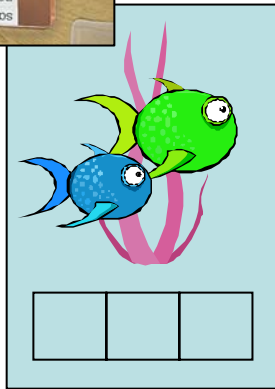


Word Work Strategies to Develop Decoding Skills for Beginning Readers



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Many thanks to...

Paige Pullen, University of Virginia

Holly B. Lane, University of Florida

Lynda Hayes, University of Florida

Alphabetic Principle

- **Children must develop the fundamental insight that letters and sounds work together in systematic ways to form words.**
- **This understanding provides the foundation for the development of decoding skills.**

Less Skilled Readers

- Rely heavily on context and guessing
- Read slowly and with great effort
- Focus on decoding rather than comprehending
- Skip challenging words and sections of text
- Do not monitor their reading to make sure it makes sense.

More Skilled Readers

- Read a word letter by letter
- Process words automatically and rapidly
- Look for known word parts in unfamiliar words
- Use context to confirm pronunciation and meaning.

Ehri's Phases of Word Recognition Ability

- **Pre-alphabetic phase**
- **Partial alphabetic phase**
- **Full alphabetic phase**
- **Consolidated alphabetic phase**
- **Automatic Phase**

Word study activities promote . . .

- development of phonological awareness
- understanding of the alphabetic principle

Goals of a Word Study Curriculum

Students should . . .

- Know about the features of print.
- Know a large core of high-frequency words.
- Understand simple and complex letter-sound relationships.
- Notice and use patterns in words (how words sound, look, and mean).
- Use a repertoire of word-solving strategies.
- Use references, resources, and proofreading.

(Pinnell & Fountas, 1998)

Phonics Instruction

Phonics instruction provided in a meaningful context that provides multiple anchors to help students learn about words: meaning, spelling, and sound.

Teaching letter-sound relationships is critical, but we should not neglect the equally important role of vocabulary and meaning.

Juel, Biancaroasa, Coker, & Deffes (2003)

Phonics Instruction

- ✓ need not extend beyond second grade for most children
- ✓ should develop both word reading accuracy and automaticity
- ✓ most effective when it is *explicit* and *systematic* connected with a meaningful context
- ✓ should begin with the easiest individual sounds and progress to more complex orthographic patterns

Phonics Instruction

Instruction *must* be explicit and systematic

- **Explicit means...**
 - ◆ Letter sound relationships are taught in isolation
 - ◆ Blended into whole words
 - ◆ Practiced in decodable text

Phonics Instruction

Instruction *must* be explicit and systematic

- **Systematic means...**
 - ◆ **Initially introducing the most common sounds for a new letter**
 - ◆ **Most useful letter sounds first**
 - ◆ **Letter sounds that are easier to blend (e.g., continuous)**
 - ◆ **Progress from simple to more complex**
 - ◆ **Separate confusing letters and sounds**

Common Confusions

- Visual Similarity

- ◆ **b, d**
- ◆ **b, p**
- ◆ **m, n**
- ◆ **q, p**

- Auditory Similarity

- ◆ **/f/, /v/**
- ◆ **/t/, /d/**
- ◆ **/b/, /d/**
- ◆ **/i/, /e/**
- ◆ **/o/, /u/**

Phonograms

- **Phonogram**--a series of letters that stands for a sound, syllable, syllable part, or series of sounds.
 - ◆ Word families - **ay** as in **say** and **play**
 - ◆ Rime - linguistic term referring to a phonogram
- Needed for more advanced, automatic word recognition (Ehri, 2002)
 - ◆ Use only after having taught individual sounds
 - ◆ Phonogram knowledge should build on systematic, explicit phonics instruction

Phonograms

- Phonograms are useful during spelling
 - ◆ Word patterns are effective for teaching spelling
 - ◆ student's literature contain many of the most common phonograms
- Recognizing word patterns or “chunks” is valuable in developing reading fluency--analyzing by analogy
- Phonograms are helpful with multisyllabic words

What does research say about word work? A review of two studies...

Study 1: A study examining word work with manipulative letters.

Study 2: A comparison of two types of phonics whole-class first grade instruction on spelling and word identification.

Study 1: Alphabetic Word Work with Manipulative Letters and Reading Acquisition of Struggling First-Grade Students

- **Setting and Participants**
 - Nine school sites in two Florida school districts
 - 98 first-grade students struggling to acquire reading skills
 - Randomly assigned to three groups
- **Materials**
 - Rigby PM Story Books (Levels 1-10)
 - Solid white manipulative letters
 - Pre-designed lessons

Intervention Description

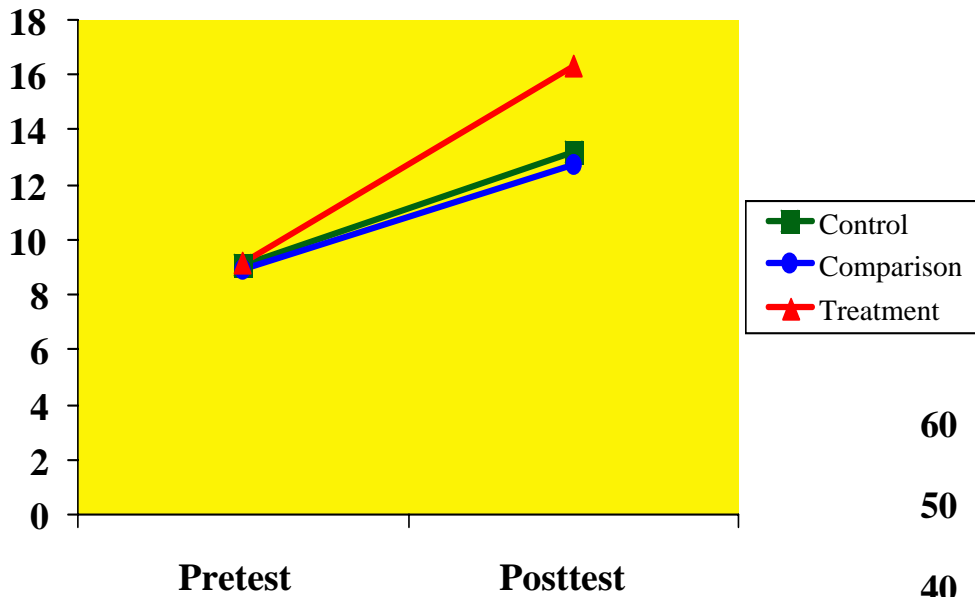
- Treatment Lesson

- ◆ Step 1—Introduce the book
- ◆ Step 2—Coach students through the book
- ◆ Step 3—Alphabetic word work with manipulative letters
- ◆ Step 4—Reread the book

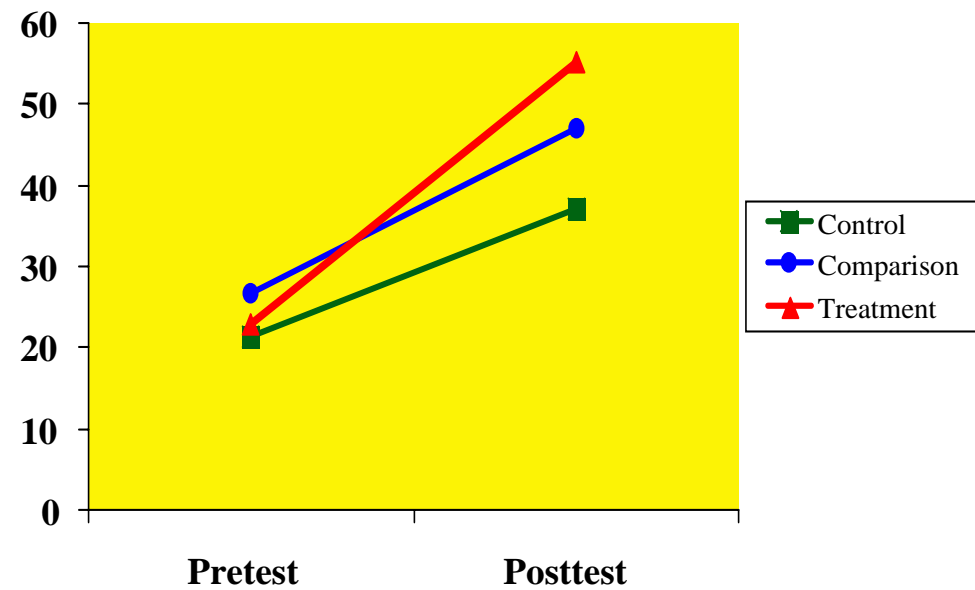
- Comparison Lesson

- ◆ Step 1—Introduce the book
- ◆ Step 2—Coach students through the book
- ◆ **Step 3—Omitted**
- ◆ Step 4—Reread the book

Decoding CVC Nonwords



Decoding CVC Words



Study 2: Using Word Boxes as a Large Group Phonics Approach in a First Grade Classroom

- 48 participants in first grade
- Randomly assigned to phonics instruction using word boxes or “traditional” methods
- 20 minutes a day for 4 weeks with approximately 5 words per lesson taught by same teacher to both groups
- Pre-test and Post-test on spelling and word identification on taught words and transfer of skills to untaught words



Joseph, 2000

Study 3: Word Boxes Condition

- **Materials for each student (ziploc bag):**
 - ◆ laminated word box divided into three sections;
 - ◆ laminated small printed alphabet cards;
 - ◆ small colored chips;
 - ◆ magic markers
 - ◆ tissue to clean board
- **Procedures:**
 - ◆ Step 1: Segmenting Sounds
 - ◆ Step 2: Letter-to-Sound Matching
 - ◆ Step 3: Spelling
 - ◆ Each step consists of teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent practice

Study 3: Traditional Phonics Condition

Procedures:

- Step 1: Choral reading of words in list
- Step 2: Letter-sound correspondences taught by teacher by underlining each letter, naming the letter, and saying its sound in sequential order.
- Step 3: Choral guided practice
- Step 4: Worksheet exercises for practice.

Study 3: Results

- Students in word boxes condition significantly higher at post-test than student in traditional condition on all measures:
 - ◆ spelling and reading taught words,
 - ◆ spelling and reading transfer words
- No effect sizes reported, so no idea how meaningful or large the difference is

Word Work with Manipulative Letters

Manipulative Letters

- **Can be used for whole class, small-group, or individual instruction.**
- **Use lowercase letters of just one color.**
- **Select target words.**
- **Guide students in blending and segmenting sounds in words.**

Manipulative Letters

- **Conduct word work at the onset-rime and phoneme level.**
- **Help students to encode and decode new words.**
- **Use both real words and nonsense words.**

Choose Words From the Text to Focus On That...

- are high frequency, important words that will make a difference in your student's reading (e.g., was, are, of, said, and, are, they, how).
- are familiar words that exemplify the sound or pattern your student is working on...words that lend themselves to further exploration.
 - ◆ cat, mat, fat, fate, mate, cate, cat
 - ◆ shop, shot, shock, shop, ship, fish, dish
 - ◆ ring, sing, wing, zing, bing, shing, ring
 - ◆ more, sore, wore, tore, bore, fore, more

Foam Letter Boards



www.thinkitbyhand.com

- Foam letters with velcro backing.
- Allows for large-group, small-group, or individual word practice.
- Also great for literacy centers!

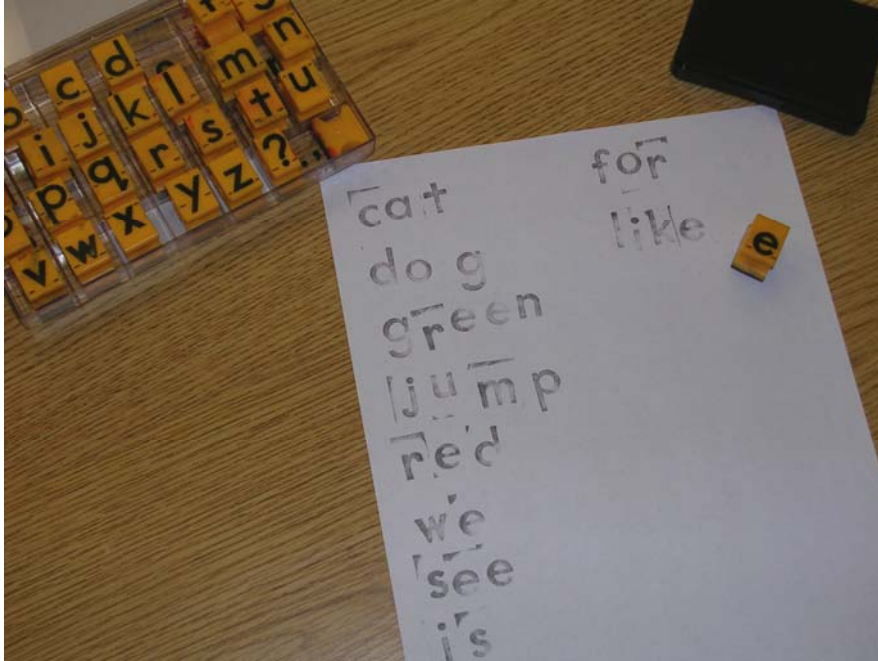
Letter Tiles & Cubes



- **Appropriate for older students.**
- **Great for word games or for activities from *Making Words*.**



Letter Stamps



- **Appropriate for older students.**
 - **Provides another mode for practice.**
-
- **Also great for word games or for literacy centers.**

Blending Wheels



- Used primarily for CVC word building, but can include longer words.
- Students change one sound at a time (initial, medial, or final).
- Great tool for building initial decoding skills.
- Can be used individually or in small groups.

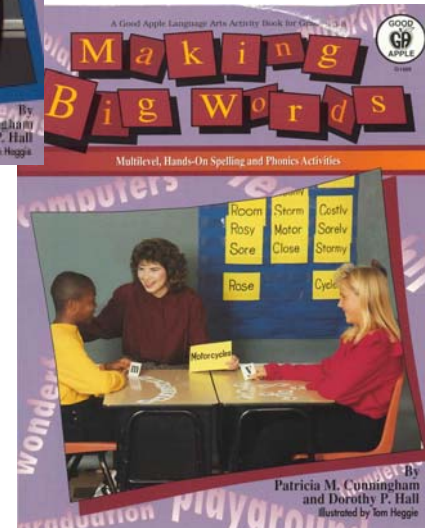
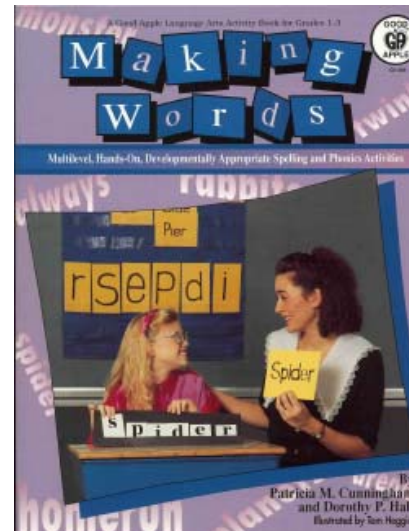
Sound Flips



- An alternative to blending wheels.
- Student flips one sound at a time to form new words.
- May be used individually or in small groups.

Making Words

- Making Words
- Making More Words
- Making Big Words
- Making More Big Words



Working with Words Online

- School District of Oswego, NY
- <http://www.oswego.org/testprep/ela4/wwords2.html>

Focus on Phonograms

- Make beginning sound cards and distribute one or two cards to each child.
- Write a spelling pattern, or rime, on a chart eight to ten times.
- Invite children to make real words by adding their beginning sound to the spelling pattern.
- Invite children to make silly words.
- Consider how some words could be changed to make new words.

(adapted from Cunningham, Hall, & Sigmon, 1999)

Manipulative Letter Lessons

- ✓ **Good preparation is essential.**
- ✓ **Match skills to learners and sequence sound difficulty.**
- ✓ **Focus on *both* accuracy and automaticity.**
- ✓ **Lesson pace is important.**
- ✓ **Use blendable sounds.**

**Reading Facilitates Writing
Writing Strengthens Reading**

**They support each other in a
reciprocal fashion.**

This girl has
made a smiling
snow monster.



V P W J A S M O S R
A
O f m p h o s i a m e
and destroyed my house
everything
It ate me

- One of the best ways to see what a child knows about language and sound-symbol relationships is to examine his or her invented spelling
- Frequent opportunities to write help students learn how language works
- When students write and access sounds during invented spelling, they are practicing encoding

Written Word Work

- “Soundable” words
 - ◆ Increases phonemic awareness
 - ◆ Understanding of how letters spell sounds (alphabetic principle)
 - ◆ Children “see” how our language system is structured
- Sight Words or “Unsoundable” words
 - ◆ Increases knowledge of orthographic patterns
 - ◆ Provides practice in another modality to provide deeper processing of words for reading

Written Word Work

- Attention to meaning and transferable “chunks”
 - ◆ Increases understanding of how meaning, sound, and spelling work together in English
 - ◆ Helps increase the generative, deeper knowledge of English needed to independently decode and spell words

Morpheme

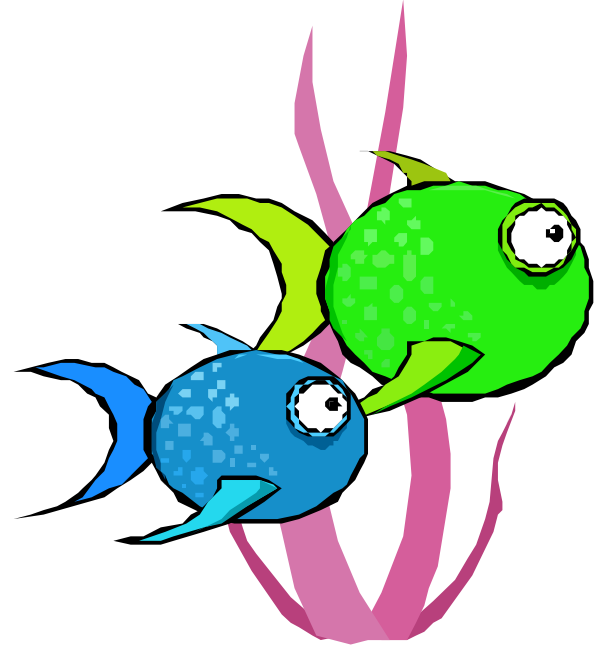
- Smallest unit of meaning in language
- **Free morphemes** can stand alone
- **Bound morphemes** are used only in combinations with other morphemes

Morphographs

- The **written** form of a morpheme
- A group of **letters** (aside from whole words) that carries unique meaning
- A morphograph represents a specific letter-meaning relationship
- Familiarity with morphographs aids in spelling, reading, and making sense of difficult words

Elkonin Boxes

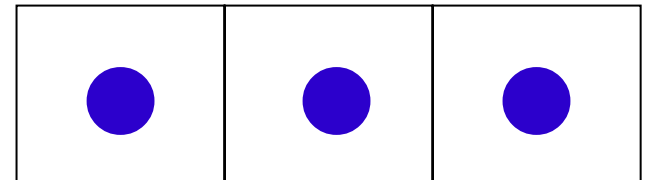
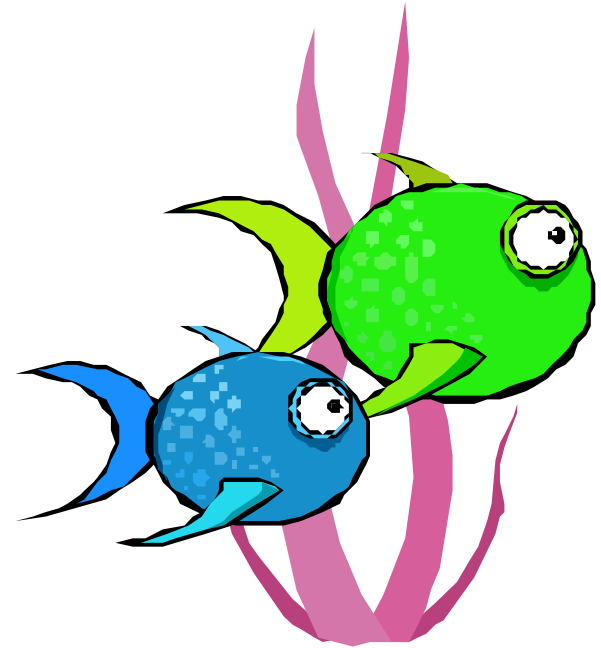
- Count the sounds in the word with the child.
- Draw one box for each sound.



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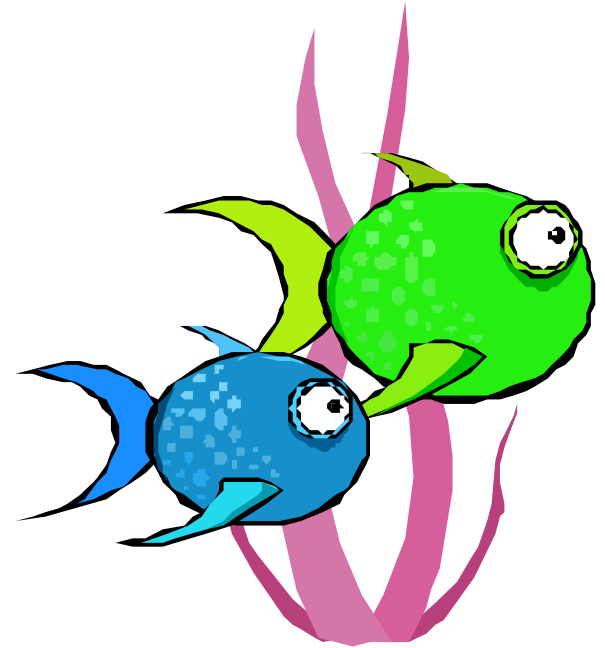
Elkonin Boxes

- **Count the sounds in the word with the child.**
- **Draw one box for each sound.**
- **Use chips to represent sounds at first.**



Elkonin Boxes

- Count the sounds in the word with the child.
- Draw one box for each sound.
- Use chips to represent sounds at first.
- Insert the letter(s) for each sound.



f	i	sh
---	---	----

Sight Word Practice

- Have students practice the word several times, however ensure they fully process the word each time
- Never ask them to “write this three times”
- Highlight the relevant features or chunks
- Cover the word and have the student write it from memory

Ways to Use Written Word Work in Language Arts Instruction

- Writing from dictation during phonics instruction
- Word study during spelling
- Word work pages during independent writing

**When done intentionally,
with careful thought,
teaching spelling is
teaching reading.**

Making Sense of English Spelling



STORRISTOK to ecotens
BY STIKING tIR hA^S
~~PU~~Ug. + PY hAV vire
SMOL MILS

MICHAEL

Forces that shape English spellings

- **Phonetic** - spell words the way they sound (sit)
- **Semantic** - spell words alike that share meaning (hymn, hymnal; crumb, crumble; electric, electrician)
- **Etymological** - spell words to reflect their origins (machine)

Making Sense of English Spelling

- Two things that matter most:
 - ◆ that students write for others to read
 - ◆ that they understand that spelling is logical and not just a memorization task

Important Questions to Ask About Spelling Programs

- Are there words in the same lesson that spell the same sound in different ways that might confuse children?
- A lesson should not teach /a/ with the words Weigh, gate, braid in the same lesson

Important Questions to Ask About Spelling Programs

- Is there a mix of high-utility and soundable words?
 - ◆ Several high-utility words that make a big difference in kids writing and reading
 - ◆ Enough soundable words to understand and use the pattern
 - ◆ Words from kids' writing

Important Questions to Ask About Spelling Programs

- Do the activities actually teach spelling?
 - Phonemic awareness
 - Sound-Symbol relationships
 - Orthographic patterns
 - Relationship of meaning to spelling

Important Questions to Ask About Spelling Programs

- Is there a systematic approach that follows a sensible progression of sound-symbol relationships?

Spelling Instruction

- Consider individual or small group lists that focus on what the children do not know how to spell based on assessment and their writing
- Use a mix of high-frequency words, soundable words that demonstrate a pattern, words from their writing
- Keep spelling test data and only remove a word from the list after it has been spelled correctly twice.
- Once a word is removed from the list, expect that it be spelled correctly in the student's writing

Spelling-Focused Word Work

- Make and break spelling words
 - ◆ Blending and segmenting by phonemes
- Count the sounds and draw Elkonin boxes to spell the word sound by sound
- Look at the word carefully, highlight the target pattern or “tricky” part

Spelling-Focused Word Work

- Magnetic letter work at the onset-rime and phoneme level to draw attention to common patterns and improve phonemic awareness
 - Mix and fix irregular “sight” words
 - Change onset to build word families
 - Point out small differences between easily confused words
- Word sorts and work with similar patterns

**But what about more
advanced skills?**

Why learn how to read big words?

- Fluent reading depends on the ability to quickly analyze and recognize multi-syllable words.
- Facility with big words is essential for students as they read, write, and learn in all areas of school and life. Many big words occur infrequently, but when they do occur they carry a lot of the meaning and content of what is being read

(Cunningham, 1998)

Independent Word Learning Strategies

Three Critical Questions:

- ◆ Do I know any other words that look and sound like this word?
- ◆ Are any of these look-alike/sound-alike words related to each other?
- ◆ What do the words I know tell me about this word?

Adapted from Cunningham, 1998

Independent Word Learning Strategies

For example:

- If the unknown word is *antibiotic*, the first question is: Do I know any other words that look and sound like this word?

antifreeze, anti-aircraft, anti-terrorism

prehistoric, biology, biographical

- Are these words related to *antibiotic*?

from Cunningham, 1998

Decoding Multisyllabic Words

- Students need to know:
 - ◆ What a syllable is;
 - ◆ That a syllable contains one vowel sound;
 - ◆ That recognizable word parts are also in multisyllabic words;
 - ◆ How to divide the words in parts, read each part, and then read the word by combining the parts
 - ◆ How to be flexible with word parts that are irregular.

This includes the ability to...

- Quickly recognize as “chunks” the phonic patterns they have learned in single syllable words;
- Understand the concept of a syllable and how to identify vowels and consonants;
- Recognize the various syllable types and their pronunciations;

This includes the ability to...

- Know where the syllables divide-- syllable patterns;
- Recognize common prefixes, suffixes, and base words;
- Possess the necessary “mental flexibility” to break a word and arrive at an approximate pronunciation, then use context to resolve ambiguity and confirm the word.

Types of Syllables

- **open syllable**--a syllable ending with a single vowel. The vowel sound is usually long (e.g., me, veto).
- **closed syllable**--a syllable in which a single vowel is followed by a consonant. The vowel sound is usually short (e.g., cat, rabbit, picnic).
- **r-controlled**--a syllable in which the vowel(s) is followed by the single letter r. The vowel sound is neither long or short (e.g., chart, fern, pour, target, whisper).

Types of Syllables

- **vowel team**--a syllable containing two letters that together make one vowel sound. The vowel can be long, short, or a diphthong (e.g., plain, show, heavy, boy, cow, cloudy, boiling).
- **vowel-silent e**--a syllable with a long vowel-consonant-silent e pattern (e.g., shape, cube, slide, behave).
- **consonant -le**--an unaccented final syllable containing a consonant plus -le (e.g., apple, table).

Summary: Multisyllabic Words

- As readers mature and improve in their decoding, meaning begins to play a larger and larger role
- Simply being able to decode single-syllable words isn't enough to be a successful reader
- Most students need explicit instruction and practice in the role meaning plays in English and strategies for decoding larger words order to read and spell complex multi-syllabic words

Keys for Success

- **Organization**
- **Planning**
- Keeping your goal in mind
- Teaching routines
- Differentiating practice
- Accountability
- Assessment to guide instruction

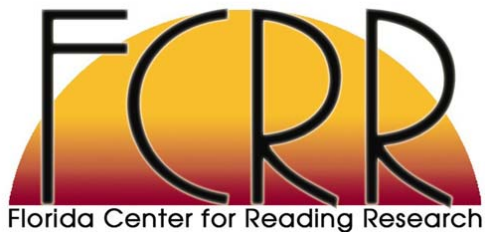




THANK YOU!

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