

Lesson 18 — The Sound Map

Spelling · ages 6–adult · 30 minutes · one screen, the free game, this page, a pencil

At a Glance

- Game: The Spelling Climb, Sound First deck (free, no login, plays in the browser) — read.globalsovereignuniversity.org/spelling-climb.html#sound-first. Also on the Homeschool hub: globalsovereignuniversity.org/homeschool.
- Ages & time: Spelling · ages 6–adult · 30 minutes · one screen, the free game, this page, a pencil and paper.
- Prep (2 min): read the Teaching Creed once, open the game, turn the sound on, and cut six small paper squares to use as tiles. That's the whole setup.

Why this lesson

Copying a word three times trains the hand, not the memory. A child can copy because perfectly, then write because the moment the word is covered. A word sticks only when it is mapped: each sound heard in order and matched to the letters that spell it. This lesson teaches the five steps from Sound First — Hear, Say, Tap, Build, Write — and uses the Sound First climb to practice the hardest part of English spelling: one sound can be written more than one way.

What the learner will be able to do

- Say a word slowly and tap one finger for each sound before writing it.
- Explain, in their own words, why copying a word is not the same as spelling it.
- Spell the same vowel sound more than one way (ai in rain, ay in play, a-e in cake).
- Run Hear, Say, Tap, Build, Write on a new word without help.

The 30-Minute Climb

How to read this: the gold box in each step is your lesson, word for word — run it exactly. The notes beneath are optional support. “The room/the group” = your family; “host” = you.

1 • The Hook (3 min)

“Copy the word because three times. Good. Now I'm covering it. Write it again from memory.” (Copying is the hand's job. Spelling is the memory's job.)

Say it like this: the host takes the test too, in front of everyone. If the learner gets it right, try Wednesday or neighbor. The point is the pause that comes when the model disappears.

Watch for / if it stalls: if the learner is upset by a miss, say plainly: nothing is wrong with you; something is wrong with copying. Today we fix the method.

2 • Play Together (12 min)

Open the Sound First deck. Read the teach card aloud. For every word: everyone says it slowly and taps one finger per sound on the table before anyone types. Vote on the spelling, then type it.

Two rituals make it work: (1) tap before typing, every word, every time (Sound First calls it Tap Before Pencil); (2) read the clue aloud, because meaning anchors the spelling.

Watch for / if it stalls: when rain, play and cake come up, stop the climb. Same sound, three spellings. Ask: where in the word is the sound? That question is the whole lesson.

3 · The Talk (8 min)

1. Why can you copy a word perfectly and still miss it tomorrow? 2. Rain, play, cake: the same sound, three spellings. How do you choose? 3. What will you do differently the next time you study a spelling word?

You're not fishing for a right answer — you're listening for depth:

- Q1 — copying looks at the word; spelling recalls it. A copied word leans on the page. A mapped word lives in memory.
- Q2 — position is a clue: ay usually ends a word (play, day), ai sits in the middle (rain), and a-e uses the silent e (cake). English has rules, not just exceptions.
- Q3 — listen for the five steps in their own words. If they say "tap it first," the lesson has landed.

4 · Solo Climb (5 min)

Five words at your own pace. Tap before you type, every time.

Why solo: spelling is recall done alone, at a desk or a keyboard, with no one to copy. Five solo words rehearse exactly that.

5 · The Takeaway (2 min)

"Hear it, say it, tap it, build it, write it. Never just copy." · Homework: pick three words you missed this week. Run the five steps on each, then spell them tomorrow from memory, without looking.

The badge moment: finishing all five steps earns the Bronze ring of this lesson's badge, The Word Mapper. Mark it on the Passport now; the homework is how Silver and Gold are earned during the week.

The Teaching Creed

You are not the expert; the game is. Your job is to vote last, read aloud well, and ask "why?" one more time than feels natural. Celebrate wrong answers loudly — in here, wrong is where the lesson lives.

GENO — the GSU tutor you can actually TALK to, free, 24/7, understands 70+ languages (32 fully optimized) — can explain any answer a second way.

Adapt It & Measure It

Differentiation

- Younger (ages 6–8): use the paper tiles. Push one tile forward for each sound you say, then write the letters on the tiles. Sound First calls this building the word before writing it.
- One child: the parent spells a word wrong on purpose. The child catches the mistake by tapping the sounds.
- Large co-op: teams race to sort the deck's words into sound families: ai, ay and a-e; ee; oa and ow; igh; oo.
- Reluctant teen: start with a word they really miss in their own writing or texting, and map that one first.

Evidence of learning (no exam)

Look for three things — Tried (ran the five steps on three missed words), Noticed (can name two spellings for the same sound), Changed (spelled a missed word correctly a day later, from memory). Those three words are the whole rubric, and they map onto the badge tiers below.

Gamify It — The Campus Climb

Every GSU lesson is one badge on the Climber's Passport, each earned at four depths — the GSU standard Bronze → Silver → Gold → Platinum.

LESSON 18 BADGE — The Word Mapper · Bronze — The Climb: finished the 30-minute lesson, all five steps. · Silver — The Try: ran the five steps on three missed words and spelled them from memory the next day. · Gold — The Proof: reached Gold on the Sound First climb. · Platinum — The Teacher: ran this lesson as host for someone else. The harvest of a teacher is teachers.

The book behind this lesson: Sound First, by Dr. Gene A Constant — Chapter 1 (The Lie of the List), Chapter 2 (The Five Steps) and Chapter 3 (Tap Before Pencil).

"Every person on Earth is born with an American spirit: an untamed yearning for a better tomorrow." — Dr. Gene A. Constant

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