# Table of Contents

Introduction ......................................................... .3

**Reading Intervention**

Research-Based Principles for Struggling Readers .................. .5

Recommended Instructional Model for Reading Intervention .......... .6

  Self-Selected Reading and Structured Writing .................. .6

  Strategy & Skill Development ...................................... .7

  Guided Reading ....................................................... .7

  Common Problem Areas ................................................ .9

  Self-Assessment ......................................................... .9

  Journal Writing ......................................................... .10

**Brain-Based Learning**

Teaching Students about Brain-Based Learning .................. .16

  My Brain Teaching Script ........................................... .18

  My Brain Student Booklet ........................................... .34

**Reading Activities**

Reading Activities Overview ........................................ .44

  Phonemic Awareness ................................................... .45

  Phonics ................................................................. .55

  Vocabulary and Word Recognition .................................. .86

  Fluency ................................................................. .103

  Comprehension ......................................................... .115

  Citations ............................................................... .127
Meeting the needs of struggling readers is an ongoing challenge that schools and teachers have grown accustomed to facing. Within the past few years, scientific research has dictated much of the basis for new approaches to reading instruction. With the U.S. government mandating the use of this research-based approach, school districts have been actively adopting sounder and more balanced reading programs. Staff development also now heavily emphasizes teaching practices that implement the five components of reading instruction outlined by the National Reading Council (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension).

Though schools offer programs designed to give additional support to struggling readers, about one student in three still has trouble reading. Many remedial programs may be subjecting students to the same strategies and techniques that were not effective in their regular classrooms. Many struggling readers continue to experience the “been there, done that” syndrome and continue to falter, resulting in negative attitudes and behavior problems that further hinder their learning.

Strategies for Struggling Readers takes a unique approach that exposes students to brain-based learning. This resource offers students the opportunity to learn how the brain works and participate in brain-based instructional activities. By seeing how brain research ties into everyday learning, students develop a better understanding of how learning occurs and recognize their role in the learning process. Instruction in brain-based learning theory helps struggling readers discover the following information:

- How people learn
- How the brain processes information
- What must happen for learning to become permanent
- How chunking information increases working memory capacity
- What types of practice are necessary for retention
- Why time is a significant factor
- Their role in learning
- The importance of commitment
The underlying philosophy of this approach is to deal openly and honestly with students’ reading problems and to discuss how to address them. The activities have been specifically designed to improve struggling students’ reading and overall academic skills. With this approach, students are always told why they are doing an activity and how it will help them. When students, especially those who have been exposed to the same unsuccessful instructional techniques, see this connection, they are very cooperative and willing to put forth their best efforts. Instruction becomes a mutual effort for students and the teacher as students begin to feel like they are part of the instructional process and realize that their attitudes and commitment are part of the solution.

The teacher is a crucial factor in the learning process, so teachers need to have strong backgrounds, understand the rationale behind their instruction, and know how it will improve student learning. With that in mind, Strategies for Struggling Readers also provides teachers with a knowledge base about teaching reading. Because it provides this support, this book is the ideal resource for teachers seeking to help their students who are still struggling to learn how to read.
Research-Based Principles for Struggling Readers

There are four research-based design principles that must be part of any successful intervention program (Allington, 2006). The suggested intervention program in this resource incorporates these four basic principles:

**Principle #1**  Provide expanded opportunities for students to read, and help them become engaged in that reading.

Research indicates that engaged students spend 500% more time reading than disengaged students (Guthrie, 2004). Reading volume has been widely neglected in intervention programs. Therefore, it is imperative to increase allotted reading time for struggling readers, and to find ways to make sure that students are engaged in their reading during that time.

**Principle #2**  Match text to struggling readers’ actual reading levels.

Research has proven that using texts matched to struggling readers’ actual reading levels results in greater gains, especially for students at the lowest levels of proficiency (Guthrie, Schafer, and Huang, 2001). Ideally, struggling readers should spend 80% of their school days working with texts that they can read with 90% accuracy. However, it is very common to see grade-appropriate texts assigned to struggling readers. If these readers are to succeed, intervention needs to be based on materials that they can read accurately, fluently, and with good comprehension.

**Principle #3**  Provide systematic and explicit strategy instruction.

Struggling readers need systematic and explicit instruction (in all areas of reading) provided by expert teachers who understand the beginning reading process. While one-on-one tutoring is the most powerful intervention, small-group instruction for students with similar needs has also proven beneficial.

**Principle #4**  Ensure articulation between intervention providers and classroom teachers.

Research indicates that there must be communication between intervention providers and classroom teachers, and that students must experience a balanced and coherent instructional program with an array of lessons and activities.
Recommended Instructional Model for Reading Intervention

Reading intervention programs can follow many different schedules and include many different components, or segments. Below is a list of recommended segments to include when assisting struggling readers. Suggested time allotments should be adjusted according to these factors:

- Whether your school or district has an existing intervention program to follow
- Whether you may pull students out of the classroom for intervention
- Whether you can group students according to reading difficulties
- Students’ ages and abilities
- The time you or the intervention teacher/staff have available

Segment #1  Self-Selected Reading and Structured Writing
Reading and writing at students’ independent reading levels — 20 minutes

Self-Selected Reading
Self-selected, active reading sets a supportive tone for the instructional session. Having students choose familiar stories or books that are at their independent reading levels increases the amount of reading that students can accomplish. Pay special attention to reading rates during this segment. If a student reads very slowly, the text may be too difficult. Provide easier text and ask the student to read a second time for fluency. If a student reads word-by-word, use chunking strategies (see page 25 of the My Brain Teaching Script) and emphasize seeing more than one word at a time. Read the passage with the student, group appropriate words together, and then allow the student to read it alone. If a student reads too fast, causing inaccuracies or decreased comprehension, invite the student to read the text like a turtle or a snail (slowly).

During this segment, students should use the Give Me Five—S cycle as they read. Students should select their own reading materials, scan the pictures to preview the story, skim the story to find and write down a word of interest from each page, summarize what the story was about, and reread the story for speed (fluency). Use Structured Writing (page 7) to monitor comprehension. Finally, the teacher’s job during this segment is to facilitate: to question, observe, model, monitor reading, and encourage students to verbalize strategies they use.
Strategies Bookmark Instruction for Unknown Words

When students come across unfamiliar words, do not tell them the words. Direct them to the Strategies Bookmark. Describe how each picture prompt relates to a strategy, and provide sufficient guidance about using the strategies. After students are familiar with the picture prompts, encourage them to refer to their bookmarks as they read independently. Note that many strategies have some overlap, as do the activities listed for teaching each one.

Segment #2  Strategy and Skill Development

Explicit instruction in phonics, grammar, and word-attack strategies—30 minutes

Assuming someone has assessed students’ reading capabilities, use the assessments to address each student’s problem reading areas. Students may be aware of their difficulties, but they don’t often know what to do about them. Review each student’s assessment results individually to make him or her aware of strengths and areas needing attention, and then implement directed strategy and skill development instruction with emphasis on brain-based learning. Refer to the objective bullets in the activities section (pages 44-126) for specific ways to address different weaknesses.

Segment #3  Guided Reading

Direct teaching of reading strategies and content standards—30 minutes

During this segment, make content more comprehensible through direct instruction of strategies that will ensure active reading. These strategies are outlined on page 8 and are represented by pictures on the Strategies Bookmark Reproducibles (page 13). They combine elements of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension instruction and demonstrate applying word-attack skills and using context to gain meaning. Help students internalize the strategies by introducing the bookmark, choosing skill-based activities to teach its strategies, and relating them to student reading selections.

Structured Writing

Following Self-Selected Reading, students should write about or otherwise reflect upon what they have read. Have them complete copies of the Reader’s Review reproducible (page 12) by responding to the prompts, scoring the book, and writing the reason for the score. (File these so that students can use others’ reviews to help them choose books.) Each student can also write a brief reader’s theater piece of a scene, draw pictures to complete a visual story sequence, audio- or videotape himself or herself reading out scenes, or change one story element (such as the ending, the setting, or a character). Other ideas include letting students choose a story and chorally read it as a class, or collaboratively write a rap, a song, or even stage directions for an interpretive dance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Picture Prompt</th>
<th>Ask students to try the following steps</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *1 Does it make sense? | ![Coin](69x744) | • Think about what you already know about the subject.  
• Guess what the word might be.  
• Consider if that word makes sense in the sentence. | • Click and Clank; Give It Meaning; See It, Say It; Letter Snatcher |
| *2 Look for key words and clues. | ![Key](137x744) | • Look for key words in the sentence (nouns and descriptive words).  
• Look for clues in the pictures in the book. | • Word Association; What’s Missing?; The Missing Link; Relationship Box; See It, Say It; Collaborative Reading |
| *3 Listen to how it sounds. | ![Ears](253x758) | • Identify the beginning, middle, and ending sounds of the word.  
• Sound out the letters.  
• Guess the word and say it in the sentence.  
• Consider if it sounds right. | • All phonemic awareness activities, Short Vowel Response Cards, Short Vowel Sound Puzzle, Syllable Spot, Vowel Combination Response Cards |
| *4 Look for little words in big words. | ![Box](85x693) | • Look for hidden words to help pronounce the bigger, unfamiliar word. | • Scavenger Hunt, Which Word Doesn’t Belong? |
| *5 Search for similarities. | ![Magnifying Glass](222x744) | • Look and listen for similarities among words.  
• Consider if words sound the same.  
• See if words have the same letter patterns. | • Any activity that trains students to look for spelling patterns in words is relevant: Rhyming Riddles, Rhyming Words, Speedball Vowels, Word Line, Short Vowel Flashcards, Word Swap, What Makes Long Vowels Long?, Silent Race, Switcheroo, Word Sorts, Long Vowel Classification, Find and List |
| *6 Try a popper. | ![Popper](202x714) | • Sound out the first letter of an unfamiliar word.  
• Continue reading the rest of the sentence.  
• See if the word “pops” into your head! | • Poppers, Letter Snatcher, see also page 29 of the My Brain Teaching Script |
| *7 Backtrack and read again. | ![Bear](202x714) | • Reread the sentence.  
• Notice clues you missed the first time. | • Collaborative Reading; Criss-Cross Sentences; What’s Missing?; Give It Meaning; The Missing Link; Letter Snatcher |
| *8 Skip it and go on. | ![Boy](192x758) | • Skip the unfamiliar word.  
• Keep reading the sentence.  
• Use the sentence context to understand the word. | • What’s Missing?, Give It Meaning, The Missing Link, Letter Snatcher |
Segment #4 Common Problem Areas
Supervised assessment and correction of skills—20 minutes

Use this segment (and the Self-Selected Reading segment) for one-on-one diagnosis and instruction. This is the most valuable segment of the intervention program because you will address specific needs. During these assessment segments, observe and diagnose individual problems and demonstrate corrective strategies. The common problem areas segment helps students as they work individually or in small groups on areas in which they need additional practice. Common problems can include things like trouble with unknown words, ignoring punctuation, or irregular reading rates. Depending on their needs, students may be working on phonics, language development, silent reading comprehension, or reading fluency. This is the perfect time to incorporate additional support programs that are available at your school.

Segment #5 Self-Assessment
Goal setting and evaluation — 5–10 minutes

Obviously, reading and understanding text is difficult for struggling readers. To reach these students, you must replace their failures with successes. Self-assessments help students see their progress and understand that their attitudes and hard work result in positive change. The self-assessment reproducibles (pages 14–15) emphasize work habits, skills and strategies, attitudes, and individual goal setting.

Work with each student to choose a goal for the week, such as I will look for silent e in words or I will increase my reading speed. Be sure each selected goal relates to the skill and activities being emphasized, and to each student. During this segment, refer to students’ goals and acknowledge their efforts to meet those goals. At the end of the instructional period, have students assess how they did that day using the self-assessment reproducibles. Make sure students have time to concentrate on a particular area and complete the self-assessment forms before moving to new goals. Students need to internalize the assessment criteria before they choose their own goals.

You may choose to share assessments with classroom teachers (if they are not the ones providing intervention) to demonstrate students’ achievements and changing attitudes. Students may want to revisit their assessments to see how far they have come. For these reasons, it is a good idea to take a few minutes at the beginning of the intervention program to have students make self-assessment folders in which to keep the forms.
Segment #6  Journal Writing
A dialogue about the learning process — 10–15 minutes

Incorporating journal writing helps students develop and build on written language skills and gives students a chance to apply these skills and incorporate self-assessment. Depending on students’ needs, entries can serve different purposes.

Initially, you will write the entries, focusing on how each day’s activity helps students improve their reading. As students recognize how their participation affects their progress, they can write their own entries. Prior to the instructional block, write a starter prompt on the board, such as Today I _______. It helped me _______. Cover the prompt until the end of the session, then have students copy and respond to it. Eventually, use journal writing to dialogue with students about their hard work, attitudes, and progress, and to give them opportunities to write self-assessment entries in addition to using the self-assessment reproducibles. Consider asking students’ permission to share their journal entries with classroom teachers to help relate their progress.

Partner Journaling

In order to be successful, students need to feel safe in their environment and connected to their peers and teachers. When struggling readers connect with their teachers and classmates, they tend to take more responsibility for the environment in that classroom. Partner journaling can be used to foster these connections because it gives students opportunities to share about themselves in a deeper way. Before introducing partner journaling, make topic cards. Each week, write six or seven topics on an index card for each student. Let students keep the cards in their journals for reference. These topics should be relevant, interesting, and of a reflective nature. (See Journal Writing Topics, page 11, for examples.) Then conduct journaling sessions in this order:

1. To introduce journaling, model writing an entry. Choose a topic and write it on a transparency. Then write some superficial things about it.
2. Next, model how to “go deep inside yourself” by reflecting on why you feel as you do, why the topic is important to you, and how it has affected you and others.
3. Then, ask students to choose topics from their topic cards or make up their own topics.
4. Ask some volunteers to share their topics. Model how to ask pertinent questions that expand each idea or make it more personal. Let other students ask questions.
5. Once students have adequate experience with this process, have them choose partners (different partners each time). Partners should not have the same topics.
6. Encourage students to ask each other who, what, where, when, and why questions to help them expand their topics. Partners should “dig down deep” to share how they think and feel.
7. Students should then write their entries independently.

Journal entries do not need to be lengthy. The goal is to give students a means to connect socially and emotionally; style, spelling, and structure should be taught in directed writing lessons. (Punctuation may be addressed because it can interfere with readability.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What makes you happy? Share one of your happiest experiences.</th>
<th>How do you feel about yourself at this moment in time?</th>
<th>What talent were you given for which you are grateful?</th>
<th>If you could have anything in the world, what would it be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe an activity that makes you feel good about yourself.</td>
<td>What makes you sad? Share one of your saddest experiences.</td>
<td>Describe a time when you were able to help someone.</td>
<td>What goals do you have for your future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share ways in which you have changed over the last few years.</td>
<td>What makes you feel lonely? Share a time when you felt lonely.</td>
<td>Share a time when you were very proud of yourself.</td>
<td>Write about something you strongly believe in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?</td>
<td>What do your friends like about you?</td>
<td>Describe something you want to do and tell why you want to do it.</td>
<td>Tell about the progress you are making in class. What are you learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share your interests and hobbies. What do you like to do?</td>
<td>Write about your best quality.</td>
<td>Share what you want to be. Why do you want to be that?</td>
<td>What do you think makes a good friend?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reader's Review

What was the book about?

What?

So...

Then

How would you rate this book? (Circle one.)

Reason for score:
Work Habits Self-Assessment

Goal: ________________________________________________________________

Monday ____________________ Tuesday ____________________ Wednesday ____________________

Thursday ____________________ Friday ____________________

SW = Super Worker!
ST = Super Thinker!
SPS = Super Problem Solver!

Scored by ___________________________ Date __________________

How I Think I Did

Goal: ________________________________________________________________

Monday ____________________ Tuesday ____________________ Wednesday ____________________

Thursday ____________________ Friday ____________________

1 = I learned from my mistake.
2 = I used a “popper.”
3 = I solved a problem.
4 = I used a strategy.
5 = I thought about what made sense.

Scored by ___________________________ Date __________________
**Attitude**

**Goal:** ________________________________________________________________

1. I was eager to do my best.  
2. I was energetic.  
3. I showed what I know.  
4. I was enthusiastic about my work.  
5. I was attentive and answered questions.  
6. I need to work on ________________________________________________________________

Monday _____ Tuesday _____ Wednesday _____
Thursday _____ Friday _____

Assessed by ___________________________ Date __________________________

**How I Think I Did**

**Goal:** ________________________________________________________________

+ I worked hard at my goal.  ✓ I could have done more.  – I did not think enough about my goal.

Monday _____ Tuesday _____ Wednesday _____ Thursday _____ Friday _____

**List of goals:**

- I will work on fluency.  
- I will use my reading strategies.  
- I will catch my mistakes.  
- I will look for clues in words.  
- I will use context to get meaning.  
- I will practice my reading.  
- I will show a good attitude.

I will finish all of my work.  
I will stay on task.  
I will listen and follow directions.  
I will focus on what I am doing.  
I will keep on trying and not give up.  
I will think about what I do well.  
I will congratulate myself.

Assessed by ___________________________ Date __________________________
Teaching Students about Brain-Based Learning

Brain-based learning techniques can positively influence students’ understanding of the learning process and increase their motivation and personal commitment. This simple approach to learning and memory can be the tool that will make a difference. Giving students knowledge about how to use brain-based learning techniques to improve their reading can lead to better overall academic performance. The My Brain Booklet (pages 34–43), used in conjunction with the My Brain Teaching Script (pages 18–33), is an interactive tool to which students add words and graphics to personalize the information.

Implementing My Brain Booklet and Teaching Script

Materials

✱ The interactive My Brain Booklet (pages 34–43) teaches students about memory and learning. Each student needs his or her own copy to personalize.

✱ The My Brain Teaching Script (pages 18–33) is a word-for-word model of the instruction. Read and discuss this with students to introduce and explain the graphics on each page of the My Brain Booklet.

✱ Create transparencies of the booklet and use an overhead projector and erasable markers so that you can model how to draw and color the booklet. Invite students to complete their pages as you do the same on the transparency.

✱ Students need access to crayons, colored pencils, or markers (red, green, black, blue, and yellow).
Procedure and Schedule

As you start training, provide an orientation session. Then divide up the different parts of the booklet according to what your schedule will accommodate. You can break the training into sessions as listed below, or you can complete all of the training in one day and review for several days afterward. Read aloud the blue text in the script, and encourage student participation. Teacher directions are in black.

Below is a sample training schedule. If you teach the *My Brain Booklet* over several days, use the schedule to help you decide how many days you need. But you do not have to spread out training. If you decide to teach the entire *My Brain Booklet* in one day, the suggested session groupings show logical places where students can take breaks. If you have one day of training, remember that students need to practice the material 18–24 hours after learning it in order to retain the information. To review, let students complete any activities a second time.

### Session #1–My Brain, Front-Brain and Back-Brain Learning
- Orientation Session (Explain that students are there to work on reading and learning better.)
- *My Brain Booklet*, pages 1–4
- Duration: 20 minutes

### Session #2–How the Brain Works, Sensory Input
- *My Brain Booklet*, pages 5–8
- Duration: 20 minutes

### Session #3–Short-Term Memory, Working Memory
- *My Brain Booklet*, pages 9–12
- Duration: 25 minutes

### Session #4–Long-Term Memory, This is How I Remember
- *My Brain Booklet*, pages 13–16
- Duration: 20 minutes

### Session #5–What Can I Do, What I Will Do?, What Teachers and Students Can Do
- Duration: 25 minutes

### Session #6–Self-Selected Reading and Structured Writing
- Have students do Self-Selected Reading (page 6).
- Model Structured Writing (page 7), or conduct a structured writing time if students are aware of the procedure.
- Duration: 40 minutes

### Session #7–Self Assessment
- Make self-assessment folders (page 9).
- Have students complete one self-assessment reproducible.
- Duration: 20 minutes

At this point, integrate the other segments from the Recommended Instructional Model (page 6) and the Reading Activities (pages 44–126) as needed.
If you could open up your head and take a picture, this is what you would see. This is what the brain looks like. Why do we each have a brain? What does the brain do? Your brain is what makes everything in your body work, and it helps you think and learn. We are going to talk about how your brain works. I will ask you to do some funny things, like coloring, drawing, and even singing! These things will help you understand your brain.

(Especially older students may balk at some of the exercises, such as coloring and singing, because they may seem more appropriate for younger grades. If so, acknowledge that students may feel silly at first, but then explain that the silliness they feel will actually do a lot to help them to remember and make sense of the information they are learning. Finally, remember that if you have fun, students will have fun with you.)

Look at the picture of the brain again. The brain is made up of many different parts, or lobes, and each part has a special job to do, from helping you breathe and move to recognizing danger. For example, you use different parts of the brain to name different objects. Find the word people on your page, and draw some people under the word. If I asked you the name of your teacher, what part of the brain would you use? Use a crayon to trace the arrow that points to that part of the brain.

Now, find the word animals, draw a picture of any animal, and trace the arrow. Point to the part of the brain that you would use if I asked you to name an animal that has spots and a long neck. (Call on a student to name the animal.)
Under the word *tools*, draw a picture of a tool, and trace that arrow. Show me the part of the brain that you would use if I asked you to name the tool you drew. (*Call on a student to point to that part of the brain and then name the tool he or she illustrated.*)

To say the names of people, animals, and tools, you use three different parts of your brain. When you learn to read, you also use different parts of your brain to hear and write sounds, to put sounds together to make words, and to remember whole words. When you learn to read, you use the front part of your brain and read words one letter at a time. To learn to read the word *d-o-g*, your brain actually looks at each letter and sound, /d/ /o/ /g/, to read the word. But in order to read faster—to look at a whole word and immediately know that it is the word *dog*—you have to use the back of your brain. Let’s do an activity, and then we will look at the next page to learn more about front-brain reading and back-brain reading.
Session *1 (cont.): Front and Back Brain

My Brain Booklet, page 3
(See reproducible page 35)
Let’s look at the difference between front-brain reading and back-brain reading. In order to read these hyphenated sentences, the front part of the brain looks at every letter. *(Read the first message slowly, almost sounding it out.)* Let me show you how reading every letter can slow you down. On the first line in your booklet, write your name, but put a hyphen between each letter. *(On a transparency, write your name with hyphens.)* Did you have to think about the letters and remember to put in the hyphens?

Now, look at the bottom of the page. The same message is written without hyphens. When reading takes place in the back of the brain, it sounds like this. *(Read the message fluently.)* Write your name on the line like you usually do, without hyphens. See how much faster that is? Why is it faster to write this way? *(Pause for answers.)* Yes, when you don’t have to stop and think about the letters and the hyphens, the writing is faster. You just wrote your name automatically—without even thinking. Well, that’s how reading happens when the back of the brain is used. So, your job is to move your reading from the front of your brain to the back. You’re going to train your brain to do this by learning and practicing some reading strategies.

My Brain Booklet, page 4
(See reproducible page 35)
Look at the two people. How are they different? *(Pause for answers.)* Right, one is younger. Circle the person whom you think reads faster. Who did you circle? *(Call on a student to answer. Most students will say that the older person reads faster.)* When might the younger person read faster? *(Answers may be When the older person is just learning English or When the younger person is a genius.)*

*(Pair students with partners.)* Cover everything except sentence 1a. One of you should read that sentence aloud while the other listens. *(Pause.)* Now, read sentence 1b, without hyphens. *(Pause.)* Which sentence was easier to read? *(Pause.)* Let the other partner read sentences 2a and 2b in the same way and decide which was easier. *(Pause.)* Why were the sentences without hyphens easier?
My Brain Booklet, page 5
(See reproducible page 36)
It’s important to understand how the brain works, because that helps you train your brain to learn better. Page 5 shows a picture of how information passes through the brain until it becomes part of your memory. Use your green crayon to trace the arrows that point to the right. They show the paths that information follows when it moves. Notice that at every point, information can fall out of your brain. Use your red crayon to trace all of the arrows that point down, except for the curved arrow. The arrows that point down show the paths that information takes when it falls out. If information falls out, it is not learned. (The graphic is shown at this point to give students the big picture. Each segment of the brain will be discussed in the following pages of the booklet.)

My Brain Booklet, page 6
(See reproducible page 36)
Practice finding information for your brain by closing your eyes and taking an imaginary walk across the playground to see what your senses pick up. Think about what you see, hear, smell, and touch on the playground. Can you think of anything you might taste? Draw a picture of something each of your senses will notice. (Pause while students imagine and draw.) Now that your senses have taken in this information, your brain decides whether this information drops out or moves ahead. On the next page, we will find out how that happens.
Session *2 (cont): Sensory Input

My Brain Booklet, page 7
(See reproducible page 37)

Let’s take a look at how your brain remembers things. You take in information from your environment, which is everything around you. Look at the picture and tell me how you take in information. (Pause for answers.) That’s right, eyes and ears show that you see things and hear things. What other ways do we take in information? (Pause for answers.) Yes, you use all of your senses: touch, taste, and smell. Now, imagine what a person with extra-powerful senses would look like, and draw a picture of that person.

Your brain takes in 40,000 bits of information a second, but you certainly don’t remember all of that. Imagine that you hear a siren. Color the fire engine red to show where you imagine the siren comes from. Hearing a siren is not unusual. Most of the time, you probably don’t pay much attention. There is no reason to remember every siren that you hear. But what if you hear a siren and smell smoke? Draw smoke near the fire engine. If you smell smoke, you may be concerned that the fire is near, so the siren becomes more important. Because the siren is now important, it passes through the brain’s filter. The filter is like window blinds. Color the window blinds yellow. When information is important, the filter opens so that information can pass into your memory like light through the blinds. Use your green crayon to trace the arrow on the far right of the page to show that the information passed through the filter. If information is not important, the filter closes and the information drops out. Use your red crayon to trace the arrow that shows where information can drop out.

My Brain Booklet, page 8
(See reproducible page 37)

Now, demonstrate how your filter works. Make a fist with your hand. This is your filter. As you look at each picture, if the picture is of something that interests you, open your fist. If a picture does not interest you, close your fist. Since everybody’s interests are different, some fists may be open while others are closed. Now, circle the items that made you open your fist. (Say the name of each picture: candy, shark, line, trash, onion, square, race car, kitten.) What made your filter open? Why? What made your filter close? Why? When you are finished, draw and color a picture of something that would make you open your fist.
My Brain Booklet, page 9
(See reproducible page 38)

Did you know that you have three kinds of memory? Information has to get past the filter and then go through these three kinds of memory if it is going to be learned. On page 9, we see what happens after information passes through the filter (the one that acts like window blinds). It moves to the first kind of memory, which is your short-term memory. This is called short-term memory because it holds information for a very short time—about 18 seconds. Short-term memory acts like a lightning flash. Something has to happen to get the brain’s attention so that the information does not drop out. What do you think gets the brain to pay attention?

* Pictures and colors get the brain’s attention. That is why you are drawing, coloring, and tracing things. If information is written with different colors or is shown with pictures, the brain is more likely to notice. Color the box of crayons to remind you that the brain likes color and pictures.

* Music (Sing this word.) and rhythm (Clap your hands.) get the brain’s attention. If you want to learn spelling words, try singing the letters. (Sing the letters in the word brains to the tune of “Happy Birthday.” Ask students to join in.) Use a crayon to trace the musical notes to show that music grabs your brain’s attention.

* Movement gets the brain’s attention. Using your body makes an impression and improves learning. For example, how many of you remember the words and motions to “The Itsy Bitsy Spider?” (Sing the following song and do the hand motions. Invite students to join in.)

The itsy, bitsy spider went up the waterspout. (Touch your right index finger to your left thumb and then your left index finger to your right thumb, making a crawling motion.)

Down came the rain and washed the spider out. (Raise your hands and wiggle your fingers as you lower them to simulate rain.)

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain. (Raise your arms and touch your hands together to make a big circle.)

And the itsy, bitsy spider went up the spout again. (Repeat the index finger and thumb “crawling” motion.)

Color the wiggly spider.
Humor gets the brain’s attention. Just like you remember a good joke, the brain remembers information when it is presented in a funny way.

What does a brain do when it sees a friend? Gives a brain wave!

Something new or different gets the brain’s attention. The brain tends to remember new, unusual information. If I told you that frogs eat their old skin after they shed it, you probably wouldn’t forget something like that!

Using more than one learning style gets the brain’s attention. There are three learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, or seeing, hearing, and moving. If you learn something in more than one way, you will remember it better. For example, if I say Pie in the face! you hear it. But, if I say Pie in the face! and throw a pie at someone, you hear it and see it. And if I say Pie in the face! and hit you with a pie, you will hear it, see it, and try to move away from it.

Next to the pencil, draw a picture showing something interesting that you have learned about the brain. Look back over your booklet for ideas.

My Brain Booklet, page 10
(See reproducible page 38)
Look at the writing and the pictures.
• Circle the television you prefer.
• Circle the math lesson you prefer.
• Circle the reading lesson you prefer.
• Circle the transportation you prefer.
• Circle the shoe you prefer.
• Circle the cat you prefer.

(Discuss which items and pictures students selected, and why. Paraphrase students’ answers, using the terms color, music, movement, humor, and new to explain why these things got their brains’ attention.)
Session *3 (cont): Working Memory

My Brain Booklet, page 11
(See reproducible page 39)
(Teach this segment in the same session as short-term memory or as its own session.)
You have looked at how information grabs your brain’s attention and goes through the filter into your short-term memory. What would happen if information did not grab the brain’s attention? (Pause for answer.) Yes, the information would fall out. What can you do to make sure the information doesn’t fall out? (Pause for answers.) If the information is interesting and you give your brain some help, the information moves to the second kind of memory—the working memory.

The working memory is represented by a picture of a desk because you have to use this kind of memory to work with information (like you use a desk for schoolwork) if you are going to remember it. The desk only holds a limited amount of information. At your age, the working memory can remember about five things at a time. If too much is in your working memory, new information falls out and is not learned. But there are some tricks to help your working memory learn and remember more things.

**Chunking**

Listen to these numbers and try to remember them: 9, 3, 8, 6, 4, 2. Write those six numbers on the line on the picture of the desk. Remember that you can store five things in your working memory, but I gave you six numbers. How can you shrink what you have to remember? (Pause for answer.) Try combining the six numbers (9, 3, 8, 6, 4, 2) to make three numbers (93, 86, and 42). Write these three numbers on the three lines. This is called **chunking**. You can chunk information together to make it smaller.

Let’s try chunking with something else. Spell Mississippi—M-i-s-s-i-s-s-i-p-p-i. How many letters is that? (Pause for answer.) How can you possibly remember 11 letters if your working memory can only hold about five things at a time? That’s right, you can chunk it. What if you spell Mississippi like this, Miss – iss – ipp - i? (Write it this way on a transparency.) How many chunks or groups do you have to remember? (Pause for answer.)
Right, there are only four chunks. Do you see a spelling pattern? There’s an *i* followed by two double letters. Do you see anything else? Are any of the chunks alike? (Pause for answer.) Right, the letters *iss* are repeated two times in the word. We’ve chunked the information. Under the hyphenated word M-i-s-s-i-s-s-i-p-p-i, write the word *Mississippi* in chunks.

**Practice**

Besides chunking, there are other things you can do to help things remain in your working memory. To make sure that the chunked spelling of *Mississippi* stays in your memory, you have to practice it. Practice doesn’t have to be boring. Let’s be silly and spell the word using different voices. Use a giant voice to spell it. *(Spell the word with a loud voice, using the “chunked” spelling pattern.)* Now, spell it with a teeny, tiny mouse voice. *(Spell the word with a soft, squeaky voice.)* Use a really high voice. *(Spell the word with a high voice.)* Now, use a deep, low voice. *(Spell the word with a deep voice.)* Use your regular voice to spell *Mississippi*. *(Spell the word.)* Use your finger to write it on top of your desk. *(Demonstrate.)* Spell it and tap your feet in rhythm. *(Demonstrate.)* Spell *Mississippi* and stand up every time you say the letter *i*. *(Do this with students, and let them suggest some other silly things to do.)* This feels silly, but since it is different from what we usually do, that helps the brain remember it.

Do you think that you will remember how to spell *Mississippi*? Why? If you don’t practice, what happens? (Pause for answer.) Use your red crayon to draw a line through the word *Mississippi* to show that if you don’t practice, the information will fall out and you will forget how to spell *Mississippi*. If you do practice, what will happen? Use your green crayon to draw a green arrow from the chunked word to the right-hand edge of the page.

**My Brain Booklet, page 12**

*(See reproducible page 39)*

Look at page 12 of the booklet. You should see two groups of numbers, the word *Massachusetts*, and a group of five words. Think about how you would chunk each of these to make sure they remained in your working memory. In your booklet, write a solution for remembering each of these. *(Let students share answers, then explain the solutions.)*

For the numbers 1, 8, 5, 6, 7, 0 you could chunk them into three numbers: 18, 56, and 70. You could chunk 2, 1, 4, 3, 8, 6, 9 into a telephone number: 214-3869. To spell *Massachusetts*, you could chunk the letters: Mass–a–chu–setts. To remember *school*, *story*, *elephant*, *banana*, and *trampoline*, you could chunk the words into a sentence, like *Today at school, I read a story about an elephant eating a banana on a trampoline*. What kinds of practice could you use to help you remember even better? *(Students may suggest singing or clapping. Suggest other ways to practice: drawing a picture of the sentence, pretending to dial the phone numbers, or learning about Massachusetts.)*
Session *4: Long-Term Memory

My Brain Booklet, page 13

(See reproducible page 40)

Look back at page 5 in your booklet. You can see that next to the working memory desk is a file cabinet that represents long-term memory. On pages 11–12, you can see how to help your working memory work with information and move it closer to your long-term memory, where you store everything you have learned. Spelling Mississippi is a good example because you probably remember how to spell it. (Let a volunteer spell Mississippi.)

Sense and Meaning

In order for the information to move on to your long-term memory, it has to make sense. Use any color to trace the cents sign. Look at the nonsense word. Do you think it will be easier to remember that nonsense word or the two words under the nonsense word? Cross out the word or words you think will be harder to remember. Which word or words didn’t you cross out? Why? (Pause for answer.) Those letters spell two words that we know, and the words make sense. If you want to remember information, it has to make sense. It also has to mean something to you. You remember things that are important to you. For example, you may remember Mississippi because it is one of the 50 states, because someone you know lives there, because it is famous for its riverboats, or just because it is fun to spell.

New Learning

Even if information makes sense and has meaning for us, it can still drop out. Look at the clock. The time on the clock says 18:24, but that isn’t a time you normally see on a clock. The clock reminds us that information must be practiced from 18 to 24 hours after it is presented. If you get new information on Monday, practice it on Tuesday, and practice it again on Wednesday, the information has a better chance of going into your long-term memory. Use any crayon to color the clock, and then use your green crayon to trace the arrows showing that the new learning has made it to the long-term memory and has been officially learned. If you are introduced to something new on Monday and don’t practice it on Tuesday or Wednesday, what is going to happen to that new information? (Pause for answer.) It is going to fall out. Use your red crayon to trace the arrow that shows that the new information may not be learned.
Long-Term Memory (Storage)

You have finally made it to the last kind of memory. This is your long-term memory. Long-term memory is like a file cabinet. Learned information is stored there. When you have to remember something for a test, or a teacher asks you a question, the information you need to find is in your long-term memory. Use your blue crayon to color the file cabinet to show that learned information is stored in your brain. Sometimes it takes a little bit of time for the brain to find, or retrieve, the information to answer the question. That’s why you might need a little bit of “wait time” before you can answer a question. But no matter what, since the information made it all the way to your long-term memory, you will be able to remember it, or retrieve it, to answer the question. Use your blue crayon to trace the curved line at the bottom of the file cabinet that represents your long-term memory. That shows that you are able to remember, or retrieve, information and then use it.

My Brain Booklet, page 14
(See reproducible page 40)

On page 14, you see a picture of a file cabinet from the side. This file cabinet represents your long-term memory. On the file cabinet, draw or write something that is already in your long-term memory. It can be a word you know how to spell, a special memory, directions for how to get to a place, or even a phone number. Then answer the questions next to the file cabinet.
Session * 4: This Is How I Remember

My Brain Booklet, page 15
(See reproducible page 41)

Let’s take a look at what you have learned about your brain. First, information enters your brain through your five s____ (senses). (As you read, have students fill in the correct words orally. Supply the first sound of each answer—this is a strategy on the Strategies Bookmark on page 13.) If it is important to you, it goes through a filter that looks like window b____ (blinds). If it isn’t important to you, the filter stays closed and the information drops o____ (out). Next, the information moves to your short-term memory. This is where the information must grab the brain’s a____ (attention). By using color or pictures, music, movement, humor, or something new, the information is more interesting to your b____ (brain). If you try learning the information in different w____ (ways), it will be even easier. Then the information passes to the working memory which acts like a d____ (desk). Here you have to work with the information. You have to make it smaller by ch____ (chunking) it together into smaller pieces, then you have to pr____ (practice) it or the information will fall out. The information has to make s____ (sense) to you and have m____ (meaning) if it is going to be r____ (remembered). You have to practice the information at a later time or the next d____ (day). If you do practice it 18 to 24 hours later, the information finally moves into your long-term m____ (memory). The information has been learned and your brain will store it here until you need to r____ (remember) it.

The brain helps you learn everything you know, but the brain can only learn if you do your part. You won’t learn if you don’t work at it. Let’s review what you have to do to make sure information is learned. (Review page 15 of the booklet with students.)

My Brain Booklet, page 16
(See reproducible page 41)

Read the sentences on page 16 of your My Brain Booklet. See if you can unscramble the words to help you practice what you have learned about the brain. (If this activity is too difficult for students, allow them to work with a partner or do as a whole-group activity.) Next time, we will talk about your role—and mine—in the learning process.
Session *5: What Can I Do?

My Brain Booklet, page 17
(See reproducible page 42)
Your brain wants to learn. Do you? You found out how information flows through the brain and how it can fall out and not be remembered. Your job is to make sure that the information you are learning makes it to your long-term memory. Since music catches your brain’s attention, let’s do some singing to practice what you have learned.

(As you review page 17 of the booklet with students, sing each step with them using the tune “Did You Ever See a Lassie?”) You learned that the senses take in everything around us. In the box beside the arrow, draw your five senses (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and hand). (Begin singing and invite students to join in.)

I watch closely and listen. I watch closely and listen. I watch closely and listen. That’s how I learn.

Next, the information goes to the filter that works like window blinds. If the information is important, the blinds open and the information passes through. If you don’t think the information is important, the blinds close and the information drops out. So your attitude about learning matters, because you decide what is important. If you want to learn, then the information will be important to you. Color the blinds yellow to show light coming through. (Begin singing the next verse and invite students to join in.)

I make it important. I make it important. I make it important. That’s how I learn.

Now that the information has made it through the filter, where does it go? (Pause for answers.) It goes to your short-term memory. If the information grabs your attention through color, music, movement, humor, or because it is new, you remember it. In the space next to the flash, draw a picture of yourself paying attention. (Begin singing the next verse and invite students to join in.)

I grab my brain’s attention. I grab my brain’s attention. I grab my brain’s attention. That’s how I learn.

If you use more than one learning style (seeing, hearing, moving) to help you remember information, that can also help the short-term memory move it along. Sway back and forth while we sing this verse. (Begin singing the next verse and invite students to join in.)

I use my eyes. I use my ears. I use my body. That’s how I learn.
Once the information leaves your short-term memory, where does it go? *(Pause for answers.)* It goes to the working memory. The working memory is like a desk because you do the work (chunking and practicing) to keep information in your working memory. On the desk, circle the word *practice*. *(Begin singing the next verse of the song.)*

*Use it or lose it. Use it or lose it. Use it or lose it. That’s how I learn.*

After you practice the information for a day or two, where does it go? *(Pause for answers.)* It moves into your long-term memory, where it is stored until you need it. In the box next to the file cabinet, draw a person raising his or her hand to show that the person can retrieve the information from the “file cabinet.” *(Begin the last verse of the song.)*

*I show what I know. I show what I know. I show what I know. That’s how I learn.*

---

My Brain Booklet, page 18
(See reproducible page 42)

In the first circle on page 18 of your booklet, draw your face and write the word *me* under it. In the second circle, draw a picture of a globe and write *my world* under it. In the third circle, draw a picture of a clock and write the word *time* under it. This will help you remember that you can remember information more easily if it means something to you, if it relates to your world and your life, and if you practice it before 18 to 24 hours have passed. Last, label the four pictures at the bottom. *(Students should label the pictures *filter*, *short-term memory*, *working memory*, and *long-term memory*.)

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My Brain Teaching Script 31
My Brain Booklet, page 19
(See reproducible page 43)
You have spent a lot of time learning how the brain works. You have seen how information can pass through your memory or drop out. You also sang a song about what you need to do to help learning take place. You saw that teachers can help you learn by using color and pictures, song, movement, humor, and interesting ideas, and by helping you use several different ways to learn. Teachers can also help by making time for you to practice what you are learning.

So, as a student, what will YOU do to help yourself learn? Your attitude—how you act, what you think about learning, and how you feel about yourself—will determine whether you learn or not. If you say I don’t want to do this or This is stupid or I can’t do this or This is too hard, you tell your brain not to learn. But if you have a positive attitude and want to learn, you will. (Have a student come to the overhead and draw two self-portraits in the section labeled “Have a positive attitude.” One should have a bad attitude and the other a good attitude. Have him or her cross out the picture with the bad attitude.) The more you practice learning, the easier it will get. (While the student is drawing at the overhead, make sure the rest are drawing on the diagrams in their booklets.)

(Have one student come to the overhead and draw a picture of someone working hard—putting a lot of effort into something.) Effort means how hard you try. If you only work a little, say 20%, you’ll only learn 20%. If you give 100%, it will be easier to learn 100%.

(Have another student come to the overhead and draw a picture of him- or herself paying attention in the section labeled “Pay Attention.”) Next, you have to pay attention. It is your job to listen and think about what you are learning. If the information never makes it inside your brain, are you going to learn it?
(Circle Practice in the last section.) Once the information is in your brain, what do you have to do? (Pause.) “Practice” means doing something many times. Remember, if you don’t use it, you lose it. (Erase the drawings from the transparency.)

Now, I want you to think about what you will do to help yourself learn. When you are finished, we will share the work. Look at the right side of the page and read what it says. It says I get what I give. What does that mean? If you give only a small amount, what will you get? If you give a large amount, what will you get? It’s up to you. If you only give a little effort and time, don’t work hard, and don’t try your very best, you’re only going to get a little out of it. But if you give your all, do all of the work, and put forth your best effort, you’re going to get the most out of it. Let’s say it all together: I get what I give!

My Brain Booklet, page 20
(See reproducible page 43)

This is the last page of your booklet. After this page, you are ready to begin using the information to improve your reading and learning. You can draw or write anything you want, as long as it has to do with what you have learned. Maybe you will write about how you want to use the information to improve your learning. Maybe you want to draw a picture to help you remember something that you learned about the brain and memory. Whatever you choose, be sure to draw or write something that will inspire you to do your best when you look back at this booklet.
**My Brain**

What does the brain look like to you?

__________________________________
__________________________________
__________________________________

Draw a picture of the brain. Why do you think you are drawing this picture?

__________________________________
__________________________________
__________________________________

**My Brain: Activity**
FRONT BRAIN and BACK BRAIN

When you use the front of your brain to read, it looks like this:

I g-o t-o J-e-f-f-e-r-s-o-n S-c-h-o-o-l i-n C-a-r-l-s-b-a-d.
I-t i-s a c-o-o-l s-c-h-o-o-l.

M-y n-a-m-e i-s_________________________________________________________
Write your name with a hyphen between each letter.

When you use the back of the brain to read, it looks like this:

I go to Jefferson School in Carlsbad. It is a cool school.

My name is__________________________________________________________
Write your name like you usually do.

FRONT BRAIN and BACK BRAIN: ACTIVITY

Which person do you think is the faster reader? Circle that person. Why do you think so?

1a. I l-i-k-e t-o b-u-y m-y l-u-n-c-h o-n T-h-u-r-s-d-a-y-s.
1b. I like to buy my lunch on Thursdays.

2a. O-n T-h-u-r-s-d-a-y-s, w-e h-a-v-e c-h-e-e-s-e p-i-z-z-a.
2b. On Thursdays, we have cheese pizza.
**HOW THE BRAIN WORKS**

Information goes in and is remembered or it falls out!

**HOW THE BRAIN WORKS: ACTIVITY**

Take an imaginary walk across the playground to see what your senses pick up. Draw or write about something you might see, hear, smell, and touch. Can you think of anything you might taste on the playground?

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36 My Brain Student Booklet
**SENSORY INPUT**

Information grabs your brain’s attention when it’s important.

Draw smoke. Information grabs your brain’s attention when it’s important.

Draw a person with extra-powerful senses.

Important information passes through the filter. If the information isn’t important, it drops out.

**SENSORY INPUT: ACTIVITY**

Close your fist. Look at each picture. If it is of something that interests you, open your fist. If it does not interest you, keep your fist closed. Circle the items that made you open your fist.

What made your filter open? Why? In the box, draw and color a picture of something else that would interest you.
SHORT-TERM MEMORY

These things help information move from your filter into your short-term memory.

- pictures and color
- music and rhythm
- movement
- humor
- new and different
- combining learning styles

In the box, draw something interesting that you have learned about the brain.

SHORT-TERM MEMORY: ACTIVITY

In each set, circle the item or picture that you prefer.

- a TV with a color picture
- a black-and-white TV
- saying multiplication tables
- singing a math rap
- clapping syllables
- writing the number of syllables
- a little red wagon
- a magic carpet
- a shoe
- a cat
**Working Memory**

Working Memory can hold 5 things.

**Chunking**

9 3 8 6 4 2

M-i-s-s-i-s-s-i-p-p-i

---

**Practice**

Mississippi Miss-iss-ipp-i

---

**Working Memory: Activity**

What can you do to help you remember these groups of information?

1 8 5 6 7 0 or _____ _____ _____

2 1 4 3 8 6 9 or _____ - _______

M-a-s-s-a-c-h-u-s-e-t-t-s or ___________ _____ _____

school

story

elephant or

banana

trampoline
**LONG-TERM MEMORY**

Information must **make sense** and have **meaning** to move to your long-term memory.

Information must be **practiced** within 18 to 24 hours after it is learned to move to your long-term memory.

If information is not practiced, it will drop out.

---

**LONG-TERM MEMORY: ACTIVITY**

* On the file cabinet, draw or write about something that is already stored in your long-term memory. What did you draw or write about?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

* Why do you think this information is in your long-term memory?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
**THIS IS HOW I REMEMBER**

*Important*

Grabs your attention

*Short-term memory*

Practice

*Long-term memory*

**Storage**

What can you do to stop information from falling out? ________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
You can use your five sensse _____________________ to get information.
The information must be timopran _____________________ enough to pass through the filter.
Next, information moves to your rotsh-ermt _____________________ memory.
Information then moves to your krongwi _____________________ memory.
To keep memory from falling out at this point, you need to hunck _____________________ information and racipcet _____________________.
If you work with the information within 18 to 24 hours after you learn it, it moves into your glon-mert _____________________ memory.
Congratulations! You can now teiverre ___________________ the information any time you need it.
**What Can I Do?**

**Information**
- I watch closely and listen. I watch closely and listen. I watch closely and listen. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!
- I make it important. I make it important. I make it important. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!
- I grab my brain’s attention. I grab my brain’s attention. I grab my brain’s attention. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!

**Practice**
- I use my eyes. I use my ears. I use my body. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!
- Use it or lose it. Use it or lose it. Use it or lose it. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!
- I show what I know. I show what I know. I show what I know. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!

**Label each picture.**

**What Can I Do?: Activity**

I will remember if . . .

---

I show what I know. I show what I know. I show what I know. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!

---

I grab my brain’s attention. I grab my brain’s attention. I grab my brain’s attention. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!

---

I make it important. I make it important. I make it important. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!

---

I use my eyes. I use my ears. I use my body. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!

---

Use it or lose it. Use it or lose it. Use it or lose it. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!

---

I watch closely and listen. I watch closely and listen. I watch closely and listen. THAT’S HOW I LEARN!

---

**My Brain Student Booklet**
**WHAT I WILL DO**

I get what I give!

**WHAT I WILL DO: ACTIVITY**

Draw or write about something you have learned. It should be a positive drawing or writing that will inspire you to do your best.

---

**My Brain Student Booklet**

Strategies for Struggling Readers © 2007 Creative Teaching Press
Now that students are familiar with how their brains work, it is time to put that learning to good use while students focus on improving their reading. Here is a recap of the brain-based techniques students and teachers can implement to help build strong foundations in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension:

- Use color and pictures, music and rhythm, movement, humor, and novel approaches to help their brains pay attention to new concepts.
- Employ two learning styles (auditory, visual, or kinesthetic) for each new concept.
- Practice new information at least twice within 18 to 24 hours.
- Frequently discuss student progress and attitudes and teacher methods.

The next five sections provide background and activities related to the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary and word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. The activities address each component individually and provide support to help students strengthen these skill areas.

Each reading activity consists of these parts:

- **Objectives:** Tell the purpose of the activity. Share this information as part of the attitude, progress, and method discussions (above).

- **Brain-based learning elements:** Explain what research findings and brain-based techniques are used in each activity. Share this information with students, as well.

- **Directions:** Step-by-step instructions for completing each activity.

- **Extensions:** Any additional related activities that reinforce concepts.

Students will complete many reproducible activities in pairs or groups, or with you modeling them on a transparency. To give students further practice without making many more reproducibles, laminate a few additional copies and store them with erasable markers. Allow students to work on them independently.
The aim of phonemic awareness is to help children develop an ear for language—to hear specific sounds, identify sound sequences, and understand the role phonemes (sounds) play in word formation. Phonological awareness is sequential, beginning with the awareness of spoken words, then syllables, then onsets and rimes, and finally individual sounds within words (phonemic awareness). Before students can identify a letter that stands for a sound, they must be able to hear that individual sound in a word. This is difficult because sounds are abstract in nature, but being aware of sound differences in spoken language is crucial when learning to read written language.

**Prerequisite Skills in Phonemic Awareness**

In order to build a strong foundation in reading, at-risk readers must do the following:

- Have phonological awareness—the awareness that language can be broken into smaller components (sentences into words, words into syllables, syllables into sounds).
- Demonstrate an understanding of onsets and rimes and rhyming words.
- Identify beginning, medial, and ending sounds.
- Approximate sounds (identify positions of given sounds).
- Segment words into individual phonemes (/c/ /a/ /t/).
- Add, delete, and change sounds to make new words.
- Recognize that letters represent sounds (the alphabetic principle).

**Recommendations**

While older students have often had exposure to reading, some may not have had the adequate training needed to develop their phonological skills. Practice with phonemic awareness concepts will help them build new neural circuits. Using brain-based learning techniques and explaining the whys of activities will provide practice, heighten interest, and help to make “remedial” activities acceptable to older students.
Rhyming Riddles (Hinky Pinks)
* EXPOSE STUDENTS TO ONSETS AND RIMES THROUGH RHYMING WORD PAIRS.

Directions
Read the riddles below. Encourage students to guess the answers.

What do you call a . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chubby kitten?</th>
<th>→</th>
<th>(fat cat)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>crying father?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(sad dad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silly rabbit?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(funny bunny)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huge hog?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(big pig)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tidy road?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(neat street)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reptile’s dessert?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(snake’s cake)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library corner?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(book nook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colorful mattress?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(red bed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overweight rodent?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(fat rat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat burglar?</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>(beef thief)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students should quickly notice that all answers are rhyming pairs. Discuss the criteria for rhyming words. Students might say that rhyming words sound and look alike. Invite students to brainstorm a list of rhyming words. Write them on the board. Point out similar rimes in words, such as ew in new and stew. Write an irregular rhyming word, such as shoe. Guide the discussion until students recognize that rhyming words must have the same sounds but can be spelled in different ways.

Auditory Match-Up
* TEACH STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY BEGINNING AND ENDING PHONEMES.

Directions
Divide the class into a beginning sound team and an ending sound team. Choose and say a key word from the Multisyllable Word List (page 49). Have the first member of the beginning sound team say a word that begins with the same sound as the key word. Have the first member of the ending sound team say a word that begins with the ending sound of the key word. For example, if the key word is snail, the beginning sound team member might say seal and the ending sound team member might say lion. Switch team designations so that all students practice beginning and ending sounds.

Extension: Have students identify the medial sounds in key words and say other words that have the same medial sounds. For example, if the key word is met, one team member might say beg and another might say pen. Do not let students use rhyming words for their responses, since the emphasis will fall on the rimes rather than the vowel sounds.
Phonological Coding

* TEACH STUDENTS TO BLEND PHONEMES (COMBINE SOUNDS) TO IDENTIFY WORDS.

Explain that putting sounds together to make words or breaking apart sounds in words takes place in the phonological part of the brain. This part of the brain identifies words before determining pronunciation, spelling, and meaning. Practicing with sounds and words reinforces this ability. Have students listen as you orally segment a word. For example, say jump, but pause between each sound /j/, /u/, /m/, /p/. Invite them to combine the sounds, identify the word, and say jump. Repeat with other two-, three-, four-, and five-phoneme words (listed below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 phonemes</th>
<th>3 phonemes</th>
<th>4 phonemes</th>
<th>5 phonemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pie /p/, /i/</td>
<td>bat /b/, /a/, /t/</td>
<td>stars /s/, /t/, /ar/, /s/</td>
<td>zebra /z/, /e/, /b/, /a/, /t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toe /t/, /o/</td>
<td>boat /b/, /o/, /t/</td>
<td>lamp /l/, /a/, /m/, /p/</td>
<td>robot /r/, /o/, /b/, /a/, /t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tea /t/, /e/</td>
<td>ball /b/, /a/, /l/</td>
<td>turtle /t/, /i/, /l/, /a/</td>
<td>peanut /p/, /e/, /n/, /u/, /t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>key /k/, /e/</td>
<td>fish /f/, /i/, /sh/</td>
<td>tiger /t/, /i/, /g/, /r/</td>
<td>puppet /p/, /u/, /p/, /e/, /t/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then let students cut apart copies of the Phoneme Picture Cards (pages 50–51) and sort the pictures by the number of phonemes they contain.

Phoneme Sort

* TEACH STUDENTS TO SEGMENT WORDS INTO INDIVIDUAL SOUNDS (PHONEMES).

Discuss how the brain breaks words into individual sounds. Reinforce how important this skill is in reading and spelling. Explain that this skill is called segmenting.

Give each student a copy of the Phoneme Graph reproducible (page 52) and five counters (dried beans or pennies). Say a word from the Nonsense Word List (page 53). (All nonsense words listed have short vowels.) Tell students to repeat each nonsense word, count the number of sounds, and place a counter above the corresponding number on the graph. For example, say the nonsense word muz. Students should repeat the word, determine that it has three sounds, and place a counter above the 3 on the graph.

Note that in some words, two letters represent one sound. For example, there are four letters in boat but only three sounds. When segmenting oral words and counting the number of sounds, students (especially those who have had extensive experience with printed words and text) have a tendency to visualize the word and count the number of letters (graphemes) rather than the number of sounds (phonemes). Nonsense words help students avoid this tendency. Students have not seen nonsense words in print and will have an easier time counting just the sounds.
Sound Manipulation

* HELP STUDENTS CREATE NEW WORDS BY MANIPULATING SOUNDS WITHIN WORDS.

Explain that manipulate means move around. Say a one-syllable word from the Multisyllable Word List (page 49), give a direction to change the word, and have students say the new word. For example, say pan. Tell students to change the n to a t to make pat, then change the p to a b to make bat, then change the t to a th to make bath. While this is an auditory activity, writing the words may help students better understand the lesson. Once students seem comfortable with the manipulation, only give the words orally. As students become competent at changing letters, have them drop letters from words and determine the new words. For example, say nest. Ask students to drop the letter s (net). Say tent. Ask students to drop the final t (ten). Say stomp. Ask students to drop the letter m (stop).

Extension: Have students change vowel sounds rather than consonant sounds. When using short vowel words, say the vowel sound rather than the letter name. For example, Say the word not. Change the /o/ to /u/. Students should answer that this makes nut.

Change It!

* TEACH CHILDREN TO CREATE NEW WORDS BY MANIPULATING PHONEMES WITHIN EXISTING WORDS.

Copy, cut out, laminate, and assemble a Change It Spinner (page 54). Say a one-syllable word from the Multisyllable Word List (page 49).

Invite a student to spin the Change-It Spinner. If the spinner lands on Beginning, ask the student to change the first sound of the word to make a new word. If the spinner lands on End, invite the student to change the last sound to make a new word. If the spinner lands on Middle, have the student change the vowel. Have students take turns spinning the spinner for each one-syllable word you say aloud.
# Multisyllable Word List

## One-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>beach</th>
<th>cake</th>
<th>cup</th>
<th>gum</th>
<th>net</th>
<th>plate</th>
<th>tent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bear</td>
<td>clock</td>
<td>dish</td>
<td>hand</td>
<td>nose</td>
<td>snail</td>
<td>train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread</td>
<td>cloud</td>
<td>drum</td>
<td>hat</td>
<td>nut</td>
<td>sled</td>
<td>stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bridge</td>
<td>corn</td>
<td>flag</td>
<td>lamp</td>
<td>pan</td>
<td>stick</td>
<td>tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broom</td>
<td>crib</td>
<td>foot</td>
<td>leg</td>
<td>plant</td>
<td>tape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Two-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>airplane</th>
<th>carrot</th>
<th>finger</th>
<th>fireplace</th>
<th>monkey</th>
<th>rabbit</th>
<th>tractor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apple</td>
<td>circus</td>
<td>firelace</td>
<td>glasses</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>rainbow</td>
<td>spider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baby</td>
<td>cowboy</td>
<td>kitten</td>
<td>lemon</td>
<td>popcorn</td>
<td>starfish</td>
<td>table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baseball</td>
<td>dolphin</td>
<td>lettuce</td>
<td>pumpkin</td>
<td>puppet</td>
<td>tiger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basket</td>
<td>elbow</td>
<td>lettuce</td>
<td>potato</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camel</td>
<td>faucet</td>
<td></td>
<td>radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Three-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>animal</th>
<th>astronaut</th>
<th>crocodile</th>
<th>hamburger</th>
<th>icicle</th>
<th>parachute</th>
<th>submarine</th>
<th>underground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>banana</td>
<td>basketball</td>
<td>dishwasher</td>
<td>dinosaur</td>
<td>jellyfish</td>
<td>porcupine</td>
<td>potato</td>
<td>telescope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bicycle</td>
<td>calculator</td>
<td>escalator</td>
<td>experiment</td>
<td>hibernation</td>
<td>radio</td>
<td>screwdriver</td>
<td>tomato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer</td>
<td></td>
<td>elephant</td>
<td></td>
<td>information</td>
<td></td>
<td>spaghetti</td>
<td>tricycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>grandmother</td>
<td></td>
<td>magician</td>
<td></td>
<td>umbrella</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Four-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>alligator</th>
<th>apologize</th>
<th>calculator</th>
<th>caterpillar</th>
<th>dictionary</th>
<th>harpomica</th>
<th>invisible</th>
<th>responsible</th>
<th>television</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>elevator</td>
<td>escalator</td>
<td>experiment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>motorcycle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mysterious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pepperoni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Five-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cafeteria</th>
<th>condominium</th>
<th>electricity</th>
<th>hippocotamus</th>
<th>pronunciation</th>
<th>refrigerator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

*Phonemic Awareness 49*
# Phoneme Picture Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Pie</th>
<th>Tea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bee</td>
<td>Bow</td>
<td>Key</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Bat</th>
<th>Book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sail</td>
<td>Leaf</td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phoneme Picture Cards

4
- Drum
- Ladder
- Lamp
- Turtle
- Tiger

5
- Bucket
- Zebra
- Rainbow
- Cloud
- Robot
- Raccoon
Phoneme Graph
### Nonsense Word List

#### Two Phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>zo</th>
<th>ve</th>
<th>che</th>
<th>tho</th>
<th>za</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fi</td>
<td>sho</td>
<td>shu</td>
<td>fo</td>
<td>ge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pu</td>
<td>thu</td>
<td>chu</td>
<td>be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca</td>
<td>wha</td>
<td>shi</td>
<td>wi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Three Phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>zaf</th>
<th>mof</th>
<th>miz</th>
<th>thim</th>
<th>whez</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>veb</td>
<td>huj</td>
<td>wov</td>
<td>wom</td>
<td>thab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pid</td>
<td>fap</td>
<td>shaz</td>
<td>chag</td>
<td>shil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muz</td>
<td>pef</td>
<td>choz</td>
<td>shup</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Four Phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>slup</th>
<th>smit</th>
<th>snad</th>
<th>blav</th>
<th>crog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>grap</td>
<td>glab</td>
<td>grep</td>
<td>bris</td>
<td>scaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drit</td>
<td>skif</td>
<td>glin</td>
<td>clud</td>
<td>chib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snef</td>
<td>cloj</td>
<td>smub</td>
<td>glef</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Five Phonemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>slonk</th>
<th>morst</th>
<th>snabl</th>
<th>trimd</th>
<th>snult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clant</td>
<td>skinf</td>
<td>clonk</td>
<td>stald</td>
<td>clist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drist</td>
<td>glist</td>
<td>smuld</td>
<td>bleft</td>
<td>drorv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gronk</td>
<td>snust</td>
<td>stif</td>
<td>srast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change It Spinner

Beginning

Middle

End
Phonics

Phonics is an instructional approach for teaching reading and spelling that emphasizes sound-symbol relationships. It is based on the alphabetic principle: spoken words are made up of sounds (phonemes), and these sounds are represented by letters (graphemes). Phonics instruction should be sequential, with one skill building on another. However, many struggling readers’ phonics instruction has been haphazard, leaving students confused and overwhelmed. They find that the dual task of decoding and comprehending requires more energy and attention than is available. To compensate, struggling readers employ a “divide and conquer” strategy, decoding words first and then switching to comprehension. By alternating, struggling readers can work through text, but progress is slow and difficult. Starting over with an accelerated, implicit word-attack program can quickly provide students with a solid foundation that will allow them to develop skills to decode text and comprehend the words that they read. Once students understand the alphabetic principle, the task of decoding words becomes automatic, allowing students to use all of their energy on comprehension (back-brain reading).

Prerequisite Skills in Phonemic Awareness

To have a strong foundation in phonics, at-risk readers need to do the following:
• Gain a working knowledge of the alphabetic principle.
• Discriminate between short vowel sounds and read short vowel words.
• Automatically blend sounds into words (CVC-CCVC-CVCC).
• Identify long vowel spellings and rules.
• Orally change vowel sounds in words.
• Identify vowel combinations and their sounds.
• Become familiar with irregular spelling patterns.
• Read multisyllabic words.
• Identify root words and affixes.

Recommendations

First, use a diagnostic and oral reading inventory to assess students’ decoding skills. Next, use a test that has students decode basic phonetic elements. Struggling readers can often decode short- and long-vowel words, but they do not know sounds or vowel spellings in isolation. This becomes a problem when they attempt to decode unfamiliar or multisyllabic words. Work and assessment with nonsense words is a good way to determine if students know the phonetic elements and can process them to make words.
Short Vowel Song

* IMPROVE STUDENTS' RETENTION OF SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS.

Directions

Give each student a copy of the Short Vowel Picture Prompts reproducible (page 68) and have students cut apart the cards. (Store cards in plastic bags for future use.) As you show the picture cards, have students join you in singing the song and making the gestures (below). Remind students that singing is not “baby stuff,” because it activates the brain and improves learning. (Believe it or not, even most older kids will participate and like it!)

Short Vowel Song

(Tune: “The Mockingbird Song” also known as “Hush Little Baby”)

\[\text{\( /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ \)}\]

Pet the lamb, short \( a \) says /a/.
(Curve left hand and pet with right hand.)

\[\text{\( /e/ /e/ /e/ /e/ /e/ /e/ /e/ \)}\]

Grandpa Ed can’t hear, short \( e \) says /e/.
(Put hand to ear and bob head as you sing.)

\[\text{\( /i/ /i/ /i/ /i/ /i/ /i/ /i/ \)}\]

Icky pig, short \( i \) says /i/.
(Wrinkle up nose and hold it with fingers.)

\[\text{\( /o/ /o/ /o/ /o/ /o/ /o/ /o/ \)}\]

Open wide, short \( o \) says /o/.
(Place finger on lip like a doctor’s tongue depressor.)

\[\text{\( /u/ /u/ /u/ /u/ /u/ /u/ /u/ \)}\]

Bear cub in the mud, short \( u \) says /u/.
(Make fists, round off shoulders, and move from side to side.)

After the students have been introduced to the picture prompts and song, pass out picture sets to each student and have them hold up the appropriate picture card as they sing. This combines the visual (pictures), the auditory (song), and the kinesthetic (movement) modalities.

Extension: Sing the song by yourself. As you reach the short \( _ \) says /_/_/ portion of each verse, do not sing the vowel sound, but let students hold up the appropriate cards.
**Short Vowel Response Cards**

* HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY BEGINNING AND MEDIAL SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS IN WORDS.

Review the “Short Vowel Song” (page 56). Give each student a set of Short Vowel Picture Prompts (page 68) from the previous activity. Have students place the cards in a row. Say each short vowel sound. Invite students to repeat the sounds and hold up the appropriate cards. Next, switch from using sounds to words. Tell students to listen to each word, repeat it, and hold up the card that represents the short vowel sound. (Initially, use words from the Short Vowel Word Lists—One-Syllable Words, page 69, and Consonant Blends and Digraphs, page 70—that begin with short vowel sounds. Then move to words with short vowel sounds in the middle.) If students have difficulty hearing the medial vowels, teach them how to use “hiccup” to emphasize the sound. Say the beginning of the word, exaggerating the vowel sound by saying it three times. Then finish saying the word. For example, for the word *man*, say *m... a... a... a... an.*

**Extension:** As students begin to easily identify the vowel sounds, use words from the Short Vowel Word Lists (page 69–70) that have initial blends or digraphs.

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**Short Vowel Sorting**

* HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY AND DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS IN WORDS.

Give each student a Vowel-O Game Board (page 71). Have students circle the vowel over the column that they think will fill up first. Say a word from the Short Vowel Word Lists (pages 69–70). As you say a word, students should write it in the appropriate vowel-sound column. When students fill up a column, students who circled that letter on their papers should call out *Vowel-O!* Play until all columns are filled.

**Extension:** Let each student choose a short vowel letter tile (a, e, i, o, u) from a grab bag, and program a Vowel-O Game Board by writing a word containing that vowel sound in the appropriate box. (To increase the difficulty, specify how many letters the word must have.) When the game boards are full, have students read their words to their partners.
**Short Vowel Sound Puzzle**  
*Teach students to identify short vowel sounds.*

Distribute a *Short Vowel Sound Puzzle* (page 73) to each student. As you say a one-syllable word from the *Short Vowel Word Lists* (pages 69–70), tell students to decide which short vowel sound they hear in that word. Pause after saying each word to let students identify the correct vowel sound. If they are not sure, remind them to use the “hiccups” strategy (/f/, /l/, /a/, /a/, /a/, /ah/). If necessary, repeat the word, emphasizing the short vowel sound. Invite each student pair to use crayons or markers to color a section of the appropriate vowel. After you have repeated all of the words, have student pairs record their findings on a graph. Discuss the results.

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**Short Vowel Flashcards**  
*Help students build automatic recognition of short vowel sounds and words.*

Write words from the *Short Vowel Word Lists* (page 69–70) on index cards. Write the consonants in black and the vowels in red. Shuffle the cards. Remind students that color grabs the brain’s attention and that using two different colors is ideal. Tell students that they are going to help the brain process words quickly by first identifying the vowel sounds in those words. As you show students the flash cards, tell them to read only the red part, not the entire word. Illustrate by showing the cards slowly and saying only the vowel sounds. Have students join in. Increase the speed with which you show the cards until it is so fast that students cannot identify the vowel sounds. Explain that with daily practice, their brains will learn to process the information more quickly and they will soon be able to read the vowel sounds at a rapid pace. When this happens, the brain’s recognition process has become automatic.

Once students can quickly identify the vowel sounds, have them say the vowel sounds and then the words. Initially, they will say each vowel sound then pause before they read the word. Have students practice until the pause is eliminated. Point out that students no longer pause because the brain has developed automaticity, or automatic recognition.
Making and Writing Words
* HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY AND DISTINGUISH SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS IN WORDS.

Select a word related to a story theme or that contains the phonetic elements you wish to emphasize (such as words with CVC and a blend). In random order, write the vowels and consonants in the appropriate boxes on a transparency of the Making and Writing Words reproducible (page 74). For example, if the word is spider, write i and e in the vowels box and d, s, r, p in the consonant box. Show students the transparency and tell them to use the letters on it to make new words. Allow them to call out words for you to record. When they have finished making as many smaller words as they can, encourage them to make a single word using all of the letters at once. When students are ready, let them do the activity independently.

Extension: Use the lower boxes of the reproducible for a spelling activity related to word meaning. In advance, write a list of words that can be made using the letters in the top two boxes. Create a clue for each word, such as what water does when a faucet is leaky (drip). Invite students to spell a word that fits the clue and record it in a word box on the transparency. As students’ skills improve, let them complete this activity independently or in pairs. Eventually, students may even be able to write their own clues.

Word Swap
* HELP STUDENTS MANIPULATE SOUNDS IN THE INITIAL, MEDIAL, AND END POSITIONS IN WORDS.

Distribute copies of the Word Swap reproducible (page 75). Choose a key word from the Word Line Word List (page 72), and demonstrate how to change its beginning sound. Write the new word in the first box on the Word Swap reproducible. In the next box, have students change the ending sounds, write the new words, and then read them aloud. In the last box, demonstrate how to change the middle sound by adding a different short vowel sound. Remind students that when changing the vowel sound they may end up making nonsense words. While this gives good practice in blending words, use only real words for this activity. Have students read the new words they created by manipulating the sounds.

Finally, introduce the Bonus Words section. Tell students that they will use the last word in each of the three sections to make new words, but this time they should change two letters as designated.
Little Words in Big

* SHOW STUDENTS HOW TO FURTHER IMPROVE THEIR DECODING SKILLS USING SPECIFIC STRATEGIES.

Write a few words from the Word Hunt reproducible (page 76) on the board. Have students read the words. Ask how they were able to read the words. Invite students to be detectives and find the clues that helped them identify the words. As students discover that there are little words inside each of the big words, draw a blue box around each little word. (If students do not notice this, put blue boxes around the little words and wait for students to realize what you are doing.) Explain that they should be able to hear the little words inside of the big words. For example, they can hear the word other in the word another, but even though they can see the word her, they cannot hear it. Point to each word and say little word. After students read a little word, say big word, and have students read the big word.

Give each student a Word Hunt reproducible and a blue pencil. Tell students to look at the list of words and draw a blue box around any little words in a bigger word. Remind students that the brain is attracted to color and that the blue pencils will make the little words stand out. Have them quietly read each little word and then the bigger word as they are drawing blue boxes. When students have finished, ask them to read all of the words together, first identifying the little word and then the bigger one.

Syllable Spot

* TEACH STUDENTS TO DECODE MULTISYLLABLE WORDS.

Write some words from the Multisyllable Word List (page 49) on the board, using a dot to divide each syllable. Write the words in a bright color and the dots in black (white if using a chalkboard). (Make a “cheat sheet” of the words you select since you will be erasing them and rewriting them in a different order.) Have students read each word aloud syllable by syllable and then as a whole word. Erase the words and rewrite them in a different order as whole words. Ask students to read the whole words as quickly as possible. Then have students look at each word and say the number of syllables the word contains. Explain that spotting syllables in words will make it easier to decode and read longer words.
Select words from the Long Vowel Word List (page 78). Choose words with signal e (CVCE), such as hike, and with two-letter long vowel spellings-called 2-fers”, as in oa in goat. They are called “2-fers” because there are 2 letters for 1 sound. Use index cards to make flash cards of these words. Preselect five cards that have the signal e and five with two-letter long vowel spellings. Distribute a copy of the What Makes Long Vowels Long? reproducible (page 79) to each student. Explain that students need to learn to immediately spot signals and long-vowel spellings in words. Show the flash cards one at a time. Invite students to write tally marks in the appropriate boxes indicating whether the word has a signal e or a double vowel spelling. Note that reading the words is not part of the activity. The goal is to have students develop automatic recognition of the long vowel spellings. Once students are used to spotting the long vowel criteria, invite them to write the words on the What Makes Long Vowels Long? reproducible in the appropriate category and then read the words aloud. Make sure that students draw the arrow from the signal e to the long vowel, and add a bracket under the “2-fers”.

(cake)       (goat)

---

**Signal e Race**

* HELP STUDENTS IMPROVE RECOGNITION OF SILENT E LONG VOWEL SPELLINGS.

Use index cards to prepare flash cards that contain short vowel words and related long vowel words with a signal e, as in the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short Vowel Word</th>
<th>Long Vowel Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kit</td>
<td>kite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bit</td>
<td>bite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rat</td>
<td>rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not</td>
<td>note</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explain that it is important for students to learn to immediately spot a signal e in a word. Tell them to make a continuous /s/ sound as you show a set of flash cards. When they see a signal e word, invite them to say signal. Initially, do not have students read the words because the goal is to achieve visual recognition of the signal e. Repeat the activity often for automaticity. Each time students do the activity, flip the cards faster until each word is seen for less than a second. When students can identify the signal e, have students read the words. Practice until students can easily read the words as you flip them quickly.

**Extension:** To reinforce signal e with color, prepare an additional flash card set. Use black ink to write consonants. Write the signal e and long vowels in red. As students learn to spot the red e, substitute a few cards at a time with the words written entirely in black ink.
Use *index cards* to prepare flash cards for the long vowel sounds below. Use a different color for each of the five long vowel sounds. If possible, give a *whiteboard* to each student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>a_e</em></td>
<td><em>e_e</em></td>
<td><em>i_e</em></td>
<td><em>o_e</em></td>
<td><em>u_e</em></td>
</tr>
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<td><em>ai</em></td>
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<td><em>ew</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>ay</em></td>
<td><em>y</em></td>
<td><em>ow</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explain that students will learn to see each two-letter pattern as one sound. Tell students that these are called “2-fers”—two letters for one sound and remind them how the signal e works. Explain to students that the blanks represent where letters go. Some vowel spellings are usually in the middle of a word (_ai_) and some at the end of a word (_ay_). Ask students to look at the vowel spellings (highlighted in color) and say the vowel sounds as you flip through the flash cards. Increase the speed each time you flip through the cards.

As students demonstrate automatic recognition of the words, have them identify the vowel sound on each flash card. On their whiteboards, have them write another way of spelling each sound. For example, if a flash card shows long a as *ay*, students may write either *a_e* or *ai*.

**Reading Links**

*Give more practice in recognizing long vowel spellings.*

Select long vowel spelling patterns from the **Long Vowel Word List** (page 78). Write each spelling pattern on a separate, *interlocking cube*. Place each set of cubes in a small *plastic bag*. Pair students and give each pair a bag with a set of vowel cubes. Invite pairs to choose a cube and write a word that contains that vowel spelling. Have pairs continue until they have written a word for each cube. Then make a word graph using the vowel spellings. Have pairs add the words they made to the appropriate columns. When the graph is complete, have students read the words.
Switcheroo

* Move students from just recognizing long vowel spellings to the more difficult skill of substituting letters to make new long vowel words.

On the board, demonstrate how one letter in a two-letter vowel pattern can be changed to make a new word, such as changing the word *beat* to *boat*. On the board, write some words from the list below. Invite students to work together to write all of the new words they can create by substituting one or more vowels.

**Change 1 letter to make a new long vowel word:**
- bake (bik) load (lead) leaf (loaf) space (spice) like (Luke)
- chose (chase) blow (blew) fume (fame) lone (line) wide (wade)
- mule (mole) road (read) race (rice) those (these) mile (male)

**Change 2 or more letters to make a new long vowel word:**
- gate (goat) sheep (shape) braid (bride) fly (flew) feel (fail)
- wheat (white) cry (crew) life (loaf) note (night) bean (bone)
- hail (hole) toad (tide) float (flea) seat (sight) sweep (swipe)
- bait (bite) spike (speak) froze (freeze) seep (soap) raid (ride)

**Extension:** When students are skilled at substituting letters, explain that sometimes changing a vowel sound is as simple as rearranging the vowels that are already in the word. Give them some practice with words from the list below, and then let students try to think of words that fit this pattern or circle them in their reading.
- seal (sale) eat (ate) same (seam) feat (fate) heat (hate)

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**Word Sorts**

* Continue practicing recognizing long vowel spellings.

Choose four long vowel word categories from the Long Vowel Word List (page 78) that you wish to reinforce. Write the four category names in the four blank boxes at the top of the Word Cards reproducible (page 80). Write the selected words in the remaining boxes. Distribute a copy of the customized Word Card reproducible to each student. Have each student work with a partner to cut out the word cards and sort them according to their vowel spellings. When the partners have finished, ask them to read their words aloud. Invite partners to move to another group’s word sort and read those words. Continue until students have read all of the word sorts. Explain that this type of practice (reading the same words over and over again) will help their brains quickly recognize the vowel sounds and result in faster word recognition.
Long Vowel Classification

Select words from the Long Vowel Word List (page 78). Choose words to represent both signal e and two-vowel combination spellings. Write a column of 10 words on the board. Discuss what makes vowels long, and then explain that these words will be easier to read once students’ eyes and brains are trained to automatically see the signal e and the two vowels together. Ask students to read all of the words in 10 seconds as you time them using a stopwatch. Distribute copies of the Long Vowel Classification reproducible (page 81) to students, and then let them decide how to classify the words and write them under the appropriate headings.

Next, students should use red pencils to mark each signal e with an arrow and each two-letter vowel combination with a bracket. They should then quietly read the words independently. When all students are finished, let them try again to read all of the words in 30 seconds. Have them read the words a few more times. Each time, reduce the allotted time by five seconds. Repeat the activity with 10 new words each day of the week.

Add a Vowel

Discuss what makes vowels long. Write the short vowel words cot, fin, pan, set, and tub on the board. Ask students to identify what kind of vowels are in these words (short). Ask students how they would change these short vowel words into long vowel words. Point to the word cot on the board, have students read it, and ask what must happen to make it a long o word. Write the new word, coat, next to the original short vowel word. Have students read and change the remaining words on the board to fine, pain/pane, seat, and tube. Then, distribute a copy of the Add a Vowel reproducible (page 82) to pairs of students. Invite pairs to add the appropriate vowels to the words to make them long vowel words.

Extension: Make a set of flash cards that matches the number of students in the classroom. On each flash card, write either a short vowel word or its matching long vowel word. Distribute the flash cards randomly and let students find their matching pairs. If you have an odd number of students, use a short vowel word, (such as pal) that has two matching long vowel words (pail and pale).
Which Word Doesn’t Belong?

* CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY SMALL WORDS IN LARGER WORDS TO IMPROVE DECODING SKILLS.

Directions

Practice the Little Words in Big activity (page 60) before doing this activity. Two of the words in each row have little words in them that you can see and hear. The third word (in bold type) does not. On the board, write one set of three words from the word list below.

Word List:

1. small forgive they
2. rust one monkey
3. cabbage pillow cover
4. great play smile
5. what dragon folder
6. find peach scat
7. late time explain
8. puppet mushroom hope
9. absent bear skill
10. early needle hiccup
11. never teacher heard
12. saddle once boil
13. paste return slap
14. monster think country
15. microphone drown twig

Ask students to look at the three words on the board and determine which one doesn’t belong because it does not have a little word inside that can be seen and heard. As students discuss the words, mark a blue box around the little words. The word that does not have a little word in it may look like it does. However, when you say the big word, you do not hear the little word. For example, you do not hear eat when you say the word great. Help students understand that they should draw boxes around only little words that they can see and hear. Ask students why they did not select all of the words. Discuss reasons why they may not hear the little word. For example, they do not hear the word car in the word care because the silent e makes the a say its name. Repeat this activity using two or three sets of words at a time.
After students have worked extensively with short and long vowels, give each student a copy of the Vowel Combination Picture Prompts cards (page 84) to cut out. Review the sounds using the examples below. (Store the cards for further use.)

/oo/ (as in foot) = What the muscle man says when he picks up something heavy.
/oi/ /oy/ (as in ahoy) = What you yell when you see a ship.
/ou/ /ow/ (as in mouse) = What you say when you hit your thumb with a hammer.
/ar/ (as in large) = What a pirate says.
/au / /aw/ (as in claw) = What the boy says when he breaks his bat.
/oo/ (as in boo) = What the ghost says.

Explain that most of these vowel sounds are neither long nor short, but all are made with vowel combinations. Say each sound and have students repeat it and hold up the picture that goes with that sound. (Note that the /oo/ sound is often considered a long u sound. Adjust the cards and activity according to the teaching method your phonics program uses for this sound and vowel combination.)

Lightning Flash
* GIVE STUDENTS MORE PRACTICE IN IDENTIFYING VOWEL COMBINATION SOUNDS.

Directions
Continue training students to see a two-letter pattern as one sound. Before the activity, use index cards to prepare flash cards of words from the Vowel Combination Word List (page 85). Write consonants in black and vowel combinations spellings in color. Flip through the flash cards and ask students to look at the vowel pattern and say the vowel sounds. Increase the speed each time you flip through the cards until students’ recognition of the vowel combinations becomes automatic.
**Vowel Combination Response Cards**

* HAVE STUDENTS PRACTICE IDENTIFYING VOWEL COMBINATION SOUNDS.

Review the Vowel Combination Picture Prompts (page 84). Give each student a set of cards to line up in a row. Say each vowel combination sound. Invite students to repeat the sound and hold up the appropriate card. Next, say words instead of just sounds. Tell students to listen to each word, repeat it aloud, and then hold up the vowel combination sound card they hear. Initially, use words from the Vowel Combination Word List (page 85) that begin with a vowel digraph (such as out and oops), and then move on to words in which the vowel digraph is in the middle. If students have trouble hearing the medial sound, remind them to use “hiccups” to emphasize the sound. Have them say the beginning of the word and then exaggerate the vowel combination by saying it three times before finishing the word. For example, say the word pause, then repeat it in exaggerated form, p ... au...au...au...ause.

Remind students that it is important for them to repeat each word after you. Explain that when you say the word, the students hear the word outside their heads. When they repeat the word themselves, they hear the word inside their heads. This makes it easier for them to hear and identify the sound.

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**Find and List**

* CONTINUE HAVING STUDENTS IDENTIFY VOWEL COMBINATION SPELLINGS AND WORDS.

Scan a preselected story for words with vowel digraphs. Cut apart and tape the Vowel Combination Picture Prompts (page 84) to the board. Leave space for words to be written below each card. After introducing the story, have students read it silently. Then ask students to reread and look for vowel digraph words. When a student finds a word with a vowel digraph, ask him or her to come to the board and write it under the appropriate picture. After students finish reading, have them read aloud the lists of words they wrote on the board. Discuss any words that were placed inaccurately and rewrite them under the appropriate pictures.
Short Vowel Picture Prompts

ā

ē

ī

ō

ū
# Short Vowel Word List

## One-Syllable Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short A</th>
<th>Short E</th>
<th>Short I</th>
<th>Short O</th>
<th>Short U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>zip</td>
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# Short Vowel Word List

## Consonant Blends and Digraphs

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<th>Short I</th>
<th>Short O</th>
<th>Short U</th>
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</thead>
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</table>
Vowel-O Game Board

a e i o u

Name: ______________________________
### Word Line Word List

#### Short A

**Ending Sound Manipulation**
- bad
- cat
- gab
- hat
- map

**Beginning Sound Manipulation**
- ham
- cab
- rack
- sad
- rag

#### Short E

**Ending Sound Manipulation**
- bet
- jet
- met
- leg
- pet

**Beginning Sound Manipulation**
- bed
- bet
- pen
- led

#### Short I

**Ending Sound Manipulation**
- bib
- dig
- him
- lid
- pig

**Beginning Sound Manipulation**
- him
- did
- big
- sit
- hip

#### Short O

**Ending Sound Manipulation**
- cob
- dot
- hop
- job
- lot

**Beginning Sound Manipulation**
- cob
- pop
- lot
- cod
- not

#### Short U

**Ending Sound Manipulation**
- bud
- cub
- dug
- gum
- bug

**Beginning Sound Manipulation**
- bud
- sun
- bum
- bug
- nut
**Making and Writing Words**

**Directions:** Use the letters in the top boxes to make new words. Write your new words in the lower boxes.
**Word Swap**

**Directions:**
1. Change the beginning sound of the key word to make three new words. Write the new words in the “Beginning” column.
2. Change the middle sound of the key word to make three new words. Write the new words in the “Middle” column.
3. Change the ending sound of the key word to make three new words. Write the new words in the “Ending” column.

**Key Word:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Ending</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Bonus Words**

**Directions:** Use the last word in each of the three sections above to make new words. This time, change two letters to make each new word, and write the words below.

- Change last two letters.
- Change first two letters.
- Change first and last letters.
Word Hunt

Directions: Draw a blue box around any little word you find in one of the big words. Remember, you have to be able to hear the little word when you say the big word. Read the little word and then the bigger word as you draw each blue box.

- absent
- another
- army
- astonish
- attention
- bandage
- boil
- bonfire
- borrow
- bracelet
- bring
- cabbage
- cancel
- candle
- carton
- cattle
- clean
- cobweb
- cottage
- customer
- deliver
- deserve
- dragon
- draw
- electricity
- escape
- excuse
- explain
- factory
- flour
- folder
- forgive
- freezer
- giant
- hamster
- harmful
- hiccup
- juggle
- late
- layer
- letter
- litter
- magnet
- manage
- message
- microphone
- monkey
- monster
- mushroom
- napkin
- needle
- never
- newt
- passage
- peach
- peppermint
- pillow
- planet
- play
- pretend
- princess
- puppet
- reach
- recent
- repeat
- return
- rust
- saddle
- scar
- scat
- scrap
- season
- skill
- slap
- small
- smile
- spent
- spring
- teacher
- team
- think
- transparent
- twig
- visit
absent (sent)
another (an, other)
army (arm)
astonish (on)
attention (ten)
bandage
  (an, and, ban, band)
boil (oil)
bonfire (on, fire)
borrow (row)
bracelet (brace, race, let)
bring (ring)
cabbage (cab)
cancel (can, an)
candle (can, and)
carton (car, art, ton)
cattle (cat, at)
clean (lean)
cobweb (cob, web)
cottage (cot)
customer (us, custom)
deliver (live, liver)
deserve (serve)
drag (drag, rag, on)
draw (raw)
educate (ed, et, act, ect)
escape (cape, ape)
excuse (use)
explain (plain)

factory (fact, or, act)
flour (our)
folder (fold, old, older)
for give (for, give)
freezer (free, freeze)
giant (ant)
hamster (am, ham, hams)
harmful (harm, arm)
hiccups (cup, up)
juggle (jugg)
late (ate)
layer (lay)
letter (let)
litter (lit, it)
magnet (net)
manage (man, an)
message (mess)
microphone (phone)
monkey (monk, key)
monster (on)
mushroom (mush, room)
napkin (nap, kin)
needle (need)
ever (ever)
new (new)
passage (pass)
peach (pea, each)
peppermint (pepper, mint)

pillow (pill, low)
planet (plan, net)
play (lay)
pretend (ten, tend, end)
princess (prince)
puppet (pup, up, pet)
reach (each)
recent (cent)
repeat (eat)
return (turn)
rust (us)
saddle (ac, sad, add)
scar (car)
scat (cat, at)
scrap (rap)
season (sea, son)
skill (kill, ill)
slap (lap)
small (mall, all)
smile (mile)
spend (pen)
spring (ring)
teacher (tea, each)
team (tea)
think (ink)
transparent (ran, rent, an, spare, parent)
twig (wig)
visit (is, it)
### Long Vowel Word List

#### Long A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long A</th>
<th>Long E</th>
<th>Long I</th>
<th>Long O</th>
<th>Long U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a__e</td>
<td>e__e</td>
<td>i__e</td>
<td>o__e</td>
<td>u__e</td>
</tr>
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<td>brave</td>
<td>Pete</td>
<td>drive</td>
<td>globe</td>
<td>cube</td>
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<td>cake</td>
<td>here</td>
<td>hike</td>
<td>hope</td>
<td>cute</td>
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<td>Steve</td>
<td>nine</td>
<td>robe</td>
<td>fuse</td>
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<tr>
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<td>twine</td>
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#### Long I

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#### Long O

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<td>party</td>
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<td>shiny</td>
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</table>
What Makes Long Vowels Long?

Directions: Make tally marks in the appropriate boxes to indicate whether each word has a signal e or a “2-fer” spelling. Write the words on lines next to the tally boxes.

-e

I do the talking.
## Word Cards

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Long Vowel Classification

Day #1

Day #2

Day #3

Day #4

Day #5
Add a Vowel

Directions: Read each short vowel word. Add the appropriate vowel to each word to change the short vowel into a long vowel. The first one is done for you.

1. ad __________ aid
2. at ______________
3. am ______________
4. bat ______________
5. bed ______________
6. Ben ______________
7. bet ______________
8. bit ______________
9. bled ______________
10. blot ______________
11. brad ______________
12. bran ______________
13. can ______________
14. cap ______________
15. clam ______________
16. con ______________
17. cub ______________
18. cut ______________
19. did ______________
20. din ______________
21. fad ______________
22. fat ______________
23. fed ______________
24. gap ______________
25. got ______________
26. hat ______________
27. hop ______________
28. hug ______________
29. kit ______________
30. lad ______________
31. led ______________
32. lest ______________
33. lop ______________
34. mad ______________
35. man ______________
36. mat ______________
37. men ______________
38. met ______________
39. mop ______________
40. net ______________
41. not ______________
42. pad ______________
43. pal ______________
44. past ______________
45. pep ______________
46. pet ______________
47. pin ______________
48. plan ______________
49. plum ______________
50. quit ______________
51. ran ______________
52. rat ______________
53. red ______________
54. rid ______________
55. rip ______________
56. rod ______________
57. rot ______________
58. run ______________
59. slat ______________
60. slid ______________
61. slop ______________
62. sop ______________
63. spin ______________
64. spit ______________
Add a Vowel

Answer Key

1. ad ade, aid
2. at ate
3. am aim
4. bat bait, beat, boat
5. bed bead
6. Ben bean
7. bet beat, beet
8. bit bite
9. bled bleed
10. blot bloat
11. brad braid
12. bran brain
13. can cane
14. cap cape
15. clam claim
16. con cone
17. cub cube
18. cut cute
19. did died
20. din dine
21. fad fade
22. fat fate
23. fed feed
24. gap gape
25. got goat
26. hat hate
27. hop hope
28. hug huge
29. kit kite
30. lad laid, lady
31. led lead
32. lest least
33. lop lope
34. mad maid, made
35. man main, mane
36. mat mate
37. men mean
38. met meat, meet
39. mop mope
40. net neat
41. not note
42. pad paid
43. pal pale, pail
44. past paste
45. pep peep
46. pet Pete
47. pin pine
48. plan plane, plain
49. plum plume
50. quit quite
51. ran rain
52. rat rate
53. red read
54. rid ride
55. rip ripe
56. rod road
57. rot rote
58. run ruin
59. slat slate
60. slid slide
61. slop slope
62. sop soap
63. spin spine
64. spit spite
Vowel Combination Picture Prompts

oo

oi__  _oy

ou__  _ow

ar

au___  _aw

oo
### Vowel Combination Word List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/oo/ as in school</th>
<th>/oo/ as in good</th>
<th>/oi/ and /oy/ as in toy</th>
<th>/ar/ as in car</th>
<th>/ow/ and /ou/ as in hour</th>
<th>/au/ and /aw/ as in awful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brood ooops root spool</td>
<td>foot look stood</td>
<td>boil coin joy soil</td>
<td>ark bark chart shark</td>
<td>bounce loud out south</td>
<td>autumn crawl haunt paw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goof pool shoot tool</td>
<td>good shook wood</td>
<td>boy join oil toy</td>
<td>arm cart large star</td>
<td>cloud mouth pound</td>
<td>awful flaunt launch</td>
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<tr>
<td>mood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>art charge scar yard</td>
<td>couch ouch sound</td>
<td>caught flaw lawn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Readers need to know the meanings of words in order to understand text. Students learn most of their vocabulary indirectly—by hearing words repeated in different contexts—but direct instruction is still important because students need to develop word-learning strategies that include using context, visualizing, and using word associations and reference skills. All of these strategies help students activate prior knowledge, build word relationships, and connect with the text. Wide reading is another significant contributor to vocabulary development. However, students who need the most reading practice generally spend the least amount of time actually reading. Giving students sufficient time to read will help increase their exposure to and practice with words.

**Prerequisite Skills in Vocabulary**

In order to construct meaning from text, struggling readers need to do the following:

- Demonstrate word awareness: the desire to know words and gain satisfaction from making them part of spoken and written vocabulary.
- Use alternative (unknown) words to construct meaning.
- Be able to attach a new concept to an existing one (prior knowledge).
- Use the context surrounding an unknown word to discover its meaning.
- Be cognitively aware of using words to form relationships and connections.
- Link verbal and visual images to store new vocabulary in long-term memory.

**Recommendations**

To develop a rich vocabulary, students need literacy experiences that integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Direct instruction usually involves discussion prior to reading. This instruction should involve CPR—using context, activating prior knowledge, and reinforcing new words in many meaningful ways. Generally, only five to seven vocabulary words should be highlighted for a specific story. These should be words that are central to understanding the topic, and they should be difficult but useful words that the students will meet again in text.
**Spider Map**

* HELP STUDENTS MAKE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO NEW VOCABULARY.

Select a word from students’ guided reading or another current vocabulary list. This word should be easy to define and describe. Distribute the Spider Map reproducible (page 97) to each student. Explain that the brain remembers new information better when it is connected to prior knowledge—something they already know. The Spider Map will help students make connections to the new word and develop personal meanings for it. Direct students to write the new word on the spider’s head, a one- or two-word definition on the body, four descriptive words on the right legs, and four examples of the word on the left legs. Collaboratively complete a Spider Map for the pre-selected vocabulary word before students complete one on their own.

**Extension:** When reading a new story as a class, let each student choose a significant story word and complete a spider map for it. Tell students not to write the words on the spiders’ heads. Have students trade papers and see if they can guess each other’s words.

---

**Connect Four**

* GIVE STUDENTS PRACTICE IN APPLYING NEW VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT.

Preselect vocabulary words from students’ reading material. Tackle one word at a time. Using the following formats, invite students to write four sentences using a new vocabulary word. In sentence #1, students should use the word appropriately in context. In sentence #2, students should describe the characteristics or attributes of the word. In sentence #3, students should write a definition for the vocabulary word. In sentence #4, students should relate the new word to their lives. For example, if using aroma as the preselected vocabulary word, a student may write Pumpkin pie has a delicious aroma, An aroma can be pleasant or bad, An aroma is an odor, and The aroma of pumpkin pie reminds me of Thanksgiving.
Relationship Box
* LET STUDENTS HELP EACH OTHER UNDERSTAND, CONNECT WITH, AND REVIEW NEW VOCABULARY WORDS.

Select 10 words from assigned reading that are critical to understanding the text. List those words on the board along with the page numbers where they appear. Give each student a copy of the Relationship Box reproducible (page 98). Ask each student to choose three or four words from the list, read each passage that contains a word he or she selected, then complete a three-section relationship box for each word. To complete a box, students should write a chosen word in the first section, draw a picture of the word’s meaning in the second section, and write a synonym for the word in the last section. When students have finished, call on a volunteer to share a relationship box for each word on the list.

Start and Stop
* TEACH STUDENTS TO PREVIEW TEXT AND VOCABULARY FOR UNDERSTANDING BY MODELING READING.

Preview a text selection and mark focus words that need extra attention. Teach students the start-and-stop reading technique. As you model reading the story, stop before reaching one of the preselected words and have students read that word.

Extension: When students are reading independently, consider letting a student choose several focus words—words he or she finds difficult or important. Do a start-and-stop reading with the class using this student’s words as the focus words.
Synonym Stairs

* HELP STUDENTS EXPAND THEIR REPERTOIRE OF WORD MEANINGS FOR CHOSEN WORDS.

Make a list of words that are easily definable and have numerous synonyms. (Guided reading vocabulary often works well.) Write these words on the board.

Divide students into teams. Give each team a vocabulary word and a copy of the Synonym Stairs reproducible (page 99). Have each team brainstorm lists of synonyms for the word and write each word on a stair step. Have students share completed synonym stairs.

Extension: Make this activity kinesthetic. On a piece of sentence strip, write a word for which there are many synonyms. Conceal the word from students. Give each student an index card and a marker, and then take the class to a flight of stairs. Reveal the word and let students write synonyms on their index cards. As each student finishes writing, have him or her choose a stair step to stand on and share the synonym with the class. If several students choose the same synonym, let them stand on consecutive steps, or one behind the other on the same step if there is room. Back in the classroom, post the original word and synonyms in a stair-step pattern on a bulletin board.

Frame It

* TEACH STUDENTS TO VISUALIZE WORDS IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

Write a list of vocabulary words on the board. Give each student markers or crayons. Invite each student or pair of students to select one word from the list.

Distribute a copy of the Word Frame reproducible (page 100) to each student or pair and model how to complete the page.

1. In the large box in the middle of the page, draw a picture of the selected word.
2. In the top right section, write the word.
3. In the top left section, write a short definition of the word.
4. In the bottom left section, write a synonym for the word.
5. In the bottom right section, write an antonym for the word.

Let students use colored markers or crayons to write their words, draw pictures, and decorate the frames. After students have completed their frames, have them share them with the rest of the class. Display the frames in the classroom.
Classify It

* TEACH STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND WORD FUNCTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS.

Write a list of related words on the board. Draw a few columns next to the list. At the top of each column, draw a question mark. Begin by having students read aloud the list of words. Explain that they should decide on categories and then sort the words into the categories. Students may choose categories related to word meanings, words with similar structure (such as words that end in -ed), words with double letters, or big words that have little words in them. (See example.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of a Thing</th>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Words with Double Letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wrinkled</td>
<td>furious</td>
<td>deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deep</td>
<td>worried</td>
<td>worried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flat</td>
<td>relieved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assign students to groups, provide markers and chart paper, and have groups begin listing the categories on the chart paper and assigning words to them. (Students should write each separate category and list in a different color.) When the categorizing is complete, have one group’s volunteer read one set of grouped words without stating the category. Have other teams guess what category the group chose. Allow other groups to share different word groupings.

Criss-Cross Sentences

* GIVE STUDENTS MORE PRACTICE WITH USING CONTEXT CLUES TO FIND WORD MEANINGS.

After reading a story as a class, make two lists of words. In the first list, write story words that were difficult for students. In the second list, in random order, write related words or synonyms for words in the first list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List 1</th>
<th>List 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>furious</td>
<td>upset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worried</td>
<td>looked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glanced</td>
<td>angry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask students to read the two lists and discuss words that might go together. Have students write sentences using the words. Each sentence must contain a word from the first column and its matching word from the second column. Invite volunteers to read their sentences.
See It, Say It

* TRAIN STUDENTS TO COMBINE PHONETIC OR GRAPHIC CLUES WITH PRIOR KNOWLEDGE TO DISCOVER WORD MEANINGS.

This activity is a spin-off of the hangman game. Select **six story words** that were interesting or important to the meaning of a recent reading assignment. After students have completed the reading, have them number sheets of paper from one to six as you do the same on the board. Next to the number one, draw blanks for each letter in the first word from your list. Have students do the same thing on their papers. Tell students that they will be trying to guess the story word by looking at the letters and thinking about what happened in the story. Write the first letter on the first blank, pause, and then write the second letter. Keep adding letters until the word is correctly identified. Discuss what strategies students used to determine the word. Have students write that word in the appropriate blank on their papers. Continue with the remaining words.

Use It or Lose It

* EXPAND STUDENTS’ VOCABULARIES AND GIVE THEM OPPORTUNITIES TO USE NEW WORDS IN CONTEXT.

After discussing new **vocabulary words** from a story, choose three or four of the most challenging words. Discuss the meanings of the words and write them on the board. Explain that using new words in conversation will help students remember them. Challenge students to correctly use each vocabulary word three different times throughout the day. Make a game of it by keeping a tally of the number of times each word is used.
What’s Missing?

* DEMONSTRATE USING CONTEXT CLUES TO IDENTIFY UNFAMILIAR (OR MISSING) WORDS.

Write a simple passage that relates to a story topic. Replace some of the key words with blanks and make a transparency of the story passage. Or make an **overhead transparency** of the passage below.

Long ________, the Emperor welcomed _________ Mulan to the High Palace. First, a soldier ________ a huge drum. Then the Emperor _________ a speech about how ________ gave up everything and _________ the army. He won _________ because he was so ________ and skilled. Now the ________ is safe from the _________.

Introduce the concept of using context clues to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Read the transparency passage aloud as a class, skipping the blanks. As students read each sentence, pause to ask comprehension questions about its meaning. When students finish reading the passage, ask how they were able to understand the overall meaning of the passage and answer the questions, even though some of the key words are missing. If students have trouble putting the concept into words, explain that sometimes they can use what they know from the surrounding words to understand what the missing words could be.

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Poppers

* TEACH STUDENTS TO COMBINE AUDITORY AND CONTEXT CLUES TO IDENTIFY UNFAMILIAR WORDS.

**Directions**

Preview a **text selection**. Prepare it by deleting key words, leaving only the beginning letter for each word. Read the passage to students. When you come to a deleted word, say the beginning sound and stop. For example, read, *Hearing the ring, he quickly answered the ph___________.* Students will readily supply the correct word. Ask how they knew the word if they couldn’t see it. Tell students that sometimes, if they just say the beginning sound of the unknown word, the word might just “pop” out. Continue reading the sentences aloud with students, helping them use “poppers” to identify the missing words.
Give It Meaning
* DEMONSTRATE HOW TO USE SENTENCE CONTEXT CLUES TO UNDERSTAND MEANING.

Copy or write a paragraph that describes a story plot that students are reading, or use the sample: Mona lost her hat again. She looked in the Lunt and Found box. She only saw lost jackets and thists. She kept biming for it but could not find it. Finally, at the bottom of the jix she found her hon. Write each sentence on a separate sentence strip. Place the sentence strips, in order, in a pocket chart. Next, write a few nonsense words on index cards. Place each nonsense words over a key word in the paragraph.

Extension: Repeat this activity 18–24 hours later with a different text. Let students write the nonsense words on index cards and use their cards for this activity.

The Missing Link
* USE CLUES TO DETERMINE THE MEANING OF UNKNOWN ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS.

Write several sentences that contain context clues on the board, such as: The gigantic bear was as large as a house. In each sentence, underline a key word that is defined in the next part of the sentence. Have students read the first sentence. Explain that sentences often contain clue words or “missing links” that can help them define unfamiliar words. Point to the underlined word and ask students to find the clue word in the sentence that helps them understand the word’s meaning. Underline the clue word, and draw a line to link the two words together. Discuss the importance of using context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words. Invite students to underline and connect the word pairs in the rest of the sentences you have prepared.
Scavenger Hunt

* TEACH STUDENTS HOW TO USE WORD STRUCTURE CLUES TO DECODE WORDS.

On the board, write a list of nonsense words that contain real smaller words within them, such as sment, frun, finst, and zand. Ask students to read the nonsense words. Explain that they are not real words. As students begin to read the words, ask if there are any clues to the nonsense words. If students hesitate, point to one of the words and ask them if they see anything familiar. Explain that sometimes, there might be a little word inside a bigger word. Draw a box around each little word inside a nonsense word. Ask students if it is now easier for them to read the words. Have them read the words together, saying the little word first and then the bigger word.

Give each student a copy of the Scavenger Hunt reproducible (page 101). Explain that some of the words are nonsense words and a few are real words. Ask students to go on a little word scavenger hunt and draw a box around each little word they find inside a bigger word. When they are finished, have students read the list of words, saying the little word and then the big word.

Extension: Create a set of classroom labels from index cards. Include some nonsense words among the real words. Make sure that in each big word, a little word can be found. Attach the labels to their objects and have students go on a scavenger hunt to bring you all of the nonsense words. Collect all of the real words, post them in a pocket chart, and have students take turns circling the little words in the big words. Possible real words to use as labels include chalkboard (chalk, board), door (or), window (win, wind), teacher (each), bulletin board (bull, tin, oar), floor (or), notebook (note, book), textbook (text, book), hallway (hall, way), globe (lobe), and pencil (pen).
**Guess My Word**  
*HELP STUDENTS USE LETTER PATTERNS IN VOCABULARY WORDS TO REINFORCE WORD RECOGNITION.*

Choose **vocabulary words** from a recent story. Write each word on a separate **index card**. Fold the cards in half and place them in a **paper bag**. Ask a student to select a card from the bag and give it to you without looking at it. Write the middle letter of the word on the board and add blanks on either side for the remaining letters. Return the word card to the student who selected it. Ask the remaining students to guess the word. Have the student with the word card add another letter to the left or right of the middle letter that was already written on the board. With each incorrect guess, the student should add another letter, moving outward from the center. The first student to guess the word and give the meaning gets to choose the next word card.

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**Letter Snatcher**  
*TEACH STUDENTS TO COMBINE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, LETTER PATTERNS, AND CONTEXT CLUES TO IDENTIFY WORDS.*

On a **transparency**, write text from a student **reading selection**, or use the one below. Delete the vowels or beginning sounds. Make a copy of the following Letter Snatcher passage for each student.

Dr__gons  have sk__n much __ike  snak__s, li__ards,  and other r__ptiles. Since they ar__ __old-blo__ded, d__agons l__ke  to  liv__ in __arm  sp__ts.

Distribute the Letter Snatcher page to students. Explain that letters have been “snatched” from some of the words in the passage. Have students read the text as it appears. Tell students that the story context will help them fill in the gaps. Guide students to say the sounds, look at letter patterns, and search for context clues. Add the missing letters on the transparency as students add the letters on their papers. Read the completed passage and discuss how students were able to read the words.
Mystery Words

* GIVE STUDENTS OPPORTUNITIES TO USE CLUES TO IDENTIFY WORDS.

Directions

Select **vocabulary words** from text. Make a list of clues to help students identify the words. The clues can refer to the meaning of the word, the phonetic structure, the letters, or a phonemic awareness characteristic (rhyming word or number of syllables). Some examples are:

- Find a word that has the /ou/ sound.
- Find a word that means *to do over and over*.
- Find a word with double letters.
- Find a word that rhymes with *station*.
- Find a word that has both short /i/ and long /i/.

Invite students to open their books to the text selection. Give clues to help them find the mystery words in the story, and have students write the answers on sheets of paper. When students have found the words, have them read the passage aloud independently. Discuss the passage and the words afterward, asking students if they feel like they understand the passage better since they were introduced to parts of it before reading.

**Extension:** Pair students and assign a new passage to the class. Instruct the pairs to think of new clues for words that they think are important. Allow the pairs to swap sets of clues and find the answers within the story. Ask students which words they think they know better: the ones they found or the ones for which they wrote the clues.
**Spider Map**

**Directions:** Write a new word on the spider’s head. Write a one- or two-word definition for that key word on the spider’s body. Write a describing word for the key word on each of the right legs. Write an example of the key word on each of the left legs.
Relationship Box

**Directions:** Write a key word in the first box. Draw a picture of the key word’s meaning in the second box. Write a synonym for the key word in the third box.
Synonym Stairs

Directions:
Write a key word on the bottom step. Write a synonym (word that means the same) for the key word on each of the other steps.

How many steps can you climb?

Vocabulary

Key word

Synonym Stairs
Word Frame

Directions: Draw a picture of a key word in the middle of the frame. Write the key word in the top right section. Write a definition for the key word in the top left section. Write a synonym for the key word in the bottom left section. Write an antonym for the key word in the bottom right section.
**Scavenger Hunt**

**Directions:** Draw a box around each little word you find inside a bigger word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>flill</th>
<th>ponud</th>
<th>grat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>thin</td>
<td>stin</td>
<td>horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leat</td>
<td>mall</td>
<td>onstoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>busp</td>
<td>ballo</td>
<td>fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thisk</td>
<td>smust</td>
<td>tent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sled</td>
<td>wins</td>
<td>zill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stwig</td>
<td>boxes</td>
<td>menz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clap</td>
<td>inth</td>
<td>slif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fast</td>
<td>pout</td>
<td>fint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thand</td>
<td>upset</td>
<td>jand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cold</td>
<td>larm</td>
<td>stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plip</td>
<td>twin</td>
<td>ufog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scavenger Hunt
Answer Key

flill (ill)  ponud (on)  grat (rat, at)
thin (in)  stin (tin, in)  chorn (or, horn)
leat (eat)  mall (all)  onstoo (on, to, too)
busp (us, bus)  ballo (ball, all)  fit (it)
thisk (this, his, is)  smust (must, us)  tent (ten)
sled (led)  wins (win, in)  zill (ill)
stwig (twig, wig)  boxes (ox, box)  menz (men)
clap (lap) inth (in)  slif (if)
fast (as)  pout (out)  fint (in, fin)
thand (and, hand, than, an)  upset (up, set)  jand (and, an)
cold (old)  larm (arm)  stop (top)
plip (lip)  twin (win, in)  ufog (fog)
Fluency bridges the gap between word recognition and comprehension. Children who lack fluency read aloud slowly and laboriously, making it difficult for them to remember what they read and to connect or relate to the text. Since most of their cognitive energy is directed toward print processing, little attention is left for comprehension. Having good fluency also means using skillful phrasing, intonation, pitch, and expression when reading aloud. Struggling readers look at each word independently rather than chunking words into phrases. Additionally, these readers are not automatic in word recognition and phrasing, which makes it impossible for them to read aloud with ease.

Students need specific fluency instruction and frequent reading practice with texts at their independent reading levels. Assisted and repeated oral readings of the same text provide systematic and explicit guidance and feedback to students. Independent, silent reading fosters both fluency and vocabulary development. Short, intense daily practice that extends over weeks and months, with students rereading passages until they attain high accuracy, can also develop fluency. The automatic word recognition skills gained with practice positively impacts comprehension.

**Prerequisite Skills in Fluency**

In order to read fluently and with expression, struggling readers need to do the following:

- Understand and identify noun, verb, and prepositional phrases.
- “Chunk” text into grammatically meaningful phrases.
- Recognize that punctuation marks require a pause in reading.
- Convey text mood and meaning through appropriate expression and tone.
- Make a conversational connection in their reading.
- Recognize words automatically so that energy can be directed to comprehension.

**Recommendations**

Repeated readings of all kinds, especially of poetry, help students learn to read with expression, develop the skill of chunking text into meaningful phrases, and orally interpret the text. The rhythm and rhyme in poetry also help students make their reading sound more like conversation. Finally, using music with lyrics for fluency practice also supports brain-based learning.
Echo Reading

* ALLOW STUDENTS TO ECHO MODELED READING TO IMPROVE CADENCE AND EXPRESSION.

Choose a few sentences from a text selection to read aloud. Practice beforehand to ensure that you will read them fluently. Read the first sentence and model appropriate expression, intonation, and phrasing. Invite students to echo the reading, making it sound exactly like your reading. After modeling a few sentences, ask students what you did with your voice as you were reading. If necessary, prompt students with questions like Did my voice go up or down in spots? Did I read faster in some places? Did I put more emphasis on some words? Did I sound happy, sad, excited, or scared? Repeat with other sentences.

Extension: For visual reinforcement, write a sentence on the board and read it aloud. Have students tell you what you did with your voice as you read. Mark the sentence accordingly. Use colored chalk or marker to draw arrows to indicate voice inflection, underline words that you emphasized, draw lines to link words that you chunked together, and draw faces to show expression.

Collaborative Reading

* PREVIEW STORY VOCABULARY TO INCREASE FLUENCY.

Choose a new text selection that will be effective when combined with a picture walk. As you conduct the picture walk, discuss the pictures using challenging or new vocabulary words from the text. Next, read the story aloud. (If the story is long, divide it into segments.) Invite students to join in when they are comfortable. After the picture walk, have students reread silently. Group students who need more support and read the story with them.

Directions

In this activity and its extension, students will combine visual and auditory learning.

Previewsing and discussing illustrations before reading helps students attach meaning to words and make connections.
Every Other Story
* HAVE STUDENTS FOCUS ON EXPRESSION AND PHRASING WHILE READING ALOUD.

Before the activity, choose a text selection that is at students’ independent reading level and that is especially effective when read with good expression and phrasing. Introduce the selection by drawing colored lines that represent writing on the board. Make the first line one color and place a period at the end. Use a different color to make the second line and place a period at the end. Continue making alternating colored lines using the same two colors. Ask students to tell you something about these lines. Students should identify the two colors, recognize the periods, and identify the alternating color pattern. Explain that students will recognize this pattern in the activity.

Next, distribute copies of the text selection or write it on the board. Read the first sentence. When you stop, let students read the second sentence. Continue with students reading every other line. Note that students will attempt to match your reading rate. They will also be exposed to context clues in the sentences that you read, which will help them recognize words that appear in their sentences.

Speeding Ticket
* HAVE STUDENTS READ TEXT MULTIPLE TIMES TO IMPROVE FLUENCY.

Text should be read one time to gain understanding (comprehension) and a second time for speed (fluency). Remind students that the more they practice, the better they will become at reading smoothly and with expression and speed. Give each student an index card. Have students write the word speed on their cards, making the letters look as if they are going fast. Have students tape these cards to the edges of their desks and then flip over the cards on their desktops to hide the word speed. Invite students to read a text selection one time for comprehension. As students finish this first reading, have them flip down their cards to show the word speed, and then read the text a second time for fluency and speed.
**Partner Reading**

*HAVE STUDENTS READ TEXT MULTIPLE TIMES TO IMPROVE FLUENCY.*

Designate a spot in the classroom for several “partner reading” books. To qualify for partner reading, books should be at students’ independent reading levels. Explain that when students read a book more than once, they make fewer mistakes, increase their reading speed, and read with more expression. Designate one or two days per week for partner reading. Before the first partner reading day of each week, ask each student to choose a reading passage from a partner reading book and complete a practice reading. Then let students read their selections three times to three different partners. After each reading, have the listening partner complete the Partner Reading Checklist (page 112) to indicate how the reading partner did. After the third reading, have each student note progress by reviewing the checklists filled out by classmates.

**Reading Workout**

* CONTINUE HAVING STUDENTS READ THE TEXT MULTIPLE TIMES TO IMPROVE FLUENCY.

In a quiet corner of the classroom, provide reading passages at students’ independent reading levels along with cassette tapes and a tape recorder. Explain that when athletes want to build muscles and improve strength, they must exercise those muscles by repeatedly lifting weights. When runners want to improve their speed, they must run repeatedly and time themselves so that they can determine if their speed is improving. If readers want to get stronger and read faster, they have to work out to build their “reading muscles.” Have students choose text selections and read them once for comprehension. Then have students tape-record their second readings of the passages. Invite students to listen to their readings and make notations on copies of the Reading Workout Record (page 112). They should listen for whether they are recognizing words faster, using expression, or grouping words together. Invite students to record themselves again as they read a third time. During this reading, they should strive to improve in the areas highlighted in their notes. As students listen to the taped readings, invite them to review their Reading Workout Records to note improvements.
Reader’s Theater
* HAVE STUDENTS READ A SCRIPT MULTIPLE TIMES TO IMPROVE FLUENCY.

Develop a Reader’s Theater script from a narrative text selection students are reading. To accommodate lower-level readers, substitute easier text and vocabulary as needed. Commercial Reader’s Theater scripts are available, but using students’ own reading material helps reinforce the vocabulary in and comprehension of text students will be reading independently. Distribute a script to each student. Read it together and discuss the characters, setting, and plot. Have students practice reading the script and then decide as a group who will play each part. Explain that there are a limited number of parts. Students who are not assigned a part will be audience members and will get first choice for parts in the next Reader’s Theater activity. (If you want all students to read, create narrator roles that can be read by a group.) Give students additional practice time, and then have them perform the Reader’s Theater for the audience.

Extension: Consider inviting parents or a younger class to the reading.

Go-Togethers
* HAVE STUDENTS FOCUS SPECIFICALLY ON PHRASING AND PACING.

Copy some of the phrases from the Go-Togethers reproducible (page 113) on sentence strips and place them in a pocket chart. Show students the phrases and explain that phrases are words that go together. Have students read the first phrase aloud and then count the number of words. Tell students that these words go together and can be read together as one. Demonstrate by reading the words separately and then as a phrase (all in one breath), showing that reading in phrases will increase reading speed.

Extension: Invite students to practice phrases from their reading material. Write each sentence on a sentence strip. Write the highlighted phrase in color and the rest of the text in black. Draw a curved line under the colored words to show that they are to be read together. Choose a sentence to read word by word, with a slight pause between each word. Reread the sentence and link appropriate words together. Ask students to compare the two readings and decide what was different. Explain that grouping words into phrases increases reading speed and makes the reading sound more like natural conversation.
**Reading Aerobics**

* HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUATION IN COMPREHENDING TEXT AND READING IT FLUENTLY.

Choose a passage from students’ reading, copy it, and redistribute the punctuation. It should look something like this: *I’ll never learn* wailed. *The teeny tiny ghost* I’m so. *Timid* I scare myself and a teeny tiny tear. *Slid down his cheek* his teeny tiny cats. *Climbed on his lap* licked. *His teeny tiny face* purred their teeny tiny purrs.

Begin the activity by reading the **text selection** with the new punctuation. Ask students if the passage made sense. Ask them why not, since it is a selection from their reading material. Help students understand that punctuation helps keep ideas together and makes it easier to read text correctly. Explain that the brain needs punctuation because text is usually printed in lines, and the sentences don’t always end at the end of a line, so it is easy to misplace punctuation. Every time there is a pause or a stop, the brain gets a chance to think about what it has read (or **recode**) and can use that information to make sense of what will be read next. If the reader doesn’t pause, or pauses at the wrong place, the brain cannot make sense of what was read.

Let students take their books to an open space, such as the playground. Have them form one long line facing the open space. Ask students to walk as they read aloud together. When they come to a period or question mark, they should stop. When they come to a comma, semicolon, or dash, they should pause by holding up one foot, waiting a second, and then taking their next step.

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**Laser Reading**

* HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND HOW GROUPING WORDS INTO PHRASES INCREASES READING SPEED.

Remind students that reading words in phrases increases reading speed. Demonstrate how to read along with a laser light. Show a transparency of a text selection students are reading. As students read aloud, shine the light on the words, moving it along at a consistent, steady pace. After the reading, tell students to reread the passage. Move the light faster this time and encourage students to keep up with it. Congratulate students for pushing themselves to improve their pacing and reading speed.
Eye Counting

* TEACH STUDENTS TO USE SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO REDUCE CHOPPY READING CADENCE.

Since many struggling readers have developed the habit of choppy, word-by-word reading, they need help learning how to see more words as they read. Explain that the eye’s visual span is very important in reading. The eye’s visual span determines how many symbols the eye can take in at one time. For beginning readers, the visual unit is letter by letter. As students read more, their visual span increases and the eye can take in whole words. When students read a passage for the first time, their visual unit is smaller. As they reread and the words become more familiar, their visual spans increase and they read faster. Explain that fluent readers’ eyes are ahead of their voices, and they can read faster because their brains already know what is coming in the rest of the sentence.

Prepare a transparency of several sentences that gradually increase in word count. Place the transparency on the overhead projector and cover the sentences. Tell students to look at the first sentence and count the words. Then reveal only the first sentence for just one second each. Ask students to write down how many words they counted. Display each remaining sentence one at a time for just one second each. Invite students to write the number of words they count in each sentence. Repeat the activity over several days with different sentences. Since the activity is designed simply to help students expand their eye span and to discourage word-by-word reading, there is no need to correct responses, but do ask whether students notice the number of words they count increasing over time.

Watch Your Tone

* GIVE MORE PRACTICE IN READING WITH EXPRESSION.

Write a question, such as What are you doing? on four sentence strips. On each sentence strip, emphasize a different word by writing it in a different color and using heavy strokes. For example, write WHAT are you doing? What ARE you doing? What are YOU doing? and What are you DOING? Place the sentence strips face down in a pocket chart. Discuss how emphasizing different words can change the meaning of a sentence. Reveal the first sentence strip, and invite students to read the question, emphasizing the highlighted word. Discuss how their tone of voice affected the question. Continue revealing the sentence strips one at a time, and discuss how emphasizing different words affects the overall message of the sentences.
Imperative sentences demand that an action be performed. They are the perfect type of sentence to use for practicing reading with expression. Write several imperative sentences on separate sentence strips. Create your own or use the following examples: Give that to me now. Turn off the light. Take the groceries upstairs. Watch out for cars! (Or use humorous ones, such as Jump out of the plane, now! Stop eating the dog food! Don’t give the monkey a hair cut! Place a prepared sentence strip in a pocket chart and read it in a faint, monotone voice.

Read it again using proper intonation and expression. Ask students which version had more meaning. Explain that when reading, students should read like they talk, using emphasis to show what they mean. Continue reading all of the imperative sentences without expression and inviting students to reread them correctly.

Extension: Play a form of Simon Says. Throughout the school day as you tell students to do things, use either the faint, monotone voice or a more expressive, commanding voice. Explain that students should not perform the command unless you use an expressive voice. When you use a monotone voice, let a student reissue the command with appropriate tone and expression.
Helpful Hints

* DEMONSTRATE USING TEXT CLUES TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATE EXPRESSION AND TONE.

Select sentences from a text selection, or compose your own that contain clues to the way they should be read, such as The shy little girl said, “I don’t want to go to the House of Monkeys.” He smacked his lips and asked his grandmother, “Can I have more chocolate-strawberry milk?” He yelled, “Run! Run away from the giant bugs!”

Write the preselected sentences on a transparency. Explain that students must be on the lookout for clues that will help them understand how to read text. Certain words offer clues about pacing, expression, and tone. Display only the first sentence on the transparency, and ask students to identify clues that indicate how to read the sentence. For example, how would a shy little girl who doesn’t want to go somewhere sound? Circle the clue words. Invite students to read the sentence using the appropriate expression or emotion, and then read and discuss the remaining sentences.

Extension: Let students compose their own sample sentences for the class to use during a subsequent practice session.

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Word Race

* BUILD STUDENTS' AUTOMATICITY TO INCREASE FLUENCY.

Remind students that by reading the same text repeatedly, they will build their reading speed. Reading becomes more automatic when students immediately recognize words and don’t have to decode them. Distribute a copy of the Long /A/ Word Race reproducible (page 114) to each student. Tell students to practice reading the words as quickly as possible, moving from one column to the next. Show students how to count the words they read using the totals at the bottom of each column. When students are ready, set a timer for one minute and tell students to read as many words as they can until the timer rings. When the timer rings, have students underline the last word they read, count how many words they read, and write their word count totals at the bottom of their pages next to the label First Reading. Let students do second and third readings over the next few days with no more that 24 hours between readings. After the third reading, discuss the results and ask why students think the number of words they read increased.

Extension: Create additional word race lists using words that focus on a single phonetic element students are studying. Place the words in five columns of 20 words each.
Partner Reading Checklist

Reader__________________________________________________________

Book Title____________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Reading</th>
<th>2nd Reading</th>
<th>3rd Reading</th>
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<td>Listener</td>
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<td>Fluency</td>
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Scores:  + = Great!  / = OK  – = Needs practice

Reading Workout Record

Name____________________________________________________________Date __________________________

Story _____________________________________________________________________________________

First Taping: Put a – next to the sentences that describe your reading.

I had trouble with some words. _____
I couldn’t figure out some words. _____
My reading was too slow. _____
I paused between words and sounded choppy. _____
I read too fast and couldn’t understand the words. _____
I sounded boring and my voice was flat. _____

Second Taping: Make a + out of every – in the areas where you improved.

My reading was better because __________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
### Two-Word Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am</th>
<th>I could</th>
<th>I had</th>
<th>with her</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>it was</td>
<td>on the</td>
<td>in my</td>
<td>they went</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can</td>
<td>I will</td>
<td>he said</td>
<td>she said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the</td>
<td>by the</td>
<td>at the</td>
<td>over there</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Three-Word Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I will go</th>
<th>you and me</th>
<th>but they are</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>we went to</td>
<td>I knew that</td>
<td>in your dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this is my</td>
<td>by my side</td>
<td>in front of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all day long</td>
<td>in the car</td>
<td>list of words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he did not</td>
<td>when it's time</td>
<td>it was fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a</td>
<td>now I know</td>
<td>in between the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you will see</td>
<td>not this time</td>
<td>add the numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>here it is</td>
<td>I can't go</td>
<td>circle the word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we like to</td>
<td>with my friend</td>
<td>write your name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes I will</td>
<td>look at this</td>
<td>list the words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not that way</td>
<td>that was in</td>
<td>identify the one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to</td>
<td>it is about</td>
<td>more or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>it is that</td>
<td>come over here</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think that</td>
<td>in order to</td>
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<tr>
<td>she said that</td>
<td>to find out</td>
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# Long /A/ Word Race

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<td>grace</td>
<td>pail</td>
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<td>grape</td>
<td>pave</td>
<td>shade</td>
<td>wave</td>
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20  40  60  80  100

First Reading  ______ words  ______ date
Second Reading  ______ words  ______ date
Third Reading  ______ words  ______ date
Comprehension—constructing meaning from print—is the ultimate goal of reading. The most basic type of comprehension is explicit comprehension, where meaning is direct, clear, and unambiguous. A more sophisticated form, implicit comprehension, requires the reader to think beyond what the text explicitly says to make inferences and understand underlying intent. Students must develop strategies to gain both types of meaning.

Just as each student needs to develop word-learning strategies, he or she must also rely on comprehension strategies in order to retain, interact with, and process text. These strategies need to become part of each student’s unconscious reading process so that he or she can combine and apply strategies to problem solve and interpret text before, during, and after reading. Many struggling readers have graphophonetic, semantic, or syntactic difficulties that impede their reading and comprehension process. The following skill-based comprehension activities use specific instructional techniques, rather than general reading strategies, to help struggling readers focus on major comprehension pitfalls.

**Prerequisite Skills in Comprehension**

In order to gain meaning from text and remember what was read, at-risk readers need to do the following:

- Develop automatic word recognition skills.
- Examine text features, skim to get a sense of what the text is about, and identify/preview organizational structure.
- Connect what they already know about the topic and form related opinions based upon experiences and prior knowledge.
- Make predictions using clues from the title, illustrations, and text details.
- Interact with the text by asking questions to review content and to connect old and new learning about the topic.
- Identify, organize, and draw conclusions about essential information in the text.

**Recommendations**

As a teacher, your role in the reading process is to create experiences and environments that introduce, nurture, or extend students’ abilities to engage with text. This means that you must engage in explicit instruction, modeling, scaffolding, facilitation, and participation. To do this, you must have a firm grasp of the content presented in the text and relate it to struggling readers’ individual needs. Note that instruction of comprehension strategies may not be effective until mechanical problems typical of struggling readers are corrected. If a student does not understand things like passive voice, relationships between clauses, or how to monitor their reading, then using a comprehension strategy may be pointless. Evaluate each student’s needs and adjust instruction accordingly.
Choose a text selection and substitute key words with incorrect or nonsense words that are visually similar or have a subtle phonetic change. For example, change wanted to wented and laws to lawns. Practice reading the passage with the miscues so that it sounds natural. (See example below.)

He was ejected as senator and went to Washington D.C. As a senator he worked on the lawns of our country. But it was not always that why. Before John Glenn was walking with problems of this word, he was in outer spake. In February 1962, he became the fist American to trivia in the earth’s orbit. He had anyways wanted to be an astronaut.

Explain that when reading, students can be clicking right along when suddenly there is a clank—something that doesn’t sound right. That clank means that the passage doesn’t make sense. Explain that by training themselves to listen when they read (monitoring their own reading), they can hear mistakes and correct them. Next, read aloud a passage and pause slightly after each mistake to give students a chance to respond. When something doesn’t sound right, students should say clank. After students say clank, ask what the word should be. Eventually, students should say clank and then the correct word without being prompted. This helps maintain the storyline by keeping the interruption minimal.

Once students easily find miscues as you read aloud, assign them to independently read a short passage containing miscues. (Students will now combine auditory and visual learning to find the mistakes.) If students falter a bit at the beginning, provide support by revealing the number of miscues in the passage. Repeat with additional passages from students’ reading to reinforce word recognition and comprehension. Note that as students practice this activity, their ability to find the miscues will first increase but then decrease. The decrease means that students are automatically correcting the mistakes and have learned to monitor their reading.

Write a short summary of a story that includes all of the main ideas. Choose several words that will require students to reflect on what happened in the story, and substitute them with blanks. Copy a class set of the cloze passage. Tell students that you started to write a summary of a story but your mind went blank. Invite students to read the summary and fill in the blanks using markers. Encourage them to refer to the original story to make sure that their spelling is correct.
Most Important Ideas (MIIs)

* HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY THE MOST IMPORTANT IDEAS ON A PAGE OF TEXT.

**Directions**

Choose a text selection with an illustration on the first page. Have students study the illustration and determine the most important part of the picture. Tell the students, as they read the story, to think about the most important parts. While students are reading the text, write the most important ideas (not the full sentences) from the first few pages on different sentence strips. Provide additional sentence strips and markers. After students have read the text, introduce MIIs—most important ideas. When students have selected the MII, display the first teacher-made MII sentence strip on a bulletin board or in a pocket chart. Have students continue finding MIIs on each of the first few pages until all sentence strips are displayed. After modeling this format, assign each student to finish reading one page of the remaining text and show you the MII. If a student is correct, give him or her a sentence strip and a marker and have the student write the MII and the page number. As students finish, add their sentence strips to the display until all pages from the text are represented. Have students take turns reading the sentence strips in order and then use those words to retell what happened on that page.

**Extension:** Use the sentence strips in a writing lesson on sentence fragments. Have students select a few of the sentence strips and write complete sentences using the words written on them. Allow students to share their completed sentences in sequence.
Plan some questions that relate to a text selection students will read. The questions should be simple enough for students to use prior knowledge to answer without having read the text. Ask the questions, let students answer them, and then ask how students know the answers if they have not yet read the text. Explain that what students already know is called prior knowledge, and prior knowledge helps readers understand ideas in a story. When reading, readers combine old learning (what they already know) with new learning (what they are learning in the story). Place the transparency of the Concept Box reproducible (page 124) on the overhead projector and distribute a copy to each student. Tell students that before reading about a topic, they should think about what they already know, and the Concept Box reproducible will help them to do that.

For example, if the reading selection topic is about life cycles, ask students to think about what they already know about the life cycle of a butterfly. As students answer, write the topic on the line at the top of the transparency, have students do the same, and begin drawing pictures in the boxes to illustrate what is being discussed. Have students simultaneously draw and label pictures to show their prior knowledge. When students have finished drawing, draw a thick, vertical line between the last illustrated picture box and the first empty one. Have students do the same. Tell students that as they read and encounter new information, they should illustrate that new information in the remaining, empty sections of their concept boxes. Read the story aloud together, and then let students read the story independently and complete their concept boxes. Ask volunteers to share the pictures in their concept boxes and identify what prior knowledge and new information those pictures represent.
Shrink It

* ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO DEVELOP CONCISE AND EFFECTIVE STORY SUMMARIES.

**Directions**

Assign a brief text selection for students to read prior to this activity. Make several copies of the Shrink It Spinner and arrow (page 125) on cardstock. Cut out the game boards and arrows. Attach each arrow to the center of a game board using a brass fastener. Make sure that the spinner spins easily; if it gets stuck, enlarge the hole for the brass fastener. Next, invite students to orally summarize the story. Tell students that their ideas were all correct, but assuming the summary was very lengthy, ask what could be left out to make it shorter. As students respond, point out that they are deleting details—parts of the story that made it interesting but were not significant. Tell students that they will have to shrink the summary small enough to fit into a nutshell—only main ideas can go into the summary. After students share the main ideas, ask them if all that would fit in a nutshell. Tell them that they will have to shrink the summary even more. Guide students to determine the overall meaning or theme of the story. Have them concentrate on what significant event (the main problem) happened in the beginning, what resulted from this, and how the story ended.

Helping students develop an oral summary statement may require extensive practice using different text selections. Once students are able to determine the overall theme of a story, have them write summary statements in small groups. Have students spin the Shrink It Spinner to determine how many words they can use in their summary statements. Each group should then summarize the story and shrink it so that it contains the correct number of words.

Picture It

* BUILD STUDENTS’ WORKING MEMORIES AND HELP THEM APPLY THAT SKILL TO REMEMBERING TEXT.

**Directions**

Choose a text selection that can be easily illustrated. Remind students that the working memory can only hold a limited amount of information. Discuss how to increase the working memory’s capacity by chunking information together. Repeat a chunking activity from the My Brain Booklet (pages 11–12, script pages 25–26). Next, explain that the same thing happens when students try to remember what they read. Sometimes there is too much information for the working memory to hold. Tell students that when they read, they have to chunk ideas together and come up with the overall idea.

Read a text selection aloud, and then invite each student to draw a picture that represents the overall meaning of the text. Have a few volunteers share their illustrations and discuss how all of the important information from the passage was chunked together into one picture. The pictures will help their working memories recall the meaning of the text. However, if a picture were drawn for every sentence in the passage, the working memory would be too overloaded to remember all of the pictures.
**First and Last**

* HELP STUDENTS CONTINUE TO LEARN HOW TO BUILD THEIR WORKING MEMORIES.

Explain that some readers have difficulty remembering a number of words at one time. They may be reading a sentence, and by the time they get to the end of the sentence, they have forgotten what the first part of the sentence said. Once again, students need to help their working memory remember things. Tell students that they are going to help strengthen their working memories by using pictures. Read a two-part sentence that offers two ideas. After hearing the first idea, students should quickly make a simple sketch to help them remember it. At the same time, they must listen to the last part of the sentence to hear the second idea and sketch something to help them remember it. Read the first sentence from a text selection, or use the following sentence.

*The scrawny little dog ran into the yard, circled the tree, and headed for the porch looking for food.*

Discuss student drawings, which may be simple illustrations of a dog and food. Remind them to draw quick and simple pictures so that they can move on to draw the next picture. Continue the activity by adding sentences to create an entire paragraph, having students continue to draw and listen as they work to improve their sentence comprehension.

*The scrawny little dog ran into the yard, circled the tree, and headed for the porch looking for food. When he found nothing but the newspaper on the porch, he picked up the newspaper and angrily began tearing it apart. I knew right away that I would be the one who had to clean it up. At that moment, I wished that the dog I found was a neat and tidy little kitty cat.*

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**Find and Identify**

* TRAIN STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF WORD ORDER WHEN DETERMINING SENTENCE MEANING.

Choose some sentences from a current text selection and give each student a copy of the Who Did What? reproducible (page 126). Read each sentence aloud. Have students independently identify the subject, the verb, and the object in each and then write the sentence parts in the appropriate sections of their reproducibles. Discuss students’ responses and clarify any confusion.

Extension: This activity can also be done as a partner or small group activity. Assign a paragraph to each pair or small group. Have students identify the subject, the verb, and the object, and record them in the appropriate sections of their reproducibles.
**Who Did What?**

* INTRODUCE STUDENTS TO THE PARTS OF A SENTENCE, WHICH WILL HELP THEM RECOGNIZE PATTERNS AND CREATE MEANING.

Compose or select some sentences from students’ reading material that follow the subject, verb, object (SVO) order, such as *The cat ate the tuna*. Make a transparency of these sentences, and provide a copy for each student. Tell students to be sentence detectives and figure out who did what. To do so, they will need to find the subject (S), the verb (V), and the object (O) of each sentence and label them accordingly. Use the transparency to demonstrate how to find the S, V, O. Use a different color to label each part of the sentence. After marking a few of the sentences together, distribute the student copies. Invite students to mark the subject, verb, and object of each sentence.

**Extension:** When students are ready for a challenge, have them practice labeling the S, V, and O in sentences with prepositional phrases, such as, *The cat ate the tuna after drinking milk*, and *The cat ate the tuna under the table*.

**Flip It**

* INTRODUCE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE.

Provide students with colored pencils or markers. In advance, write some sentences that follow the subject-verb-object order in black ink on a transparency. Leave enough space between the sentences to label and then rewrite each sentence. Possible examples include the following:

- *The truck towed a boat.*  
  *A famous artist painted that picture.*
- *The farmer plowed the field.*  
  *My cousin won the contest.*
- *My favorite movie is Shrek.*  
  *My mother answered the phone.*

Passive voice can be confusing and difficult for students to understand. Provide multiple opportunities for students to improve their understanding of this concept. Discuss the subject-verb-object order in the sentences. Have students read the sentences and identify each subject, verb, and object. Mark the subjects with red, the verbs with blue, and the objects with green. Explain that when the subject of the sentence comes first, the sentence is written in *active voice*.

Next, ask students if this order must be followed in every sentence. Rewrite some of the sentences, putting the objects first. For example, write *The boat was towed by the truck* and *That picture was painted by a famous artist*. As you label the subjects, verbs, and objects with markers, explain that if the object of the sentence comes first, the sentence is written in *passive voice*. Invite students to flip the remaining sentences by rewriting them and putting the objects first. Have them label the parts with the same colors used earlier as they work.

*Comprehension 121*
Who Are You Talking About?
* TEACH STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY CLAUSES TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND LONG SENTENCES.

Many struggling readers, especially second language learners, tend to match referral words to the closest nouns. It is important to give extended practice with referral words. Make a list of sentences with multiple clauses, such as *The boy rode the bike that belonged to the neighbor all by himself.* The mother dog that took her puppies outside wanted them to stay close to her. While my mother was out shopping, my sister jumped on my mother’s bed and sprained her ankle. Even though they were nervous about their routine, the cheerleaders performed well for the judges. Make a transparency of these sentences and a copy for each student.

As you display the transparency, read the first sentence. Ask *Who is this sentence talking about?* After students identify the subject (*boy*), ask how many times the boy is referred to in the sentence. Draw an arrow from the word *himself* back to the word *boy*. Explain that in long sentences, it is easy to get mixed up because there are so many words. Sometimes the subject is at the beginning of the sentence and the referral word is at the end. While the word *himself* is close to the word *neighbor*, it refers to the subject at the beginning of the sentence (*boy*). Continue with more of the sentences. When students are able to match each subject and referral word, distribute the copies of the sentences. Have students read them and draw an arrow from each referral word to its subject.

**Extension:** Choose additional sentences with multiple clauses from students’ reading. Once students begin to recognize these sentences, allow them to submit additional ones from their reading for you to use in giving them more practice with this skill.
Sentence Stretchers

* CONTINUE WORKING WITH STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY CLAUSES.

Begin by talking to students about how easy it is to “get lost” in long sentences. Give an example, such as Juan, a student in my class, likes to play soccer on Saturdays with his team, the Giants, who have won every game this season.

Ask students to identify the most important idea in this sentence. Point out that because there is so much information, it may be hard to identify the main idea that Juan likes to play soccer. Create some simple sentences about students and write them on the board. Leave enough space under each sentence to write an additional sentence. Have students read aloud the first sentence you have written on the board. Invite students to stretch the sentence by adding more details. Write the new sentence underneath the first one. For example, write Mariella loves to dance. Then write Mariella, who sits in the front row, loves to dance and takes ballet classes after school. Have students read both sentences. Explain that both have the same main idea, but the second sentences provide more information. Explain that the reader sometimes has to “dig through” the words in a sentence to find the main point. By reading the main idea sentence first and then adding additional information, students can see how extra words don’t change the core meaning. Invite students to read and stretch each sentence on the board.

Extension: Let students complete this exercise independently by writing and stretching a sentence about each of their classmates. Collect the sentences and choose one from each student about another student, so that each student is represented both by a sentence he or she wrote and one that is written about him or her. Mark your sentence choice on each student’s paper, and have all students share their sentences with the class.
**Concept Box**

**Directions:** Draw pictures to show what you already know about the topic. Label your drawings. Draw a thick line after the last picture you draw. As you read the story, draw pictures of new information you discover in the remaining boxes. Label these new drawings.

**TOPIC**

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**Old Learning**

---

**New Learning**

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Shrink It Spinner

15 words

20 words

25 words

30 words
Who Did What?

Directions: Find and identify the subject, the verb, and the object in each sentence. Write them in the appropriate sections.
Citations


Braunger, Jane, and Jan Patricia Lewis, Building a Knowledge Base in Reading (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2006).


Kaufeldt, Martha, Begin with the Brain: Orchestrating the Learner-Centered Classroom (Tucson: Zephyr Press, 1999).

Lehr, Fran, and Jean Osborn, A Focus on Comprehension: Research-Based Practices in Early Reading Series (Honolulu: Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, 2005).
Citations


