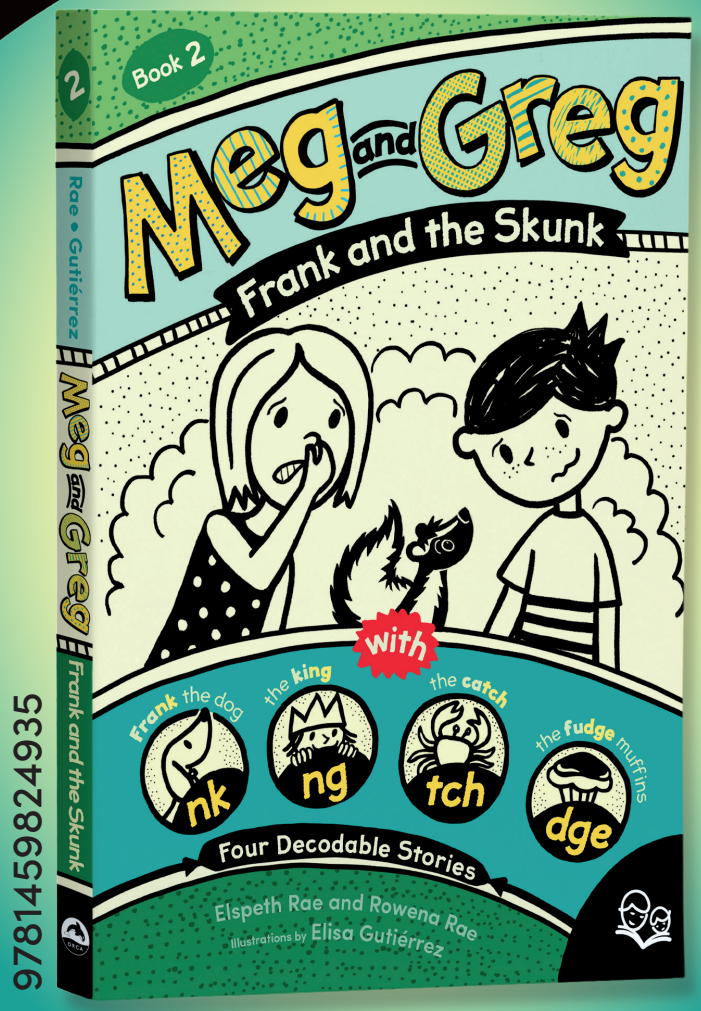
Meg and Greg

Frank and the Skunk

Resource Pack



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Specifically designed for shared reading, the Meg and Greg books help children of all abilities overcome language-based learning difficulties and achieve reading success.

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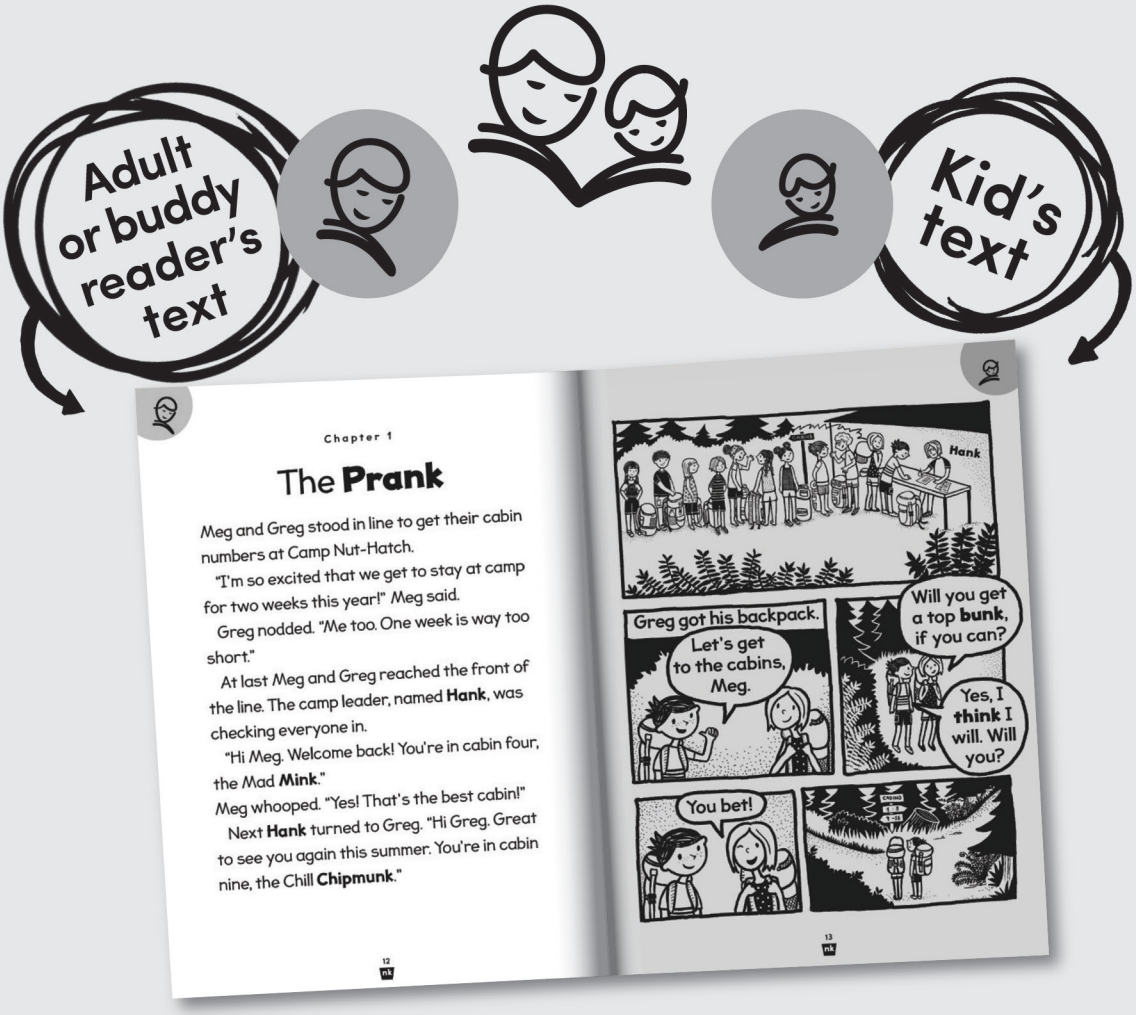
How to read the stories in this book



Meg and Greg is a series of phonics storybooks for children ages 6 to 9 who are struggling to learn how to read because of **dyslexia** or another language-based learning difficulty. The stories are designed for a child and an experienced reader to share the reading, as shown in the diagram above. A child feeling overwhelmed at reading sentences could start by reading only the illustration labels.

What is included in these stories

The stories in this book are for a child who is familiar with all the basic **consonant** sounds (including **consonant blends**), **short vowel** sounds and the four letter combinations (**phonograms**) introduced in *Meg and Greg* Book 1 (***ck***, ***sh***, ***ch***, ***th***). The stories in this book introduce the following phonograms: ***nk***, ***ng***, ***tch*** and ***dge***. Each story uses previously introduced phonograms, so by the final story, a child is practicing all four new phonograms.

The stories also use a few common words that can be tricky to sound out. These words are in the list to the right. The child you're reading with may need help with them. We recommend writing the words on a card that can double as a bookmark. If you're curious about what makes these common words tricky to read.

Warning!

These words look little, but they can be tricky to read.

a
as, has
is, his
of
the
do, to
I
be, he, me, she, we
OK

New for this book

have, give
you
"all" family (ball, small, etc.)

Some oddities of English explained

Do you know what's tricky about these little words?

a	This little word can be pronounced with a **short vowel sound** (/ă/ as in *hăt*), **long vowel sound** (/ay/) or **schwa vowel sound** (/uh/).
as, has	If these words followed the standard English spelling convention, they would all end in a double *s*, as in *pass* and *kiss*. Instead, they have a single *s* and are pronounced with a /z/ sound.
is, his	
of	Children might try to pronounce this word as /off/ instead of the pronunciations /uv/ or /ov/.
the	This very common word starts with the ***th*** letter combination (**phonogram**) and ends with a schwa-sounding vowel. The ***th*** phonogram is the focus of the fourth story in *Meg and Greg* Book 1.
do, to	Children might try to pronounce these words with short vowel sounds, as in /daw/ and /taw/, or even long vowel sounds, as in /doe/ and /toe/, instead of the pronunciations /doo/ and /too/.
I	
be, he, me, she, we	In these words, the vowel makes a long sound, which children reading this book may not be familiar with yet.
OK	Children might try to pronounce this word as /ock/ instead of reading the two individual letters.
have, give	Children might be confused by the letter *e* at the end of these two words. They might try to pronounce it, but it's a silent letter. Read more about the role of silent *e* in words ending with the sound /v/ on page 152.
you	This word is pronounced /y/-/oo/. It's fairly common for the letters ***ou*** to be pronounced with an /oo/ sound (*soup, group*), but it's unlikely that beginning readers will be aware of this sound for these letters, so they might need help reading it.
"all" family (ball, small, etc.)	Words in the "all" family are pronounced /ŏ/-/l/. Beginning readers might try to pronounce the letter *a* as /ă/ as in hăt and so pronounce "all" as /ă/-/l/.

Do you know what's cool about the letter *v*?

In English a word never ends with the letter *v*, so the silent *e* must be added. As well as the two words used in the stories in this book (*give*, *have*), there are many examples: *curve*, *olive*, *nerve*, *solve*, *twelve*.

As well as "protecting" the letter *v* at the end of a word, the silent *e* has several other functions in English. Stay tuned for *Meg and Greg* Book 3 to learn more.

Do you know why some words have double consonants?

Early scribes, who were often monks, used double consonants for several reasons.

They doubled a consonant to indicate that the previous vowel makes a short sound (*rabbit*, *bottom*, *hill*, *boss*). Not all words got this treatment, but one group got the double consonant quite consistently. They are the Buzz Off Miss Pill words, which are all one-syllable words with a short vowel and ending in *z*, *f*, *s* or *l*. Some historians suggest that the scribes wanted to show how the sounds made with these four letters can be carried on for a few seconds, rather than stopping abruptly like they do with the letters *t*, *b*, *p* and others.

The scribes also doubled consonants at the end of many small words, either to make the word longer or to differentiate it from a similar-sounding word. In English, content words (nouns, most verbs, adverbs, adjectives) tend to be three letters or longer. One- and two-letter words tend to be grammatical function words (pronouns, articles, prepositions, conjunctions and a few others) such as *me*, *a*, *of*, *or*. Therefore the scribes sometimes added a consonant (or a silent *e*) to make a content word longer. Examples are *egg*, *odd* and *inn*. In the case of the word *butt* (used as a chapter title in the story *Fudge!* in this book), the extra *t* was likely added to differentiate the noun from the function word *but*.

About the *Meg and Greg* stories

Who are the *Meg and Greg* stories for?

These stories are for children who are struggling to learn how to read because they have dyslexia or another language-based learning difficulty.

We wrote the stories especially for struggling readers who are ages 6 to 9 (approximately grades 2–4), which is a little older than most kids start learning to read. These slightly older learners can understand and appreciate more complex content, but they need it written at a lower reading level. You might see this concept described with the term *hi-lo*.

To make a hi-lo concept work for children at a near-beginner reading level, we designed the *Meg and Greg* stories for shared reading. A buddy reader—an adult or other confident reader—shares the reading with the child who is learning. Each story has five short chapters and is ideal for use in one-on-one or small-group reading sessions.

Aren't there already lots of books for beginning readers?

Yes, but the many leveled readers available for beginners typically don't meet the needs of children with a learning difficulty. These children benefit from learning English incrementally and without spelling exceptions or advanced spellings thrown into the mix.

The *Meg and Greg* stories introduce one letter combination (**phonogram**) at a time. Each story builds on the previous ones by including words with the phonograms already introduced.

How does shared reading work?

Each story has several layers of text so that an adult or buddy reads the part of the story with more complex words and sentences, and the child reads the part of the story with carefully selected words and shorter sentences. Quite literally, *two read*.

Each story has:

- *Illustration labels* for a child just starting to read or feeling overwhelmed at reading sentences. The labels are single words or short phrases and contain the story's target letter combination (**phonogram**) as often as possible.
- *Kid's text* for a child who has mastered the sounds made by the **basic consonants** (including **consonant blends**), **short vowels** and the four phonograms introduced in *Meg and Greg* Book 1 (***ck***, ***sh***, ***ch***, ***th***). The kid's text appears on the right-hand page when the book is open to a story. We also used kid's text for all story and chapter titles. As we created the stories, we bound ourselves to a set of rules that controlled the words we were "allowed" to use in the kid's text. If you're interested in these rules, they are listed on our website (megandgregbooks.com).
- *Adult or buddy reader's text* is the most difficult, and it always appears on the left-hand page when the book is open to a story. The buddy text uses longer sentences, a wider vocabulary and some phonograms and other language elements that the beginning reader has likely not yet learned, but it avoids very difficult words.

A child who is a more advanced reader and simply needs practice with the target phonogram can try reading all three layers of text in the story.

Are there any tips for buddy readers?

Yes! Try these ideas to help the child you're reading with:

- Keep the list of tricky words handy for the child to refer to when reading (see the list on page 151).
- Before starting to read a story, have the child read the story title and each chapter title (in the table of contents). Ask them to predict what the story might be about.
- Before starting a story, write down a list of all the words the child might not be familiar with and review them together.
- Before you read a page of buddy text, have the child point out all the words with the target letter combination (**phonogram**) on the left-hand page of the open book.
- After reading each chapter, have the child speak or write one sentence that uses some of the words from the chapter. Some children might like to draw a picture.

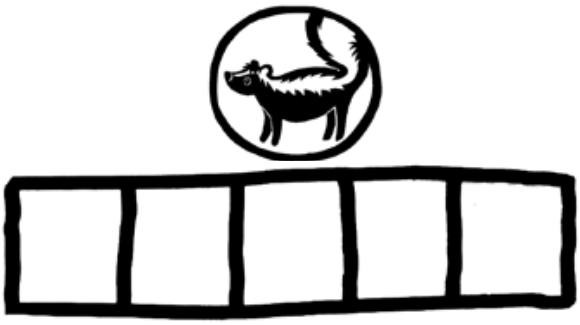
Do the stories use "dyslexia-friendly" features?

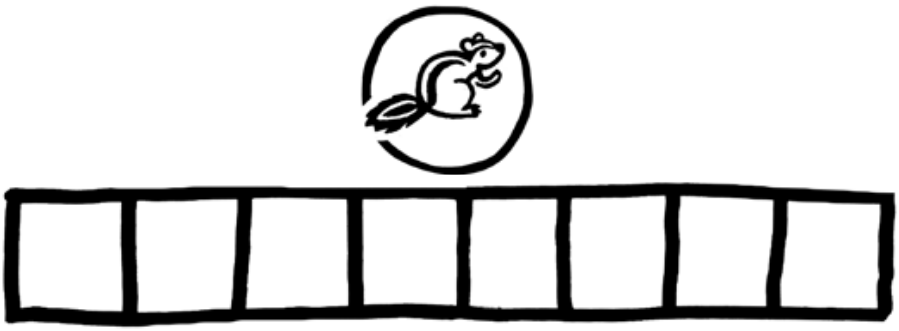
Yes. As well as the language features throughout the story, we used design features that some people find helpful for reading:

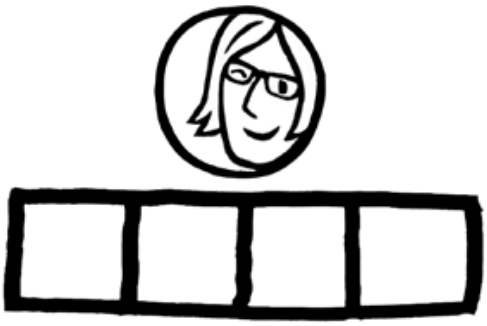
- The font mimics as closely as possible the shapes of hand-printed letters. Children begin by learning to print letters, so we think it is important for the letter shapes to be familiar. For example, a child learns to print *a* not *a* and *g* not g.
- The illustration labels are printed in lowercase letters as much as possible because children often learn to recognize and write the lowercase alphabet first. A beginning reader may be less familiar with the uppercase letter shapes.
- The spaces between lines of text and between certain letters are larger than you might see in other books.
- The kid's text is printed on shaded paper to reduce the contrast between text and paper.

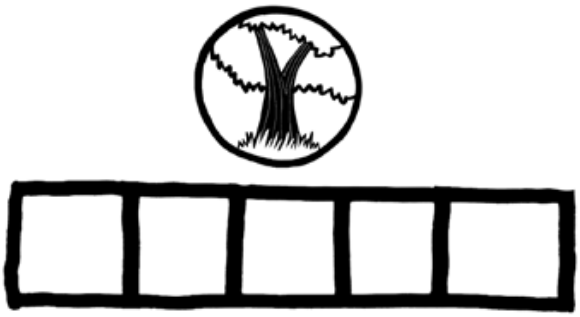
nk
spelling

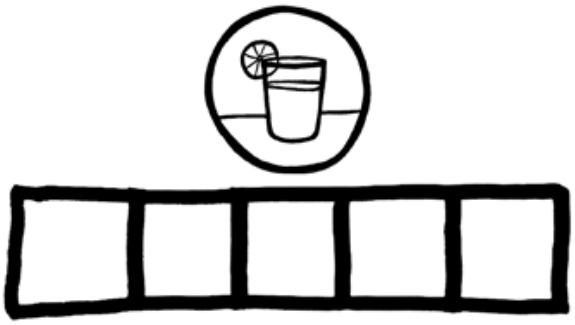
Spell each **nk** word below the picture.
One letter fits into each box.

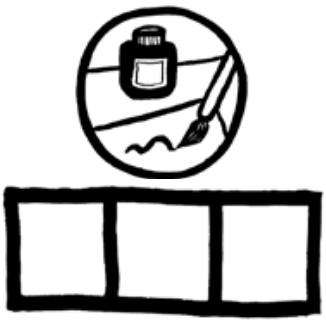












nk
match-up

Draw a line from each *nk* word to the correct picture.

sink

trunk

stink

skunk

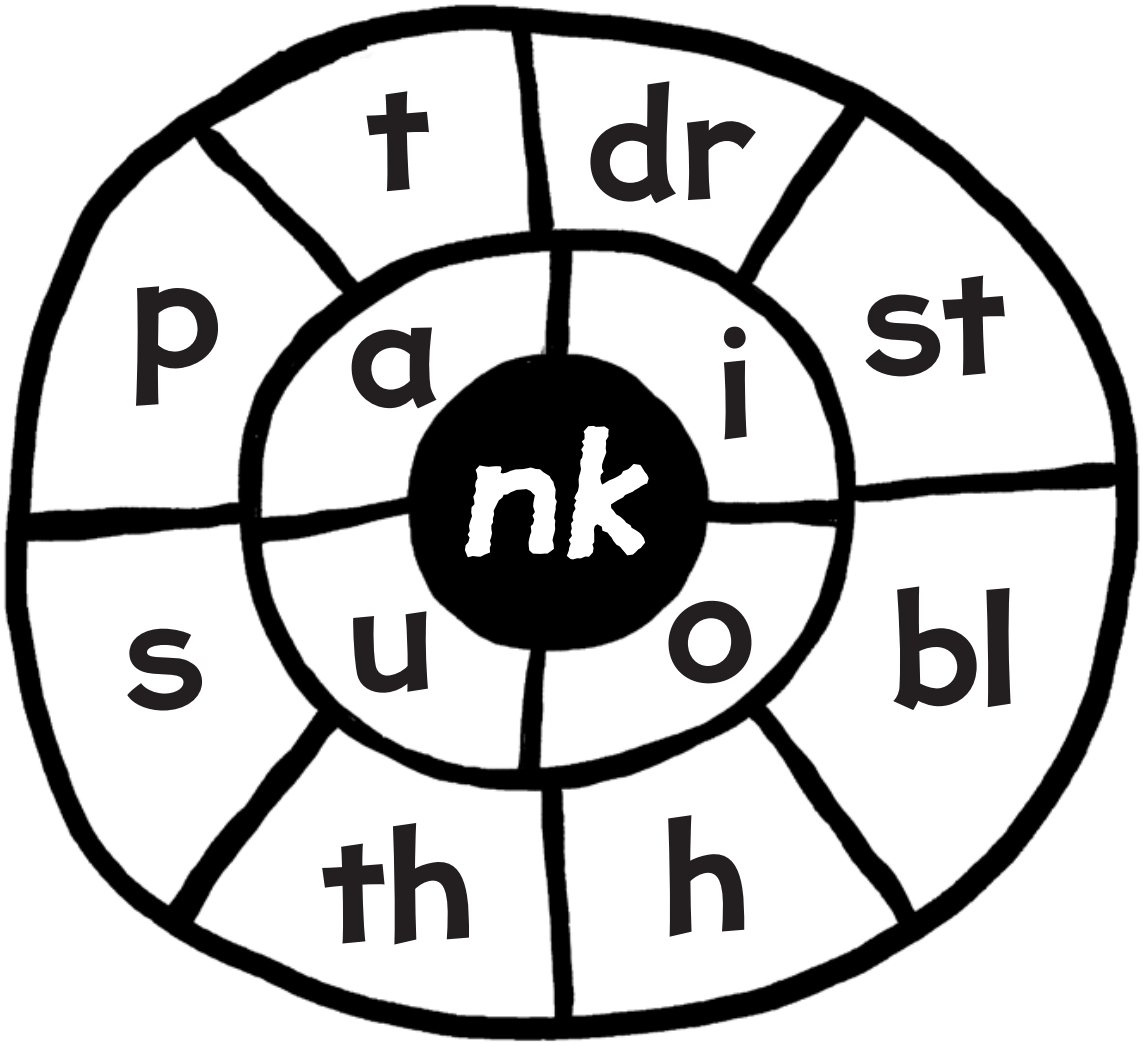
drink

bunk bed

wink

nk
word wheel

How many words can you think of using the letters from the wheel? Start every word with a letter or a letter combination from the outer ring. Then use a vowel from the middle ring. End the word with **nk**.



ng
rhyming

Think of a word to rhyme with:

bang

gang

_____

ring

swing

_____

strong

long

_____

lung

stung

_____

ng
word search

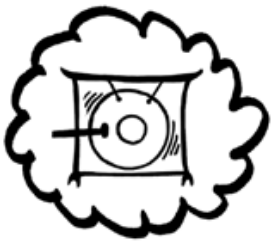
Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → and ↓.

b	d	h	h	a	n	g	t	v	r	r	u
a	q	z	s	t	r	i	n	g	s	p	z
n	e	p	u	n	k	x	e	g	w	o	h
k	d	x	f	a	n	g	d	a	i	z	o
s	t	r	o	n	g	z	k	n	n	o	t
x	p	s	p	r	i	n	g	g	g	v	t
m	g	u	l	u	n	g	p	i	n	k	p
x	u	n	h	o	n	k	h	b	m	u	j

		Bonus words:
fang	**spring**	**bank**
gang	**string**	**honk**
hang	**strong**	**pink**
lung	**swing**	**punk**

ng
sorting ng and g words

Spell each word in the correct list, **ng** or **g**.

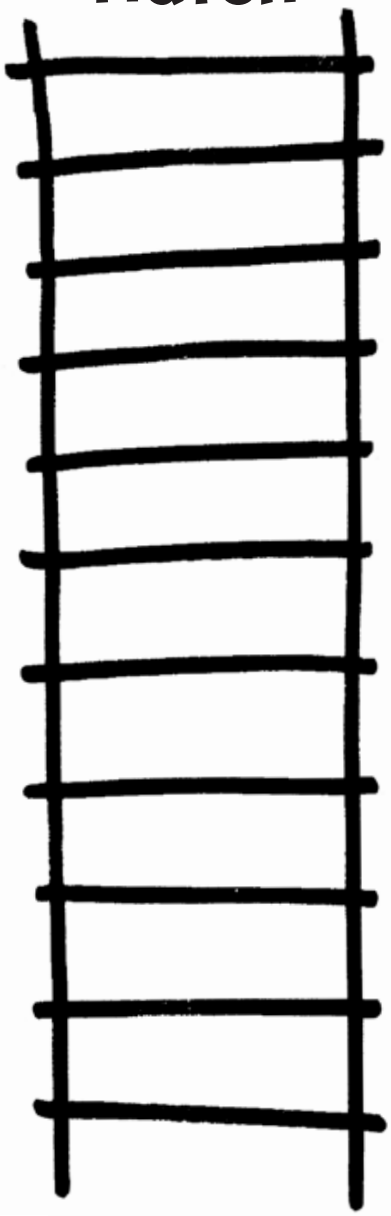


ng	g

tch
word ladder

Climb down the ladder by solving the clues and changing just one letter from the previous **tch** word. You'll know you've done it right if the word at the bottom of the ladder matches the one at the top.

Hatch



1. **Hatch**
2. **When you bake muffins or cookies, you make a _____ of them.**
3. **If someone throws you a ball, you try to _____ it.**
4. **The thing that holds a gate or door closed.**
5. **A pirate often has one of these over one eye.**
6. **To throw the ball to the batter in a baseball game.**
7. **A lady dressed in black and riding on a broomstick.**
8. **A narrow trench dug along the sides of roads for water to run into.**
9. **A person from the Netherlands (Holland) is _____ .**
10. **The cage for a small animal like a rabbit to live in.**
11. **When baby birds break out of their eggshells.**

tch
match-up

Draw a line from each **tch** word to the correct picture.

witch

patch

stitch

scratch

match

switch

crutch

tch

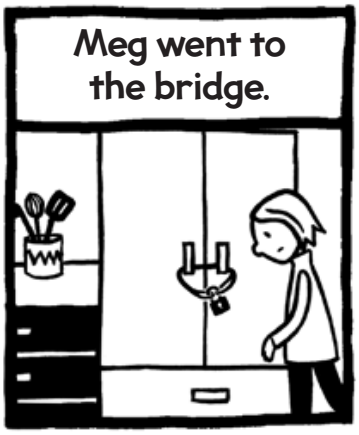
sorting tch and ch words

Spell each word in the correct list, **tch** or ch.

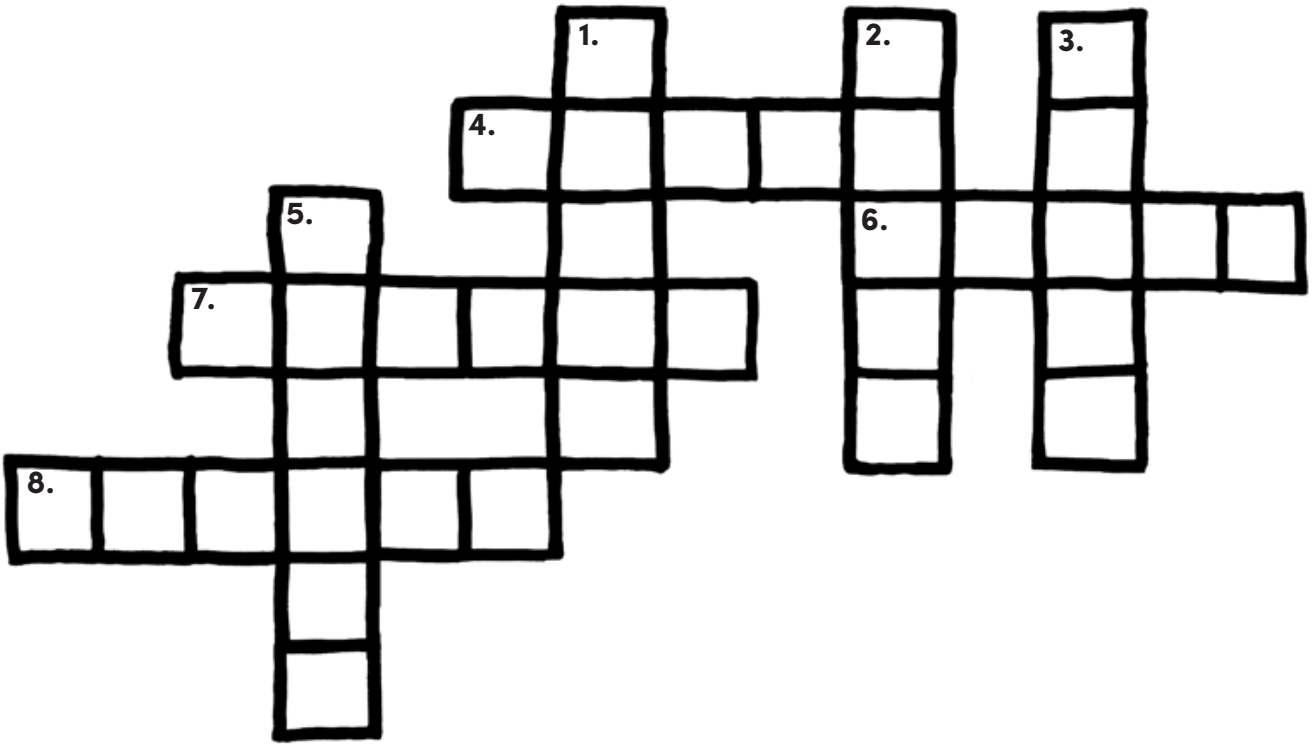
tch	ch

dge
word mix-up

Find the incorrect **dge** word in these speech bubbles.



dge crossword



Across →

4. A sweet treat made with sugar, butter and milk.
6. In the game of _____ ball, you try to hit people on the other team with a ball but not get hit yourself.
7. You put milk in the _____ to keep it cold.
8. A word that means "a tiny little bit of something."

Down ↓

1. Someone who hears cases in a law court and decides if an accused person is guilty or innocent.
2. A kind of fence made by planting bushes close together.
3. Something police officers use to prove their identity.
5. People and cars use this to get from one side of a river to the other.

dge
sorting dge and j words

Spell each word in the correct list, **dge** or *j*.
Hint: one picture/word will go into both lists.

dge	j

List of words containing *nk.*

The phonogram nk makes a single sound that is very different from the individual sounds of the letters n and k. Try making the sounds /n/, /k/ and /nk/, and notice how the position of your tongue differs for each one. It's quite difficult to pronounce /nk/ without a preceding vowel. Try ank, ink, onk, unk (bank, sink, honk, bunk). English doesn't have words ending with enk.

***These words appear in *Frank and the Skunk*, the first story in Book 2 of the Meg & Greg series.**

bank
blank
blink*
bonk
brink
bunk*
chipmunk*
chunk
clank
clink
clunk
conk
crank
dank
drank
drink
drunk
dunk*

flank
flunk
Frank*
funk
gunk*
Hank*
honk
hunk
ink
junk*
kink
lank
link*
mink*
pink
plank*
plunk*
prank*

punk
rank*
rink
sank*
shank
sink*
skunk*
slunk*
spank
spunk
stank
stink*
stunk
sunk
tank
thanks*
think*
thunk*

trunk*
wink*
yank*
zonk

Advanced *nk* word from the story:

wrinkle*

List of words containing ng.

The phonogram ng makes a single sound that is very different from the individual sounds of the letters n and g. Try making the sounds /n/, /g/ and /ng/, and notice how the position of your tongue differs for each one. It's quite difficult to pronounce /ng/ without a preceding vowel. Try ang, eng, ing, ong, ung (sang, strength, wing, strong, lung). The very common suffix -ing is pronounced in the same way.

***These words appear in *The King's Long Fangs*, the second story in Book 2 of the Meg & Greg series.**

along
bang*
bing*
bling*
bong*
bring*
bung*
clang*
cling
clung
dang
ding
dong
dung
fang*
fling*
flung*
gang*
gong*
hang*

Hong Kong
hung
jing-a-ling*
King Kong*
king*
ling cod
long*
lung*
mustang*
oblong
offspring
pang
ping
Ping-Pong*
prong*
rang
ring*
ring-a-ling*
rung
sang*

sing*
slang
sling
slung
song*
sprang*
spring*
sprung
sting
string
strong*
strung
stung
sung
swing*
swung*
tang*
thing
thong
throng*

tong*
twang*
wing

Advanced ng word from the story:

something*

List of words containing *tch.*

The letter combination or phonogram *tch* always comes immediately after a short vowel and is pronounced /ch/. It is most frequently found at the end of a word.

***These words appear in *The Catch That Went Bad,* the third story in Book 2 of the Meg & Greg series.**

batch*
blotch
botch
catch*
clutch*
crutch
dispatch
Dutch*
etch
fetch*
glitch*
hatch*
hitch*
hopscotch*
hutch
itch
ketchup*
kitchen*
latch
Mitch*
match*
notch*
nut-hatch*
patch*
pitch*
retch*
Scotch
scratch*
sketch
snatch
snitch
splotch
stitch
stretch*
switch*
thatch*

List of words containing *dge.*

The letter combination or phonogram *dge* always comes immediately after a short vowel and is pronounced /j/. It is most frequently found at the end of a word.

***These words appear in *Fudge!*, the fourth story in Book 2 of the Meg & Greg series.**

badge*
bridge*
budge
dislodge
dodge
dredge
edge*
fledge
fridge*
fudge*
grudge
hedge*
hedgehog
hodgepodge
judge*
ledge*
lodge*
Madge*
midge
nudge*
pledge
ridge*
sedge
smidge*
sledge
sludge
smudge*
splodge*
trudge
wedge*
wodge