

Phonological Awareness Activities

Phonological awareness is the understanding that spoken language is made up of meaningful units of sounds. Use these activities to strengthen children's skills, whether they need more support and practice or are ready for a challenge. Activities are appropriate for children in grades K–2.

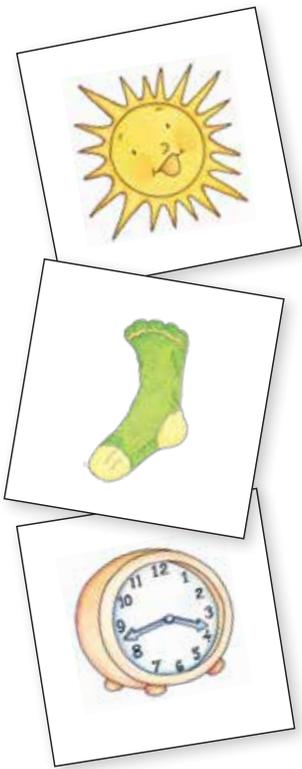
I. Reteaching Rhyme

Purpose: *Understand what makes words rhyme and recognize rhyming words*

Remind children that rhyming words are words that have the same ending sounds. Say “man” and “pan” slowly, stretching out the vowel sound and the final consonant in each word. Point out that both words end with the same sounds, /an/, so “man” and “pan” rhyme. Give other examples of *-an* words that rhyme with *man* and *pan*, such as *can*, *Dan*, *fan*, *plan*, *ran*, *tan*, *van*. Have children repeat each word you say. Then say “man” and “bus” slowly, stretching out the vowel sound and the final consonant in each word. Ask if *man* and *bus* have the same ending sounds. (*no*) Ask if the two words rhyme. (*no*) Repeat for *pan* and *pig*. Point out that these two words have the same beginning sound, but their ending sounds are different so *pan* and *pig* don't rhyme. Repeat for *man* and *map*, pointing out that the first two sounds in the words are the same but the final sounds are different.

Say other word pairs, and have children tell if the words rhyme. Initially, have most of the pairs rhyme and include a few pairs that don't. Start off by making the nonrhyming words very different from one another with no common letter-sounds, such as *cat* and *sun*. Gradually include trickier pairs of nonrhyming words with the same initial sound, such as *cat*, *cup*, and then, if children are able, words with the same initial sound and vowel sound, such as *cat*, *can*. If children misidentify a pair of nonrhyming words as rhyming, remind them to listen for the same ending sounds and repeat the words again, saying each one slowly.

Variation Show sets of three pictures. Each set should include two pictures whose names rhyme, such as *sock* and *clock*, and a third picture whose name doesn't rhyme with the other names, such as *sun*. Name each picture. Have children point to the two pictures whose names rhyme.



2. Identifying Rhymes in Nursery Rhymes, Poems, and Stories

Purpose: *Identify rhymes in connected text*

Materials: *Books with rhyming text*

Say a line from a familiar nursery rhyme and emphasize the rhyming words. For example, say, “One, two, buckle my shoe.” Ask children to identify the rhyming words. (*two, shoe*) Repeat the line with children, having them say the rhyming words louder than the rest of the words. Repeat the line a few more times with children, this time having them whisper the rhyming words or clap as they say them. Continue with other lines from the same nursery rhyme or other nursery rhymes.

Reinforce an understanding of rhyming by reading poems and stories that feature rhyming text. Periodically pause as you read and ask children to identify words that rhyme.

Variation Sing a song or say a nursery rhyme that children know well. As you sing or speak, stop occasionally to let children fill in a rhyming word. For example, say, “One, two, buckle my ____.” Have children supply the missing word. (*shoe*) Do the same when reading a familiar story that has predictable rhyming text.

TIP: Linking rhymes to printed words If children struggle to identify rhymes, keep activities focused on spoken or sung words. Once they get better at recognizing rhymes, draw their attention to written rhymes that include decodable words whose ending sounds are spelled the same, such as *hot, pot*.

3. Completing Rhymes

Purpose: *Produce rhymes when given hints*

Say a sentence with two rhyming words, such as “The goat rowed a boat.” Ask children to identify the rhyming words. (*goat, boat*) Then say similar sentences, but say only the beginning sound of the second rhyming word. For example, say, “A man was driving a /v/___.” Have children supply the missing rhyming word (*van*), say the complete sentence (*A man was driving a van.*), and identify the two rhyming words. (*man, van*)

Here are some other sentences you can use:

A fox hid under a /b/_____. (*box*)

A hen counted to /t/_____. (*ten*)

A bug ran across the /r/_____. (*rug*)

Let’s bake a chocolate /k/_____. (*cake*)

I saw a snake by the /l/_____. (*lake*)

The king wears a diamond /r/_____. (*ring*)

I sniffed a rose with my /n/_____. (*nose*)

Is it true that the sky is /bl/_____? (*blue*)

Let’s talk as we /w/_____. (*walk*)

Eek! There is a mouse in my /h/_____. (*house*)

April showers bring May /fl/_____. (*flowers*)

Variation 1 For greater challenge, don’t supply the initial sound for the missing rhyming word, and have children figure out a word that rhymes and makes sense in the sentence.

Variation 2 Say a word and then say the beginning sound of another word that rhymes with the first word. For example, say “hat” and /k/. Ask children what word rhymes with *hat* and begins with /k/. (*cat*)

4. Rhyming Games

Purpose: Have fun identifying or producing rhymes

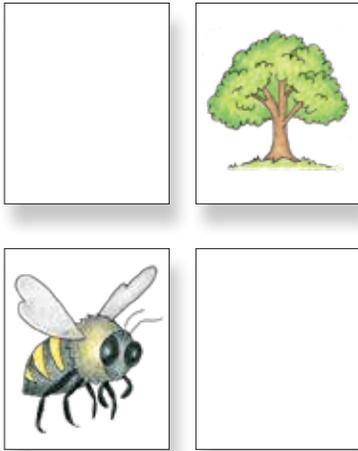
Materials: Picture or word cards

Odd One Out Say three words, two that rhyme and one that doesn't, such as *fish, fan, dish*. Have children tell which word doesn't rhyme. (*fan*)

Rhyming Store Tell children to imagine that you run a store that only sells things that rhyme. Say, "Come into my store. I can sell you a snake. Do you want something more? I can sell you a ____." Have children name other things that rhyme with *snake* that you could sell. (*lake, rake, cake, steak*) Repeat for other groups of rhyming words.

Rhymin' Simon Have children touch the part of their body that rhymes with the word you say. See examples below. Focus on the body parts children are likely to know.

red (<i>head</i>)	peck (<i>neck</i>)	land (<i>hand</i>)
chair (<i>hair</i>)	goat (<i>throat</i>)	calm (<i>palm</i>)
race (<i>face</i>)	boulders (<i>shoulders</i>)	crumb (<i>thumb</i>)
week (<i>cheek</i>)	best (<i>chest</i>)	stinky (<i>pinkie</i>)
my (<i>eye or thigh</i>)	jelly (<i>belly</i>)	linger (<i>finger</i>)
rose (<i>nose or toes</i>)	yummy (<i>tummy</i>)	bee (<i>knee</i>)
ships (<i>lips or hips</i>)	sack (<i>back</i>)	peg (<i>leg</i>)
booth (<i>tooth</i>)	fine (<i>spine</i>)	soot (<i>foot</i>)
fin (<i>chin or shin</i>)	farm (<i>arm</i>)	peel (<i>heel</i>)
fear (<i>ear</i>)	list (<i>wrist</i>)	low (<i>toe</i>)



Rhyming Names Have children invent rhyming names for pets, such as *Matt the cat*, *Jake the snake*, *Myrtle the turtle*, *Honey the bunny*, *Noah the boa*, *Ferbil the gerbil*.

Rhyming Numbers Have children say the number that rhymes with a word you say, such as *fun (one)*, *shoe (two)*, *free (three)*, and so on. Repeat for colors (*shoe, blue*) or animals (*wig, pig*).

Rhyming Pop Up Have children sit down. Tell them you will say a word and if their name rhymes with that word, they should pop up out of their seats. Use real or nonsense words to make rhymes for children's names.

Rhyming Concentration Gather or make pairs of picture cards whose names rhyme, such as *tree, bee*. Review the pictures and names with children. Mix the cards and place them facedown on a table. Have children take turns drawing two cards, saying the picture names, and telling if the names rhyme. If they do, the child keeps the pair. If not, the child returns the cards facedown in their original positions. Play until all pairs have been matched. For older children, use word cards instead of picture cards. Initially, use pairs of words whose ending sounds have the same spelling, such as *snail* and *pail*. For greater challenge, include words whose ending sounds are spelled differently, such as *snail, whale*.

5. Listening for Syllables in Words

Purpose: *Identify and count syllables in spoken words*

Say “nap” and clap once as you say it. Repeat with children. Point out that *nap* is a short word. Explain that longer words, such as *napkin*, are made up of more than one part. Say “napkin” and clap once for each syllable. Repeat with children. Tell them the claps show how many parts a word has and that each part is called a *syllable*. Repeat “nap” and “napkin,” clapping the syllables for each word. Point out that *nap* has one syllable and *napkin* has two syllables.

Explain that you’ll say some words slowly so it is easier to hear the small parts inside a word, and you’ll clap once for each part, or syllable. Say the names of the children in your class, clapping once for each syllable. Have children repeat each name with you and clap for each syllable. Repeat the name, holding up a finger for each syllable. Discuss who has a short name and who has a long name. Then have fun saying, clapping, and counting other words, such as the following:

2 syllables	3 syllables	4 syllables	5 or more syllables
baseball	ambulance	alligator	archaeologist
basket	banana	California	cafeteria
brother	basketball	cauliflower	congratulations
cupcake	butterfly	celebration	determination
father	chimpanzee	harmonica	hippopotamus
flower	computer	helicopter	multiplication
kitten	elephant	kindergarten	refrigerator
mother	fantastic	motorcycle	autobiography (6)
pencil	gorilla	supermarket	supercalifragilistic (8)
puzzle	hospital	television	
rabbit	lemonade	thermometer	
sister	October	watermelon	

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