eKidz.eu
The eKidz.eu methodology for learning to read

Motivated children, inspired teachers and satisfied parents

The eKidz.eu reading application is a program built on levels of gradually increasing complexity. It accompanies and guides pre and primary aged children in a playful and intuitive way while developing their language and reading skills. It is aimed at beginners, first-time readers, intermediate and advanced readers.

The program also offers valuable support for those students with reading difficulties. Besides the conventional pedagogical uses, the eKidz program can be used in the acquisition and understanding of letter-sound relationships and the decoding process.

The texts, differentiated according to reading level (so-called pattern books), progress from short, repetitive sentence structures and simple, monosyllabic vocabulary to more complex text patterns. At all levels of difficulty, the word and sentences boundaries are clearly defined; the deduction of meaning and the holistic understanding of words and groups of words is supported by images promotes fluency and meaningful reading.

Various technical functions and playful illustrations along with reading exercises have a motivating effect while facilitating the learning process. Professional speakers act as linguistic models for the spoken words highlighted in color - these can be quietly read in tandem and followed with a finger. The digital nature of the program makes learning to read a flexible option, suited to a variety of environments - at home, in the classroom or on the go. The program offers different reading options:reading aloud, recording and playback functions, reading along as well as the choice of texts at the respective reading level - all of which allow the development of an individual, independent reading practice without the direct supervision of parents or teachers.

eKidz.eu texts cover a range of fiction and non-fiction topics taken from everyday life and science, and in a variety of forms, such as prose and poetry. Supportive illustrations improve the understanding of the text, engaging their imaginations and pricking curiosity of beginner readers. Progressing through the levels is matched by student's increase in skills and the confidence of reading ability - this improves the reader's self-image and leads to further reading experiences and progression. Weaker readers and students who need scaffolding have the option of differentiated digital support and are met at their points of need. Students with good reading skills are given incentives to improve and progress to the next level of more complex text.

The eKidz.eu program is of great value to preschool and primary aged children; in fact the eKidz.eu reading promotion program is even being used for the higher grades.

The program's versatility make it an attractive and viable option for a number of settings and scenarios including: teacher supervised group work, kindergarten, individual work, work with parents, special educational needs or reading groups are just a few examples.

Methodology at the text level

eKidz.eu provides 12 differentiated reading levels covering an extensive range of text types. It offers a sensible introduction to reading with gradual advancement and content for more advanced readers. The digital nature of the program accommodates a wide range of genres and forms, exposing students to a variety of texts, which supports the development of the reading experience and the enjoyment of literature. There are currently 50+ books in the program, offering a wide choice according to personal preferences and ability.

The concept of so-called "Pattern Books" forms the basis for a meaningful and gentle introduction to reading and is based on the following principles:

• Easy readability, including high-frequency vocabulary
• Simple and logical sentence structures
• Supporting illustrations
• Repetitive use of individual words and phrases
• Rhythmic language
• Familiar concepts and settings
• Level appropriate linguistic structures and patterns
• Level appropriate punctuation

On the basis of this didactically sound quality framework, eKidz.eu has developed text material at different levels, whereby meaningful reading is supported and promoted by comprehension questions. If the essence of the text is not grasped when reading it for the first time, the feedback serves as a yardstick for one's own performance as well as an incentive to read the text again.

The use of this procedure has proven itself and demonstrably promotes linguistic expression and success in learning to read. Successful reading experiences have a highly motivating effect on the learners and set in motion a positive cycle consisting of reading motivation, further reading experience and the associated continuous improvement in reading skills.

The eKidz.eu program offers a variety of approaches and thereby facilitates a very individual approach to the reading process. The reading function opens up linguistic models that specifically promote the student's pronunciation and, particularly when reading aloud, offer a link between what is heard and what is read.

The reading speed increases according to the respective reading level. Similarly, the font size is adapted to the relative reading level. The possibility of finger guidance via touch screen offers an additional orientation option.

A clearly defined layout, sensible print formats, comfortable line spacing and the absence of hyphenation guarantee a smooth reading experience.

All texts meet the following requirements for primary school books:

• Structured the text
• Uniform tense
• Age and level appropriate words
• Varied sentence structure
• Use of literal speech
• Introduction and conclusion of a story
• Expression of thoughts, feelings and moods
• Formation of the climax of a story
• Content and linguistic conciseness in factual texts
• Consistent argumentation
• Optical structure of all texts.

When selecting modern topics from everyday life and science, we focus on selected content from home and general knowledge lessons in pre and primary school. This familiarity gives children additional support in learning key vocabulary.

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Differentiated reading levels

The eKidz.eu program encourages children to promote reading in accordance with their own individual skills and abilities. The reading levels were developed by experienced class teachers in cooperation with scientists and educational specialists based on the latest research results.

The following overview shows the classification features of for readers and the criteria for the individual levels of difficulty. These allow an effortless classification into the learning and reading program of eKidz.eu and can also be consulted by

teachers and parents when assessing the reading ability of the students.

The texts of eKidz.eu are divided into four parts: beginners, early readers, intermediate readers, advanced readers. Within each group there are further gradations, each with three levels of difficulty. The division into groups takes place on the basis of holistic assessment criteria, while an allocation to the individual difficulty levels within the group is also made according to word and sentence complexity.

Step	Texts and images	Student Advantages
Group A Levels 1-3 Beginner	• Uniform arrangement of texts • Orientation through repetitive phrases and very basic sentence structures • Treatment of familiar content through age-appropriate topics • Illustrations support reading comprehension and inductive learning • Build up of keywords through the use of common words	• Pictorial representations support text anticipation and have a motivating effect • Automation of the letter-sound assignment • Reading aloud with syllables promotes the learning of the written and spoken word structure • Focus on enjoyment with incentives for fast and accurate readers
Group B Level 4-6 Early Reader	• Easily comprehensible plot has a supportive effect when vocabulary or grammar is more demanding • Simple sentence patterns support learning by presenting numerous variations of the same subject • 2-3 lines of text per page and constant repetitions of the visual and spoken vocabulary promote contextual learning • Multi-channel access increases motivation and appeals to multiple learning styles • Language structure is based on oral use of the language • Gradual increase in the number of words from the basic vocabulary	• Actions and text contents are closely supported by visual animations which assist the inductive learning process • Letters and their sounds as well as frequently used words are practiced repeatedly. • Gradually increased reading speed and fluency
Group C Levels 7-9 Intermediate Reader	• Longer simple sentence structures, which constantly varied • Increase in sentence length and text per page • Use of new, more advanced and compound vocabulary • Gradual expansion of the basic known vocabulary as well as different forms	• The anticipation of actions and textual content by referring to the book illustrations is retained. • Knowledge of sentence structure and punctuation increases. • Reading speed increases noticeably.
Group D Levels 10 to 12 Advanced Reader	• Sentence structures and tenses are varied and there is more detailed description of actions • Texts are in the foreground, images no longer continuously supported text comprehension • Complexity of vocabulary, sentence structure and punctuation increases	• Knowledge transfer through comprehensive factual texts • Reading speed reaches 100 words per minute

eKidz.eu is a modern and flexible program to learn to read.

eKidz.eu provides teachers with an innovative set of instruments to observe and record the level of development of the pupils' reading and speaking. With eKidz.eu teachers can continuously and individually control and support the learning process of their students. The content of eKidz.eu has been carefully and didactically developed. eKidz.eu is accessible to children every day and in every environment: in the school class, at home, when visiting relatives or on vacation!

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