

Chapter 1

Early Reading

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS CHAPTER

Print Concepts

Kindergarten

Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

- Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.
- Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.
- Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.
- Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Grade 1

Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print. Recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g., first word, capitalization, ending punctuation)

Phonological Awareness

Kindergarten

Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

- Recognize and produce rhyming words.
- Blend and segment onsets and rimes of single-syllable spoken words.
- Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in three-phoneme (consonant-vowel-consonant, or CVC) words. (Add or substitute individual sounds (phonemes) in simple, one-syllable words to make new words.

Grade 1

Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

- Orally produce single-syllable words by blending sounds (phonemes), including consonant blends.
- Segment spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds (phonemes).

Source: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010.

Early reading encompasses skills and understandings that provide a foundation for formal reading instruction. These are the skills necessary to learn to read printed words. Although all students come to school with some knowledge of reading and writing, that knowledge varies greatly. To provide an appropriate program for all students, it is important to know where each student is. The most critical skill areas in early reading are *letter identification* and *phonemic awareness*. Letter identification is the ability to name the letters of the alphabet. Phonemic awareness is the ability to isolate the separate phonemes or speech sounds in words. The following measures for assessing students' current standing with these skills are presented in this chapter: Letter Identification, Letter Recognition, Rhyming, Matching Beginning Sounds, Saying Beginning Sounds, Blending Onset and Rime, Blending Phonemes, Phoneme Segmentation, and Manipulating Sounds: Deleting Onsets. (The *onset* is the consonant or consonants that precede a vowel in a word: h+at, ch+at. The *rime* is the part of the word that begins with a vowel; it may be followed by one or more consonants: g+o, g +oat.) Table 1.1 provides a form for recording performance on these early literacy assessments.

LETTER NAMES

The best indicator of how well students will do in a formal reading program is letter knowledge. The ability to name letters demonstrates that students have sufficient memory ability to associate abstract symbols with spoken names. Letter knowledge can also indicate that the student comes from an environment in which literacy skills are fostered. Knowledge of both uppercase and lowercase letters is assessed. Young students generally are able to identify or recognize more uppercase than lowercase letters.

Letter Identification

Description

Students identify the twenty-six uppercase and twenty-six lowercase letters.

Target Population

Students in pre-K can be tested in the spring or at the end of the year. Kindergarteners can be tested at any time of the year. First graders would generally be assessed at the beginning of the year. However, first graders who are lagging behind can be tested at any time of the year. Students in grades 2 and beyond may be assessed on letter knowledge if it is suspected that they might not be able to identify all the letters of the alphabet.

Table 1.1 Performance on Early Literacy Assessments

Name _____ Grade _____

Assessment	Score/Performance	Comments
Letter Names		
Letter Identification		
Letter Recognition		
Phonological Awareness		
Rhyming		
Matching Beginning Sounds		
Saying Beginning Sounds		
Blending Onset and Rime		
Blending Phonemes		
Phoneme Segmentation		
Onset Abstraction		
Manipulating Sounds: Deleting Onsets (Optional)		

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Older English language learners whose native language uses a different alphabet from the Roman alphabet might need assessment and instruction in letter names.

Administration

Distribute a copy of the test and explain the purpose of the assessment. Say to the student, “I want to see how many letters you know. You might not know the names of some of the letters. That is okay. Just do your best. If you don’t know the name of a letter, you can say, ‘I don’t know.’ Look at your paper. You will see rows of letters. When I point to a letter, tell me the name of the letter.”

Record the student’s performance on a separate sheet. Draw a line through a missed or incorrectly read letter. Record incorrect responses above the crossed-out letter. The responses might show that the child is confusing letters on the basis of similarity of appearance—uppercase *E* and *F*, for example. Administer the uppercase letters subtest first. If a student fails to respond within about 5 seconds, move on to the next letter. If a student cannot identify any uppercase letters or knows only one or two, the lowercase subtest may be skipped. If a student says she doesn’t know any letters, show the child her name and ask if she can tell you any of the letters in it.

The Letter Identification test can also be used to assess letter name fluency. In a letter name fluency assessment, students read as many letters as they can in 1 minute. They move on to the lowercase letters immediately after naming the uppercase ones. Even if administered as a fluency measure, the Letter Identification test can be used to see how many letters students can identify in an untimed administration. After 1 minute, draw a vertical line after the last letter named and continue the test to see how many additional letters the students can identify. Timing the administration of the assessment gives a sense of how automatic the student’s letter recognition is. A student who can name the letters immediately has a better grasp than the student who needs time to retrieve the letter names from memory. It is also important, however, to determine how many letters the student can identify so that this information can be used to teach the letters the student missed. A student who has a low score on letter naming fluency but a high score on overall identification might just need more experience working with letters.

Interpretation

A reasonable expectation is that kindergarteners would be able to identify ten to twelve lowercase letters at the beginning of kindergarten and all the letters by year’s end (Invernizzi, Juel, Swank, & Meier, 2005). Expectations for letter naming and other assessments can be found in the Assessment Chart in the Introduction to this book. In addition to determining how many uppercase and lowercase letters students can recognize, look for patterns of errors that might be helpful when planning instruction. Students might be confusing *b*, *d*, *p*, and *q*, or *E* and *F*, for instance. This could be a directionality issue. Students might not be proceeding from left to right and top to bottom consistently. Or it may be a memory issue. The student might not remember which letter is *b* or which is *d*. Directionality is reinforced by having in place a handwriting program that explicitly explains how strokes are to be made. Memory might require a mnemonic device, such as making fists so that the knuckles of each hand are touching with the thumbs up to help students remember the difference between *b* and *d*. The left hand represents *b*. The right hand represents *d*. The left hand comes before the right hand just as *b* comes before *d* in the alphabet.

LETTER IDENTIFICATION

Name _____ Date _____

Uppercase _____ /26

Lowercase _____ /26

S H B T W R A

P M K G X E N

D L O J F Y V

I Z U C Q

s h b t w r a

p m k g x e n

d l o j f y v

i z u c q

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Letter Recognition

Description

Students select from four options the letter named by the examiner. The test can be given to groups as well as to individuals.

Administration

To administer the Letter Recognition test to a group of students, distribute a copy of the assessment and a strip of cardboard about the size of a ruler that can be used as a marker to be placed under the line of letters being tested so that students have no difficulty focusing on a row of possible responses. Explain the purpose of the assessment. Say to students, “I want to see how many letters you know. Look at your papers. You will see rows of letters. I am going to say the name of a letter and then I’m going to ask you to make a circle around that letter. Let’s do the first one for practice. Find the ball. Now put your marker under the ball. [Check to make sure all students are focusing on the sample row.] Now find the letter *X* and make a circle around it. Here is what the letter *X* looks like [write it on the board]. Find it and make a circle around it.” Check to make sure that all students have drawn a circle around the *X*.

“Now move your marker down to the row that has a cat. Look at the letters in that row and draw a circle around the letter *S*. Draw a circle around the letter *S*.” Using this same procedure, have students draw a circle around the following letters:

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. S | 11. s |
| 2. A | 12. a |
| 3. B | 13. b |
| 4. R | 14. r |
| 5. M | 15. m |
| 6. O | 16. o |
| 7. T | 17. t |
| 8. E | 18. e |
| 9. G | 19. g |
| 10. K | 20. k |









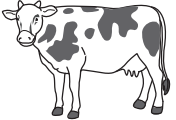



LETTER RECOGNITION

Name _____ Date _____

Uppercase score _____ /10 Lowercase score _____ /10




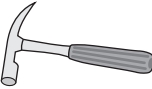
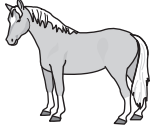
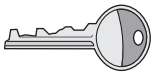

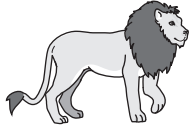



Circle the letter that your teacher says.

A		O	X	R	U
1		N	S	D	C
2		I	T	A	P
3		B	J	V	Z
4		W	G	K	R
5		X	M	H	U
6		E	O	F	L
7		Y	Q	B	T
8		S	R	E	C
9		I	G	X	Z

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Figure 1.1

(continued)

10		P	W	H	K
11		n	s	d	c
12		i	t	a	p
13		b	j	v	z
14		w	g	k	r
15		x	m	h	u
16		e	o	f	l
17		y	q	b	t
18		s	e	r	c
19		i	g	x	z
20		p	w	h	k

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Figure 1.1 (continued)

Source: Gunning, T. (2011). *Word Building, Beginnings* (2nd ed.). Honesdale, PA: Phoenix Learning Resources. Reprinted by permission of Galvin Publishing.



Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 is adequate. Eventually, of course, students will need to learn all the letters. As you assess students' performance, in addition to determining how many letters they are able to recognize, compare their performance on uppercase compared with lowercase letters. Generally students do better with uppercase letters. Also note any confusion of similar letters and consider opportunities for learning. If a student recognizes very few letters but has not been in a program in which letters were taught, he may have no difficulty learning letters.

Individual Administration

To administer the Letter Recognition test to an individual, point to the first letter in row 1 and ask the student to say the letter's name. Do this for each letter until you reach the letter **Q**. At that point you will have checked all twenty-six uppercase letters. Follow the same procedure for assessing knowledge of lowercase letters. However, discontinue testing if the student misses five letters in a row or if it is otherwise obvious that he doesn't know the letters.

When given as an individual measure, the Letter Recognition test requires that letters be *identified*, which is a more difficult task than *recognizing* the letters, which is what is involved in a group administration. If a student has difficulty identifying letters, switch to the administration that you would use with a group; ask him to draw a circle around the letter you name and see if he knows the letters on a recognition level.

Dynamic Assessment

If students experience difficulty identifying letters on the Letter Identification test, administer the Letter Recognition test. Selecting from four choices a letter named by the examiner is easier than naming a letter to which the examiner points. To determine a student's ability to learn letters, teach a series of three letters and see how many letters the student learns in the session. Use the suggestions in the Teaching Suggestions section entitled "Letter Names." Note the kinds of learning tasks that are most helpful.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The second best predictor of students' early reading achievement is phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the ability to think about and manipulate language. Although students might use language to communicate quite capably, they need to develop the ability to detect and manipulate elements of spoken language deliberately and consciously. Phonological awareness includes the ability to detect rhyme and to segment sentences into words and words into syllables and separate sounds. Detecting individual speech sounds is a form of phonological awareness known as *phonemic awareness*. Phonemes are individual speech sounds. The ability to detect the beginning sounds of words is a prerequisite for learning to read. Phonological awareness develops from larger to smaller units, from identifying the separate words in a sentence to identifying the syllables in a word, the onset and rime, and finally the separate sounds in a word.

There is also a cognitive dimension. Phonological awareness tasks are grouped into three categories: matching, segmenting (analyzing), and blending (synthesizing). *Matching* sounds includes saying that two words sound the same or supplying a word



that has the same sound as the target word. *Blending* involves combining separate syllables, onset and rime, or separate sounds to form a word—combining /h/-/a/-/t/ to form the word *hat*, for example. *Segmenting* ranges from segmenting the syllables of a word, segmenting the onset and rime, isolating the first sound in a word, to segmenting all the sounds in a word. Segmenting also includes deleting and substituting sounds to form new words. In this text, the focus is on segmenting individual sounds.

Matching is the easiest of the phonological awareness tasks. Noting that the words *mop* and *mat* begin with the same sound is easier than blending /m/- and /op/ or /m/-/o/-/p/ to form the word *mop*. Blending is generally easier than segmenting. It is easier to blend /m/-/o/-/p/ to form *mop* than it is to segment *mop* /m/-/o/-/p/ or to create a new word by substituting /t/ for /m/ in the word *mop* to produce *top*.

There are dozens of phonological awareness tasks. Not all of them are critical. Students should be able to match initial consonants and to blend and segment words by individual sounds. Ultimately the ability to insert a sound into a word is what is necessary to be able to apply phonics. For instance, after being taught a letter-sound relationship such as m = /m/ (the letters placed in slashes represent sounds), it is possible for a student to be able to say that *man* begins with /m/ without being able to read the word, even if the student is told that the word ends with an /an/ sound.

Once students can detect the beginning sounds in words and insert beginning sounds into a word, they are able to learn *beginning consonant correspondences*, such as b = /b/ or s = /s/. (The ability to detect beginning sounds does not require the ability to say what letter represents that sound.) Two tasks frequently used to assess ability to detect beginning sounds are telling whether two words begin with the same sound and providing the beginning sound of a word. Test words may simply be spoken or they may be spoken and accompanied by pictures. Using pictures eases the load on working memory. For instance, if a child is shown a picture of a bell, a man, and a lion and is asked which word begins like *moon* while the words are spoken, less of a load is placed on memory than simply saying the words. It also helps if the target sounds are emphasized: *mmmooon*.

Rhyming

Description

Rhyming is traditionally taught in early literacy programs. The ability to detect and produce rhyme is a valuable skill in its own right. Students enjoy listening to rhymes and verses. Rhyming also helps them become aware of the elements of language. However, it is a relatively weak indicator of future reading performance. Being able to detect beginning sounds is a more essential skill and a better predictor of future reading performance.

Target Population

Students in the middle or at the end of kindergarten, beginning first graders, or older students who may have a weakness in this area.



Administration

Distribute copies of the Rhyming assessment. Explain to students the purpose of the measure and then give them directions. Say, “I want to see if you can tell when words rhyme. Words rhyme if they have the same ending sound. For example, *Bill* and *Jill* rhyme because they both have an ‘ill’ sound. *Book* and *took* rhyme because they both have an ‘ook’ sound. Find the top row of pictures on your paper. We want to see which picture name rhymes with the first picture name. Put your marker under the row that begins with a ring. *Ring* is the name of the first picture. Now point to each of the other three pictures in the row as I say their names: *ball*, *king*, *shoe*. Which picture name—*ball*, *king*, or *shoe*—rhymes with *ring*? The answer is *king*. That is why *king* has a circle drawn around it. *Ring* and *king* rhyme. They both have an ‘ing’ sound. Now move your marker down to the next row, the row that begins with a house. Point to the house. *House* is the name of the first picture. Now let’s see which of the three other pictures in that row rhymes with *house*. Point to the pictures as I say their names: *bed*, *dog*, *mouse*. Which one rhymes with *house*? *Bed*, *dog*, or *mouse*? Draw a circle around the picture whose name rhymes with *house*. Did you draw a circle around the mouse? *Mouse* is the right answer. *Mouse* and *house* rhyme. They both end with an ‘ouse’ sound.”






















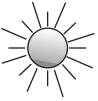









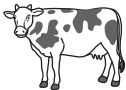
















Administer the ten test items. Identify the pictures in each row and remind students to draw a circle around the picture in each row whose name rhymes with the name of the first picture, but provide no other assistance. Individual administration of the Rhyming assessment is identical to group administration.



RHYMING

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ /10

In each row, say the name of the first picture. Then find the picture whose name rhymes with the name of the first picture. Draw a circle around the picture that has the rhyming name.

A				
B				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

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Figure 1.2

Source: Gunning, T. (2011). *Word Building, Beginnings* (2nd ed.). Honesdale, PA: Phoenix Learning Resources. Reprinted by permission of Galvin Publishing.

Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 indicates a good grasp of rhyme. Scores lower than that suggest the need for additional work in this area. If students do poorly, it may be because they have had little experience with rhyme or because they find the terminology confusing. You might try working on rhyme with the lowest-scoring youngsters to determine how readily they learn this concept. Although most youngsters will learn rhyme naturally through listening to nursery rhymes and participating in shared reading, some will need direct instruction. (In shared reading, the teacher reads a big book or other enlarged text so that all can see the words. The teacher points to each word being read. In subsequent readings, students read along with the teacher.) Because learning to deal with language in an abstract way apparently depends on a degree of cognitive maturity, some youngsters may also need additional time as well as direct instruction.

Matching Beginning Sounds

Description

This test, which may be given to groups, consists of rows of illustrations. The student is asked to circle the picture whose name begins with the same sound as the name of the picture at the beginning of each row.

Target Population

Students in the middle or at the end of kindergarten, beginning first graders, or older students who may have a weakness in this area.

Administration

To administer this assessment, distribute copies of the Matching Beginning Sounds test and explain its purpose to the students. Say, “I want to see if you can tell whether two words begin alike. Words begin alike if they begin with the same sound. The words *tie* and *ten* begin alike because they begin with the same sound: /t/. The words *pen* and *pet* begin alike because they begin with the same sound: /p/. Find the top row of pictures on your paper. We want to see which word begins with the same sound as the word for the first picture. Put your marker under the row that begins with a nail. *Nail* is the name of the first picture. Now point to each of the other three pictures in the row as I say their names: *bike*, *car*, *net*. Which word—*bike*, *car*, or *net*—begins with the same sound as *nail*? Nail-bike, nail-car, nail-net. The answer is *net*. That is why net has a circle drawn around it. *Nail* and *net* begin with the same sound. They both begin with an /n/ sound. Now move your marker down to the next row, the row that begins with a dog. Point to the dog. *Dog* is the name of the first picture. Now let’s see which of the three other pictures in that row begins with the same sound as *dog*. Point to the pictures as I say their names: *wagon*, *deer*, *pin*. Which one begins with the same sound as *dog*? *Wagon*, *deer*, or *pin*? Draw a circle around the picture whose name begins with the same sound as *dog*. Did you draw a circle around the deer? *Deer* is the right answer. *Deer* and *dog* begin with the same sound. They both begin with a /d/ sound.”

Administer the twenty test items. Identify the pictures in each row and remind students to draw a circle around the picture in each row whose name begins with the same sound as the name of the first picture in that row. (Individual administration of the Matching Beginning Sounds assessment is the same as group administration.)

Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 indicates a good grasp of beginning sounds. Scores lower than 8 suggest the need for additional work.

Saying Beginning Sounds

Description

This test, which is designed to be given one-on-one, consists of two practice spoken words and ten test spoken words. The student is asked to say the first sound of each word.

Target Population

Students in middle or end of kindergarten, beginning first graders, or older students who may have a weakness in this area.

Administration

Put the student at ease and explain the task. “I’m going to say some words and I want you to listen carefully and tell me the first sound you hear in each word. If I say the word *sun*, you would tell me you hear /s/. /s/ is the first sound in *sun*. Now you tell me what is the first sound you hear in the word *mmmop*.” If the student’s answer is correct, affirm that answer, “Yes, /m/ is the first sound in the word *mmmop*.” If the student gives the last sound, explain what you mean by the first sound. “The word *mop* has three sounds: /m/-/o/-/p/. /m/ is the first sound in the word *mmmop*. It comes before the other sounds. /o/ is the second sound. It comes after the first sound /m/. /p/ is the last sound in the word *mop*. It comes after /m/ and /o/.”

Administer the ten test items.









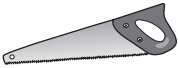








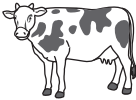







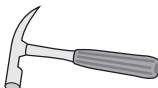










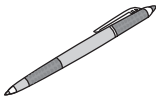











Interpretation

Isolating and saying a beginning sound is more difficult than matching beginning sounds and is a necessary skill for learning beginning consonant correspondences. A score of 8 out of 10 is adequate. Beginning kindergarteners may have difficulty with this test. If students get fewer than five items correct, provide additional instruction in this skill.

MATCHING BEGINNING SOUNDS

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ /10

In each row, say the name of the first picture. Then find the picture whose name begins with the same sound. Draw a circle around the picture whose name begins with the same sound as the first one.

A				
B				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

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Figure 1.3

Source: Gunning, T. (2011). *Word Building, Beginnings* (2nd ed.). Honesdale, PA: Phoenix Learning Resources. Reprinted by permission of Galvin Publishing.

SAYING BEGINNING SOUNDS

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ /10

A. What is the first sound in the word *sun*? _____

B. What is the first sound in the word *moon*? _____

1. What is the first sound in the word *feet*? _____

2. What is the first sound in the word *nine*? _____

3. What is the first sound in the word *hat*? _____

4. What is the first sound in the word *ran*? _____

5. What is the first sound in the word *zebra*? _____

6. What is the first sound in the word *shoe*? _____

7. What is the first sound in the word *jump*? _____

8. What is the first sound in the word *toy*? _____

9. What is the first sound in the word *cat*? _____

10. What is the first sound in the word *goat*? _____

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Dynamic Assessment

If students do poorly, it may be because they have little experience with identifying or segmenting beginning sounds, or they may find the terminology unfamiliar. They might also have difficulty paying attention and following directions. As you proceed through the testing, you might correct students' responses and re-explain the task and see if this improves their performance. You might further probe low scores in this area by teaching beginning sounds to low-scoring students and noting how they respond to instruction. To determine students' ability to learn to identify beginning sounds, teach two sounds, such as /s/ and /m/. Use the suggestions under the Teaching Suggestions section entitled "Beginning Consonant Sounds." Note the kinds of learning tasks that are most helpful and the ease or difficulty with which students learn the sounds.

The First Sound Fluency assessment uses a similar task but has more items and is timed. It is designed to be given in the middle and at the end of kindergarten. It may be downloaded free of charge from <http://dibels.org>

BLENDING

Blending is an easier task than isolating or segmenting sounds. Students are provided with the sounds and need only put them together. However, when students are blending four or five sounds, memory may be an issue. They might also distort the sounds and so have difficulty identifying the word that they have blended.

Blending Onsets and Rimes

Description

This test, which is designed to be given one-on-one, consists of two practice spoken words and ten test spoken words. The student is asked to blend an onset and a rime to form a word.

Target Population

Students in the middle or at the end of kindergarten, beginning first graders, or older students who may have a weakness in this area.

Administration

Put the student at ease and explain the task. "I'm going to say a word in parts and I want you to put the parts together and say the word. For example, if I added /m/ to /an/ I would make the word *man*. What word would you make if you added /r/ to /at/?" If the student's answer is correct, affirm that answer, "Yes, the word is *rat*. When you add /r/ to /at/ you make the word *rat*." If the answer is incorrect, say, "When you add /r/ to /at/ you make the word *rat*."

See the sample test. Administer the two practice items and the ten test items.

Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 is adequate.

BLENDING ONSETS AND RIMES

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ /10

- A. What word would you make if you added /m/ to /y/? _____
- B. What word would you make if you added /s/ to /ay/? _____
1. What word would you make if you added /m/ to /e/? _____
2. What word would you make if you added /p/ to /ie/? _____
3. What word would you make if you added /g/ to /o/? _____
4. What word would you make if you added /f/ to /eet/? _____
5. What word would you make if you added /f/ to /ox/? _____
6. What word would you make if you added /h/ to /at/? _____
7. What word would you make if you added /s/ to /ad/? _____
8. What word would you make if you added /m/ to /en/? _____
9. What word would you make if you added /p/ to /ig/? _____
10. What word would you make if you added /g/ to /ame/? _____

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Blending Phonemes

Description

This test, which is designed to be given one-on-one, consists of two practice spoken words and ten test spoken words. Students put individual speech sounds together (phonemes) to form words: /n/ + /o/. They begin with two-letter blends and progress to three-letter blends.

Target Population

Students in the middle or at the end of kindergarten, beginning first graders, or older students who may have a weakness in this area.



Administration

Put the student at ease and explain the task. “I’m going to say the sounds of a word and I want you to put the sounds together and say the word. If I say the sounds /s/-/a/-/t/ you would put the sounds /s/-/a/-/t/ together and say *sat*. Now you tell me, what is this word: /b/-/oy/?” If the student’s answer is correct, affirm the answer. “Yes, the word is *boy*. You put /b/ and /oy/ together to make the word *boy*.” If the answer is incorrect, say, “When you put /b/ and /oy/ together, you make the word *boy*.”

See the sample test. Administer the two practice items and the ten test items.

Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 is adequate. If students can blend two phonemes but not three, this indicates an understanding of the task but they may have difficulty keeping three sounds in memory.

BLENDING PHONEMES

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ /10

A. What is this word? /n/-/o/

B. /m/-/e/

1. /t/-/ie/ _____

6. /s/-/ea /-/t/ _____

2. /g/-/o/ _____

7. /b/-/oa /-/t/ _____

3. /t/-/oy/ _____

8. /h/-/a/-/t/ _____

4. /t/-/oe/ _____

9. /m/-/u/-/d/ _____

5. /s/-/ay/ _____

10. /r/-/a/-/t/ _____

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SEGMENTING

Segmenting is the ability to detect separate sounds in words. It can be assessed on three levels: by having students say a word in syllables, as in *cow-boy*; saying a word in onset-rime parts, as in *h-at*; and saying the individual sounds in a word, as in *h-a-t*. In



some tests, students are asked to segment words that have clusters (blends), as in *stop*. To start learning beginning consonant correspondences, students need only be able to segment the initial sound. They don't need to be able to segment clusters such as *st* until they encounter them. It is best to delay instruction in segmenting clusters until students are being introduced to clusters. Then they can be taught to segment sounds at the same time as they are learning the letters for the sounds. As they learn medial and final sounds in words like *hat* and *cat* and the letters that represent them, they need to be able to segment initial, medial, and final sounds. Letters become a means for marking the presence of individual sounds.

Students vary widely in their ability to segment. For kindergartners in the second half of the school year, Yopp (1995) found a range from all correct to none correct on a twenty-two-item test of phoneme segmentation, with average scores of 11.78 and 11.39.

Phoneme Segmentation

Description

After being given a spoken word, the student is asked to say all the sounds in the word. The tester pronounces the word *hop* and the student is expected to say /h/, /o/, /p/.

Target Audience

Middle and end of kindergarten, beginning of first grade, and older students experiencing difficulty in this area.

Administration

See the sample test. Say, "I'm going to say a word. After I say the word I want you to say its sounds. If I say *see*, you would say the two sounds in *see*. You would say /s/ /ee/, *see*. If I say *hat*, you would say the three sounds in *hat*. You would say /h/ /a/ /t/, *hat*. Now you try one: *me*. Say the sounds that you hear in *me*." If the answer is correct, affirm the answer, "Yes, the sounds for *me* are /m/ /e/." If the answer is incorrect, say, "The sounds for *me* are /m/- /e/. When you put /m/-/e/ together, you make the word *me*."

Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 is adequate. If students can segment two phonemes but not three, this indicates an understanding of the task but they may have difficulty with the finer discrimination and memory needed to segment three sounds.

PHONEME SEGMENTATION

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ /10

Administer the two practice items and the ten test items.

A. Say the sounds that you hear in *we*. _____

B. In *cat* _____

1. In *ate* _____

2. In *pay* _____

3. In *at* _____

4. In *two* _____

5. In *it* _____

6. In *hat* _____

7. In *nail* _____

8. In *pet* _____

9. In *soap* _____

10. In *book* _____

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Onset Abstraction

Description

After being given the rime of a spoken word, the student is asked to supply its onset. The tester asks the student what sound would need to be added to *ig* to make the word *pig*. The student must abstract the /p/ from *pig*. This is a more complex task than segmenting words into phonemes. Onset abstraction ability would be especially important if students were being taught through a pattern approach, but it is a necessary prerequisite for learning phonics, regardless of the approach used.

Target Audience

Middle and end of kindergarten, beginning of first grade, and older students experiencing difficulty in this area.

Administration

See the sample test. Say, “I’m going to ask you to help me make words by adding the missing sound. For instance, what sound would you need to add to *oy* to make the word *boy*?” If the student’s answer is correct, affirm that response. “Yes, that is correct. You would add /b/ to /oy/ to make the word *boy*.” If it is incorrect, say, “Add /b/ to /oy/ to make the word *boy*.” Check the student’s responses as he or she completes the practice items A and B. Then have the student respond to the ten test items.

Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 is adequate.

ONSET ABSTRACTION

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ /10

- A. What sound would you have to add to *at* to make the word *hat*? _____
- B. What sound would you have to add to *at* to make the word *rat*? _____
- 1. What sound would you have to add to *at* to make the word *cat*? _____
- 2. What sound would you have to add to *at* to make the word *mat*? _____
- 3. What sound would you have to add to *at* to make the word *bat*? _____
- 4. What sound would you have to add to *at* to make the word *sat*? _____
- 5. What sound would you have to add to *at* to make the word *pat*? _____
- 6. What sound would you have to add to *an* to make the word *man*? _____
- 7. What sound would you have to add to *un* to make the word *sun*? _____
- 8. What sound would you have to add to *ish* to make the word *fish*? _____
- 9. What sound would you have to add to *all* to make the word *ball*? _____
- 10. What sound would you have to add to *oy* to make the word *toy*? _____

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Manipulating Sounds: Deleting Onsets (Optional)

Description

The student is asked to tell what word would be left if he or she took a sound off another word. This is a complex task that requires students to abstract a sound and then be able to identify the word that remains. Students must keep in mind both the sound to be abstracted and the remaining word. This subtest is frequently found in batteries of phonemic awareness tests. However, the processing ability required by this task is not a necessary prerequisite for instruction in beginning phonics. It makes considerable demands on working memory. The subtest is included here in case you wish to see if students possess the level of ability necessary to complete this task.

Target Audience

Middle and end of kindergarten, beginning of first grade, and older students experiencing difficulty in this area.

Administration

See the sample test. Say, “I’m going to ask you to take a sound away from a word and then tell me what word is left. For example, if I say, ‘What word would you have if you took the /p/ off *pair*, you would say *air*.’” Have the students do the practice items A and B. If a student’s answer to item A is correct say, “Yes, if you took the /h/ off *hat*, you would have the word *at*.” If the answer is incorrect, say, “If you took the /h/ off

hat, you would have the word *at*.” Discuss each student’s response in the same way as they complete B.

Interpretation

A score of 8 out of 10 is adequate.

MANIPULATING SOUNDS: DELETING ONSETS

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ /10

- A. What word would you have if you took the /h/ off *hat*? _____
- B. What word would you have if you took the /m/ off *meat*? _____
1. What word would you have if you took the /s/ off *send*? _____
2. What word would you have if you took the /s/ off *sat*? _____
3. What word would you have if you took the /w/ off *win*? _____
4. What word would you have if you took the /p/ off *pup*? _____
5. What word would you have if you took the /l/ off *late*? _____
6. What word would you have if you took the /p/ off *page*? _____
7. What word would you have if you took the /r/ off *rice*? _____
8. What word would you have if you took the /h/ off *hold*? _____
9. What word would you have if you took the /f/ off *fall*? _____
10. What word would you have if you took the /f/ off *fear*? _____

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Dynamic Assessment

If students do poorly on these tests, it may be because they have little experience with segmenting or blending words, or they may find the terminology unfamiliar. They might also have difficulty paying attention and following directions. As you proceed through the testing, you might correct students’ responses and re-explain the task and see if this improves their performance. You might further probe low scores in this area by teaching skills with which they had difficulty and noting how they respond to instruction. Note the kinds of learning tasks that are most helpful and the ease or difficulty with which students learn the sounds. Also note the level of students’ performance. For instance, they might be able to segment words that have two sounds but have difficulty with words that have three sounds. Or they may be able to blend onsets and rimes but not phonemes. Or they may have difficulty abstracting onsets.

Also note students' attempts at writing. Are they representing sounds in their writing? If so, which sounds? Typically students represent the first sound, then the last, and then the medial. First and last sounds are easier to perceive than are medial sounds. If they are representing sounds, this is evidence that they are developing phonemic awareness. Listen in on their attempts to spell words. Note how they go about detecting and representing sounds.

CONCEPTS OF PRINT

Along with letter knowledge and phonological awareness, students' understanding of what reading and writing are and how they work are also essential components of early literacy. To informally assess a student's concepts about print, give the child a copy of Bill Martin's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (1983) or a similar book. Ask a series of questions that probe the student's knowledge of print conventions: "Have you ever seen this book? What do you think this book might be about? How can you tell what a book is about? What do you do with a book?" Open to a page that has both an illustration and text and say, "I'm going to read this page to you. Where should I start reading? Point to the first thing I should read." (Note whether the child points to print or an illustration and whether he or she points to the first word. Read two facing pages of text slowly. Note whether the child can point to each word as you read it. Note too whether the child goes from left to right, makes a return sweep, and goes from top to bottom and from the left page to the right page.) Pointing to a line of print, ask, "How many words are in this line?" Pointing to a word, ask, "How many letters are in this word? Can you read any of the words?" Note the child's overall level of development. Fill in the Concepts About Reading section of Table 1.2: The Early Literacy Observation Guide (Gunning, 2011c).

Writing Sample

Ask the child to write her name. If she seems hesitant, encourage her to write it as best she can. If the child can write her name, ask her to write any other words she knows. Also ask the child to write a story. Ask her to write a story about games she likes to play or other things she likes to do. Encourage her to write as best she can or to write the way she usually does. (Accept drawing, scribbling, letterlike symbols, and other forms of written expression.) Note the child's overall level of development. Fill in the Writing section of the Observation Guide in Table 1.2.

In addition to observing the child's performance on the structured reading and writing observations, note whether he or she understands the functions of reading and writing. Ask yourself, Does the child enjoy listening to stories? Is he able to retell a story? Does he enjoy browsing through books? Does he attempt to read or retell a story from a book? Does he attempt to write? Does he write for a variety of purposes: to tell a story, to send a message, to make a list (Gunning, 2011b)?

Screening and Monitoring

The letter names and phonological awareness tests can be used for screening and monitoring. Suggested benchmarks and rate-of-progress scores can be found in the Assessment Chart provided in the Introduction.

Table 1.2 The Early Literacy Observation Guide

Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Concepts About Reading	Yes	No	Sometimes	Comments
Can identify the parts of a book: title, pages, pictures, words				
Can explain that print or words are read				
Can show that print is read from left to right and top to bottom				
Can point to separate words as they are being read				
Can identify letters in a word				
Can read words				
Writing				
Can write given name				
Can write parts of other words or whole word				
Level of Writing				
Random scribbles (lack a pattern)				
Drawing (main mode of expression)				
Organized scribbles (form a pattern)				
Letterlike figures (look like letters)				
Prephonemic spelling (letters do not represent sounds)				
Invented spelling (letters represent sounds, but words may not be fully spelled: <i>kitten</i> may be spelled KTN)				

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TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Letter Names

Use names to build awareness of letters. Write your name on the board and call attention to the letters in your name. Then write the names of students on the board and discuss the letters that make up their names. Call attention to names that begin with the same letter. Discuss, for example, names that begin with *m* or *s*. If students are unable to write their names, teach them how to do so. Review correct letter formation. Demonstrate the formation of the letters and use simplified directions to talk students through what you show them. For lowercase *h* you might say, “Straight down, back up to the top of the first line, curve around and go straight to the bottom of the line.”

Display an enlarged alphabet strip that shows the formation of the letters. Also supply students with personal copies of the alphabet that show correct letter formation. Systematically introduce the letters of the alphabet. You might introduce letters according to the strokes needed to form them. Initially introduce the easiest-to-form letters and work up to the more difficult-to-form letters. Introduce two or three letters at a time and review letters periodically. Letters are learned through contrasting features. After presenting a letter, contrast it with a previously presented letter, perhaps the last letter introduced. When presenting uppercase *R*, for example, discuss how it is formed. Demonstrate to students how to form *R* and have them form *R*'s on their whiteboards. They should say the name of the letter and how it is formed as they write the letter. “Down, around, and slant makes *R*” (Roberts, 2011, p. 37). Saying the letter name as they write it helps students bond it in memory to the shape of the letter. Research suggests that three to five formations is optimal (Roberts, 2011). The teacher then provides a contrastive analysis of *R* and *M*. Writing the letter *R* and the previously introduced *M* on the board, the teacher helps students note differences in the letters. Having distributed *R* and *M* letter cards, the teacher then calls out an *R* or *M*, and students respond by holding up an *R* or *M* letter card.

Don't restrict instruction to one letter a week. Otherwise it will take twenty-six weeks to introduce the letters and there won't be enough time for review. If you introduce three letters a week and set aside every third week for review, you can present all the letters within fifteen weeks. In most programs, uppercase and lowercase letters are taught together.

Surround students with examples of letters and reasons to use them. Have available computers, stamp sets, letter stencils, magnetic and felt letters, lots of alphabet books, and a wide assortment of writing instruments and paper. Encourage students to experiment with the alphabet and to play alphabet games. Most important of all, read and discuss alphabet books and encourage students to read them. Simply reading alphabet books to students seems to increase their letter knowledge and their sensitivity to sounds in words (Murray, Stahl, & Inez, 1993). Other activities that might be used to reinforce letter knowledge include the following:

- Using a magnetic letter board, mix several examples of the letter being taught with letters that have already been learned. Don't mix letters that are similar in form—*m* and *w*, for example. Have students assemble all the examples of the target letter—all the *s*'s, for example (Clay, 1993).

- Help students create an alphabet book. Set aside twenty-six pages in a composition book. As students learn a letter, write it on the appropriate page in both uppercase and lowercase forms. Write a model word that begins with the letter so that students can see the letter in the context of a word and begin to get a sense of the sound that the letter represents. Have students paste in or draw an illustration of the model word.
- Use environmental print. Bring in cereal boxes, milk cartons, labeled canned goods, and signs. Help the students read the labels and signs and identify the letters that make up the labels and signs.
- Develop letter knowledge in the context of everyday routines. As you list names or write messages on the board, spell out the words and names. Also surround students with the tools of writing so they are encouraged to experiment with writing and make discoveries about the alphabet as they do so. Once students become familiar with a few letters and their sounds they can begin to use that knowledge to write words using invented spelling. Having learned b/b/ they might spell *bird* as *B*. Knowing b/b/ and d/d/, they might spell *bird* *BD*. After learning r/r/, they might spell *bird* *BRD*.
- Have students engage in letter hunts. For example, after the letter *m* has been introduced, students might seek out examples of the letter *m* in classroom charts, signs, and labels or in alphabet or other beginning books. Have them locate the letters both in isolation and within the context of words. If they have difficulty identifying letters, provide recognition or matching activities. Give them a copy of the letter *m* and have them find other *m*'s.
- Have students sort letters. Create a sheet or magnetic whiteboard that has the target letters in columns: *s*, *m*, *h*, for instance. Give students a supply of magnetic, cardboard, or felt *s*'s, *m*'s, and *h*'s and have them place the letters in the proper columns, naming each letter as they place it. You might use several fonts. At some point, for the letters *a* and *g* students need to know both the manuscript (used in manuscript printing) (a,g) and typical type (a, g) forms.
- Have students match uppercase and lowercase letters.

Suggestions for Students Still Having Difficulty

Focus at first on building awareness of the letters in each student's name. Provide students with the mixed-up magnetic letters or cutup letters contained in their given names and have them reassemble the letters to form their names. Have them say the name of each letter as they do so. Use kinesthetic and tactile reinforcement to help students learn letter names. If they are having difficulty learning the letters in their names, have them trace their names and say the name of each letter as they trace it. As you introduce or reinforce letters, have students trace the letters in the air or on paper or whiteboards as they say the letters' names. Encourage the reading of alphabet books.

Concepts of Print

The most effective way to convey basic concepts of print is to immerse students in literacy activities. Surround them with books, posters, signs, and labels. Have available paper, pencils, markers, stamp pads, computers, and other digital devices. Read to them daily. Discuss the parts of the book—cover, front, back, author, illustrator—as you do so. To convey the idea that words can be read, share read stories from big books or digital sources, or materials from document cameras projected on the board

so that students can follow along as you read the selections. Point to each word as you read it. Show how you read from left to right and top to bottom. After an initial reading, have students read along with you. As you write messages or announcements on the board, say what you are writing and spell out the words. Also use a language experience approach, in which you discuss experiences such as a visit to a nature center or supermarket and then have the class, with your guidance, dictate an account of the experience, which you record on the board or chart paper so that all can see it. You read the story back to them and then you share read the story with them. As students gain skill, have them “share the pen” so that they help write the story. For example, after getting a new class pet, the class, in response to your prompts and suggestions, discusses the experience and dictates a story about it. After the students decide that the title of the story should be “Our New Pet,” you write “Our” on the board. After students have learned consonant correspondences, you ask who has a name that begins like *new*. Nina raises her hand and writes the *n* for the beginning sound of *new*, then you write the *ew*. Paula writes the *p* for *pet*, you write the *e*, and Tomas writes the ending *t*. You then read the title to them and have them read it with you. An account of the new class pet is then composed.

To target the needs of specific students, compose interactive, share-the-pen stories on a one-on-one basis. In this way you get a close-up look at a student’s level of literacy development and can gear the activity to the student’s individual needs (Roser, 2011).

Phonological Awareness

Playing with words is an excellent way to develop students’ awareness of the sounds of language. Besides being fun to listen to and produce, tongue twisters, nursery rhymes, songs, and word games call students’ attention to the sounds of language. Students might enjoy listening to books such as *Jamberry* (Degen, 1983), in which both real and nonsense words are formed by adding *berry* to a variety of words; or *The Hungry Thing Goes to a Restaurant* (Slepian & Seidler, 1992), in which initial sounds are substituted so that the Hungry Thing orders things such as bapple moose and spoonadish. Students might enjoy guessing what the Hungry Thing really wants (apple juice, tuna fish). These activities help students to think of language as language, and put them on the road to developing the phonemic awareness required for learning phonics.

Rhyme

Although not so critical a skill as perceiving initial sounds, rhyming is traditionally taught as a way of developing students’ awareness of the sounds of language, as a way of appreciating traditional nursery rhymes and poems, and generally to enrich students, understanding of language. At first you might read rhymes in order to build students’ background and to have them enjoy and play with language. After students have become familiar with traditional rhymes, introduce the concept of rhyme. Explain to them how the last word in one line has the same ending sound as the last word in the next line. Give examples of rhyming words: *he-me, now-cow, moon-spoon, can-man*. Show how rhymes are built by changing the onset. Tell students that you are going to make words that rhyme because they all have *at* in them. Holding up a picture of a hat, have them tell what it is: “hat.” Tell them to listen to the *at* in *hat*. Explain that *h-at* has an *at* in it. Hold up a picture of a cat and have students tell what it is. Tell students that *c-at* has an *at*. Explain that *hat* and *cat* rhyme because they both end with *at*. Hold up a picture of a bat and have students tell what



it is. Ask them if *bat* rhymes with *hat* and *cat*. Ask why *bat* rhymes with *hat* and *cat*. Help them see that *hat*, *cat*, and *bat* all have an *at*. Hold up a picture of a rat and ask students if *rat* rhymes with *hat*, *cat*, and *bat*. Discuss why it does. Have students suggest other words that rhyme with *hat*: *sat*, *mat*, *pat*, *fat*. Introduce other rhyming words in this same way. To reinforce the concept of rhyme, introduce the following activities:

- Have students identify the rhyming words in nursery rhymes you read.
- Have students supply rhyming words for the second line in a rhyming couplet:

The cow said, “Moo moo.”
 The calf cried, “Boo _____.”
 I did bake
 A yummy jelly _____

- Have students sort rhyming pictures.
- Have students recite rhyming verses and sing rhyming songs.
- Have students match rhyming pictures.

Blending

Blending is generally easier than segmenting because the student does not have to isolate the sounds, which is a difficult task. However, because the sounds are presented in isolation, blending can be a preparation for segmenting. To introduce blending, explain to students what you are doing. Inform them that you will be saying a word in parts and they will put the parts together to make a word. Explain that this will help them to learn to read. Give them an example: “If I say /m /- /e/, you would put the sounds together /m /- /e/ and say *me*.”

Begin with words that contain just two sounds, such as *me* or *say* (Scanlon, Anderson, & Sweeney, 2010). Say each sound and hold up a finger for each sound you say. Have students say each sound, holding up a finger as they do so, and then blend the sounds. If students have difficulty blending individual sounds, you might begin by having them blend the individual words in compound words, syllables, onset and rimes, and then individual phonemes. Possible practice words are listed below. All of the words can be illustrated. With the use of pictures, you can create exercises in which students respond by holding up a picture. For instance, you might distribute to students pictures of a cat, a hat, and a bat. You say the sounds /c/-/a/-/t/. Students say the sounds, the word *cat*, and hold up a picture of a cat. Using this type of every-student-response, you can tell immediately who is getting it and who isn't. You also get 100 percent participation.

Compound Words

airplane	baseball	cowboy	football	sunfish
backpack	catfish	doghouse	sandbox	sunset

Syllables

chicken	kangaroo	monkey	rabbit	spider
elephant	lizard	penguin	robin	tiger





Onset-Rimes

b-ird	d-eer	h-at	m-oon	s-eed
ch-air	g-oat	m-an	r-at	sh-ark

Two-Sound Words

bow, row, sew, tow	hay, bee, key, knee	shoe, two, Sue, zoo
--------------------	---------------------	---------------------

Three-Sound Words

bell, ten, net, bed	cat, hat, bat, rat	fish, dish, whale, nail
bus, duck, pig, cup	feet, wheel, seal, feet	

Segmenting

To ease students into segmenting, begin with words that contain just two sounds. Also start off with words that begin with continuants, which are sounds that can be articulated with a continuous stream of breath: /f/f/, /h/h/, /l/l/, /m/m/, /n/n/, /r/r/, /s/s/, /z/z/: *see, so, moo, no, row, low, who, Sue.*

Segmenting is difficult because in ordinary speech the sounds in words are coarticulated and so occur in a continuous stream. To help students segment the words, stretch out the words or emphasize their sounds so that the sounds can be more readily distinguished. You might say something like, “I will say a word slowly so you can hear its sounds. Listen and watch as I say the word and put up one finger for each sound: fish fffiiish [hold up one finger for each sound] fish. Now you say the word *fish* and its sounds.” Guide students as they stretch out the sounds and hold up a finger for each sound (O’Connor, 2011). (Consonant sounds known as *stops* cannot be articulated with a continuous stream of breath: /b/, /d/, /p/, /ch/, /j/, /k/, /t/, and /y/. They should be emphasized but not stretched.)

If students have difficulty segmenting phonemes, you might have them segment words into syllables and onset-rimes. The words in the previous section used for blending can also be used for segmenting. To make the task a bit easier, hold up the pictures of the words to be segmented. When students are segmenting the word *hat*, for instance, hold up a picture of a hat. This eases the load on memory. You might also start instruction with two-sound words that begin with a vowel: *Ed, add, ate, at, eat, ape, up, it.* Words beginning with a vowel are easier to segment. Avoid segmenting words that contain the nasals /m/, /n/, and /ng/ as in *an, am, sing.* The nasal consonants blend in with the preceding vowels and so are difficult to segment. Nasals are best dealt with as units: *an, am, ing.*

Beginning Consonant Sounds

Many letter names contain the sound of the letter within their names. The letters *b, d, j, k, p, t, v,* and *z* contain their sounds in the beginning of their names. The letters *c* and *g* have their “soft” sounds at the beginning of their names: *c/s/, g/j/.* The letters *f, m, l, n,* and *s* contain their sounds at the end of their letter names. The names of the vowel letters are their long sounds. Hard *g (got)* and *c (can), h, w,* and *y* do not contain their sounds within their names and so are more difficult to learn. The letter name *y* is especially difficult because it begins with a /w/ sound.



Because the ability to insert a sound into a word is critical to being able to apply phonics, building words by segmenting and blending sounds and substituting one sound for another develops the kind of phonemic awareness needed for reading, which many struggling readers lack. Use names to convey the concept of detecting and manipulating beginning sounds. Ask students if you are Mr. _____iggins. When they say no and say you are Mr. Riggins, ask them what was missing from _____iggins. Lead them to see that the beginning sound was missing—that you are Mr. RRRiggins. Stress the initial /r/. Point to students and ask, “Is this _____anuel [Manuel]? Is this _____amantha [Samantha]?” Ask students to say the target student’s whole name and what sound they had to add. Repeat the student’s name. Emphasize the beginning sound as you do so: “This is MMMaanuel. I added MMM to *anuel* to make *MMManuel*.” Follow the same procedure with objects or pictures of objects. Ask, “Is this a _____andwich [sandwich]?” “Is this a _____encil [pencil]?” “Is this a _____ine [nine]?”

Read alliterative tales, emphasizing the repetition of beginning sounds as you do so. Or read alphabet books. Focus on *continuants*. Also consider *frequency*. The sounds /s/, /m/, and /r/ have a very high frequency of occurrence and therefore should be introduced early. Last, but not least, consider *utility*. Introduce the sounds that will be taught first in the core or intervention program you are using. For instance, *Road to the Code* (Blachman, Ball, Black, & Tangel, 2000), a research-based intervention program, introduces the consonants m/m/, t/t/, r/r/, b/b/, and f/f/ first.

Integrate the teaching of phonemic awareness with phonics instruction. Learning the letters that represent sounds is a way of marking or highlighting sounds. Before systematic phonics instruction is initiated, students should be able to segment and blend initial sounds. However, students will further develop the ability to segment and blend initial sounds as they learn beginning consonant correspondences, as explained in Chapter Two. They learn to segment onsets and rimes as they learn vowel patterns. They learn to segment all the phonemes in words when they learn vowel sounds. They learn to segment clusters such as *st* and *bl* when they learn clusters. As students learn letter sounds, call attention to the way sounds are articulated so that students can “feel” the sounds. These procedures are described in the next chapter.

