

RYAN

THE UNSTOPPABLE READER!



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID MALAN

I worked twice as hard. But I was still one of the worst readers in the whole grade!

By Jessica Larsen
(Based on a true story)

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Three weeks until summer break, Ryan!" my friend Logan said after recess. "I can't wait to swim and hike!"

"Me too!" I said. I walked into the classroom smiling, but then I saw the chairs set in circles. That meant reading groups.

"Everyone get in your groups!" Mr. Carson said. "Blue group, Mrs. Bush is waiting for you in room 205."

I trudged to my desk and grabbed my book. Most of my classmates had been able to read this book years ago. Everyone knew the blue group was for kids who couldn't read well. I'd been part of it since kindergarten. That was when I found out I had a learning disability. Mom says it means my brain just understands things differently.

It's not fair, I thought as I walked to room 205. I held the book to my chest so no one could see it was for little kids. I hated being different. I worked twice as hard as any of my friends. But I was still one of the worst readers in the whole grade!

After an hour of reading, Mrs. Bush said we were done. "Good work," she told us. "I know reading is hard, and it would be easy to give up. But keep working at it! You *can* improve. And don't forget your summer reading packet."

I took the packet and walked back to my classroom. Every summer I got a reading packet with stories to read out loud, questions to answer, and other things to help me with my reading. None of my friends had homework over the summer. But I really wanted to be able to read, so the extra work was worth it.

At least I'll still have some time to play this summer, I thought.

But when Mom picked me up from school, she had some news. "I just learned about a new computer



My biggest challenge is that I have anxiety, which means worrying about things that are not a big deal. I pray about it, and my daddy gives me priesthood blessings. I still have anxiety, but I know that my Heavenly Father has helped me, because it has gotten better.

Kate L., age 7, Washington, USA

program that can help you read better," she said as I got into the car. "It will help your brain make better connections."

"That sounds cool," I said.

"You'll need to work on it for a few hours every day."

More homework over the summer? Part of me wanted to just quit trying. But an even bigger part of me knew I really wanted to read better. And that would take a lot of work. I took a deep breath. "OK, I'll do it."

It was a long, hard summer. I spent most of my time working on my reading exercises or the computer program. And I prayed every day for Heavenly Father's help.

When school started again, I tried my hardest to follow along with the class reading. I was still pretty slow, but I could do it!

Soon my teacher asked to talk to me at lunch. That made me nervous. What would she say?

"Ryan, I've seen you reading along with the class this week. I know how hard you worked this summer," Ms. Andersen said. "I'm going to put you in a higher reading group."

"Really?" I said.

She nodded. "You'll have to work a little harder than some of the other kids and promise to read every single day, but I think you can do this. Are you up for the challenge?"

"Yes!" I said. I walked out to lunch feeling happy and strong. My hard work during the summer *had* helped me! And Heavenly Father had answered my prayers. I knew I could keep working hard. And I knew Heavenly Father would keep helping me. ♦

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

Ryan finished high school and went to college.



I've had to work hard at reading too. But it's worth it!