



HANDOUT: ALPHABETICS PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

PHONICS

WORD TOSS

This is a good activity for discerning beginning and ending sounds. It is played like the name game and can be played with individuals or in teams.

Steps

1. Sit in a circle if individuals are playing. If playing in teams, line each team up (after a team member gives an answer, they will go to the back of the line)
2. Determine who will go first.
3. The first person (or team) says a word, such as *bird*
4. The second person or team must say a word that begins with the same sound as the end sound in *bird*. For example, *dog*
5. The next person or team must now say a word that begins with the same sound as the end sound in *dog*. For example, *garden*.
6. The teacher writes the words used on the board. Words may not be used twice.
7. When a person or a team is unable to come up with a word, they are eliminated and the game continues until one person or team is left.

PHONICS BINGO

This is a great way to review lots of phonics elements. There are lots of variations to the game, as you will see below.

Steps

1. Select the phonics sounds you want to work on.
2. On a piece of paper, draw a grid of five rows and five columns (like a bingo card).
3. Write a phonics sound in each of the spaces (you can use some more than once). Make the middle space a "Free" space.
4. Do the same on cards for the remaining learners. You can use the same phonics sounds, just put them in different places.
5. Select words from the lessons that represent the sounds. Write these words on pieces of paper, underline the phonics sound, and put them face down in a pile.
6. Draw a word from the pile. Read it aloud and then give the sound the word represents.
7. Each learner should cover the matching sound on his or her bingo card.
8. The person who first covers five sounds in a row wins.

Variations

1. You don't have to use the beginning sound of the word. You can have learners listen for the end sound of the word and cover the letter or letters on their bingo cards.
2. Some sounds can be spelled many different ways. You can have multiple ways of spelling the sound on the bingo card. Instead of reading a word and giving the sound, just give the sound and have learners cover all of the ways to spell that sound. For example, if the sound was /k/, learners might cover *c*, *k*, *ck*, or *ch*.

WORD FIND

This is a great way to use real world materials to reinforce phonics study.

Steps

1. Pick an article from a newspaper or other piece of realia that learners are interested in.
2. Read the article to the learners.
3. Give learners a sound, such as /b/. Ask learners to find all of the words in the article (or paragraph, if the article is long) that have the sound in the beginning, middle, or end of the word.
4. Ask learners to write the words they found, grouping them by where the target sound occurs.

SAME OR DIFFERENT

This activity helps learners distinguish between sounds.

Steps

1. Select two initial consonant sounds to practice. Write the letter for each sound along with a keyword. If learners have created study flash cards, you can have learners use those cards.
2. Review each sound and letter.
3. Say two words that begin with the same sound. Ask learners if the words begin with the same sound or different sounds. Ask learners what letter each word begins with.
4. Say two words that begin with the other sound. Ask learners if the words begin with the same sound or different sounds. Ask learners what letter each word begins with.
5. Say two words, each beginning with one of the sounds. Ask learners if the words begin with the same sound or different sounds. Ask learners what letter each word begins with.
6. Repeat the process with other words with the same or different beginning sounds until you are sure learners can distinguish the sounds.

SOUND BOXES

Sound boxes, also known as Elkonin boxes, are used to help learners break words into individual sounds. They are good for spelling practice.

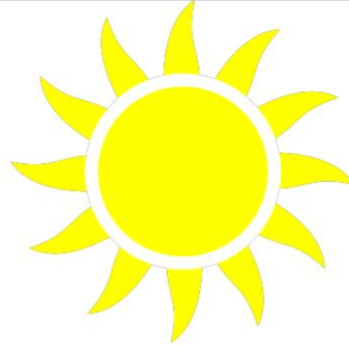
Steps

1. This activity requires some computer skills – the ability to insert clipart or pictures into a document and the ability to make boxes.
2. Identify the words you want learners to practice.
3. Find an image that represents the word. Insert the image into a document.
4. Underneath the image create a series of boxes, one box for each sound (not letter).

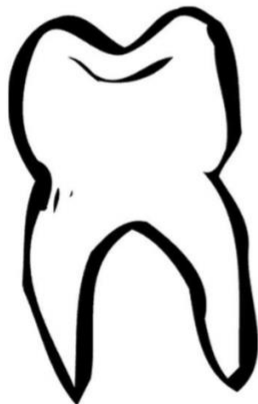
5. Explain to learners that they are to identify the word, identify the individual sounds in the word, then spell the word in the boxes provided. Each box represents one sound.



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WORD PATTERNS

CONCENTRATION GAME

This game provides practice in both sounding out words using patterns and recognizing patterns in print.

Steps

1. Create matching pairs of word patterns and each word on a separate index card. Examples: *cat/mat, had/mad, love/glove*.
2. Determine how many pairs you will use for the board. A good size board is 8 pairs.
3. Turn the cards face down and shuffle them. Put them into a grid—for 16 cards the grid would be 4 x 4.
4. The first player turns over two cards. If they do not use the same word pattern, the player turns them back over and it is the second player's turn.
5. If they use the same word pattern, the player must read each word correctly to pick up the cards. It is then the second player's turn.
6. The second player turns over two cards. If they do not use the same word pattern, the player turns them back over and it is the first player's turn. If they use the same pattern, the player must read each word correctly to pick up the cards. It is now the first player's turn again.
7. Play repeats until all of the cards have been picked up. The player with the most cards wins.

WORD SLIDES

Word slides are a great hands-on learning tool for working with word patterns.

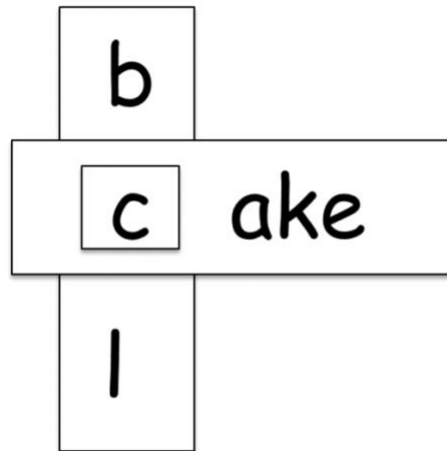
Steps

1. Select the word pattern or patterns to review.
2. Place learners in pairs or small groups.
3. Give each set of learners a word pattern. Have learners brainstorm all of the words they can form using that word pattern.
4. Give each learner two 4" x 6" index cards
5. Have learners fold one index card in half lengthwise.
6. Have learners print the word family on the right hand side of the card.
7. Have learners cut a window for the missing initial sound, and then cut a slit in the fold of the index card.
8. Have learners fold the second index card lengthwise.
9. Have learners write the initial consonant sounds from the words they brainstormed onto the second index card.
10. Insert the second index card into the slot of the first index card.
11. As learners pull the index card, the consonant sounds will appear in the window. Learners can practice reading each word.

Variations

1. Instead of cutting a window at the beginning of the word, you can cut a window in the middle of the word. Write the vowels on the pull strip and practice substituting them to create words.
2. Write one word pattern on the front of the strip and another on the back of the strip.

Example



WORD PARTS

TEACHING SYLLABLES

Use this process for teaching learners to divide words into syllables and apply three rules to help with pronunciation.

Steps

1. Select a group of words to practice. These words can come from the reading or can be part of learners' known vocabulary.
2. Explain to learners that a syllable is a word or word part that has only one vowel sound.
3. Give examples: *bat* (1), *paper* (2), *little* (2), *employment* (3), *example* (3)
4. Read the first word. Ask learners how many vowel sounds they hear. Ask learners to identify the vowel sounds. Continue with the remaining words.
5. If learners have difficulty with step 4, continue to practice that skill. When learners can accurately identify vowel sounds, move on to step 6.
6. Explain that learners can use three rules about syllables to help them decode and pronounce new words. Explain that we will learn the rules and then see how they apply to the words in the list.
7. Write each rule at the top of an index card. Leave room at the bottom for learners to write examples.

Rule 1: The two-consonant rule

If there are two consonants between the vowel sounds, divide the word between the consonants. Do not divide blends or digraphs.

1. Ask learners to write the following words below the rule: *into*, *lesson*, *traffic*, *fender*, *bashful*, *emblem*.
2. Ask learners to put a dot under each vowel.
3. Ask learners to put an x under any final e's.
4. Ask learners to underline digraphs and consonant blends.
5. Ask learners to divide the words according to rule 1.
6. Ask learners to pronounce each word according to rule 1.

in/to • •	les/son • •	traf/fic • •	fen/der • •	bash/ful • _ •	em/blem • _ •
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Rule 2: The one-consonant rule

If the word has only one consonant sound between two vowel sounds, divide the word before the consonant. If the vowel is at the end of a syllable, it will usually have a long sound. The letter y in the middle or at the end of the word acts as a vowel.

1. Ask learners to write the following words below the rule: *bacon, female, syphon, lady*.
2. Ask learners to put a dot under each vowel.
3. Ask learners to put an x under any final e's.
4. Ask learners to underline digraphs and consonant blends.
5. Ask learners to divide the words according to rule 2.
6. Ask learners to pronounce each word according to rule 2.

ba/con • •	fe/male • •x	sy/phon • _ •	la/dy • / •
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Rule 3: The one-consonant oops rule

Sometimes the one consonant rule doesn't work. If the word doesn't sound like a word you recognize, divide the word after the consonant. The vowel will have a short sound.

1. Ask learners to write the following words below the rule: *lemon, visit, second, travel*.
2. Ask learners to put a dot under each vowel.
3. Ask learners to put an x under any final e's.
4. Ask learners to underline digraphs and consonant blends.
5. Ask learners to divide the words according to rule 2.
6. Ask learners to pronounce each word according to rule 2.
7. Ask learners if the way they pronounced the words sounded like words they recognized.
8. Ask learners to write the words again under the rule, putting dots under each vowel, x's under final e's, and underlining digraphs and consonant blends.
9. Now ask learners to divide the words according to rule 3.
10. Ask learners to pronounce the words according to rule 3. Do learners recognize the words now?

lem/on • •	vis/it • •	sec/ond • • _	trav/el _ • •
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8. Now give learners the first word from your list.
9. Ask learners to put a dot under each vowel.
10. Ask learners to put an x under any final e's.
11. Ask learners to underline digraphs and consonant blends.
12. Ask learners which rule applies to the word.
13. Ask learners to divide the word according to the rules.
14. Ask learners to pronounce the word according to the rules.
15. Give learners another word.

WORD MAPS

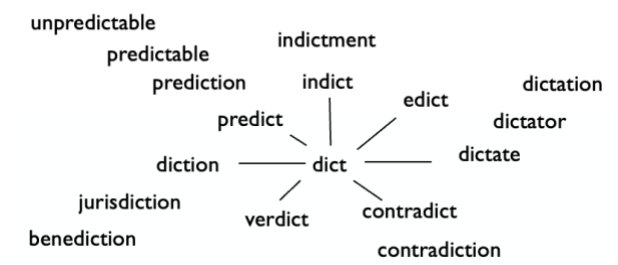
Word maps can help learners identify prefixes, suffixes, and word roots to decode words; to recognize words with similar roots; and to use prefixes and suffixes to build new words.

Steps

1. Begin with a word learners have discovered in their reading. It may have been new to them or they may have had trouble decoding it. We'll use the word *predict* as an example.
2. Explain that the word is actually made up of a word root, *-dict*, and a prefix *pre-*. Write the root *dict* in the middle of a piece of paper. Write the word *predict* to the side and draw a line connecting *predict* to the root *dict*.
3. Ask learners if they can think of any words that might be made by adding prefixes and suffixes to the word *predict*. If learners have difficulty identifying words, give them an example like *prediction*, *predictable*, or *unpredictable*. As learners come up with words, write them off of the word *predict* (if they are related to *predict*). If learners generate words related to the root *dict*, but different from *predict*, write them to a different side of *dict* and connect them to the root.
4. After you write the words related to *predict*, point out the common word root and prefix in each one. Explain that looking for elements you already know in longer words can help learners decode words.
5. Returning to the word root, ask learners if they can think of any other words that contain that root. If learners have trouble thinking of words, give them a list of prefixes and suffixes. Encourage them to try adding prefixes and suffixes until they come up with words they recognize. When they think of another word, follow steps 3 and 4 with these words as well.
6. Continue to do steps 3–5 until you have developed a word map. Review each word, asking learners to identify the prefix, suffix, and root for each word, then read it.

Variation

1. For vocabulary instruction, give learners a list of common prefixes and suffixes and their meanings after you have created the word map.
2. Give learners the meaning of the word root. In the example above, *dict* means to tell.
3. Point out that the prefix *pre-* means before, so *predict* means to tell before. Ask learners what *predict* actually means. Answers should be similar to "to tell what you think will happen before it happens." Ask learners if "to tell before" makes sense based on their definition.
4. Continue with other forms of the word, using prefixes and suffixes to show how these word parts can help learners understand a word's meaning.
5. If learners don't know what a word means, have them make a guess based on the meaning of the root and prefixes and suffixes. Use a simple dictionary to look up the meaning and compare the actual definition to their guess.



SIGHT WORDS

SIGHT WORD FLASHCARD PRACTICE

Flashcards are one of the best and easiest ways to practice recognizing words by sight. It's also useful that many other literacy practice activities involve writing words on flashcards, so they are often readily available for practice.

Steps

1. Choose six to ten words the learner wants to learn. They may already exist on flashcards. If not, have the learner write each word on an index card.
2. Shuffle the stack of index cards. Flip the top one over and ask the learner to read it. If the learner reads it correctly, put it to the right.
3. If the learner misses the word, put it to the left. If a learner has trouble, read the word aloud and ask him or her to use it in a sentence. Put the card to the left.
4. Once a learner has gone through the stack once, pick up the cards on the left that the learner missed. Shuffle these cards and review them again following the same procedures. Continue this until the learner reads all of the words correctly.
5. Shuffle the entire deck and review all the words again. Continue until the learner is able to read the entire deck, or until you sense that the learner is becoming frustrated.

Variations

Once the learner is able to read the entire stack correctly, focus on reading the word quickly and accurately. Using a stopwatch, begin timing as you flip over the first card. Work your way through the deck. Record the time and any misses. Repeat the process 2–3 more times, recording the time and number of misses. Discuss any improvement the data shows.

CONTEXT CLUES

CREATE A CLOZE ACTIVITY

Cloze activities are a great way to practice using context clues to decode words.

Steps

1. Select a passage from a lesson.
2. Leave the first sentence intact, and then delete words in the subsequent sentences. Select words for which there are context clues. Example *There were four eggs in the bird's _____, not There were _____ eggs in the bird's nest.*
3. Provide a word list. Review the words with the learners.
4. Ask learners to fill in the missing words. Learners may work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
5. For beginning learners, you can
 - • provide a choice of two words for each blank;
 - • provide the first letter of the word in the blank space;
 - • provide the exact number of spaces for the deleted word.

STRATEGIC DECODING

Teaching Learners to Decode Strategically

In strategic decoding, learners combine decoding skills with a consistent problem solving process to help them decode difficult words. The steps below describe the process and explain how you can introduce it to learners.

Steps

1. As a learner reads a passage, listen for places where he or she struggles to decode a word. If the learner is unable to decode the word, encourage him or her to say “blank” and keep reading. You will return to that part of the passage later.
2. After the learner has finished reading the passage, return to the sentence with the difficult word. (Depending on the sentence, you may want to start with the previous sentence to provide context.)
3. Ask the learner to read the sentence(s) again, saying blank for the difficult word. Ask, “Based on the meaning of the sentence, is there a word you think makes sense here?” Depending on the learner’s response, ask if there are visual clues (initial letter, shape of word) that confirm the guess.
4. If the learner is unable to think of a word that makes sense in context, isolate the word. Encourage the learner to try to sound it out using phonics, word patterns, and word parts skills. Does the learner recognize the word? Does the word make sense in the sentence? Reread the sentence to find out.
5. If the learner is unable to use decoding skills to identify a word that makes sense, suggest using different vowel sounds. This may be a word that does not follow a common phonics pattern. Does the learner recognize the word? Does the word make sense in the sentence? Reread the sentence to find out. Encourage the learner to think of a word that makes sense in the sentence and read the sentence using that word.
6. Read the word the learner was unable to decode and demonstrate which decoding skills could have been used to decode it. If the word is new to the learner, explain what it means.
7. Ask the learner to reflect back on the process they just used. Point out that the learner
 - a. used context and visual clues to decode the word;
 - b. tried to sound out the word;
 - c. tried different vowel sounds;
 - d. thought of a word that made sense and used that word.
8. Explain that any time the learner encounters a word they are unable to decode while
9. reading, they can use this process to try to figure out the word.