Life of Fred®
Begin Teaching

Stanley F. Schmidt, Ph.D.

Polka Dot Publishing
A Note Before We Begin

This is the second book in the Life of Fred® language arts series. These language arts books will cover English from every angle.

In this volume, we will learn about the adventures of Fred from late afternoon on Tuesday until 9 a.m. on Wednesday. Even though Fred is only five years old, the readers of his adventures may/might/should be a little older.

By the end of this book you will be able to answer:

- What is the past perfect progressive form of the verb *to sing*?
- What are the five ways to pronounce the letter *a*?
- What are the meanings of the verbs *affect* and *effect*?
- What are the meanings of the nouns *affect* and *effect*?
- What are the 16 ways to create plurals in English?
- What does it mean to read *Moby Dick* at a deeper level than just as a fishing story?
- What is the rule for verbs in which the compound subjects are connected by *or*? The hats or the coat is/are mine.
- How can you define a consonant in terms of air flow, instead of just saying that it isn’t a vowel?
- Why is it silly to put anapestic on an iambic foot?

. . . and many more topics in language arts.

AND MORE

There is an essential body of knowledge that every well-educated person should have. English is important.

Math is important. But so are many other areas of learning. There is no reason why each subject should be kept in water-tight compartments. They flow together naturally.
In this book you will learn:

- why you can’t buy a kangaroo at your local pet store
- where Tasmania is located
- how Russian has three numbers when English only has two (singular and plural)
- how to sing the “Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon” song (The sheet music is included in this book.)

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

Each chapter is a daily lesson. There are about four pages of reading about the adventures of Fred and a Your Turn to Play.

Have a paper and pencil handy before you sit down to read.

Each Your Turn to Play consists of about three or four questions. Write out the answers—don’t just orally answer them.

After all the questions are answered, then take a peek at my answers that are given on the next page.

Don’t just read the questions and look at the answers. You won’t learn as much that way.

A NOTE FROM STAN

Fred spends some exciting and some anxious moments getting ready to Begin Teaching a new subject (English) in a new country (Australia).

Almost every teacher experiences some of those feelings at the beginning of a new school year.

By the time that Fred finished his first hour of teaching, which is at the end of this book, he was feeling good again.
Contents

Chapter 1 Meeting Mack. ................................. 13
  ellipses
  litotes
  how to love people
  plurals of lower case letters

Chapter 2 Teachers Quit. ................................. 19
  how to make someone cry by saying since
  the whole point of English is . . .
  measuring elapsed time from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
  silent letters
  air flow determines vowels

Chapter 3 Today. ................................. 25
  commas can change the meaning
  14ºC = 57ºF
  list of all the countries that use the metric system

Chapter 4 Arrival at Night. ................................. 31
  mosquito abatement in Tasmania
  nine ways to make plurals
  a tenth way, an eleventh way

Chapter 5 Searching for Lesson Plans. ................................. 37
  one key to happiness
  5 cm ≈ 2 inches
  run-on sentences
  how to get a ride on a policeman’s horse
  appositive phrases
  conjunctions
Chapter 6 In Custody. ................................................. 43
the policeman sings an octave below Fred
how to provide scansion
iambic pentameter and anapestic tetrameter
a twelfth way to make plurals

Chapter 7 Helping Margie. ................................. 49
using semicolons
anxious ≠ eager
child protective services doesn’t mean that kids go
around protecting things
a vs. an  It’s not whether the word starts with a vowel.
long u   long a   long e   long i   long o

Chapter 8 Intake. ................................................. 55
idioms
affect as a noun
definition of a noun

Chapter 9 Rabbits and Kangaroos. ......................... 61
to lie = to recline
transitive and intransitive verbs (v.t. and v.i.)
what herbivore is seven feet tall and shy?
why Fred couldn’t take a kangaroo back to Kansas
ə is called a schwa

Chapter 10 What We Know. ................................. 67
who thinks ATMs give out free money
foster and adoptive parents
why we say happy as a clam
scare quotes
a history of early computers in 1⅜ inches

Chapter 11 Early Morning. ................................. 73
sixteen ways to make plurals in English, which
means one rule and 15 exceptions
three places that are open all night
why we say go bananas and not go apples
where we got the skin of my teeth (You’ll be surprised.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 12</th>
<th>The Proofreading Room</th>
<th>79</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>how to alienate professional proofreaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cardinality of a set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to proofread</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homonyms (homophones)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commas before direct quotes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 13</th>
<th>Pineapple Invasion</th>
<th>85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>proofreading is like soldiering, gardening, and dentistry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how scientists can make big mistakes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to write sympathy notes that mean something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing numbers: words or numerals?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 14</th>
<th>Subject-Verb</th>
<th>91</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>compound subjects connected by <em>or</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English verbs are easier than German ones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three ways to say <em>you</em> in German</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literary symbolism in <em>Moby Dick</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjugation of verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 15</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what it means to be a graduate student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpretation of dreams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what is wrong with <em>The early bird gets the worm</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regular and irregular verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 16</th>
<th>In the Classroom</th>
<th>103</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a dictionary vs. a thesaurus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a gallon of milk weighs about a quarter of a Fred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjugating a verb in the present, past, and future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using <em>will</em> and <em>shall</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 17</th>
<th>Begin Teaching</th>
<th>109</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>how to look like Einstein</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 copies of <em>Ducky Sings Opera</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capitalization in titles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the two numbers in English: singular and plural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more than the present, past, and future tenses
the three progressive tenses indicate continuous action
what Rodin wrote about “What makes my Thinker think.”
translating the Norwegian idiom: Han er darlig utstyrt i øverst etasje.

starting with the six tenses of Chapter 18, we add another six
how to tell Fred, the Thinker, from Rodin’s Thinker

Index. ........................................................................................................ 126
Chapter One
Meeting Mack

Fred was so happy to have found Mack. Together they hopped into Mack’s car and headed to the Board of Missions office.

On Sunday Fred had written to the Board of Missions, “I want to be a friend, help people in trouble . . . I do love to teach.”*

Now, two days later, Fred was in Australia heading to the board office in Wagga Wagga. He was eager to begin teaching. He had taught math at KITTENS University for five years, and he knew he could teach any math course that was needed. It was June 4. He was going to spend the whole summer in Australia. He had never been outside the United States before. When Fred sat in Mack’s car, he couldn’t see anything except the sky. He was too short.

*The three dots ( . . . ) are called an ellipsis (ee-LIP-sis). An ellipsis indicates something has been left out. In Fred’s letter he had written, “I want to be a friend, help people in trouble, teach, dig a well to get clean water, and kill mosquitoes. I don’t know how to dig a well or kill mosquitoes, but I do love to teach.”
Fred couldn’t find any seatbelts. Fred thought *This must be a really old car.*
Mack said, “This car is not brand new.”

---

**Time Out!**

Both Fred and Mack said the same thing. Mack’s way of saying it is called an understatement.

**Understatements:**

- Oceans have some water in them.
- Being run over by a car is irritating.

**Understatements with “not”:**

- This car is not brand new.
- Fred is not extremely tall.
- Having a pizza, a milkshake, and a piece of pie for lunch is not a starvation diet.

Understatements with “not” in them have a special name. They are called litotes. (LIE-toe-tease)

When someone learns that he has just won a million dollars, he might say, “That ain’t bad.” That’s litotes.

---

Mack said, “The Mission Board here in Wagga Wagga does not have a lot a money (litotes). This car may be old, but it still runs. We are so happy that people like you, Fred, would volunteer to come and help.”

“I’m too small to help dig wells,” Fred said. “But I’m not bad at teaching (litotes).”
Mack was a little confused. He was told to pick up a famous college professor from KITTENS University. He was also told that Fred Gauss had been teaching there for five years and had won many teaching awards.

Mack said, “You mention being small. Looking at you, some people might think that you were just a child rather than a man who is very short. You are about a meter tall.”

“Not quite,” Fred said. “A meter is about 39 inches. I’m 36 inches tall, which is one yard.”

Mack said, “I like your bow tie. That makes you look older. Have you ever thought of growing a beard? Then people wouldn’t mistake you for a child.”

Mack didn’t know that he was talking to a five-year-old.

They arrived. Mack got out of the car. Fred reached down to unfasten (silent t) his seatbelt and then realized he hadn’t been wearing one. Fred realized that if Mack had crashed the car, he might have been thrown through the windshield.*

* Have you ever noticed that there are no seatbelts on motorcycles?
Fred had imagined that the Wagga Wagga office building of the Board of Missions would look very fancy.

He knew they were doing important work: helping people in trouble, digging wells to get clean water, teaching, and killing mosquitos. What he didn’t realize was that the work was the important thing—not making a big name for itself.

Every member of the Board had received this memo:

**Notice**

**to All Board Members**

*Our job is to love people. It’s that simple.*

*Do that without showing off. Don’t go around bragging. No special titles for any of you.*

*Give them h’s:*  

Hold the hand of those who are crying.  

Help the poor.  

Heal the sick.
Wait a minute! I, your reader, have a question.*
What did you have in mind?

There’s an English error in that notice. In the previous book you told us the eight ways to make something plural.

1. one cat ➞ two cats    → s
2. one calf ➞ two calves  → ves
3. one foot ➞ two feet    → irregular plurals
4. one deer ➞ two deer    → no change
5. one toss ➞ two tosses  → s → es
6. one mystery ➞ two mysteries → ies
7. one hippopotamus ➞ two hippopotami → us → i
8. one alumna ➞ two alumnae → a → ae

In this “Notice to All Board Members,” the plural of h was h’s. That’s not any of the eight ways to make a plural.

You are right. That’s the ninth way to make a plural. Lower case (uncapitalized) letters are special. There are seven e’s in the previous sentence.

Your Turn to Play
Write your answers down before looking at my answers.
If you don’t remember the spelling, turn to earlier pages to find it.

1. (Fill in the blank) “This Your Turn to Play is not very long” is an example of __________.
2. (Fill in the blank) A, B, C, D, . . . , X, Y, Z uses an ____________.

* Life of Fred books are the only books in the world in which the reader can talk back to the author.
1. “This Your Turn to Play is not very long” is an example of _litotes_.
   Instead of saying it was not very long, you could have said that it was short.

2. A, B, C, D, . . . , X, Y, Z uses an _ellipsis_.

---

**small essay**

**Sometimes English Makes Sense**

I can’t tell you why yacht is spelled y-a-c-h-t.
I can’t tell you why the plural of die is dice.

But I do have a guess as to why we use an apostrophe to make the plurals of lower case letters. If we didn’t use an apostrophe, then I might write, “There are eight as you can see in the previous sentence.”

If we use the apostrophe, the sentence becomes clear: “There are eight a’s you can see in the previous sentence.”
Index

100 Best First Lines from Novels. .......... 96

a vs. an. .......... 52, 53
affect vs. effect .......... 57-59
anapestic .......... 46, 48
anxious vs. eager .......... 50
appositive phrases .......... 41, 98, 103, 104
capitalizing titles .......... 110, 111
cardinality of set .......... 80
Celsius .......... 27
centimeters and inches .......... 37
Christina Rossetti .......... 47
closing salutations
——capitalization .......... 90
comma before a direct quote
................. 84
comma splice .......... 38, 86
commas can change the meaning .......... 25-27
computers—a short history
................. 72
conjugation of verbs. 42, 96
in three tenses .......... 107, 116, 117
in six tenses .......... 119, 120
consonants .......... 24
dactylic .......... 46
dimeter .......... 46
ellipsis .......... 13
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
................. 64
existentialism defined .......... 109
Fahrenheit .......... 27
five ways to pronounce the letter a .......... 66
foreshadowing in literature
................. 112, 113
future perfect progressive
................. 124
future perfect tense .......... 123
future progressive tense
................. 119
George Gordon Byron .......... 47
George Orwell’s 1984 .......... 99
Green’s Theorem in Space
................. 22
herbivores .......... 63
hexameter .......... 46
homonyms .......... 30, 82
Index

homophones.... 82
iambic foot.... 45, 46, 48
iambic pentameter.... 46
idioms.... 55, 70, 77, 78, 85, 119
intransitive verbs.... 62, 111
irregular verbs.... 101
it’s vs. its.... 82
kilograms vs. pounds.... 55
letter writing.... 88
lie vs. lay.... 62, 81, 99
litotes.... 14, 35, 57
long a, long e, long i, long o

long u.... 53, 54
lyrics.... 45, 114
meter of a poem.... 45
metric system.... 27
countries not using the metric system.... 30
countries using the metric system.... 30
Moby Dick.... 94, 95
nouns.... 60
numbers in a language:
singular and plural

numbers—when do you spell them out.... 89
old sayings.... 40, 100
past perfect tense....

past perfect tense.... 122, 123
past progressive tense.... 118
pentameter.... 46
plurals.... 17, 18, 23, 33, 36, 48, 73-75
present perfect progressive

present perfect tense.... 124
present perfect tense.... 123
present progressive tense

proper names.... 84
quotation marks—a second use.... 71
reading a novel at a deeper level.... 95
regular verbs.... 101, 115
Rodin’s The Thinker.... 119
run-on sentences....

scansion.... 47
scare quotes.... 72, 85
schwa.... 66, 79
semicolon.... 42, 49
Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night

shall vs. will.... 108
silent letters.... 15, 23, 34, 51
Index

since vs. because. . . 20, 21
small essays
“Sometimes English Makes Sense”. . . 18
“The Dangerous Word Since”........... 20
“What Does It Mean to Be a Graduate Student?”........... 97
“What Some People Know”. ............ 67
songs
“Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon”. . 80
“I Don’t Believe”. . . 44
“I Teach”............. 44
subject-verb agreement. . .
....................... 84, 91, 92
Tasmania ................. 32
tetrameter ............... 46
that vs. which........... 114, 123
thesaurus vs. dictionary
..................... 104
titles—how to capitalize
..................... 110, 111
transitive verbs........ 62, 111
trimeter.................. 46
trochaic ................. 46
two forms of you in German
....................... 93, 94
understatements........ 14
verbs ................. 59
intransitive........... 62
transitive ........... 62
vowels ................. 24
who vs. that .......... 82
why you never see kangaroos in pet stores. .... 63, 64
words without vowels. . . .
....................... 53, 54

To see descriptions of all of the Life of Fred books . .

FredGauss.com