

Teaching Phonemic
Awareness
Across a
Balanced Literacy Program

Compiled by
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2007

Definitions

Phonological awareness is the understanding that language is made up of *words, syllables, rhymes, and sounds* (phonemes). This knowledge occurs initially in oral language; students do not have to know the name of the letters or their corresponding sounds in order to demonstrate phonological awareness.

Phonemic awareness is one component of phonological awareness. It is the ability to hear individual sounds (phonemes) in words. Children should be taught how to segment, blend, and manipulate individual sounds in words.

Phonics is the ability to use the sound and letter relationships to read or spell words. Phonological awareness is necessary in order to use this phonics knowledge effectively in reading and writing.

Read Aloud

Select books that play with language such as poetry, tongue twisters, songs and chants. Here are some examples of books that support phonological awareness.

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|---|---|
| Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain (Aardema) | Eight Ate: A Feast of Homonym Riddles (Terban) |
| Noisy Poems (Bennett) | The Itsy Bitsy Spider (Trapani) |
| Tiny Tim (Bennett) | 1000 Knock Knock Jokes for Kids (Kilgariff) |
| Hand Rhymes (Brown) | I Don't Care! Said the Bear (West) |
| I Love You, Good Night (Buller & Schade) | The Happy Hippopotami (Martin) |
| The Biggest Tongue Twister Book in the World (Brandeth) | The Teddy Bear Book (Marzollo) |
| What am I? Very First Riddles (Calmenson) | One Sun: A Book of Terse Verse (McMillan) |
| All About Arthur: An Absolutely Absurd Ape (Carle) | Pigs Aplenty, Pigs Galore! (McPhail) |
| The Hopeful Trout and other Limericks (Ciardi) | When We Were Very Young (Milne) |
| Goggly Gookers (Cowley) | Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin (Moss) |
| Mrs. Wishy Washy (Cowley) | Row, Row, Row Your Boat (Muller) |
| Tomie dePaola's Mother Goose (dePaola) | Hickory, Dickory, Dock (Muller & Duranceau) |
| Sing a Song of Popcorn (deRegniers, Schenk, White, & Bennett) | Poems for 7-year-olds and Under (Nicoll) |
| Butterscotch Dreams (Dunn) | Faint Frogs Feeling Feverish, and other Terrifically Tantalizing Tongue Twisters (Obligado) |
| Crackers and Crumbs (Dunn) | Moose on the Loose (Ochs) |
| Deep Down Underground (Dunrea) | Dinosaur Chase (Otto) |
| 101 School Jokes (Eisenber & Hall) | Amelia Bedelia books (Parrish) |
| One Wide River to Cross (Emberley) | Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Mud (Plourde & Schoenherr) |
| In the Tall, Tall Grass (Fleming) | My Parents Think I'm Sleeping (Prelutsky) |
| In the Small, Small Pond (Fleming) | The Random House Book of Poetry for Children (Prelutsky) |
| Henny Penny (Galdone) | Read Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young (Prelutsky) |
| Is Your Mama a Llama? (Guarino & Kellogg) | Something Big Has Been Here (Prelutsky) |
| Stop that Noise! (Geraghty) | Old Mother Hubbard (Provensen & Provensen) |
| Jillian Jiggs (Gilman) | Alphabet Annie Announces the All-American |
| Six Sleepy Sheep (Gordon) | |
| Jewels, Children's Play Rhymes (Harwayne) | |

Pat the Cat (Hawkins & Hawkins)
 Surprises (Hopkins)
 The Sky is Full of Song (Hopkins)
 Don't Forget the Bacon (Hutchins)
 Letter Clusters (Iversen)
 I Can Fly (Krauss)
 Roar and More (Kuskin)
 Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go (Langstaf)
 Alligator Pie (Lee)
 Jelly Belly: Original Nursery Rhymes (Lee)
 Frederick (Lionni)
 Buzz Said the Bee (Lewison)
 What's a Frank Frank? (Maestro)
 The Hungry Thing Returns (Slepian & Seidler)
 The Dove Dove (Terban)

Album (Purviance & O'Shell)
 Down by the Bay (Raffi)
 Sing a Song of Mother Goose (Reid)
 We're Going on a Bear Hunt (Rosen)
 Frogs in Clogs (Samton)
 A Twister of Twists, A Tangler of Tongues
 (Schwartz)
 Fox in Socks (Seuss)
 Green Eggs and Ham (Seuss)
 There's a Wocket in my Pocket (Seuss)
 Sheep on a Ship (Shaw)
 The Listening Walk (Showers)
 Where the Sidewalk Ends (Silverstein)
 A Giraffe and a Half (Silverstein)
 The Hungry Thing (Slepian & Seidler)
 The Lady with the Alligator Purse (Westcott)
 Hush, Little Baby (Zemach)

Shared Reading

Select poems, big books and chants that contain alliteration or rhymes.

Big Books

A big book that supports phonological awareness would have a rhyming pattern. As you read the book, stop before a rhyming word and let the children predict the word. After you read the book, select one or two words from the text and have children generate other words that rhyme, begin with the same sound or end with the same sound as the target word.

Chants

Engage children in catchy chants and songs whenever you need to transition to another activity.

Example of phonemic awareness chant: Patty-Cake Blending (onset & rime)

1. Children sit in a circle. Show them how to pat their legs and clap in a 2:1 rhythm (two pats on the legs, then one hand clap).
2. Have them repeat onsets and rhymes, such as c-at or p-in, while patting and clapping the parts. For example, /c/ /at/ cat (pat, pat, clap)
3. For variety, use musical instruments to keep the beat while breaking and then blending onsets and rimes.

Songs

Almost every song would support phonological awareness because it rhymes. However, the following songs specifically teach phonemic and phonological awareness. Whenever you see letters between slashes (/a/) you are supposed to say the letter sound NOT the letter name. A capital letter between slashes signals a long vowel sound (/O/), whereas a lowercase signals the short vowel sound (/o/).

Clapping Syllables
(sing to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?")

Clap a friend's name.

Clap a friend's name.

After me.

After me.

Clapping names is fun.

Especially clapping this one:

Sa-man-tha.

Sa-man-tha.

Variations: Replace bolded words with other actions such as snapping, marching, or tapping.

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Rhyming Chunks
(To the tune of "Old Mac Donald Had a Farm")

What's the chunk at the end of these words?

Hop, stop, chop. (Wait for a response)

/op/ is the chunk at the end of these words:

Hop, stop, chop

With an /op/, /op/ here and an /op/ /op/ there,

Here an /op/, there an /op/ everywhere an /op/, /op/

/op/ is the chunk at the end of these words:

Hop, stop, chop

Catch It! (Onsets & Rimes)
(to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean")

A **shark** lives down in the ocean.

A **shark** lives down in the sea.

A **shark** lives down in the ocean.

Oh, please catch a **shark** for me.

Sh-ark, Sh-ark,

Oh, please catch a **shark** for me, for me.

Sh-ark, sh-ark,

Oh, please catch a **shark** for me.

(Substitute other one-syllable sea creatures: crab, fish, whale, shrimp, squid, etc.)

Beginning Sounds
(To the tune of "If you're happy and you know it")

If your name begins with /m/, stand up.
If your name begins with /m/, stand up.
If your name begins with /m/, stand up and take a bow.
If your name begins with /m/, stand up.

Repeat with different sounds and movements such as clapping your hands, turning around, touching your toes, or jumping up and down.
 As a variation, have children use picture cards with the song. For example, If your picture starts with /s/, stand up...

Beginning Sounds
(To the tune of "A Hunting We Will Go")

Nancy Jo Mannix

A word that starts with /d/.
A word that starts with /d/.
Hi-Ho, the Dairy-Oh!
A word that starts with /d/.

(A child supplies a word like doughnut.)
Doughnut starts with /d/.
Doughnut starts with /d/.
Hi-Ho, the Dairy-Oh!
A word that starts with /d/.

Beginning Sounds
(to the tune of "Old MacDonald")

Old MacDonald had a farm
E-I-E-I-O
And on that farm he had some pigs.
PE-PI-PE-PI-PO
With a /p/, /p/ here and a /p/, /p/ there.
Here a /p/, there a /p/, everywhere a /p/, /p/
Old MacDonald had a farm.
PE-PI-PE-PI-PO

Old MacDonald had a farm
E-I-E-I-O
And on that farm he had some ducks
DE-DI-DE-DI-DO
With a /d/, /d/ here and a /d/, /d/ there.
Here a /d/, there a /d/, everywhere a /d/, /d/
Old MacDonald had a farm. DE-DI-DE-DI-DO

Here Come the Bugs! (Beginning Sounds)
To the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

Little bees go buzzing by, buzzing by, buzzing by.

Little bees go buzzing by, /b/ /b/ /b/.

Little flies go flying by, flying by, flying by.

Little flies go flying by /f/ /f/ /f/.

Little ants go crawling by, crawling by, crawling by.

Little ants go crawling by, /a/ /a/ /a/

(Beginning Sounds)
(to the tune of "Old MacDonald")

What's the sound that starts these words?

David, dove, and dad. (children say the sound /d/)

/d/ is the sound that starts these words:

David, dove, and dad.

With a /d/, /d/ here and a /d/, /d/, there,

Here a /d/, there a /d/, everywhere a /d/, /d/.

/d/ is the sound that starts these words: David, dove, and dad!

Beginning Sounds
(to the tune of Jimmy Cracked Corn and I Don't Care)

Who has a /t/ word to share with us?

Who has a /t/ word to share with us?

Who has a /t/ word to share with us?

It must start with a /t/ sound!

(A child provides a word that begins with the /t/ sound)

Turtle is a word that starts with /t/.

Turtle is a word that starts with /t/.

Turtle is a word that starts with /t/.

Turtle starts with a /t/ sound.

Blending Sounds
(To the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands")

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

If you think you know this word, then tell me what you've heard.

If you think you know this word, shout it out!

(Teacher segments a word such as /h/-/o/-/p/-, and children respond by saying "hop.")

Substituting Beginning Sounds

(To the tune of "Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah")

I have a song that we can sing

I have a song that we can sing

I have a song that we can sing

It goes something like this:

Fe-Fi-Fiddly-I-O

Fe-Fi-Fiddly-I-O-O-O-O

Fe-Fi-Fiddly I-O

Now try it with the /t/ sound.

Te-Ti-Tiddly-I-O

Te-Ti-Tiddly-I-O-O-O-O

Te-Ti-Tiddly-I-OOOOOOOOOO

Now try it with the /gr/ sound.

Beginning Sounds

When singing "Happy Birthday" to a student in the class, change each word in the song to begin like the student's name. For example, if it is Charlie's birthday, sing...

Chappy, chirthday, cho, chou,

Chappy, Chirthday, Cho, Chou

Chappy, Chirthday, chear, Charlie.

Chappy, Chirthday, Cho Chou.

Segmenting Three Sounds

(To the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Listen, listen to my word

Tell me all the sounds you heard: (Teacher says "race" slowly)

/r/ is the first sound, /a/ is two, /s/ is the last in race it's true. (children hold up a finger for each sound as they say it.)

Listen, listen to my word

Tell me all the sounds you heard: (teacher says any word with three sounds like "coat")

/k/ is the first sound, /o/ is two, /t/ is the last in coat it's true.

Thanks for listening to my words

And telling all the sounds you heard!

Segmenting Three Sounds

(To the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus")

Use three phoneme words or picture cards and have children sing the following verse:

The sounds in this word go /c/ /a/ /t/; /c/ /a/ /t/; /c/ /a/ /t/;

The sounds in this word go /c/ /a/ /t/,

Can you guess the word?

The sounds in this word go /t/ /o/ /p/; /t/ /o/ /p/; /t/ /o/ /p/;

The sounds in this word go /t/ /o/ /p/

Can you guess the word?

Guided Reading

Pre-A Lessons: Phonemic Awareness instruction is woven throughout the pre-A lesson plan; however, you will teach phonemic awareness directly and explicitly during "Working with Sounds" and "Interactive Writing" components. You should have students use personal alphabet charts during these lesson components to help them link sounds and letters. If you are doing all four components every day, and following the procedures in the handbook, students WILL have phonemic awareness when they move into level A for guided reading. They may not know every letter sound, but they will be hearing initial consonant sounds.

Guided Reading Levels A & B:

Before, during, and after reading: Ask students to predict the first letter of a word and locate the word in the book. ("What letter would you expect to see at the beginning of 'look?' Find it.")

Word work: All of the word work activities in the emergent guided reading lesson plan teach phonemic awareness. Select an appropriate activity on Day 1 and **follow the procedures in the handbook.**

Guided writing: Always include at least one unknown word in the dictated sentence. Encourage students to say this word slowly and write the sounds they hear. The goal is not accurate spelling but phonetic spelling.

Interactive Writing

1. Count the words in the sentence (word awareness).
2. Make children stretch the sounds in words. Use a large rubber band, if necessary, to emphasize saying the word slowly.
3. Ask children to say each sound in sequence. Use sound boxes if appropriate.
4. Use the name chart or alphabet chart to help children link a sound with a letter.
5. While one student is writing the letter or word on the chart, engage the rest of the class in phonemic awareness activities. They could give you other words that begin with the same sound or words that rhyme with that word.

Writing Workshop

Minilesson:

Use minilessons to model how to say words slowly and write the sounds you hear (not spell accurately). In this lesson, you are not emphasizing accurate spelling; you are encouraging inventive spelling. **Remember inventive spelling is the number 1 predictor of reading success.** The minilesson for this skill from Calkin's Primary Units of Study can be found in Unit 3 "Writing for Readers: Teaching Skills and Strategies", session III, "Stretching and Writing Words" (p. 19).

Individual conferences:

During conferences, help students say words slowly and segment sounds. If they say the sound but do not recall the name of the letter or letter form, direct them to use their personal alphabet chart. For example, the student says "milk" slowly and hears the /m/ at the beginning but doesn't know the letter. Say, "What picture in this row begins with the /m/ sound? It is a good idea to laminate a small alphabet chart to the back of their writing folder. Students can use it for linking sounds to letters and checking letter formation.

Other Activities that Teach Phonemic Awareness

These are whole class activities and **SHOULD NOT** be used during guided reading.

Clap a Name

1. Students sit in a circle. The teacher gives a soft ball or stuffed animal to one of the students. The rest of the class claps the syllables in the student's name.
2. The student passes the stuffed toy to the child sitting next to him/her.
3. Everyone claps this student's name.

Mystery Name

1. The teacher says a student's name in syllables and tells him to do a simple task (Christopher, touch your toes.)
2. The class points to the mystery child and says his name.

Stretch the Name

1. Select a student in the class and say,
CHRISTOPHER, CHRISTOPHER, HOW DO YOU DO? WHO'S THAT
FRIEND RIGHT NEXT TO YOU?
2. The teacher and children say the next child's name very slowly, stretching palms far apart as the word is stretched: /RRRR-eeee-bbb-eee-kkkk-aaa/.
3. Children put their palms together and say the child's name naturally: Rebecca.

Word of the Day (DO one word every day.) This activity teaches children how to do sound boxes during guided writing.

1. Select a word with 2 sounds.
2. Display a transparency on the overhead projector with that number of boxes.
3. Say the word slowly and push counters into the boxes.
4. Ask the students to say the word slowly while you push the counters in the boxes.
5. Ask children to come up to the overhead and push the counters in the boxes while the students say the word slowly.
6. Ask the students to give you the letters to put in the boxes.
7. Write the letters in the boxes as the students say the sounds.
8. Once children have demonstrated competency with two box words, move to three, four, and five box words.

Examples of 2 box words: am, me, at, an, as, he, we, go, no, so, on, in, it, up.

Examples of 3 box words: mom, mp, man, lip, fox, fix, fit, hot, hit, hut, job, cap. The following words have four letters but still have three sounds. Put the "sh", "ch", and "th" in one box: shut, ship, shop, shot, chip, chin, chap, math, this, that, than, hush, wish, push, chop.

Examples of 4 box words: trip, slop, slot, slip, spit, spot, spun, bran, brag, crib, crab, slob, span, slit, plot, plan, brush, plush, jump, just, went, sent, wilt, west, vest, most, best, kept.

Examples of 5 box words: spilt, swept, spent, slant, plank, crank, trunk, blunt, crest, crust, trust, spent, splash, strip, strap.

Rhyme Detective

1. Teacher says a word.
2. Teacher gives clues about another word that rhymes with the first word.
3. Children guess the word using the clues.

Examples:

1. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **log** and begins with /d/. (dog)
2. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **car** and begins with /st/. (star)
3. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **tree** and begins with /b/. (bee)
4. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **grass** and begins with /gl/. (glass)
5. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **sled** and begins with a /b/. (bed)
6. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **clock** and begins with a /s/. (sock)
7. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **cat** and begins with a /b/. (bat)
8. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **swing** and begins with a /st/. (sting)
9. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **tall** and bounces. (ball)
10. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **bat** and has whiskers. (cat).
11. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **dish** and swims. (fish)
12. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **sheep** and you can ride in it. (jeep)
13. I'm thinking of a word that rhymes with **stamp** and lights the room. (lamp)

CAUTION: Research has shown that 10 minutes a day of explicit phonemic awareness instruction will teach this skill. Doing phonemic awareness activities longer than 10 minutes a day does not produce better results.