

FLY WITH PHONICS:

Engaging Activity Ideas for 3-8 Year Olds

By No Worksheets Allowed

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. What is Phonics?	4
2. Letter & Sound Learning Tips & Activities	5
3. Blending Tips and Activities	10
4. Segmenting Tips and Activities	15



What is Phonics?

- Phonics is a key strategy in the teaching of reading and spelling. 'Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way, starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex, it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read.' (Department for Education, 2013).
- Words are made up of sounds, called phonemes. A phoneme can be represented by between one to four letters (graphemes), such as 'igh' in light, or 'a' in man. Phonics teaches children each of these sounds and how to use them to read and spell.
- Blending is when children say the sounds which make up a word (not the letter names) and then merge them together until they can hear what the word is, e.g. c-a-t = cat. The blending of sounds helps children to decode unfamiliar or unknown words. Blending plays a very important role in the journey to becoming a fluent reader.
- Segmenting is the opposite of blending and teaches children to recognise the segments that form a word. It is when children 'stretch' out a word and then break it up into sounds, e.g. dog = d-o-g. This enables them to spell words.

LETTER & SOUND LEARNING TIPS & ACTIVITIES

Letter Learning Tips

- Initially, it is best to introduce the letter *sounds* rather than placing too much focus on their *names*. This makes blending to read simple 2 or 3 letter words far easier. As children progress, they will start to learn that some sounds can contain 2 or more letters, for example, 'ch' or 'ai'. They will then need to learn the letter names.
- Make sure that the sounds are pronounced correctly by children and adults! Sometimes people add /uh/ on the end of a sound (for example, /m/ becomes muh).
- Ask children to look in a mirror whilst saying the sounds, so that they can focus on the shape that their mouth should be making.
- It is more important to learn lower case letters first rather than capitals. This is because most early books consist mainly of lower-case letters! You *can* introduce the capital letters at the same time but focus more on the lower-case letter.
- Always demonstrate how to correctly form each letter. If you are a parent/guardian, ask your child's school to give you a sheet showing how they teach children to form each letter.

Peg It!



You Will Need

Card

Letter flashcards

Pegs

Instructions

- Write your focus letters for the week around the outside of a piece of card.
- Place a letter in the middle of the card.
- The child should peg the matching letters around the outside.

Letter Hunt



You Will Need

Cardboard tube

Scissors

Craft items

Glue

Letter flashcards

Instructions

- Make a telescope (or binoculars) and decorate.
- Hide letters (inside and out) for children to hunt for using their telescopes.
- When someone spots a letter, they should say its sound.

Loose Parts



You Will Need

Letter flashcards

Bag of loose parts (e.g. gems, pom poms, pebbles, petals)

Instructions

- Pick a letter flashcard and say the letter sound.
- Cover the letter using loose parts.
- Talk about the shape of the letter: does it have straight or curved lines, any holes in it, etc?

BLENDING TIPS & ACTIVITIES

Blending Tips

- Do lots of oral blending first, saying the sounds which make up the name of an object (e.g. c-u-p) or giving an instruction (e.g. Stand u-p).
- Start blending with words which have just two sounds, for example 'i-t' and then move onto words which have three sounds, such as 'm-a-n', 'ch-i-p'.
- Once a child can hear that the sounds go together to make a word, you can demonstrate blending with magnetic or wooden letters.
- Early readers will, '1. see the written word 'cat' 2. say the corresponding three phonemes /k /a/ /t/ 3. blend the three phonemes to say the word 'cat'. (Department for Education, July 2021)
- Vary the activities to keep learning fun.
- Teach blending daily; little and often is key.
- Say the first sound in the word the loudest. Children generally start blending with the loudest sound which they heard.
- Say the sounds faster and faster each time, to make hearing the word possible.
- Make learning hands-on and fun!

Dinosaur Blending



You Will Need

Toy dinosaur

Paper

Pens

Scissors

Instructions

- Draw dinosaur footprints on paper and cut them out.
- Write sounds on each of the footprints.
- Arrange the footprints to make a word.
- Move the dinosaur across the footprints, saying the sounds.
- Blend to read the word.

Blending Ramp



You Will Need

Ramp

Toy cars

Plain stickers

Instructions

- Write the sounds which you require on individual stickers.
- Stick the sounds on the ramp to make a word.
- Send the toy car down the ramp.
- Say each of the sounds as the car whizzes over them!
- Blend to read the word.

Hop Along!



You Will Need

Mats/hoops

Sound cards

Instructions

- Use mats or hoops and place a sound card on/in each one.
- Jump or hop along and say the sounds aloud.
- Blend to read the word.

SEGMENTING TIPS & ACTIVITIES

Segmenting Tips

- Segmenting is the ability to separate a word into its sounds (phonemes). It needs to be taught explicitly, alongside blending.
- A child should begin with oral segmenting, i.e. saying the sounds in a word out loud. They don't even need to know what the written letters and sounds (graphemes) look like at this stage.
- Begin by segmenting words made up of two phonemes, such as in (i-n), then three phonemes, such as cat (c-a-t) or shop (sh-o-p), before moving on to longer words. Teach children to listen for the sounds in words by asking them to stretch or chop up the word. They can use their fingers to count the number of sounds.
- Once a child can confidently 'sound out' (orally segment), they can begin to represent the sounds with letters (graphemes).
- The simplest way for children to see the written word is by using magnetic letters. Initially, you can just give them the letters which they will need to make the word.
- Once a child is getting to grips with handwriting, they can then begin to write the words.

Stretchy Segmenting



You Will Need

Rubber bands

Tape

Card

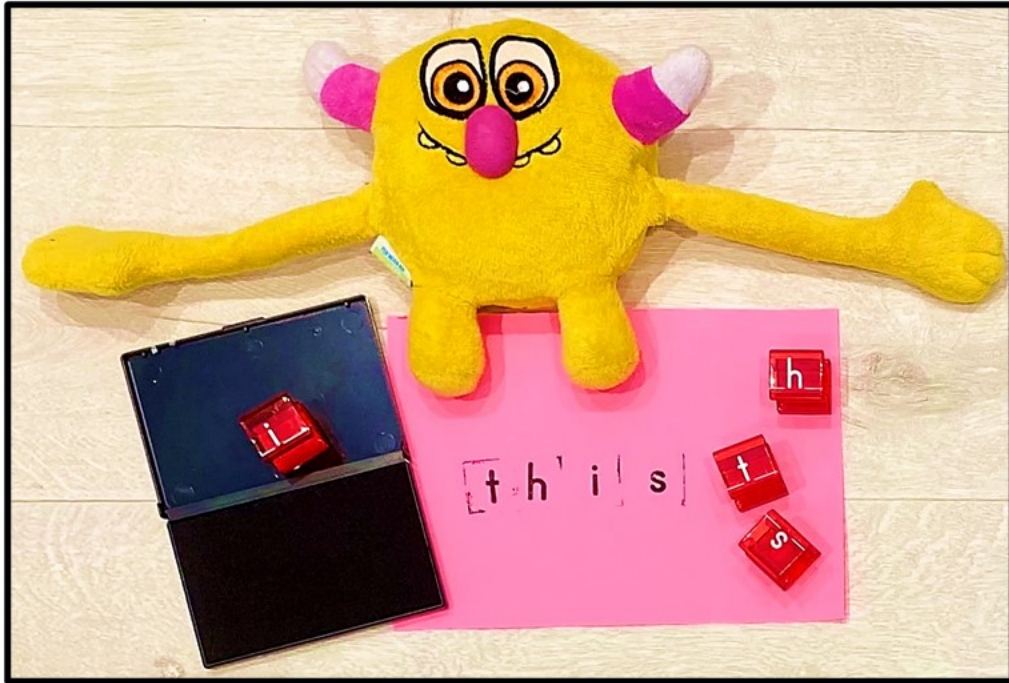
Pen

Scissors

Instructions

- Cut a rubber band so that you have one long piece.
- Cut squares of card and write a grapheme on each to make a word.
- Tape the squares of card onto your rubber band.
- Stretch the word to see which sounds it is made from.

Stretch and Spell



You Will Need

Stretchy toy, e.g. Stretch Armstrong or Stretchkin (or slime to stretch, if you don't mind a bit of mess!)

Alphabet stamps

Paper

Instructions

- Say a word to the children, e.g. this.
- Use the toy's arms to stretch the word out slowly so that you can hear all of the sounds, th-i-s.
- Repeat with different words.
- Segment to spell: make the words using letter stamps.

Soar with Segmenting



You Will Need

Toy aeroplane/rocket

Large piece of paper/wallpaper

Pens/pencils

Instructions

- Say a word to the children, e.g. fan.
- Ask the children to make their toy plane/rocket take off. Say the sounds in the word as it goes, f-a-n.
- Repeat with different words.
- Segment to spell: write the words on a large piece of paper.

Author's Note

Thank you for reading my book. I hope that they have brought your little learners on in leaps and bounds!

If you loved the book, I would really appreciate it if you could tell your friends about it. As a new author, your help in spreading the word is greatly appreciated!

Thank you, No Worksheets Allowed

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You can also find me at noworksheetsallowed.com

The activities in this freebie are taken from my three books, which are all available from Amazon. If you are interested in buying the complete versions, click on the images below:

