

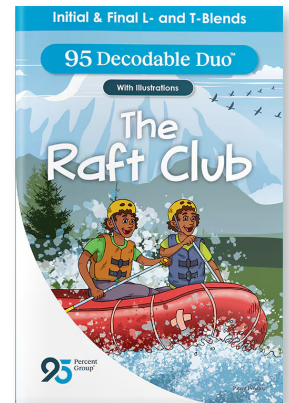
# PRODUCT CASE STUDY

Role	Product Name	Authors
Art Director Illustrator	95 Duo Decodables™	95 Percent Group Content Team

## Overview

The 95 Duo Decodables project involved the creation of two levels of decodable readers for students (grade k, grade 1). The innovative concept featured a patent-pending design that allowed students to first read a text-only version of the story to build fluency and then flip the book over to view the same text paired with engaging illustrations after mastering the words. This dual-version design helps young readers strengthen their decoding skills and comprehension. As art director, designer, and illustrator, I led a team of designers

and illustrators to bring this concept to life, overseeing all design elements, created the illustrations for the Kindergarten books, and creating packaging materials. Throughout the project, we aimed to create an engaging, educational experience that was inclusive and reflective of diverse student identities.



## CHALLENGES

This project had several challenges that needed to be addressed in order to create a high-quality, impactful product:

- Tight Timelines:** Due to a quick turnaround, we needed to manage the production and design of both books and packaging under a strict deadline. The timeline was particularly compressed when one of our illustrators unexpectedly had to leave the project, prompting me to take on the illustration work for the Kindergarten books.
- Innovative, Dual-Version Layout:** The concept of a text-only version paired with an illustrated version meant that we had to ensure the layout was simple enough for early readers, but also dynamic enough to keep them engaged. The transition between the two versions needed to feel seamless and intuitive.
- Scope and Sequence and Packaging Addition:** The scope and sequence of the decodable books was added with a display box at the last minute. This required me to quickly integrate these educational components into production without compromising the visual appeal or organization of the packaging.
- DEI Representation:** A key consideration for the project was ensuring that the design and illustrations supported diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). It was essential that the characters and settings in the books reflect a wide range of identities, backgrounds, and experiences, while also being sensitive to developmental appropriateness for young readers.



## ■ SOLUTION

### Leading the Design Process

I led the creative direction and collaborated closely with the design team and other stakeholders. The biggest challenge came with the need to balance the educational objectives of the product with engaging, age-appropriate visuals. I worked with the team to ensure that the books' text-only versions were clean, easy to read and focused on phonetic practice, while the illustrated versions were dynamic, but simple enough to help reinforce word recognition.

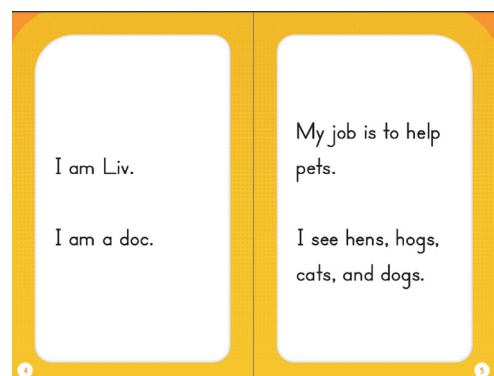
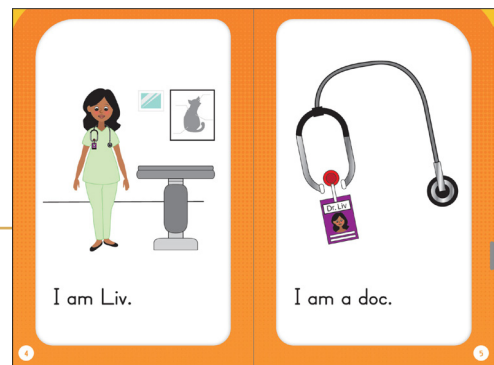
### Illustration Creation

When the illustrator for the kindergarten books left the project, I took on the responsibility of illustrating all 20 books. These illustrations had to be visually engaging for young children, while also supporting early literacy by reflecting the text. I used simple, friendly character designs with bright colors and clear visuals that would appeal to young readers.

### Incorporating DEI Considerations Into Imagery

To support a more inclusive learning experience, we aimed to ensure that the characters, settings and stories in the decodable readers reflected diverse backgrounds, identities and experiences. This was critical not only to ensure that the books resonated with a wide audience but also to help children see themselves reflected in the stories they were reading.

1. **Diverse Skin Color Palette:** I created a custom skin color palette to ensure that all characters were depicted with a wide range of skin tones, enabling children of all backgrounds to see themselves represented in the stories.
2. **Tracking Gender, Race, Disability, and Environments:** I developed a spreadsheet to track the gender, race, disability representation, and settings for each character in the Kindergarten and Grade 1 books. This allowed us to ensure that the series was diverse in its character depictions and that the environments reflected a wide variety of experiences. We aimed to have characters from various cultural backgrounds, including characters with disabilities, and to show a range of environments from urban settings to rural communities.



## ■ OUTCOME

This project was a rewarding challenge that required quick thinking, creative problem-solving, and close collaboration across teams. Despite the tight deadlines and the loss of an illustrator, we were able to produce a high-quality product that met the educational goals and reflected the commitment to diversity and inclusion.

I'm proud of how the 95 Duo Decodables turned out, both in terms of design quality and its positive impact on young readers. The project reinforced the importance of adaptability, collaboration, and a deep understanding of the target audience's needs. The success of this project has set a strong precedent for future educational product designs, and I look forward to continuing to push the boundaries of what's possible in educational publishing.



## ■ DELIVERABLES

20 Full-Color Decodable Reader Books  
*(kindergarten level)*

20 Full-Color Decodable Reader Books  
*(grade 1 level)*

20 Full-Color Tabs *(per grade level)*

2 Full-Color Display Boxes with Scope  
and Sequence Inserts

