

Double the Digraph Fun

How to Teach Consonant Digraphs

This blog contains 10 consonant digraphs* complete with a mini-lesson and images to use for teaching. These digraphs should be explicitly taught to young learners because they are in the process of transitioning from knowing that a letter symbol represents a sound, to the knowledge that two letters together form one sound. If this skill is not explicitly taught, children may try to sound out each letter individually and thus run into trouble.

- **Word Lists** for each sound spelling are included. It is important to show students many words at a time that utilize the sound spelling so they can see a visual pattern. This is how right-brain dominant students learn most easily. Write the word list in a column, writing the sound spelling in a contrasting color to make the spelling in each word stand out visually. You can add to the lists anytime you find another word with the target sound spelling.
- **Hands-On:** Allow time for the children to decorate and embellish the digraphs. Write the digraphs in large letters on paper or use the download provided. They do not have to copy the picture, they can choose another word that uses the same digraph if they prefer.
- **Digraph Search:** Give children scrap paper and a pile of books and see how many words containing the target digraph they can find. Alternatively, if writing is tedious, let them use a whiteboard and marker to record their words. Another option would be to allow them to cut those words out of magazines or newspapers and glue them on scrap paper. This could also be a fun class project, using a bulletin board to collect all the target digraphs they find.

[*Some of the digraphs were covered in the first blog. This lesson will go into them a little bit further.](#)

Teaching SH*



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. A baby is crying, and Mom is saying, “Shhhhh.” The body of the baby that is crying is the s while the mother is the h. If you look closely, however, the hand that she is holding up to her mouth is making the shape of the h as well!

Have your child make a “shushing h” with their hand and see the shape it makes. If they make the “h” with their left hand, they will be able to see it if they look in the mirror! Next, have them close their eyes and see if they can still see the picture in their head while they say, “Shhhhh.”

Word List

she	shoo	shout	shop	ship	shins
shed	shot	shirt	short	shoe	show
shall	shears	shave	wish	fish	dish

Teaching CH* as in “Chip”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. A girl in a blue dress is holding two things: a bag of CHips and a very large potato CHip. The shape of the CHip perfectly fits into the C, which will help children remember both the spelling and the sound of the digraph CH.

Have children make a C shape with their left hands while they say the sound of CH. Next, have them close their eyes and see if they can still see the picture in their heads while they say, “CH.”

Word List

chip	chop	chin	chap	chat	chow
child	chill	chew	chum	chunk	china
cheer	chain	chimp	chirp	chick	

Teaching TCH as in “Itch”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. A girl has some straw and she is working to paTCH the thaTCH roof on her house. Then she noticed that the thaTCH made her hands iTCH. Good thing she was finished paTCHing!

Have children make a T shape with their hands while they say the sound TCH. Next have them close their eyes and see if they can still see the picture in their heads while they say, “TCH.”

Word List

batch	catch	hatch	latch	match	patch
scratch	thatch	etch	fetch	retch	sketch
wretch	itch	ditch	hitch	pitch	witch
switch	botch	notch	blotch	hutch	clutch
crutch					

Teaching “Spoken” TH* as in “They”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. I believe THE two boys want to play ball, but THEY will rake leaves first. They got THEIR rakes and are working fast to get finished with THEIR task!

Have children make the sound of spoken TH as they pretend to rake THEIR leaves. Next, have them close their eyes and see the picture in their imagination while they say, “TH.”

Word List

that
the

than
there

this
these

them
those

then
their

they

Teaching “Breathy” TH* as in “Thin”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. In this picture we see a very THin man getting ready to eat his snack. “I Think I like THin crackers wiTH cheese,” the THin man says.

Have your child make the soft, breathy TH sound as they pretend to be the thin man, eating his thin crackers and cheese. Next, have them close their eyes and see the picture in their imagination while they say, “TH.”

Word List

through three throw thing think threw
thought thin both bath with

Teaching WH*: Sounds Like H as in “Who”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. The shocked gentleman is probably asking, “WHo ate the WHole pumpkin?”

Have your children make the breathy H sound as they look down at the empty pumpkin with an expression of surprise. Next, have them close their eyes and see the picture in their imagination while they say, “WH.”

Word List

who whole whose whom

Teaching WH*: Sounds Like “HW” as in “What”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. This girl has so many questions! “WHat, WHere, WHen, WHich, WHy?”

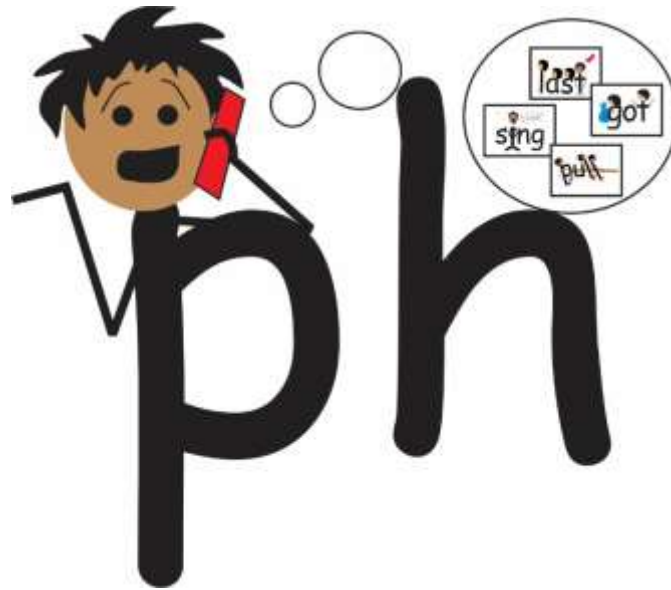
I understand clearly that there is a debate on how WH should be pronounced. Many people ignore the H completely and just say the W - so WHAT becomes WAT, etc. There are people (including me) who pronounce the WH the old way, which is HW. So, WHAT becomes HWAT. Of course, teach this the way you feel is appropriate for your students. The primary point of this lesson is to distinguish between the word in which the WH sounds like H and those words that have WH that don't sound like H.

Have your students say the WH sound while putting both hands up like the girl in the picture. Next, have your students close their eyes and “see” the picture below as they say the sound of the digraph WH.

Word List

what	when	where	which	why	whale
whiz	wheel	whine	whip	whisper	while
whopper	white	whack	whirl	whistle	whiskers

Teaching PH, Sounds like F as in “Phone”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. In this picture, a guy named Phil is on the PHone, calling the PHarmacy to ask if his PHotos are ready for him.

Have your students make the PH sound while holding their hand up to their ear, as though talking on the phone. Next, have your children make the sound for PH as they close their eyes and picture Phil phoning the pharmacy to ask about his photos.

Word List

Phil phone photos pharmacy phew phony
phase phrase phonics physician pheasant phantom
phobia phonograph elephant

Teaching CK, Sounds like K as in “Duck”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. The girl is saying, “Oh no! My duCK is stuCK in the muCK and can’t kiCK!”

Have your students make the CK sound while waddling like a duck. Next, have your children make the CK sound as they close their eyes and picture the girl and her duCK who are stuCK in the muCK.

Word List

luck
jack
sack

sick
lack
stack

kick
clack
quick

lock
slack
stick

rock
tack
slick

dock
back

Teaching NG, as in “King”



Display the image and talk about what is happening in the picture. A good description of this picture is, “The KING will riNG and siNG.”

Have your students pretend to put a crown on their heads as they say the NG sound. Next, have your children make the NG sound as they close their eyes and picture the kiNG who will riNG and siNG.

Word List

bang	fang	gang	hang	pang	rang
sang	tang	clang	slang	sprang	twang
bing	ding	king	ping	ring	sing
wing	zing	bring	cling	fling	sling
spring	sting	string	swing	thing	wring
dong	gong	long	song	strong	wrong
hung	lung	rung	sung	clung	slung
sprung	stung	strung	swung	wrung	