

Reading Longer Words Activities

These activities help children use their knowledge of base words, suffixes/endings, prefixes, and syllables to read longer words and determine their meanings.

I. Reading Affixed Words

Purpose: Identify parts in affixed words and read the words by blending the parts together

An *affixed* word is one with a prefix and/or an ending fixed to a base word. Make a list of decodable words with the prefix(es) or ending(s) you want to review. Start with words that include a base word children can easily recognize and decode, such as *jump* in *jumping*. Then list words with more challenging base words, including base words with changed spellings, such as *smiling*.

Use these steps to give practice reading affixed words:

1. Write an affixed word from your list on the board.
2. Remind children that when they read a longer word, they should first look for smaller words and word parts they know in the word. Ask what prefix or ending the word has. If they can't identify it, underline it for them.
3. Have children identify the base word. Cover the prefix or ending if needed. If the spelling of the base word changed before the ending was added, help children identify the change. For example, if the final consonant of the base word was doubled, circle the added consonant or cover it up. If an *e* was dropped, write *e* above the end of the base word. If a *y* was changed to *i*, write *y* above the *i*.
4. Have children read the entire word, blending the parts quickly and smoothly.
5. Discuss what children know about the prefix or ending and how they can use it plus the meaning of the base word to understand what the affixed word means.

jumping

dusting

smelling

sleeping

crying

hopping

smileing

happyer

Repeat the steps using other words with the same prefix or ending. Review other prefixes or endings.

Variation 1 Write affixed words on separate strips of paper. Bend back the prefix or ending. Have children read the base word. Reveal the prefix or ending and have them read the entire word.

Variation 2 For a challenge, give children practice reading words with both a prefix and an ending, such as *unlocked*, or two endings, such as *hopefully*. Tell children they read these words the same way they read words with one prefix or one ending—by finding smaller parts in the longer word and blending the parts.

TIP: Pronunciation reminders Give reminders about letter-sounds in affixed words if children have trouble with them.

Plurals (*hats, boxes*): The *s* at the end can stand for /s/ or /z/. The ending *-es* adds another syllable (or chunk of sounds) to the word. The *e* in most CVCe plurals, such as *cakes* or *bones*, is silent and just /s/ or /z/ is said. For soft *c* and *g* words, such as *faces* and *cages*, *es* is pronounced /es/ or /ez/.

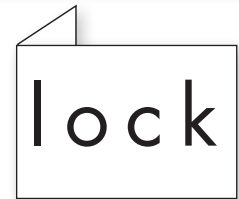
-ed: The ending *-ed* can stand for /ed/ (*rested*), /t/ (*jumped*), /d/ (*hugged*).

CVCe + -ing (*smiling*): When the *e* is dropped from a CVCe base word, children might not recognize the remaining vowel in the base word has a long-vowel sound. Review the reading rule shown and give practice reading pairs of similar words, such as *smelling* and *smiling*, *sledding* and *sliding*, *hitting* and *hiding*, *licking* and *liking*.

y changed to i (*flies, happier*): The sound of *i* will be the same as the sound of *y* in the base word.



unlock



lock

Reading Rules

Words with endings (*hopping, hoping*): To read a word with an ending, first cover the ending. If there is only one consonant before the ending, the vowel sound is usually long. Then read the whole word.

bugs

cups

boxes

dishes

pennies



hats

2. Understanding Plural Endings

Purpose: Discuss the meanings of plural endings and use them plus the base words to figure out the meanings of the plurals

Materials: Pictures, index cards, drawing paper, art supplies, decodable reading materials

Use Reading Longer Words Activity 1 to give practice reading decodable plurals with the ending(s) you want to review. Keep the words listed on the board. Discuss what children know about plural ending(s). Remind them that *-s* and *-es* (if that ending has been taught) can be added to a noun to make it name more than one thing. Cover up the plural ending in a word and have children read the singular base word. Ask whether that word tells about one thing or more than one thing. (*one thing*) Use or have children use the word in a sentence. Uncover the plural ending and have children read the word. Ask whether it tells about one thing or more than one thing. (*more than one thing*) Use or have children use that word in a sentence.

Here are other ways to reinforce the meanings of plurals:

- Gather picture pairs whose names are decodable. One picture in each pair shows one item, such as a hat, and the other shows two or more of the same item, such as several hats. Write the picture names on separate index cards. Mix up the pictures and word cards. Then have children match each noun with the picture it names.
- Write the singular and plural forms of the same noun on separate index cards, such as *dish* and *dishes*. Repeat the process for several other nouns. Mix the cards. Have children take turns choosing a card, reading it, and telling whether the word names one thing or more than one thing. Have them sort the singular and plural nouns into two piles.
- Play Concentration. Have children match a plural noun with a picture it names or with the singular form of the noun. Show an example of a match. Put the cards with plural nouns facedown in one area and the pictures or singular nouns facedown in another area. Have a child choose an item from each set, read the word(s), and tell whether the two items match. If so, the child keeps the pair. If not, the child returns the items facedown to their original places. Have children continue playing until all pairs are matched.

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- Give children decodable phrases of singular or plural nouns, such as *a backpack*, *ten eggs*, and *lots of dishes*. Have them draw pictures for the phrases.
 - Using decodable texts, make and distribute copies of a page that contains plurals with the ending(s) you want to review. Tell children to find and circle plural words that have the target ending(s). Call on children to read the words they circled and tell what they mean. If they circle verbs ending in *-s* or *-es*, remind them that verbs tell about actions and nouns name people, places, and things. Point out that some words, such as *skates*, can be a noun or a verb and they need to think about how the word is used in the sentence.

Variation Modify the bulleted ideas above to give children practice reading and using irregular plurals.

sailed sailing
hugged hugging
baked baking
cried crying

3. Understanding Verb Endings

Purpose: Use verb endings and verb phrases to figure out the time of action the verbs describe

Materials: Decodable reading materials, index cards

Use Reading Longer Words Activity 1 to give practice reading decodable verbs with the ending(s) you want to review. Keep the words listed on the board. Discuss what children know about the verb ending(s). Remind them that *-ed* at the end of a verb means the action has already happened. Give context sentences using *-ed* verbs from the board. Include time words that make it clear the action was done in the past, such as *yesterday* or *last week*. For *-ing* words, give context sentences that include verb phrases that combine *am, is, are, was, or were* with an *-ing* verb—for example, *is sailing*. Discuss how children can use these phrases to figure out when the action happened.

Here are other ways to reinforce the meaning of verbs with endings:

- On the board, write a decodable verb that children can act out, such as *jump, twist, stretch*. Make sure it's a regular verb that uses *-ed* for past tense. Do the action with children as you describe it. For example, say, "I am jumping. Lisa is jumping. Ashley and Chase are jumping too!" Then have everyone stop the action. Use an *-ed* verb to describe what everyone did, for example, "We jumped a lot!" On the board, write the verb phrases with *-ing* and the *-ed* verb. Have children read the words. Discuss which words describe an action as it happens (*am/is/are plus -ing* verb) and which one describes an action that already happened (*-ed* verb). Repeat with other actions. You could include *was* and *were* plus *-ing* verbs (*was/were jumping*) to expand the discussion of past-tense verbs.
- Using decodable texts, copy and distribute pages containing verbs with the ending(s) you want to review. Tell children to find and circle verbs with the target ending(s). Have them take turns reading a sentence with a circled word. Discuss the time of action the sentence describes and how they figured it out.
- On separate index cards, write decodable *-ing* verb phrases for present and past tenses and *-ed* verbs. Mix the cards. Have children take turns reading them and telling whether the word or phrase tells about a past action or an action happening now. Have them sort the cards by the time of action they describe.

Variation Irregular verbs do not use *-ed* for past tense—for example, *catch/caught* and *bring/brought*. Modify the bulleted ideas above to give children practice distinguishing between present- and past-tense forms of irregular verbs.

4. Using Syllables to Read Longer Words

Purpose: Divide longer words into syllables and read the words by blending the syllables

Materials: Paper strips, (optional) highlighter

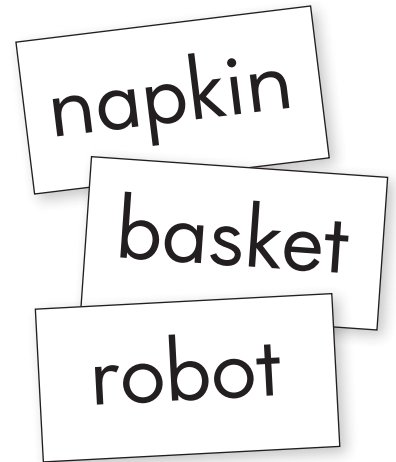
Use: Anytime after grade 2, unit 3

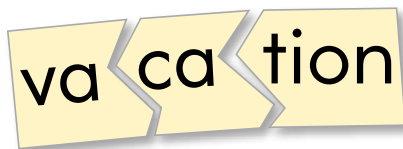
Write in large letters on paper strips multisyllabic words children can decode. Use lots of familiar words in which vowel sounds are represented by one letter, as in *basket*, *rabbit*, *button*, *planet*, *rocket*, *animal*, *hospital*, and *fantastic*. These words are easier for children to divide into syllables. Include more challenging words with more complex vowels, such as *crayon*, *candle*, *puzzle*, *surprise*, *lemonade*, *crocodile*, *tarantula*. Make strips for *napkin* and *waitress* and use them as examples.

Show *napkin*. Point out that one way to read this word is to say the sounds for the letters from left to right. Model how to do this, saying *napkin* slowly as you run a finger under each letter in the word. Then explain that they can read longer words more quickly by breaking the word into smaller parts, such as syllables, and blending the parts. Remind children that a syllable has one vowel sound, and this sound can be spelled with one or more letters. Have them identify the vowels in *napkin*. (*a*, *i*) Circle each vowel or shade it with a highlighter. Explain that since this word has two vowels circled, you'll break it into two parts, or syllables. Fold *napkin* after *p*, *nap/kin*. Note that each part has a vowel in it. Bend back *kin* so only *nap* is showing. Point out that this is a small word they should know, and have them read *nap*. Reveal *kin* and have children read that part. Then have them blend the two parts quickly and smoothly to say the entire word.

Show *waitress* and have children identify the vowels in it. (*ai*, *e*) Draw one circle around *ai* and another around *e*. Explain that you put one circle around *ai* because those two letters together stand for a vowel sound, /ā/. Point out that there are two circles, so you'll break the word into two parts. Fold *waitress* into two parts, *wait/ress*. Have children read each part and blend the parts quickly and smoothly.

Repeat these steps for other multisyllabic words, starting with easy words, and gradually using more challenging words. For each word, help children circle or highlight the letter(s) that stands for each vowel sound. Remind them of letter combinations that stand for individual vowel sounds, such as vowel digraphs, variant vowels,





or *r*-controlled vowels. If a syllable ends with a silent *e*, as at the end of *lem/on/ade*, point out the Super *e* (CVCe) pattern. Have children circle the *a* and cross out the silent *e*. Help them fold the word by its syllables (see tip below) and sound out each syllable. Have them repeat the word, blending the syllables quickly and smoothly.

If children stumble over vowel sounds, remind them to try different sounds (short, long, schwa, or another sound they've learned). Point out that if a syllable ends with a vowel, the vowel sound is often long. Help them change the syllable they emphasize (stress).

After children practice reading words this way for a while, have them read multisyllabic words without folding the word strip.

Variation 1 If children struggle to divide longer words, precut the word strips into parts and arrange the parts in a row. Have them read and blend the parts. Breaking the words apart for them will help them learn to recognize typical syllable breaks.

Variation 2 Write multisyllabic words on heavyweight paper. Cut apart the syllables using a few jagged lines to create puzzle pieces. Have children put the pieces together to form a word and then read it, saying and blending the syllables.

TIP: Dividing words into syllables Dividing a word into syllables is a challenge for many adults. As children divide simple words they already know into syllables, they develop a sense of logical syllable breaks they can apply to more complex words. Remind them to identify vowels first, then break the word so there is a vowel or vowel combination in each syllable. Tell them to look at the consonants between the vowels. If there are two consonants, tell them to break between the consonants (*but/ton, bas/ket, dif/fi/cult*). If there is one consonant, tell them to break after the first vowel and then try sounding out the word (*ro/bot, ti/ger*). If the word doesn't sound familiar, have them rebreak after the consonant and sound out the word again (*rob/in, cam/el*). Point out that if a word ends in *-le, le* and the consonant before it usually go together as a syllable (*can/dle, ta/ble*). Don't expect children to memorize these rules, but over time they should begin to recognize common syllable units. Dictionaries sometimes divide a word by how it should be hyphenated in texts, which might not correspond to how syllables are pronounced in the word.