

Effective Enhancements for Foundational Skills Instruction: Make Foundational Skills Instruction More Fun!

By enhancing your foundational skills instruction with engaging activities, you'll make important learning opportunities feel like fun and games to learners! For each of the suggestions below, consider how you will adapt the content of the activity to match your scope and sequence of skills and students' needs.

Want a quick refresher on the difference between print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency? See this handy [one-pager](#).

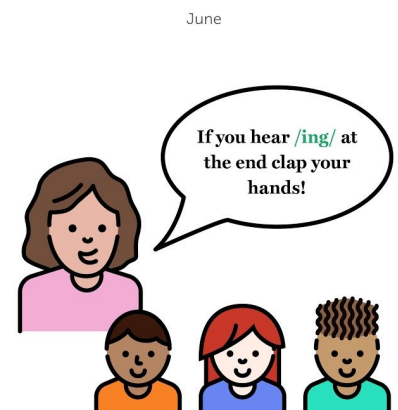
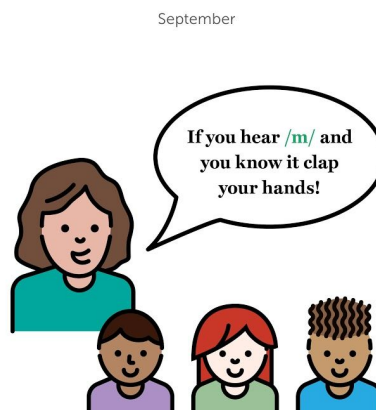
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Print Concepts

- **"Be the Sentence":** Write each word of a sentence on a piece of paper and ask students to arrange themselves in order. Then discuss features of the sentence such as spacing, capitalization, number of words, and punctuation.
- **Lights Out Letters:** Use a flashlight and a large alphabet wall. Chant "Magic light, magic light, where will you go? Children tell me the letters that you know." Point the flashlight to a letter, asking students to identify the letter and discuss its features. See a video of this activity [here](#).

Phonological Awareness

- **Hungry Monster:** Use a puppet or picture of a "hungry monster." Speak one sound, syllable, or word part (in compound words) at a time and ask students to "feed" the monster the correct word by blending the parts together. You may even use printed or projected pictures of the foods for this activity. To see this effective enhancement in action, check out [this video](#).



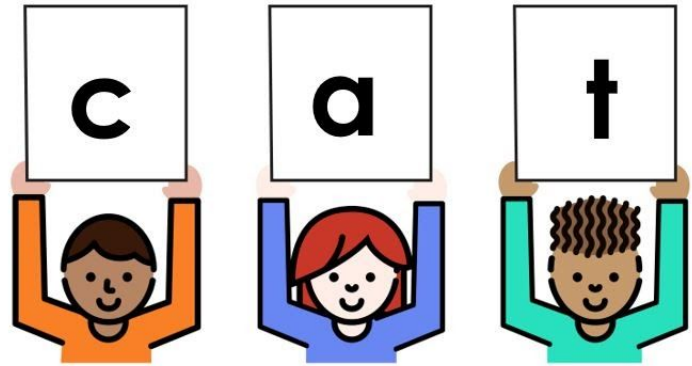
- **If You're Happy and You Know It:** Turn a task into a song by setting it to the lyrics of kid-friendly tunes, e.g., "If you hear /s/ and you know it, clap your hands." "If you think you know the word, yell it out!"
- **Stand Up/ Sit Down:** Turn word sorts into an opportunity for movement. "Stand up if you hear a word with ----" or "sit down if you see the sound ----" can add movement to a basic task.
- **Sound Riddles:** Provide students with riddles with the target sound (e.g., for /k/ I'm thinking of something that you wear when it's cold.). Give students a few seconds to think before answering chorally. To see a video of sound riddles in action, check out [this video](#).
- **Do You Speak Robot?** Turn your blending oral routine into a game by teaching students that you (or a puppet!) speak robot- one sound at a time. Students must listen to the segmented

sounds and blend them together to understand the words. To see a variation of this activity using onset and rime blending, check out [this video](#).

- **Snap/Clap/Stomp When You Hear:** Give students a physical activity to do when they hear a sound and spelling pattern, rhyming word, or other stated task.
- **Freeze Dance:** Play music and let students dance. Have them freeze when they hear a given sound and spelling pattern, rhyming word, or other stated task.

Phonics & Word Recognition

- **Team Chaining:** Give each student a card with a taught sound and spelling pattern. Call out a word and invite students up to the front to spell the word with their individual sound and spelling cards. Ask other students to provide feedback to the spelling team. See this [video example](#).
- **Head, Shoulders, Toes:** Blend written words with a physical activity like touching parts of your body for each sound in a word. For example, with “cat,” students read “c” (touch head), “a” (touch shoulders), “t” (touch toes), and then “cat” again. Note: this activity could also be adapted to incorporate other movements like dribbling for each sound and spelling pattern and then shooting a basket to blend the written word together.
- **Hi-Five Your Neighbor:** Hi-Five a neighbor (or use a silent hand signal) to note when you see a target sound and spelling pattern throughout the day.
- **Let’s Hear It For:** Teach students to spell high-frequency words, or to learn word parts, by cheering for each letter. “Give me an A” “I’ve got your A, I’ve got your A!”
- **Whisper It, Shout It:** Vary any activity by simply varying the volume level for students when they are responding. Alternating between whispering and shouting, or adding other silly additions (say it like you’re underwater, say it in slow motion, mouth it with no sound) can bring the fun to a simple task.



Fluency

- **Choice of Voice:** Practice rereading a decodable text in a silly voice, e.g. “Read the text in a robot voice.” “Read the text in a mouse voice.”
- **Read to Me:** Ask students to read decodable texts out loud to a stuffed animal or celebrity of their choice (celebrity photo).

Stop to Reflect

How can you use effective enhancements to support practice with skills from your scope and sequence? How could you modify these activities (or substitute them) to better engage or reflect *your* students?

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