



POPEY 

Provincial Outreach Program
for the Early Years

www.popey.ca



The Foundations of Literacy Learning: Phonemic Awareness

Presenters:
Lisa Thomas & Jen Kelly

Friday, February 24th

10:30am–12:00pm

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

Outcomes for This Session



- ★ defining phonemic awareness and its scope and sequence in the primary years, including:
 - mini-lessons, activities, and routines to explicitly and systematically support our students as they learn to isolate, manipulate, blend and segment the sounds in spoken and written words.

Learning to buckle yourself in...



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 and then discuss with your table group.

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

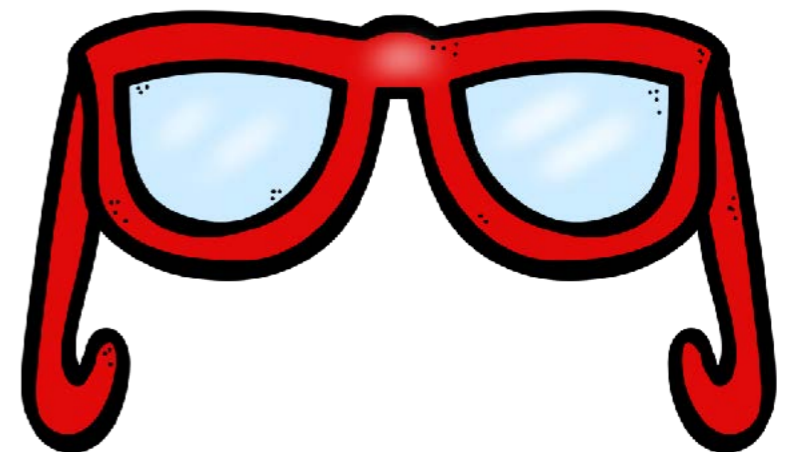
Memories

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**



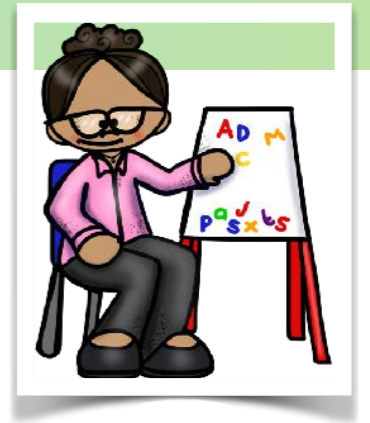
Phonics

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



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**.

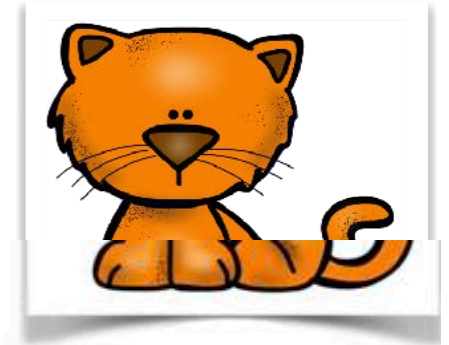
Phonemic awareness and alphabet recognition are focused on primarily in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

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*

Effective Routines for Developing Word Solvers

Students should have daily experiences with:

- ▶ scaffolded reading and writing activities
- ▶ alphabet games, stories, poems and songs
- ▶ predictable charts
- ▶ sound activities – sorting, blending, substituting, matching
- ▶ letter and word sorts
- ▶ making words activities
- ▶ word and sentence segmenting activities
- ▶ syllable sorting and segmenting activities
- ▶ word wall activities
- ▶ word guessing games

Take **one minute** to reflect **individually** on which activities are already in your daily routines.

Next, share a favourite routine, a connection, or a new possibility with your table group.



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.

Onset Fluency

One minute direct instruction lesson

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)

Onset Fluency

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

T: funny S: funny /f/

Blending Phonemes

One minute direct instruction lesson

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

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

Segmenting Phonemes

One minute direct instruction lesson

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

Segmenting Phonemes

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

T: flip

Ss: flip f-l-i-p

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

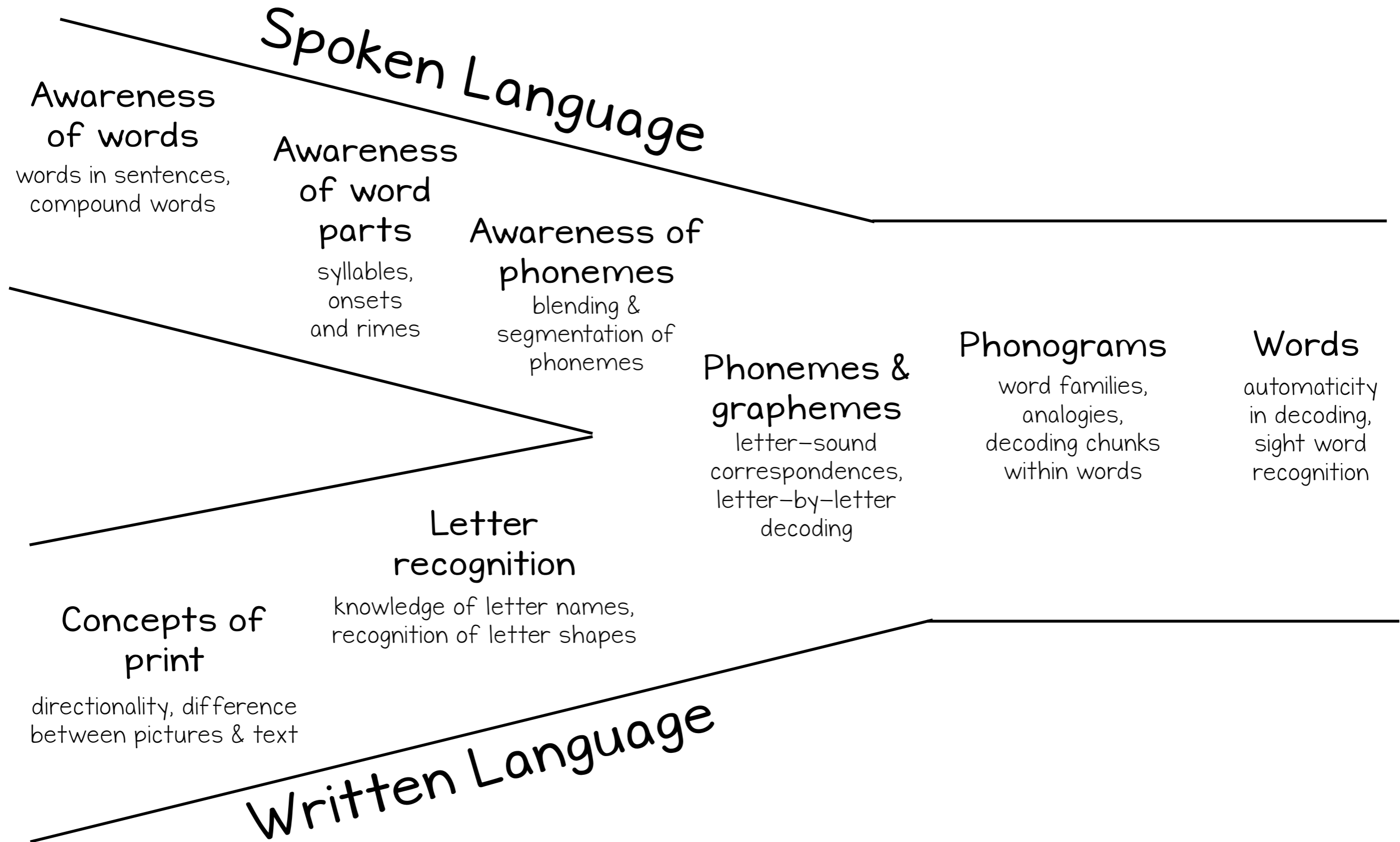
Role of the Educator

- ▶ 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

The Road to Reading Words



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

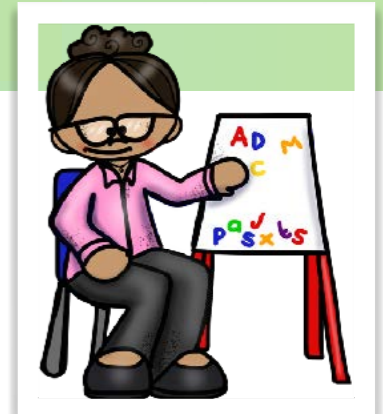
Active Read Aloud
Reading Mini–Lessons
Shared Reading
Guided/Small–Group Reading
Independent Reading

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.

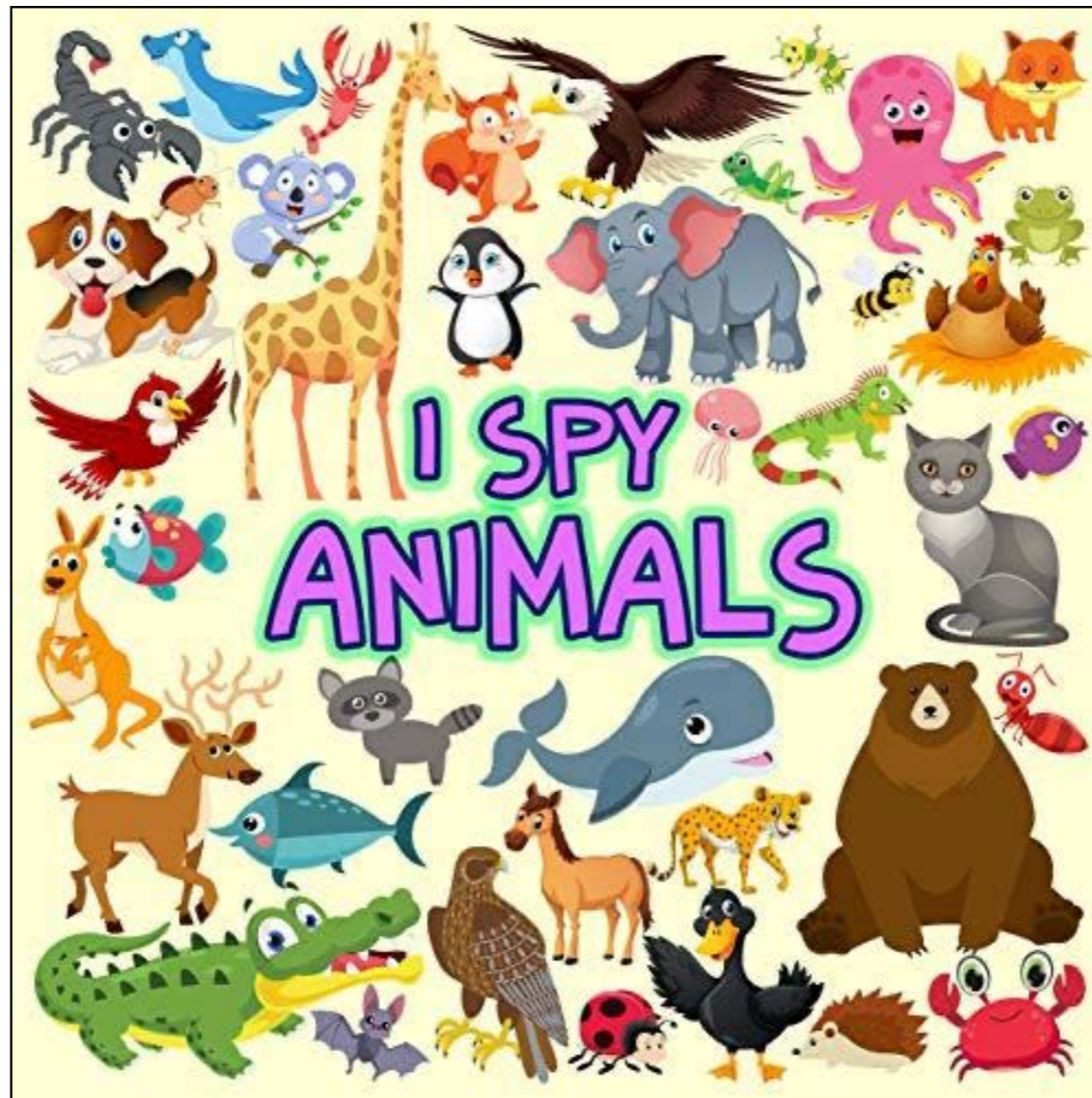
Tricky Taylor teaches ten timid tigers to twirl.

- * transfer to independence

make up your own phrase using alliteration

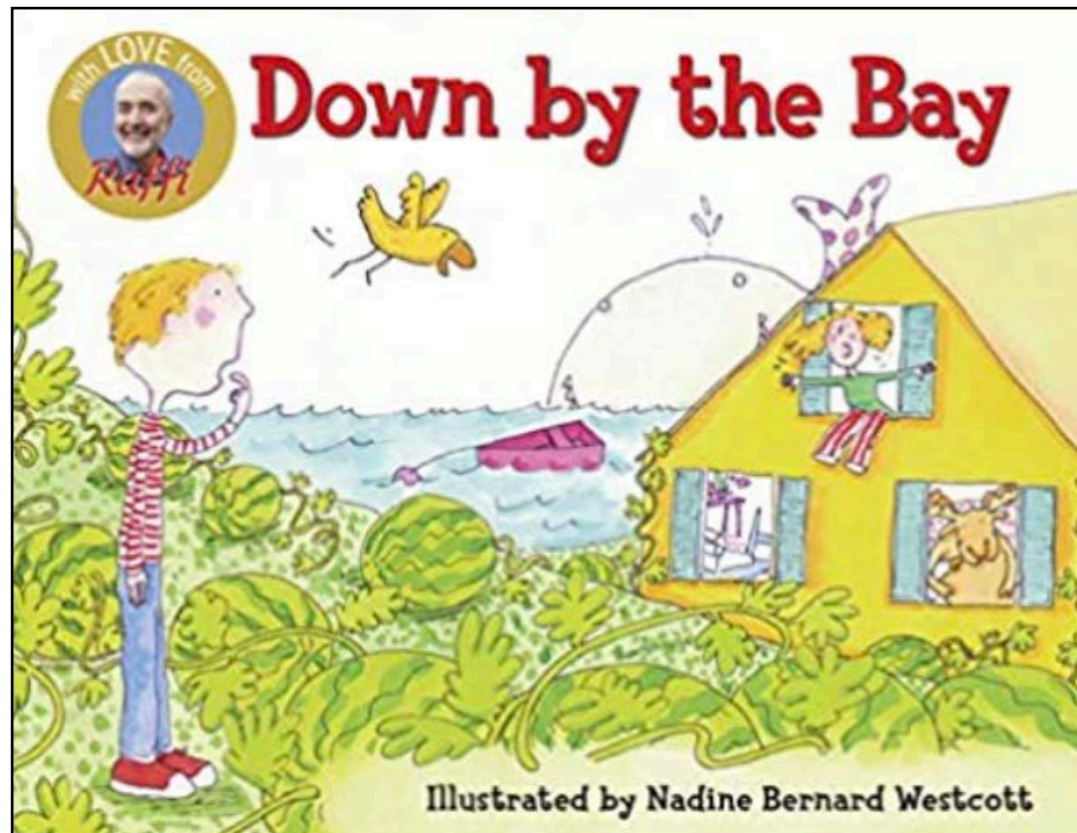
I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with ...

- mat
- tail
- hear
- grab



- log
- wish
- chair
- wheel

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?

Take **one minute** to
come up with 2 – 3
more rhymes we can
add to the book:

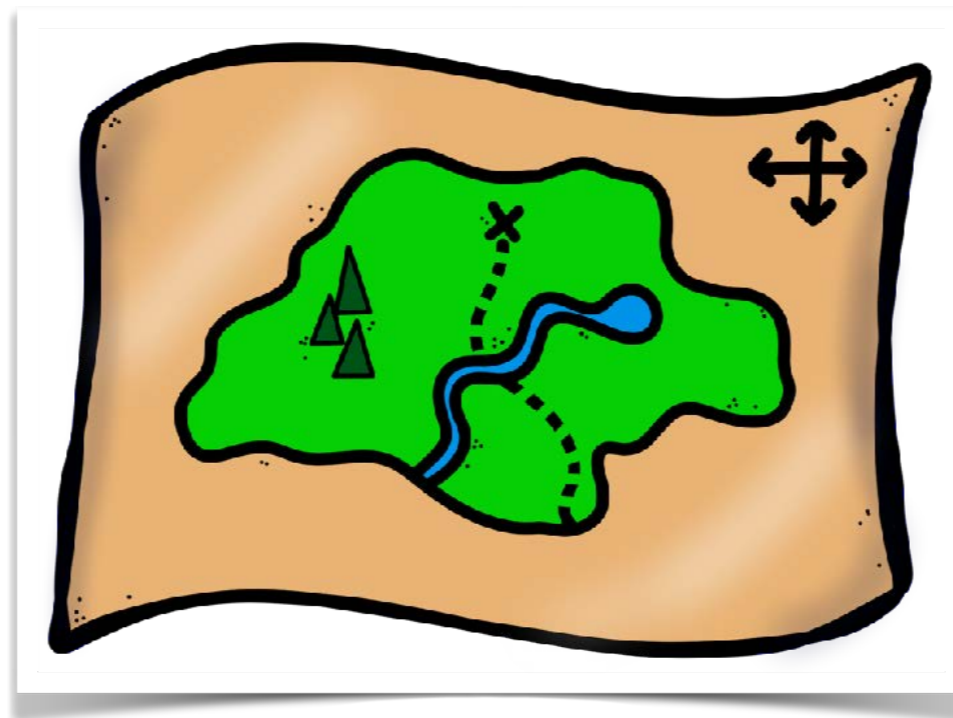
Did you ever see a...?

Share your favourite
with your table group.

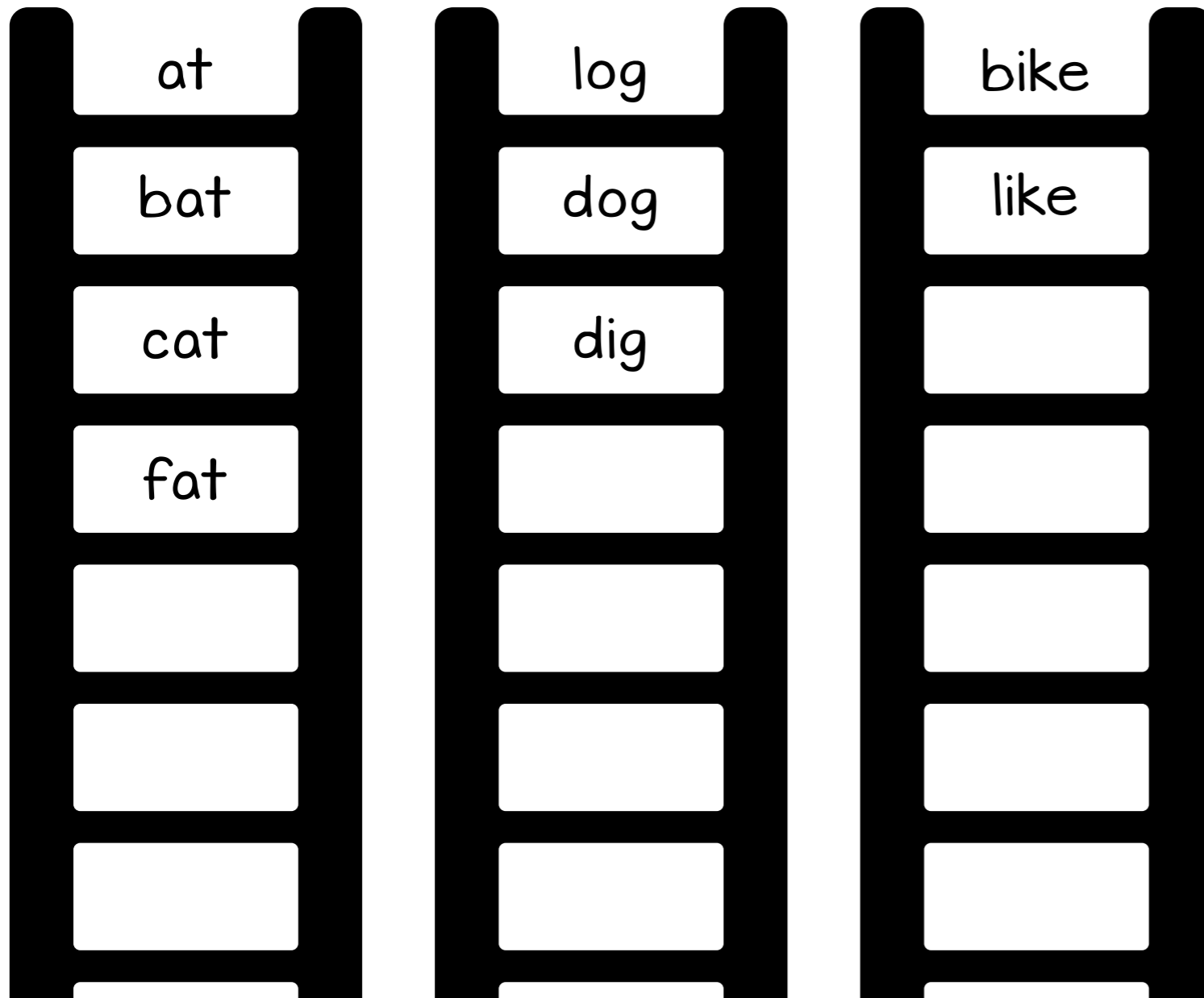
A Systematic Plan for Instruction, Practice & Mastery

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

– Wiley Blevins



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.

Work with a partner or your whole table group.

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

Word Wall I Spy

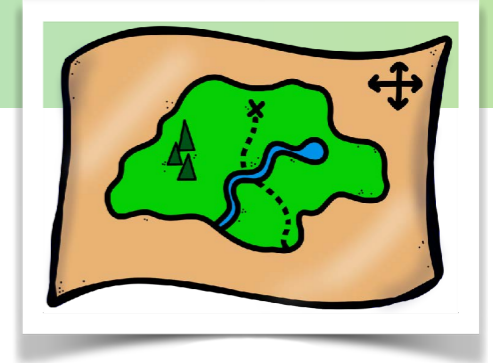
- ▶ the word starts with 'm'
- ▶ the word has 3 letters
- ▶ the word has 2 syllables
- ▶ the word has a long 'e' sound
- ▶ it's a compound word
- ▶ it's a word that means the opposite of **last**

| | | | |
|------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| 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.

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

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)
- ✓ Elkonin boxes and orthographic mapping
- ✓ 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?

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](#)

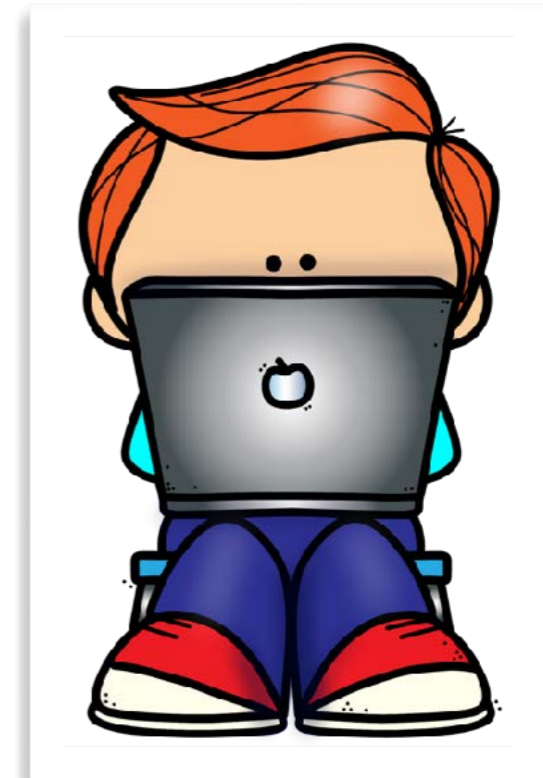
[Balanced Literacy Diet – Park Those Sounds](#)

[Tik Tok Word Reading](#)

[POPEY – Word Ladders](#)

[Balanced Literacy Diet – Word Wall I Spy](#)

[Miles Music Kid on TikTok](#)





Lisa Thomas

lisa@popey.ca



Jen Kelly

jen@popey.ca



POPEY 

Provincial Outreach Program for the Early Years

www.popey.ca