Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

BUILDING STRONG READERS FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE!

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

LITERACY TOOLKIT

PHONEMIC AWARENESS



Created through funding provided by the Comprehensive Literacy Grant Initiative.

Supporting early literacy success for every child, every family, every community.

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

WELCOME, TEACHERS!

Thank you for using the Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Literacy Toolkit!



This toolkit is designed to help young children hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds in words.
Together, we can build strong phonemic awareness and help every child become a confident reader!

1 WHY PHONEMIC AWARENESS MATTERS

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and work with the separate sounds in words.
It is one of the most important skills children need before they learn to read and spell.

Benefits Include:

- Improves decoding and spelling
- Supports early reading success
- Helps children break words apart and build them back
- Strengthens phonological skills
- Boosts confidence in reading and writing
- Prepares children for long term literacy success

2 RESEARCH BASED BENEFITS

Strong phonemic awareness gives children a solid foundation for learning to read and spell.

When children can hear, identify, blend, segment, and manipulate sounds, they are better able to decode words and build their vocabulary.

Daily phonemic awareness practice strengthens listening, language, and early literacy skills while preparing children for lifelong reading success.

3 HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

1 EXPLORE
Review the activities and choose the ones that best fit your students' needs.

2 PREPARE
Gather a few materials and set up center or small group activities.

3 ENGAGE
Introduce sounds in meaningful, real life contexts through play and exploration.

4 OBSERVE
Use the assessment tools to track progress and celebrate success.

PERFECT FOR

- Classrooms
- Small Groups
- Intervention
- Take-Home Practice
- Literacy Centers
- Family Engagement

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

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This toolkit aligns with key early learning and literacy standards that support print awareness and early literacy development.

BIRTH–3
(INFANTS & TODDLERS)

Early experiences with songs, rhymes, and books build the foundation for lifelong reading.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Engages in back-and-forth interactions using sounds, words, and gestures.
- Responds to and enjoys finger plays, songs, and rhymes.
- Explores books and shows interest in pictures, print, and story.
- Demonstrates early understanding that print carries meaning.
- Develops attention and memory through repeated experiences.

PRESCHOOL
(3–5 YEARS)

Preschoolers strengthen print awareness and oral language through meaningful literacy experiences.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Identifies that print carries meaning and has a purpose.
- Recognizes some letters, words, and signs in the environment.
- Understands that we read from left to right and top to bottom.
- Participates in shared reading and retelling of familiar rhymes.
- Uses vocabulary and oral language to express ideas and make connections.

PRE–K
(4–5 YEARS)

Pre-K children use their knowledge of print to connect language with meaning and purpose.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Demonstrates understanding of basic concepts of print.
- Identifies letters and their associated sounds.
- Recognizes and produces rhyming words.
- Reads and understands high-frequency words.
- Retells stories and rhymes in sequence using key details.

KINDERGARTEN
(5–6 YEARS)

Kindergarteners apply print awareness skills to support reading comprehension and emergent writing.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Demonstrates a deep understanding of concepts of print.
- Reads emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.
- Uses phonological awareness skills to decode and encode words.
- Writes letters, words, and sentences to express ideas.
- Comprehends and retells nursery rhymes and connected text.

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PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

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BEGINNING SOUND CALL OUT FOR TEACHERS

Say each sound clearly and naturally. Give students time to listen and find the picture that starts with that sound.

PICTURE	SOUND	EXAMPLE WORD	PICTURE	SOUND	EXAMPLE WORD	PICTURE	SOUND	EXAMPLE WORD
	/k/	kite		/m/	mouse		/p/	pig
	/sh/	ship		/s/	sun		/h/	hat
	/d/	duck		/b/	ball		/b/	bus
	/k/	cat		/m/	moon		/j/	jam
	/d/	dog		/f/	fish		/t/	top
	/h/	house		/w/	wave		/b/	bed
	/sh/	shoe		/m/	mop		/c/	cup
	/b/	book		/l/	lip		/m/	map
	/h/	hip		/u/	up		/b/	bug
10	/t/	ten		/f/	fox		/b/	bell
	/j/	jet		/l/	lock		/g/	gum
	/r/	run		/g/	gas		/ch/	chin
	/f/	phone		/h/	ham		/n/	nose
	/s/	sock		/p/	pot		/m/	mat
	/p/	pin		/h/	hill		/l/	log
	/ch/	chips	—	/l/	line		/l/	leg
	/r/	road		/f/	feet		/b/	bat
	/r/	red		/r/	ram		/l/	love

REMEMBER

Use a clear, consistent voice. Say each sound once and wait.
Encourage students to listen carefully!

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PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

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SEGMENT SOUND CALL OUT FOR TEACHERS

Say each word clearly. Segment the word into individual sounds.
Give students time to listen and repeat the sounds.

PICTURE	SOUND	EXAMPLE WORD	PICTURE	SOUND	EXAMPLE WORD	PICTURE	SOUND	EXAMPLE WORD
	/k/ /i/ /t/	**kite**		/m/ /ou/ /s/	**mouse**		/p/ /i/ /g/	**pig**
	/sh/ /i/ /p/	**ship**		/s/ /u/ /n/	**sun**		/h/ /a/ /t/	**hat**
	/d/ /u/ /k/	**duck**		/b/ /ô/ /l/	**ball**		/b/ /u/ /s/	**bus**
	/k/ /a/ /t/	**cat**		/m/ /oo/ /n/	**moon**		/j/ /a/ /m/	**jam**
	/d/ /o/ /g/	**dog**		/f/ /i/ /sh/	**fish**		/t/ /o/ /p/	**top**
	/h/ /ou/ /s/	**house**		/w/ /ā/ /v/	**wave**		/b/ /e/ /d/	**bed**
	/sh/ /oo/	**shoe**		/m/ /o/ /p/	**mop**		/c/ /u/ /p/	**cup**
	/b/ /oo/ /k/	**book**		/l/ /i/ /p/	**lip**		/m/ /a/ /p/	**map**
	/h/ /i/ /p/	**hip**		/u/ /p/	**up**		/b/ /u/ /g/	**bug**
10	/t/ /e/ /n/	**ten**		/f/ /o/ /k/ /s/	**fox**		/b/ /e/ /l/	**bell**
	/j/ /e/ /t/	**jet**		/l/ /o/ /k/	**lock**		/g/ /u/ /m/	**gum**
	/r/ /u/ /n/	**run**		/g/ /a/ /s/	**gas**		/ch/ /i/ /n/	**chin**
	/f/ /o/ /n/	**phone**		/h/ /a/ /m/	**ham**		/n/ /ō/ /z/	**nose**
	/s/ /o/ /k/	**sock**		/p/ /o/ /t/	**pot**		/m/ /a/ /t/	**mat**
	/p/ /i/ /n/	**pin**		/h/ /i/ /l/	**hill**		/l/ /o/ /g/	**log**
	/ch/ /i/ /p/ /s/	**chips**		/l/ /i/ /n/	**line**		/l/ /e/ /g/	**leg**
	/r/ /ō/ /d/	**road**		/f/ /e/ /t/	**feet**		/b/ /a/ /t/	**bat**
	/r/ /e/ /d/	**red**		/r/ /a/ /m/	**ram**		/l/ /u/ /v/	**love**

REMEMBER

Use a clear, consistent voice. Say each sound once and wait.
Encourage students to listen carefully!

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc. | Birth-5 Literacy Resource Collection
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SOUND DETECTIVE

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Students identify the first sound they hear in a spoken word.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus: Initial Sound Isolation
Grades: Preschool–Kindergarten
Time: 10–15 minutes
Group Size: Whole Group, Small Group, Pairs

TARGET SKILL

Students will identify the first sound they hear in a word.

MATERIALS

- Sound Detective picture cards
- Magnifying glass (optional)
- Pocket chart (optional)

WHAT TO DO

1. Tell students they are "Sound Detectives."
2. Hold up a picture.
3. Say the picture name slowly.
4. Ask: "What sound do you hear first?"
   Students respond with the sound, not the letter.
5. Continue with additional pictures.

TEACHING TIP

Stretch the first sound slightly.

ssssun
mmmmoon
fffffish

Avoid adding "uh."

Say /b/, not "buh."

LET'S LISTEN FOR THE FIRST SOUND!

Teacher Prompt:

- Show one picture at a time.
- Ask, "What sound do you hear first?"
- Say the picture name aloud.
- Students respond with the sound only.









TEACHER REMINDER

Students should focus on the sound at the beginning of the word, not the letter.
Use the Picture Reference Guide to help students identify the pictures and sounds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which picture begins with /m/?
2. Which two pictures start with different sounds?
3. Can you think of another word that starts with /s/?



EXTENSION IDEAS

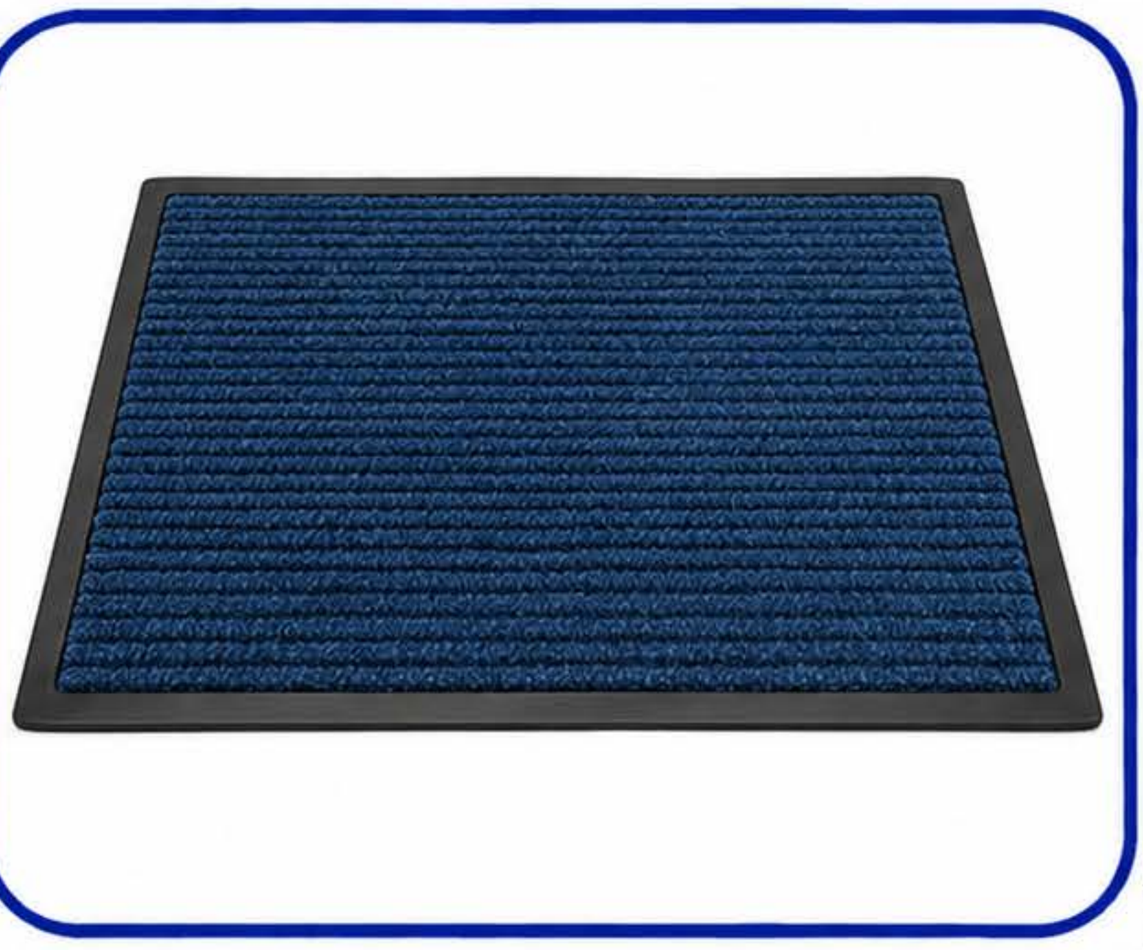
- Take a Sound Hunt around the classroom for things that begin with a target sound.
- Say three words. Students give a thumbs up when they hear the target first sound.
- Play Mystery Sound! Give a clue (e.g., "It starts with /b/."). Students

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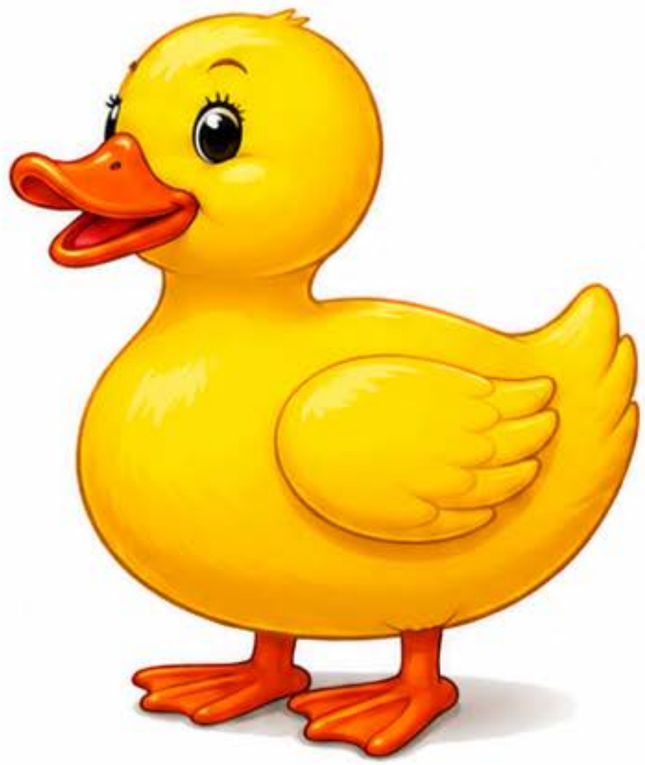




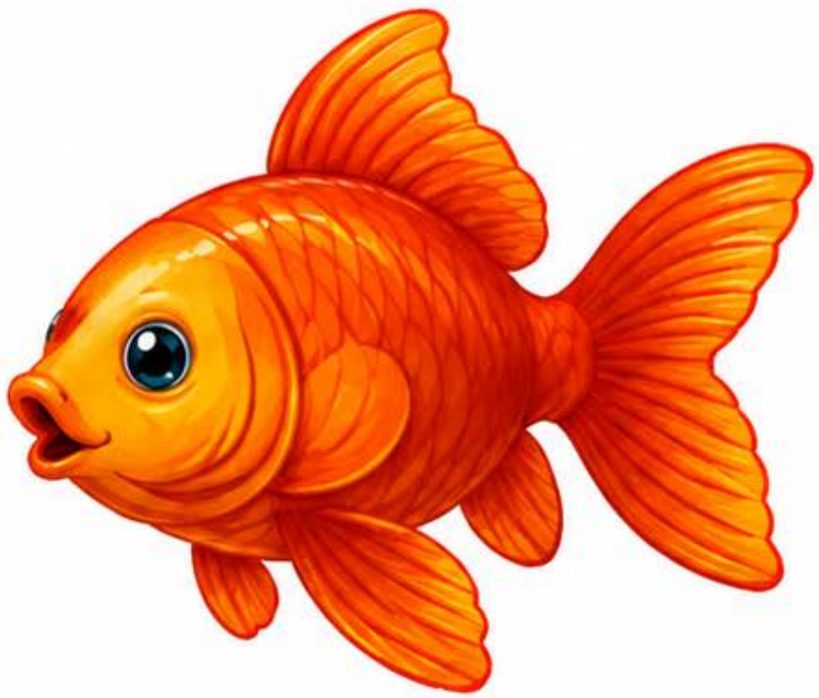















SCHOOL BUS
STOP






RED














N
W
E
S









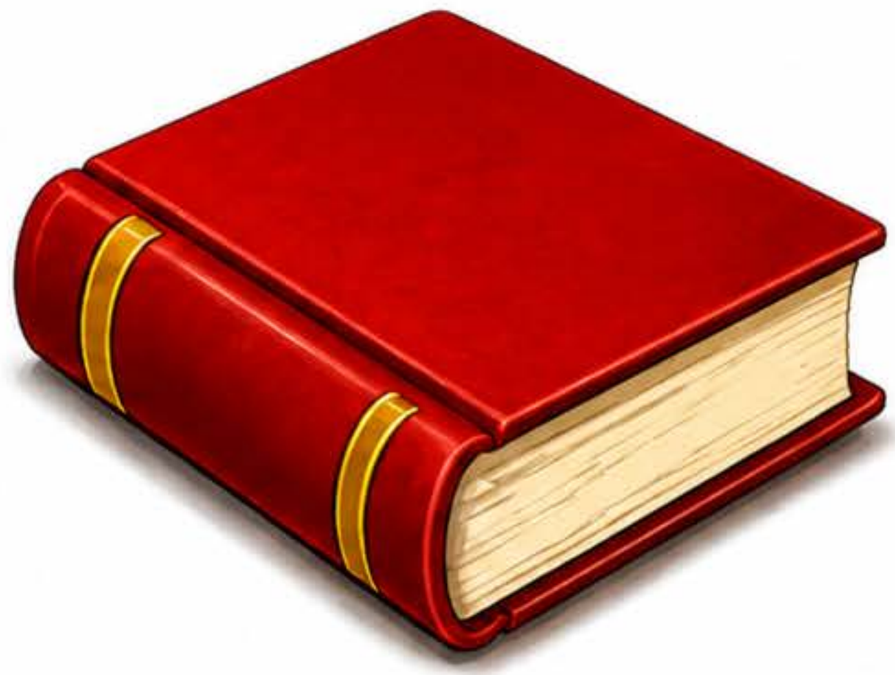

























10:30
Tuesday, June 11
Messages
Calendar
Photos
Camera
Weather
Clock
Maps
Videos
Notes
Reminders
Stocks
Books
App Store
Podcasts
TV
Health













ROBOT TALK



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Students hear individual sounds and blend them to make a word.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus: Phoneme Blending
Grades: Preschool–Kindergarten
Time: 10–15 minutes
Group Size: Whole Group, Small Group, Pairs

TARGET SKILL

Phoneme Blending

Students blend individual sounds to make a word.

MATERIALS

- Robot Picture
- Picture Cards (examples below)
- Pocket chart (optional)

WHAT TO DO

1. Tell students the robot is going to talk.
2. Say the word sounds slowly like a robot. Example: /m/ ... /a/ ... /p/
3. Students blend the sounds and say the word.
4. Repeat with additional words.
5. Invite students to be the robot!

TEACHING TIP

Keep a steady rhythm between sounds.

Pause about one second between phonemes.

EXAMPLES



mop



lip



map



up

TEACHER REMINDER

Students should focus on the sounds in the word, not the letter.
Use the Picture Reference Guide to help students identify pictures and sounds.

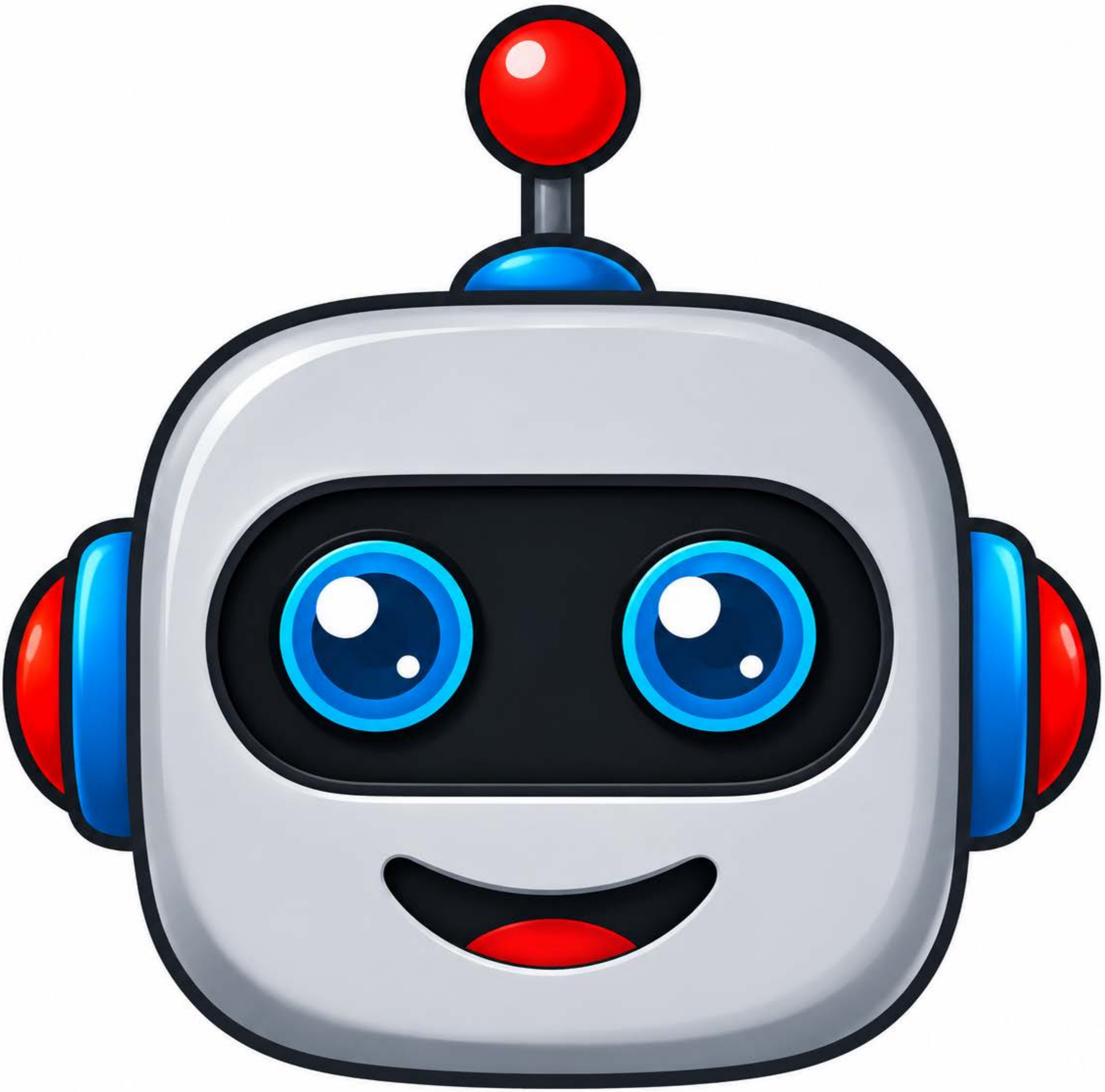
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What sounds did the robot say?
2. What word did we make from those sounds?
3. Which word was the easiest to blend? Why?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Use more difficult words by adding beginning blends or ending sounds.
- Students can write the word after blending the sounds.
- Use Robot Talk during centers with headphones for extra practice.



STRETCH & SNAP SOUNDS

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Students stretch the band while saying each sound.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus: Phoneme Segmenting

Grades: Preschool–Kindergarten

Time: 10–15 minutes

Group Size: Whole Group, Small Group

TARGET SKILL

Phoneme Segmenting

Students break a spoken word into individual sounds.

MATERIALS

- Stretchy band
- Picture cards
- Pocket chart (optional)

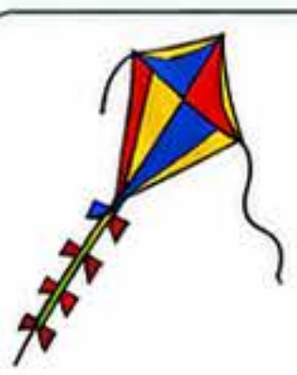
WHAT TO DO

1. Tell students they will stretch the band while saying each sound.
2. Show a picture.
3. Stretch the band while saying the sounds slowly.
4. Snap the band back together and say the word.
5. Repeat with additional pictures.

TEACHING TIP

- Students are saying sounds, not letters.
- Model the word first before asking students to segment it.
- Stretch the band a little farther for each sound students hear.
- Keep the sounds separate and clear. Avoid adding "uh" to consonant sounds.
- Start with simple two- and three-phoneme words before moving to words with more sounds.

EXAMPLES



kite



ship



duck



cat



dog



house

TEACHER REMINDER

Students should focus on the sounds in the word, not the letter.
Use the Picture Reference Guide to help students identify pictures and sounds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What sounds did we say for this word?
2. How many sounds did we say?
3. Can you think of another word we can stretch and snap?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Use individual stretchy bands for students to practice with partners.
- Have students choose a picture card and stretch the band on their own.
- Students draw a picture and a friend stretches the band to segment the sounds.

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GUM
SPEARMINT





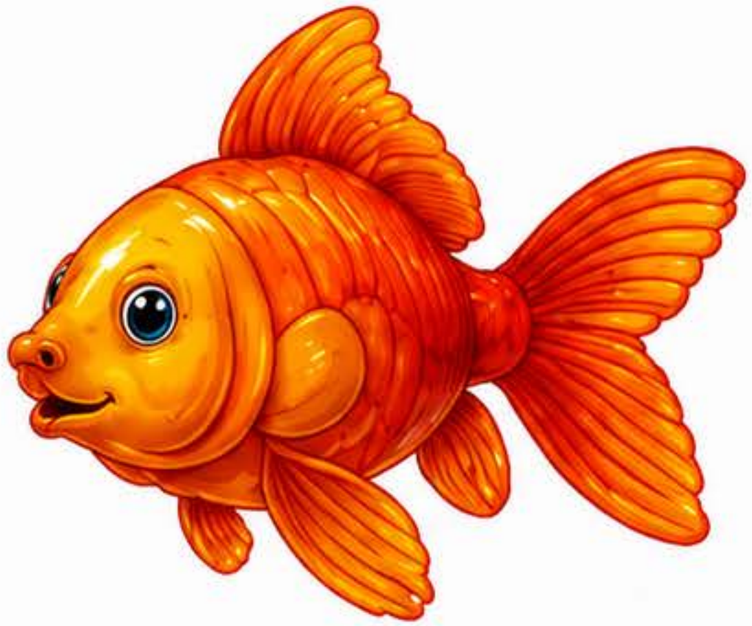


























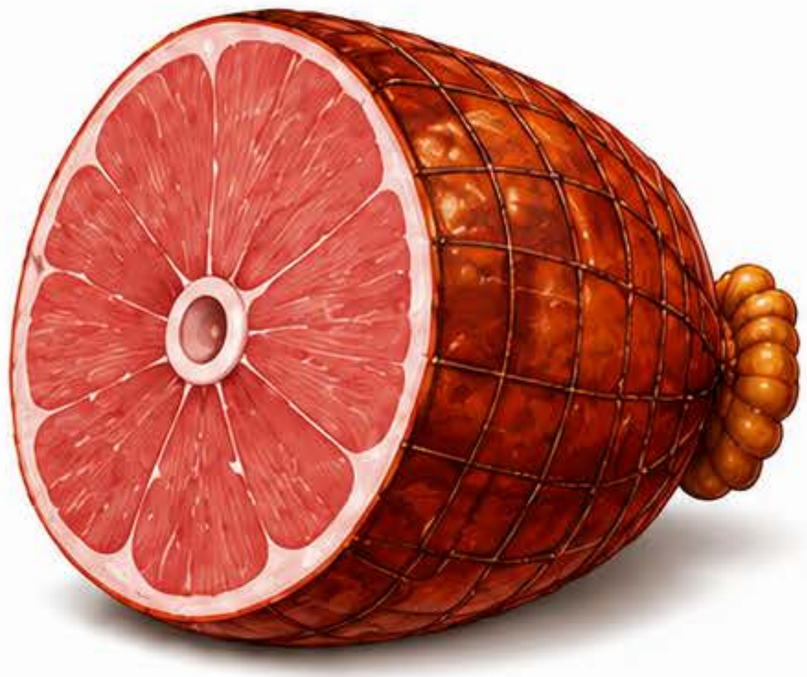








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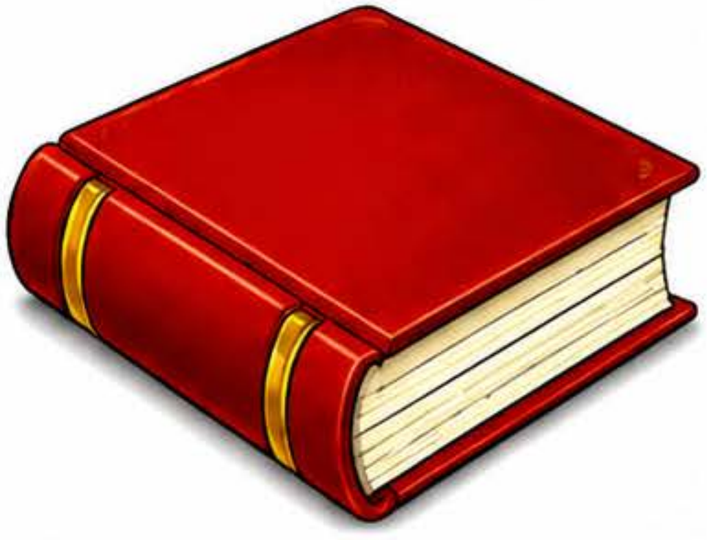




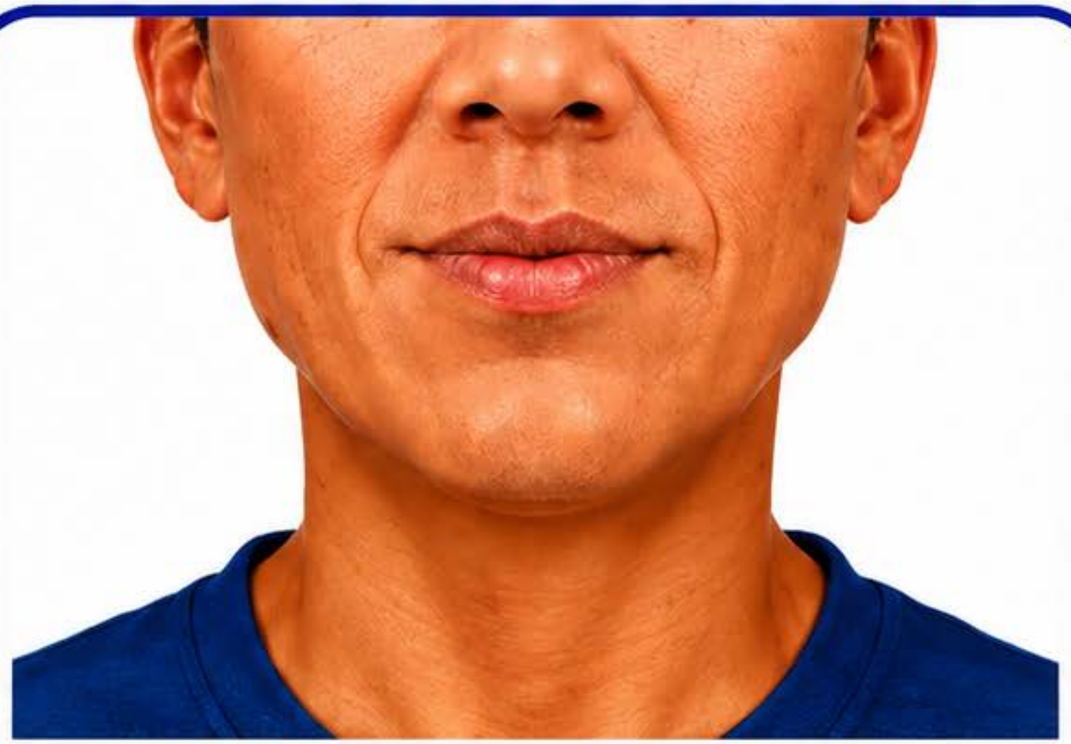






















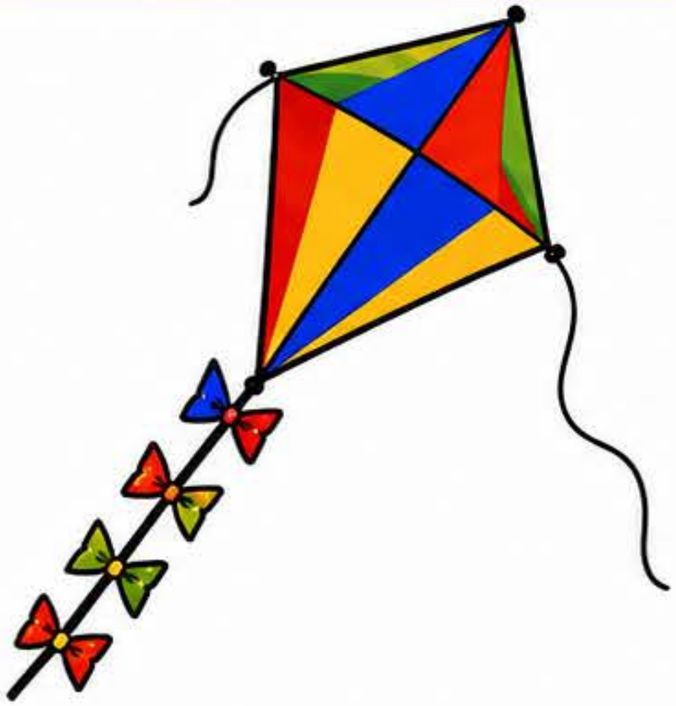




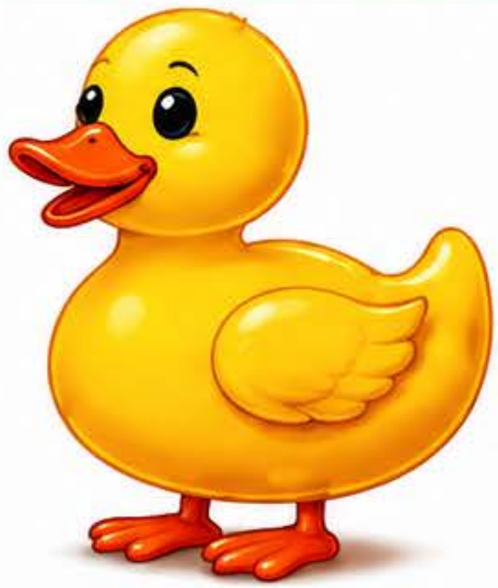


















SOUND SWAP MAGIC

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Students change the beginning sound to make a new word.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus: Beginning Phoneme Manipulation

Grades: Preschool–Kindergarten

Time: 10–15 minutes

Group Size: Whole Group, Small Group, Pairs

TARGET SKILL

Beginning Phoneme Manipulation

Students change the first sound in a word to make a new word.

MATERIALS

- Picture cards
- Pocket chart (optional)
- Magic wand (optional)
- Beginning Phoneme Manipulation Script

WHAT TO DO

1. Tell students, "Let's change one sound!"
2. Say a word and show the picture.
3. Change the beginning sound.
4. Students say the new word.
5. Repeat with additional examples.

TEACHING TIP

- Only change beginning sounds.
- This is the easiest form of phoneme manipulation for young learners.

EXAMPLES

(Examples are provided in the Beginning Phoneme Manipulation Script.)

TEACHER REMINDER

Focus on the beginning sounds in each word.
Use the Beginning Phoneme Manipulation Script to help students create new words.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What word did we start with?
2. Which sound did we change?
3. What new word did we make?
4. Can you think of another word we can change?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Have students think of their own word swaps.
- Let students draw a picture of two words that rhyme after swapping the sound.
- Use magnetic letters to build the new words.

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SOUND SWAP MAGIC

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

Students change the beginning sound to make a new word.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Beginning Phoneme Manipulation
Grades:	Preschool–Kindergarten
Time:	10–15 minutes
Group Size:	Whole Group, Small Group

PHONEME MANIPULATION SCRIPT

1 SAY THE WORD

TEACHER SAYS	STUDENTS DO/SAY
"Listen to my word: **cat.** Say **cat."**	Students listen. Students say: **"Cat."**

2 LISTEN TO THE FIRST SOUND

TEACHER SAYS	STUDENTS DO/SAY
"Listen to the first sound in **cat.** The first sound is **/k/.**" What sound do you hear first?"	Students think. Students say: **"/k/."**

3 SWAP THE SOUND

TEACHER SAYS	STUDENTS DO/SAY
"Let's change the beginning sound. Take away **/k/** and put **/h/** at the beginning." Listen: **/h/ ... at.**	Students listen. *(No response needed.)*

4 SAY THE NEW WORD

TEACHER SAYS	STUDENTS DO/SAY
"What new word did we make?" Yes! We changed **cat** to **hat."**	Students think. Students say: **"Hat!"** Students repeat: **"Hat!"**

★ LET'S PRACTICE TOGETHER! ★

pan → **fan** | bug → **rug** | log → **dog** | pig → **wig** | top → **mop** | bat → **cat**

TEACHER TIP

Keep the activity oral. Students do not need to see letters.
Clearly emphasize the beginning sound and give students a few seconds to think before answering.

LISTENING LOTTO

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Students listen to sound clues and find the matching picture.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus: Phoneme Identification/Discrimination

Grades: Preschool–Kindergarten

Time: 10–15 minutes

Group Size: Whole Group, Small Group, Pairs

TARGET SKILL

Phoneme Identification/ Discrimination

Students listen for a beginning sound and identify the matching picture.



MATERIALS

- Listening Lotto boards (examples below)
- Picture calling cards or teacher prompt cards
- Counters or chips
- Pocket chart (optional)



WHAT TO DO

1. Give each student a Listening Lotto board and counters.
2. Tell students you will say a sound clue.
3. Students listen and cover the matching picture.
4. Continue with new sound clues.
5. The first student to cover all pictures shouts "Lotto!"



TEACHING TIP

- Use clear, consistent sound clues.
- Say the sound slowly and naturally.
- Provide support by using a picture clue or acting it out.
- For a challenge, say a word and have students find another picture that begins with the same sound.

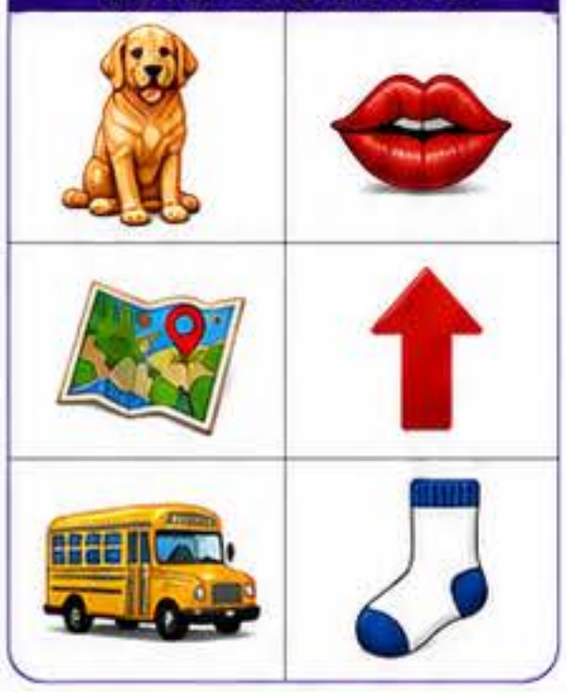


EXAMPLES

LISTENING LOTTO



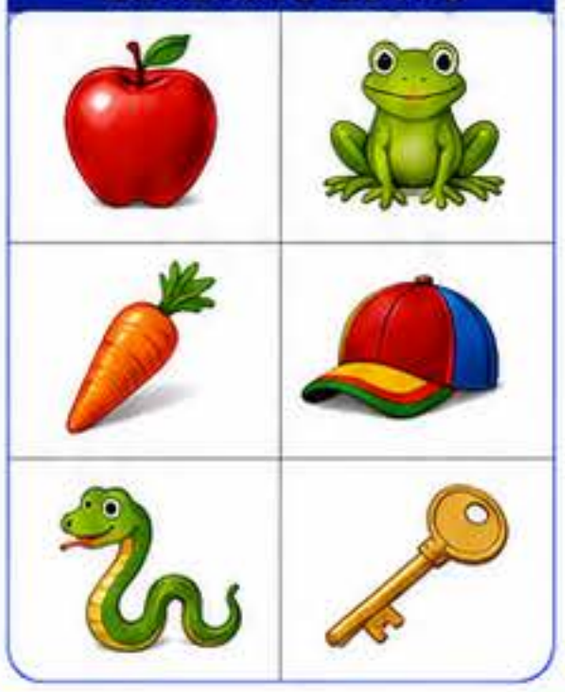
LISTENING LOTTO



LISTENING LOTTO



LISTENING LOTTO



TEACHER REMINDER

Students should focus on the sounds in the word, not the letter.
Use the Picture Reference Guide to help students identify pictures and sounds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What sound did we listen for?
2. Which picture did you choose? Why?
3. What other words begin with that sound?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Play in small groups or pairs.
- Invite students to be the caller.
- Create new boards using other pictures from the Picture Reference Guide.

LISTENING LOTTO













LISTENING LOTTO













LISTENING LOTTO













LISTENING LOTTO













LISTENING LOTTO



10





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LISTENING LOTTO













LISTENING LOTTO





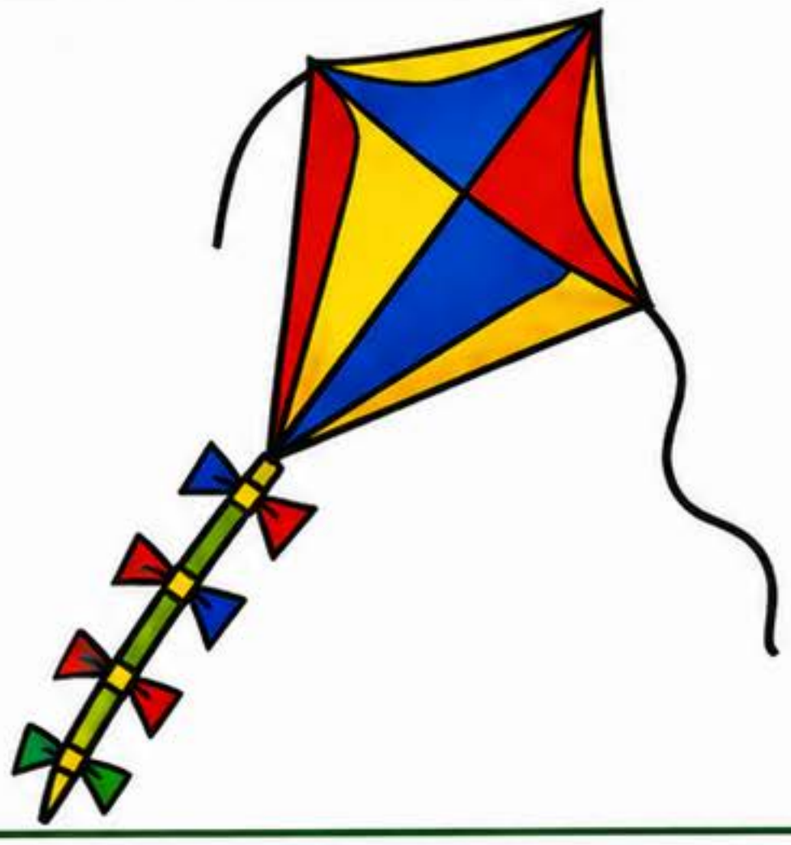


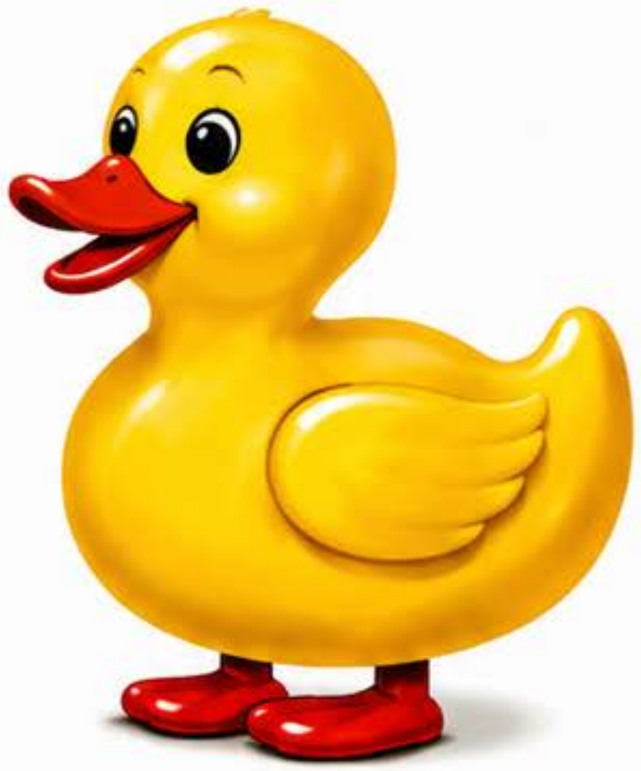






LISTENING LOTTO













FAMILY CONNECTION

STRONG SOUNDS TODAY. STRONG READERS TOMORROW.

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TALK

- Talk about sounds in words.
- Listen for the sounds.
- Have fun with sound play!

LISTEN

- Listen for the first, middle, and last sounds.
- Notice sounds in everyday conversations.
- Play listening games together.

TAP

- Tap the sounds in words.
- Stretch the sounds as you say them.
- Repeat and practice often.

CONNECT

- Count sounds (phonemes) in words.
- Build and change words by adding, removing, or changing sounds.
- Make phonemic awareness a daily habit!

FAMILY CHALLENGE

Try these phonemic awareness activities all week!

- ☐ Clap the sounds in 5 different words.
- ☐ Find and name 5 items around the house that start with the same sound.
- ☐ Choose a word from a story or book. Say it slowly and listen for the first sound in each one.
- ☐ Sing a silly song and tap the sounds together.
- ☐ Make a silly word by changing the first sound (e.g., man → fan → pan).

Little sounds make a big difference!

TRY THIS TONIGHT!

- Choose a word and tap the sounds together.
- Say a word slowly and listen for each sound.
- Take turns thinking of words that start with the same sound.
- Change a sound in a word to make a new word.
- End with a high-five and celebrate your child's great listening!

TOGETHER, WE BUILD STRONG SOUNDS AND BRIGHT FUTURES!

Your encouragement helps your child grow as a reader and a confident learner.
Thank you for being such an important part of your child's learning journey!

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OBSERVATION CHECKLIST



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Use this checklist to observe and celebrate children as they develop phonengic awareness skills by hearing, identifying, and manipulating sounds in spoken words.

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____ Observer: _____

SKILLS TO OBSERVE	CONSISTENTLY (Most of the time)	SOMETIMES (With support)	NOT YET (Needs more practice)	NOTES
1 Hears and identifies rhyming words	○	○	○	_____
2 Hears and identifies the beginning sound in words	○	○	○	_____
3 Hears and identifies the ending sound in words	○	○	○	_____
4 Hears and identifies the middle sound in words	○	○	○	_____
5 Segment words into individual sounds (phonemes)	○	○	○	_____
6 Blends individual sounds (phonemes) to make a word	○	○	○	_____
7 Adds a sound to make a new word	○	○	○	_____
8 Deletes a sound to make a new word	○	○	○	_____
9 Substitutes (changes) a sound in a word to make a new word	○	○	○	_____
10 Taps the sounds in a word	○	○	○	_____
11 Identifies sounds in words when reading or listening	○	○	○	_____
12 Uses phonemic awareness skills during songs, rhymes, and games	○	○	○	_____

STRENGTHS I OBSERVED:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NEXT STEPS:

- ★ Continue to build confidence.
- ★ Provide extra practice and support.
- ★ Encourage and celebrate every step!

WHAT CAN HELP:

- ✓ Songs and nursery rhymes
- ✓ Syllable clapping games
- ✓ Books and storytelling
- ✓ Movement and actions
- ✓ Family practice every day

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