

# Phonics Activities



GRADES

K-1

## Reading Activities for the Home



- Make letter sounds and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words. (For example, "If the letters 'p-e-n' spell *pen*, how do you spell *hen*?")
- Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds. (For example, the /d/ sound for the letter *d*)
- Teach your child to match the letters in his/her name with the sounds in his/her name.
- Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child's name. (For example, *John* and *jump*)  
Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, "I am thinking of something that starts with /t/."
- Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.
- Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound. (For example, the letter *m* matches the /m/ sound as in *man*.)
- Make letter sounds and ask your child to draw the matching letters in cornmeal or sand.
- Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all of the letters in the alphabet in order. Say letter sounds and ask your child to pick out the letters that match those sounds.
- Building words: Using magnetic letters, make a three-letter word on the refrigerator (cat). Have your child read the word and use it in a sentence. Every day, change one letter to make a new word. Start by changing only the beginning letter (cat, bat, hat, sat, mat, rat, pat). Then change only the ending letter (pat, pal, pad, pan). Finally, change only the middle letter (pan, pen, pin, pun).

# Phonics Activities—continued



- Making Words:** For this game, you will need magnetic letters and three bags. Put half of the consonants into the first bag. Put the vowels into the middle bag, and put the remaining consonants into the last bag. Have your child pull one letter from the first bag. That will be the first letter of his/her word. Then have your child pull from the vowel bag for the second letter of the word and from the other consonant bag for the third letter of the word. Next, the child will read the word and decide if it is a real word or a nonsense word. Take turns, replacing the vowels as needed until there are no more consonants left.
- Labeling Words:** When reading with your child, keep Post-It® notes handy. Every so often, have your child choose one object in the picture and write the word on a Post-It®. Put the note in the book to read each time you come to that page.
- Practicing Words with Pictures:** Choose pictures from a magazine or catalog. Say the name of the picture; have your child say the sound that the picture begins with and the name of that letter.
- Hunting for Words:** Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is *m*, the child might find and write *mop*, *mat*, *Mom*, *money*, and *microwave*.
- Hints for helping your child sound out words:
  - **First Sound:** Have your child say the first sound in the word and make a guess based on the picture or surrounding words. Double-check the printed word to see if it matches the child's guess.
  - **Sound and Blend:** Have your child say each sound separately (*sss*, *aaa*, *t*) This is called sounding it out. Then say the sounds together (*sat*). This is "blending".
  - **Familiar Parts:** When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example in a word such as *presenting*, your child may already know the prefix *pre-*, the word *sent*, and the word ending *-ing*.
- Teach your child to recognize the letters in his or her name.

# Phonics Activities—continued



- Use magnetic letters to spell words on the refrigerator or to spell names of family members or friends.
- Discuss how names are similar and different.
- Recognizing shapes is the beginning of recognizing the features of letters. Have your child sort letters by tall tails, short tails, hooks, humps, and circles. Your child can continue to sort by feature combinations as well (For example: circle and tall tails, hooks and circles, humps and tall tails, etc.)
- Ask your child to name stores, restaurants, and other places that have signs. This is called environmental print. Have your child cut the images of these signs from bags, take-out containers, and fliers and post them somewhere to make an Environmental Print Word Wall.
- Ask your child to look through ads to point out things he/she recognizes. Ask if they know any of the letters on the page.
- Use stores as an opportunity for learning! Ask questions like, “Can you find something that has a letter *c*? Can you find a word that begins with an *m*? Can you find something with four letters?” Praise all efforts and keep it like a game.
- Make alphabet letters out of Play-doh®.
- Write letters with your finger on your child’s back and have him or her guess the letter. Have your child do the same to you.
- Play “**Memory**” or “**Go Fish**” using alphabet cards.
- Read alphabet books to your child and eventually ask him/her to name the items on the page that you know he/she can successfully tell you.

# Phonics Activities

GRADES

2-3

## Reading Activities for the Home



- Make blend sounds and have your child write the letters that match the sounds.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words. (For example, "If the letters "l-a-t-e-r" spell *later*, how do you spell *hater*?" How many syllables are in *later*?)
- Write vowel and consonant digraphs, trigraphs, and blends on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds. (For example, the long *e* sound /ē/ for the vowel digraphs *ea* and *ee*)
- Writing Words:** Many children love to send and receive notes, and writing is a great way to reinforce phonics skills. Send your child notes in his/her backpack or place notes on his/her pillow. Have a relative or friend send a letter or email to your child. Whenever your child receives a note, have him/her write back. Don't be concerned about spelling. Instead, have your child sound out words to the best of his/her ability.
- Hunting for Words:** Choose a blend and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is *bl*, the child might find and write *blanket, blood, blue, blizzard, and blast*.
- Hints for helping your child sound out words:
  - **First Sound:** Have your child say the first sound in the word and make a guess based on the picture or surrounding words. Double check the printed word to see if it matches the child's guess.
  - **Sound and Blend:** Have your child say each sound separately (*sss, aaa, t*) This is called sounding it out. Then say the sounds together (*sat*). This is "blending".
  - **Familiar Parts:** When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example in a word such as *presenting*, your child may already know the prefix *pre-*, the word *sent*, and the word ending *-ing*.
- Play "**Memory**" or "**Go Fish**" using consonant and vowel digraphs, trigraphs, and blends.