

INNOVA GRADED READERS SERIES
 Innova Press, 2018
 innovapress.com

What a delight it was to open this series of books for younger learners. Containing seven titles at four levels, each of the twenty-eight is an easily-portable, slim, colourful booklet containing a single classic tale, one that many us, although from various cultural backgrounds, have memories of, as both a child and parent. I must admit to having feasted on reading and re-reading them all over the next few days, calling up memories of, to choose among many examples, the boy who cried “wolf” too often, how the steady tortoise outran the rabbit, and how Goldilocks survived her meeting with the three bears. Absolutely smashing!

Innova readers are clearly designed by a team with vast experience in the ELT field. As early as page one in any title, the teacher as reader will notice the complete absence of the comprehension questions many of us were brought up to answer before moving onto the next text. In their place we see shorter, much more encouraging activities that ask the younger reader to choose the correct option, from two possibilities, of what happens next. This was a delight for me personally when reading titles with which I was unfamiliar; I quite often got it wrong.

The text is fully supported with full-colour illustrations that contain speech and thought bubbles which enable even children with limited ability in reading to follow and enjoy the activity. Captions also appear from time to time for a small number of new nouns in the illustration. Another delightful aspect is the reappearance of characters across the grades, something additional to activate the minds of young readers. The Fox, for example appears in tales with a bird, a dog and even some grapes. The picture dictionary at the end of each story provides excellent reader support.

Several other enjoyable tasks appear throughout the series, especially those relating to vocabulary, such as finding words in a snake, matching antonyms like angry and happy, identifying true/false statements and correctly ordering sentences that tell the story. Perhaps the most unique feature of the whole series, and certainly my own favourite, are the pop-out characters, which appear with different expressions on each side. These will help the reader build an oral version of the text while manipulating them. Be careful to store the characters

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safely; mine seem to be a bit mixed up already! Grammar is not at all neglected, by the way. The *Piper of Hamelin*, for example, asks the reader to choose the best way to complete sentences based on singular/plural nouns. Each title in Grade Four ends with a fairly lengthy and easily-comprehended poem. Young children will, I am convinced, love to work on memorising parts of each.

Sets of stories at each level are delivered in an attractive slipcase in which they can be safely stored. Also available is the very helpful Guide for Teachers

and Parents, which offers tips on how to engage with the stories by means of role-play and flashcards, reading aloud to children and asking them to listen and point. All good fun, I think you’ll agree. All stories are accompanied online by fully dramatised audio-recordings, enabling the young reader to listen and follow, thus connecting sound to individual written words. Visit innovapress.com/readers to locate samples of interactive digital readers and to browse the full range in the series.

Wayne Trotman is a teacher educator at Izmir Katip Çelebi University, Izmir, Turkey.



The Pied Piper of Hamelin is one of the stories presented in the Innova Graded Readers Series.

Absolutely enchanting

Children’s tales are irresistible to readers, says *Wayne Trotman*