

Talking Matters

www.talkingmatters.com.au Ph: 8255 7137
 Helping your child to reach their potential



Goal: Sound Segmentation

To develop the ability to separate words into their individual sounds.

The ability to segment words is a foundation skill to developing spelling skills. Children need to be able to hear individual sounds in words before they are able to work out what letter to use to write a word. Segmenting is an early spelling skill that can be used to work out new words.

When a child begins practicing spelling it is easier for them to begin with short vowels first. Some children will be able to move from simple 2 sound words like 'it', 'am' and 'up' to 3 sound words like 'cat', 'dog', 'pig' quite quickly. Many children find it difficult to stretch and hear both sounds in a cluster when they practice 4 sound words such as 'slip', 'nest' and 'drop'.



Getting Started

Children need many opportunities to see and then practice new things when learning them. Follow these steps to get started;

- Choose words at the correct level for the child. Start with easier words and move to harder words only as the child is confident at each level.
- Choose your words carefully to make sure they have the correct type of vowel (short or long) and are phonetically regular. Phonetically regular words are spelt exactly the way they sound, such as 'cat' or 'pig'. Words like "was" or "is" (which sound like 'woz' and 'iz') need to be memorized rather than sounded out and are NOT phonetically regular.
- SHOW the child how you would stretch the words out by doing a few for them e.g. "listen as I stretch these words "ccccaaattt"... .."c... a....t".
- Children often benefit from extra visual information also. To make this activity visual you can choose one of the following strategies;
 - point to drawn boxes as you say the sounds,
 - push buttons into place with each sound heard,
 - stretch the sounds as they come out of your mouth like they were a long piece of chewing gum,
 - or tap your head, tummy and bottom to match each individual sound.
- Remember, we are talking about SOUNDS, not LETTERS e.g. 'day' has only 2 sounds, but 3 letters to write it. The 'ay' part of the word is a long vowel sound.

Easier to Harder

When choosing words we need to know which words are easier and which ones are harder. The list below is sorted from easy to more difficult

- 2 sounds with a short vowel (e.g. up, it)
- 2 sounds with a long vowel (e.g. my, see, day)
- 3 sounds with a short vowel (e.g. pig, cat, dog)
- 3 sounds with a long vowel (e.g. bead, seat, soap)
- 4 sounds with a short vowel (e.g. slap, drop, clip)
- 4 sounds with a long vowel (e.g. slope, steep, bread)
- 5 sounds with a short vowel (e.g. strip, drips)
- 5 sounds with a long vowel (e.g. stripe, droops)



Things to think about

- The child should practice words at the level they are working on until they are correct 90% of the time (9 times out of 10), without any extra help or clues.
- When a child moves from one level to the next you can expect them to find it difficult. You will probably need to give them a bit of extra help and show them more times than you did with easier words to help them to learn this new and more complex skill.
- Make sure the child always feels good about themselves when working with you. If the activity is so difficult that they aren't getting any correct at the new level make it a 'watching and thinking activity'. Let them continue to do it at a level they are successful at while they 'watch' and 'learn' about the next level as you do it for them and they watch.
- Be sure to be clear in your terminology so you don't confuse the child. Sounds are what we hear, and letters are the symbols we use to write the sounds down. Try not to use the word 'letters' when you mean sounds and vice versa.

Games to play

To make practicing stretching out words try these game ideas;

- As you read books together find words with the correct amount of sounds that sound the way they are spelled and stretch them out as you go along.
- Collect a range of pictures of words that fit the requirements to sound out. If you have 2 of each picture you can play memory and stretch the words out as you turn them over.
- You can put items such as toy animals, or pictures into a feely bag and stretch as you select.
- Use the pictures above and extend the activity by describing items for someone else to guess e.g. It's an animal, fluffy, drinks milk and purrs. The child then needs to stretch the word 'cat' as they guess.

To extend this activity you can then begin writing the letters to represent the sounds you hear in words. When doing long vowels you can draw boxes for each sound. For the long vowel place a dotted line in the middle of the box and talk about the sound needing 2 letters to represent the sound.

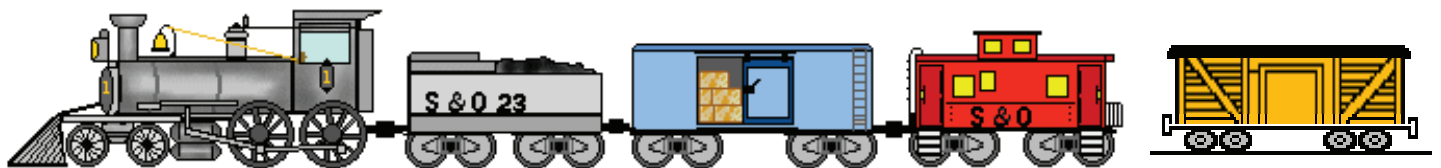
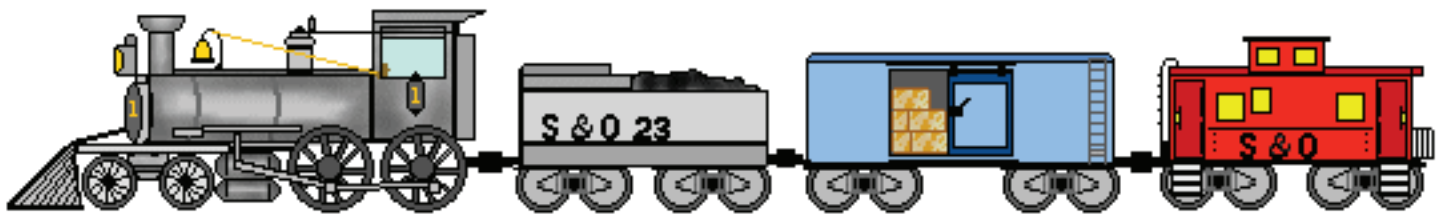
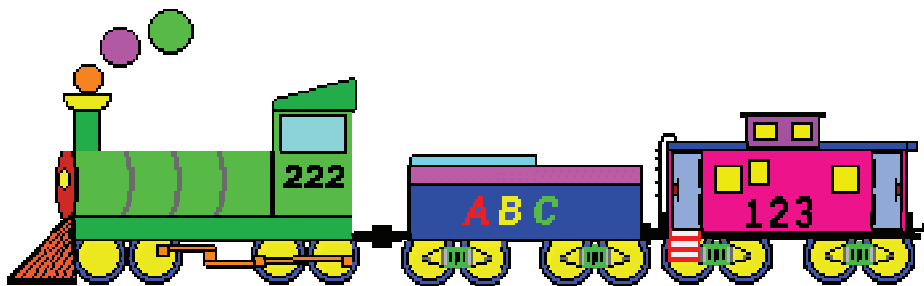
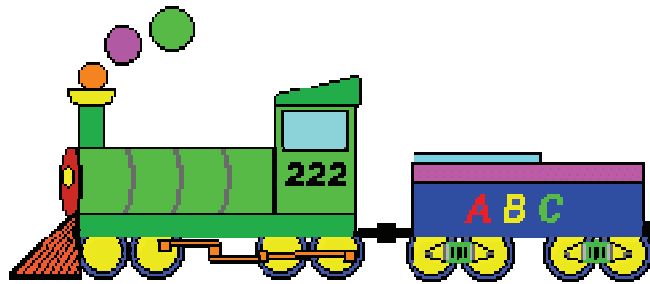
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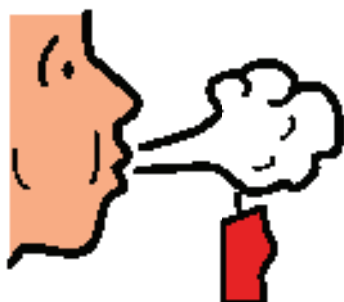
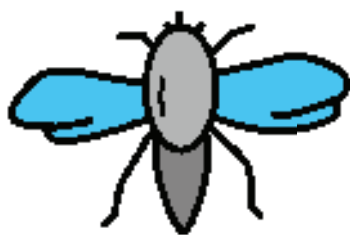
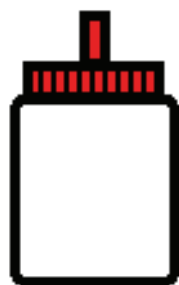


Stretching Out Words

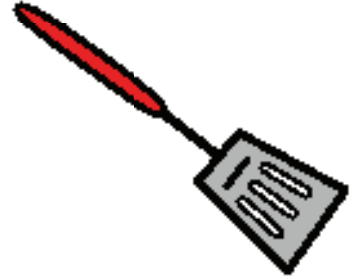
How many sounds can you hear in the word? Stretch and then tap them out on the train and carriages.



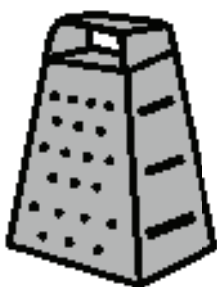
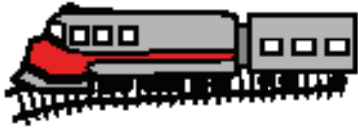
3 sounds (clusters)



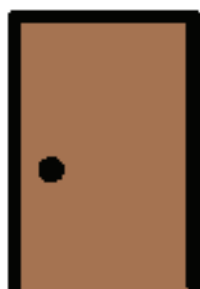
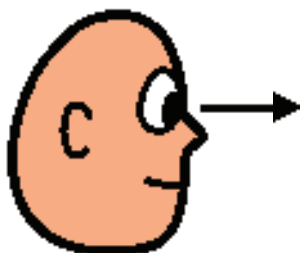
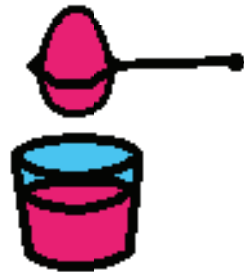
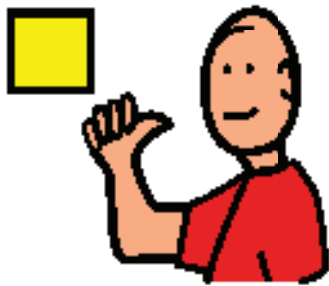
4 sounds- short vowel



4 Sounds- long vowel



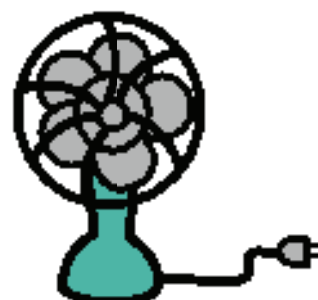
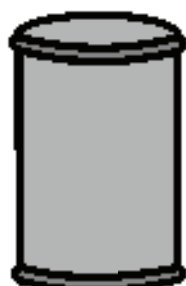
2 Sounds



3 Sounds- short vowel



Bob



3 Sounds- long vowel

