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Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years
www.popey.ca

The Foundations of Literacy Learning:

Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness & Phonics

Presenters:
Lisa Thomas & Jen Kelly

Friday, February 17th 9:00 – 11:00am

*Workshop handout & resources available at padlet.com/POPEY

Live captions available in the Zoom toolbar.

Outcomes for Today

- ☆ **definitions** and **scope and sequence** for foundational literacy skills:
  - phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics
- ☆ mini-lessons, activities, and routines to:
  - **explicitly** and **systematically support** our students as they learn letter/sound relationships in reading and writing
  - **provide** students with the **time, opportunity,** and **practice** to make meaning **in** and out of texts and **expand** their word solving **skills**

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How did you learn to...

ride a bike?

swim?

drive a car?

Please choose ONE activity and take ONE minute to reflect individually – take some notes on how you learned to do it.

Please share your thoughts in the Chatbox as the music ends ...

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HOW do we learn?

* observation of someone skilled modelling/demonstrating
* direct instruction
* gradual release of responsibility
* practice / repetition
* time / opportunity
* encouragement / feedback
* safety to take risks and try new things
* relationships, motivation, engagement...

Learning is:
* social
* constructive
* experiential
* inquiry-based

With this in mind, how can we provide our students with the comprehensive learning experiences needed to build their foundational literacy skills?

Visual Metaphor

Processes Sounds

Sound City

Memories

Meaning Mountain

Recognizes objects & faces

Visual Village

Phonological Awareness

–refers to the ability to **recognize and manipulate the spoken parts** of **sentences** and **words,** and **involves a continuum of skills** that develop over time and are crucial for **reading** & **spelling success**:

* *rhyme, alliteration, syllables, blending/segmenting, and...*
* *the most sophisticated – and last to develop – is* phonemic awareness

Phonemic Awareness

–refers to **oral language** and is the understanding that **spoken words** are made up of **individual sounds** called **phonemes**

Phonics

–refers to **print**, and is the knowledge of **letter/sound relationships** and the ability to **apply** that knowledge to **decoding** unfamiliar **printed words**

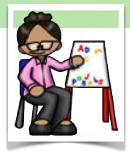
Emergence of Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of words.

Taught and learned in the order of easiest to most difficult...

- Rhyme
- Alliteration
- Sentence Segmentation
- Syllables
- Onset and Rime
- Phoneme Matching
- Phoneme Isolating
- Phoneme Segmenting
- Phoneme Segmenting and Blending
- Phoneme Manipulating

Phonemic Awareness & Phonics



These work in concert to explicitly and systematically support our students as they navigate the unpredictable, complex alphabetic structure of language & print.

Phonemic Awareness

- main focus is on sounds
- deals with spoken language
- lessons are oral and auditory
- students work with manipulating sounds in words
- there are 44 sounds in the English language

Phonics

- main focus is on letters and their sounds
  there are 26 letters that make 44 sounds
- deals with written language and print
- lessons are both visual and auditory
- students work with reading and writing letters
  according to their sounds, spelling patterns, and phonological structure
- there are over 200 ways to spell the 44 sounds we hear

Phonemic awareness instruction improves phonics skills, and phonics instruction improves phonemic awareness; the relationship is reciprocal.

–Lane & Pullen, 2004

Readiness Skills

The **two best predictors** of **early reading success** are **phonemic awareness** and **alphabet recognition.**

Phonemic Awareness

A range of subskills is taught to develop phonemic awareness, with **oral blending** and **oral segmentation** having the most positive impact on **reading and writing development**.

☆ These skills are **power skills**.

Alphabet Recognition

Involves learning the **names**, **shapes**, and **sounds** of the **letters** of the alphabet with **fluency**.

Phonemic awareness and alphabet recognition are focused on primarily in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

Scope and Sequence of Phonemic Awareness

…the **understanding** that **spoken words** are made up of **individual sounds**

Examples of Phonemic Awareness Skills

Taught and learned in the order of easiest to most difficult…

1. **Sound and word discrimination:** *What word doesn't belong with the others? cat, mat, bat, ran*
2. **Rhyming:** *What word rhymes with 'cat'? bat*
3. **Syllable splitting:** *The onset of 'cat' is /k/, the rime is /at/*
4. **Blending:** *What word is made up of the sounds /k/ /a/ /t/? cat*
5. **Phonemic segmentation:** *What are the sounds in 'cat'? /k/ /a/ /t/*
6. **Phoneme deletion:** *What is 'cat' without the /k/? at*
7. **Phoneme manipulation:** *What word would you have if you changed the /t/ in 'cat' to an /n/? can*

University of Oregon Center on Teaching and Learning: Phonemic Awareness

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Rhyme Recognition & Repetition

One minute direct instruction lesson

Rhyme Repetition

T says word pair, Students repeat:

hop/mop ran/fan
wet/jet mad/dad

Examples:

go/no
yes/me
sad/mad
out/pig
run/fun
in/lap
rip/bag

Role of the Educator

- educator says the word pairs

Role of the Students

- Students repeat the word pairs and show thumbs up if the words rhyme, thumbs down if the words don't rhyme.

From – Phonemic Awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! – Heggerty

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Onset Fluency

One minute direct instruction lesson

Onset Fluency

T says word, Students say word, then isolate the onset

T: funny S: funny /f/

Examples:

baker /b/
puppy /p/
dinner /d/
gentle /j/
happy /h/

Role of the Educator

- educator says a word

Role of the Students

- Students repeat the word and isolate the onset (first sound)

From – Phonemic Awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! – Heggerty

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Segmenting Phonemes

One minute direct instruction lesson

Segmenting Phonemes

T says the word,
Students say word,
then segment it

T: flip
Ss: flip f–l–i–p

Examples:

hop
run
map
play
slug
grab

Role of the Educator

- educator says the word

Role of the Students

- Students repeat the word and segment it into phonemes

Blending Phonemes

One minute direct instruction lesson

Blending Phonemes

T says the phonemes for each word, Students blend the sounds & say whole word

T: b–l–a–k
Ss: b–l–a–k … black

Examples:

r–e–d
p–u–t
b–a–l
f–l–a–g
s–w–i–m
g–l–a–s

Role of the Educator

- educator says the phonemes for each word

Role of the Students

- Students blend the sounds to say the whole word

Early Literacy Skill: Letter Naming

One minute direct instruction lesson

Letter Naming

T holds up flash cards, says 'the letter is T, the sound is /t/ (tuh)'
Ss say the letter **name**, then the letter **sound**

Examples:

T
M
B
C
G

Role of the Educator

- educator holds up flash cards one at a time
- says 'the letter is _____, the sound is _____"
- cards are selected based on student need

Role of the Students

- Students say the letter name AND sound

Explicit Instruction Both In and Out of Texts

Making Meaning OUT OF Texts

Word Study

- Early Literacy Concepts
- Phonological Awareness
- Letter–Sound Relationships
- Letter Knowledge
- Spelling Patterns
- High–Frequency Words
- Word Meaning/Vocabulary
- Word Structure
- Word Solving Actions

Making Meaning IN Texts

Reading

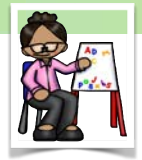
- Active Read Aloud
- Reading Mini–Lessons
- Shared Reading
- Guided/Small–Group Reading
- Independent Reading

Writing

- Modelled Writing
- Writing Mini–Lessons
- Shared/Interactive Writing
- Guided/Small–Group Writing
- Independent Writing

Oral Language

The Art of the Mini-Lesson



Mini-Lesson Structure

I do

WE do

YOU do

- mini, not maxi
- strategy–focused
- model, model, model
- direct and explicit instruction
- guided practice in a safe, supportive setting
- transfer to independence

Modelling a Mini-Lesson on Alliteration

- mini, not maxi
- strategy–focused
- model, model, model
- direct and explicit instruction

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers

- guided practice in a safe, supportive setting

Goofy Garrett grazes on gigantic green grapes.
Silly Simon searches sneakily for slithering snakes.
Tricky Taylor teaches ten timid tigers to twirl.

- transfer to independence

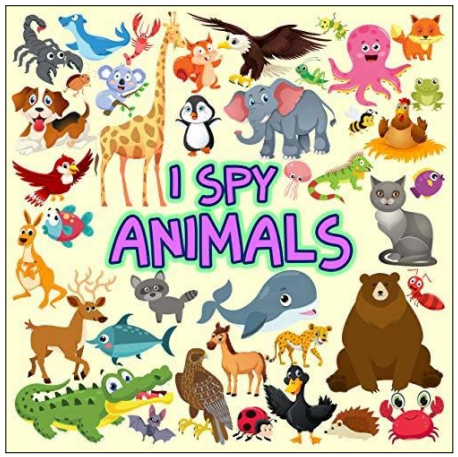
make up your own phrase using alliteration

Rhyming Activity - OUT of text

Rhyming I Spy

I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with …

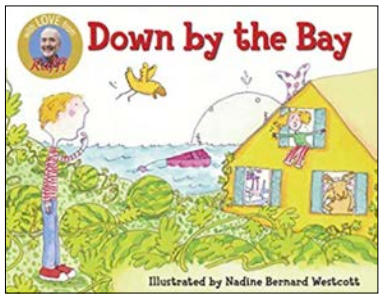
- mat
- tail
- hear
- grab



- log
- wish
- chair
- wheel

Image from: I Spy Animals – by Nancy Dyer

Read Aloud Rhyming Activity - Making Meaning IN Text



Did you ever see
…a goose kissing a moose
…a whale with a polka-dot tail
…a fly wearing a tie
…a bear combing his hair
…llamas eating their pajamas
…down by the bay?

Did you ever see a **frog**…

Did you ever see a **fox**…

Did you ever see a **dragon**…

–or choose your own animal and rhyme–

The Name Game

Our name is the first word we loved. We can study our names as an entry point for learning letters and writing other things.

Write down your name on some paper.

See how many words you can make, using the letters in your name, in one minute.

Stefanie

You could also **sort** them like this:

- high frequency words – at, as, is, if, in
- cvc words – fan, tin, tan, set, net, sat
- cvce words – safe, sane
- blends or digraphs – nest, fast
- vowel teams/pairs – feast

What's in a name?

Using these names,
how could you sort or group them together?

–syllables, beginning sounds, ending sounds/
letters, short/long vowels, vowel teams, etc.

Marie

Laura

Lydia

Nicole

Roxanne

Angela

Danielle

Robyn

Rebecca

Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom – Fountas & Pinnell

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Characteristics of Strong Phonics Instruction

- ✓ **Readiness Skills** – phonemic awareness & alphabet recognition
- ✓ **Scope and sequence** – build student learning from simple to complex
- ✓ **Blending** – must be frequently modelled and applied
- ✓ **Dictation** – guided spelling helps transition growing reading skills to writing
- ✓ **Word Awareness Activities**– word sorts and word building provide opportunities to play with words and experiment with how word parts combine
- ✓ **Teaching High-Frequency Words** – teaching high utility words that are irregular based on common sound-spelling patterns (typically the top 200–300 high frequency words are taught in K–2)
- ✓ **Reading Connected Text** – controlled, decodable text at the beginning level of reading instruction helps students develop a sense of comfort in and control over their reading growth – a key learning tool in early phonics instruction

Active * Social * Reflective

Phonics From A to Z: A Practical Guide – Blevins

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Possible Phonics Scope and Sequence

1. **Teach short-vowel sounds before long-vowel sounds**
   - –efficiency and ease of learning are critical
   - –the simplicity of using short-vowel spellings and CVC words is beneficial to struggling readers
2. **Teach consonants and short vowels in combination so that words can be generated as early as possible**
   - –you can create decodable, connected text so kids can apply their knowledge of learned sound-spelling relationships
3. **The majority of consonants taught early on should be continuous consonants**
   - –such as **f, l, m, n, r,** and **s** – because these consonant sounds can be sustained without distortion; it's easier to model blending
4. **Use a sequence in which the most words can be generated**
   - –for example, many words can be generated using the letter **t**; very few using **x**
   - –higher-frequency sound-spelling relationships should precede less-frequent ones
5. **Progress from simple to more complex sound-spellings**
   - –consonant sounds should be taught before digraphs and blends
   - –short-vowel sound-spellings should be taught before long-vowel sound-spellings

Phonics from A to Z: A Practical Guide – Blevins

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WHY a Scope and Sequence?

Scope and sequence are created so that many words can be formed as early as possible.

How many words can you potentially read and write with the following letters?

- s, m, t, d, l
- s, m, a, t, d

Quick generation of useful words is not only more efficient, but highly motivating!

Phonics Instruction The Connection Between Decoding & Comprehension

Phonics instruction helps the reader to **map sounds onto spellings**. This ability enables readers to decode words. **Decoding** words aids in the development of and improvement in **word recognition**. The more words one recognizes, the easier the reading task. Therefore, phonics instruction aids in the development of word recognition by providing children with an important and useful way to figure out unfamiliar words while reading.

When children begin to be able to recognize a large amount of words quickly and accurately, **reading fluency** improves. As more and more words become firmly stored in a child's memory (that is, the child recognizes more and more words on sight) they gain fluency and **automaticity** in word recognition. Having **many opportunities to decode words in text** is critical to learning words by sight…and to avoid making reading errors.

Reading fluency improves **reading comprehension**. Since children are no longer struggling with decoding words, they can devote their full attention (mental energies) to **making meaning from the text**.

As the **vocabulary and concept demands increase** in text, children need to be able to devote more of their **attention** to making meaning from text, and increasingly **less attention to decoding**.

A Systematic Plan for Instruction, Practice & Mastery

"When a **new skill is introduced**, it should be **systematically** and **purposefully reviewed** for the next **four to six weeks**."

– Wiley Blevins

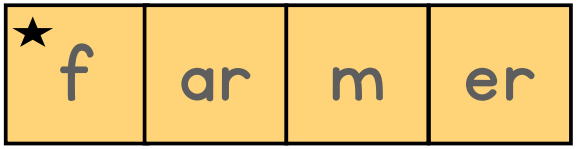
Using Elkonin boxes to Teach Orthographic Mapping

Why use Elkonin boxes?

- it helps build students' phonemic awareness & phonics
- it helps connect letters to sounds
- it helps students hear and record all sounds in a word
- it helps solidify left to right directionality

Once students are proficient with phonemic awareness:

- You can transition to teaching letter boxes (this helps with spelling)
- Students gain independence with this problem-solving strategy



The process of using Elkonin boxes during Writing

- Give the student a 'practice page' or white board
  - When the student is writing and they come to a word they need to problem solve, model the use of Elkonin boxes on the practice page
- Model the task for the student
  - Say the word slowly and touch the boxes (or push objects into the boxes) as you say the word
- Have the student try it themselves
  - You may do the task together until the student can take over

Orthographic Mapping

Orthographic mapping proposes that we use the pronunciations of words that are already stored in long-term memory as the anchoring points for the orthographic sequences (letters) used to represent those pronunciations.

Let's Explore an Orthographic Mapping Routine for the word

does

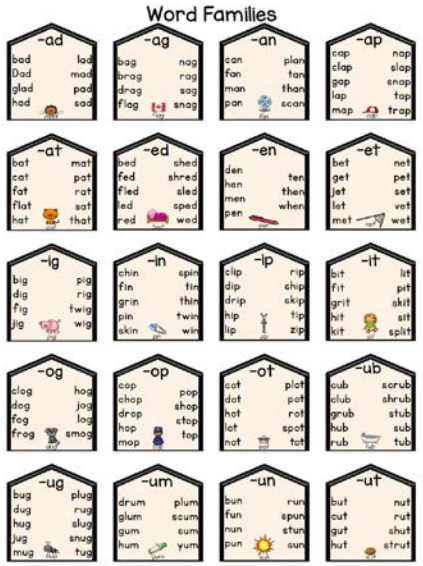
The Power of Word Families

Teaching word families is high impact instruction

- There are **37 word families** that can **help kids spell** about 500 words
- The **word families** help kids make **C–V–C words** and also **teach children** a **foundational spelling strategy**
- One **known word** can **help you** spell other unknown words:
  - ✓ hop, mop, chop
  - ✓ day, say, play
  - ✓ bat, cat, flat
  - ✓ fin, pin, grin
  - ✓ bit, fit, split

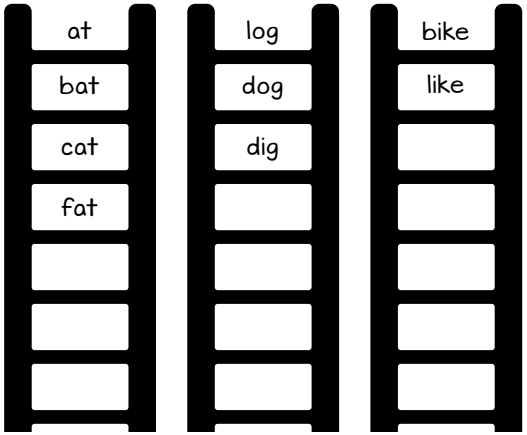
- Once writers **understand** a **word family**, sometimes they can then **begin** to **recognize** that **short vowel sound** in **other words**, too.

Scaffolded Supports for Working with Word Families



POPEY's Word Families Chart

Word Ladders - Playing With Sounds, Letters, Words



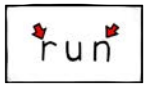
Take one minute to finish **one** of these word ladders, or create your own word ladder.

See if you can come up with 8 words in your ladder.

Share yours in the Chat box before the music ends...

Easily differentiated to be responsive to your students' varied abilities & needs, and can be extended to a literacy centre/station for additional engagement & practice.

Vowel Charts

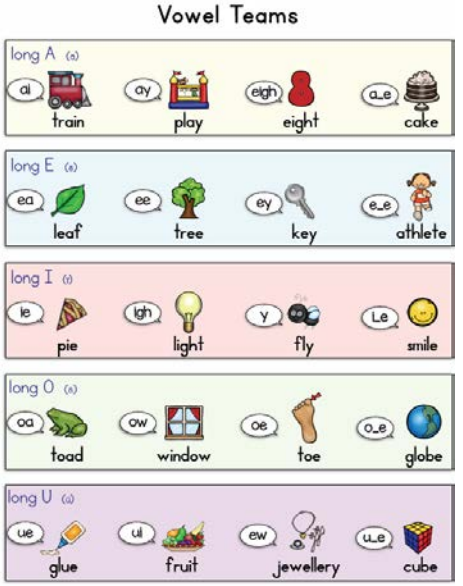


Can help with the middles of words:

- At first, most of the sounds children hear are consonants.
- Tell them that every word has at least one vowel.
- When the middle of a word is hard, it is often because vowels are tricky.
- Even if their vowel guess is incorrect, it makes the word they are writing more readable.
- Show students how to use the vowel chart to help decide which vowel to use.

a – e – i – o – u

POPEY's Vowel Charts to Support Early Literacy



POPEY Vowel Charts

Word Wall I Spy

- the word starts with 'm'
- the word has 3 letters
- the word has 2 syllables
- the word has a long 'e' sound
- it's a compound word
- it's a word that means the opposite of **last**

and	animal	because	another
ball	big	crash	community
can	friend	eating	discover
day	have	make	everybody
fun	look	outside	first
like	night	really	question
play	said	school	recycle
see	talk	sometimes	terrible
the	thing	truck	usually
up	your	writing	weather

Easily differentiated to be responsive to your students' varied abilities & needs.
Can be adapted to use with vocabulary words from across the curriculum,
and extended to a literacy centre/station – Portable Personalized Word Wall Folders.

Balanced Literacy Diet – Word Wall I Spy

The Building Blocks of Literacy Learning

The goal is for students to…

- be **enthusiastic explorers** of words:
  - ★ **puzzle** out **letter–sound relationships**
  - ★ see **patterns**
  - ★ take words **apart**
  - ★ **investigate** meanings
- **connect** to **words** in an **active** way
- **expand** their **reading** and **writing** powers

Students **learn HOW TO LEARN** aspects of words, and develop efficient and powerful word–solving strategies

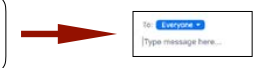
Adapted from The Fountas & Pinnell Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study System – Fountas & Pinnell

Reflections & Next Steps

Resources, research & activities shared today:

- ✓ Definitions, scope & sequence: phonological & phonemic awareness, phonics
- ✓ How we learn, and the reading brain (visual village, sound city, meaning mountain)
- ✓ Explicit, intentional, and repeated word study in and out of texts
- ✓ Mini–lessons (direct instruction, model, guided practice, transfer to independence)
- ✓ The connection between decoding & comprehension
- ✓ Characteristics of strong phonics instruction
- ✓ Elkonin boxes and orthographic mapping
- ✓ Using students' names, word families, word ladders, word wall I spy
  - ★ differentiated & engaging word solving routines

What is ONE thing you can commit to TRY in your classroom or role? Share it in the ChatBox…



Sources

Resource Books

A Fresh Look at Phonics, Grade K–2 – Blevins

Phonics Activities & Games Kit – Blevins & Sadler School

Phonics From A–Z – Blevins

Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates

Units of Study in Phonics – Calkins

Units of Study in Writing – Calkins

Literacy Lessons Part Two – Clay

Comprehension Skill, Will & Thrill of Reading – Fisher & Frey

The Fountas & Pinnell Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study System – Fountas & Pinnell

When Readers Struggle: Teaching That Works – Fountas & Pinnell

Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom – Fountas & Pinnell

Lesley University Institute: Word Study: Teaching Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling in Grades K–3

Phonemic Awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! – Heggerty

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum

Comprehensive Literacy Resource – Trehearne

Sources

Blogposts & Presentations

Carolyn Strom – Presentation: Refining Professional Knowledge to Build Capacity in Reading Instruction, Learning & the Brain Conference, April 2022

The Big Five: Phonics–Orthographic Mapping – Wooldridge

Reading Rockets – Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: Introduction

Videos

Worry About Yourself

TED Talk – Birth of a Word

Balanced Literacy Diet – Park Those Sounds

Tik Tok Word Reading

POPEY – Word Ladders

Balanced Literacy Diet – Word Wall I Spy

Miles Music Kid on TikTok

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