

Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Introduction



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Introduction

Before you get started with your DECK-odables, please review the following key concepts. Our Background Information Sheets on Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence, Morphology, and Orthographic Conventions can also provide essential background information. They can all be found on our website at:

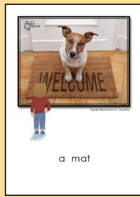
syllasense.com/teaching-resources

Key Concept for Educators	Examples/Activities/Considerations
A grapheme can represent more than one phoneme.	For example: <s> can represent /s/ (e.g., <i>snake</i>) <s> can represent /z/ (e.g., <i>is</i>) <s> can represent /zh/ (e.g., <i>vision</i>)
A phoneme may be represented by more than one grapheme.	For example: /m/ can be represented by <m> (e.g., <i>mat</i>) /m/ can be represented by <mn> (e.g., <i>autumn</i>) /m/ can be represented by <mb> (e.g., <i>lamb</i>)
The position of our lips, tongue, and mouth, as well as airflow and vocal cord vibration, determine which phoneme is produced.	Some key teaching considerations: - It is important to help students recognize what is happening in their mouths when they pronounce certain phonemes. - Ask them to consider what they are feeling with their lips, tongue, and throat. - Some mouth formations are visible — have students look into a mirror as they pronounce different phonemes.
It is beneficial to use the terms grapheme and phoneme in Kindergarten. A grapheme represents a phoneme but can be spelled with more than one letter.	- A grapheme can consist of more than one letter (e.g., <ck>, <tch>), and a phoneme can “sound” different depending on the letters that are around it (e.g., listen to the /a/ in <i>cat</i> vs <i>can</i>). - The terms grapheme and phoneme are more wholesome than “letters and sounds”. These may seem hard terms for kindergarten students, but their vocabularies are growing dramatically during this stage, and starting them with the correct vocabulary makes learning easier in the long run.



Note: Students may not learn <mn>, <mb> for /m/, or that <s> can represent /zh/ until Grade 3, but it is essential for teachers to understand why it is important to say “<s> **CAN** represent /s/”, as opposed to “<s> **REPRESENTS** /s/”.

Continued on next page.



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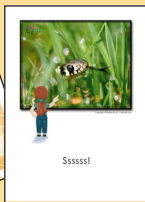
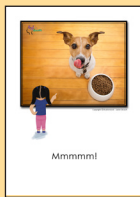
Key Concept for Educators	Examples/Activities/Considerations
Phonemes can be voiced or unvoiced.	- All vowel phonemes, as well as /b/, /d/, /g/, /j/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /r/, /v/, /y/, /z/ are voiced. This means when pronounced, vocal cords will vibrate. - The phonemes /k/, /f/, /h/, /p/, /s/, /t/ are unvoiced. This means that when pronounced your vocal cords will not vibrate.



Note: often, in the attempt to be louder or “clearer,” people pronounce phonemes with an added “uh” at the end (e.g., add a schwa). Imagine a child who has not been taught that <c>s and <t>s are unvoiced. The student may read “kuh”, “a”, “tuh” and then reread the word as “kuhatuh” instead of *cat*.



Refer to the **Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets** for a more comprehensive description of teaching phonemes and description of the schwa.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 001–002



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Cards 001-002

- consonants <m>/m/ and <s>/s/

Key Concepts to Understand

- /m/ and /n/ are nasal phonemes, which means the air stream created during articulation is directed through the nasal cavity
- <m> and <s> are continuous as they can be held for a length of time before you blend into the next phoneme — continuous sounds are easier to blend, so as you progress with the DECK-odables, start with these phonemes in initial position when students are first learning to blend — for example, use *map* instead of *tap* as the /t/ has an abrupt stop

Activities to Try

When introducing print, it is important to give children a lot of varied experiences noticing/matching/labeling the connections between particular graphemes and their corresponding phonemes.

Here are some suggestions:

- 1 Using Mirrors:** The goal is to pay attention to what the lips, teeth, tongue, and airflow are doing (e.g., using a small mirror, using the camera on a tablet as a mirror, or looking at a classmate's mouth).
- 2 Partner Work:** Have students turn to face each other: ask one to pronounce a phoneme (/m/ or /s/) and the other to describe what is happening in their partner's mouth and to their airflow. Pre-teach ways to notice:
 - airflow (e.g., plugging their nose)
 - open/closed lips
 - voiced/unvoiced

**ensure there is no added “uh” at the end of the phoneme

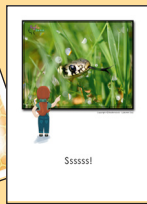


Refer to the **Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets**.

- 3 Sorting:** In a sorting activity, students identify those who have an <m> or do not have an <m> in their names. Have students notice what their mouths are doing when pronouncing the <m>. Students can also notice where in those names the /m/ is: (beginning/middle/end). You may wish to use the terms initial/medial/final position as these terms will support future learning (see **Positional Constraints and Relationships in the Orthographic Conventions Background Information Sheets**). Repeat with <s>. This activity can be used with newly introduced graphemes.



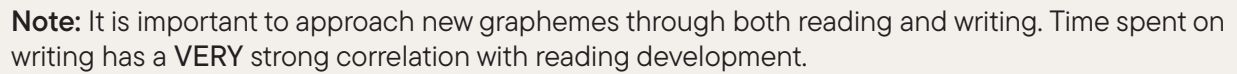
Take advantage of other ways to spell /m/ or /s/ if they exist in the names of your students. For example, students will notice that a Cindy has a <c> that is pronounced /s/. At this point, draw their attention to alternate spellings (Sophia vs Sofia) rather than teach explicit lessons.



Cards 001–002



Writing – Tips and Activities to Try

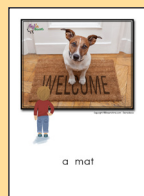


Students require explicit instruction on letter formation. Research shows that adding letter formation practice while learning graphemes is extremely helpful — think of letter formation as having a “pathway” with an entrance and exit point, not as a picture (e.g., lines and circles drawn without a continuous pathway). Teaching letter pathways helps with letter reversals and helps writing efficiency. The majority of writing should be written using lowercase unless uppercase is required (names, beginning of sentences).

Steps to Write Words

- 1 Provide students with items that begin with an <s> and items that begin with an <m>. Students sort provided items and then record the beginning grapheme underneath the object.
- 2 Students can draw things they like to eat and write <mmmmmmm> underneath.
- 3 Draw non-living things (e.g., *leaky balloon*) and/or living things (e.g., *snake*), and write <sssssss> underneath.

Extension → Explore reasons for the uppercase letters and exclamation marks on Cards 001 and 002.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 003–014



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Cards 003–014

- <a>/ă/
- <d>/d/, <n>/n/, <p>/p/, <t>/t/

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important for students to be able to recognize letters as either consonants or vowels.
- Vowel phonemes are continuous, voiced, and they have unobstructed airflow. Consonant phonemes all have some sort of airflow constriction. It is good to explore articulation with students.
- Note: the mouth formation is the exact same for /t/ and /d/, but /t/ is unvoiced and /d/ is voiced. Students sometimes interchange these phonemes when they speak and write (e.g., sdop instead of stop).
- When teaching graphemes, include letter formation. It is essential to use a “pathway” with an entrance and exit point, not as a picture; this will also support students with <d>/ confusion as they often start with a “stick” for both and then guess which way to go. See writing section for more specific pathway examples.
- Phrases contain a word or group of words. Phrases do not have to begin with a capital and end with a period, as they are not complete sentences.

Noun Phrases: (tell the who or what) examples → *cats* or *the cute cats*

Verb Phrases: (tells what the subject is doing or being) examples → *sat* or *sat quietly*

Prepositional Phrases: (tell the where and when) examples → *over the fence* or *at dinner time*

There are many types of sentences. Complete sentences contain a subject and a predicate. More simply stated, simple sentences include a noun and a verb (e.g., *Jack sits.*). Sentences begin with a capital, and end with punctuation.

There are times when an author will use capitalization and ending punctuation for emphasis. In our DECK-odables, we sometimes use capitalization and exclamation marks for sentence fragments meant to show a strong or forceful emotion (e.g., *A mad cat!*). It is important to note this with your students and discuss. You might ask your students why they think the author chose to use specific punctuation in a card, and whether or not your students would have used the same punctuation. The nice thing about writing is that it provides the author an opportunity to communicate their thoughts. This can be done in a formal, or informal way, and can provide an excellent opportunity for student discussion.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 003–014



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence – Tips and Activities to Try

Common Blending Difficulties:

- students segment (pronounce each sound in isolation) and then say the word (m-a-t → *mat*)
- students pronounce the onset followed by the rime and then say the word (m-at → *mat*)
- students segment (pronounce each sound in isolation), but then say the incorrect word (m-a-t → *tap*)

Students may say the incorrect word if they haven't blended the sounds. Teaching continuous blending helps to resolve/prevent these difficulties. Segmenting is important when encoding (spelling) but can hinder fluency when reading.

Teaching Continuous Blending

- it is a good idea to start with continuous phonemes, as blending from a stop phoneme to a vowel can be difficult for students
- have students blend the phonemes without turning their voices off as they track the word underneath



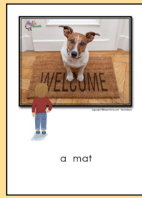
Refer to the Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets for more information on continuous and stop phonemes.

Reading CVC Words That Begin with Continuous Sounds:

- 1 Show the word <mat>
- 2 Teacher covers the <t>
- 3 Have the students pronounce /m/ and prompt them to keep their voices on while “adding” the /a/ (like they are singing “/maaa/”)
- 4 Teacher quickly uncovers the <t> while students continue to keep their voices “on” and read *mat*

Students will hear the word *mat* as they are continuously blending as opposed to hearing /m/, /a/, /t/ in isolation and then potentially rereading the word incorrectly (e.g., saying *tam* or *map*)

Continued on next page.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 003–014



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try (Cont.)

Reading CVC Words That Begin with Stop Sounds:

- 1 Show the word <pat>
- 2 Teacher covers the <t>
- 3 Have the students position their mouths for the <p> without pronouncing it
- 4 Students track from the <p> to the <a> and then pronounce together, keeping their voices "on" ("/paaaa/")
- 5 Teacher quickly uncovers the <t> while students continue to keep their voices on and read *pat*



Note: while using the above strategies may seem initially taxing, there is an enormous payoff as students do not have to “undo” segmenting, leading to increased fluency and reduced guessing.

Using a Grapheme Deck

Only choose grapheme cards that students control automatically as this is a blending exercise, not a teaching grapheme exercise.

Blending/Word Chains:

- 1 Place grapheme cards in front of students
- 2 Start with simple CVC blends using the graphemes you have taught — change one grapheme at a time to form new words
- 3 Have students blend the phonemes together without pausing between phonemes as they swipe underneath to read the word. Here is an example:

cat → mat → map → mop → top → tap → tad → dad → sad

sat → pat → pot → hot → got → lot → tot → not



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 003–014



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

High-Frequency Words — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Cards 003–014

- “a”

Key Concepts to Understand

- When the letter <a> is in CVC words, it can be pronounced /ă/ (short <a>), but when the word a is in a phrase or sentence, it is usually pronounced as a schwa. The word a was therefore labelled as a high-frequency word.
- Introducing the concept of schwa early is important as English is a **stress-timed language**. This means that we automatically stress certain words or syllables when we speak. These stressed syllables are perceived to occur at regular intervals, creating a natural “rhythm” to our speech. Unstressed syllables are often said faster to help maintain this rhythm. A schwa is a non-distinct vowel sound that does not sound like any of the main vowels in isolation.



Refer to the Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets for a more comprehensive description of the schwa.

Writing — Tips and Activities to Try



Note: It is important to approach new graphemes through both reading and writing. Time spent on writing has a **VERY** strong correlation with reading development.

Key Concepts to Understand

- Students in Kindergarten/Grade 1/Grade 2 benefit from daily practice with letter formation. There are many free worksheets and underlays online.
- Although <c> has not been introduced, practising the formation and verbal pathway (“magic c”) for printing purposes is beneficial as <c> is the beginning of a pathway into <a>, <d> <g>, <o>, <q>. Giving students LOTS of practice writing <c>s can prevent reversals later on.
- An example of a verbal pathway for <d> is, “magic c, up, down, d”. Students will say “magic <c>” while they form the <c>, then complete the “stick” of the <d> with the “up, down”. Students may need prompts to keep their pencils on the paper the entire time.
- Ensure students are holding (attempting) the writing instrument correctly. There are many inexpensive ways to support this (using butterfly clips, rubber bands)

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Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 003–014



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Writing — Tips and Activities to Try (Cont.)

Activities to Try

- Have students say the word, then “tap out” the word. Students can tap out each phoneme (e.g., on their arm, with their fingers, etc.) and then name the graphemes for each phoneme orally.
- Students will name the grapheme aloud while they simultaneously write (e.g., they only say <m> while they are forming the <m>, then say <a> while they are forming the <a>, etc.). It is important for students to practice forming the graphemes. The majority of writing should be written using lowercase unless uppercase is required (names, beginning of sentences).



Refer to the **Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets**.

- When the focus is on spelling words, using magnetic letters, grapheme decks, etc., will reduce physical and/or cognitive fatigue.



Note: Use this strategy with words that contain graphemes that have been explicitly taught AND are phonetically regular (e.g., do not use this strategy for words such as <was>).



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 015–047



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Cards 015–047

- <i>/ĭ/, <o>/ŏ/
- /b/, <c>/k/, <f>/f/, <g>/g/, <h>/h/

Key Concepts to Understand

- It is important not to say <c> REPRESENTS /k/ but instead that <c> CAN REPRESENT /k/ (e.g., some other graphemes that can represent /k/ are: <k>, <ck>, <ch>).
- When teaching letter formation, it is essential to use a “pathway” with an entrance and exit point, not as a picture; this will also support students with <d>/ confusion as they often start with a “stick” for both and then guess which way to go. An example of a verbal pathway for is, “pull down, bounce up to the midline, and around the belly” (the round part of the). Have students notice that their lips are “like a stick” when their mouth is ready to pronounce /b/ to prompt them on how to begin. Students may need prompts to keep their pencils on the paper the entire time.



Note: the mouth formation is the exact same for /c/ and /g/, but <c> is unvoiced and <g> is voiced. Students will sometimes interchange these phonemes when they speak and therefore write (e.g., *kuitar* instead of *guitar*).



Note: the mouth formation is the exact same for /f/ and /v/, but <f> is unvoiced and <v> is voiced. Students may interchange these phonemes as well.

- It is beneficial to have students put their hands in front of their mouths and notice the puff of air when pronouncing <h>. <H>s are unvoiced, but often (in an attempt to be heard), we voice <h>s. Voicing <h>s can lead to difficulties when blending. For example, a student may read “huh”, “a”, “tuh” and then reread the word as “huhatuh” instead of *hat*.

Be careful when choosing keywords for vowels. For example, *igloo* for /ĭ/ can create confusion as the <g> influences the sound of the <i>, *elephant* for /ĕ/ can create confusion as the <l> influences the sound of the <e>, and *umbrella* for /ŭ/ can create confusion as the <m> influences the sound of the <u>.

The following keywords allow for a crisp vowel pronunciation:

- <a>/ă/ – apple
- <o>/ŏ/ – octopus
- <e>/ĕ/ – edge
- <u>/ŭ/ – up
- <i>/ĭ/ – itchy

Including actions with these keywords is very helpful as it adds a multisensory component (e.g., pointing up when pronouncing <u>/ŭ/).



Refer to the **Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets** for more information on voiced/unvoiced phonemes.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 015–047



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

Common Blending Difficulties:

- students segment (pronounce each sound in isolation) and then say the word (s-i-p → *sip*)
- students pronounce the onset followed by the rime and then say the word (s-ip → *sip*)
- students segment (pronounce each sound in isolation), but then say the incorrect word (s-i-p → *sit*)

Teaching continuous blending helps to resolve/prevent these difficulties.

Teaching Continuous Blending Effectively

- it is a good idea to start with continuous phonemes, as blending from a stop phoneme to a vowel can be difficult for students
- have students blend the phonemes without turning their voices off as they track the word underneath

Reading CVC Words That Begin with Continuous Sounds:

- 1 Show the word <fat>
- 2 Teacher covers the <t>
- 3 Have the students pronounce /f/ and prompt them to keep their voices on while “adding” the /a/ (like they are singing “/faaa/”)
- 4 Teacher quickly uncovers the <t> while students continue to keep their voices on and read *fat*

Students will hear the word *fat* as they are continuously blending as opposed to hearing /f/, /a/, /t/ in isolation and then potentially rereading the word incorrectly (e.g., saying *tam* or *map*)

Reading CVC Words That Begin with Stop Sounds:

- 1 Show the word <bat>
- 2 Teacher covers the <t>
- 3 Have the students position their mouths for the <p> without pronouncing it
- 4 Students track from the <p> to the <a> and then pronounce together, keeping their voices on (“/paaaa/”)
- 5 Teacher quickly uncovers the <t> while students continue to keep their voices on and read *bat*



Note: While using the above strategies may seem initially taxing, there is an enormous payoff as students do not have to “undo” segmenting, leading to increased fluency and reduced guessing.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 015–047



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Writing - Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- Students in Kindergarten/Grade 1/Grade 2 benefit from daily practice with letter formation. There are many free worksheets and underlays online.
- As mentioned before, practising the formation and verbal pathway for “magic c” is beneficial as <c> is the beginning of the pathway into <a>, <d>, <g>, <o>, <q>.
- Giving students **LOTS** of practice writing <c>s can prevent reversals later on.
- Ensure students are holding (attempting) the writing instrument correctly. There are many inexpensive ways to support this (using butterfly clips, rubber bands).

Steps to Write Words:

- 1 Practice forming the graphemes: See the **Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets**. The majority of writing should be written using lowercase unless uppercase is required (names, beginning of sentences).
- 2 Tap it out (segmenting): Students can tap out the phoneme (e.g., on their arm, with their fingers, etc.) and then orally name the graphemes for each phoneme.
- 3 Students will name the grapheme aloud while they simultaneously write (e.g., they only say <m> while they are forming the <m>, then say <a> while they are forming the <a>, etc.).
- 4 When the focus is on spelling words, using magnetic letters, grapheme decks, etc. will reduce physical and/or cognitive fatigue.

Steps to Write Phrases and Sentences — it's not too early!

- 1 Teacher says a phrase or sentence — you can use the text from a card for this (e.g., *a cat mat*).
- 2 Teacher identifies whether it is a phrase or sentence, prompting a discussion on whether an uppercase letter/punctuation will be needed
- 3 Students repeat phrase/sentence several times.
- 4 Ask students how many words are in the phrase/sentence (e.g., students repeat while putting up a finger for each word).
- 5 Ask students to identify the first word they will write.
- 6 Follow **Steps to Write Words** (prompting them to reread what they have already written before writing the next word).
- 7 When completed, students should use their fingers to point to each word as they read their phrase/sentence.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 048–080



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Cards 048–080

- <u>/ŭ/>
- <s>/z/

Key Concepts to Understand

- As mentioned in tip sheet 3, be careful when choosing keywords for vowels. For example, *igloo* for /ī/ can create confusion as the <g> influences the <i>. The following keywords allow for crisp pronunciation:
 - <a>/ă/ – apple
 - <e>/ě/ – edge
 - <i>/ī/ – itchy
 - <o>/ŏ/ – octopus
 - <u>/ŭ/ – up
- Including actions with these keywords is very helpful as it adds a multisensory component (e.g., pointing up when pronouncing <u>/ŭ/).
- It is important not to say <s> REPRESENTS /s/ but instead, that <s> CAN REPRESENT /s/ (e.g., another phoneme that <s> can represent is /z/). Once this has been introduced, ensure students always include both pronunciations of <s>: /s/ and /z/, when shown the grapheme.

Introducing <s> as /z/

This is the first time students are being introduced to more than one way to pronounce a grapheme.

- 1 Provide students with the words *sat*, *sip*, *has*, and *is*.
- 2 Students track underneath the word while the teacher reads them.
- 3 Ask students to notice when <s> represents /s/ and when <s> represents /z/.
- 4 Ask if the position of the <s> makes a difference to the phoneme it represents.

Be mindful of your wording. The grapheme <s> can represent /z/ at the end of a base (e.g., *has*), as a suffix (e.g., *dogs*), and in the middle of a base (e.g., *raisin*). At this point in lessons, students will only see <s> as /z/ at the end of a base. It is important that we don't imply this is the only position you will see <s> as /z/.

Using Popsicle Sticks

- 1 Provide students with 4 popsicle sticks, labelled with <a>, <o>, <i>, and <u>.
- 2 Teacher says a CVC word containing short <a>, <o>, <i>, and <u> (select words from the Card 048 to 080).
- 3 Students repeat the word while focusing on the vowel. This can often be difficult for students. One way to stretch out the vowel is to pretend your hand is climbing a roller coaster, and as the hand comes over the hill, you pronounce a continuous /ă/, /ŏ/, /ī/, or /ŭ/ (e.g., /m/ /aaaa/ /t/). Model this until students can do it independently.
- 4 Students hold up the correct popsicle stick.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 048–080



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

High-Frequency Words — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Cards 048–080

- "the"

Key Concepts to Understand

- *The* is a decodable word once students have been taught the digraph <th> and the schwa, but at this point in their lesson series, it can be taught as a high-frequency word.
- **Digraph:** a grapheme comprised of 2 letters (e.g., <th>) representing one phoneme. Digraphs are a combination of vowels and/or consonants (e.g., <sh>, <ea>, <ow>, <ck>).
- *The* is usually pronounced with a “schwa” (unstressed vowel sound), rather than a short /ĕ/ or long /ē/ as English is a stress-timed language.
- Refer to the **Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets** for more information on “schwa”.
- *The* is a function word — function words are defined as words that have a grammatical purpose/specify grammatical relations, as opposed to content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs which have a distinct meaning.
- Function words are often unstressed in a phrase or sentence, thus are pronounced with a schwa.



Note: *the* is sometimes stressed, at which point the <e> usually represents the long /ē/ → think about how we pronounce the at the end of a story (*the end*) compared to when the is unstressed (*for the kids...*).

Activities to Try

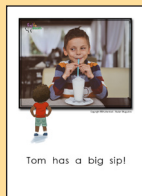
Have students explore the concept of stressed and unstressed words and syllables by saying simple sentences. For instance, say the sentence, “Let’s go to the movies.” Have students repeat it, stressing every word equally (like a robot). Repeat the sentence with natural stress and intonation. Hearing the contrast helps students notice that we tend to stress go and movies, while the let’s and to the, squish together and are said quickly and are unstressed.

★ Introduced in Cards 048–080

- "and"

Key Concepts to Understand

And is a decodable word but is listed as a high-frequency word as consonant clusters have not yet been explicitly taught.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 048–080



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Writing — Tips and Activities to Try



For writing activities, see Page 5 of the Yellow DECK-odable Teacher Tip Sheets for Cards 003–014.

Writing High-Frequency Words

At this point, students are writing *the* as a rote word. As *the* is a frequently used word in reading and writing, it is introduced before the concept of digraphs has been explored.

- Provide many opportunities to write *the*.
- Do not have students isolate the phonemes for the word *the* (as they may have not yet been introduced to the digraph <th>).
- Have students name the graphemes as they write (e.g., say each letter name as they write it).



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 081–125



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

☆ Introduced in Cards 081–125

- <e>/ě/
- <k>/k/, <l>/l/, <r>/r/, <x>/x/, <z>/z/, <ck>/k/, <ff>/ff/

Key Concepts to Understand

- A <ck> is used to represent /k/ (e.g., *sick*, *rack*) after a single short vowel at the end of a base.
- An <f> is doubled to represent /f/ (e.g., *off*, *staff*) after a single short vowel at the end of a base.
- This convention is often either called the FLSZ (Floss Rule) or BOMP (Buzz Off Miss Pill); acronyms help students remember the convention that after a single short vowel, instead of a single grapheme, we use <zz>, <ff>, <ss>, <ll>. (Note: only <ff> is included in this section of cards)
- The grapheme <k> is used to represent /k/ at the end of a base when preceded by a consonant or when it precedes “marker <e>” (e.g., *milk* and *cake*).
- The phoneme represented by <s> (/ks/) actually includes two “phones”: [k] and [s].

Activities to Try

<ck> spelling /k/ (Cards 096–120)

This is the first time students are being introduced to a two-letter grapheme (digraph)

- 1 Teacher writes the following words on cards/stickies/etc.: *cat*, *cap*, *cot*, *cub*, *cup*, *luck*, *back*, *sack*, *pick*, *tack*.
- 2 Teacher reads words while students track underneath.
- 3 Students sort the words into two groups with their own sorting rule. Guide them to sort by <c> and <ck>. (Providing them with the opportunity to discover this sorting rule is more powerful than telling them.)
- 4 Ask students to notice when the phoneme /k/ is represented by <ck> and when the phoneme /k/ is represented by <c>.
- 5 Ask if the position of the phoneme /k/ makes a difference in how it is spelled.
- 6 Ask students to circle/underline/etc. the <ck> and highlight the preceding grapheme.
- 7 Identify what type of grapheme precedes the <ck>. Guide students in noticing the <ck> follows a single vowel.

Continued on next page.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 081–125



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try (Cont.)

Activities to Try (Cards 121–125)

Sorting

- 1 Teacher writes the following words on cards/stickies/etc.: *kit, ask, ink, kid, duck, pack, rack, lock*.
- 2 Teacher reads words while students track underneath. Students are not expected to read the words with consonant clusters (e.g., *ask, ink*).
- 3 Students sort the words into two groups with their own sorting rule. Guide them to sort by <k> and <ck>. (Providing them with the opportunity to discover this sorting rule is more powerful than telling them.)
- 4 Students highlight (circle, underline, point, etc.,) what grapheme precedes the <k>. Guide students to notice that the <k> is either in initial position or is preceded by a consonant.
- 5 Students highlight/circle/underline/point/etc. what grapheme precedes the <ck>. Guide students in noticing the <ck> follows a single vowel.

Morphology - Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Cards 081–125

- suffix <-s> (third person singular)
- suffix <-s> (plural)

Key Concepts to Understand

Words either have a base or are a base → a **base** is a structural element that holds the meaning and does not contain prefixes or suffixes.

- the suffix <-s> has more than one function, and more than one pronunciation
- suffix <-s> can indicate third person singular present tense (e.g., *she jumps, he runs, Sue hits*, etc.)
- suffix <-s> can indicate the base is plural (e.g., *dogs, cats, balls*)
- suffix <-s> represents the unvoiced phoneme /s/ if it follows an unvoiced phoneme (e.g., *jumps, hits*)
- suffix <-s> represents the voiced phoneme /z/ if it follows a voiced phoneme (e.g., *digs, calls*)

We have used <-s> as third person singular early in our series as it allows for a more natural language structure. These words are easy for students to read if they know the phonemes represented by <s>. When exploring morphology, and suffixes as meaning units, it is best to start with suffix <-s> as a plural, as it holds a more concrete meaning (plural) rather than serving a grammatical function.

Continued on next page.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 081–125



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try (Cont.)

Activities to Try (Cards 121–125)

Suffix <-s> as Plural

- 1 Students have a popsicle stick with an <-s> attached.
- 2 They walk around the classroom with their “suffix <-s>”.
- 3 Students find objects in the room that have 2 or more (e.g., *stack of chairs*, *bin of pencils*, *markers*, etc.), put “suffix <-s>” beside them, and orally name them (e.g., “*Pencils!*”).

Extension: provide students with decodable word cards/nouns (e.g., *dog*, *cat*, *hat*) and ask students to put their “suffix <-s>” popsicle stick after the base and read the entire word. This activity encourages students to notice the base + suffix.

Word Sums

Introducing word sums at this time can be valuable

pet + s → pets

kid + s → kids

van + s → vans

Use the phrase “is rewritten as” to represent the arrow “→” in a word sum. Say “<p>, <e>, <t> plus suffix <s> is rewritten as <p>, <e>, <t>, <s>”.



Refer to the **Morphology Background Information Sheets** for more information on working with word sums.

Multisensory Activity

- 1 Teacher selects words with suffixes from Card Deck (starting at Card 081) (e.g., Teacher says *naps*.)
- 2 The goal is to represent the base with a fist, and any suffixes with two fingers pointing downwards to the left of the fist (to ensure the base precedes the suffix when facing students). To see this in action, visit: wordtorque.com/using-visual-cues-to-indicate-morphemic-structure
- 3 Teacher says *nap* while holding up fist and then says /s/ while pointing two fingers downwards to signal the suffix.

Follow this procedure whenever you are emphasizing bases — it is especially powerful to orally expose students to other examples, going beyond what has been explicitly taught (e.g., *looking*).



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 081–125



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Writing - Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- Use <c> for /k/ unless followed by an <e>, <i> or <y>.
- The grapheme <k> is easy to read but more challenging to spell (there is more than one way to spell /k/). Teachers may not expect students to be responsible for knowing when to use <k> in initial position at this time (some prefer to teach this when introducing soft <c>).

Activities to Try

<c> vs <ck>

- 1 Teacher writes the following words on cards/stickies/etc.: *cat, cub, can, cot, cap, cut, kid, kit, kin, kill, keg, Ken, Kyle* (students are not responsible for reading Kyle).
- 2 Students sort the words into two groups with their own sorting rule. Guide them to sort by initial <c> and <k>. (Providing them with the opportunity to discover this sorting rule is more powerful than telling them.)
- 3 Students highlight/circle the grapheme that follows either the <c> or <k>.
- 4 Guide students in noticing that <k> is the spelling that precedes an <e>, <i> or <y>.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 126–150



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence — Tips and Activities to Try

★ Introduced in Cards 126–150

- consonant digraphs <zz>/z/, <ss>/s/, and <ll>/l/
- <v>/v/, <w>/w/, <j>/j/

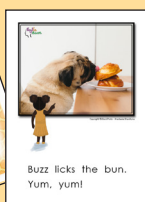
Key Concepts to Understand

- A double <ss> is used instead of a single <s> (e.g., *kiss*, *toss*) after a single short vowel, at the end of a base.
- A double <zz> is used instead of a single <z> (e.g., *jazz*, *fuzz*) after a single short vowel, at the end of a base.
- A double <ll> is used instead of a single <l> (e.g., *will*, *tell*) after a single short vowel, at the end of a base.
- This convention is often either called the FLSZ (Floss Rule) or BOMP (Buzz Off Miss Pill); acronyms help students remember this convention
- The mouth formation is the exact same for /v/ and /f/, but <v> is voiced and <f> is unvoiced.
- It is useful when pronouncing /w/ to ask students to purse their lips, saying /w/, without releasing into a “wuh”.
- It is useful when pronouncing /y/ to ask students to purse their lips, saying /y/, without releasing into a “yuh”.
- This makes blending easier
 - instead “wuh” “i” “ll” and then reread the word as “wuhill” instead of *will*
 - instead “yuh” “e” “s” and then reread the word as “yuhess” instead of *yes*
- In initial position, <y> is pronounced /y/.
 - Students may notice <y> in medial or final position where it acts as a vowel (e.g., *gym*, *sky*, *mommy*) or part of a vowel team (e.g., <ay>). Let them know that <y> can represent other phonemes that they will learn later.

Key Concepts to Understand

Board Games:

- Provide students with a deck of word cards to read and/or spell including the digraph <zz>, <ff>, <ss>, <ll>.
- Have students play a board game (any board game will work). Before rolling the dice, students need to either read or spell a word from the deck.
- Have students make their own deck of FLSZ words to use in the above games.



Teacher Tip Sheets Yellow DECK-odables

Cards 126–150



IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PRE-TEACH THE CONCEPTS INTRODUCED IN EACH CARD PRIOR TO READING!

Morphology — Tips and Activities to Try



For activities to do with suffix <-s>, see the Yellow DECK-odable Teacher Tip Sheets for Cards 003–014 and Cards 081–125. Plenty of practice is needed with these concepts!

Writing - Tips and Activities to Try

Key Concepts to Understand

- As students often form <y>s backwards, they may benefit from a verbal pathway that builds a <u> first and becomes a <y>.
- It is very important to remind students that lowercase <y>s and <j>s start at the midline
- FLSZ words are more easily read than spelled. Students require a lot of practise and prompting to control the FLSZ convention.

Activities to Try

Steps to Write Words

- Practice forming the graphemes: Refer the **Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence Background Information Sheets**. The majority of writing should be written using lowercase unless uppercase is required (names, beginning of sentences).
- Tap it out (segmenting): Students can tap out the phoneme (e.g., on their arm, with their fingers, etc) and then name the graphemes for each phoneme orally.
- Students will name the grapheme aloud while they simultaneously write (e.g., they only say <m> while they are forming the <m>, then say <a> while they are forming the <a>, etc.).
- Use this strategy with words that contain graphemes that have been explicitly taught **AND** are phonetically regular (e.g., do not use this strategy for words such as was).
- When the focus is on spelling words, using magnetic letters, grapheme decks, etc., will reduce physical and/or cognitive fatigue.
- Prompt students to think about the vowel, if there is a single vowel preceding a /f/, /l/, /s/ or /z/ → then the grapheme is doubled!

References

These sheets are being offered as a free download because the more we understand our language, the more powerful decodable books can be for our students. Each tip sheet provides Key Concepts to Understand and Tips and Activities for Grapheme/Phoneme Correspondence, Orthographic Conventions/Patterns and Generalizations, Morphology, and Phonetically Irregular Words. It is essential to pre-teach the concepts using this tip sheet prior to reading the book. There is nothing inherently decodable about a book. Decodability is a relationship between the student and the book. If the concepts in a book have been taught, the book is decodable.

The information for these sheets has been compiled from a wide variety of sources. Many thanks to those in the field who have researched, practiced, and shared their knowledge with educators. Please note: these sheets are based on our current understanding, both from our studies and from our personal experience. As we continue to learn, our understanding will evolve. If we reach a point where we feel these sheets need to be adjusted, we will do so and provide updated versions for free download.

Here is a list of the resources we have used and courses/workshops we have completed:

Source	Details
www.funlearning.ca • O-G Fundamentals/O-G Associate Practitioner • O-G practicum • SWI Workshop • Grammar Workshop	Liisa Freure is an OG Fellow and teacher trainer based in Toronto. We highly recommend her courses, and cannot thank her enough for getting us started on this journey! Liisa provides OG training with supervised practicums, as well as a range of linguistic workshops.
www.rebeccaloveless.com • Teaching Real Script • SWI for Early Readers • Beyond the Intro • The High Frequency Word Project – Rebecca Loveless & Fiona Hamilton	Rebecca Loveless is a Structured Word Inquiry Coach based in California. Her courses are practical, informative, and inspirational — a great way to see how morphology can be explored with young learners!
www.learningaboutspelling.com • Beneath the Surface of Words – Sue Hegland	Sue Hegland is the author of “Beneath the Surface of Words”, which is a fantastic resource that has significantly broadened our understanding of morphology.
www.tbox2.com • Real Spelling Toolbox – Real Spelling and Pascal Mira	This book is our go-to reference for Orthographic Phonology, Orthography, and Morphology. We would highly recommend getting a lifetime subscription!
www.etymonline.com • Etymonline By Doug Harper	This is a free Online Etymology Dictionary that gives explanations of the history of words.
www.wordworkskingston.com/WordWorks/Home.html • Peter Bowers	Peter Bowers is a Structured Word Inquiry Coach extraordinaire. His courses are practical, informative, and inspirational — a great way to see how morphology can be explored with young learners!