

Grade 1 Literacy Activities for At Home



[Reading League Buddies](#)

[Sounder and Friends](#)

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Phonological Awareness

What is Phonological Awareness?

Phonological awareness refers to the bigger “chunks” or “parts” of language. When we ask students to rhyme, blend small words to make a compound word, break words apart into syllables or onset-rime, we are working at the phonological awareness level. Phonemic awareness is a part of phonological awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate each sound in a word. Phonological/phonemic awareness focuses on sounds and does not include written letters or words. In 1st grade, readers learn to blend together individual sounds to make words, break apart each individual sound in a word, delete a sound in a word, and change a sound in a word.

Practice Activities

- Sound Walk with Segmentation: Name people, places, and things as you walk around the neighborhood, apartment complex, store, and more. As you name an item, continue by saying each sound in the name of the object or person's name. Then state how many sounds you heard (e.g., I see a bike. /B/ /i/ /k/ has 3 phonemes or sounds). Have the child name items they see and practice counting the sounds together.
- Sound "I Spy" with Counting Sounds: Play "I Spy" with sounds by naming the number of sounds as the first clue. Next, give clues about each sound until the spied item is named (e.g., For cloud, the adult would say, "I spy something with 4 sounds. The first phoneme or sound is /c/. The second phoneme or sound is /l/." The child would say, "Cloud!".) [Word list organized by phonemes](#) (optional).
- Sound "I Spy" with Blending: Play "I Spy" by saying each sound in a word and have the child blend the sounds together and name what you spy (e.g., I spy a /b/ /e/ /n/ / ch/).
- Make New Words with Deletion: Say a word to the child. The child will repeat the word. Next, ask the child to say the word without one of the sounds (e.g., Now say the word slip without the /s/. Lip.) The remaining sounds may not be a real word. Watch [Sound Deletion](#).
- Make New Words with Addition: Say a word to the child. The child will repeat the word. Next, ask the child to say the word with an additional sound (e.g., Now say the word lip with /s/ at the beginning. What is the new word? Slip.)
- What Needs to Change?: Ask the child what sound needs to be replaced to change one word to another (e.g., What sound needs to change to make the word "cat" into "hat"?). Practice changing sounds in the beginning, middle, and end of words. Watch [Changing Sounds](#).

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Say and Slide: Engage in this activity by saying a word, segmenting (taking apart) each individual sound in the word, and then counting how many sounds are in the word. [Say and Slide](#)
- Sound Counting Sort: Count the number of sounds in a word and then sort the words based on the number of sounds. [Sound Counting Sort](#)
- Picture Slide: Practice blending sounds while sliding cards together to make pictures. The child will name the picture, segment the word into sounds, and repeat the word (e.g., “Frog, /f/ /r/ /o/ /g/”). [Picture Slide](#)
- Phoneme Swap: Compare two pictures and decide which phoneme sound has been changed. [Phoneme Swap](#)
- Word Change: Delete the second sound in a blend to make a new word. [Word Change](#)

Online Activities

Use the [Letter Tile Free Play Board](#) and the word lists below for the online activities:

- [Word list organized by phonemes \(or sounds\)](#)
- [Word list organized by word families](#)
- [Letter Tile Segmenting and Counting](#): Practice segmenting by using the free online Letter Tile Free Play Board.
- [Letter Tile Blending Sounds](#): Practice blending by using the free online Letter Tile Free Play Board.
- [Letter Tile Deleting Sounds](#): Practice phoneme manipulations by using the free online Letter Tile Free Play Board.
- [Letter Tile Substituting Sounds](#): Practice phoneme manipulations by using the free online Letter Tile Free Play Board.

Oral Language

What is Oral Language?



Oral Language is sometimes called spoken language. It includes speaking and listening and is the way people communicate with each other. In 1st grade, readers demonstrate speech that is clear and easy to understand. They continue to build this skill through having conversations and following oral directions.

Practice Activities

- Tune In, Talk More, Take Turns: Tune In means be in the moment by paying attention to what the child is focused on and talking about it. What children focus on is always changing, so stay tuned in and change your words to match. Once you Tune In, Talk More with the child. Remember, every word you say fills their vocabulary bank and builds their brain. When you Tune In and Talk More, you automatically Take Turns. No matter a child’s age, you can Take Turns and have a conversation. Learn more about the [3Ts](#). Watch the [3Ts](#).
- How was your day?: Very few children give more than a simple, one word answer when asked this question. Try asking more specific questions with additional follow- up questions to increase the amount of turns taken in a

conversation. *Who did you play with today? Tell me what you did with them. Did the teacher read a book? What/who was the book about? Who sat next to you at lunch? What did you talk about?*

- **Would You Rather:** Play "Would You Rather...", by giving two options and having the child choose what they think would be better. After the child says which situation they would prefer, have them explain why. Examples for [Would You Rather](#).
- **Why?:** Answer genuinely when a child asks, "Why?". First ask if the child has an answer to their question by asking, "What do you think?". Then suggest looking up the answer in a book, on a computer, or on a smart phone. Discuss how the child's answer is similar and/or different from the answer found, increasing the number of turns taken in conversation.
- **Open Ended Questions:** Ask the child questions that require more than a yes or no answer. If you start with a question that requires a yes or no answer, follow up with opened ended questions (e.g., Did you have a good time at soccer practice? What did the coach teach you? What did you practice most?).

Practice Activities (Printables)

- **Conversation Cards:** Use conversation cards any time or place to increase a child's use and understanding of oral language. Suggestions include at the dinner table, while waiting in a store or restaurant, and during bedtime routines. Use follow up questions to increase the number of turns taken in a conversation. [Conversation Cards](#)
- **Play to Read with a Caregiver:** Use the NC Office of Early Learning's Play to Read with a Caregiver resource to increase the number of turns taken in a conversation. Print 4 slides per page for cards on the go! [Play to Read with a Caregiver](#)

Phonics

What is Phonics?



Phonics refers to the ability to learn the individual sounds in spoken language and map those sounds to specific written letters in the English language. Students who have strong phonics skills are able to connect individual sounds with letters and use those sounds to read words. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#)) In 1st grade, readers recognize and read words with ch, th, sh, and ph, read regularly spelled one-syllable words, know long vowel sound/spellings, read two-syllable words that follow basic patterns, and recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.

Practice Activities

- **Mail Letter Names and Sounds:** Circle, underline, or point to letters the child needs to practice more. Then, ask the child to name the letter and say the sound. Use printed materials such as newspapers, magazines, or junk mail. Watch [Mail Letter Names and Sounds](#).
- **Change a Letter, Change a Word:** Start with a three letter word. Have the child say the word and spell the word. Next, ask what letter would need to be changed to make a new word (e.g., What letter would you change when turning the word 'cat' into 'hat'?). Watch [Change a Letter, Change a Word](#). [Skill Sheet](#) (optional)
- **Letter Bag:** Write individual letters or letter patterns (e.g., th, ch, sh, wh, ph) on paper. Cut or tear the individual letters or letter patterns apart and place in a bag. Have the child pull one piece of paper out of the bag and say the sound. Play together by taking turns pulling a piece of paper and saying the sound represented by the letters.

- Rainbow Word: Write a word for the child. Have the child write the same word using different colored utensils (e.g., marker, colored pencil, crayon) and using the key below to mark spelling patterns. [Rainbow Words](#) example: Red- Consonant, Blue- Vowel, Orange- Digraph: two letters that make one sound (e.g., sh, ch, th, wh, ph, ck, ng), Green- Bossy or Silent e: an e at the end of a word that is silent and makes the vowel say its name (e.g., kite, cake, broke), Purple- Vowel Teams (e.g., ee, ei, ie, ea, ie, ou, oi, oy, ai, ay, oa, ow, ue), Brown- R Controlled Vowels (e.g., ir, ur, er, or, ar)

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Word Puzzles: Scramble letter cards and give the child a word to spell. As the child pulls each letter, have them say the letter sound. [Word Puzzles: Level 1](#) [Word Puzzles: Level 2](#) [Word Puzzles: Level 3](#)
- Sound Spelling Word Sort: Review spelling patterns (e.g., sh, th, ch). Give the child one word card at a time to sort according to the spelling pattern. Watch [Sound Spelling Word Sort](#). [Digraphs](#), [R Controlled Vowels](#)

Online Activities

- [Letter Tile Phonics](#): Practice phonics by using the free online [Letter Tile Free Play Board](#). Access optional lists of words organized by the [number of phonemes \(or sounds\)](#) or [by word families](#).
- [Sound-Spelling Patterns](#): Practice the child's spelling words by using the free online [Letter Tile Free Play Board](#).
- [Learn to Read](#): This resource provides games, books, and skill practice.
- [Letter Sounds Make Words](#): This Classroom Connection lesson focuses on identifying the sounds letters make in words, blending words together, and breaking sounds in words apart. Access an [extension activity](#) here.
- [Reading and Identifying Long or Short Vowel Words](#): This game has children read words and identify whether words have a long or short vowel sound.
- [Long Vowel Whack-A-Mole](#): This game allows children to determine if a word has a long or short vowel sound.
- [Whack-A-Mole with o-e](#): This game allows children to determine whether or not a word has a long o, spelled o-e as in hole.
- [Long e Spelling Sort](#): This activity includes sorting words according to spelling patterns.

Vocabulary

What is Vocabulary?



Vocabulary refers to knowledge of the meanings of individual words being read. Vocabulary knowledge is important to a student's ability to read and comprehend what is read. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#)). In 1st grade, readers strive to learn many new words and their meanings. Growing vocabularies will help them academically and socially.

Practice Activities

- Read to Build Vocabulary: While reading with the child, talk about the text, helping the child understand important vocabulary words in the story. Watch [Read to Build Vocabulary](#).
- Conversation in the Kitchen: Through conversation, use every day activities to build the child's language and vocabulary. Watch [Conversation in the Kitchen](#).
- Word Chain: Give the child a word and take turns brainstorming words that mean the same thing as the word that was named (e.g., big, huge, large). This game can also be played by brainstorming words that mean the opposite of the word that was named.
- Add Details: Encourage the child to include details when talking and/or writing by asking for more information (e.g., I see a brown truck that delivers packages. vs. I see a truck). One way to encourage the child to include more details is by asking the child what they see, hear, smell, taste, and feel.

Practice Activities (with Printables)

- *If you don't have a printer, your child's school will print these for you.*
- Multiple Meaning Bugs: Connect multiple meanings to one word in this bug game. [Multiple Meaning Bugs](#)
- Word Connection: Identify similarities and differences between the meanings of words. [Word Connection](#)
- If the Word Fits: Use words in context with sentence cards. [If the Word Fits](#)
- Four Square Vocabulary Map: Describe a word by completing a Four Square Vocabulary Map. [Four Square Vocabulary Map](#)
- Action Word Ring Sort: Select words that describe a picture card. [Action Word Ring Sort](#)

Online Activities

- [Multiple Meaning Words](#): This activity includes matching sentences to demonstrate an understanding of words with multiple meanings.
- [Shades of Meaning](#): This activity has children select words that are related from a given group of words.
- [Word Smith](#): This game includes matching 3 sets of pictures to words read.
- [What Does This Mean?](#): This Classroom Connect lesson focuses on determining word meanings and identifying prefixes and base words. [Extension Activity](#) (optional)

Fluency

What is Fluency?



Fluency is the ability to read accurately with reasonable speed and expression while understanding what is read. In kindergarten, children are observing and listening to adults read aloud and model fluent reading. In 1st grade, readers can fluently read grade level text aloud with accuracy, appropriate speed, and expression.

Practice Activities

- Echo Reading: First, model fluency by reading a sentence, paragraph, or page to the child. Next, the child will reread the same sentence, paragraph, or page. You may notice the child's reading sounding more and more fluent. Continue taking turns.
- Partner Reading: Take turns reading with the child. If the child is just learning to read, you may start by taking turns to read each sentence. Over time, you may begin to alternate reading paragraphs and eventually pages.
- Repeated Reading: Prompt the child to reread the same paragraph a few times. If needed, model reading with expression before prompting your child to reread. This helps improve fluency and reading with expression.
- Choral Reading: Practice reading the same text aloud chorally (together and in unison) with the child.
- Read it Again: Rereading a favorite book many, many times increases fluency. Each time the child reads a familiar book, reading speed and accuracy will increase. Their confidence will grow too!
- Read and Record: Create your own audiobooks with the child. You can buddy read, choral read, or have the child read independently. Have the child listen to the recording. You can also share the recording with family and friends.
- Model Reading Fluency: Use the following tips for Reading With Expression:
 - ❖ Read expressively: talk the way the story's characters would talk; make sound effects and funny faces; and vary the pitch of your voice throughout the story to make it more interesting.
 - ❖ Expressively reread when you notice words like “shouted”, “cried” or “laughed”.
 - ❖ Expressively reread when you notice the punctuation such as ! and ?.
 - ❖ Enjoy the time reading together! Do not rush.
 - ❖ See reading with expression here.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Fast Phrases: Stack cards with printed phrases face down. With a phrase correct per minute sheet, record how many phrases are read correctly with a goal to increase speed and accuracy. [Fast Phrases](#)
- Speedy Phrases: Support the child in gaining speed and accuracy by reading phrases, completing the record sheet, and setting a goal. [Speedy Phrases](#)
- Readers' Theater: Assign reading parts to you and the child. Practice reading with appropriate accuracy, speed, and expression. [Readers' Theater](#)

Online Activities

- [Models of Fluent Reading](#): This resource provides access to many illustrated read alouds narrated by famous individuals. These stories provide children with models of fluent reading.
- [Echo Reading](#): This resource provides books to practice echo reading with your child to build fluency. Each book has a speaker symbol at the bottom of the page. Push the speaker for the child to hear the

page read aloud. Then, have the child echo the reading to practice reading with expression as if they were talking to someone.

- [Read Fluency Passages](#): This resource contains passages the child can use to practice reading with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. Each passage can be read more than once to improve oral reading fluency. Passages can be read online by clicking preview or printed by downloading.
- [Starfall Reading](#): This resource gives children access to games, decodable books, and skills based games. Have the child practice reading the books multiple times until they read it accurately, with an appropriate rate, and expression.



Comprehension

What is Comprehension? Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand what one reads. It is the ultimate goal of reading instruction. ([Definition from University of Oregon](#)) In 1st grade, readers can demonstrate a variety of comprehension skills including making predictions, retelling a story, and answering questions related to the story. They are also able to identify fiction from nonfiction texts and share their background knowledge of a topic prior to reading.

Practice Activities

- Think Aloud: Make connections while reading to or with the child. Connect the story or information to the child's life experiences. Connect the book to other books the child has read. Connect the book to big ideas and lessons. [See a Think Aloud example](#).
- Check for Understanding: Ask questions to determine the child's understanding of the story or information read. Questions can be asked during reading and/or after reading. Watch [Check for Understanding](#).
- Story Charades: Act out a story silently to retell it in a creative way. Have the child guess which story you are acting out. Take turns acting out and guessing.
- Comprehension Ball: Write comprehension elements (e.g., central message, lesson, characters, problem, solution) on a ball. Toss the ball to the child. The child describes the story element their right pointer finger (or other designated hand/finger) touches based on a book recently read.

Practice Activities (Printables)

- Retell Wheel for a Story: Support the child in retelling a story by using the questions provided on a retell wheel. [Retell Wheel for a Story](#)
- Retell Wheel for Summarizing Information: Support the child in summarizing information learning from reading by completing sections of the retell wheel. [Retell Wheel for Summarizing Information](#)
- Character Compare: Identify similarities and differences between characters by listing shared and unique characteristics. [Character Compare](#)

- Picture the Character: Use a graphic organizer to describe characters from a recently read story. [Picture the Character](#)
- Story Question Cube: Use a dice-like cube with questions on each side to review elements of a recently read story. Roll the cube and answer and discuss the question on top. [Story Question Cube](#)

Online Activities

- [Storyline Online](#): This resource provides access to many illustrated read alouds narrated by famous individuals. Use the ABCs of Reading (ask questions, build vocabulary, and connect to the child's world) as you listen to the story with your child.
- [ABCs of Reading](#): This resource provides access to videos and explains the ABCs of Reading (ask questions, build vocabulary, and connect to the child's world.).
- [Interactive Read Alouds](#): This video provides information on interactive read alouds, including asking intentional questions, writing prompts, and drawing prompts.
- [When You Read to Me](#): This video shows a caregiver listening to a child read a book and asking questions to support oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- [Story Elements](#): This Classroom Connect lesson teaches children how to identify story elements. Access an [extension activity](#) here.