

Attachment 14

Further suggested activities for phonological and phonemic awareness

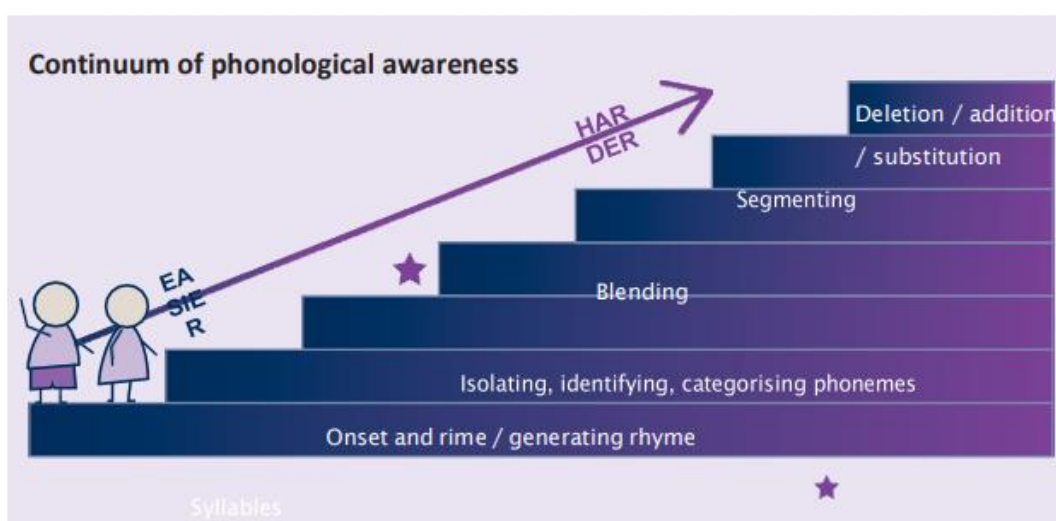
Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is the first component of language learning.

Students have to be able to hear distinct sounds before they can hear the sounds in words. These are oral and aural language games.

It is essential that students have an excellent grasp of oral language before written language and reading are introduced.

The continuum of phonological awareness, available at [Tools 4 Reading](https://www.tools4reading.com.au/)¹ under the Tools 4 Teachers tab, provides direction for helping students move from the easiest to the hardest skills. See further details below the diagram.



Adapted from Tools 4 Reading. The original diagram is available from [Tools 4 Reading](https://www.tools4reading.com.au/) under the Tools 4 Teachers tab. Membership is required for access but is free.

Words

Students need to be able to identify and manipulate words in phrases and sentences. They also need to understand compound words. Compound words are formed when two words are put together to form a new word with a new meaning, for example, cow + boy = cowboy.

Manipulating words: students play with language

Start with as simple sentence, such as, 'I went to the shops.' Point out 'I' is one word and point to yourself.

¹ <https://www.tools4reading.com.au/>

Ask, 'Who else could go to the shops?' Encourage students to put their own name into the sentence. 'Maya went to the shops.' 'Nick went to the shops.' Point out Maya is one word, Nick is one word, and in the sentence there are other words. The next step would be to move on to place as indicated in the sentence.

Point out that 'shops' is one word. Ask, 'What else could we say? Where else could we say we went?' Ask students to think of one place. Then say, 'I went to the (pause)' and gesture for students to add the place, for example, oval, paddock, house. No doubt students could say – 'I went to the class next door', which is three words. In such cases, the teacher would discuss the phrase. You could say, 'Which class? We needed more words to say exactly where, so we used three words – class, next and door.'

Segment and blend compound words: students practise segmenting and blending compound words

Compile a list of compound words such as 'classroom', 'butterfly', and 'playground'. Explain to the students that you are going to break these words into two separate words.

Using two fists stuck together, show how 'butter' and 'fly' combined make the word 'butterfly'. Then model how to break the word 'butterfly' into 'butter' and 'fly' by separating the fists to show segmentation.

Practise the reverse skill of blending by providing students with two separate words that can be blended into one compound word.

Syllables

A syllable is a unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound, with or without surrounding consonants, forming the whole or a part of a word.

Syllable sort: students identify the number of syllables in a word

The teacher has real objects or pictures of them. Draw a chart on the carpet or mark it with tape. Put the numbers 1, 2, 3 into the chart. Ask the students to sort the objects based on how many syllables they can hear in each of the words.

Bumble Bee, Bumble Bee: students clap the beats (syllables) in their name

The teacher asks the students to sit in a circle. The teacher walks around to a child saying the rhyme, 'Bumble Bee, Bumble Bee, will you say your name for me?' They stop at a child and hand them a toy bee. The child responds by saying their name.

The teacher asks the class to say the name, clapping out the syllables. The teacher can then ask students to whisper the name, clapping out the syllables. The teacher and class then chant, 'Bumble Bee Bumble Bee, thank you for saying your name for me!' Repeat with another student.

As students become familiar with the game, they can take on the 'teacher' role. The game can then be played using other words with more syllables.

Onset and rime

Onset and rime is the natural division of a syllable into two parts. Onset is the beginning sound in a syllable before the vowel; rime is the vowel and all the letters after it in a syllable.

Deletion and substitution: students orally practise deleting and substituting onset units

Orally practise deletion of onset units in a word with students regularly. 'Say /dill/. Now say /dill/ but don't say /d/. ' The answer is /ill/. Challenge students to substitute onset units as well. 'Say /wood/. Now say /wood/ but instead of the /w/, say /g/. ' The answer is /good/.

Sounds switch (or sound out): students segment words into onset and rime and manipulate the onset to make new words

The teacher sits the students in a group where they can all see the board. They place a picture of a cat on the board and ask the students what they can see. They then ask the students what sound they would need to change to turn the word from 'cat' to 'hat'. Repeat with other CVC words.

Rhyme

Rhyming words sound the same at the end of words. They do not need to have the same spelling to rhyme.

In my box (rhyming game): students find and match words that rhyme

Place some pictures in a small box that represent familiar words that have familiar rhymes (like box/socks, cat/hat, or chair/bear). Sit in a circle with the students. Hold the box and choose a picture.

If the picture shows a cat, say 'In my box, there's a cat'. Call on a child to come up with a rhyming word. The child might say, 'In my box, there's a hat' or 'In my box, there is a mat' (or some other rhyming word). After they answer with a rhyming word, hand them the box. Now they get to choose a card.

Odd one out (rhyming game): students recognise sets of rhyming words in songs, speech and poetry

Say three words to students, two of which rhyme. Ask students to determine which word does not rhyme. For example: What does not rhyme: stop, mop, cake (cake); night, ball, light (ball)?

Regularly include rhyming books as part of your daily read-aloud. Encourage students to join in with repetitive rhymes.

Phonemic awareness

Isolating and identifying phonemes

In order to support students' skill in identifying phonemes in all positions in a word, focus on one position at a time. As students' skills develop, they will become aware that it takes two letters to make one sound in some words, for example, there are five letters in the word 'train' but only four phonemes because the 'ai' in train makes one sound, the long /ā/ sound.

Teachers understand there are categories of phonemes, such as digraphs (two letters make one sound) and trigraphs (three letters make one sound, e.g. 'igh' in 'sigh' makes the long /ī/ sound).

Alliteration snakes: students listen for initial sounds in words and say other words that start with the same sound

The teacher asks the students to sit in a circle and then hands each a picture (all the pictures should start with the same sound). If the initial sound is 's', the teacher makes the sound 'sss' in a silly way and says 'silly'. The teacher asks the students to stand in a circle and chooses a student to start.

The teacher asks the student to say the teacher's word 'silly' and their word 'sand'. The student then stands behind the teacher. The next child says the words 'silly sand' and then their word 'stick' and stands behind the teacher. Repeat till all the students are standing in a snake. Then everyone in the group says all the words 'silly, sand, stick, snake, sun, soup'.

This game can be repeated with any letter sound.

Pick it out: students identify sounds in varying positions

Look at five pictures. Students need to pick out the picture with a different beginning/medial/final sound.

Blending

Blending is the skill of joining separate speech sounds (phonemes) together to make a word.

Puppet talk: students practise blending sounds prior to segmenting them

Introduce the students to the class puppet who can only speak in 'sound talk'. Make the puppet whisper a word to you; relay the segmented word to the students, for example, /ch/ /ee/ /z/.

Now ask the students to blend the sounds into the word 'cheese'. Then ask students to imitate the puppet by segmenting words themselves.

Segmenting

Segmentation is the skill of splitting words up into their separate speech sounds (phonemes).

How many sounds in the word: students count the individual sounds they hear in a word

Teachers can provide each student with tokens and two or three 'phoneme frames' drawn on a sheet of paper. The children place a token in each box from left to right as they hear each sound in a word.

Bead slide: students practise segmenting words into phonemes

To support concept development and the phonemic skill of segmentation, use concrete materials such as beads on a string to scaffold learning. Ask students to touch and slide a bead for every sound heard in a word.

Deletion/addition/substitution

The ability to manipulate phonemes has a 'substantial long-term impact on reading' (²Kilpatrick, 2015, p. 156).

In order to manipulate phonemes, students need to be able to use the skills of segmenting words into phonemes and blend phonemes together.

Thus, deleting, adding and substituting phonemes in words is dependent on the ability to segment and blend. This, in turn, is dependent on the ability to isolate and identify phonemes.

Deletion: students practise deleting sounds in varying positions

Ask students to delete sounds from words in different positions:

- Say the word /stop/. Take away the first sound. What do you get? (top)
- Say the word /goat/ take away the final sound. What do you get? (go)
- Say the word /bread/. Take the /r/ sound out. What do you get? (bed)

Addition: students practise adding sounds in varying positions

Ask students to add sounds to words in different positions:

- What word do you get if you add /s/ to the beginning of the word /park/? (spark)
- What word do you get if you add /s/ to the end of the word /park/? (parks)

Substitution: students practise substituting sounds in words

Substitution is the most complex skill in phoneme manipulation.

Ask students to substitute phonemes and say a new word:

- Say the word /blue/. Now say /blue/ but instead of /b/ say /k/. (clue)
- Say the word /cry/. Now say /cry/, but instead of /k/ say /t/. (try)
- Say /dad/. Now say /dad/, but instead of /a/ say /i/. (did)
- Say /spy/. Now say /spy/, but instead of /p/ say /k/. (sky)

² Kilpatrick DA (2015). *Essentials of assessing, preventing, and overcoming reading difficulties*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.

Word chaining: students change sounds as directed or identify where changes are made

Select a word and track the changes in the word as you change sounds, for example, tat – sat – rat – ran – fan.

You can either direct students to change particular positions or sounds, or you can challenge your students by asking them where the change can be made.

Further activities

David Kilpatrick's *Equipped for reading success*³ (2016) has one-minute activities to reinforce phonemic manipulation skills. They can be implemented across the teaching day and as part of phonemic awareness skill development.

³ Kilpatrick D (2016). *Equipped for reading success*. Syracuse, NY: Casey and Kirsch.