

Phonics and Fluency, Grade 1

English learners

EL considerations for teaching sound/spelling correspondences

Validating and reinforcing English Learners' existing knowledge of sounds and spellings and understanding of words is very important. Encourage English Learners to tell the class how they say the names of the alphabet letters in their primary languages. As they begin to learn the English sounds and their spellings, encourage the children to demonstrate the sounds as they learn them. Encourage them to listen for the new sounds and find the new spellings in familiar words and to use those words in sentences and extend those sentences.

English Learners will probably encounter some problems as the class begins to learn sound/spelling correspondences. This is not surprising; some sounds associated with English letters and spellings do not exist in other languages, and some sounds used in other languages do not exist in English. These children will be reassured to discover that even native English speakers have difficulty with some sound/spelling correspondences.

The following chart indicates sounds that may be difficult for children whose first language is not English.

[Click here to view the chart.](#)

The action-sound association used to introduce the sounds and spellings is particularly helpful for English Learners. While the name of the object associated with the target sound and spelling may be different in English from the children's primary language, learning the action and the sound the action makes is language-free and helps second language learners make the connection between the sound and the spelling. They may not remember the word *monkey* but they do remember the sound that animal makes—/m//m//m/.

EL considerations for blending

Most English Learners can understand more spoken words than they can speak or read. Learning to blend, therefore, can provide these children with a valuable tool that will allow them to figure out on their own any words they have never encountered before in print. Reading words, however, does not guarantee understanding. For many second language learners, working on meaning along with learning the sounds and spellings is critical. To help ensure that second language learners understand the meaning of the blended words, many first grade teachers quickly demonstrate the meaning. For example, if the word is *clap*, the teacher claps and has the children clap too. Quickly illustrating the word, as Ms. Canzone did with the word *mast*, is also beneficial.

In addition, English Learners will learn about basic structural elements—inflectional endings and affixes—as part of blending. During Workshop, you may want to review the meaning of inflectional endings such as *-ed*, *-s*, or apostrophe *s*. English-language learners often drop these elements or do not understand the meaning that they convey.

Using blended words in sentences and extending sentences helps support vocabulary growth and language development. You may want to preteach the meaning of some of the words in the blending lines, so that children will be able to recognize the word after they have blended it, and participate in the oral language activities that accompany each blending lesson.

Use Workshop time to encourage English Learners to use the, *Sound/Spelling Card Stories* CD. Encourage them to work alone or in small groups to learn and repeat the *Sound/Spelling Card Stories* for targeted sound/spelling correspondences. This familiarity will give them practice making the sounds and increase their confidence as they blend words and develop their reading skills.

Additional EL resources

Books

August, D., & Hakuta, K. (Eds.). (1998). *Educating language-minority children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York: Longman.

Delpit, L. D. (1996). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: New Press.

Websites

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)
<http://www.tesol.edu>

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
<http://www.nbpts.org>