

Phonological Awareness Lessons

Lesson One

Objective: Children focus on initial sounds in words and learn that the presence or absence of an initial phoneme results in two different words.

- Explain that you can take a sound away from a word and create a different word.
- Give an example repeating the initial consonant: *ffffair*.
- Have children repeat.
- Then say *air*.
- Ask if they know what sound has been taken away. Repeat both words: *ffffair; air; /ffff/ –air*.
- Gradually move from easier consonants to more difficult ones.
- Most children have less difficulty identifying the new word than identifying the sound that has been taken away.
- Because some children may produce rhyming words rather than focusing on initial sounds, avoid using rhyming and initial sound activities close together.
- **Variation:** Call children to line up by saying their names without the initial consonants (e.g., *artha* for *Martha*). Ask children to tell what sound is missing. For names that begin with consonant blends, you may want to delete both sounds as a unit until blends have been introduced (e.g., *ank* for *Frank*).

Examples of Easier Consonant Onsets:

f, ch, m, s, h, kn, l, ph, n, sh, th, v, wh

Examples of More Difficult Consonant Onsets:

b, c, g, l, p, t

Adapted from Adams, M. J., Foorman, B. R., Lundberg, I., & Beeler, T. (1998). *Phonemic awareness in young children: A classroom curriculum*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Lesson Two

Objective: Children focus on initial sounds in words and learn that the presence or absence of an initial phoneme results in two different words.

- Explain that a new word can be made by adding a sound to a word.
- Give an example: *at*.
- Have children repeat.
- Ask them to add a new sound to the beginning of the word, such as /sssss/. Then say: *ssssat* ; *sat*.
- Have children repeat.
- Explain that by putting a new sound on the beginning, we have a new word.
- Offer support by having children say the new word in unison.
- Gradually move from easier initial consonants to more difficult ones. Add consonant blends later.
- **Variation:** In small groups, have children roll a ball of yarn from one to another as each responds, creating a spider web of yarn.

Examples of easy word pairs:

ill–mill ace–vase out–shout am–Sam aim–name

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Lesson Three

Objective: Children blend syllables, onset-rimes, and phonemes.

Materials: Puppet; picture cards

Setting: Small groups

- Introduce a puppet.
- Explain that the puppet likes to play a game with children, but it has a strange way of talking. It says words very slowly. It likes to give children picture cards, but there is a catch. It wants them to figure out what is on the card before it gives the card to them.
- Give an example: "Instead of saying baseball, the puppet says *base ball*. You have to figure out what it is saying and say the word fast, putting the parts together. What's the word? *Baseball*." Then show a picture of a baseball.
- Have the puppet say a word slowly to each child. When the child says the word, the puppet gives the card to the child.
- Begin with words that have more than one syllable: *bi-cy-cle*, *pep-per-mint*, *wa-ter-mel-on*, *fin-ger-paints*, *com-put-er*.
- Then have the puppet say one-syllable words, breaking them into their onset and rime: /s/-oap, /b/-ook, /d/-esk, /d/-og, /p/-an.
- Finally, have the puppet say words separating each phoneme: /m/ /a/ /t/ = *mat*, /ch/ /e/ /k/ = *check*, /p/ /e/ /n/ = *pen*.

Adapted from Adams, M. J., Foorman, B. R., Lundberg, I., & Beeler, T. (1998). *Phonemic awareness in young children: A classroom curriculum*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Lesson Four

Objective: Children blend and segment phonemes.

Materials: 2 different-colored blocks or plain counters for you and each child;
1 set of pictures that represent two-phoneme words

Setting: Small groups

- Use words whose meanings and usage are familiar to children.
- Begin with blending activities and then combine with segmenting activities.

Blending

- Child chooses a card and names what is pictured.
- Repeat the word slowly with a short pause between phonemes.
- All the children in the group repeat the word slowly in the same manner.
- Place two different-colored blocks or blank counters underneath the picture and say the sound of each phoneme.
- Children repeat the word, sound by sound, using their blocks to represent the two distinct sounds.
- Model how to continue saying the word, pausing less each time between phonemes: /t/ /o/ *toe*; /t/ . . . /o/ . . . *toe*; /t/. /o/. *toe*.
- Have children repeat the sounds several times and point to the respective blocks.

Segmenting

- Place the picture cards face down. Choose one and place it so the children cannot see the picture. Name the picture phoneme by phoneme (e.g., /t/ /i/ for *tie*) while placing the two blocks under the picture.
- Have children point to their blocks and repeat the phonemes over and over and faster and faster. Follow the same procedure as described in the blending activity until children know the word.
- When they know the identity of the picture, turn the picture card over for all to see.

- When children become more proficient, they can choose a picture and say the phonemes for the others in the group to identify. Follow the same procedure and have the whole group respond by voicing the separate phonemes as they point to their corresponding blocks.
- **Variations:** Say words without picture cards. Use the words in sentences for clarification: “*tie*—The man’s *tie* is black and white.” Have children use words in sentences.
- Use these games to teach the alphabetic principle by replacing the colored blocks with letters or letter tiles. Begin with words that include one letter for each sound. Avoid words with silent letters or digraphs.

Adapted from Adams, M. J., Foorman, B. R., Lundberg, I., & Beeler, T. (1998). *Phonemic awareness in young children: A classroom curriculum*. Baltimore: Brookes.