

Oral blending and segmenting

Being able to hear and put together a sequence of sounds to make a word (oral blending) is a key phonics skill, essential for good progress in reading. The ability to hear and say sounds in words (oral segmenting) is a key skill in learning to spell. It is important that children have a lot of experience of oral blending and segmenting as preparation for blending and segmenting with letters in Phase Two.

Tuning into sounds

Oral blending

- ▶ **Tog talk:** Use a toy robot or the **Tog posting box** to introduce the idea of ‘sound-talk’. Ask the robot his name and tell the children that he says it is T-o-g. Say: *T-o-g Tog* and ask the children to repeat after you. Ask Tog other questions, such as: *What’s your favourite sandwich?* (*j-a-m – jam*); *What’s your favourite colour?* (*r-e-d – red*). Always say the answer first in sound-talk before saying the whole word. Ask the children to repeat after you each time. As they become more familiar with the idea of blending sounds, see if they begin to say the blended word before you, after hearing the sound-talk.
Always pronounce sounds clearly in a way that makes blending easy – avoid adding an /uh/ sound to the end of a sound (for example, say /b/ rather than /buh/).
- ▶ **Everyday blending:** Model oral blending in everyday activities. Give the children instructions, segmenting and then immediately blending the sounds in the final word (for example, *Let’s fill the p-o-t pot*). Occasionally, do the same with the final word of a rhyme (for example, ... *the pod went p-o-p pop*).

Oral segmenting

- ▶ **Talk like a robot:** Show the children a toy robot and explain that he talks in a robot voice. Hold up an item or a picture of an item, such as a hat, and ask the children to name it. Demonstrate how the robot would say the name, exaggerating the sound of each phoneme in a robotic voice (for example, *h-a-t*). Repeat with more items or pictures, gradually encouraging the children to join in with first saying the words in a robotic voice and then saying the words in their normal voice.
- ▶ **Tell Tog:** Use the **Tog posting box** to introduce the idea of oral segmenting (the reverse of oral blending). Invite the children to tell Tog the name of some objects in sound-talk. Model this process (for example: *Tog says, ‘What’s this?’ Let’s tell him it’s a hat. Hat, h-a-t*). Ask the children to repeat the sound-talk to Tog. Continue the activity with other objects. Gradually, see if the children can segment a word for themselves and praise them for ‘speaking sound-talk’.
- ▶ **Clap the sounds:** Say a sentence, giving the last word in sound-talk (for example, *Tog put on his h-a-t*). As you sound-talk the last word, clap each phoneme and then blend the phonemes to say the word. Repeat with more sentences, encouraging the children to clap each phoneme and blend the word. For example: *Tog has hurt his l-e-g; Tog sat in the s-u-n*.

Listening and remembering sounds

Oral blending

- ▶ **Treasure hunt:** Hide some treasure (for example, some ‘gold’ coins) around the room. Explain that Tog has left some clues about where he has hidden the treasure, but part of each clue is in sound-talk. Ask the children to help you. Read a clue, saying the last word in sound-talk (for example: *It is by the b-e-ll; It is under the m-a-t*). See if the children put the sounds together and say the word. If they do not, repeat the sound-talk, say the word and ask them to repeat after you.
- ▶ **Tog says:** Display the **Tog posting box** and a selection of objects that represent simple CVC words, or use some of the **Oral blending and segmenting picture cards**. Say the name of an item in sound-talk (for example, *Tog says he wants a p-e-g*). Pause to encourage the children to say the word and identify the correct object or picture to post in the box.