# PHONEMIC AWARENESS AND EARLY SPELLING Schuele, 2012 (adapted from Clay, 1993) 



ONE SOUND


LETTER, NO SOUND


ONE LETTER, TWO SOUNDS

GOAL: Facilitate children's application of phonemic awareness to spelling words.
SPELLING LIST: cake, bake, make, gate, late, shake, choke, game, base, chase (CVC words, all silent E, including consonant digraphs)

Prepare practice blocksheet for the week's words.
Day 1: Tell me the number of sounds. What are the sounds? Use manipulatives (e.g., fingers, blocks, teddybear counters)

Guide children as a group through say word, stretch/iterate sounds in words, tell number of sounds, say sounds, say word.
Day 2: Same as above and after segmenting into sounds, decide letter for each sound. Give children blocksheet; segment words and spell words as a group. Write words on blocksheet with guidance as needed.
Day 3: Practice writing words with blocksheet; Practice writing words on regular paper.
Day 4: Write words on regular paper. Remind children to segment and then write.
Day 5: TEST; modification: allow child to take test using blocksheet. Note that blocksheet will need to be prepared ahead of time with blocks ordered as words will be presented.


## ANALYZE6 HEARATGAND RECORDING SOUNDS IN WORDS

## Introduction

These activities are designed to help the child think about the order of sounds in spoken words, and to help the child to analyse a new word he wants to write into its sequence of sounds. The activities are included in the writing lesson, and the teacher chooses from the story the child has composed two or three words they can profitably work on together.

These 'writing' activities have an important relationship with progress in reading. The beginning reader of stories anticipates 'upcoming words' from his semantic and syntactic knowledge of language. Therefore from the sound of the predicted word he may try to check whether some or all of those sounds do occur in the print.

Most beginning reading programmes bring children in classrooms to the awareness of sound sequences in words rather effortlessly. For many decades and in many different programmes teachers have taught children to distinguish between letters and to link sounds to those letters. The children who succeeded in those programmes were able to do just that. However, some children find it extraordinarily difficult to hear the sounds that go to make up words. For example, some children consistently focus on the final sound of the word and for them this completely masks the initial sounds.

For children who cannot hear the order of sounds in words the teacher can act as analyser of the words. She articulates the words slowly, but naturally, and gradually develops the same skill in her pupils. It is an essential feature of the theory behind this tutoring to hear the sounds within words that the child's first lessons take place in the absence of letters or printed words. The child must hear the word spoken, or speak it himself and try to break it into sounds by slowly articulating it. He is asked to show what he can hear with counters not letters.

## Recovery procedures

A child needing help in hearing the sounds in words should begin at the beginning of these recovery procedures and work through the early stages slowly or rapidly according to his needs.

## Early learning

Establishing the task In the first few trials the child will be learning what it is the teacher wants him to do. This
applies to slow articulation, to clapping or to pushing counters. Take time to make clear what the task involves. This is the first thing to be learned.

Hearing syllables Because hearing big chunks of sound is easier than discovering single sounds a good first step is to ask the child to clap the parts he can hear in a few words he knows well. Choose words of one and two syllables at first, and later three or four. Repeat this activity from time to time as opportunities arise in connection with reading or writing stories. The activity will help him with the longer words he tries to write into his stories. (See also discussion of onset and rime page 49.)

Hearing the sounds Prepare for the activities which help children to hear the sounds within words.

- Make a few picture cards for simple words such as cat, bus, boy, ship, house to use to introduce the task.
- Prepare some cards on which you draw a square for each sound segment in words of two, three and four sounds, for example:

- Have a selection of counters ready.

In the first lessons after the 'roaming around the known' stage only attempt two or three of the activities in the next two lists.

## Step I Slow articulation and hearing sounds

Introduce the child to the task of slowly articulating words. Use a picture card and:

- Slowly and deliberately articulate the word for the child. Let him hear the sounds separated but in a natural way.
- Ask the child to articulate the word aloud. Ask him to 'Say it slowly'. This transfers the initiative for the activity to the child.
- Ask the child to watch your lips while you say it, and then to copy you.
- Use a mirror if it helps the child to be more aware of what his lips and tongue are doing.
Use stress to emphasise any sound you want the child to notice.


## Step II Using the boxes for hearing the sounds in words (phonemic analysis)

The sound segment cards make a visual model within which to place the sounds that have been articulated. (Choose a card which has a square for each sound in your demonstration word, i.e., a three-square card for c-a-t.) You need a square for every sound in the aural task, NOT for every letter. The transfer to an emphasis on letters comes much later.


- Model the task for the child. Articulate the word very slowly and push the counters into the boxes, sound by sound.
- Now get the child to try this. Share the task with the child as long as he finds the coordination of saying slowly and pushing counters too difficult.
- Articulate the word slowly for him while he moves the counters.
- Or, get the child to articulate slowly while you push the counters.
- Change roles to enable the child to practise both parts.
- You may guide the child's hand or work alongside him with another card.
- As soon as possible have the child complete the whole task himself.

Accept his approximations. Coordination will come with practice.

## Intermediate steps

Now use words which the child wants to write in his stories and draw boxes on his practice page. Limit the words for this activity to up to four sounds at first. The focus is on hearing sounds and clusters of sounds, and finding some way to record them in letters. This helps the child to write words he has not yet learned to spell.

Select activities like those in the following list according to a particular child's needs.

- Articulate the word slowly for the child, emphasising the sounds.
- Draw a box for each sound segment on the work page of the child's writing book.
- Encourage the child to say the word slowly and push counters into the boxes you have drawn. Later he will not need counters: he will only need to point to each box as he says the word slowly.
- Ask: 'What can you hear?'

Accept any sound that the child can hear clearly but cannot write and write it in for him as he watches.

- Ask: 'How would you write it?'
- Ask: 'Now where will you put it?'

Let the child record any sound for which he knows the letter but ensure that it goes in the correct box (i.e. for a time the teacher will need to show the child where to put it). Encourage the child to write all the letters he knows.

- Say: 'How would you write it?' if the child gives the sound but hesitates over writing the letter(s). If the child cannot recall the letter form give him some help.
- Make links with what he knows somewhere else in his alphabet book, or his name, or a word he can already write, or a word in his reading.
- Provide a magnetic letter or some other model of the letter that the child has forgotten how to write.
- Let the child who thinks he knows but is unsure do a trial letter on the work page or write the letter in . the air or with his finger on the desk.

Then use questions like these to help the child locate other letters.

- What else can you hear?
- What do you hear at the beginning?
- What do you hear at the end?
- What do you hear in the middle?

Accept what the child can hear in any order. Do not insist on a beginning to end approach. This will come later, as the child gains control of the task.

The child can record only those letters he knows how to form and the one or two he is currently learning. The teacher can act as his scribe to produce words like these,

with the child writing only those letters he knows.


Alternatively, the teacher may get the child to fill in what he can by himself and then complete the word for him, perhaps teaching one new point but not explaining everything.

Gradually shift from the question 'What can you hear?' to the question 'What letters would you expect to see?'

## A note on consonants and vowels

Be satisfied if the child can separate out some of the consonants. Give the child the vowels as these seem to be much more difficult to hear and require more experience with reading and writing.

For the teacher who is not used to a linguist's analysis of the sounds of spoken English there are traps in this activity. For example, one child responding well to her own phonemic analysis of cousins wrote:

## Kusns

Except for the $S s$ which should have been Zs (if you are writing the sounds or phonemes in cousins) this is an accurate rendering of the sounds in the word but not one which helped the child to reach the written form of the word. It was not an appropriate word for training sound to letter analysis.

The teacher must be alert to detect the difference between what is good analysis of sounds and what is confusion or error. Here are some examples of accurate 'hearing' by children which should not be undervalued.

| plac | aftr | childrn |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| (place) | (after) | (children) |

There will be an improvement in recording sounds heard as the child identifies more letters and vice versa.

## Choosing the words to use in boxes

The teacher must select some of the words which the child wants to write in his stories as the ones most appropriate for learning to hear the sounds in words. How will she choose these? Select on the basis of what will be easiest for this child at this time. At first choose

- words in which it is easy to hear the sounds (not saw)
- words which use letters he already knows (not bed or dog)
- words he will need to use often (not picture)
- words which have simple letter-sound relationships in English (this is NOT the place to learn words like light or know or police or eight)
- words which will lead him to other words (rather than words which are exceptional in English orthography like was or there).

Remember to limit the words for this activity to four sounds because more than four sounds can be a problem to the beginner.

Despite all the above at some time during the programme the child will be ready for the teacher to break
with those restrictions. This is a matter of teacher judgement on the basis of her records and knowledge of the particular leamer at a particular time in his programme.

## Advanced learning

After the early learning and intermediate steps the child is usually able to

- hear and record the consonants well
- have control over writing letters
- select some vowels correctly.

If the teacher has noted these kinds of transitions she will decide that he is ready for another important transition.

## Step 1 Hearing and recording sounds in sequence

If it has not already occurred it is important now to make another special transition as soon as possible. Have the child identify the first sound in the word, and the rest in sequence. This requires him to shift from recording whatever he is able to hear, irrespective of position in the word. Have the child fill in the letters in the boxes in sequence, from beginning to end, from left to right.

## Step II Attending to spelling using boxes for letters

The teacher now draws a box for every letter in the word to be analysed. She explains this to the child.

At this stage we introduce the child to the mismatch between the sounds of the language to which he has been attending and the way we spell the words. Now we want to provide the child with a box for each letter, even though two letters may not represent two sounds.

One of our teachers found an easy way to introduce the transition:

1) she drew enough boxes for the sounds only and then
2) she put in a dotted line to divide any box that needed two letters like this:

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\begin{array}{|l|l|l:l|l|l|}
\hline \mathrm{h} & \mathrm{a} & \mathrm{~m} & \mathrm{~m} & \mathrm{e} & \mathrm{r} \\
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\end{array}
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and then gradually transferred to solid lines.
Explain the shift to the child - a box for every letter he needs.

- Articulate the word clearly for the child. Let him hear the sounds in sequence several times.
- Make a squared diagram in his booklet with spaces equal to the number of letters required.
- Help the child to fill in the letters of the word using stress or pausing on a sound in an exaggerated way to emphasise the sound you want him to focus on.
- As soon as the child can attend to the sound, return to a natural rate and mode of articulation.
- Find similar sound segments in known words.
mother
monster
water
over
- Help the child if the word has unusual elements or ones that he is not yet ready for (especially vowels).

Sometimes our teachers have provided children with some of the letters for vowels and asked them to select the letter they think could be right. It is not clear how helpful this is.

## Step III Working without boxes

In the later stages of a Reading Recovery programme the writing of the word in boxes will not be needed very often.

As the child becomes a better reader and writer he will continue to encounter new words and the following activities will be needed from time to time.

- The child hears the teacher slowly articulating the sounds in sequence, perhaps several times.
- Encourage the child to 'say it slowly'.
- Use stress to emphasise a sound you want him to focus on.
- Use pausing on that sound or draw it out in an exaggerated way to call attention to it.

Return to any of the earlier ways of helping children to hear sounds in words.

## A brief overview

The task has been to teach children that a good way to write new words in English is to try to hear the sounds in words, but that this will not always give you the right solution.

- Sometimes you can analyse new words you want to write.
- Sometimes you have to know how to spell a particular word.
- Sometimes you have to 'make it like another word you know' which means get it by analogy with a common spelling pattern used in English.

Remember to direct the child to what he knows in reading to help him with his writing. in suede and suave，for example．Thus，it might be more accurate to suggest that $q$ represents $/ \mathrm{k} /$ and $u$ represents $/ \mathrm{w} /$ ．The grapheme $x$ is used to


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of coupon． vowel．We have listed the combination here as a vowel as it is often referred to as a vowel．In truth，／ju／creates／j／blends，as in cube，beautiful，


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SPELLING LIST
Unit 22, First Grade (Houghton Mifflin)

Directions: Create phoneme-grapheme guides for each word.

| this | when | that | with | white | bath | down | how |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |

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2. 
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Unit 23, Second Grade (Houghton Mifflin)

Directions: Create phoneme-grapheme guides for each word.

| cow | mouse | could |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| house | found | show |
| town | loud | towel |
| shut | brown | pounce |
| down | ground |  |

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