



## *Best Practices for Using Songs to Develop Primary Readers*

“Let’s Bring Back the Magic of Song For Teaching Reading”

**Summary:** Singing and tracking song lyrics has an impact on teaching primary students to read. As teachers work to balance literary and informational text in their classrooms, they should not forget the power of song in engaging young students in reading.

### **Practical Applications:**

The authors list many benefits to using songs and having your readers track song lyrics as a way to increase the amount of time primary students spend reading.

Benefits:

1. The joy students find in singing motivates them to follow along and read the lyrics.
2. Melody and rhythm of songs make them easy and fun to learn.
3. Song lyrics provide ample opportunity for students to practice reading sight words in context.
4. Song lyrics provide opportunities for vocabulary instruction, word family instruction in conjunction with rhyming words and rimes.
5. Repeated reading of song lyrics increases reading fluency.

The first author of this article introduced a new song each week to her first grade students. She chose songs that had distinct melody and regular rhythm and lyrics. The following is a sample of how she used the song for various instruction throughout the week.

Day 1: She introduced the song and song lyrics and led a discussion of what the song meant. Students looked for words they knew in the lyrics and each student received their own copy of the lyrics. Students also take home a copy of the lyrics to sing for their parents.

Day 2-5: She started each day with the song and everyone sang it and used the lyric sheet. On each day, the class focused in on a different skill through the lyrics of the song. For instance, Compound words, family words, rhyming words, choral read the lyrics, write about their feelings about what the song means, sing for an audience. Throughout the week, the teacher always encouraged students to watch the words as they sing the song.

### **Conclusion and Citation:**

As we make shifts in classroom instruction and content, do not rule out the power of music and singing to engage our primary students in meaningful reading and word study.