

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is my child learning with their tutor?**

FOG Readers is a highly structured program based on the [Orton-Gillingham methodology](#). The program breaks reading and spelling into smaller skills involving letters and sounds. It is a phonetically based, sequential, structured approach that uses multisensory techniques – this means tutors use sight, hearing, touch, and movement to help learners connect language with letters and sounds.

Every lesson builds upon the last and all students start at the very beginning of the curriculum to make sure there are no gaps in foundational skills.

Your student and their tutor are also reading aloud together and talking about what they are reading. As children rise through the grade levels, more and more of their reading is silent. When we read silently, we are able to skip over words we don't know. Having a dedicated time to read aloud is helpful because your child will need to pause and sound out words that are difficult and can stop and ask questions about words they don't know.

### **What kind of training do tutors have?**

We couldn't do what we do without our amazing tutors. Our tutors are volunteers which allows us to offer this program for free and reach as many students as we do.

Most of our tutors are not educators, but they all go through 6 hours of tutor training where they learn the different activities that make up the lesson plan and how to introduce and teach new concepts. I am in contact with tutors as they continue to work with your child. I'm here if you have questions as well.

### **How long does the program last?**

Unlike many programs, we do not have clear start and end dates. You can continue to meet with your tutor for as long as it continues to work for both parties until your child has completed the fourth grade, or until they have mastered the requisite concepts and are ready to graduate from the program. If your child is entering fifth grade or has progressed beyond the scope of our program and you are still looking to work on reading and writing, let me know and we can talk about different programs throughout the city.

The tutor/student relationship plays a large role in making progress and building confidence. Reading aloud can make students feel vulnerable and self-conscious, but it's very important for feedback. When possible, we strive for consistency in meeting and do not like to have to rematch student with new tutors too often- SF can be a difficult place to live and tutors often

change jobs, move, or just have circumstances change where their free time becomes more limited.

Sometimes these relationships end without notice to me from either of you until later- if your tutor needs to stop meeting and you are interested in a new tutor, please contact me at [laura.lay@sfpl.org](mailto:laura.lay@sfpl.org) or 415-557-4203.

### **My student needs help in comprehension- do you work on comprehension?**

We do, but maybe not in the same way that you might be thinking about it. We want your student to be able to read a text and then be able to talk about it. Every time your student reads with their tutor they are working on comprehension by stopping and talking about what is going on in the story and what words mean. In this way they are building reading vocabulary to match oral vocabulary and building background knowledge.

All reading difficulties fall into one of three general types: poor at decoding, poor at language comprehension or weaknesses in both. Language comprehension is the end goal of reading – you’re not really reading until you understand what you are reading, but it is greatly affected by decoding skills. If a student is struggling to decode or break apart words (choppy reading) then they are using all their mental energy on that task and will not be spending as much energy on what is going on in the story. Reading is a complex process and we need to cover all the concepts and areas of reading to make sure there aren’t any gaps.

We work on decoding and language comprehension skills every session because both skills are needed to become an expert reader.

The main drivers of comprehension are vocabulary and background knowledge. You can work on these at home by talking about words and what they mean, reading together and talking about it, and listening to audiobooks.

### **Can I have more than one tutor? Or meet more than once a week?**

I’m sorry, no. Tutors care about the students they work with and want them to succeed, but they have generously agreed to meet once a week and we don’t want to put them in a position where they feel inclined or pressured to say yes and meet more than once. We also cannot provide you with another tutor because our waitlist is already over 250 students(!) who have yet to receive any tutoring.

Legally, you are entitled to free and appropriate public education- and this includes being taught to read and write proficiently.

If you feel like your child needs extra help, [Support for Families](#) is a great resource in the city to help you navigate school services.

If your child is struggling it's important to find an intervention that works for them and is not more wheel spinning.

You should request that your school uses a science-based intervention that is structured, systematic, sequential, repetitive and phonologically based.