

FIVE ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP PHONICS

1. Sound Grid

The purpose of this activity is to help children map sounds to letters and letters to words. You can see several examples in the completed sound grid below.

h	e	l	p	s	helps
s	a	n	d		sand
r	e	s	t		rest
t	o	ss			toss
h	i	ll			hill
d	u	ck	s		ducks

To complete this activity, provide children with a blank sound grid. You can use paper or reusable laminated sound grid boards. Here is a sample: [SOUND GRID](#).

First, have the students tap each identified sound in the boxes to determine the number of sounds. Then have them write one sound per box in the sound grid. This is a great opportunity to remind students of difficult sounds/rules they've learned. For example, with the word hill, remind students of the FLOSS rule, which is the spelling convention for words that end with a final l, s, f, or z, the final consonant is doubled. Ask: *Why does the double double l use only one box?* (it makes only one sound)

2. **Word Ladder**

Word ladders are an opportunity for students to see relationships among words. These can be built using letter cards or magnet letters. Alternatively, you can have students write word ladders on a white board.

The rules for building an anchor are simple:

1. Pick an anchor word
2. Change just one sound for each consecutive word

NOTE: These can get tricky!

Example #1

You can change the word dog to cat by changing only one letter at a time to form a new word at each step

Letter cards needed: d, o g, t, p, p, m, a, c

dog

dot

pot

pop

mop

map

cap

cat

Example #2:

Letter cards needed: m, a, t, l, u, e, ch,

mat

mit

mut

mute

chute

Example #3:

Letters used: p, o, t, h, i, a, b, ai, w

pot

hot

hit

hat

bat

bait

wait

3. Blending Drill

The goal of the blending drill is to strengthen students' overall fluency. The more students practice blending previously learned sounds, the more automatic they will become in their overall reading.

Materials needed for the blending drill are really simple. You will need blending cards with letters of previously learned sounds. You can use a blending board or any flat surface.

Teachers want to make sure students are actively pointing to each card, saying the sound, then blending all the sounds together to read the word while swiping from left to right. *The teacher is encouraged to try and avoid pointing with the students, to build more independent reading.*

The blending drill is a built-in assessment of your students' retention of previously learned material. If they are miscuing often, this tells you that you may need to go back and review or reteach challenging skills that have been previously introduced. The phonological awareness skill of blending may also need revisiting, as this is a foundational skill necessary for fluent reading.



Image Source: <https://blog.maketaketeach.com/a-strategy-for-teaching-students-to-blend/>

***You are encouraged to use only real words during this drill**

Whole-Class or Small Group:

1. Sort cards into three piles.
2. Display card piles for all students to see.

Teacher note: A chalkboard ledge or document camera works well for displaying cards if you do not have a blending board.

3. Teacher touches each card with blending fingers prompting student(s) to produce the sound on each card.
4. Teacher then slides fingers under the word prompting student(s) to blend together the sounds.

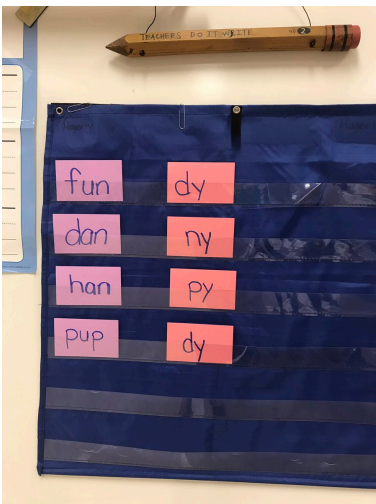
Note: As student(s) progress, encourage whole-word reading versus sound by sound blending.

Miscues:

- a. Isolate the sound card the student(s) read incorrectly
- b. Have student(s) trace the letter to help retrieve the sound.
- c. Adult provides the phoneme and prompts student(s) to write the grapheme three times while producing the sound

Note: Cards resulting in miscues should stay in the blending pile to provide the additional blending practice.

5. Spelling Multisyllabic Words



1. Teacher encourages student(s) to look at his/her mouth to ensure student(s) is/are hearing the correct sound.
2. Teacher pronounces the word.
 - a. Example: fantastic
3. Student(s) repeat(s) word – fantastic.
4. Teacher asks, “how many syllables?”
5. Student(s) count(s) syllables: 3.
6. Teacher confirms and asks student(s) to draw line for each syllable.
7. Student(s) draw(s) lines to represent the number of syllables in the word.

8. Teacher repeats words one syllable at a time, asking student(s) to repeat and spell each syllable: fan-tas-tic
9. Teacher asks student(s) to put syllables together and read the word: fantastic

Miscues or Blocks.

- a. Teacher isolates the error and repeats the word or syllable.
- b. Teacher provides the keyword or rule.
- c. Teacher provides the grapheme or rule and prompts student(s) to write grapheme three times while producing the sound.
- d. Teacher provides student(s) with additional practice spelling words with the corrected sound or pattern.

Note: Multisyllabic words can be complicated for students because of the schwa sounding unaccented syllables. When students are unsure which vowel spelling is producing the schwa, they should use the letter u as a default spelling (and be proud of the accomplishment).

5. Sentence Dictation

1. Dictate a sentence: Depending on the child's reading and spelling abilities, dictate one sentence that is appropriate for the child's level of knowledge. Let the child know that you need full attention since you will only be saying the sentence once.
2. Child repeats the sentence: Repeating the sentence will help your child retain it in short term memory long enough to write it down.
3. Child writes the sentence: Don't correct your child while writing out the sentence, even if you see the child start to make a spelling mistake. In fact, it's best to look away when the child is writing! This will allow the child to concentrate on the task without feeling monitored or judged, and it allows the child to "own" the process of spelling. There will be time for correcting spelling after the next step.
4. Child proofreads the sentence was just written: In this step, your child reads the sentence aloud. This is a good time for your child to practice self-correction. Ask the child to check the writing by asking these questions: Am I satisfied that I spelled everything correctly? Did I use capital letters and punctuation properly?
5. Finally, check the sentence: If you identify a misspelled word, swing into action by picking ONE mistake and talking about what you see. This is important



teaching time! Is there a specific rule or generalization that you need to review? If there are multiple errors, remember you get to focus on just ONE.

Dictation is a wonderful tool to use for spelling, but you might have some questions at first. Check out the solutions to some common problems in the troubleshooting section in this article: <https://blog.allaboutlearningpress.com/spelling-dictation/> as well as some helpful hints for correcting spelling: <https://blog.allaboutlearningpress.com/handle-spelling-mistakes/>