

Introduction

When we learn to read and write, we are learning to use and make patterns with the 26 letters of the alphabet that represent the sounds we speak. Phonics breaks spoken language into its component sounds. The best way to master phonics for reading and phonics for writing is to first be introduced to the rules that make print work, and then, to actually practice using those rules!

Reading and writing are best taught concurrently, beginning in kindergarten. Students who have graduated from our Hatchling Volume 1 and Hatchling Volume 2 will have been introduced to the whole of phonics and a significant body of sight vocabulary. They will have been introduced to the four types of sentences, they will have created simple weekly journal entries and they will have practiced and reviewed... *practiced and reviewed!*

Does this mean reading and writing have been mastered? By NO means!

No matter which curriculum has been used to introduce the primary student to phonics, it takes years of ongoing practice in order to read and write and think boldly.

Beginning in Grade 2, students using our curriculum graduate from Hatchling to the Earlybird Level. Here, they will begin the work of putting all the pieces together as they construct ideas. Utilizing our Earlybird level and beyond, students will be constructing their ideas, and as they do, they will be solidifying and mastering their ability to use phonics, with ease and fluidity.

Description

The following lists are BIG words that students in 2nd grade and above will be able to decode (“read”) with ease.

Utilizing one word per week, your student will be actively engaging in the focused work of learning how to spell. Our method is scientific in nature, allowing students to participate in the work of creating a taxonomy for lists of words that will enable them to understand the nature of that word’s specific phonics and purpose. Our method is also like a game that will enable students to enjoy a process that is often presented as a tiring task of memorization.

Each week, students will actively engage in the art of creating words by constructing them from the scrambled letters of another single word. How many words can you construct from the word *explore*? Answer: More than 50! Through this activity, students will be practicing spelling across the entire spectrum of phonics.

While this method is designed to be the next step after the introduction of phonics in Hatchling V1 and V2, or the equivalent, engaging in this activity week after week will also provide solid remediation for the elementary, or even middle-school, student who needs a bit more practice and inspiration to write.

Getting Started

The following exercises require the use of a Moveable Alphabet. The tactile interaction with the letters is an important part of the learning process. We recommend Montessori type sets that differentiate consonants and vowels by color, but just about any set of alphabet letters will do. If you don't have one, you can purchase one here:

blackbirdandcompany.com/product/moveable-alphabet

Day 1: Discover Words and sort by word length.

Choose any BIG word from the list (words can be used in any order). Now, inside the lid of your moveable alphabet, or on an uncluttered work surface, spell the BIG word you have chosen for the week without letting your student see. Scramble the letters and present the scrambled letters to your student, keeping the BIG word a secret to be discovered.

Print the Day 1 worksheet

Instruct your student to begin by using the scrambled letters to make all the two letter words that can be found, writing each in the correct column on the worksheet as they go. Next, move on to three, four, and five letter words, writing each as they go. Students may not be able to discover every word in each category, but should try to get as many as possible. Every word spelled is another seed of learning planted. Students can keep on working until they discover the longer words, and eventually, the BIG word. Students may need help finally getting to the BIG word, but always try to be a field guide, pointing toward a path of discovery.

Click through to the video corresponding to your word and allow your student to watch and see how many words they are able to discover,, encouraging them to write these words on their worksheet.

Or, if needed, use the video for inspiration to help students get started. Watch again and again like a scavenger hunt.

Day 2: Sort (and sort again!)

Now that so many words have been discovered, learning to group and sort in different ways reinforces memory of the words themselves, and, more importantly, teaches students to recognize common sounds and patterns that will become second nature and apply to everything they read and write, exponentially enhancing their ability to decode (read) and encode (write).

Print the Day 2 worksheet

Use the Day 2 worksheet to re-sort in a new way and write the words from your Day 1 Worksheet.

There are many different ways to sort words, the following are just a few suggestions to get you started.

Day 2 (continued)

1. Sort by Phonics

Short Vowel Patterns:

CVC Words – These are three-letter words (*consonant + short sound vowel + consonant*) like *cat, hut, and mop*.

CCVC, CVCC, and CCVCC – These are four and 5 letter words (*consonant + consonant + short sound vowel + consonant, etc.*) that utilize consonant blends and/or digraphs, like *fish, blast, and spent*.

Long Vowel Patterns, Vowel Combinations, Double Consonants, Bossy R Words, Word Endings

2. Sort by number of syllables

3. Sort by similar sounds

4. Sort by parts of speech

Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, Pronouns, Articles, Prepositions

5. Alphabetize

Day 3

Copy each word beautifully into a journal. You can use our “Day 3” worksheet.

Create a special place to keep your words using a notebook, composition book, diary, or other journal.

Day 4

Print the Day 3 worksheet

Choose your 7 favorite words and write each in a sentence telling what you like about the word using as many specific details as possible:

I like the word “pie” because I love to make, eat, and smell apple pie.

Day 5

Print the Day 5 worksheet

Spelling Test – Choose 12 words to check for spelling.

Your student, after the week’s activities, will have engaged in significant practice.

Use the first column for the test, use the second column to re-write, or re-test for any corrections needed.