

Phoneme Isolation

Wisconsin State Standards

Reading:
Foundational Skills
– Phonological
Awareness

Grade Level
K-5

Purpose

Use with students to support phonological awareness: explicitly teach students to recognize isolated phonemes in a word

When to Use

Before Reading
During Reading
After Reading

Grouping

Whole Group
Small Group
Partners
Individuals

ABOUT THE STRATEGY

PHONEME ISOLATION is a strategy that helps develop students' phonemic awareness, which is part of phonological awareness. Phoneme isolation involves having students identify specific phonemes in words (e.g., first, middle, last sound). Phoneme isolation tasks can be done in conjunction with phoneme segmentation tasks. Phoneme isolation tasks take place orally without the written word. Phoneme isolation should be taught using direct and explicit instruction but after such instruction, it can also be reinforced with educational games/activities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

- Select the word(s) to use for the phoneme isolation task.
- Determine which type of phoneme isolation on which you are going to work with your students, moving from easiest to more difficult isolation tasks (beginning sound, ending sound, middle sound).
- Tell students you are going to say some words out loud and ask them to identify the beginning/middle/end sound.
- Say the word out loud and prompt students to isolate the specified sound.
- Repeat the tasks until students can fluently isolate phonemes with accuracy.
- Complete this activity with picture cards where students identify the beginning/middle/end sound of the picture.
- Once students understand the concept, create a more game-like situation to practice phoneme isolation. Play a sorting game where students sort picture cards based on similarities in beginning/middle/ending sounds.

MEASURING PROGRESS

- Teacher observation
- Conferencing
- Informal blending assessment

RESEARCH

- Bursuck, W. D., & Damer, M. (2011). *Teaching reading to students who are at risk or have disabilities: A multi-tier approach* (2nd Ed). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Chard, D. J., & Dickson, S. V. (1999). Phonological awareness: Instructional and assessment guidelines. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 34*, 261-270.
- Vaughn, S., & Linan-Thompson, S. (2004). *Research-based methods of reading instruction: Grades K-3*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Phoneme Isolation

Decide what sounds you would like students to isolate: beginning, middle, or ending sound.

Direct Teaching of Phoneme Isolation

Beginning Sound	<p>After hearing the teacher say a word aloud or present a picture card, the student identifies the beginning sound of the word. (You can also refer to them as <i>first</i> or <i>initial</i> sounds.)</p> <p>Example: Teacher: "What's the beginning sound in <i>fish</i>?" Student: "/f/" Teacher: "What's the beginning sound in <i>cat</i>?" Student: "/c/"</p>
Middle Sound	<p>After hearing the teacher say a word aloud or present a picture card, the student identifies the middle sound of the word.</p> <p>Example: Teacher: "What's the middle sound in <i>fish</i>?" Student: "/i/" Teacher: "What's the middle sound in <i>cat</i>?" Student: "/a/"</p>
Ending Sound	<p>After hearing the teacher say a word aloud or present a picture card, the student identifies the ending sound of the word. (You can also refer to them as the <i>last</i> or <i>final</i> sounds.)</p> <p>Example: Teacher: "What's the ending sound in <i>fish</i>?" Student: "/sh/" Teacher: "What's the ending sound in <i>cat</i>?" Student: "/t/"</p>
<h2>Games/Activities to Promote Phoneme Isolation</h2>	
Phoneme Isolation Sort	<p>Materials: Collect several pictures of 2 to 3 phoneme words. Create a three-column sheet and place a picture at the top of each column.</p> <p>Directions: Decide if you are going to have students sort words by beginning, middle, or ending sound. Tell them you are going to sort words by beginning/middle/ ending sounds. Students should be directed to place pictures in the column with the same beginning/middle/ending sounds.</p>

Word Picture Cards

Examples of word picture cards that can be used during phoneme isolation tasks and games.



Phoneme Isolation Sort

Example of the word columns to be used during phoneme isolation sort. Students select picture cards from a pile, say the word aloud, and sort into the correct column based on words that have the same beginning, middle, or ending sound.

