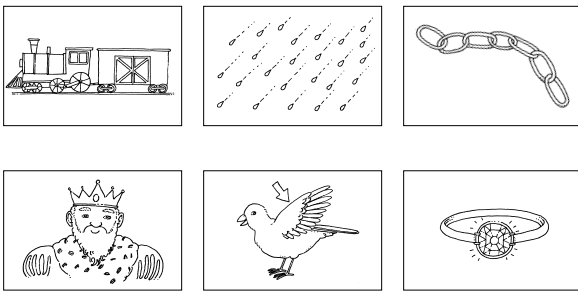


Introduction

Welcome to *Picture Sorting for Phonemic Awareness*! Designed especially for pre-readers, these easy hands-on activities and games help children develop an awareness of sounds, which is essential to reading success. Children examine picture cards, say the names of the pictures aloud, and sort the cards by how the words sound—for example, words that rhyme or begin with the same sound. The active process of sorting allows children to focus on specific word elements, such as onsets (initial sounds) or rimes (word endings). It encourages children to use higher-level thinking skills as they make generalizations, recognize the similarities and differences among words, and discover how words are related. Picture sorting is also a great way to reinforce content-area vocabulary. This book includes dozens and dozens of reproducible picture cards for sorting, as well as assessment ideas and games—everything you need for lots of picture-sorting fun!



What Is Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the separate sounds, or phonemes, that make up words. Speech can be analyzed into separate words, words can be broken down into syllables, and syllables can be broken down into separate units of sounds, called phonemes. For example, the word *pig* has three phonemes: /p/, /i/, and /g/. By

changing the first phoneme in *pig* from /p/ to /b/, the word changes to *big* and, of course, the meaning changes as well. Helping children develop an awareness of phonemes and the ability to manipulate them is an essential step in emergent literacy instruction.

Phonological awareness is a broader term that includes phonemic awareness and also encompasses an understanding of syllables, onsets and rimes, alliteration, rhymes, and words. It is the ability to attend to the sounds of spoken words rather than their meanings. Decades of research highlight the importance of phonological awareness for beginning readers. In fact, studies have identified phonological awareness and letter knowledge as the greatest contributors to reading success. Children who can analyze the sounds of spoken words are more successful in learning to read printed words.

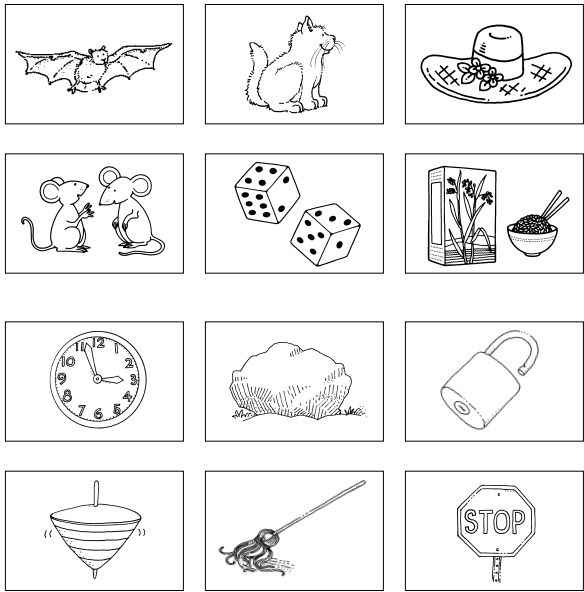
Getting Started

The activities in this book help young children build skills in recognizing rhymes, matching beginning sounds, counting syllables, and counting phonemes. Each of the picture-sorting sections in this book lays the groundwork for the next, but the sections do not need to be followed in sequence. You may use them in the order presented here or in a different order to meet children's needs.

On each reproducible page, you'll find two sets of picture cards to be used together in a sorting activity. The names of the pictures appear at the bottom of the page for the teacher's reference. In advance, cut apart the cards. Review the picture names with children before they begin sorting. Then have children sort the cards into two groups. To customize learning, have children sort two sets of cards from different pages. For a greater challenge, have them sort more than two sets of cards.



Within each section, the picture cards are arranged in order of difficulty. The sets of cards at the beginning of each section provide the most obvious contrasts. Throughout the section, the sets progress to finer contrasts that present a greater challenge. At the beginning of the rhyming section, for example, children sort words that end in *-at* and *-ice*. At the end of the section, they sort words that end in *-ock* and *-op*, a more difficult task because the rimes both begin with the short *o* sound.



For greater durability, laminate the cards (you might color them before laminating). Store the cards in an envelope labeled with the target sound (such as *-ing*) or feature (such as 2 syllables). If you want to expand your picture-card collection, create additional cards by drawing pictures or cutting out pictures of familiar objects from old workbooks, magazines, or catalogs. Paste them onto unlined index cards or onto the blank cards on page 61. See page 62 for a list of additional picture words that can be used to expand your card collection. You might even start a collection of small objects and toys, such as plastic fruit, animal figurines, and dollhouse accessories, for children to sort by name.

How to Sort

To sort picture cards, children compare and contrast how words sound. They start by saying aloud the whole word, then focus on specific elements of words, such as onsets or rimes. Finally, children group together words that share a common element, such as the same number of syllables.

Use the same routine each time you introduce a sorting activity so children become familiar with the procedure. After you model the activity, have children sort a group of cards as you observe and guide them. When you feel children understand the process, have them sort independently or with partners. Below is a step-by-step description to take you through the process.

1 First, review the picture names and target sounds or features with children. In advance, choose a page of picture cards that you would like children to sort. Make a copy for each child and one for the demonstration. Cut apart the cards in advance. It is a good idea to start with the first page of cards in each section, since these are the easiest to sort. Choose one card from each set on the page as the key picture card. (Suggestions appear on page 62.) Identify the picture name and the target sound. For example, show children the cards for *mug* and *sun* and tell them: “*Mug...mmmug* begins with the sound /m/. *Sun...sssun* begins with the sound /s/.” Present the rest of the picture cards and review the names of each. (Names appear at the bottom of each reproducible picture-card page.) Discuss the meaning of picture names as needed.

2 Next, model the sorting process with a few more cards. For example, tell children to listen to the beginning sounds in each picture name and decide if it sounds like /m/ as in *mug*. Demonstrate by thinking aloud: “This is a picture of a mop. *Mmmop* begins with the same sound as *mug*—/m/—so I’ll put it below the picture of the mug.”



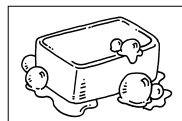
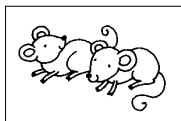
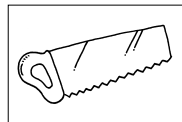
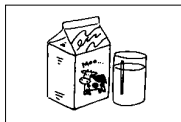
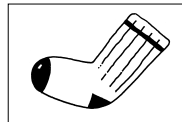
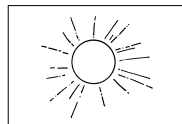
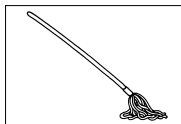
Or for rhyming picture cards, tell children to listen for the ending sounds in each picture name and decide if they sound like *-at* as in *hat*. Demonstrate by exaggerating the sounds in each word: “This is a picture of a cat. *Caaat*, *haaat*. *Cat* has the same ending sounds as *hat*, *-at*, so I’ll put it below the picture of the hat.”

TEACHER TIP

Choose sets of cards for children to sort based on words or target sounds that they have recently come across in a book or class discussion.

3 Give children their own sets of cards to sort during guided practice. (Cut apart the cards in advance.) Have children say the picture names as you help them sort. Provide picture names if children can’t identify them. Once children have sorted the cards, remove any whose picture names children can’t remember. Then have children shuffle the cards and sort again, naming each picture aloud.

4 Finally, have children work with partners or independently to sort the cards into the same categories as above. When they are finished, ask children why they grouped together the cards as they did. Have children tell how the picture words in each group are alike. Guide children to identify the target sound that the words have in common.



TEACHER TIPS

For practice with oddity tasks, use one set of cards that all share the same target sound. Add one distractor (a picture name that does not feature the target sound). Include additional distractors to increase difficulty. Ask children to determine which card(s) do not belong with the rest and why.

For closed sorts, have children sort cards into categories that you have specified. For open sorts, have children examine a set of cards and sort them into categories of their own choosing.

Meeting Individual Needs

Tailor sorting activities to meet children’s needs by adjusting the number of categories. Start with two categories of obvious contrasts. Increase the number of picture cards as children become more proficient. Eventually add a third or even fourth category to present a greater challenge. At the beginning of each section, you’ll find additional ways to vary the activities in order to meet individual needs. You may also use the games on pages 52–60 to provide children with an extra challenge or additional practice.

To provide further reinforcement, read aloud rhymes and poems to small groups of children who need more practice. Have children raise their hand each time you say a word that features the target sound. You might also read aloud big books. Track the print as you read to help children build an association between the target sound and the corresponding letter(s).

Picture sorts are also ideal for first- and second-graders with limited reading vocabularies, English Language Learners (ELL), and children with special needs. To teach ELL children or to reinforce content-area vocabulary, children can sort pictures by categories, such as food, clothing, and animals.

TEACHER TIP

Before children begin a sorting activity, review the name of each picture with them. Have children say the names on their own to ensure that they know them.



Working With Groups

The sorting activities in this book can be used with individuals, pairs, small groups, or the whole class. For whole-group instruction, photocopy the picture cards onto a transparency to use with an overhead projector. Or enlarge the cards on a photocopying machine and color them to use in a pocket chart. You might also use removable adhesive on the back of each card to affix it to the wall or chalkboard. When working with small groups, lay the cards faceup on the floor or on a table and gather children around so they all can see.

TEACHER TIPS.....

Build on previous knowledge to help children experience success. For example, contrast a new target sound with a sound children already know.

Read rhyming or alliterative stories to improve children's sensitivity to sounds. (For suggestions, see the book list on page 63).

Assessing Students' Skills

Children acquire word knowledge through instruction. Since young children differ in their phonological awareness, determine each child's ability before beginning instruction and practice. Use the reproducible assessments at the beginning of each section of picture cards to determine children's levels of phonological awareness. Although individual assessment is preferable, you can also assess small groups of children at the same time (two or three children for pre-kindergarten and up to six children for kindergarten).

To begin, choose sorting activities that match children's developmental levels. If children are having difficulty sorting, have them sort each group of cards until they have mastered it before moving on to the next group of cards. Children are ready to move on to a new sorting activity when they can sort quickly and accurately.

The Five-Day Plan

It is ideal to have children work on picture sorting (or other phonological awareness activities) five days a week for 15 to 20 minutes per day. Refer to pages 8–9 for a five-day plan. The five-day routine can be modified for three days a week as described below.

Day 1

(Days 1 and 2 of the five-day plan)

Model/Guided Practice

Sort Again/Color (as independent practice)

Day 2

(Days 3 and 4 of the five-day plan)

Draw

Search for Pictures (as independent practice)

Day 3

(Day 5 of the five-day plan)

Games

