

Suggested Daily Lesson Sequence-

The 5-Step Plan

Step 2B of 5 – Slingerland's phoneme analysis and blending using the sound board (adapted 1971)



2b. Phoneme analysis and blending using the sound board

The primary phoneme analysis and blending technique used in Step 2b of the lesson is built around the use of a sound board (adapted from Slingerland, 1971) — a small 11- by 14-inch pocket chart with two or three pockets to hold the grapheme (letter) cards students manipulate to make new words. Using only letter sounds that the children already know, consonants are placed in the top pocket, vowels (colour-coded in red) are placed in the middle pocket, and the bottom pocket is used for manipulating these grapheme cards to build and decode new words.

Remember also that letter combinations that represent a single phoneme (speech sound) are written on a single grapheme card. For example, consonant digraphs, such as *sh* and *ch*, represent a single sound and appear on a single card. Likewise, vowel teams, such as *ai* and *ea*, represent a single sound and should also appear on a single card. The letters in a consonant blend, on the other hand, such as *bl* and *st*, are written on separate cards because consonant blends do not represent a single phoneme. The letters in a consonant blend are blended, but each letter retains its own sound.

To get started, tell the children what word they are going to make, modelling the first words for the students. For example, you might instruct the children to make the word *ran*. Pronounce the word for the students, emphasising the medial vowel. The children repeat the word, listen for the vowel sound, and select the vowel grapheme and place it in the bottom pocket. Repeat the word for the students and ask them to identify the first sound they hear, find the appropriate grapheme card and put it in front of the vowel. Finally, you might say, "Now we have /ra/. Our word is *rat*. What is the last sound we hear in *rat*?" The children then select the *t* and place it at the end of the word. Ask either an individual child or the whole group to read the word.



Teacher Tips:

Especially with young children, it is important to include on the sound board only the letters that will be needed to build the words in that day's lesson. The activity will go more smoothly and the children will be more successful if extra letters are not included on the sound board.

Next, ask the children to make a series of words, changing just one sound at a time. For example, you might ask the children to change *rat* to *fat* and then *fat* to *fan*, manipulating both initial and final sounds. When children learn a new vowel, ask the children to change *fan* to *fin*.

Examples of early sound board lessons:

Below is an example of an **early sound board** sequence that can be used when children are just learning short vowels.

mat – sat – sap – sip – sit – pit – pat

Notice that the sequence requires the children to listen for changes in the initial, final, and medial position. This is much more difficult than just asking children to make a sequence of words that rhyme (e.g., changing *mat* to *cat* to *sat* to *rat*). It is easy to get a false sense of security about what the children know if we ask the children to construct only rhyming words — they quickly learn to listen only for the initial consonant and learn that they don't actually have to look closely at the internal structure of the word to decode it.

The goal, however, is to make children as flexible as possible and asking them to listen carefully for the first, last, and middle sound builds flexibility that will carry over when they are constructing more difficult words.

When children are still working on closed syllables but have added digraphs (two consonant letters that make a single speech sound, such as *ch*, *sh*, and *ck*), the following sample sequence might be used:

bat – chat – chap – chip – ship – shin – win – wick

When consonant blends are introduced (two or three consonant letters that are blended but retain their own sounds), a sound board lesson might include these words:

lip – slip – slap – slam – clam – clap – clip – blip

Examples of later sound board lessons featuring more advanced syllable patterns:

When children are working on the final “e” syllable, try sequences modeled after this one:

kite – kit – bit – bite – bike – like – lake – lame – shame

More advanced sound board sequences look like the following—the first focuses on vowel team syllables and the second on vowel + r syllables:

team – ream – read – raid – rain – drain – drown – crown
corn – cord – card – carp – harp – hard – herd

It is also a good idea to review previously learned syllable patterns in your sound board sequences. The vowel + r sequence above could begin with the closed syllable *can*, for example, and then children make *can* into *corn*.

It is important to remember that the goal of this activity is to help children learn to decode words accurately.

Each time a new word is made on the sound board, it should be read aloud by the children before the next word is made. The sound board also provides an excellent opportunity to ask important questions about the internal structure of words. For example, if the children make the word *chin*, ask the children “How many sounds? Yes, three! Now, how many letters?”



Reference:

Teaching Tutorial: Decoding Instruction

Benita A. Blachman and Maria S. Murray

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