



# Rime Magic: Bringing the Power of Strong Word Recognition to All Students

by SHARON ZINKE

*When our children are introduced to an effortless understanding of how words work—based on their natural pattern-seeking ability—in a very short time, they are able to experience the fluency and joy of reading books they love.*



## **SHARON ZINKE: LITERACY CHAMPION**

Sharon Zinke is the author and creator of *Rime Magic: Phonics-Powered Prevention and Intervention for All Students*. After teaching for many years as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, special education teacher, and literacy coach, she has spent the past decade helping teachers and school leaders develop effective reading intervention systems that bring fast results and encourage lifelong readers.

## **One to Know: RIME MAGIC**

When groups of students are asked to memorize letters and sounds in a particular sequence, we can predict several outcomes. Some in the group are already experiencing success in reading and don't need or want to spend time on the phonics instruction for that day. Others in the group are not developmentally ready for the skills being introduced, and often feel frustrated that it doesn't make sense to them. The lessons can be boring, take up too much precious time, and make very little difference in students' overall progress. Students who have fallen behind need to make fast progress while simultaneously experiencing the joy of reading.

Rime Magic is a completely different approach to phonics instruction. Students are swept up in daily, highly engaging, five-minute sessions, based on onset/rime research, that allow an effortless understanding of how words work. Students are immersed in all of the sounds and letters at once. Drawing on their own natural pattern-seeking ability, kids quickly grasp how



words segment, they see key word parts—solving the mystery of word recognition! Students are not expected to master any particular phonic element at any given moment. Rather, they have the freedom to develop their word skill at their own pace. The engaging rhythm and positive response from the teacher encourage 100% participation. What’s more, the combination of Rime Magic with the supported reading of best-beloved books enables students who have been held back by low word recognition to zoom ahead and thrive.

All students should have the right to learn to read with ease and with dignity. Every classroom has a number of students for whom reading does not come easily. Teachers want to help them and most often find that their current programs take too long and fail to make a real difference. Our students should not have to spend years trying to catch up. Rime Magic offers teachers the opportunity to give all students strong foundational skills in just a few weeks or months, so that they are able to successfully participate in and enjoy all of the language arts curriculum with the rest of their peers.

## What to Know and Do

Rime Magic is a highly-effective, seven-step system for both prevention of reading difficulties and intervention for students who need it. When upper-grade students have fallen behind in reading due to low word recognition, teachers can work with small groups to bring fast success. Five to ten minutes of Rime Magic paired with supported reading with high-interest grade-level reading materials will allow students to see immediate results and experience sudden confidence in their progress. In the primary grades, teachers can easily prevent issues at the word level so that students develop strong foundational skills before the end of third grade. Five-minute daily immersion with the whole class or small groups produces high engagement and fast results, preventing word-recognition difficulties as students move up through the grades.

With Rime Magic, students enjoy short, engaging sessions, developing proficiency in understanding word structure, including onsets (consonants and consonant blends), rimes (*ip* in the word *slippery*, *ank* in the word *thankful*), endings (inflectional endings and other suffixes); vowel sounds and blending of word parts. Students of any age with a word-recognition grade equivalent below fourth-grade level will benefit from Rime Magic. For students who have significant blending and letter confusion issues, and who often qualify for special education services, teachers can use the Power Paks to help them train their own brains to smooth out those problems.

Magic Rimes are all around us—in the print that surrounds our children in their homes, schools, and world beyond. Every time you take your children on a field trip or on a shopping excursion, invite them to search for and call out the Magic Rimes they spot in the print around them (a rime begins with the first vowel and continues to the end of the syllable); for example:

<b>Target</b>	<b>Railroad Crossing</b>	<b>Zoom</b>	<b>Popcorn</b>
<b>McDonalds</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Ice cream</b>	<b>Sale</b>
<b>Pet Store</b>	<b>Video Store</b>	<b>Gum</b>	<b>Gas</b>

Additionally, children will enjoy finding the Magic Rimes in their own names as well as in family and close friends' names; for example:

<b>Brandon</b>	<b>Jayden</b>	<b>Hudson</b>	<b>Emily</b>
<b>Angela</b>	<b>Anthony</b>	<b>Stella</b>	<b>Dominic</b>
<b>Daniel</b>	<b>Martha</b>	<b>Dimitri</b>	<b>Tommy</b>
<b>Sam</b>	<b>Andrea</b>	<b>Cameron</b>	

## More to Know and Do

Of course, the ultimate aim of RIME Magic is to grow confident and capable readers—and Rime Magic gives our children both the confidence and skilled capability to soar ahead as independent readers. At the same time you are introducing your children to the skill-building power of RIME Magic, be sure you are simultaneously building a rich reading culture that entices your children to want to read!

Here are six easy-to-implement reading actions to nurture a child's reading life:

- **Create a rich reading culture in your classroom or home.**  
Display books, talk books, and read books—not just once a day but all day! Every time your kids have a free moment, encourage them to dip into an ever-ready book they keep close at hand at all times.
- **Build the richest classroom or home library possible.**  
Immerse your kids in books of all kinds—wordless, graphic, predictable, series, and audio. One of the best ways to support children who need additional support is to invite them to read along with an audio version of the book. An abundant collection of books is the best way to assure that all children will find the right book that matches their interest and ability. Of course the best way to fill your classroom or home with books is to establish a library habit. Make sure your kids have a library card and spend the time necessary to help them feel at home in the library, understanding what's entailed in choosing a just right book for themselves.
- **Share your own reading life.**  
We humans learn best from other humans, particularly those who are older or more skilled at the endeavor we long to learn. Model your own “reading joy” in front of your kids—carry books around, talk about what you are reading and why you are enjoying it so much—or not—and model your own reading in front of your children thinking out loud as you read across the page, making predictions about what will come next and confirming as you read further into the text.
- **Establish reading routines in the classroom and at home.**  
Just as we make time for piano practice or soccer practice, so we need to make time for reading practice. Children thrive with routines. In addition to encouraging a dip into their book at hand every time a free moment opens up, set aside generous intentional time for reading—time that your kids can anticipate and plan for (making sure they always have a

book at hand to read). How much time is time enough? Ideally, children are reading an hour a day—30 minutes in school and 30 minutes at home.

- **Invite your kids to take charge of their own reading lives.**

We all prefer to read books we've chosen ourselves to read—children are no different. Indeed, children are twice as likely to read a book they have chosen themselves. So make sure your children have ample time for one of life's greatest pleasures—book browsing and finding a favorite among the bunch to call their own.

- **Help all children join the “reading club.”**

Turn your home—or classroom—into a “Goodreads for kids” and invite them to share their books with each other, discuss what surprised them about their book or how it may have changed them. Series books are especially great for readers who are finding their way. Within the safety of a familiar setting, with known and often beloved characters, and sometimes formulaic plots, children feel most at home in the reading world. They can't wait to read—and discuss with their friends—the next book in the series, and the next and the next!

You can find the Rime Magic kit and Power Paks (*Rime Magic: Phonics-Powered Prevention and Intervention*) at Scholastic, Inc. Look for helpful tips, videos, and registration for ZoomTime with the author at [www.rimemagic.com](http://www.rimemagic.com) and find more classroom demonstrations of Rime Magic on Sharon's Rime Magic YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyj4xoyMFqBvujmxMyLflcQ>. Follow Sharon on Twitter [@shayrime](https://twitter.com/shayrime).

Sharon Zinke is available for staff development workshops to help teachers fine-tune their Rime Magic instruction and to share powerful strategies for helping students develop strong foundational skills.