

Kindergarten Literacy

Phonological
and
Phonemic
Awareness

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Contents

Introduction	1
First Sounds	8
Final Sounds	
Medial Sounds	43
Consonant Blends	62
Diagnostic Assessment	76
References	80

Introduction

Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is the understanding that speech can be broken down into parts, or units of sound, and the ability to manipulate those parts. Phonological awareness is an auditory (heard) and oral (spoken) skill that **does not involve reading letters or words**.

Phonological awareness builds students' capacity to learn phonics.

Phonological awareness is a foundational skill for reading and spelling.

Phonological awareness includes four levels of the English language's sound structure, beginning with larger units of language and moving toward smaller ones. The largest unit is the **word** (sunshine), followed by the **syllable** (pic-nic), the **onset and rime** (/m/ /ap/), and the **phoneme** (/s/ /ü/ /n/).

Phonological awareness task

Segmentation

Segmentation tasks require students to break sentences into word units; compound words into word units; and words into sound units.

For example,

- 'Listen to my sentence. Repeat the sentence after me, and clap for each **word**.'
- 'Break this word into its **compound parts** (inside, breakfast, treetop).'
- 'Tell me the **syllables** in this word (timber, presume, coconut, comprehend).'

Phonemic awareness

Quotes from research

Phonemic awareness includes both an awareness that spoken words are composed of tiny, abstract sounds **and** the ability to manipulate those sounds in a variety of ways (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, Slocum, & Travers, 2017, p.50).

Students are said to be fully aware of phonemes when they can recite the sequence of all the phonemes in a word (Stuart & Stainthorp, 2016, p.47).

Untaught students first become able to identify initial phonemes and then final phonemes. Phonemes in the middle of the syllable or word, inevitably vowels, are the most difficult for young students to isolate (Stuart & Stainthorp, 2016, p.47).

Phonemic Awareness: Initial Sounds

Isolation

Teacher: I will say a word. You tell me the first sound in the word. For example, 'if'. What is the first sound that you hear?

Student: /i/.

Teacher: Well done. The first sound in the word 'if' is /i/.

Note 1 All vowels in this exercise are making their **short** sounds.

Note 2 If the student makes a mistake, repeat the word with greater emphasis on the first sound, e.g., iiiiiiiif.

Note 3 Supplementary exercises for the sounds 'a/u' and 'i/e' are provided for those students who are confusing these sounds (see pages 15-16).

a,m,s,t,i,f

Set 1

am
sa
mi
it
af
is
ta
fi

Set 2

im
ti
at
fa
as
ma
at
si

Set 3

is
af
mi
ta
it
am
fi
sa

Set 4

at
ti
fa
ma
af
im
as
si

Set 5

Sam
fat
miss
ash
tis
ist

Set 6

Tim
mat
ift
sit
ams
fit

Set 7

sat
tiff
mass
at
ims
fat

Set 8

fit
ass
mitt
stă
tiff
its

Set 9

apple
mice
sack
tizz
itchy
finish

Set 10

march
silly
ankle
ink
fox
tank

Set 11

seven
talk
ill
many
ant
fork

Set 12

action
impossible
tissue
famous
monster
film

Phonemic Awareness: Final Sounds

Isolation

Teacher: I'm going to say a word. I want you to tell me the **last** sound that you hear in that word. 'Am'. What is the **last** sound in 'am'?

Student: /m/.

Teacher: That's right. The last sound in 'am' is /m/.

Note If the student makes a mistake, ask the student to repeat the word after you, putting particular emphasis on the last sound. Then repeat the question as above.

Note All vowels at the end of the pseudo words are **short sounds**.

a,m,s,t,i,f

Set 1

am
sa
mi
it
af
is
ta
fi

Set 2

im
ti
at
fa
as
ma
at
si

Set 3

is
af
mi
ta
it
am
fi
sa

Set 4

at
ti
fa
ma
af
im
as
si

Set 5

mat
sta
Sam
fat
smi
tiff

Set 6

fit
sma
miss
sti
fat
sit

Set 7

Tim
tis
smi
fim
mitt
tas

Set 8

miss
fit
Sam
smi
mat
miff

Set 9

laugh
fame
mate
circus
scarf
column

Set 10

market
mite
Adam
colours
bluff
geese

Set 11

Christmas
ticket
mouse
cuff
cream
comb

Set 12

plate
cough
pram
fuss
bookcase
steam

