

Julia Donaldson

Oxford  
Reading  
Tree



Pen-Pals

Songbirds



Phonics

**Talk together**

- Ask your child to
- Point to each letter pattern in the box on the back cover. Say the sound that it makes in words. Tell your child the sounds if necessary.
- Look out for these letter patterns in the story. Try and remember the sound they make.

**Read the story**

- Remember, children learn best when reading is relaxed and enjoyable so give lots of praise.
- Encourage your child to try to read any words they do not recognise by saying the sounds of each letter pattern separately (e.g. *l - oa - n*), then running the sounds together quickly. If they find it difficult to say the sounds, say the sounds for them first and then see if they can hear the word.
- Explain that it is important when running the sounds in a word together to check to see if it sounds like a real word as some words are less regular (e.g. *your*). Read these words to your child if they don't recognise them. Point out the letters that make the usual sound in each word (e.g. the *y* in *your*).





Hi Megan  
I am your American pen-pal. My name  
is Joan and I am nine. Next May,  
twenty kids from my school will be  
visiting the UK. Can I stay with you?  
Best wishes, Joan





Hi Joan  
I am glad we are pen-pals. Yes, you  
can stay with us in May. I am nine as  
well, and I like animals. I have a dog.  
His name is Rex. Have you got a pet?  
Best wishes, Megan



Hi Megan  
No, I don't have a pet. Dogs make me  
sneeze. I like playing tennis. I hope  
you like tennis too.  
Joan

Hi Joan  
I'm afraid I don't play tennis. I read  
a lot. Do you like reading?  
Megan





Hi Megan  
 I don't read much but I like TV. My  
 plane gets in at eleven on Friday.  
 Will you meet me?  
 I hope we will get on.  
 Joan



Hi Joan  
Yes, we can meet the plane. Sorry  
but we don't have a TV. We did have  
one but it got broken.  
See you on Friday!  
Megan



We met Joan's plane. She is very quiet. I think she is shy.

May 1

b



Rex made Joan sneeze. He had to go and stay with Granny.

May 2



Joan was sad today. I think she is missing home.

May 3



I went swimming with Joan.  
It was fun.

May 4



Joan can play Dad's drums! We sang  
lots of songs. I like Joan a lot.

May 5



We went swimming again. Joan made  
up a game. I was a fish and she was  
a crocodile. Back home, we told lots  
of jokes.

May 6



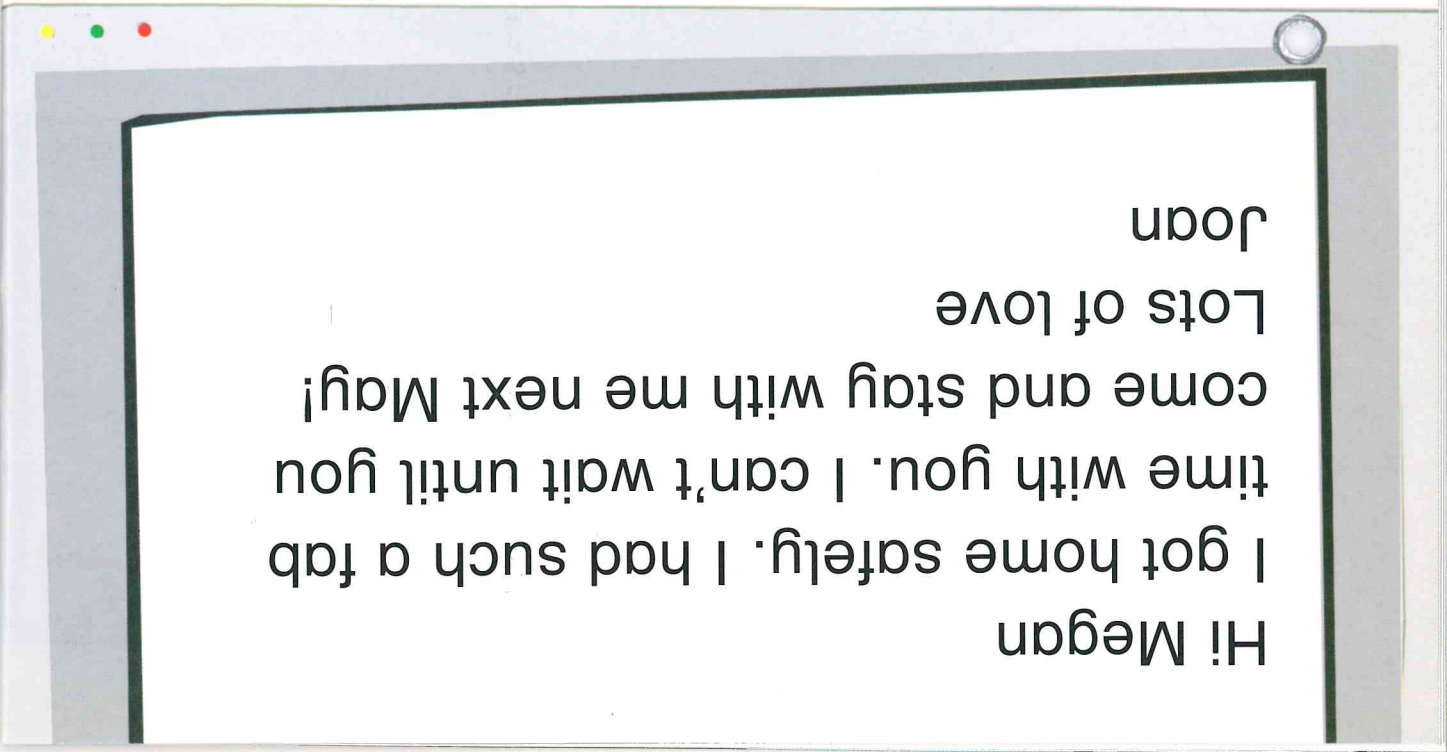
Joan and I had a midnight feast!  
I will be sad when she goes.

May 7



Joan had to go home. We got Rex  
back from Granny's, but I am  
missing Joan.

May 8



Hi Megan  
 I got home safely. I had such a fab  
 time with you. I can't wait until you  
 come and stay with me next May!  
 Lots of love  
 Joan

### Check comprehension

Ask your child

- Did Joan enjoy her stay with Megan? How do you know? (Yes, because she wrote to Megan that she had a fab time.)

### Check phonics (letter-pattern sounds)

Ask your child to

- Find and read two words which rhyme on pages 2 and 3 (*May, stay*). Point to the letter pattern that makes the long vowel sound in these words (*ay*). Say the sound this letter pattern makes.
- Find and read some words on pages 5 and 6 which contain a long *ai* sound (*afraid, play, a, plane, Friday*). Point to the letter patterns that make the long *ai* vowel sound (*ai, ay, a, a-e, ay*).
- Find and read some words on page 13 which contain a long *oe* sound (*Joan, crocodile, home, told, jokes*). Point to the letter patterns that make the long *oe* vowel sound (*oa, o, o-e, o, o-e*).
- Find and read some words on pages 14 and 15 which contain a long *ee* sound (*feast, be, she, we, Granny's*).

**Example phonic words:** afraid again wait Friday May play playing stay game made make name plane safely a meet see feast read reading be me she we granny sorry twenty very crocodile like nine time midnight my shy hi I'm quiet Joan Joan's home jokes broken don't go no told

**Context words:** your school the you are have one do to come of love sneeze was today can't goes

# Pen-Pals

Story by Julia Donaldson • Pictures by Alison Bartlett  
 Series editor Clare Kirtley

Will Joan be happy when she comes to stay with Megan?



**Focus Phonics**  
 Revision of phonics from Stages 1+, 2, 3, 4  
 ee (as in tree)  
 ee (as in three)  
 ie (as in tie)  
 oe (as in toe)  
 ai (as in train)

**Letter Pattern**  
 ee ea e y  
 ie igh y i  
 oa o-e o  
 ai ay a-e a

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