

Phonics Routine: Sound-by-Sound Blending

Steps	Examples								
<p>Step 1: Introduce</p> <p>Explain the task and its purpose to students before beginning the activity</p> <p>Teacher Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blending is critical during initial phonics reading instruction Instruction and practice in blending must be explicit 	<p>Say: <i>Today we will practice blending sounds to make words. When I tap under a letter or spelling, you will say the sound. When I sweep my hand under two or more letters or spellings, you will blend the sounds together. When I slide my hand under the whole word, you will say the word. The more practice we have sounding out words with the letters and spellings we have learned, the better readers we will be.</i></p>								
<p>Step 2: Model - I Do</p> <p>Model blending with up to five examples. Use the signal techniques, such as tapping and sweeping with your finger. Additionally, be mindful of the pace of instruction. For example, note when to pause and wait for children's responses.</p> <p>Teacher Tips (Sequencing): <i>Note: V=vowel and C=consonant</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin modeling using VC words such as <i>an</i> and <i>at</i>. Make sure students have been taught all the individual sound-spellings in the word prior to blending. Continue with CVC words that begin with continuous sounds. Continuous sounds are sounds that can be stretched or prolonged, such as those made by the letters <i>f, l, m, n, r, s, v, and z</i>. 	<p>Say: <i>I will model for you how to blend words. Watch and listen.</i></p> <table> <tr> <td>Level 1: Teacher Model</td><td>Model only the first few times you do this routine.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Level 2: Oral Sounding Out</td><td>Use this level for many weeks or even months, until students become skilled at blending words. You will need to continue this level for children needing Strategic Intervention during Small Group Instruction.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Level 3: Internal Sounding Out</td><td>Begin to transition children to internal sounding out, or "sounding out in one's head," after months of practice doing it orally. It is important to show children how to internalize this strategy. Be sure to provide ample time for children to blend the word in their heads before saying it. Reinforce this level of blending during the reading of decodable text.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Level 4: Whole Word Reading</td><td>This is the goal of blending. Many children will naturally begin doing this as their blending skills improve because it is more efficient. You may have to remind children that they don't need to work through every word sound-by-sound if they have seen the word many times before.</td></tr> </table>	Level 1: Teacher Model	Model only the first few times you do this routine.	Level 2: Oral Sounding Out	Use this level for many weeks or even months, until students become skilled at blending words. You will need to continue this level for children needing Strategic Intervention during Small Group Instruction.	Level 3: Internal Sounding Out	Begin to transition children to internal sounding out, or "sounding out in one's head," after months of practice doing it orally. It is important to show children how to internalize this strategy. Be sure to provide ample time for children to blend the word in their heads before saying it. Reinforce this level of blending during the reading of decodable text.	Level 4: Whole Word Reading	This is the goal of blending. Many children will naturally begin doing this as their blending skills improve because it is more efficient. You may have to remind children that they don't need to work through every word sound-by-sound if they have seen the word many times before.
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- Next, move on to CVC words that begin with stop sounds (sounds that cannot be stretched) made by the letters *b, d, g, p, t, w, x*.
- Continue with the following sequence: CVCC words (mask), CCVC words (flat), CVCe (made), CVVC (road, CCVVC (float), CVVCC (roast) and then on to multisyllabic words.
- When blending multisyllabic words, blend syllable by syllable.
- Explicit blending instruction should be related to spelling instruction. This accelerates students' mastery of the sound-spelling correlation and helps students in using correct spelling in their writing.

Therefore, they should visually scan the word and see if they recognize it prior to beginning the blending of it.

Examples

*See [Levels of Modeling Blending Sounds](#) for sample teacher scripts for each level.

Step 3: Provide Guided Practice -We Do

Continue to use effective signaling, corrective feedback/monitoring, and pacing procedures during this level. Guided practice using choral whole-group responses should continue until children demonstrate knowledge of the skill. Throughout the task, provide corrective feedback/monitoring using the correction procedure below, as needed.

Teacher Tips:

As you listen to your students read, offer immediate feedback on errors made.

- This part of the lesson should be brief and take between 5-10 minutes maximum.
- It will be necessary to review the meanings of any unfamiliar words in the blending lines for English Learners and those with limited

Provide practice with blending words using signaling procedures described for each level. Be sure to use words that have the same spelling pattern. For instance, if you are working on the short u sound, only use words that have that spelling pattern such as *mud, tub, cup*, etc.

Say: *Your turn.* Point to each word as children chorally read them. Provide the appropriate corrective feedback noted in Step 4, as needed.

When chorally reading sentences, read each word deliberately. If the word can be sounded out using the phonics skills previously learned, say: *Sound out.* If the word is a high-frequency word formally taught, say: *Word?*

vocabularies. This should consist of a quick, student-friendly definition.

Step 4: Use Correction Procedure

When children make mistakes during blending, we need to look at the prerequisite skills required to blend words, such as:

- Phonemic Awareness skills needed to orally blend sounds
- Mastery of the individual sound-spellings that comprise the word.

The correction procedures enable you to go back and determine where the blending breakdown occurred.

To correct students who make a Sound Error:

- Model the sound that children missed, then have them repeat the sound. Take note of those sounds children consistently miss and provide needs-based reteach lessons during Small Group Instruction.
- **Say:** *My turn.* Tap under the letter and say: *Sound? /___/*. Then face the children and say: *Say it with me: /___/*. *Now it's your turn. Sound?*
- Then return to the beginning of the word. **Say:** *Let's try that again.*

To correct students who make a Blending Error:

- Model blending, using the appropriate signaling procedures. **Say:** *My turn.*
- Then lead students in blending the sounds. You will respond with the children to offer support. **Say:** *Do it with me.*
- Check for student mastery on each blending step. **Say:** *Your turn. Blend.*
- Then return to the beginning of the word. **Say:** *Let's try that again.*
- When completed, go back two words and repeat the word-reading steps, re-present the missed word, then continue.

Vowel-First Blending Error:

- If students struggle reading CVC words, use vowel-first blending.
- Point to the vowel, say its sound, and have children repeat. Then blend the word from the beginning.

Step 5: Provide Independent Practice – You Do

Random individual turns allow you an opportunity to quickly assess each child's skill level and provide additional practice opportunities for those children needing more practice before moving on in the lesson.

When it appears that the group is consistently answering all items correctly, provide individual turns as a check. Call on several students for one word each. Call on students in an unpredictable order. Call more frequently on students who have made errors.

Step 6: Reread for Fluency

As a final reading opportunity, have children quickly and chorally read the word lists and sentences. Children should read a word every two seconds. This will help to develop fluency with the words and spelling patterns before children read the Decodable Reader.

Say: *Let's read these words and sentences one more time quickly to "show what we know." I will point to each word as you read it aloud together. Then, we'll be ready to read our story for today.*

Levels of Modeling: Blending Sounds

Level 1: Teacher Model

1. Write *m* on the board. **Say:** *I will sound out a word to show you how to do it. When I tap under a letter, I will say its sound. Then you will repeat it.* Point to the letter *m*, tapping under it, as you say the sound /m/. Then **say:** *Sound?* Tap under *m*. Have children chorally say the sound /m/.
2. Write *a* on the board to form *ma*. Point to the letter, tapping under it, as you say the sound /a/. Then **say:** *Sound?* Tap under *a*. Have children chorally say the sound /a/.
3. Point just to the left of *ma*. Sweep under *m* and *a* and blend the sounds: /mmaaaa/. As you blend the sounds, stretch out each sound for 1 to 1½ seconds so children can hear each individual sound. Then **say:** *Blend.* Have children chorally blend the sounds as you sweep your finger under the letters.
4. Write *t* on the board to form *mat*. Point to the letter, tapping under it, as you say the sound /t/. Then **say:** *Sound?* Tap under *t*. Have children chorally say the sound /t/.
5. Point just to the left of *mat*. Sweep under *m*, *a*, *t* and blend the sounds /mmaaat/. Then **say:** *Blend.* Have children chorally blend the sounds as you sweep your finger under the letters.

Level 2: Oral Sounding Out

1. Write *m* on the board. Point to the letter, tapping under it. Then **say:** *Sound?* Have children chorally say the sound /m/.
2. Write *u* on the board to form *mu*. Point to the letter, tapping under it. Then **say:** *Sound?* Have children chorally say the sound /u/.
3. Point just to the left of *mu*. Sweep under *m* and *u*. Then **say:** *Blend.* Have children chorally blend the sounds /mmmuuu/ as you sweep your finger under the letters.
4. Write *d* on the board to form *mud*. Point to the letter, tapping under it. Then **say:** *Sound?* Have children chorally say the sound /d/.
5. Point just to the left of *mud*. Sweep under *m*, *u*, *d*. Then **say:** *Blend.* Have children chorally blend the sounds /mmmuud/ as you sweep your finger under the letters.
6. Point just to the left of *mud*. **Say:** *Word?* Slide your hand quickly under the word and chorally **say** *mud*.

6. Point just to the left of *mat*. **Say:** *Word?* Slide your hand quickly under the word and chorally **say:** *mat*.

Level 3: Internal Sounding Out

Tell students that today they will try to sound out words silently. They will say each sound “in their heads” as you point to it, then blend the sounds without speaking them. For the first few times you use this level, you will need to model it. For example, **say:** *Watch my mouth. I’ll say the sounds in this word to myself, then I’ll say the word.* Move your lips as you say each sound, then blend the word.

1. Write *r* on the board. Point to the letter, tapping under it. **Say:** *Sound?* Remind children not to say it out loud.
2. Write *oa* on the board to form *roa*. Point to the spelling, tapping under it. Then **say:** *Sound?*
3. Point just to the left of *roa*. **Say:** *Blend.* Sweep under *r* and *oa*. Have children silently blend the sounds as you sweep your finger under the letters.
4. Write *d* on the board to form *road*. Point to the letter, tapping under it. Then **say:** *Sound?*
5. Point just to the left of *road*. **Say:** *Blend.* Sweep under *r*, *oa*, *d*. Have children silently blend the sounds.

Level 4: Whole Word Blending

1. Write *soil* on the board. Tell students that you want them to quickly and silently blend the sounds to read the word.
2. **Say:** *When I point to the word, I want you to sound it out “in your head” without making any noise. When I signal, say the word out loud the fast way.* Point to the word, tapping under it. Pause 3 seconds to give children time to read it. Then **say:** *Word?*
3. Provide corrective feedback, as needed.

6. Point just to the left of *road*. **Say:** *Word?* Slide your hand quickly under the word. *Road*.