

Phonics Guide for Teachers



Overview

This phonics guide provides a step-by-step approach for teachers to introduce early reading skills, starting from alphabet recognition and distinguishing between vowels and consonants. It emphasizes teaching letter sounds (not names), focusing on initial sounds, short vowel pronunciation, and consonant sounds. The guide supports blending and segmenting skills, helping children build and decode CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. It serves as a practical toolkit for teaching foundational phonics and early literacy in an engaging, structured way.



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Alphabet – Sound Learning

(When introducing new letters and sounds to children, it's best to focus on letter sounds and not focus only on letter names. Also try to use as many tactile materials; movement and senses as possible. This helps students not only to be more engaged but also helps them to remember and reinforce the knowledge as the more senses they are using, the more brain power they are using.

1. Start with Letter-Sound Correspondence:

Begin by introducing the connection between letters and their sounds. Teach children the sounds of individual letters, such as /s/ for the letter 's.' Use visual aids like flashcards or posters to associate the letter with its sound. You can say, "This is the letter 's,' and it makes the /s/ sound, like in 'sun' or 'snake.'"

2. Use Multisensory Techniques:

Incorporate multisensory activities to engage children in a variety of learning experiences. For example, you can create tactile materials like sandpaper letters or magnetic letters, where children can trace the letter's with their finger while saying the sound aloud. This approach helps reinforce the connection between the letter's shape, sound, and feel. They are fully engaged with all their senses as they are learning.

3a. Listening Acquisition:

Encourage children to listen attentively to the sounds they hear in words. Engage them in activities where they identify and discriminate between different sounds, including the /s/ /a/ /t/ sound. Play listening games, where the children must identify the target sound said by the teacher and pick the correct letter (use sandpaper letters, flashcards or even the magnetic letter box). You may also have colouring in sheets that when the child hears the sound they can colour the corresponding letter.

3b. Sound Production:

Encourage children to practice producing the sound accurately in isolation.

Once children have developed a good understanding of the /s/ sound, provide examples of words or short phrases containing the /s/ sound and have them repeat after you. Offer gentle guidance on correct tongue placement and airflow for producing the sound.

4. Practice with Phonics Games and Songs:

Make learning phonics enjoyable by incorporating games and songs into your teaching. Ensure games are kinesthetic, meaning the children are using all their senses and body. This makes learning fun but also helps the child stimulate more sensorial and brain activity to make learning better. For example, making body or hand gestures in the shape of letters; using 3D letters like movable alphabet and sandpaper letters; phonics mystery bag; phonics fishing games; phonics scavenger hunt; sand tray etc.

Singing songs that emphasize the letter 's' sound can also reinforce recognition. For instance, you can sing a song like "Silly Sammy starts with 's'" to make it memorable and engaging.

5. Engage in Word Sorting Activities:

Help children recognize words with the target letter sound by engaging in word sorting activities. Provide them with a mix of picture cards and objects, representing items with different initial sounds. Have them sort them, placing all the objects with the /s/ sound in one group. This activity encourages children to listen for the letter sound and identify it in various words.

Initial Sounds

This stage could happen simultaneously with letter-sound learning. The key takeaway is that it will take more time for children to independently identify and produce letters and sounds in words. Children also do not need to learn the entire alphabet and then move on to initial sounds, they can identify initial sounds with key letter/sounds while still learning the other letter/sound combinations.

1. Introduce Initial Sounds:

Begin by explaining the concept of initial sounds to children. Explain that the initial sound is the first sound they hear at the beginning of a word. Provide examples of words and emphasize the initial sound, such as 'sun' (with the /s/ sound) or 'cat' (with the /k/ sound).

2. Letter-Sound Connection:

Introduce the letters associated with the initial sounds you're teaching. Show the letter(s) associated with each sound and explain their connection.

For example, for the /b/ sound, show the letter 'b' and say, "This is the letter 'b,' and it makes the /b/ sound, like in 'ball' or 'bat.'"

3. Use Visual and Auditory Cues:

Use visual aids, such as word-cards, flashcards or objects, to represent words with different initial sounds. Show the flashcards or objects to the children and pronounce the words aloud, emphasizing the initial sound. Encourage children to listen carefully to the sound at the beginning of each word.

4. Practice Sound Discrimination:

Engage children in activities that focus on discriminating between different initial sounds. Provide sets of objects or picture cards and ask children to identify and sort them based on their initial sounds. For example, you could have cards representing a 'ball,' a 'dog,' and a 'car' and ask children to sort them based on whether they start with the /b/, /d/, or /k/ sound.

5. Word Building:

Guide children in forming simple words using the letters associated with the initial sounds. Provide a set of letter cards and encourage children to arrange them to create words with the target initial sound. For example, if focusing on the /c/ sound, give children "at" and a picture of a cat. The child must find "c," add it to the word family "at" to form the word "cat."

6. Reinforce with all Activities:

Encourage children to apply their knowledge of initial sounds while reading stories or learning new words. Ask children to identify initial sounds with different words throughout the week. You can also encourage children to identify final sounds.

Teaching Short Vowels

(This can also be done simultaneously when learning about CVC's, blending and segmentation)

1. Introduce the Concept of Vowels and Consonants:

Start by explaining to children the difference between vowels and consonants. Explain that vowels are the letters a, e, i, o, u and that they make distinct vowel sounds in words. Consonants, on the other hand, are all the other letters that are not vowels and have different sounds.

2. Highlight the Vowel Sounds:

Focus on teaching the vowel sounds and their association with the vowel letters. Use visual aids, such as vowel charts or posters, that display the vowel letters along with examples of words that contain those vowel sounds. Practice pronouncing words with different vowel sounds and encourage children to listen carefully to the distinct vowel sounds.

3. Emphasize Consonant Sounds:

Introduce various consonant sounds to children and provide examples of words that contain those sounds. Show visuals or use gestures to associate the consonant sounds with their corresponding letters. Encourage children to listen for the consonant sounds in words and identify them.

4. Sort Vowel and Consonant Letters:

Engage children in activities where they can sort letters into vowel and consonant categories. Provide letter cards, moveable alphabet or magnetic letters and have them categorize the letters based on whether they are vowels or consonants. Encourage discussions and provide guidance as needed.

5. Word Identification and Discrimination:

Guide children in identifying and discriminating between words that contain vowels or consonants. Use word cards or pictures and ask children to identify and sort them based on whether they have vowel or consonant sounds at the beginning, middle, or end of the word. This activity helps reinforce their understanding of the distinction between vowels and consonants in words.

6. Practice with Phonics Games and Activities:

Make learning vowels and consonants enjoyable by incorporating phonics games and activities. Use interactive online resources or create your own games where children can identify vowel and consonant sounds. For example, you could play a game such as magnetic fishing where children need to "fish" vowel sounds. Make sure to provide feedback and reinforcement throughout the game.

7. Apply in all activities

Encourage children to apply their knowledge of vowels and consonants in all activities while learning new words or during read-aloud lessons.

Teaching CVC's

1. Introduce the Concept of CVC Words:

Begin by explaining to children that CVC words are words that follow a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern.

Show examples of CVC words, such as 'cat,' 'dog,' or 'bat.' Highlight that each letter represents a sound, and these words are formed by blending the individual sounds together.

2.a Teach Segmentation:

Guide children in segmenting CVC words into individual sounds. Start with simple examples and say the word aloud, emphasizing each sound separately. For instance, with the word 'cat', pronounce /k/ - /æ/ - /t/. Encourage children to practice segmenting other CVC words as well.

3.b Practice Blending:

Introduce blending techniques by showing children how to blend individual sounds together to form CVC words. Take a segmented CVC word like /k/ - /æ/ - /t/ and demonstrate how to blend the sounds together to say 'cat.' Encourage children to repeat the blending process with other CVC words.

3. Explore Word Families:

Explain to children that CVC words often belong to word families, where the initial and final consonants stay the same, while only the middle vowel sound changes.

Provide examples of word families, such as the 'at' family ('cat,' 'hat,' 'mat') or the 'og' family ('dog,' 'log,' 'fog'). Encourage children to recognize the patterns within word families.

4. Word Building Activities:

Engage children in hands-on activities to build CVC words. Provide letter cards or magnetic letters representing consonants and vowels.

Encourage children to create different CVC words by combining the letters and sounds. For example, they can use 'c,' 'a,' and 't' to form 'cat' or 'm,' 'a,' and 'n' to form 'man.'

5. Read and Match CVC Words:

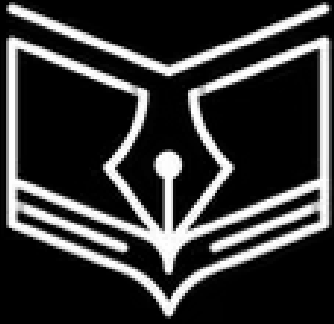
Present CVC word cards or a simple book with CVC words to children. Ask them to read the words and match them with corresponding pictures. This activity reinforces both reading skills and understanding of CVC word formation. Encourage children to sound out each letter and blend the sounds together to read the word.

6. Expand Word Families and Sentences:

Once children are comfortable with basic CVC words, introduce sight words with the word families they have learned.

Help them create sentences using CVC words and sight words to strengthen their comprehension and application.

For example, they can say, "The cat is on the mat" or "The dog is big."



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Thanks for Reading!

