

Phonics Strategy

Strategy: Decoding: Consonant Blending & Digraphs

Appropriate Grade Level: K-5

Materials Needed:

- Reading material at the students' instructional reading level
- For examples of blends and digraphs see information listed below

Procedures/Steps: Preview the book finding words with blends and/or digraphs that may be unfamiliar to the students. Then,

1. Conduct a comprehension/vocabulary preview
2. Instruct the students that one way to read words that contain two consonants side by side (blends) or words with two consonants that make one sound (digraphs such as /th/), is to say the sounds of the two consonants or the digraph and blend the sounds with the sounds of the other parts of the word (i.e., say them quickly, one right after the other).
3. Instruct the students to look carefully at any unfamiliar word to identify word or vowel patterns before they say the sounds of the letters/patterns. For example, to decode *street* through blending, students should blend the /s/ and /t/. Then the student can say all the sounds, /st/, /r/, /ee/, /t/, blend them, and state the word, *street*.
4. Practice a few words in isolation.
5. Ask the student to begin reading. Tell them that as they come to unfamiliar words, they should try blending the sounds together to read the word.
6. Tell students who misread a word to return to the beginning of the sentence containing the misread word and read the entire sentence again correctly. Important step that must not be skipped to ensure comprehension!
7. Encourage comprehension by asking students questions about the content of the story.

Comments/Tips:

- Because of the patterned nature of the English language, blending words best with parts of the word (beginning consonants and ending consonants, for example). It will be very difficult for students to be successful in decoding if they use blending as their only strategy. Rather, blending is much more successful when it is coupled with other decoding strategies to read entire words.
- Initial Consonant Blends: bl-, br-, cl-, cr-, dr-, dw-, fl-, fr-, gl-, gr-, pl-, pr-, scr-, sl-, spl-, sp, spr-, squ-, st-, str-, sw-, thr-, tr-, tw-
- Final Consonant Blends: -ct, -ft, -ld, -lf, -lk, -lp, -lt, -mp, -nd, -pt, -rd, -rk, -rm, -rn, -rp, -rt, -sk, -sp, -st
- Consonant Digraphs: ch, ck, gh, kn, ng, ph, qu, sh, th, wh
- See Consonant Cluster Linking Chart in the Appendix.

Source: Scammacca, N., Vaughn, S., Roberts, G, Wanzek, J. and Torgesen, J. (2007). Extensive Reading Interventions in Grades K-3: From Research to Practice.