencing of keywords and movements in Chapters 1 and 2 enables teachers to instruct according to the method in their program, and then provide practice opportunities in either direction to help build stronger encoding and decoding skills.

Teaching syllables:

- Teach the syllable type based on your program’s sequence and approach.
- Weave in the *Secret Code Actions* syllable keywords and movements to engage students in fun ways.
- As part of the practicing routine, perform the *Secret Code Actions* movements for all syllables learned to date (always practicing in the same order).

Teaching a rule or generalization (“MOTT”, an acronym for **most of the time**):

- Teach based on your program’s approach, weaving in the *Secret Code Actions* MOTT keywords and movements to enhance understanding of the specific MOTT.
- As part of the practicing routine, perform the *Secret Code Actions* movements for any learned MOTTs while chanting the Elaboration/Silly Story/poem.

Enhancing online instruction:

- Teach the *Secret Code Actions* keywords and movements once a concept has been introduced on the screen.
- Provide opportunities for learners to engage in physical activity, as well as have time away from the screen, by practicing the keyword(s) and movement(s) often.

Once a kinesthetic mnemonic has been taught, **practice it often!** Use *Secret Code Actions* to get children up and moving at any time – in addition to regular reading and spelling instructional blocks. Integrate *Secret Code Actions* into mandated daily physical movement and build them into warm-ups

There's a lot more content waiting
for you to explore in the book!

Order your copy today by visiting
secretcodeactions.com