

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics, Grade 1

Using the *Sound/Spelling Cards*

About the routine

In *Open Court Reading* and *SRA Imagine It!*, students learn to relate sounds to spelling by the use of *Sound/Spelling Cards*. Each card represents a common English sound and contains the common spelling or spellings of the sound, as well as a picture that serves as a mnemonic device for remembering the sound. The consonant cards have the target sound at the beginning of the card names. The target sound for short vowels is found in the medial position of the card names. The position of the sounds for the variant vowels varies. For instance, the Monkey card introduces the sound /m/ and shows a monkey looking at bananas and saying /m/. With the exception of the long-vowel cards, each card depicts both an object whose name includes the sound and an action association. The sound and the picture are linked through a story that accompanies each card. The stories can be found in the appropriate lessons in Grade 1 and in the Appendix in Grades 2 and 3.

Posting the cards

Initially post the first twenty-six cards facing the wall so that only the alphabet letters on the backs show. As you introduce each card, you will turn it to show the picture and the spellings on the front of the card. If, however, most of your students already have some knowledge of the letters and their sounds—if they are second and third graders, for example—place the cards with the picture and the spellings facing front to provide support as the students begin writing.

The first twenty-six cards should be posted in alphabetical order. The rest—long vowels, digraphs, and diphthongs—are packaged in the order in which they will be introduced in the lessons. They may be posted as they are introduced. Once the cards are posted, do not change their positions; the students need to locate the cards quickly to use them as references during reading and writing.

Special devices

- Vowel spellings are **printed in red** to draw attention to them. Consonants are printed in black.
- The blank line in a spelling indicates that a sound/letter takes the place of the blank in a word. For example, the blank in the spelling *a_e* lets the student know that a letter representing a sound goes on the blank. The blank lines may also indicate the position of a spelling in a word or a syllable. The blank in *h_*, for example, means that the spelling *h* pronounced /h/ occurs at the beginning of a word or a syllable. The spelling *h* at the beginning of the word *high* is pronounced /h/ but not at the end of the word. The blanks in *_ie_* indicate that the spelling *ie* comes in the middle of a word or a syllable, while the blank in *_oy* shows that the *oy* spelling comes at the end of a word or a syllable. When appropriate, uses of blanks in specific spellings are explained in the lessons in the *Teacher's Edition*. Please note, however, that when you write a spelling of a sound on the board or an overhead transparency, you should include the blanks.
- The color of the background behind the spellings also has a meaning. Consonants have a white background. The colors behind vowel spellings are pronunciation clues. Short-vowel spellings have a green background, which corresponds to the green box that appears before some consonant spellings. Thus, the green box before *ck* or *x* indicates that a short vowel always precedes that spelling. Long-vowel spellings have a yellow background; variant vowel spellings, such as *r*-controlled vowels and diphthongs, have a blue background. The color code reinforces the idea that vowels are special and have different pronunciations.
- The spellings are arranged on the cards in the order in which they are introduced in the lessons. You may want to cover up those spellings not taught when the card is initially introduced.

Introducing the *Sound/Spelling Cards*

Each sound and spelling is introduced by using a see/hear/say/write sequence.

1. **See:** The students see the spelling or spellings on the *Sound/Spelling Card* and on the board or an overhead.
2. **Hear:** They hear the sound used in words and in isolation in the story or poem. The sound is related to the picture (and the action) shown on the *Sound/Spelling Card*.
3. **Say:** The students say the sound during the story, in isolation, and as they write the spelling.
4. **Write:** The students write the spelling(s) for the sound.

There are a number of important points to remember about this technique.

- The spelling of the sound being introduced is the first thing written on the board. This gives the spelling a special emphasis in the students' minds. It is the "see" part of the sequence.
- One of the causes of blending failure is the failure to teach a sound thoroughly during the introduction of the *Sound/Spelling Card*.
- To ensure success for all students, make sure that everyone is able to see the *Sound/Spelling Cards* and the board or writing area.
- After the initial presentation of a sound and spelling, have the students go to the board, a few at a time, to write the new spelling. They should make the sound as they write the spelling. After they have written the spelling, give them a chance to proofread their own work. Then give the other children the opportunity to help with proofreading by noting what is good about the spelling and then suggesting how to make it better.

Sample first-grade lesson, using the letter *m* and the sound /m/

1. Point to the letter *Mm* on the *Sound/Spelling Card*. Ask the students to tell you what they already know about the card, for example, that it is a consonant and it has an upper- and lowercase form.
2. Turn the card so that the picture side is showing. Tell the students that the name of this card is *Monkey*.
3. Read aloud the alliterative story, inviting students to chime in each time you say the target sound: /m/ /m/ /m/ /m/. If your students need additional practice with the sound, read the story again. You might invite students to make up an action, such as rubbing their tummies, to perform as they say the sound.
4. Point to the target spelling and tell them that the spelling is *m*.
5. Write *m* on the board or on an overhead and say the sound. Write the spelling again and ask the students to say the sound with you as they write the spelling on slates, on paper, or with their index fingers in the air or on a surface. Repeat this several times.
6. Have your students listen for words beginning with the target sound /m/, indicating by some signal, such as thumbs-up if they hear the target sound or thumbs-down if they don't. Repeat with the sound in various positions in words as indicated in the lessons in the *Teacher's Edition*.
7. Have a small group of children come to the board and write the spelling as the rest of the class writes it on slates or paper or in the air. Have them say the sound as they write the spelling. Have students proofread their spellings.
8. Review the *Sound/Spelling Card* by pointing to the card. Have the students identify the name of the card, the sound, and the spelling. Discuss how the card can help them remember the sound and the spelling(s).