

Oral Blending and Segmenting

Oral Blending is the ability to hear the individual sounds in words and blend them together to identify the word. (E.g. m-o-p = mop)

Oral Segmenting is the opposite—separating the sounds in a word. (E.g. jam = j/a/m)

Note: Children must be secure in blending before segmenting.

Activity 1: Blending Sounds

“I have lots of pictures in my hand. Do you want to see what they are?”

“I’ll show you, but you have to guess first!”

“The first thing in my hand is a /sh...ar...k/.”

If they don’t know what it is, say it faster: /sh/ar/k/

If they still don’t know, say the sounds together: sh/ark or shar/k.

Display all the pictures and play a game of I-Spy:

“I spy with my little eye a /d...u...ck/.”

Activity 2: Splat the Words

Use a fly swatter, or let your child jump on the pictures.

“Can you splat the l/o/g?”

Once your child is confident with oral blending, ask them to have a turn at oral segmenting.

“I want to have a turn now. Can you sound out one for me to splat?”

“Don’t just say d/o/g—that’s too easy! Chop the word up for me.”

Every word has three sounds (or “chops”) that you can pretend to do with your hand on your arm:

“Like this—chop, chop, chop” (repeat 3x).

“This time, do it again, but instead of saying chop, chop, chop, say the sounds: d/o/g.”

Tip for Parents:

Remember to focus on saying the sounds clearly, not the letter names.

If your child struggles, it’s okay to slow down and repeat the activity. Mastery takes time, so celebrate the small wins along the way!

Additional Activities

Incorporate Oral Blending into Daily Life

The single best thing you can do to support your child’s early reading journey is to incorporate oral blending into your daily routine. Once they are secure in oral blending, they’ll be able to try oral segmenting (where they chop up the word).

Answering Questions with Sounds

When they ask everyday questions such as, “Where are we going?” try to chop up words in your answer. For words with more than one syllable, clap out the word. For example:

“We’re going to the sh/o/p, to n/a/n/s, t/ow/n.”

Keep it simple and fun!

Guess What’s in My Trolley Game

While waiting (for the bus, in the car, or at the doctor), play a game:

“Let’s play a game. I’m going to the shop, and you need to guess what I’m putting in my trolley.

The first thing I put in is some p/ea/s, p/ea/ch, br/ea/d, c/a/k.”

Listening Test Game

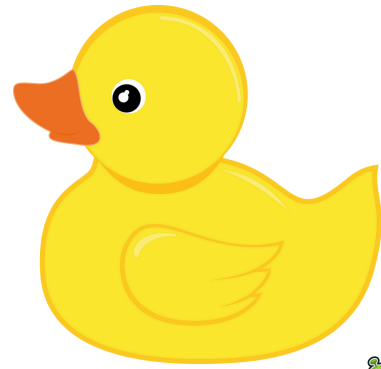
At any time, say:

“Let’s do a listening test! Put your hands on your h/ea/d, b/a/ck, l/e/g.”

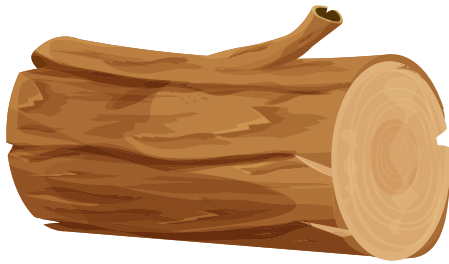
d-o-g



d-u-ck



l-o-g



m-ou-se



d-i-g



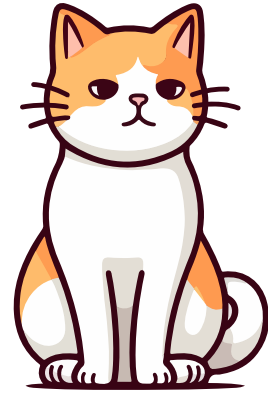
h-a-t



b-a-t



c-a-t



b-o-x



b-u-s



b-e-d



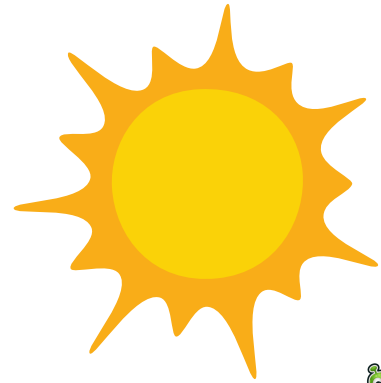
p-i-g



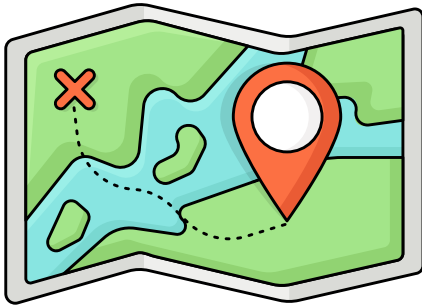
b-i-n



s-u-n



m-a-p



t-a-p



sh-ee-p



sh-ar-k

