

In blending, you use the following procedure:

- Choose a familiar word that contains sound/spellings that the students have learned, for example, *tap*. On the board, print the letter for the first sound in the word: *t*. Touch the letter and say the /t/ sound. Touch the letter again and have the students say its sound with you: /t/.
- After the letter *t*, print the letter *a* on the board. Touch it and say the /a/ sound. Touch the letter again and have the students say the sound with you: /a/.
- Tell the students to listen carefully as you blend the two sounds together. Move your hand smoothly beneath the two letters from left to right as you say the sounds without pausing: /ta/. Make sure that your hand is under the letter that represents the sound that you say.
- Tell the students to say the sounds as you blend the sounds once again: /ta/.
- After the letters *ta*, print the letter for the final sound in the word, *p*, and continue as you did with the first two sounds.
- Move your hand from left to right beneath each letter in the word *tap* as you blend the sounds to say the word. Say the word in a natural way so that the students can hear that blending sounds makes an understandable word.
- Have students blend and say the word.
- Call on a volunteer to say the word and use it in a complete, coherent sentence.
- Continue with the established procedure using the words *mat*, *map*, and *pat*.

Research in Action

Alphabetic Principle

If students cannot understand and apply the alphabetic principle, they will find word recognition a struggle, which will impede comprehension. (—*Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin, Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*)