

## **Preparing for the America Reads Challenge Ideas from Bank Street College**

America Reads is an initiative created by President Clinton which brings together a national team of volunteers to tutor children who are learning to read. Over the next five years this bi-partisan effort will recruit more than one million citizens to tutor and read to young children in small group settings. President Clinton's challenge is for all children to become literate by the completion of the third grade.

During the past 80 years, The Bank Street College of Education has been educating teachers about the connection between the theory and practice of teaching. Bank Street College is frequently referred to as "America's most trusted name in early childhood education," and is proud to host the America Reads Challenge Website.

Bank Street College and the America Reads Challenge share two important values. The first value is the centrality of early childhood education. Bank Street College places primary emphasis on early childhood education, and strives to ignite the spark in children leading them to a lifetime of learning. Bank Street's approach imbues young children with a curiosity about the world they live in and a love of books. The second mutually shared value is the importance of each citizen's contribution to society and particularly to its children. America Reads will bring together members of many communities to work with children in helping them to attain their full learning potential.

This Website provides reading tutors with a variety of information ranging from background information on literacy and early reading, sample lesson plans, activities, and information on other literacy and reading resources.

## More About This Site

This site offers preliminary guidance to college-age students working as literacy tutors to 5 - 8-year-old children. In addition, parents, volunteers working in schools or other learning environments with children, and supervisors of volunteers or work-study students, may find useful information provided here.

- Finding things on the site:

The site has been organized to provide several kinds of information to volunteer literacy tutors:

- information about the role of a tutor
- information about Early Literacy Development
- sample tutoring lesson plans and activities
- information about the strategies children can use when reading
- information about other resources for tutors including further readings and book ideas for young children

- Using the Acrobat file

If you would like to print out information from this site you can select one of the two Acrobat files we have made available. Using these files will allow you to print out information quickly and easily.

- The first Acrobat file allows you to print out all the information contained on this website (approximately 40 pages)
- The second Acrobat file allows you to print out specific information for getting started as a tutor, including basic lesson plans, tutoring tips, and some resources and activity ideas.

- Using the Index:

If you prefer to scan all the information available on this site at once, you can view our Index and go directly to any page.

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## Bank Street College's approach to Early Literacy Acquisition

Bank Street views reading and writing development as intimately linked to spoken language development, and mutually reinforcing. Young children acquire language to express their thoughts, feelings and desires, and to understand the world around them. (Halliday, 1973) Language develops through interactions with adults and other children, and through a continuous exchange of information between the child and his or her surroundings.

In keeping with Bank Street's focus on the "whole" child, as well as its recognition of the individual needs of each child, no one approach to teaching reading and writing is considered best for everyone. Rather, it is understood that reading and writing are complex processes involving the integration of a variety of strategies and skills (Clay, 1979, 1991). Effective readers are in control of the graphophonic (letter/sound), syntactic (structural or grammatic) and semantic (meaning) aspects of language. (see Cuing). They take risks, make predictions, and connect their own experiences with the information in the print.

Beginning readers and writers need to learn to use many sources of information including memory, experience, pictures and their knowledge of language including sound / symbol connections (phonics). "Phonics and other word identification skills are tools that children need to read for information, enjoyment and development of insight..." (Pikulski, 1997) The question is not **whether** to teach these and other skills, such as handwriting, spelling and punctuation, **but how and when**.

Our belief is that children learn best when they understand the need for learning, and when they are engaged in experiences that build on what they know. Thus teaching of phonics and other skills is most effective when incorporated in or combined with meaningful reading and writing of whole texts. At the same time, it is understood that some children need more direct teaching or reinforcement of strategies and skills, than others. Thus it is best to adapt teaching to the needs of individual learners, through a variety of modeling, direct instruction and opportunities for guided practice and problem solving.

Whatever the approach, the goal remains constant: to develop readers who read for pleasure and information, and writers who write to communicate meaning and make sense of their world.

## Some Basic Understandings About Literacy Development

In the last 20 years, research has highlighted the interrelationship and mutual reinforcement of reading, writing, and language development. Research has also shown that reading is an interactive process between the person and the text. Successful readers bring to the reading task a wealth of background experience and knowledge such as:

- a sense of the purpose of print,
- an understanding of some basic concepts about print such as reading text from left to right and top to bottom, turning pages from right to left, punctuation, etc
- awareness of the structure and sounds of language.

Even beginning readers use their growing background knowledge together with print as they try to construct meaning and make sense of text (Smith, 1982, 1985). Young children's experiences of the world and their evolving language awareness (playing with sounds, noticing print in the environment and attributing meaning to these signs and letters) are crucial elements in their developing understanding of the function and use of reading and writing (Goodman, 1984, IRA, 1987).

Other important understandings about literacy development include recognition that:

- The purpose of reading and writing is to gain or convey meaning
- Reading and writing involve the use and integration of multiple strategies (see Reading Strategies, Cueing)
- Children need to see pleasurable and purposeful reading and writing modeled in and out of school (people reading newspapers, signs, package labels, books, writing lists, notes, bills)
- Literacy learning is most successful when it connects with the learner's experiences and interests
- Children need to see themselves as readers and writers and be encouraged to take risks
- Children internalize learning when they are supported in constructing their own understandings of how written language works, and when they are encouraged to be problem solvers

### **Expectations Children Bring to Reading:**

Children Expect:

- what they read to make sense
- to use knowledge of the ways books are organized to predict likely events and outcomes (for example, knowing how sentences “work” -- they have a capital letter at the beginning, a period at the end, etc.)
- to use their understanding of syntax and meaning to predict sentence patterns and words
- to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to pronounce words

Activities and books that are supportive of what children expect:

- make sense, have logical connections, unity of meaning
- relate to children’s experiences and interests
- use natural or predictable language or interesting repeating patterns
- use pictures to support or extend the text

## **Volunteer Tutor's Role**

As a volunteer literacy tutor you can provide invaluable support and enrichment to students who are learning to read and write by:

- offering individual or small group attention where that may not be available
- engaging children in enjoyable experiences with literature-- writing, reading and listening
- helping children feel successful by giving positive feedback and support
- helping with homework in ways that extend children's understanding and interest
- modeling through your own actions that reading and writing are pleasurable and valuable activities

Your role is not to replace the work of the teacher. Instead, you can extend or support the literacy learning that is going on in and out of the classroom.

Tutoring programs vary widely from setting to setting. You might work in a school during the school day, tutoring an individual child, or helping out in the class with a small group. Other programs take place before or after school offering homework help and skills instruction or enrichment. They may be located in a variety of community agencies, including places of worship and hospitals.

Some programs offer special training or use particular kinds of instructional methods and materials. Other programs welcome volunteers' own initiative. In some situations you will need to bring your own reading and writing materials and create your own lesson plans, with little training or guidance; in others, you will be given assigned books or homework and specific structures to follow. Even within one school setting, there may be a variety of approaches and expectations for volunteers, depending on the individual teachers and ages of children.

Being flexible in how you approach your role as a volunteer tutor may be the key to a smooth working relationship as you begin work. It will also help if you try to find out as much as you can about where you will be before you get there. Here are some questions to ask:

- Where and when does the program take place: during or after school? In the library or other location?
- Have they had other volunteers before? If so, can you talk with any of them?
- Will you be working with a small group, or with a single child? How often? For how long?
- What is the age of the child(ren) you will work with? What kinds of reading materials are appropriate?
- Is there someone to supervise you or to whom you report? Or who will answer any questions you may have about the child or help you with scheduling or any other problems at the site?
- What are the expectations of your work?

You may know some of the answers to these questions. Others may not be clear until you get started. But thinking through these issues ahead of time should help you prepare for your first day.

## **Getting Prepared -- What to Bring**

There are several things you can do before arriving at your first tutoring session in order to get your tutoring relationship started smoothly. Assembling the materials you may need is the first step. Materials, including books, may be readily available at the place where you will be working, but even so, it is important to locate or gather these together before actually sitting down with your student(s).

In some settings, materials are in scarce supply so you may need to augment them however you can:

Essentials:

- several sharpened pencils with erasers
- colored pencils or markers
- blank paper
- lined paper (widely spaced lines are best for younger children)
- 2 - 3 books appropriate to child's reading level and interests (see [Suggested Books](#))
- a book for you to read aloud
- a game (see [Sample Games](#) for some ideas)

Other useful items:

- notebook with lined or blank pages
- index cards (helps to have at least two different colors) and a file box
- folder or large envelope to hold child's work
- child-safe scissors
- glue stick
- a post-it pad -- small or medium size
- other arts materials
- occasionally, especially in your first sessions a special object (photo, book, animal, puzzle, toy) to share and discuss to "break the ice"

## Getting Started -- Breaking the Ice

### **Establish Relationship:**

Not surprisingly children may be shy or unsure of what is expected of them in this new arrangement. From the very start your most important goal will be to establish a pleasant and trusting relationship, setting a tone so the child(ren) will be comfortable working with you and willing to take risks. Don't be surprised if this takes some time. In the early sessions you will want to try a number of different ways to "break the ice" such as bringing a special object or photograph to share and discuss, or drawing and exchanging pictures of where you live, your favorite foods or activities.

### **Avoid Putting Child on the Spot:**

If you know the age and reading interests of your student, you can choose specific books along those lines to read to him or her. But be careful not to put the child on the spot. Initially, don't even expect the child to read to you, unless he or she offers to do so, and then be sure it is a familiar text so as to avoid any risk of failure.

### **Ensure Success:**

Especially in these early sessions, plan activities in which you are confident the child will succeed and feel good. For a few sessions stick with materials that are familiar and comfortable. This will help you learn what the child already does know and can do well. It also helps the child feel secure and competent. Be sure to comment positively on the successes and avoid pointing out errors in these early encounters.

Beginning a dialogue with your student is important in establishing a tutoring relationship. One of the greatest challenges in working with young children can be getting them to relax enough to talk to you. You may want to begin your first tutoring session with a child by introducing yourself and explaining why you are there:

"Hi, my name is Naomi and I am going to be your reading tutor (or reading partner/reading buddy) for the next 4 weeks. What do you think about that?"

-- Allow plenty of time for child to answer. Try to avoid questions that can be answered with only a "yes" or "no".

"What do you think a (tutor / reading buddy) is? What do you think we might do together?"

-- Again, allow time for child to respond. If nothing is forthcoming you might explain:

"It's someone who will read books with you, will talk about stories with you, and will write stories with you. Can you tell me about a favorite book that you have heard or read? Is there one that we could read together?"

Don't be surprised if it takes some time before the student feels comfortable enough to answer your questions. You can encourage this by allowing plenty of time for students to respond, by listening carefully, and by showing interest and asking follow-up questions or making positive comments. For example, if a student simply nods "yes" when asked if he or she has a favorite book, you can follow up with: "What is it called" or "why do you like it?" Or make a comment that is confirming or appreciative: "Oh, yes, I remember reading *The Cat in the Hat*. It's one of my favorites too."

## **Valuable Hints for Successful Tutoring\***

Once you agree to be a volunteer, here are some pointers to help make your experience successful:

*Flexibility, Patience, Humor, Caring, Friendliness, and Respect*

These are invaluable traits of effective and satisfied volunteers. Remember that schools and volunteer literacy programs are complex organizations with many hardworking and talented professionals who are trying hard, usually with inadequate resources or support. Your help will be greatly appreciated, but try not to be hurt or surprised if you are not always acknowledged, or if there are mix ups and confusions from time to time.

### **Be On-time For Your Tutoring Sessions:**

Maintain regular, prompt attendance: remember that the children and teachers or agency personnel are counting on you to be there when you said you would be. Consistent attendance is also instrumental in building your relationship with the learners, and will facilitate their progress and increase your satisfaction. If you must miss an appointment, be sure to let the child and agency know in advance! On the other hand, you may not be able to count on the same kind of consistency or punctuality in return. Children's and teacher's lives are often complicated, and not entirely in their control, and schedules do change. Try to develop a sense of humor about the confusions and missed appointments that will undoubtedly occur.

### **Establish Relationships Early On With All Involved:**

It is important to try to establish friendly and respectful relationships with teachers, parents, supervisors, and of course, the children. When everybody works together in the interests of the child, real progress can occur. Remember that parents and teachers are the real experts about the children you see and can provide insights and support. Parents care deeply about their child's success, as do teachers who see the children daily and are responsible for their progress through the year. At the same time be sensitive to the fact that teachers are busy with many other children besides those with whom you work, and parents too may be struggling with complex obligations. It may not be easy to maintain contact, but this does not mean that they aren't interested in your work and the child's progress.

Your relationship with the student is, of course, most important. Here you have a fine line to tread. You will want to be friendly, warm, and supportive, setting a tone that encourages risk taking. But you also need to be clear about your role and goals. Have fun, but remember that you are there with a specific purpose - to help the child learn to read and write. You are not the teacher or a disciplinarian, so you can vary in certain kinds of activities, but you also need to set limits, and follow the school or agency rules. You want to show interest and caring to the child, but not become over involved in personal issues. Humor and flexibility are key.

### **Involve Students In Planning And Implementing Tutoring Sessions:**

Whenever possible, use a collaborative approach so that students feel invested in the goals you set and the work you do together. In your encounters, be a good listener, elicit students' ideas and interests, and share or alternate responsibilities for reading, writing, setting up and putting away materials, etc. Offer some choices, but not too many: rather than the open-ended "What would you like to do/read?" ask "Which of these two books would you like to read first?" Avoid questions that can be answered with a negative: instead of "Do you want to write now?" you can say: "Now it's time for some writing; what would you like to write about today?"

### **Allow For "Wait Time":**

When talking with your student keep in mind something called "wait time". This is the time you allow for your student to say something--either a response to a question you've asked, or a unique thought or question that he or she may have. It is important that you don't jump in too quickly

when students are silent. Learners need time to problem solve, to try things out, to make discoveries. You want to be available to help and give support, but not too quickly. You also want to model that thinking is valued and takes time. On the other hand, if you've asked a question and the student has not responded, after a bit you might ask "do you need some more time to think about this?" Or, "Are you stuck?" Then be ready to help.

**Provide Positive Feedback:**

When responding to a child's reading and writing efforts focus on the things they do right and give positive feedback rather than constantly correcting and pointing out errors. For instance, a young child reading a book with a picture of a bird in a tree may read the word "tree" when the print actually says "branch." Our instinct might be to say "no, that's not 'tree', it says 'branch'." Thus the child who actually tried a reasonable strategy of looking at the picture, would hear a negative response, and be reluctant to try again in the future. Instead, if we can respond with an encouraging, "That's a good try, that is a picture of a bird sitting in a tree. But what do you think the first letter of the word "tree" would be?" then the child is more apt to keep trying.

This kind of positive feedback provides the support a child needs as he or she learns more about the connections between pictures, story meaning and print. It will encourage him or her to use more reading strategies such as looking at the initial letters, and thinking about what would make sense to make more accurate predictions without the fear of making a reading error.

Specific comments such as: "I see you worked hard to figure out that word. I saw you go back and reread that sentence. That was a good strategy. You were really using your brain to think about what word would make sense there and match the print." These kinds of comments reinforce good independent problem solving, and help children feel competent.

This will be true in other areas too. If the child is attempting to write something and we focus only on the misspellings, she or he will be less interested in continuing; or if we constantly correct children as they discuss events in a story, they will not be willing to give their opinions or interpretations.

**Be Prepared and Keep Records:**

Allow adequate time before a tutoring session to prepare. Check on your supplies, on the books you will need and on any additional items you may want to bring. Also, be sure to allow time at the end of a session to record your tutoring activities so that you have a record of your work with your student, and so that you can plan your next lesson based on the work of previous sessions.

\* These suggestions are adapted from: B. A. Herrmann, 1994; and F. Johnston, C. Juell, M. Invernizzi, 1995.

## **Early Literacy Development:**

### **Phases of Early Literacy Development: Emergent • Early • Early Fluent • Fluent**

The terms beginning reading and writing or early literacy development actually include several phases of learning through which children progress in different ways and tempos. It is an exciting and complex process that usually occurs between the ages 5 through 8. As in most other areas of development, all children do not follow one clear sequential path in lock-step. Rather, individual children may take a variety of routes to reading and writing mastery. Literacy learning is circular or “recursive”; learners may move forward in some areas and seem to step back as they consolidate understanding in others. Thus, reading and writing may not develop evenly. A child may be fluent in one area and emergent in another. Ultimately however, whatever the timetable or path, the goals are the same for all:

- to become fluent and efficient readers and writers who can make sense of and convey meaning in written language;
- to become thinkers and communicators who are actively reviewing and analyzing information;
- to enjoy reading and writing; and,
- to feel successful as users of literacy for a variety of purposes.

### **Phases of Early Literacy: Beginning Reading and Writing**

NOTE: Keep in mind that the grade levels associated with each phase described below are only approximate. In each grade there are likely to be children in all phases of literacy acquisition. Also, remember that within each phase there may be a range of learners who are developing in different ways.

#### ***I. Emergent Readers and Writers (pre-kindergarten through first grade):***

- understand that written language conveys messages
- pretend read and write: they turn pages of books, invent the story using pictures and their memory of a story
- begin to match spoken words with print (see [Print Concepts](#))
- may know some letter names and some letter sound associations
- may recognize some words and letters in their environment or in texts; but not again in a different context; they may still be unsure of the concept of “word” or “letter”
- can write some letters, usually those in their own names
- in writing may reverse some letters, and may use mostly upper case letters
- may make scribbles or strings of random letters with no spaces; one letter may represent a whole word
- may “read” or attribute meaning to his or her marks; may not be able to “re-read” these marks at a later time.

#### **Children in this phase benefit from:**

- seeing reading and writing modeled through listening to good stories and seeing others write meaningful messages
- supported practice while reading engaging, predictable books with pictures that clearly relate to and illustrate the story line
- encouragement to experiment with writing
- experience with sorting words and pictures to build letter and sound recognition (see [phonemic awareness](#))
- experience with rhyming and other word play
- activities that engage students in using oral and written language

#### ***II. Early Readers (first grade through second grade):***

- know that reading needs to make sense
- are more attentive to print and know more print conventions
- understand that books have exact and unchanging messages carried by print as well as pictures
- can identify most letters by name, and can use some letter/sound knowledge (i.e.: the sound of the first letter) to help figure out words.
- know the meaning of some punctuation (capitals and periods), but may not use consistently in writing and reading
- can recognize, by sight, a small but growing store of words in different contexts
- use pictures, story patterns, context and memory of some words as well as some phonics to make sense of print

***Early Writers:***

- use spaces between words, but not consistently
- include more sound/letter associations in spelling, especially initial or final consonants; may write some whole words or word parts (like “ing”) from memory
- can usually re-read his or her own writing
- have variable handwriting: may use more lower case letters, but still could be mixed with caps, may reverse some letters (writing b instead of d)

**Children in this phase benefit from:**

- continued exposure to shared and guided reading of pattern stories and other predictable books, with clear print and pictures
- modeling and explicit teaching of and practice with using three cueing systems and strategies to figure out words and make sense of print
- games, activities to consolidate voice/print match and build sight word recognition
- games and activities to build phonemic awareness
- encouragement to write using invented spelling
- language experience activities
- hearing, discussing, retelling a variety of stories read aloud

***III. Early Fluent / Fluent Readers (second through third grade):***

- recognize many words in and out of context
- can apply phonics and other word analysis skills to figure out and confirm new words
- monitor their own reading for meaning and self correct as needed
- read with increased fluency, accuracy, and expression

***Early Fluent / Fluent Writers***

- are more comfortable with drafting, revising and editing
- show influence of the texts they have read
- express their ideas more elaborately
- use spelling that is closer to conventional spelling
- increase their use of punctuation

**Children in this phase benefit from:**

- continued opportunities to read and discuss a variety of increasingly challenging and personally meaningful texts
- continued practice reading for meaning using various strategies: integrating cueing systems, self monitoring and self correcting
- exposure to and practice with more aspects of word analysis
- practice building accuracy, fluency, expression
- practice reading silently
- guidance and practice with specific comprehension strategies
- encouragement to continue writing with increasing support for revision and editing

- hearing and discussing a variety of literature read aloud

## **Background Knowledge: making connections between new and known information**

All readers bring to the reading/writing process their own growing knowledge of language, the world and their understandings of how print is used to convey meaning. A child who is often read to, or who regularly sees adults reading and writing for personal tasks and pleasure will expect that reading and writing play useful roles in life and are valued activities. A child who has limited exposure to reading and writing will have very different expectations and understandings. Each of these situations, however, provides some of the background knowledge that children bring to the act of reading and writing.

Effective teaching fosters these expectations of reading and writing as purposeful and meaningful acts, and honors and builds on learners' diverse areas of knowledge through thoughtful selection of reading materials and activities. For example, a child interested in and knowledgeable about dinosaurs will be well equipped to explore a new book about these prehistoric creatures. Another child who is less familiar with dinosaurs may be equally intrigued by the same book, but will benefit from some preliminary introduction to the content. For example, before reading, the child might spend time looking at a variety of pictures of dinosaurs--skeletons as well as "life-like" images, or talking about when they existed, or what they ate.

Activating background knowledge before reading is an important step that is often overlooked in teaching young readers. As an experienced reader, you use your background knowledge automatically, without realizing it. If you are about to read a novel about World War II, subconsciously you summon up whatever images you have about that period both before and as you read. While reading a love poem or an article about baseball, you use your background knowledge about the topics, and also about the literary styles of each. You know that a poem is very different from a novel or news article, in the way it is crafted, in the choice of language, even in its format and length. In each case, you expect the text to make sense because it builds on what you know. At the same time, it may extend or deepen your knowledge and understanding as it adds new ideas or information.

Beginning readers, too, need to learn to use their own background knowledge. Helping them activate and extend this knowledge and selecting texts that build on what they already know or understand about their world support their attempts to make sense of what they are reading. If students do not have any background knowledge on the topic of the reading material that is to be used, then every effort should be made to build that knowledge through prior discussion, looking at pictures or objects, or through other means before introducing the new text. That will lead to much greater success with the reading experience.

## Strategies And Techniques Readers Use To Figure Out Words and Make Sense of Print

Beginning readers learn to use several clues or problem solving **strategies** to figure out unknown words and to make sense of written texts. Individual learners develop and use these techniques in varied ways and at different times. Emergent readers and writers generally start out using just a few strategies, such as looking at pictures and using memory, and as they become more fluent, they add more. As a tutor it is important to see what a child already knows and does use so that you can build on that knowledge and extend it. Ultimately the goal is to help readers learn and integrate the whole range of strategies, so that they do not overuse just one.

### MEMORY • PICTURES • CONTEXT • VISUAL CLUES • PHONICS • STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

**MEMORY:** Emergent and Early Readers successfully use their memory of story and specific language patterns to help them "approximate" or "role play" reading. This is an important first step. That is why patterned stories, and repeated reading of engaging texts are successful for these very beginning readers.

**PICTURE CLUES:** Most children will be attracted by illustrations, and as beginning readers they should be encouraged to use that source of information as they try to make sense of print.

**Emergent readers** will use **pictures** and **memory** to construct the story, with little attention to the print; gradually they will use the pictures to help them predict and confirm individual words in the text. Eventually, as they develop other strategies and become more fluent readers, they will rely less on the pictures. However, even fluent readers, should be encouraged to create mental images, to visualize, as they read texts with fewer illustrations.

**CONTEXT CLUES:** Successful readers use the surrounding ideas and words of a sentence, as well as their own background knowledge, and sense of language to figure out words, and to understand text. For example: "Do you know ---- time it is?" is easily read by using the surrounding words to predict the missing one. Early Fluent and Fluent readers, too, should be taught to use this strategy, building on their expectation that written language will make sense and sound like spoken language.

**VISUAL CLUES:** In addition to pictures, early fluent and fluent readers learn to use the configuration of words (length, shape, specific visual details) to recognize whole words. Gradually, too, they notice patterns of letters within words to figure out new words (*ear* in *hear*; *-ing* in *thing*, *swing*...). **Caution:** While successful readers will eventually learn to recognize many, many words instantly, especially exciting content words like "elephant" and "Exterminator" some of the more common words (high frequency words) such as "the", "this", "what", "who", "then", "there" are much harder to learn because they look so much alike to a new reader. Rather than drilling these and other similar words in isolation, they can be better taught and read within the context of whole sentences (i.e.: "Who is that at the door?" "What time is it?") (See [Sample Games](#))

**PHONETIC CLUES:** Readers use knowledge of letter sound associations, especially initial and ending consonants to help them figure out words. This is sometimes called "sounding out" and works best when it is combined with the use of **context** or **picture** clues. Tutors can help Emergent and Early readers develop "Phonemic Awareness" (awareness of the sounds and sound patterns of spoken words) through a variety of reading and writing activities and through games (see: [Sample Games](#); [Suggested Books](#), [Writing Activities](#)).

Early Fluent and Fluent Readers and writers gradually learn to distinguish more sounds within words and to apply that knowledge in reading and writing; they are increasingly aware of the middle sounds, or sound patterns such as “tion”.

Caution: Although phonemic awareness is important for reading, mastery of phonic knowledge is **not a prerequisite**; many children gain knowledge of the sound system of language in the course of listening to and reading meaningful books, and through opportunities to write. Furthermore, while phonetic clues are useful as one technique, it is usually not very efficient to sound out entire words. **Phonetic clues** work best when combined with other strategies.

Also, remember that beginning readers should not be expected to sound out words such as names or concept words that are not already part of their spoken vocabulary.

**STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS (Word Parts):** Early Fluent and Fluent Readers can use their increased awareness of the structure of words (word parts) to help figure out new words. They can be helped to notice roots and endings (play, played, playing; fast, faster, fastest) and suffixes and prefixes (un / help / ful). They also can learn about "compound words" (some / thing, every / body).

*Remember: No single element works all the time for everyone. Successful readers use different combinations of strategies and word analysis skills. Some approaches are easier for some readers than others. That is why it is essential to help beginning readers learn to use all the approaches as they become ready to do so.*

## Introduction to Sample Tutoring Lessons:

Volunteers are more successful when they come prepared. In some situations, volunteers may be following the guidelines or structure of the program or the teacher. In other situations, volunteers may need to develop their own lesson plans with minimal input from a teacher or supervisor. If you are not following a prescribed plan, here is a basic lesson framework that may be helpful. Generally, in a 45 - 60 minute session, it is good to plan 3 - 5 reading, writing and language activities that will occur each time, thus providing some consistency, but also variety. One successful structure includes:

- Warm up time: friendly chat and oral rereading of familiar book by child (5 - 10 minutes)
- Introduction and reading together of new book (5 - 10 minutes)
- Game, writing or other activity to extend reading experience or reinforce skill (10 - 15 minutes)
- Reading aloud by tutor (10 - 15 minutes) (See [Sample Lessons](#) for more details)

Within this overall plan there is room for variation in response to the learners' interests and needs, or the teacher's requirements. At the same time this plan offers a predictable structure so that children know what to expect from their work with a volunteer. Furthermore, this structure is adaptable to various levels. When tutoring, keep in mind that:

- Having a lesson plan can provide a predictable structure for you and the student. But remember to be flexible as well.
- You can include the child by offering some, but not too many choices: "Would you like to read this book about a bear, or this one about Jake who keeps getting into trouble?" "Shall we play a game or write first?"
- By observing the child and listening for clues to his or her special interests you can show that you really care what he or she thinks.
- The teacher or child may have some specific assignments that need to be built into the plan as well.
- Sometimes a simply printed plan, outlining the sequence of activities is useful as a shared reference. You can allow the child to check off each activity as it is completed--this provides some rewarding physical evidence of what you both have accomplished for the session.

Sample plan for Sam:

Plan for Sam:	
Date: _____	
Activity	Completed
1) Sam Re-reads "The Cat in the Hat"	_____
2) Sam Reads a new book title: _____	_____
3) Sam and Naomi Play Concentration _____	_____
4) Naomi reads: "Stone Soup" to Sam	_____

## **Sample Tutoring Lesson for Emergent or Early Reader (very beginning reader - usually kindergarten through first grade) (30 - 45 minutes)**

### **1. Warm Up: Child reads aloud from a short, familiar book (5 minutes)**

This emphasizes the value and pleasure of rereading familiar materials, and provides good practice to build fluency.

### **2. Tutor introduces and supports child's reading of a new book (10 - 15 minutes)**

This gives the child a chance to learn and apply strategies for figuring out the meaning of a new text. (see Prereading Strategies) Before having the child read, tell him or her the title of the book, and discuss the picture on the cover. Draw out the child's ideas and predictions. "What do you see in this picture?" "Yes, this is a chicken, or a hen, named Rosie. And there is a fox." (See Hutchins, 1968, in Suggested Books.) "What do you think this story might be about?" Next, help the child look through the pictures, covering the words, (this is called a picture walk). As you talk about what might happen in the story, use the language of the text as much as possible.

These prereading activities are very important for helping the child become familiar with the concepts and language patterns of a book -- building "background knowledge." Sometimes you might read the whole book out loud first, pointing to the words, and encouraging the student to notice or join in whenever there is a repeated pattern or refrain. "Did you notice that every page ends with the words: 'that's mine!'" Then ask the child to read the text as independently as possible, but with your help as needed.

**Hint:** Be ready to help in a supportive way, but try not to jump in too quickly to correct every mistake (miscue). Keep the focus on helping the child make sense and on learning more about print. When the child pauses before a new word, or makes a mistake, wait a little bit to see what the child does, and to allow time for the child to think. If possible give a cue such as "look at the picture" or "does that make sense? Could Rosie go through the fence?" Often children can figure out some words, or correct their mistakes if they've previewed and talked about the book with you and are allowed adequate thinking time.

### **3. A brief game related to the reading, or to practice a skill (10 minutes)**

Games such as Mix-up Fix-up, or Concentration can be made on the spot, using sentences or words from the story or the child's dictation. Other games like Fishing for Sounds, or Picture Sort should be prepared in advance. (See Sample Games)

- or -

### **3. Drawing and writing or dictation (10 - 15 minutes)**

The goal is to encourage students to use writing and drawing to communicate their ideas. Personal writing also helps children develop understandings about the structure of the English language: phonics, handwriting, the way words look on a page, and punctuation. Ask student to draw a picture about something that is personally meaningful. Then ask that she or he write something below the picture (a descriptive word, label, sentence--whatever the child is able and willing to do). Ask that he or she read back what has been written. If the child is very reluctant to write, you can offer to take dictation. Write down whatever the child says about the picture using large, clear print. Then be sure to read back what you wrote, pointing at the words as you read. (See Developing a Language Experience Story)

### **4. Read Aloud to Child (10 - 15 minutes)**

This is an important opportunity to model reading for pleasure, and to share a variety of good literature that a child is not yet ready to read independently. Also this is a way for

children to be exposed to new vocabulary, concepts and different kinds of story structures. When selecting a text to read out loud, be sure the student knows he or she will not be expected to read this text--now it's your turn. Try to respond to your child's interest and attention level: is he or she listening? Is the story line too complex? Are there words the student doesn't know? (See [Reading Aloud](#)) You can model good reading and comprehension skills by asking questions and making comments: "I wonder what they mean when they say: 'he rumbled like a volcano.' Does a volcano make noise? Can a person sound like a volcano--how do you think that would sound?"

## **5. End of session**

Wind up with some positive comments about the child's work and attitude, and suggest the plan for the next session. "You really worked hard today on your reading and writing. I can see that you are learning lots of new words. And you listened so well to "Jamaica and Brianna" (Havill, 1993). Would you like to hear another story next time about Jamaica tagging along with her brother?. When we see each other on Thursday, you'll get to read "Rosie's Walk" (Hutchins, 1968) again and a new book. And we'll do another Mix-up Fix-up. And maybe you can bring back that book about turtles you want me to read to you."

### **• Documentation of Tutoring Session**

After you have finished working with your student, take a few minutes to write down what activities and books you used, how the student responded, and what you observed about his or her progress. Also make a note of how you would like to follow up in your next session. (see [Sample Log](#))

## **Sample Tutoring Lesson for Early Fluent or Fluent Reader (usually second through third grade) (45 - 60 minutes)**

### **1. Warm up Child rereads aloud from 1 - 3 familiar books (5 - 10 minutes)**

Or, if the child is reading longer books over several sessions, such as *The Fire Cat* (Averill, 1969), or *Frog and Toad are Friends* (Lobel, 1970) have him or her look through the parts read so far, using pictures and discussion to refresh memory of the story. Then have the child reread the last chapter or few pages completed in the last session. This emphasizes the value and pleasure of rereading familiar materials, and provides good practice to build fluency and expression. Tell the child it is like an athlete practicing throwing or dribbling a ball before a game.

### **2. Tutor introduces a new book or previews a new chapter for the child to read, and supports the child in reading (15 to 20 minutes)**

This gives the child a chance to learn and apply strategies for figuring out a new text. (See [Prereading Strategies](#)). Before having the child read, discuss the title and cover pictures of the book or chapter heading, drawing out the child's ideas and predictions: "What's going on in this picture here? What do you think a 'fire cat' does?" (see [Suggested Books](#) for *The Fire Cat*.)

Help the child go through the book looking at the pictures and talking about what might happen in the story. (This is called a "picture walk" or Preview, see [Glossary](#)). As you discuss the pictures, use the language of the story. Point out or ask the child to find particular key words in the text. "Yes, you were right, in the picture the fireman is rescuing Pickles, it says he 'picked up Pickles and tucked him into his coat.' Can you point to the word 'tucked'?" Or, "Now that Joe has rescued Pickles, what can he do with him? He wants to take him back to the firehouse but he has to ask the head of the firehouse, 'the chief'. Have you heard that word before? There he is sitting at his desk. Let's look at that word 'chief'."

These two prereading activities are very important for helping a child become familiar with the concepts and language of the book-- building "[background knowledge](#)", and they can be done quickly. Once completed, ask the child to read the text as independently as possible, but with your help when absolutely necessary.

**Hint:** Be ready to help in a supportive way, but you don't have to correct every mistake (miscue). Keep the emphasis on using strategies to make sense of the text rather than getting the exact pronunciation, word, or punctuation. Also, it is important to allow students plenty of time to think about unfamiliar words. If they make a mistake or pause before reading a difficult word, don't jump in and give them the word right away. Instead, wait for a minute, then ask "would you like help with that word?" or remind them of a strategy or cue they can use. "What's going on in the picture? What word that starts with 'cl' would make sense in that sentence? How can Joe get up the ladder?" Often children can figure out some words, or correct their mistakes if they've previewed and talked about the book with you and are allowed adequate thinking time.

### **3. A brief game related to the reading, or to practice a skill (10 - 15 minutes)**

Games such as Monopoly / Read Around, Concentration, or Go Fish can be made "on the spot" using words or sentences from the text just read. Other games such as "read around". (See [Sample Games](#))

-- or --

### 3. Drawing and writing (10 to 15 minutes)

The goal is to encourage students to use writing and drawing to express their ideas or convey messages. Writing also helps children learn about and experiment with the structure of the English language.

Ask a student to draw or write about something that is personally meaningful. It can be just a few words or a sentence or two, or a longer piece. It can be a response to or a take-off of the book just read, or an original story or an anecdote. At the end, ask the child to read back what has been written. Give positive feedback to the message first, before commenting on or correcting the spelling or handwriting. (See [Writing Activity](#) for more ideas.)

**Hint:** Remember that all writing and reading development is not always even, and some children have had less experience with writing. Don't be surprised if an advanced reader is just emerging as a writer or somewhat reluctant to try. Encourage drawing and labeling or short sentences, or even offer to take dictation (See [Developing a Language Experience Story](#)) or provide story frames (see Copy Cat or Story Frames in [Glossary](#)) or a dialogue journal in which you write notes to each other.

### 4. Read aloud to child (10 to 15 minutes)

This is an important opportunity to model reading for pleasure, and to share a variety of good literature that a child is not yet ready to read independently. This also is a way for children to be exposed to new vocabulary, concepts and different kinds of story structures. When selecting a text to read out loud, be sure the student knows that he or she will not be expected to read this text -- now it's your turn. (See [Reading Aloud](#))

Try to be alert to your child's interest level -- is he/she listening, is the story line too complex, are there words the student doesn't know? You can model good reading and comprehension skills by asking questions and making comments: "I wonder what they mean when they say: 'he rumbled like a volcano.' Does a volcano make noise? Can a person sound like a volcano--how do you think that would sound?" Or, "Hmm, it says the moon was just coming up, and there was a hint of frost in the air. So it must be night time. And on the other page it showed pictures of all the pumpkins in the field. I know they grow ripe in September and October. Even though the story doesn't say so, all that information makes me think that it must be an early evening in the fall, probably near Halloween." Also be sure to allow the child time to study the pictures and comment or ask questions during or after reading.

### 5. End of session

Wind up with some positive feedback about the child's work and attitude, and suggest a plan for the next session. "What a good job you did today. You really worked hard on your reading and writing. I can see that you are learning lots of new strategies... You listened so well to the first chapter of *Charlotte's Web* (White, 19??) we'll continue with that next time to find out if Fern gets to keep the baby pig... When we see each other on Thursday, you'll be able to read the next chapter of *The Fire Cat* to find out whether Pickles can stay in the firehouse. Do you think he will? Maybe you can write your own story about a cat or dog who gets into trouble. Be thinking about that, and if we have time, we will play a new game to practice reading and spelling those rhyming words."

#### \* Documentation of the tutoring session

After you have finished working with your student, take a few minutes to write down what activities and books you used, how the student responded, and what you observed about

his or her progress. Also make note of how you would like to follow up in your next session. (See Sample Log)

## **Strategies for Successful Readers and Writers**

Successful readers and writers need to learn and practice a number of strategies to use Before, During, and After Reading.

### **Pre-Reading Strategies Include:**

#### Activating Background Knowledge

Making predictions and previewing a book  
Doing a Picture Walk  
Forming purpose for reading and writing  
Making a KWL map  
Questioning and making predictions about a story

### **During-Reading Strategies Include:**

Using specific strategies and techniques to figure out words  
Prompting a reader who is stuck  
Questioning and making predictions about a story

### **Post-Reading Strategies Include:**

Story retelling all or part of a story  
Discussing favorite parts or elements of a story  
Asking questions  
Comparing to another book  
Writing new ending  
Drawing a picture about the story  
Playing a game related to the story

## Pre-Reading Strategies:

These activities can help students to:

- **Activate Background Knowledge and Make Connections**
- **Stimulate Predictions**
- **Form a Purpose for Reading**

Predicting:

- Examine the cover illustration (if there is one) and read the title of new book. Ask child to predict what it might be about based on either the cover picture, the title, or both. If the title and illustration are not helpful in giving the student a sense of what the story is about, you can provide a brief summary of the book. For example, when looking at a book with a picture of a cat on the front, you can say: "This story is about a cat that moves to a new house and has some adventures while trying to make new friends."

Activating Background Knowledge:

- Ask the student to tell you what he or she knows about the subject of the story or if he or she has had similar experiences, or heard or read a story like this or by same author. "You said you have a cat. Tell me what your cat does all day and who its friends are. What kind of friends do you think the cat in this book might find?" If the topic is totally unfamiliar, reconsider book choice, or take extra time to build the necessary background knowledge through some kind of concrete experiences. For example, if you choose a book about a farm and the student has never been to a farm you may want to begin by looking at pictures of farms and farm animals, and having a brief discussion about what kinds of things happen on farms: what animals live there, what things grow on farms, etc.

Conducting Picture Walk:

- With Emergent and Early readers conduct a "Picture Walk" through the book, or chapter, by covering the print, and encouraging or guiding the student in a discussion of what could be going on based on the pictures. If there is vocabulary that may not be familiar to child such as "cupboard" or "bonnet" point the words out and explain them in connection with the pictures and the context of the story. "You're right, in this picture the teeny tiny woman is putting on her hat, except in this book it's called a 'bonnet' (pointing to the word) which is another word for hat. She is putting on her teeny tiny bonnet. Do you think she is getting ready to go somewhere?" In your discussion of the pictures, be sure to use as much of the actual book language as possible, especially if there are repeated patterns or refrains. (*The Teeny Tiny Woman*, Barbara Seeling).

Noticing Structure of the text:

- Where appropriate, point out or help the child notice the structure of the text and connect it with other similarly structured texts heard or read. "Yes, this is a fairy tale. We've read several fairy tales together. What do you know about fairy tales? What have you noticed that is the same about the three tales we read?"

Forming Purpose for Reading:

- Formulate and encourage the student to come up with two or three predictions or questions before reading. "This is a story about a boy who wants a dog, but his mother won't let him have one. What do you think he is going to do first? Why do you think that?" "You already know a lot about dinosaurs. What are some things you want to find out about them when you start reading this book?"

## During Reading Strategies:

### 1. Cueing and Self Monitoring Systems

Successful independent reading involves integrating three sets of cues. Efficient readers use all three to predict, confirm and self correct as they read.

- **Meaning or Semantics:** Readers use their background knowledge of vocabulary and word understanding. They also use the **context** of the sentence, the paragraph or the whole text to figure out what the text is about, and what would make sense. Readers continually evaluate the information they take in, asking:
  - “Does this word make sense as I read it?”
  - “Does this sentence make sense as I read it: ‘The girl was a dog running’?”
- **Syntax or Language Structure:** Readers use their knowledge of English grammar to make sense of text.
  - Does the sentence sound like real language? (“She went into she house”)
  - Does this word fit grammatically in this sentence?
- **Visual information or graphophonics:** Readers use information in the text including pictures and print and other knowledge of print conventions including:
  - format details
  - details and shapes of letters and words
  - directionality
  - voice / print match
  - letter / sound associations
  - punctuation

Volunteers can help young readers use these cues by modeling and encouraging them to ask themselves questions as they read. For example, if a child reads out loud:

“She rode the house into the barn.”

a tutor can say:

“Hmm, does that make sense? Did she really ride a house? What else could she ride? What word begins with an “H” that you can ride? The word ‘horse’ looks a lot like the word “house”—that was a very good try at reading that word, but it also needs to make sense, doesn’t it?”

Gradually, after you have provided a lot of this kind of model questioning, you can encourage students to ask these kinds of questions of themselves as they read.

- What would make sense here?
- Did what I just read make sense?
- If not, how can I fix it?
  
- What word would fit here?
- Does it sound right?
- If not, how can I fix it?
  
- Do the letters and the pictures match up with what I read?
- If not, how can I fix it and still be sure it makes sense and sounds right?

## **During Reading Strategies:**

### **2. Helping an Oral Reader Who is Stuck or has Miscued**

Beginning readers often substitute their own words for those in print. While we want readers to eventually become accurate readers, that should not be the primary goal. Making sense and getting meaning from the text is more important.

Even expert readers sometimes make errors or substitutions in the text without realizing it. Unless those substitutions change the meaning, you don't have to worry about them. Instead of calling them mistakes or errors, we call them Miscues. A miscue is any deviation from the text.

#### **Some things for you to keep in mind:**

- If a miscue doesn't change the meaning, or changes it only slightly, you can ignore it. "He rode his bike in / on the road."
- Try not to jump in too quickly; wait and give the reader a chance to self-correct or problem solve.
- Show confidence in the child's ability and be available to help.

#### **Some things readers can be encouraged to do when they are trying to figure out a word or get stuck:**

**Picture Prompt:** Direct reader to look at the picture, or to close eyes and imagine what is happening.

**Rerun:** Suggest rereading the sentence or phrase to clarify the meaning so far. This can help in predicting the upcoming word, giving the reader more time to access it.

**Context Prompt:** Ask the reader if what he or she just read made sense; use this information to help the reader predict what words would "make sense" or "sound right" in a sentence. Then help the reader check the print to confirm the prediction.

**Read-on:** Beginning readers can be encouraged to skip over the unknown word and read to the end of the phrase or sentence, substituting a grunt in place of the mystery word. "I never ['mmm'] what to give my mother for her birthday." This helps readers use the meaning (context) of the surrounding words, and sometimes the initial letter(s) to figure out the problem word.

**Comparing:** Ask if reader has seen a word that looks like the troubling one; or write a similar word, i.e. if the hard word is "fright", point out or write down "night." (Be sure to use a word that you are sure the child will recognize.) Helping the child see that a word part is similar to another known word can help too. A fluent reader can think "If I know 'her' and 'taps,' I can figure out 'perhaps' (assuming she or he has heard and understands the word).

**Structural Prompt:** Tell or ask the child to notice the word's parts: play-ing; out-side. Help the reader cover the appropriate part of the word.

**Look Back to Previous Context:** Sometimes beginning readers recognize that they've seen a word somewhere else. Looking back or identifying the former context can help the reader recall the word.

After the student figures out a difficult word, or after he or she self corrects, be sure to encourage him or her to ask: "Does this make sense? Does this sound right? Does this look right?" Once the child is satisfied that the sentence does make sense, give specific praise for using good strategies to figure out words. Encouraging students to constantly ask themselves "Does this make sense?" when reading reinforces the purpose of reading: we read to understand the meaning of the text, not simply to translate the printed letters into spoken words.

## **Asking Questions: An important strategy to use before, during and after reading to enhance interest and comprehension\***

Engaging students in a dialogue about something they are about to read can clarify their thinking and help you find out what they already know or expect from the material. Questions and discussion also clarify understanding during and after reading. One way to begin this dialogue is through asking questions that elicit responses reflecting the student's thoughts and understandings about the reading.

Too often questions are used only at the end of reading, asked by the teacher or tutor to check comprehension. In fact, successful readers ask themselves questions throughout the reading process. Beginning readers need modeling and practice to learn how to do this.

Effective questions encourage real thinking, not just yes or no answers. Notice too that different kinds of questions require different ways of finding the answer:

- **Factual or “right there”** questions can be answered with a single word or phrase found right in the story: “When did the story take place?” “It was midnight, the 25th of October...”
- **Inference or “think and search”** questions require finding and integrating information from several places in the story and relating one's own knowledge as well. “When did the story take place? “The harvest moon hung high in the sky, shining on the field of ripe orange pumpkins waiting to be picked for Halloween...” Using our background knowledge of concepts like “harvest” and “Halloween” as well as the words “ripe pumpkins” we figure out that this story takes place one night in late October, even though those words aren't used in the text.
- **“In the head” or “On my own”** questions require bringing in one's own information, (background knowledge). These can be answered without reading from the book. “We have read a lot of fairy tales, what kinds of things usually happen in fairy tales?” Or, “You told me you have a cat. What might happen in a story called *Puss in Boots*? Do you think it could be true?”
- Remember to focus on the positive aspects of the child's responses to encourage future attempts.

### **Questions before reading should help the reader:**

- **Make connections** between background knowledge and the topic of the book: “This book is about Anansi the Spider: do you remember the other Anansi book we read? What kind of character is Anansi? What kinds of things did he do in that story? How do you suppose he will behave in this book?”
- **Set a purpose** for reading: “Here is a new book about sea turtles. What are some things that you would like to learn about these creatures?”
- **Make predictions:** “The title of this book is *The Missing Tooth*, (Cole, 1988). Who do you suppose the two boys on the cover are, and what do you think this book might be about? What happens to you when you lose a tooth?”

### **Questions during reading should help the reader:**

- **Clarify and review** what has happened so far: “What are some of the things that made Arlo and Robby such good friends?”

- **Confirm or create new predictions:** “Now that one boy has lost a tooth, so they aren’t both the same, what’s going to happen? I wonder if they will stay friends:”
- **Critically evaluate the story and make personal connections:** “Could this really happen--that two good friends could have a fight because one of them had something the other wanted? How would you feel if you were Robby? What would you do?”
- **Make connections with other experiences or books:** “Does this remind you of another story / character, what happened in that story? Could that happen here?”
- **Monitor the child’s reading for meaning and accuracy:** “Did that word ‘horned’ make sense? What is a ‘horned toad’?”

**Questions after reading will help:**

- **Reinforce the concept** that reading is for understanding the meaning of the text, and making connections: “In this story about Amy’s first day in school how did she feel before going into her classroom? How did you feel on your first day?”
- **Model ways of thinking** through and organizing the information they have taken in from reading a text: “What did Amy’s teacher do when she walked into the classroom? How does Amy feel now? How do you know that?”
- **Encourage critical thinking** and personal response: “What do you think might have happened if the teacher had not done that? Why do you think the author decided to write this story? Would you have done what Amy did?”
- **Build awareness** of common themes and structures in literature: “What other story or character does this sound like? What parts are the same? What parts are different?”

When children respond to your questions it is important to listen carefully to what they say, and to respond to any questions they may have. Also, if a student has misunderstood a section of a story you may want to go back to that part of the book and reread it, clarifying any difficult vocabulary if necessary, to help the student understand what is going on.

You might say:

“You said that the rabbit was laughing at the pig at the end, but you know, I remember something different. Lets look at that part of the book again and see what it says.” (Then reread the appropriate segment of the book.)

“Here it says: ‘The rabbit ran through the door and slipped past the man who was laughing at the pig.’ Do you know what it means when someone “slips past” something?...”

*The most important thing, however, when talking about a story with a child is to let them know that their ideas about what they have read are important and that you value what they have to say.*

\* These suggestions are adapted from: R. Huntsman, 1990; L. Rhodes and C. Dudley-Marling, 1996.

## Developing a Language Experience (or Dictated) Story

The Language Experience approach to teaching reading and writing builds on the learner's own language and knowledge and is an effective way to encourage self expression and build awareness of the connections between oral and written language.

What I can think about, I can talk about.

What I can say, I can write.

What I can write, I can read.

I can read what I can write and what other people can write for me to read.\*

Think how meaningful and powerful a child's own dictated story can be as a reading text, to be read over and over again.

1. Be prepared with pencil and eraser, lined paper and drawing paper.
2. Together, identify a topic the child would like to tell about: (such as a retelling of a story heard or read; a personal experience; a set of directions for a game or object; a story related to the child's illustration).
3. Talk briefly about the topic, and explain that you will write what the child tells you to write. Then, as the child watches and dictates, write down in clear, well spaced, large print, the child's exact words, including dialect or grammatical variations.
4. From time to time, stop and read aloud *to the child* what you have written so far, pointing to the words, and having the child confirm that you are getting down his ideas accurately.
5. If it is a long dictation, you may want to write only two or three sentences on a page, leaving plenty of room for illustrations. This is especially important for an Emergent or Early reader, so as not to overwhelm with too much print.
6. At conclusion of dictation, read back the whole piece, pointing to the words and encouraging child to follow along. Praise the good ideas. If there is time, and the child is still attentive, reread the piece chorally. (You can save that for a follow up session, if necessary.)
7. Save the piece in child's folder to reread in future sessions; be sure to return to this story as you would to any other reading text -- to be savored and practiced. A very special dictation might be illustrated and given a cover and title page.
8. You may develop some related activities, such as choosing key sentences or particular phrases or words to use in games.(See [Sample Games](#))

After several rereadings of the piece the child may master it and be able to share it with friends or family. But this may not always be a reasonable expectation, especially with a long dictation. When the child is practicing reading his or her own story, respond to approximations or miscues, just as you would in any reading. Be supportive and help the child, and enjoy the experience!

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\* Van Allen, R. & Halversen, G. (no date). *The Language-Experience Approach to Reading Instruction*. Ginn and Company.

## Reading Aloud to Children: Helpful Hints

Listening to literature read aloud is one of the most valuable and pleasurable experiences beginning readers and writers can have. It is so important to a child's developing literacy, that reading aloud to the child(ren) should be a part of every individual or small group lesson. Here is a chance to model good reading and thinking strategies and to expose young learners to the rich variety of literature that exists-- fiction, nonfiction; poetry, biography; humor, fantasy... Immersing young learners in various types of literature helps them understand the critical features of written language, and the varying structures of different genres. When this exposure is accompanied by supportive and relaxed discussions, children are able to extend their world view, and develop important critical thinking skills.

- **Plan enough time** in each session (10 - 15 minutes) to read aloud, to enjoy, and to discuss a story, poem, or information text.
- **Choose stories or texts that respond to children's expressed interests and experiences.** For very young children or Emergent readers/listeners choose books with vivid pictures, a strong story line, engaging characters and evocative language. Humorous and predictable books are particularly successful. (See [Suggested Books](#))
- **Preview the book yourself**, so you can anticipate questions or reactions. If possible practice reading it through so you can decide where to pause for emphasis or to elicit questions, predictions or reactions.
- **Introduce the book, pointing out the cover illustration, title and author.** Invite some predictions or comments that help the listeners connect the book to their own experience or to other books heard or read. Or give a brief explanation about why you chose to read this book. "This is the story of a boy who goes on an unusual trip. I chose it because you just came back from a trip." Or "This is the story about a special friendship between a mouse and a whale. I have read this many times. I wonder what you will think about it."
- **Read with expression** that reflects the tone of the story or the characters. And not too fast. Vary your pace so you can pause for emphasis, or to allow time for child(ren)to think about what's happening or what might come next.
- **Allow time for children to study the pictures** as you read, and to make comments and ask questions about the story.
- **Encourage predictions**, and then help children confirm or revise these as the story unfolds. Try to honor many ideas and interpretations, not just the "correct" ones. Instead of accepting or rejecting comments or ideas as right or wrong, use comments such as "that's one possibility, let's see what the author has in mind." or " Well that's an interesting idea. How did you think of that?"
- **Watch the children's expressions** and body language and be sensitive to signs of boredom or confusion; you may need to change your reading plan, change the book or do more preparation.
- **Save time at the end of the story to get reactions.** Ask open-ended questions that don't have right or wrong answers, and that can't be answered with a yes or no reply. For instance ask what the child liked (or disliked) about the book, and why? You may ask

what s/he thought about the characters or how the problem was solved? Find out if the book made the listener think of any personal experience or other book heard or read.

- **Point out parts of the story you particularly noticed or liked** -- special language patterns or phrases, or parts of texts that made you feel or visualize something. Ask child(ren) if they noticed other parts.
- **Vary the length of time you spend reading aloud.** Don't be constrained by time. Some longer stories or chapter books can be read over several sessions, if the time in between is not too long, and if you plan good stopping places. Don't spoil a story by rushing to finish it. Children need to see that pleasurable reading involves time to savor language, ideas and pictures.
- **Remember that for some children, listening to stories is a new experience,** and they need to develop that interest and ability. Start with short, interesting selections, with strong pictures. In some cases allowing active children to manipulate play dough or to draw while listening may help. Be responsive to facial expressions and body language, and if the book is not working, don't be afraid to stop, without being punitive. Next time you might find a better selection.
- **Encourage discussion about the story.** Ask the child questions about what's going on, and encourage the child to predict what will come next--but be sure not to turn a discussion into a quiz!
- Most important: Have a Good Time!

## Writing Activities:

Writing and Reading really go hand in hand, reinforcing and extending each other.

There are a range of writing activities that you can incorporate into your tutoring sessions with children at any age and writing level. The most important things to remember when introducing any of these activities is that writing should be viewed as:

- enjoyable
- a way of expressing thoughts and feelings
- a way of communicating with others

Additionally, positive and continuous experiences with writing in a variety of ways, helps children learn and practice a number of skills, including phonics.

Unfortunately many children are reluctant to write because they have had little positive experience doing so and they are afraid of using incorrect spellings, or of writing letters that look sloppy. Just as in reading, beginning writers should be encouraged to focus on the meaning of what they want to say rather than the form so they can begin to think of themselves as capable of writing. Otherwise they will be unwilling to take the risks to put down their own ideas in any detail. Instead, they will simply stick to writing simple thoughts or words that they already know how to spell correctly. Eventually, as students become more comfortable and experienced with writing, the process of editing and re-writing can be introduced.

With this in mind, here are some ways to engage your students in writing:

- **Invite the student to draw a picture and then write about it.** To avoid spending all the time on drawing, you might set a time limit for this activity. You can suggest: "Let's make a plan. How about drawing a picture for 5 minutes, then write two (or some) sentences about it. OK?"
- **Give your student a journal to write in regularly.** For example, you may want to have a "journal writing time" for 5 or 10 minutes during each session. Students should be encouraged to write on any topic they wish: for Emergent and Early writers, illustrations with labels should be acceptable, or "interactive" writing, where you take turns doing the writing.
- **Invite students to write about something personal** that happened: a class trip, taking the dog to the Vet. \Or relate the writing to a book you have just read together: change the ending, or write about a favorite part or character; or make up a new story with the same characters or same problem.
- **Have your student write a note or letter to you** (and you can write one back), or to a family member or teacher or friend.
- **Encourage writing for other useful purposes.** For example, if the student is planning a birthday party she can make a list of the things she'll need for the party. Or, have your student make a list of books he has read, or wants to read.

For students who are not writing words yet, or are just beginning, you can modify some of these activities:

- **Your student can draw a picture and dictate a story** (see [Language Experience](#)); you can encourage students to "pretend" write, or to write just one or two letters to

represent a word (i.e.: “M” under a picture of Mommy -- you might need to help them hear the sound, or find the letter on a chart); you can then write the full word the child uses to describe his or her picture (i.e.: Mommy) and have the child trace over it.

- **Suggest a “copy-cat” story for children who are just beginning to write.** Have them write a story that is a take-off of a story you have just read. For example, if you’ve just read a version of “There was an old lady who swallowed a fly” then your student might write “There was an old cow who swallowed some hay...”

Always have students read over what they've written. (With a very emergent writer whose spelling is far from conventional, discreetly make a note to yourself so you'll remember what the text said).

- Give positive feedback on the content of their work once students have read through their writing. “That must have been fun to go to a birthday party” or “You did a good job of writing about your cat. I learned that he likes to sleep a lot.” At this stage, it is important to focus on the meaning of what was written rather than the form (spelling, or handwriting or punctuation) because we want students to know that writing is for conveying meaning first and foremost, and we want them to keep trying. As they become more comfortable and experienced, then the process of revising and editing can be introduced.
- Sometimes while rereading the students will catch missing words, or mixed up sentences. Encouraging them to correct their own work is a valuable experience and gives them a sense of independence and ownership of their writing. But don’t expect them to correct everything. In fact, for very novice emergent writers who are just beginning to try writing, don’t correct anything. For early writers, you might have them correct just one thing: a reversed letter, or adding a few more sounds to a word you think they can spell, or putting in a period. (To support further growth in spelling see [Sample Games.](#))

### **Spelling Hints:**

Children are often reluctant to write because they feel they can’t spell. Here are a few things to help:

- Remind them that you are interested in their ideas first, and you’ll worry about spelling later -- and stick to that promise;
- Encourage them to use “invented spelling” (spelling words the best way they can) for now even if they just put one letter down to represent a whole word.
- Avoid talking about spelling as “correct” or “incorrect”, “right” or “wrong.” Remember that children learn to spell just the way they learn to talk and read, in stages, over time, with lots of experience and practice.
- Talk about how people learn to spell by doing a lot of reading and writing, and that there are lots of ways to learn how to spell words over time.

Talk about some of these ways to figure out spelling:

For Emergent and Early writers:

- Say a word and listen for the sounds, especially the beginning sound and then maybe the end sound.
- Think about where you saw the word and look for it in a book or around the room to copy
- Help the child use a picture - letter chart (i.e.: “A” and Apple, “B” and Box, etc)

For more advanced writers who are already writing fairly comfortably suggest the following:

- Close your eyes and see if you can remember the way the word looked
- Think of a word that rhymes with word you're trying to spell ("If you can spell cent, you can spell rent.")
- Write down the word three times, using three possible spellings, and see which one looks right.
- Think about parts of the word, which parts do you know? (i.e.: 'going' -- 'go / ing')
- Look in a dictionary or other book.

## **Suggested Books:**

Beginning readers respond well to books with strong repeated patterns, vivid pictures that support the text and engaging stories that reflect their experiences. Fortunately there are many such books available today, some as parts of series, others as individual trade books. A few trade book suggestions are listed below. For a much more thorough list of titles and reading levels, we suggest the following resources:

Fountas, I.C., Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided Reading*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.

Johnston, F., Juell, C., Invernizzi, M. (1995). *Guidelines for Volunteer Tutors of Emergent and Early Readers*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, McGuffey Reading Center.

Peterson, B. (1991). "Selecting Books for Beginning Readers", in Deford, D. E., Lyons, C. A., Pinnell, G. S. (Eds.) *Bridges to Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, R. (1988). *Transitions*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## **Suggested books for reading aloud to children:**

Below are some suggested books to read to and with children, however please also visit your library, look through books available in your student's classroom, and visit bookstores to find out about other books that you and your student can read together.

Aardema, Verna, *Why Mosquitoes Buz in People's Ears*  
Allard, H., *Ms. Nelson is Missing*  
Bang, Molly, *Wiley and the Hairy Man*  
Brown, Marcia, *Stone Soup*  
Cameron, Ann, *The Stories Julian Tells; Julian, Secret Agent*  
deReniers, Beatrice Schenk, *May I Bring a Friend*  
Freeman, Don, *Corduroy*  
Havill, Juanita, *Jamaica and Brianna; Jamaica Tag-Along*  
Keats, Ezra Jack, *Whistle for Willie* (and others)  
Lobel, Arnold, *Frog and Toad are Friends* (and others)  
Marshal, J., *Fox and His Friends* (and other stories)  
Mayer, Mercer, *There's a Nightmare in My Closet*  
McDermott, G., *Anansi the Spider*  
Mosel, Arlene, *Tikki Tikki Tempo*  
Sendak, Maurice, *Where the Wild Things Are*  
Seuss, Dr., *The Cat in the Hat*  
White, E. B., *Charlotte's Web*  
Wood, Audrey, *Napping House*,

## **Predictable Books to read to children and for children to read:**

Aardema, Verna, *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*  
Ahlberg, Janet and Allen, *Each Peach Pear Plum*  
Bang, Molly, *Ten, Nine, Eight*  
Brown, Margaret Wise, *Goodnight Moon*  
Carle, Eric, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (and others)  
Galdone, Paul, *Henny Penny*

Galdone, Paul, *The Gingerbread Boy*  
Kalan, Robert, *Jump, Frog, Jump*  
Keats, Ezra Jack, *The Snowy Day*  
Seuling, Barbara, *The Teeny Tiny Woman*  
Shulevitz, Uri, *One Monday Morning*  
Westcott, Nadine Bernard, *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*  
Zemach, Margot, *The Little Red Hen*

**Poetry:**

Greenfield, Eloise, *Night on Neighborhood Street*  
Clark, Ann Nolan, *In My Mother's House*  
Adoff, Arnold, *All the Colors of the Race*  
Silverstein, Shel, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

**Jump Rope Rhymes and Jingles:**

Cole, Joanna, *The Eentsy, Weentsy Spider: Fingerplays and action rhymes*

**Books for children to read:**

**Emergent / Early Readers**

Alborough, J., *There's Something at the Mail Slot*  
Bang, Molly, *Ten, Nine, Eight*  
Carle, Eric, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*  
Eastman, P. D., *Are You My Mother?*  
Gelman, Rita, *More Spaghetti, I Say*  
Guilfoyle, E., *Nobody Listens to Andrew*  
Hoff, J., *Who will be my Friend?*  
Hutchins, Pat, *Rosie's Walk*  
Hutchins, Pat, *The Doorbell Rang*  
Kalan, Robert, *Jump, Frog, Jump*  
Martin, Bill, Jr., *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?.*  
Seuling, Barbara, *The Teeny Tiny Woman*  
Wildsmith, B., *Cat on the Mat*  
Ziefert, M., *The Wheels on the Bus*

Also, Nursery Rhymes and Jump Rope Jingles:

Twinkle twinkle little star...

One potato, two potato...

**Early Fluent / Fluent Readers**

Arkhurst, J. C., *The Adventures of Spider*  
Averill, Ester, *The Fire Cat* (short chapter book)  
Brown, Marcia, *Stone Soup*  
Cameron, Ann, *The Stories Julian Tells; Julian, Secret Agent* (chapter book)  
Cole, J., *The Missing Tooth*  
Greenfield, E., *Me and Neesie*  
Lobel, Arnold, *Frog and Toad are Friends* (and other stories) (short chapter book)  
Marshal, J., *Fox and His Friends* (and other stories)

Mayer, Mercer, *There's a Nightmare in My Closet*  
McGovern, Ann, *Too Much Noise*  
O'Connor, J., *Molly The Brave and Me*  
Schechter, Ellen, *I like to Sneeze*  
Schechter, Ellen, *Sim Chung and the River Dragon*  
Schwartz, A., *In A Dark, Dark Room* (and other stories)  
Shulevitz, Uri, *One Monday Morning*  
Slobodkina, E., *Caps for Sale*

### **Wordless Books:**

Wordless books are useful to engage emergent readers in using pictures to create and organize stories. They can also be used with fluent readers to stimulate writing. Suggested use: Ask a child to look through the whole book and “tell you the story” using the pictures. (For a second-language learner, or a very emergent reader, you may need to model this a few times before asking the child to do it all.) You may also want to write down the child’s dictated story and use that later as a reading text. (See [Developing a Language Experience Story](#))

Day, A., *Good Dog Carl*  
Mayer, Mercer, *A Boy, A Dog, and a Frog*  
McCully, E., *The First Snow*

### **Other sources for finding books:**

#### **Bank Street Book Store**

[www.bnkst.edu/bookstore/bookstore.html](http://www.bnkst.edu/bookstore/bookstore.html)

They have a large selection of books for children of all ages

(800) 439-1486 (in New York State)

(800) 724-1486 (outside New York State)

In addition, several publishers such as The Wright Group, Richard Owen, Rigby, Sundance, Children’s Press and others have developed series of beginning reading materials for Emergent and Early readers that are being used in some classrooms. For more fluent readers, titles in Bank Street’s Ready to Read series, and Random House’s I Can Read and Step Into Reading are good sources for more sustained stories or short chapter books.

Web-based sources for finding books:

#### **Bank Street’s Library on-line**

<http://www.bnkst.edu/library/library.html>

#### **The Reading Is Fundamental and the American Library Association book list**

<http://www.udel.edu/ETL/RWN/ReadingLists.html>

## **Sample games:**

Games are a fun way for children to practice specific reading, writing and spelling skills. They can spark interest, increase confidence in young readers and writers, and change the pace of a tutoring session.

Some things to keep in mind when selecting or creating games: words for the games should come from the books the child is reading, or has read recently.

Games should be chosen or designed to promote the child's sense of competence and success. If necessary, you should "rig" the game so nobody loses, or the child wins.

## **Games:**

Mix-Up, Fix-Up

Concentration or Memory

Go Fish

Old Maid

Monopoly, or Read and Spell Around

Activities to Practice Word Families

Fishing for Sounds

## Mix Up, Fix Up

A popular activity with many emergent readers, this builds individual word awareness and recognition as well as understanding of sentence order.

Using a familiar sentence or refrain from a dictated story or book, print the sentence on a large card. Then prepare the individual cards for each word. At first, start with only three or four word sentences or phrases. When the child is comfortably mastering this you can add more words, up to about six.

First, read the sentence or phrase with the child, and lay out the cards in order. Ask the child to read the sentence with you pointing to individual words. Then mix up the cards and ask the child to reorder them. The child may use the master card as a prompt, or may prefer to try it alone and then check.

Notice the child's strategies. Does he say words aloud as he arranges them, or does he do it silently in his head? Does he reread the sequence of the words as he builds the sentence, using the cadence and the context? Does he build sequentially or at random? What other cues does he use?

---

"Oh lovely mud," said the pig.

pig. "Oh mud," said lovely the

**What you'll need:** Two cards or wide strips of paper, scissors, pen/pencil/marker. Print each strip with the same sentence from a familiar book or story. Leave one strip in-tact and cut the other strip up into individual words. Be sure the write the text clearly in print (not script) letters.

## Activities to Practice Word Families (Rhyming Patterns)

For example, words in the same family as: **black**

- Introduce a poem or rhyming story such as: Miss Mary Mack:

“Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack  
all dressed in black, black, black  
with silver buttons up and down her back, back, back...”

- Encourage the child to point out words in a text that have similar spelling patterns.
- Help the child think of other words that have this pattern. You may have to write a few words for him or her:

*sack*  
*pack*  
*stack*

and then have the child read the whole word and underline the repeated part of the word: “ack.”

- Using magnetic letters or scrabble pieces form a word with the “ack” pattern. Ask the student to change the first letter of the word (for example: 's' in sack) to make a new word such as: “pack.” You should be sure to provide a limited number of letters (two or three at first) for the child to choose from.

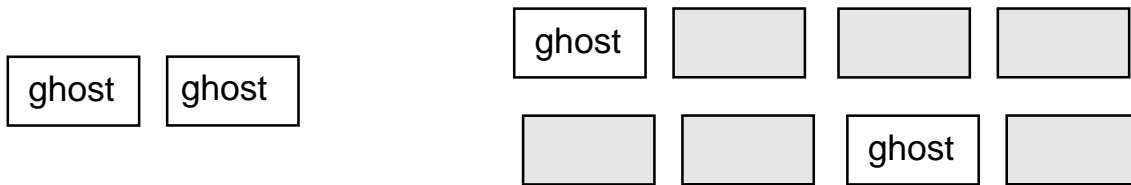
**p** **st**      **s** **a** **c** **k**

- Remember to choose a word pattern that is useful and important to the student and that relates to something that he or she has read or will read. If possible, start with a word he or she already knows in the word family. After reading a book about being sad, start with the word “cry” and then followed with “fry”, “try” and “wry”.
- Remember to review the word families you’ve chosen to work on periodically through other games such as Go Fish (using word families) or Read Around.
- Be sure to give the student a chance to go back to a book, poem, or other texts where he or she can apply this new reading skill. Poems, nursery rhymes and jump rope jingles are a great resource for early readers.

## Concentration or Memory Game

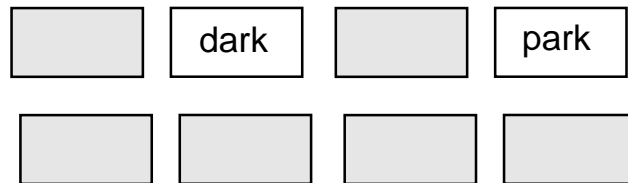
**To Make:** Select 5 - 10 words from a book (or books) the child is reading. Print each word clearly and boldly on separate 3x5 inch index cards, making pairs of each word. (The child may be able to help you by copying the words you write.)

**To Play:** Shuffle the cards and place them face down in neat rows. Take turns turning up two cards at a time and reading the words aloud. If the two cards match, the player keeps them and takes a second turn. If they do not match, the cards are replaced face down and the next player takes a turn. Play until all the cards are matched. The player with the most pairs wins. If the child has trouble recognizing a word, say the word — do not ask the child to “sound out” the word. The purpose of this game is to build *automatic* recognition of whole words.

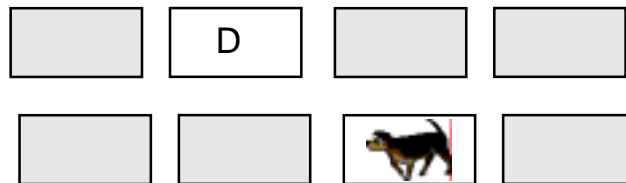


You can control the difficulty of the game by the choice and number of words used: for very beginning readers, choose meaningful words that are visually distinctive: “ghost”, “dark”, “sister”, and keep the number of words low. For a more challenging game, include some words that are less distinctive: “when”, “what”, “this”, “that”, but be careful not to overwhelm the child.

Variation 1: Instead of matching pairs, you can use rhyming pairs: look, book; dark, park.



Variation 2: This game can also be used to build letter recognition and letter / sound association. Paste or draw simple pictures on one set of cards; and on the other set, print initial consonants to go with the pictures. For example, paste the picture of a dog on one card, and write the letter “D” on a matching card.



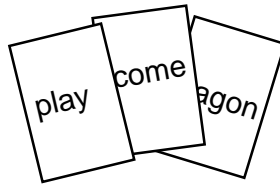
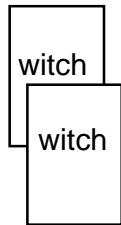
**NOTE:** This game can be adapted to use with older children, or more advanced readers: variations can include vocabulary practice such as using homonyms, (words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings: cent/scent; dear/deer, etc.) or contractions, (can’t; cannot, etc.).

## Go Fish (Good for Early Fluent to Fluent readers)

**To Make:** Select 10 - 20 words from a book (or books) the child is reading. Print them clearly and boldly on separate 3x5 inch index cards, making pairs of each word. (Children may help by copying the words you write.) Two to four players can play comfortably.

**To Play:** Shuffle and deal 3 - 5 cards to each player. Place the rest of the deck face down. Players take turns asking each other for a card to match one held in his or her hand. If the opponent has a matching card, it is given over, and the first player takes another turn. If the opponent does not have a match, he or she says “Go Fish” and the player draws from the remaining deck of cards, and the next player takes a turn. Each time a player has a match, he or she reads the words, and puts down the pair, face up. Continue the game until the cards are all used up.

Instead of matching words, rhyming words can be used. In this case, players ask for “a word that sounds like ‘night’...” At the end, the child can earn extra points by dictating or writing additional words that rhyme with the base words, or creating “silly” sentences using the rhymes.



(Go Fish Pile)



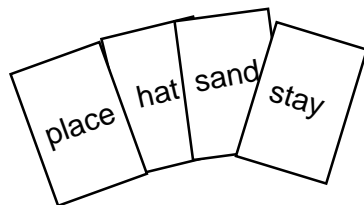
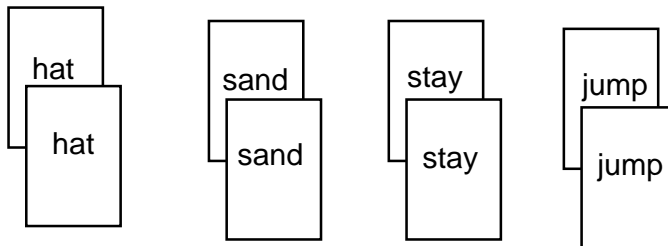
**NOTE:** This game can be adapted to use with older children, or more advanced readers: variations can include vocabulary practice such as using homonyms (words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings: cent/scent; dear/deer, etc.), or contractions (can't; cannot, etc.).

## Old Maid (all levels)

**To Make:** Select three words per player from a book (or books) being read. Print them clearly and boldly on separate 3x5 inch index cards, making pairs of words. Choose one more word without a match that will be the winning card.

**To Play:** Shuffle and deal 3 - 6 cards to each player. Players take turns drawing a card from a player to their left. If a player draws a card that matches one in his or her hand, he/she reads the two matching words in order to keep the pair. Play continues until all the cards are matched, except for the one odd card. The player who holds that card at the end wins the game.

**NOTE:** This game can be adapted to use with older children, or more advanced readers: variations can include vocabulary practice such as using homonyms (words that sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings: cent/scent; dear/deer, etc.), or contractions (can't; cannot, etc.).



## Monopoly, or Read and Spell Around

A great game to help teach word family patterns and spelling patterns. This should be used with children who write fairly comfortably, usually second grade or older.

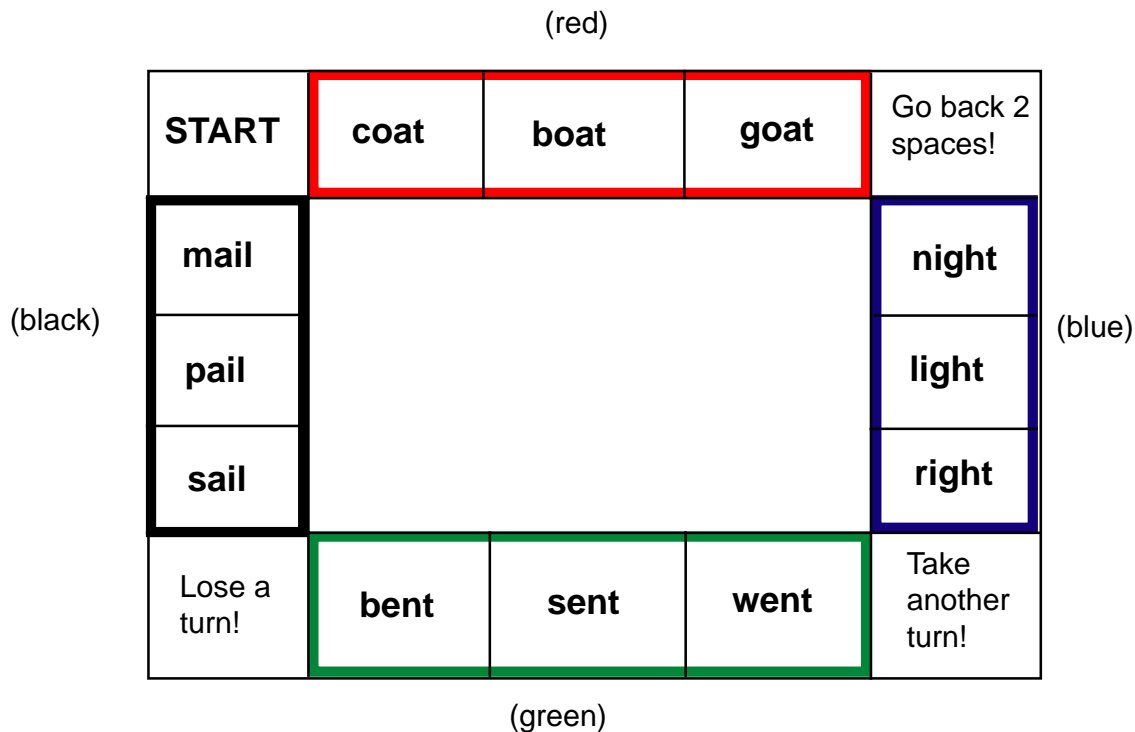
**To Make:** Create a game board with 4 or 5 squares on each side. Prepare word cards with families of words that emerge from the child's reading or dictating: night, light, tight; went, bent, sent; hat, cat, bat. (For beginning readers or younger children, make sure the patterns are not too similar: mat, sat, rat; man, can, ran; met, set, bet.) Color code each word family, and each side of the game board.

Place the words face up around the board in sets. To add to the element of chance, have other game directions on the board, such as "take another turn", "go back 3 paces", etc. Prepare score sheets for each player with color-coded headings for each word family.

**To Play:** Role dice or use a spinner to move around the board. Wherever a player lands he reads the word, then writes it in the appropriate "word family" category on the score sheet. Extra points can be earned by dictating or writing sentences with the rhyming words.

Score Sheet	
<b>Red</b>	<b>Blue</b>
_____	night _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
<b>Green</b>	<b>Black</b>
sent _____	_____
bent _____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

For older children variations can be developed to include other spelling patterns, not necessarily rhyming: vowel diphthongs (goat, toast, road) or tricky consonant blend words that may cause trouble: (stick, stuff, stop; slip, slap, slop) or many more.



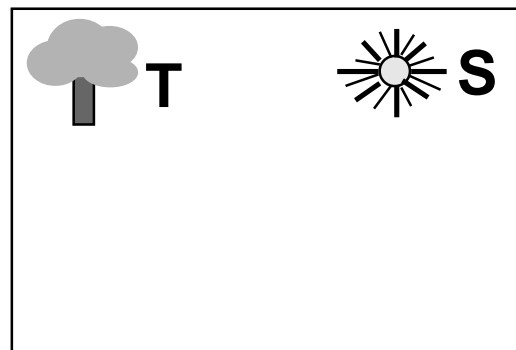
## Fishing for Sounds (for Emergent readers and writers)

**To Make:** Find and cut out small pictures of familiar objects from magazines, old workbooks, catalogues. Try to find several pictures that start with the same letter, such as book, bed, basket, boy; snake, sun, skate, slide...etc. (The child can help; this is a good language activity too.)

Cut out 12 - 15 fish shapes and paste or draw one picture on each fish.



On individual 3x5 inch index cards or on an 8x11 inch piece of paper or cardboard, print consonant letters with a key picture for each group of pictures found. (For example, print the letter “S” with the picture of a sun to represent all the words beginning with that letter.) (If using a sheet of paper, print only two or three letters per sheet.)



**To Play:** Select two or three sets of fish pictures that start with the same letters and mix them up. Place face down on a table and take turns “going fishing.” As each fish is turned over, the child names the picture and places it in the appropriate pile under the key letter / picture. When all the fish are caught and placed correctly, have the child “read” the pictures under each heading. If necessary, read along with him or her, saying the letter name and stressing the initial sound of the word. “Yes, here are ‘S’ pictures: sssun, sssnake, sssaxophone.”

To add excitement, you can play as opponents, each player having one or two categories and key letter / pictures. Take turns fishing, and discard those fish that belong to the other player.

## Sample Tutoring Log

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities	Comments
1) _____ _____	
2) _____ _____	
3) _____ _____	
4) _____ _____	
-----	
Overall impression of this session:	
_____ _____	
-----	
Plans for next session:	
_____ _____	
-----	
_____ _____	
-----	

## Glossary of Reading Terms

**Background Knowledge:** the knowledge and understandings of the world that students have acquired through their everyday experiences -- riding in cars or buses, playing and talking with other children and adults, that help them to make sense of the texts they read.

**Choral Reading / Chanting:** two or more individuals reading aloud from the same text -- this can help students to develop oral reading fluency.

**Concepts About Print / Conventions of Print:** the understandings an individual has about the rules or accepted practices that govern the use of print and the use of written language. For example concepts about print include: reading left to right, top to bottom, words are made of letters, use of spaces between words, use of upper case letters, spelling patterns, punctuation, etc.

**Constructing Meaning:** a process of making sense of text; by connecting one's own knowledge with the print readers "build" an understanding of what the text is about.

**Context / Context Cues:** information from the surrounding text that helps identify or gives meaning to a specific word or phrase, i.e.: "yesterday I read the book". The words surrounding "read" help us know how to pronounce it (see [During Reading Strategies](#)).

**Conventional Spelling:** spelling that is in the standard or correct form for written documents.

**Copy Cat Story:** a story that is written based on the structure, theme, or other feature of another story. A story that copies another story.

**Cueing System:** any of the various sources of information that may aid identification of a word such as: graphophonics, semantic and syntactic information. (See [During Reading Strategies](#).)

**Cumulative Story or Pattern Story:** a story that has many elements or language patterns repeated until the climax; a predictable text.

**Decoding:** analyzing text in order to identify and understand individual words. Figuring out the written code.

**Echo Reading:** reading of a text where an adult or experienced reader reads a line of text, and the student repeats the line. A good technique for Emergent and Early Readers to build fluency and expression.

**Emergent Reader:** a reader who is developing an association of print with meaning -- the early stages of learning to read.

**Grammar Conventions:** the rules, or accepted practices, that govern the use of grammar in written or spoken language.

**Graphophonics (Phonics):** referring to the relationship between the letters and the letter sounds of a language.

**Guided or Supported Reading:** a method by which an experienced reader provides structure and purpose, and models strategies in order to move beginning readers towards independence.

**Inference:** drawing meaning from a combination of clues in the text without explicit reference to the text. "The sky was dark and cloudy so I took my umbrella." We can infer that it might rain even though the text does not say that.

**Invented Spelling:** an attempt by beginning writers to spell a word when the standard spelling is unknown, using whatever knowledge of sounds or visual patterns the writer has.

**Inversions:** reversal or "flipping" of letters either horizontally or vertically, i.e.: p - d; or d - b; m - w; u - n. Not unusual for Emergent writers or readers.

**KWL chart (Know, Want to know, Learned):** a pre-reading or during-reading activity to support understanding in which adult and child develop a chart organized in three columns: 1) things the child already Knows about a specified topic, 2) what the child Wants to know about the same topic, and 3) what the child Learns about the topic after reading about it.

**Language Experience Approach:** a method of teaching reading by using the reader's own dictated language.

**Language Structure:** the organization of words (both spoken and written) into meaningful segments (phrases or sentences) using conventions of grammar and syntax.

**Letter Recognition:** the identification of individual letters by name and / or sound in a variety of contexts.

**Letter / Sound Association:** making a connection between individual letters and the sounds they represent (graphophonics).

**Linguistic Approach:** a reading approach based on highly regular spelling patterns. Such as:  
Nat the cat sat on the mat.

**Miscue:** any substitution of a word in a text that a reader makes.

**Miscue Analysis:** an examination of reading errors or substitutions (miscues) as the basis for determining the strengths and weaknesses of students' reading skills.

**Modeled Reading:** an experienced readers' oral reading of a text to aid students in learning strategies, understanding intonation and expression, and the use of punctuation, among other aspects of reading.

**Pattern Story or Cumulative Story:** a story that has many elements or language patterns repeated until the climax; a predictable text.

**Phonemic Awareness:** awareness of the sound system of spoken language including individual sounds, rhyming, components of words, etc.

**Phonics:** the letter / sound relationships in language, and also the relationship of spelling patterns to sound patterns.

**Phonics Approach:** teaching reading and spelling in a way that stresses the connection between letters and the sounds they represent, teaches the dissection of words into parts and then blending the sounds together again. Phonics can be taught directly, or can be incorporated in ongoing reading and writing.

**Picture Cues:** use of images that accompany and reflect the content of a text to help readers figure out words and understand the meaning of text.

**Picture Walk:** a pre-reading strategy: an examination of the text looking at pictures to gain an understanding of the story and to elicit story related language in advance.

**Prereading Strategies:** activities that take place just before reading, like reviewing a book cover or looking at the pictures, predicting, and formulating questions; these strategies provide students with valuable information about the text and prepare them for reading.

**Print Conventions / Conventions of Print:** the understandings an individual has about the rules or accepted practices that govern the use of print in the use of written language: for example concepts about print include: reading left to right, top to bottom, words are made of letters, use of spaces between words, use of upper case letters, spelling patterns, punctuation, etc.

**Reversals:** the result of reversing the order of letters in a word (tap/pat), or confusing similar letters such as d - b, or writing letters backwards. Not uncommon with Emergent readers and writers.

**Self Monitoring:** paying attention to one's own reading process while reading, and taking steps to reread or make corrections as needed to make sense of the text.

**Semantics:** the study of the meaning in language; the analysis of the meanings of words, phrases, sentences.

**Shared Reading:** when children are involved in reading a text with an adult in such a way that the adult models strategies and concepts such as predicting and noticing letter patterns. Helpful with very early readers in developing concepts about print such as "word" and directionality.

**Sight Word:** A word that is immediately recognized as a whole and does not require word analysis for identification.

**Sound(ing) Out:** using phonics to figure out words.

**Story / Text Structure:** a set of conventions that govern different kinds of texts such as characters, plot, settings, or in an informational text, comparison and contrast.

**Syntax:** the pattern or structure of word order in sentences, clauses and phrases; the grammatical rules that govern language.

**The Writing Process:** a view of teaching writing as an ongoing process involving several steps such as: planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing.

**Trade Book:** a book published and made available, for sale, to the general public.

**Visual Information:** information that is accessed through visual means such as the size and shape of a word, format, pictures, diagrams, etc.

**Word Analysis / Word Attack Strategies:** the process of using strategies to figure out or decode unfamiliar words.

**Word Families:** a group of words that share a common feature or pattern, for example: *stay*, *play*, *day*, *hay* are all part of the *ay* family, and *stick*, *stop* or *stuff* are part of the *st* family.

## Resources:

### The America Reads initiative:

The Department of Education's America Reads website:

<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/>

The Corporation for National Service

<http://www.cns.gov/areads/aread.htm>

### Online articles about phonics and reading instruction:

Reading Online -- the on line journal of the International Reading Association

<http://www.readingonline.org/critical/phonics/full.html>

Education Commission of the States

<http://wwwlecs.org/ecs/237e.htm>

### Other interesting information about literacy:

International Reading Association's on line journal:

<http://www.readingonline.org>

National Service Resource Center

[www.etr.org/nsrc](http://www.etr.org/nsrc)

Other Sites

<http://www.yahoo.com/education/literacy/>

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# Preparing for the America Reads Challenge Ideas from Bank Street College

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