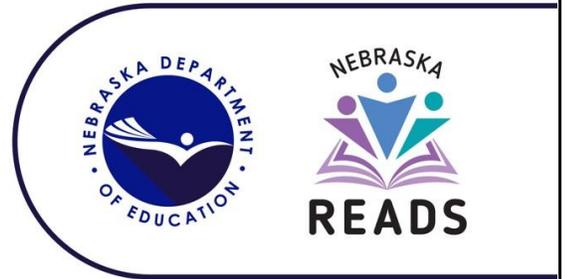




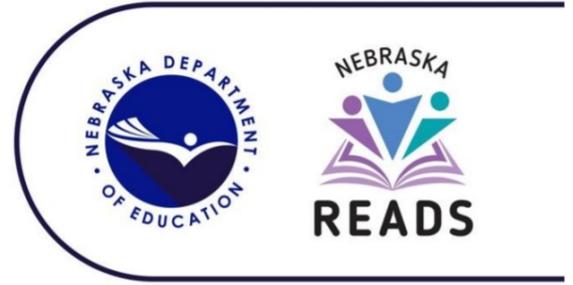
# Activities & Games to Support Early Literacy Skills

Kindergarten - 3rd Grade



Adapted with permission from the Mississippi Department of Education

# Activities & Games to Support Early Literacy Skills



The Nebraska Department of Education is dedicated to helping children reach their maximum potential as lifelong learners and proficient readers. This resource of activities and games was created to support the development of the foundational skills needed to become a skilled reader. Also included are video links demonstrating how common household materials can be used to practice these reading skills. These engaging games and activities can be adapted and changed as a child's reading ability grows.

**Be creative! Have fun!**



## It Takes a Community

**It takes collaborative partnerships between schools, educators, families, and communities to guarantee students are on the road to literacy success.**

# What is

# PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS?

*Phonological awareness* is the ability to recognize and work with sounds in spoken language. It is the foundation for learning to read.

Students with strong phonological awareness can:

- rhyme;
- count syllables;
- recognize sounds alone and in words;
- add, remove, and substitute sounds in words;
- break words into their different sounds and blend them back together; and
- isolate sounds.

# Phonological Awareness Activities

## Rhyming Activities

- Using the most common word families, play a game where you and your child take turns thinking of rhyming words. Whoever comes up with the most for each word family wins!

Example: "What words can you think of that rhyme with -at?"

"Cat!" "Hat!"

"Rat!" "Fat!" "Gnat!"

- Using magazines, newspapers, and store advertisements, have your child look for pictures of objects that rhyme and cut them out. He/She can paste the pictures onto paper to create rhyme collages.
- Create picture cards with pairs of rhyming words. Separate the cards into two separate piles with one word from each pair in opposing piles. Take turns picking a card from each of the piles. If the words rhyme, say "rhyme time!" and keep those cards. If they don't rhyme, replace the cards in their original pile and keep playing.

Example:

<https://youtu.be/BXiWuB6XMfg>

### *The 37 most common word families in English are:*

#### **A**

ack, ain, ake, ale, all, ame, an, ank, ap, ash, at, ate, aw, ay

#### **E**

eat, ell, est

#### **I**

ice, ick, ide, ight, ill, in, ine, ing, ink, ip, it

#### **O**

ock, oke, op, ore, ot

#### **U**

- Play “I Spy” with your child, but instead of naming a color, say, “I spy something that rhymes with\_\_\_\_\_.” Take turns with your child playing the game. Encourage the use of nonsense words as rhyming clues.
- Give your child a list of three words where only two rhyme. Ask them to identify which word does not belong.
- Read a rhyming picture book aloud to your child. Pause at the end of the sentences to let your child guess the rhyming word that finishes the phrase. Talk about which words rhyme.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/hYKzgymUoJs>
- Help your child read a simple rhyming passage. Start by asking your child to read a list of rhyming words, and then incorporate them into a sentence.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/Qs4YuoAxrsI>
- Sing rhyming echo songs, such as “Boom Chicka Boom.” Come up with a motion for each rhyme you create and act it out.

# Alliteration Activities

- If your child struggles to hear the alliteration in a phrase or sentence, practice with words beginning with the following sounds: /f/, /h/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /s/, /v/, /z/. These sounds can be drawn out to emphasize their placement at the beginning of each word. Come up with simple phrases where the words all begin with the same sound. Say the phrase and have your child repeat it back, drawing out the beginning sound.  
Example: “Sssneaky sssnakes ssslide and ssslither.”
  
- Ask your child to think of words to describe the objects they see. Tell your child the word used has to start with the same sound as the word they are describing.  
Examples: “delicious donut,” “bouncy ball,” “green grass”
  
- Play a game where you and your child take turns finding objects around the house to use in silly alliteration sentences. See who can use the most words beginning with the same sound in their sentence.  
Example: “Sister’s stinky sock smells sour.”
  
- Have your child think of silly names for themselves, family, and friends. The new names must be at least three words long, and all of the words in the name must begin with the same sound as the person’s regular name.  
Examples: “audible Audrey Octopus,” “hairy helpful Henry,”  
“creative character Kim,” and “picky pal Parker”
  
- Practice tongue twisters.  
Familiar tongue twisters:
  - Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
  - He sells seashells by the seashore.
  - How much wood would a woodchuck chuck?

# Sentence Segmentation

- Recite a nursery rhyme line by line to your child. After each line, ask your child how many words were heard in that line.

Example: "Do you know the Muffin Man,"

"6 words!"

"Who lives on Drury Lane?"

"5 words!"

*Alternate version:* Recite a favorite poem verse or song lyric to your child. Have your child clap for each word heard in each line.

- Use any board game and pieces you have available at home (Candyland, Chutes and Ladders, Life, Monopoly, etc.). Tell your child you will take turns saying a sentence. For every word in the sentence, the other player will move one space. Take turns giving the sentences and moving pieces. The first player to the end wins.

## Syllable Activities

### **Familiar Nursery Rhymes:**

Mary Had a Little Lamb  
Baa, Baa, Black Sheep  
Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star  
Hey, Diddle, Diddle  
Jack and Jill  
I'm a Little Teapot  
The Muffin Man  
This Little Piggy  
Three Blind  
Mice Itsy Bitsy

- Show your child pictures of family members and friends. Ask your child to say the name of the person, then to count the number of syllables in each name. If your child has trouble identifying syllables, have him/her wrap their hands around their neck under the jaw and say the name again. Each time the chin drops, it is a syllable!
- Play "Jumping Syllables" with your child. Model how to play the game by giving them a two-syllable word. As you say each syllable, open your right hand, then your left hand. Then cross your hands, showing how you are jumping the syllables to make a new, silly word.

Example: "pen/cil" becomes  
"cil/pen"

- Read a picture book aloud to your child. Pause throughout the story and ask your child to identify how many syllables are in a certain word. Help them clap out the syllables for extra practice.

Example: <https://youtu.be/n1C4L8y95kM>

- Practice counting syllables for different household objects. Help your child count the syllables in a word by clapping once for each syllable.

Example: <https://youtu.be/pcTDCoR-NsY>

- Roll a dice. Take turns brainstorming words with as many syllables as the number rolled.

- A vowel-r syllable pattern has a vowel followed by an r (like doctor or farm). Create a chart to practice these words by writing the word on one side followed by empty columns for the word sounds. Help your child write the letter sounds in the columns and underline the vowel r-syllable patterns. Next, help your child draw a connecting curve under the syllables of the word.

Example: <https://youtu.be/hPyzxqa8VcQ>

- The floss rule means that when a single syllable word ends in f, l, or s, then double the final letter. (Example: fall, floss, ball). Create a chart that is titled floss rule words on one side and exceptions to the rule on the other side. Say a word and ask your child to determine if the floss rule applies to the word. Ask your child to write the word in the appropriate column.

Example: <https://youtu.be/N0SftHCxTIU>

# Onset and Rime Activities

- Play a word guessing game with your child. Give your child clues one at a time, describing the onset and rime. Once your child understands how to play, take turns giving the clues.

Examples: "It begins with the /r/ sound and rhymes with 'bug'." (rug)

"It begins like 'bed' and ends like 'rest'." (best)

"It ends with /op/ and begins like 'tool'." (top)

- Help your child say the individual sounds in simple words. Ask your child to say the first, middle, and last sound in different words.

Example: [https://youtu.be/SPKRN\\_sXcVs](https://youtu.be/SPKRN_sXcVs)

- Create flashcards with pictures representing simple words (like car or lamp). Cut each flashcard in half vertically. Ask your child to name each card, then mix up the halves. When your child picks up the first half of any card, have them name the beginning sound of that word. Ask them to find the matching half and name the ending sound of the word. Then, ask them to say the word altogether.

Example: [https://youtu.be/xb8hJSG\\_YYU](https://youtu.be/xb8hJSG_YYU)

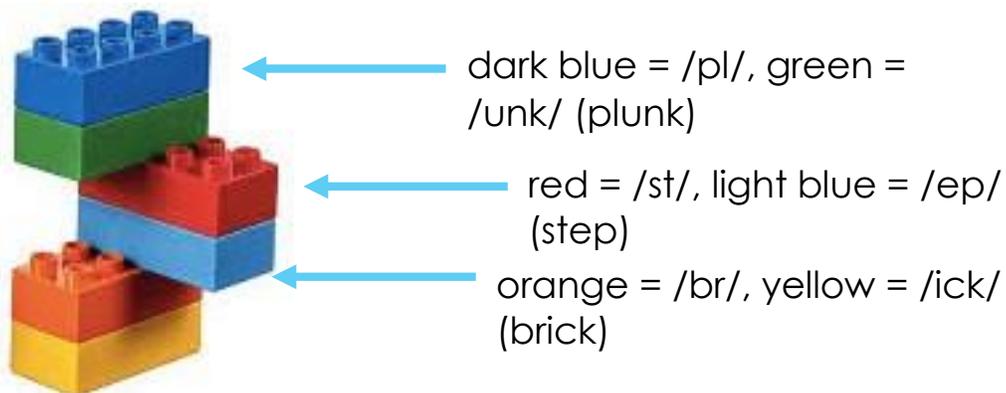
- Turn words into a math problem. Ask your child to solve the equation to build words, using onset and rime.

Examples: "What plus 'et' makes the word *net*?" (/n/)

"/h/ plus what makes the word *hippo*?" (ippo)

- Use different colored building blocks to represent onset sounds and rime sounds. Lock different block combinations together, and say what word is represented. Change the onset blocks to make rhyming words, change the rime block to make new words.

Examples:



*Note: Phoneme Activities should be done in the order listed. Follow the arrow to move down the phoneme mastery progression.*

# Phoneme Activities

- Give your child a list of three words and ask him/her to identify which two begin with the same sound.  
Example: "Which words begin with the same sound: *paper*, *pickle*, or *dish*?"
- While out, name different items you see. Ask your child to tell you the first sound heard in each word you give. After your child can successfully tell you the beginning sound, have him/her tell you the last sound.  
Examples: "What is the first sound in *road*?" "/r/"  
"What is the ending sound in *road*?" "/d/"
- Create a list of words that can be changed by adding a letter sound. Example: ice becomes nice when you add "n". Read a word from the list and ask your child to repeat the word. Then, ask your child to add the new letter sound to the word and say the word altogether.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/RPlxbRF52rM>
- Read "There's a Wocket in My Pocket" aloud to your child. While reading, pause to talk about how the first sound of different words is changed to make a silly word in the book.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/NjP0k9p0MpE>
- Ask your child to write a simple word, like cat. Then, ask them to change the first letter to form a new word, like bat. Keep changing letters to form new words. Each time you change a letter, ask your child to write the new word.  
Example: [https://youtu.be/j\\_8DJLn0aPQ](https://youtu.be/j_8DJLn0aPQ)
- Write letters on individual pieces of paper. Write a word family like "ig" or "all" on a separate piece of paper. Leave space for your child to put new letters in front of the word family in order to form new words. Ask your child to form a new word and use it in a sentence.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/5K6WicXvYGs>
- Create picture cards of different words that are at your child's skill level. Ask your child to identify each sound for two words at a time. Help them identify whether the words are alike on the first sound, middle sound, or last sound.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/dJFO1klkdNM>
- Practice changing letters in a simple word in order to create a new word. (Example: hat to cat, bug to mug) Help your child write the old word and circle the letter that needs to change in order to create the new word. Then, ask your child to write the new word.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/KqK5T9jkbK8>
- Create flashcards of words containing /th/, /ch/, /sh/ at the beginning or end. You can also include some words that don't contain those sounds. Hold up the flashcards and ask your child to identify which spelling pattern the word contains.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/mPXlqyT3LSg>
- Brainstorm simple words and ask your child to tell you what middle sound is heard.  
Examples: "What is the middle sound in *sun*?" "/u/"  
"What is the middle sound in *hatch*?" "/a/"

- Turn words into a cheer. Use the following cheer to practice breaking words into their sounds. Replace the words you use each time you cheer.

Cheer: "Listen to my cheer, then shout the sounds you hear.

*Cat! Cat! Cat!* (Note: These are the words you will change.)

Give me the beginning sound! /c/

Give me the middle sound! /a/

Give me the ending sound! /t/

That's right!

*/c/ /a/ /t/ - Cat! Cat! Cat!*

- Using pennies, pom-poms, different colored blocks, or other similar materials, push an object toward your child for each sound in the word you are thinking of while making the sound. Ask your child to put the sounds together and tell you what word you just said. After he/she can successfully blend the sounds together, ask your child to break words apart into their separate sounds.

Examples: "What word am I saying? /ch/ /a/ /t/" "*Chat.*"

"What are the sounds in *chat*?" "/ch/ /a/ /t/."

- Play a word ladder game with your child. See how many words you can make by changing one sound at a time. Add sounds to the beginning or end of the word. Once your child can successfully add sounds, change the sounds to make new words.

Example 1: "Say *top*. What word do you have if you add /s/ to the beginning?"

"*Stop.*"

"Say *stop*. What word do you have if you add /t/ to the end?"

"*Stopped.*"

Example 2: "Say *dog*. Change the /d/ to /f/. What is your new word?"

"*Fog.*"

"Say *fog*. Change the /g/ to /l/. What is your new word?"

"*Fall.*"

- Play Robot Talk with your child. Tell your child you will say a word like a robot, and he/she need to guess what you are saying. To sound like a robot, break the word into individual sounds. Say the word in a silly robot voice to make it more fun.

# What is PHONICS?

*Phonics* is the ability to understand the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent. This includes:

- recognizing print patterns that represent sounds;
- syllable patterns; and
- word parts (prefixes, suffixes, and root words).

## Vowels

a, e, i, o, u, y

## Consonants

b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z

## Common Consonant Digraphs and Blends

bl, br, ch, ck, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gh, gl, gr, ng, ph, pl, pr,  
qu, sc, sh, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, th, tr, tw, wh, wr

## Common Vowel Digraphs

ai, au, aw, ay, ea, ee, ei, eu, ew, ey, ie, oi, oo, ou,  
ow, oy

## Common Consonant Trigraphs

nth, sch, scr, shr, spl, spr, squ, str, thr

# Phonics

## Activities

### Letter-Sound Recognition Activities

- Write a letter on one end of each popsicle stick. On two or three other popsicle sticks, write KABOOM. Put all sticks letter-end down in a cup. Take turns pulling popsicle sticks from the cup. Each time you pull a stick, say the letter name and the sound the letter makes. If a KABOOM stick is drawn, that player must put all of their sticks back into the cup. The game is over when all letter sticks have been pulled.
- Write letters on sticky notes, and spread them out across a table top. Say a letter sound and have your child swat the letter that makes the sound.  
*Alternate version:* Once your child learns all of the letter sounds, you can say a word and have your child swat the letters that spell the word (in order).
- Use sidewalk chalk to draw a hopscotch formation. In each box, write a letter. On the squares that go two across, write the letters found in digraphs or blends. When your child jumps on a square, he/she will say the letter's name and sound. When your child jumps on the crossbar, he/she will say the name and sound of the letter in the left box, then the right box, then shout the sound the digraph or blend makes together.  
*Alternate version:* Play the game with only vowels, but have your child give the long and short vowel sounds. Crossbars can have vowel digraphs.
- Identify which letters and sounds your child needs help with. Write the focus letter names on sticky notes and stick them to bowls (one bowl for each letter). Collect small toys and objects from around the house. Have your child say the name of an object and sort it into the bowl with the correct letter.
- Create cards with pictures of simple objects that contain a short vowel sound. Create a card for each short vowel sound. Help your child match the word on the picture card to the correct short vowel card.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/EGf2IL9eALg>
- Place magnetic letter tiles on the refrigerator. Call out letter names or letter sounds, and have your child swat the appropriate magnet with a spatula.

- Write the alphabet in a letter arc, or a curved shape starting with A and ending with Z. Ask your child to identify various letters and letter sounds. You can also ask them to think of a word that starts with a certain letter.  
Examples: <https://youtu.be/QvN70v1QRHI> [https://youtu.be/\\_MPZ6KAKC9k](https://youtu.be/_MPZ6KAKC9k)
- Have your child use play clay to roll out and make the shapes of different letters. Call out the name or sound of the letters and watch them build the letter shapes.
- Print out a nursery rhyme on a piece of paper and read it to your child. After reading, ask your child to circle a certain letter (uppercase and lowercase) throughout the story. When your child circles each letter, ask them to make the sound for that letter. Ask your child to write the letter while saying its sound.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/-jkl7Plx834>
- Write letters on individual pieces of paper. Ask your child to spell a word using the letters. After your child spells the word correctly, ask them to name each letter sound in the word.  
Example: [https://youtu.be/AOzTD\\_z-6yM](https://youtu.be/AOzTD_z-6yM)
- Identify letters that your child needs extra practice identifying and sounding out. Using a piece of junk mail, help your child scan through a paper and identify each of these letters. Once they identify the letter, ask them to say the letter sound.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/CzhHCH0r3gA>
- Help your child learn how adding a silent “e” at the end changes the word. For example: plan changes to plane, at changes to ate. Explain how adding the silent “e” to these words makes the “a” say its name (long vowel sound).  
Example: <https://youtu.be/yKGL63QQUo4>
- Create a chart with different r-controlled vowels (ar, er, ur, or, ir). Read a word and ask your child to identify which r-controlled vowel they hear. After sounding out the word, ask your child to write the word in the appropriate column of the vowel chart.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/QKlw3-f6Cgc>
- Create a chart with various words that contain the long “o” vowel. Write the word with the letters that make the vowel sound missing. Ask your child to fill in the missing letters and say the word aloud. Talk about the word and its meaning.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/olDOvqyl-Eo>
- Vowel diphthongs happen in words that have two vowel sounds that combine in the middle of the word. Example: coin, boat, bean). Play Bingo with your child using words that contain vowel diphthongs. After reading the word, ask your child to identify which two vowels the word contains.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/WewWhd7VQnE>

# Word Blending Activities

- Cut a toilet paper roll or paper towel roll in half. On one half, write consonants, consonant blends, or consonant trigraphs spaced around the edge. On the other half, write rimes spaced around the edge. Put the pieces on the bottom of a wire clothes hanger. Have your child spin the rolls to make new words.
- Stack three Styrofoam or plastic cups. On the first cup, choose six consonants to write around the outside edge. On the middle cup, write the five vowels around the outside edge. On the third cup, write 6 consonants around the outside edge. Have your child spin the cups to create new words to read.

↓  
*Alternate version 1:* Replace the vowels on the middle cup with vowel digraphs.

*Alternate version 2:* Replace the consonants on the first and last cups with digraphs, blends, or trigraphs.

*Alternate version 3:* Add a fourth cup. Write *e, s, es, d, ed, ing* around the edge to create new words.

- Play word building board games such as Scrabble®, Boggle®, or Word Up® with your child.
- Write the names of six different letters on notecards or square pieces of paper, being sure to use vowels and consonants. Play a game with your child to see who can create the most words out of the letters given.
- Use magnetic letter tiles to practice reading word family words. Place two magnets beside one another to make a word family word. Let your child add different letters to the beginning of the word family letters to make new words. Have your child read the words fluently before building a new word.
- Spread a small amount of shaving cream on a table or counter top. Call out letter names or letter sounds and have your child write the appropriate letter in the shaving cream.
- Using letter beads, have your child make word jewelry by stringing together different beads on string or pipe cleaners to make words.



- Help your child practice spelling words using letter cut-outs. Start with words with two sounds (like it or up) and move to three sounds. Use the word in a sentence. Sound out the letters for each word as your child is working. Make corrections and praise your child's effort.

Example: <https://youtu.be/N0lvwxoNV8g>

- Using a picture card, help your child identify each letter sound in a word. Use small objects to place on the picture card to represent each sound in the word. Then, ask your child to say the whole word while sliding their finger across the picture.

Example: <https://youtu.be/Cwi2TctQYY0>

- Cut a paper into small squares and write various beginning letters on each square. On a different square of paper, write the end sound. (Example: the ending sound is "op" for mop, top, and pop, which have various beginning letters) Help your child create new words as you rotate between the beginning letters and sounds.

Example: <https://youtu.be/YqCmnbbVBjg>

- Cut up a note card and write different letters on each piece. Say a word for your child to build using the letters. As they pick each letter, ask them to say the letter sound. When the word is formed, ask your child to say the whole word together. You can also talk about the word meaning after it's spelled.

Example: <https://youtu.be/34cj31WTP6s>

- Create a chart with pictures of words at your child's level that rhyme (Example: sheep and sleep, chick and stick). Using cards with different letter sounds, help your child identify the letter sounds for each word. Help your child place the letter sounds on the chart and then say the word parts individually. Then, have your child blend the word parts together.

Example: <https://youtu.be/hhLImG-MkWA>

# Multisyllable Word Activities

- Write the most common English syllables on notecards. Hold the cards up and have your child practice reading the syllables.
- Have your child use newspapers, magazines, and books to hunt for words with a specific syllable. Have your child read the words and keep a list of all the words they collected for each syllable.  
Example: "Look! I found *table* and *apple* to go under Consonant-le, because *ta/ble* and *ap/ple* both have consonants followed by the letters -le in the second syllable!"
- Write the most common English syllables on different sticky notes. Have your child put stickies together to create words (real or nonsense). Have your child practice reading the words they make.  
*Alternate version:* Have your child only make real words from the syllable stickies. After building the words, have your child read the words fluently.
- Using a muffin tin with six cups, label each cup with a different syllable type. Write the most common English syllables on small pieces of paper and have your child sort them into the correct cup.

## 6 Syllable Types:

Closed (VC, CVC)  
Vowel-Consonant-e (VCe)  
Open (V, CV)  
Vowel Team  
Vowel-r  
Consonant-le (C-le)

## Most Common English Syllables:

ing, er, ter, al, ed, es, tion,  
re, oth, ry, ex, en, di, bout,  
com, ple, con, per, un,  
der, ty, num, peo, ble, af,  
ers, mer, wa, ment, pro, ri,  
sen, ture, few, dif, pa, tions,  
ther, fore, est, ei, si, ent,  
ven, ev, ac, ca, fol, ful, na,  
col, par, dis, ern, ny, cit,  
po, cal, mu, moth, coun,  
mon, pe, lar, por, fi, bers,  
sec, ap, stud, gan, bod,  
tence, ward, nit, nev, ure,  
mem, ters, cov, de, ver, tle,  
ber, ar, ma, fa, la, tain,  
ning, pic, im, ad, tween,  
ger, hap, e, i, y, o,

- Ask your child to read a word from a list that contains words with a vowel team, or two vowels that make one sound. After reading the word, ask your child to identify the vowel team and the syllables in the word. For example, the word teacher has a vowel team of “ea” and two syllables. Ask your child to underline the vowel team and sound out each syllable in the word.

Example: <https://youtu.be/Dh9G2cWYm84>

- Explain the reading rule about doubling the consonant to your child. When a word is one syllable and ends in a vowel followed by a consonant, you have to double the consonant when you add an ending, like -ed or -ing. Create a list of words that follow this rule and add a new ending to each word. Help your child identify the base word and write the word correctly using the new ending.

Example: <https://youtu.be/7d49Jm8X-Gk>

# What is *FLUENCY*?

*Fluency* is the ability to read with sufficient speed to support understanding. This includes:

- automatic word recognition;
- accurate word recognition; and
- use of expression.

Fluent readers are able to remember and understand what they have read. This skill bridges word recognition and comprehension. When students can read fluently, it allows the brain to have more space to comprehend the message of the text.

# Fluency Activities

## Everyday Fluency

- Read to your child! When you read aloud with your child, you are giving him/her a model of what fluent reading sounds like. No matter his/her age, it is important for your child to hear fluent reading.
- Find opportunities for your child to listen and follow along with audio recordings. Websites such as Storyline Online (<https://www.storylineonline.net>) have a variety of recorded stories. Visit your local library to check out the book versions so your child can read along.
- Practice echo reading with your child. Use a less familiar story or text and read small chunks of words, using your finger to track what you are reading. After you finish, let your child echo what you just read, tracking the words. Encourage your child to use the exact same speed and voice tone you used. This is a great activity to use with poetry!
- Reread the same story many times. Repeated reading of a story helps your child to become familiar with the words and sound they make when they are read fluently. You can also encourage your child to reread the same story multiple times, using a timer to see how quickly (and accurately!) your child reads each time he/she goes through the text.
- While reading to your child, read at a pace like you're having a regular conversation. Change your expression to model fluency for your child.

Examples: <https://youtu.be/i12X8A5giF0>,  
<https://youtu.be/4lkFh9y0C1U>, <https://youtu.be/0a0eiOyvycg>

### Finding “Just Right” Books

Children should be able to read at least 95% of the words in a text correctly. If they can't, the text is too hard for them to read independently. A quick way to check is have your child open the book to the first page and read aloud. If they struggle with five or more words on the first page of the book, it is too difficult.

Instead, you can read that book to them until it is in their independent reading range!

- Encourage your child to read independently!  
Make sure he/she is reading books that are on his/her independent reading level and encourage 20 minutes of reading a night.
  
- When reading a book together, read one sentence aloud at a time. Then, ask your child to read the same sentence aloud right after you. Read fluently and with expression to model these skills for your child.

Examples: <https://youtu.be/Gu-a0nLhZ8I>, <https://youtu.be/vt1Twhs8KiA>,  
[https://youtu.be/Pm\\_zeF0s8l8](https://youtu.be/Pm_zeF0s8l8)

# Sight Word Activities

- Cut out squares of paper or use notecards to create sight words. Use the Fry Sight Word Lists and start with the first 100. Once your child can read those words easily and fluently, move to the second 100. Continue on until your child can fluently read all 1,000 sight words.

*Alternate version:* Use a timer to see how long it takes your child to read through a sight word list. Correct the words read wrong and try again. Keep track of the time each time your child reads through and see how his/her reading speed increases.

- Write targeted sight words on a blank tic-tac-toe board drawn on notebook or printer paper. Using coins for chips, call out sight words and have your child cover them with a chip. When he/she gets five in a row, have your child read the words out to check for accuracy and to win.
- Write high-frequency words two times each on notecards. Flip the cards over so that the word is hidden and play a memory matching game with your child. Whenever a card is flipped over, have your child say the word. You can also use the card in a sentence.

Example: <https://youtu.be/3W0bBRRd>  
<https://youtu.be/V1lrTm5G5B4>

## Fry's 1<sup>st</sup> 100 Words

a, about, all, an, and, are, as, at, be, been, but, by, called, can, come, could, day, did, do, down, each, find, first, for, from, get, go, had, has, have, he, her, him, his, how, I, if, in, into, is, it, like, long, look, made, make, many, may, more, my, no, not, now, number, of, oil, on, one, or, other, out, part, people, see, said, see, she, sit, so, some, than, that, the, their, them, then, there, these, they, this, time, to, two, up, use, was, water, way, we, were, what, when, which, who, will, with, words, would, write, you, you

## Fry's 2<sup>nd</sup> 100 Words

After, again, air, also, America, animal, another, answer, any, around, ask, away, back, because, before, big, boy, came, change, different, does, end, even, follow, form, found, give, good, great, hand, help, here, home, house, just, kind, know, land, large, learn, letter, line, little, live, man, me, means, men, most, mother, move, much, must, name, need, new, off, old, only, our, over, page, picture, place, play, point, put, read, right, same, say, sentence, set, should, show, small, sound, spell, still, study, such, take, tell, things, think, three, through, too, try, turn, us, very, want, well, went, where, why, work, world, years

## Fry's 3<sup>rd</sup> 100 Words

Above, add, almost, along, always, began, begin, being, below, between, book, both, car, carry, children, city, close, country, cut, don't, earth, eat, enough, every, example, eyes, face, family, far, father, feet, few, food, four, girl, got, group, grow, hard, head, hear, high, idea, important, Indian, it's keep, last, late, leave, left, let, life, light, lists, might, mile, miss, mountains, near, never, next, night, often, once, open, own, paper, plant, real, river, run, saw, school, sea, second, seem, side, something, sometimes, song, soon, start, state, stop, story, talk, those, thought, together, took, tree, under, until, walk, watch, while, white, without, young

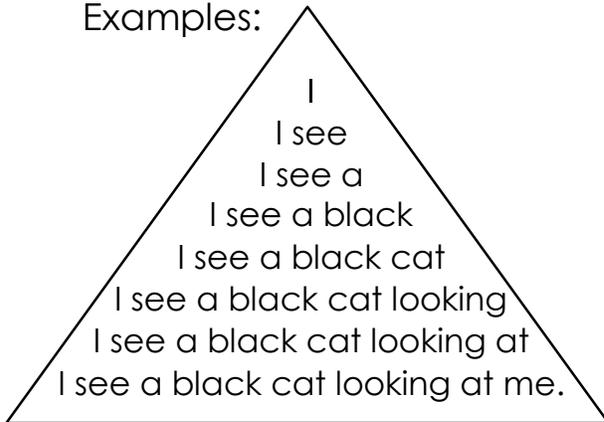
- Write your child's sight words on notecards or squares of construction paper. Set the timer for 30 seconds and see how many sight words he/she can read. As your child reads, separate the words into a "Words I Can Read" pile and a "Words I Need Help With" pile. Review the cards in the "Words I Need Help With" pile before trying again.
- Create cards with high-frequency spelling words. Ask your child to flip over a card, say the word, then spell the word out loud. Next, ask your child to write the word on a piece of paper and say the word aloud one more time.

Example: [https://youtu.be/nGPZ37b\\_CrM](https://youtu.be/nGPZ37b_CrM)

# Fluent Phrase Reading Activities

- Print or write out on notebook paper the lyrics of your child's favorite songs (make sure to copy the short phrases exactly). Have your child practice reading a single line until he/she can read it smoothly, then move onto the next.  
*Alternate version:* This activity can also be done with poetry or rhyming books. Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky, Bill Martin Jr., Sandra Boynton, Dr. Seuss, and Anna Dewdney are a few of the many authors whose poems and books work with this activity.
- Draw a large triangle on a piece of paper. Think of a sentence you want your child to practice reading (this can be a sentence you make up, or one from a text). In the triangle, write a line for each word in the sentence, adding a word from the sentence on each line. Have your child read through the entire triangle, until he/she can read the final sentence fluently.

Examples:



- When you read with your child, listen for where natural breaks happen. There is a musical quality to fluent reading – finding the phrasing in language can help your child break longer sentences into smaller chunks, making it easier to read.
- Write common phrases on notecards. Have your child practice reading the cards individually. When he/she can read them fluently, lay cards out side-by-side to make a train of phrases and have your child practice fluently reading a longer version.

## Some examples of common phrases are:

“at the house,”  
“here and there,”  
“some of the people,”  
“in a while,”  
“must be his,”  
“they need help,”  
“I like it,”  
“want to go,”  
“it is like,”  
“they want to,”  
“near the end”

# Fluent Passage Reading

- Find a page from a book at your child's independent reading level. Using a pencil, draw lines between the words where you hear a natural break. Have your child practice reading the entire passage, chunking together the words between the pencil lines as he/she reads. Once your child can fluently read the phrases, erase the pencil marks and have your child fluently read the passage.

Example: "From then on, / every afternoon, / as soon as her mother / had left for bingo, / Matilda would toddle / down to the library. // The walk took / only ten minutes / and this allowed her / two glorious hours / sitting quietly / by herself / in a cozy corner / devouring one book after another. // When she had read / every single children's book / in the place, / she started wandering round / in search of something else."

"From then on, every afternoon, as soon as her mother had left for bingo, Matilda would toddle down to the library. The walk took only ten minutes and this allowed her two glorious hours sitting quietly by herself in a cozy corner devouring one book after another. When she had read every single children's book in the place, she started wandering round in search of something else."

- Timed, repeated readings help your child see that he/she is becoming a more fluent reader! Have your child read a new-to-them piece of text – a short story, poem, or several paragraphs from a chapter. The first time your child reads it, time him/her from start to finish to see how long it took. Have your child read the same piece of text several more times, timing each time, to see how much he/she is improving.

*Suggestion:* Tie this strategy to math! Let your child use graph paper to draw representations of each timed reading's final time.

## How to find your child's fluency score:

1. Choose a 100-word passage from a grade-level text.
2. Have your child read the passage for exactly one minute.
3. Count the total number of words your child read.
4. Subtract from that number the number of words they read wrong. That is their word count per minute (WCPM).

## Suggested WCPM by the end of each year:

**First grade:** 60 words read correctly

**Second grade:** 90 words read correctly

**Third grade:** 115 words read correctly

- Ask your child to read a short passage at or slightly above their reading level. Before reading, ask him/her to read a list of key words from the passage. Correct any mistakes as they happen. Give your child feedback on their reading fluency after reading.

Example: <https://youtu.be/i44PSpTgSTk>

- When reading together, read one section to your child. Then, read the next section aloud together at the same time. Take turns reading to your child and with them. Pause to check for understanding throughout the story.

Examples: <https://youtu.be/IXLNRw-H6wA>, <https://youtu.be/x7IOPf9ULjY>,  
<https://youtu.be/KCFFqKA85tE>

- While your child is reading a book aloud to you, pay attention to any tricky words or sentences. After they read the sentence, stop and make any corrections. Read the sentence correctly to them, and then ask your child to read the sentence again.

Examples: <https://youtu.be/QGr7nDCGRrM>,  
<https://youtu.be/gpZCCrnMBwo>,  
[https://youtu.be/LL0uJqW\\_jwY](https://youtu.be/LL0uJqW_jwY), <https://youtu.be/pxrcdffJCyw>

# What is VOCABULARY?

*Vocabulary* refers to students' knowledge of and memory for word meanings. This includes:

- *receptive vocabulary* (words students understand when they are read or spoken to);

**and**

- *expressive vocabulary* (words students know well enough to use in speaking and writing).

Having a large receptive and expressive vocabulary assists students with their reading comprehension. A strong vocabulary improves all areas of communication – listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

# Vocabulary

## Activities

### Everyday Vocabulary Activities

- ❑ Read aloud to your child! Even after your child is able to read on their own, continue to read to him/her. Choose books above your child's reading level, which typically have a broader vocabulary. Through read alouds and talking about the book using words from the text, you are actually teaching your child new words and how they are used.
- ❑ When cooking, have your child help you read the recipe out loud. Pause to introduce and explain new words. Ask questions about what you're doing to support vocabulary development.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/PKvOlv30H8Y> <https://youtu.be/y2uEltfyfM>
- ❑ Have conversations with your children during dinner. Talking about your child's day at school, weekend plans, or family memories can help grow your child's vocabulary.
- ❑ Play Bingo with your child using common contractions. Create a Bingo sheet with completed contractions, and choose from a stack of cards with the broken up contractions. For example, if you drew the card "did not", you would look for the contraction "didn't" on your Bingo sheet.  
Example: <https://youtu.be/KfFadqUFYjM>
- ❑ Talk as much as possible about what you see, wherever you are. Have a conversation with your child at the store, describing the items you see. Using words such as first, next, and last, describe the process for pumping gas at the station. Talk about what you taste, smell, feel, and see as you follow a new recipe to make dinner.
- ❑ Watch favorite movies and television shows with your child with a focus on listening for big words to start using at home. Add these words into your everyday conversations with your child.  
Example: "Remember how in Power Rangers they *morphed*, and that meant they changed into superheroes? Can you *morph* into your school clothes?"

# Learning Word Meaning Activities

- Use pictures from magazines, advertisements, and newspapers to create word collages to show the meanings of new and difficult words. Having a picture to think about will help your child remember the meaning of the word.
- Write targeted vocabulary words on sticky notes and place them on a checkerboard. Play checkers together. When you land on a space with a vocabulary word, give the definition of the word and use it in a sentence to claim it.
- Before reading a book aloud, introduce any challenging or new words. Explain what the words mean and ask your child to say each word. While reading, point out the words and explain their meaning again.  
Examples: <https://youtu.be/F1h6xPV98JY>, <https://youtu.be/ibFW6nXYIkY>,  
<https://youtu.be/CwtaMw1Jgoc>
- Using a ball or soft stuffed animal, play “Vocabulary Hot Potato.” The person starting with the “potato” will call out a word, passing the “potato” while music plays. The person who ends up holding the “potato” when the music stops must give a definition and use the word in a sentence.

# Synonym and Antonym Activities

- Create a family “Bad Word” jar. Pick a few commonly overused words to go in the jar, such as *good* or *sad*. Listen for family members using the “Bad Words,” and encourage your child to think of more specific words to replace the “Bad Word.”

Example: “I had a *good* day; I made a 100 on my vocabulary test!”

“Don’t use that bad word! Use another word!”

“I had an *excellent* day; I made a 100 on my vocabulary test!”

- Name a word. Take turns brainstorming words that mean the same thing as the word that was named.

*Alternate version:* Play the game brainstorming words that mean the opposite of the word that was named.

## What are synonyms?

a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase

Example: *close* and *shut*

## What are antonyms?

a word opposite in meaning to another

Example: *good* and *bad*

# Word Connection Activities

- Play a word association game with your child. Call out a category name, and take turns brainstorming other words that make you think of the category word.

Example: “The category is ‘places to go on vacation.’”

“The beach!” “Theme parks!”

*Alternate version:* Write down the words as they are brainstormed. Afterward, have your child sort the words into other categories, based on their similarities. Have him/her explain what is similar about all of the words in their new categories.

Example: “I put *train*, *monorail*, *boats*, and *strollers* in the same category because they are all types of transportation people use at theme parks.”

- Practice vocabulary in the kitchen! Pick an ingredient and brainstorm as many words as you can to describe what it looks like, tastes like, feels like, and smells like. Discuss what other recipes use the same ingredient.

# Affixes Activities

- Using newspapers, magazines, cookbooks, or storybooks, have your child hunt for words with the targeted prefix or suffix, writing the words your child finds on a piece of paper. Once he/she has found several words, have your child break the words into the affix and the root and explain what the word means.

Example: "I found the word *unthinkable*! If I break it into the root and affixes, it is *un-think-able*. That means that if something is *unthinkable*, you are not able to think of it."

## The Most Common Prefixes

anti-, de-, dis-, en-, em-, fore-, in-, im-, il-, ir-, inter-, mid-, mis-, non-, over-, pre-, re-, semi-, sub-, super-, trans-, un-, under-

## The Most Common Suffixes

-able, -al, -ation, -ative, -ed, -eous, -en, -er, -es, -est, -ful, -ial, -ible, -ic, -ing, -ion, -ious, -itive, -ity, -ive, -less, -ly, -ment, -ness, -or, -ous, -s, -tion, -ty, -y

- Use craft supplies and items found around the house to make a tree. It can be drawn or 3D. At the bottom of the tree, have your child write or attach a card with a prefix or suffix on it. Write or add cards on the branches with words that have the targeted affix in it. Have your child explain what each word on the tree means, using the affix as a clue.

Example: "My prefix is *mis-*, and it means 'wrong.' So then *misjudge* means to judge wrongly, and *misbehave* means you behaved wrongly."

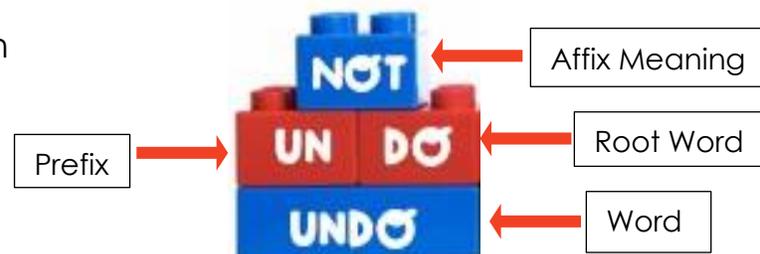
- Create a list of words with common suffixes that change the meaning of a word when added (these are inflectional endings). For example: "s" means plural, "ed" means something that already happened. Help your child work through the list to identify the base word and inflectional ending. Talk about how the meaning changes when a certain ending is added to the word.

Example: <https://youtu.be/bwJ0tnRTQZU>

- Talk about common prefixes and suffixes with your child. Ask them to read a word from a stack of cards and determine if the word has a prefix or a suffix. Help them underline the base word and circle the prefix or suffix on the card. Ask your child to sort the words with prefixes and suffixes into separate piles.

Example: <https://youtu.be/j8L7QZc7Zel>, <https://youtu.be/MULUBiHkE6Q>

- Write different roots, suffixes and affixes on building blocks. Have your child piece together different blocks to make words using different pieces. Have him/her write the complete word on a larger building block.



# What is COMPREHENSION?

*Comprehension* is the ability to understand and draw meaning from text.

Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. Students who easily comprehend what they just read are more likely to enjoy reading. They are also more effective readers, which helps them academically and in their personal life.

# Comprehension Activities

## Before Reading Activities

- Take a picture walk with your child. Have your child go page-by-page through the book and look at all of the illustrations, including the cover image. Ask your child what they think is going to happen in the book based on what he/she sees. Who does your child think the story will be about? What does he/she think is going to happen? How does your child think the story will end?

*Alternate version:* If you are reading a non-fiction text, have your child look at the different text features to help him/her make predictions about the text.

- Read the title of the text to your child. Ask him/her what the title makes them think of – a movie, a television show, another story, or an event from their own life.
- If you are reading a non-fiction text, have a discussion with your child to learn what he/she already knows about the topic. Ask your child if there are any questions about the topic they hope to find answers to as they read the book.
- Set a purpose for reading. It might be to learn something new or to enjoy a story together. Having a reason for reading can encourage reluctant readers to open a book!
- Ask your child to read a passage at their level. Before reading, point out any word rules or interesting words that they may come across. After reading, ask questions about tricky words and the passage to check for understanding.  
Example: [https://youtu.be/Rrc\\_a2edRY4](https://youtu.be/Rrc_a2edRY4)
- If you are reading a chapter book with your child over several days, have your child give you a recap of what has already happened in the story before starting the new chapter.

### **What is non-fiction?**

Writing that is based on facts, real events, and real people, such as biography or history

### **What is fiction?**

stories that describe imaginary events and people

### **What are text-features?**

Text features are all of the parts of a story or article that are not the main text. They include the table of contents, index, glossary, headings, bold words, sidebars, pictures, captions, and labeled diagrams.

# During Reading Activities

- While reading a text, pause every few pages to check your child's understanding of what is being read. Ask *who, what, when, where, why, and how* questions. If your child does not know, go back and reread or use pictures to help prompt his/her response.
- While reading, ask your child if what is being read is causing them to think of questions they want answered further in the text.
  - Examples: "I wonder where else Junie B might be hiding scissors since her mom took her first pair away. I don't think she is done cutting hair yet!"
  - "It says that Dalmatian puppies are born all white, and then develop spots as they grow older. I wonder if zebras are born all white and develop stripes as they grow older?"
- Help your child learn how to infer meaning from what is not said in the text. When a character has a major event, ask your child to think about how the character might feel, or what their next steps might be based on what he/she has already done in the story.
- If you are reading a chapter book together, have your child summarize what happened at the end of each chapter.
- When reading both fiction and non-fiction texts, it can be helpful to have your child sequence the events of the story to better understand what is happening.
- Encourage your child to visualize the characters, setting, or events from the book he/she is reading. Ask your child to describe, using details from the text, what he/she pictures when reading the story.
- When your child is reading a passage aloud, pay attention to any errors they make. If your child makes an error, stop and read the phrase just as they read it. Ask "does that make sense?" Help your child make the appropriate correction and continue reading.
  - Examples: <https://youtu.be/VMTWP2Rhlo0>,  
<https://youtu.be/bW7nalwle9U>, <https://youtu.be/6MwlTzOnD6U>
- Have your child look back at the predictions made prior to reading the story. Ask your child if his/her predictions came true. If not, ask your child to make new predictions based on what was read.

- When reading a book to your child, pause to talk about the pictures and story. Ask questions about what is happening, make predictions, and explain any unfamiliar words or concepts. Example: <https://youtu.be/OEz4Z7w85Tw>  
<https://youtu.be/HtVdlHBpjyM> <https://youtu.be/swGWVqJRc2g>  
<https://youtu.be/UMSxzZiCGSs> <https://youtu.be/XzrAQxZOSZI>

# After Reading Activities

- After reading a story, have your child retell you what happened. Ask your child to include details on the main characters, the setting, and the major events. Encourage your child to retell the story in the correct sequence of events.
- Ask your child to write a letter to the main character in the text. Have your child write about his/her favorite part of the book and include any questions he/she might still have after reading.
- Create a story bag. Use a grocery bag, gift bag, or brown paper lunch sack and fill it with items from around the house that will help your child to retell what they read.

Example: "I read *Fancy Nancy*. In my bag I have glitter because glitter is fancy, and Nancy loves fancy things. I also have an advertisement from the newspaper because Nancy makes an advertisement for her family for fancy lessons. I cut this picture out from a magazine of a lady in a fancy dress because Nancy and her family got dressed up to go to dinner. Then I have a washcloth because Nancy spilled parfait all over herself and had to take a bath. And finally, I have a Hershey's Kiss® because at the end of the story Nancy's mom and dad give her a kiss in bed and tell her they love her."

## Questions to Ask After Reading:

Who do you think is the most important character in this story?  
Why?

What do you think is the most important thing the author wanted you to know about \_\_\_\_\_?

What is one fact you learned from this text?

What clues in the pictures showed you how the character was feeling?

Did you like this book? Why or why not?

- Ask your child if he/she liked how the story ended. Ask your child to write or describe a different ending to the story. Encourage your child to think of an ending that makes sense with the rest of the story.
- If you have read the story together, ask your child to come up with test questions for you about the book. Let your child grade your test to see how well you did.
- If your child has read a non-fiction text, have him/her look online, in newspapers, and in magazines for more information on the book's topic. Have your child decide if the different texts give similar or different information about the topic.

# Tips to Support Reading Success

- ❑ Make reading part of every day, even for just a few minutes. Find the parts of your day where you can add time to read, and areas where you can keep books, so they are always available.
- ❑ Talk about the pictures in books. You do not have to read the book to tell a story.
- ❑ Let your child turn the pages when you read together.
- ❑ Show your child the cover page and explain what the story is about.
- ❑ Run your finger along the words as you read them.
- ❑ Read the story using different voices for each of the characters. Have fun!
- ❑ Choose books about events in your child's life, such as starting school, going to the dentist, or taking care of pets.
- ❑ Ask questions about the story. What do you think will happen next? What is this? How does this character feel?
- ❑ Let your child ask questions about the story. Talk about familiar activities and objects.
- ❑ Let your child retell the story.
- ❑ Visit your local library often!



Nebraska Department of Education  
500 S. 84th St., 2nd floor  
Lincoln, NE 68510-2611  
402.890.3775

Matthew L. Blomstedt,  
Commissioner of Education

**Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment**

Cory Epler, Ph.D.,  
Chief Academic Officer  
[cory.epler@nebraska.gov](mailto:cory.epler@nebraska.gov)

Abby Burke, Ed.D.,  
Reading Specialist  
[abby.burke@nebraska.gov](mailto:abby.burke@nebraska.gov)  
<https://www.education.ne.gov/nebraskareads/>