



Primary Reading Instruction Manuals for Educators

Phonics Instruction



Examples of Slides from Professional Development Training Session on Phonics Instruction

13 What is it?

Vocabulary instruction includes both direct and indirect methods.

- Students learn vocabulary **DIRECTLY** when they are taught individual words through specific word instruction and word-learning strategies.
- Students learn vocabulary **INDIRECTLY** through exposure to new words in many different contexts.

in conversations with adults

during read alouds

through wide reading on their own

15 Why is it important?

We know from research that good readers constantly read more, become even better readers, and learn more words.

Struggling readers, on the other hand, read less, and thus become poorer readers and learn fewer words. (Stanovich, 1986)

Many students who need vocabulary development do not read widely, especially in books that contain unfamiliar vocabulary. (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002)

16 How do I teach it?

Teacher Modeling

- Highlight target words during read alouds
- Model strategy use
 - Using context clues
 - Identifying word parts
 - Making connections between new and known words
 - Using fix-up strategies

Lessons and Activities

Developing Vocabulary Through Read Alouds

- Lesson 1: Narrative Text
- Lesson 2: Expository Text
- Lesson 3: Teaching Word Meanings as Concepts
- Lesson 4: Assessing and Activating Prior Word Knowledge
- Lesson 5: Explicit Instruction of Specific Words

26 Lesson 1: Narrative Text

Which of these people is *curious*: a child who is asleep or a child playing with his shadow?

I think the child playing with his shadow is *curious*.

If any of the things I say might be examples of *curious*, say "*curious*." If not, don't say anything.

A child reading a new Harry Potter book.

Curious.

29 Lesson 2: Expository Text

It's how your uncle makes his living. His **job** depends on the ocean, and the way he **travels** on the ocean is by boat.

sharks boats

seashells animals transportation

hobbies Ocean jobs

jellyfish safety boats

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Why is phonics instruction important?

The ultimate goal of phonics instruction is for students to apply the alphabetic system to read and spell new words and comprehend written language. When readers can identify words quickly and effortlessly, they can focus more of their attention on comprehension.

Systematic phonics instruction is effective. Research shows that phonics instruction contributes to growth in reading for students from all economic levels and is particularly beneficial for students having difficulty learning to read. "Systematic phonics instruction is significantly more effective than non-phonics instruction in helping to prevent reading difficulties among at-risk students and in helping to remediate reading difficulties in disabled readers" (NICHD, 2000, p. 2-94).

Grade Level	Phonics Instruction
Kindergarten	In kindergarten, students learn and apply letter-sound correspondences to pronounce and read words. "Systematic phonics instruction introduced in kindergarten must be appropriately designed for learners and must begin with foundational knowledge involving letters and phonemic awareness" (NICHD, 2000, p. 2-93).
First Grade	In first grade, students learn efficient decoding strategies that allow them to translate the letters or spelling patterns of written words into speech sounds so that they can identify words and gain rapid access to their meanings (TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY [TEA], 2002). They learn to look for spelling patterns or letter sequences that frequently occur in a certain position in words. Research shows that first grade is the pivotal year for systematic phonics instruction, and that instruction has a significant effect on decoding, spelling, word recognition, and reading comprehension at this grade level. "The greatest impact of phonics instruction is expected to occur in helping 1st graders get off the ground in learning to read" (NICHD, 2000, p. 2-114).
Second Grade	In second grade, students learn to read and write with proficiency, using structural cues, syntax, and context to support word identification and confirm word meaning.

How do I teach phonics?

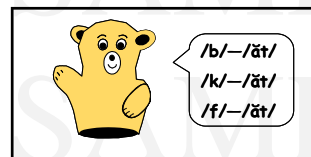
Let's look at an example of how to apply the components of effective lesson design to phonics instruction (FIGURE 2.1).

Explicit Instruction	Although research has not identified an established order for introducing letter-sound correspondences, a hallmark of explicit, systematic phonics instruction is the careful selection of a useful set of letter-sound relationships organized and introduced in a logical sequence. For example, frequently-used letters and sounds are introduced first, while letter sounds with similar features (visual or auditory) are taught separately to avoid confusion. Introduce only a few letter-sound correspondences at a time and provide many opportunities for practice. For decoding instruction, select words that consist of previously taught letter sounds and that appear frequently in the texts students read.
Teacher Modeling	To teach letter-sound correspondences, model and present each letter and its most common sound along with a key-word picture to help students remember. Begin with letter-sound correspondences that can be combined to make words students can decode, read, and understand. For decoding instruction, model how to blend the individual sounds of the letters in written words from left to right, first stretching out the sounds and then blending them.
Guided Practice	Students need many opportunities to use their letter-sound knowledge to read decodable texts (texts in which a majority of the words include familiar letter sounds and spelling patterns). During guided practice , provide immediate feedback to students as they read. Model correct responses as students blend letter sounds to read words. Provide many opportunities for students to segment words into sounds to spell them.
Independent Practice	Encourage students to practice reading decodable text with peers, older students, parents or guardians, and other educators for independent practice . Students also need many opportunities to write using the words and spelling patterns that they know.
Monitoring Progress	Regularly monitor students' progress , noting their knowledge of letters and letter-sound correspondences and their ability to decode as they read words and text.
Adapted from Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts. (2001). <i>First grade teacher reading academy</i> . Austin: University of Texas System/Texas Education Agency.	

FIGURE 2.1

What does this look like in practice?

Warm up with a phonemic awareness activity. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds, or phonemes, in spoken words. (For activity suggestions, see *Phonemic Awareness Instruction: A Region IV ESC Resource*.)



Teach sound/spelling correspondences using picture cards and key words to help students remember the sounds.

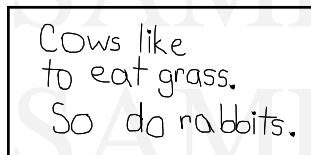


Practice blending individual sounds into words using sounds and spellings that have been previously introduced. Provide opportunities for students to blend words that are not recognized by sight as they read connected text.

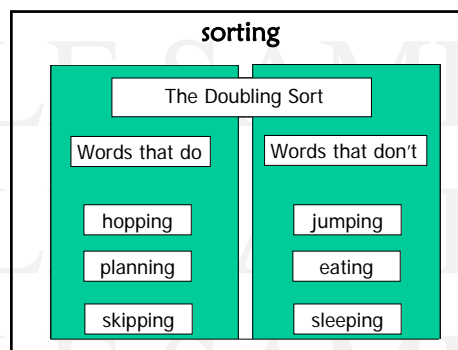
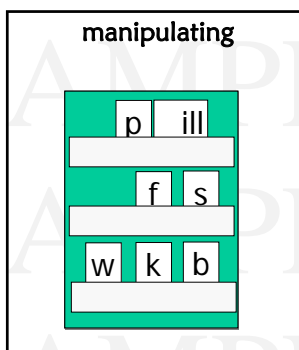
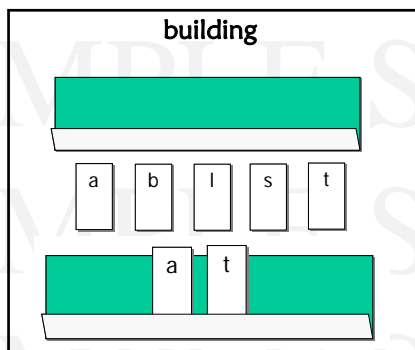


Apply these blending skills to decodable text so students can see how the skills they are learning apply to reading.

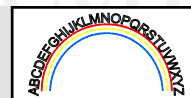
Practice spelling and writing words. Students need to see the link between spelling, reading, and writing.



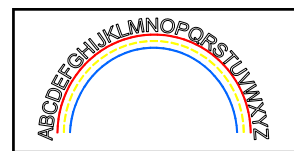
Provide word-work activities for independent practice to reinforce students' knowledge of sound/spelling patterns. Word-work activities include building, manipulating, and sorting words.



Adapted from Honig, B., Diamond, L., & Gutlohn, L. (2000). *Teaching reading: Sourcebook for kindergarten through eighth grade*. Novato, CA: Arena.



Lesson 2: Rainbow Alphabet Arc



Description—The student will identify and name upper and lowercase letters and sequence the letters in alphabetical order.

Goal—The student demonstrates knowledge of print concepts.

Objectives—The student will

- identify each letter of the alphabet and recognize letters quickly.
- identify capital and lowercase letters.
- know the order of the alphabet.
- use alphabetical order to locate information.

Materials

- Rainbow Alphabet Arcs and Activities (FIGURE 3.3, APPENDIX B)
- Plastic letters

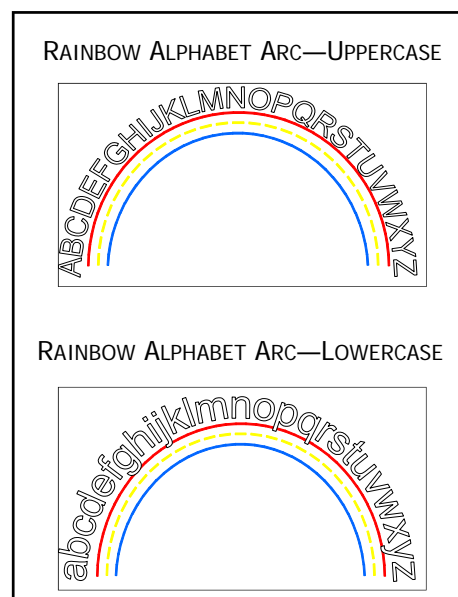


FIGURE 3.3

Background Information for the Teacher

The Rainbow Alphabet Arcs are a set of placemats with outlined block letters of the alphabet. These materials are designed to help students learn to recognize, name, and sequence the letters of the alphabet rapidly and accurately. Students also learn to identify all uppercase and lowercase letters both sequentially and randomly.

Explicit Instruction

Introduce the Rainbow Alphabet Mat, beginning with uppercase letters. For many students, uppercase letters are easier to recognize than lowercase letters. Students begin with the letter A and progress through to Z, placing the plastic letters on top of the outlined letters on the mat. Draw students' attention to the similarities and differences in letter shapes. Ask students to identify letters that consist of different types of lines. Which letters are made of straight lines only? Which letters are made of curved lines only? Which letters are a combination of straight and curved lines?



SECTION III: LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

LESSON 2: RAINBOW ALPHABET ARC

Teacher Modeling

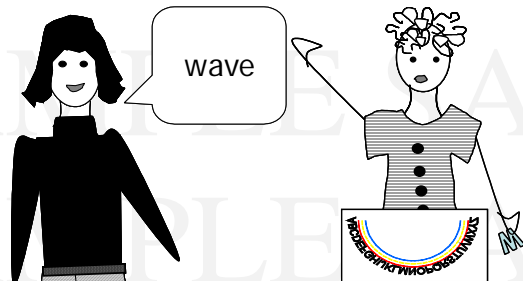
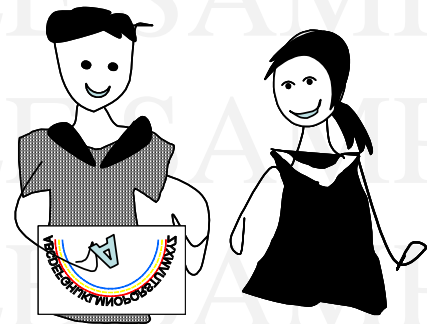
Model the sequence of instruction using the materials. Select activities that are appropriate for the students in the group. These activities may include some or all of the following activities.

- Recite the alphabet using the mat as a visual aid.
- Match the plastic 3-D letters to the printed letters on the mat.
- Name letters on the mat as they are pointed to randomly.
- Put the plastic letters in alphabetic order without using a visual aid.
- Identify which letter on the mat has been covered with a stick-it note.
- Determine which letter comes next in the sequence.
- Copy the alphabet using the mat as a visual aid.
- Write the alphabet without the mat as a visual aid.
- Find a specific letter. Ask students to name the letter that immediately precedes or follows that letter.

Guided Practice

Teach students different games that they can play using the Alphabet Arc materials. Alphabet Arc game ideas are included in Appendix B, with descriptions and directions for each game. These games include Alphabet Bingo, Alphabet Battle, and Alphabet Conversation.

Students can work with a partner during guided-practice activities, sharing the materials and completing the activity together. One easy game is to spell each other's names. Partner A spells his name as Partner B points to the letters on the mat, and then they switch. Students compare names. Do they have any of the same letters? Do they have any of the same sounds?



Call out a letter, and have students point to it on their arc and then act out a movement or action that starts with that letter (for example, B words include bend, bounce, bob; J words include jump, juggle, jog; and W words include wiggle, walk, and wave).



Independent Practice

As students become more proficient with the letter games and Alphabet Arc materials, they can use them independently or with a partner.

Independent Practice 1: Sort the plastic letters into groups: Which letters are made of straight lines only? Which letters are made of curved lines only? Which letters are a combination of straight and curved lines? (Figure 3.4).

Independent Practice 2: Have students practice with a partner several times to increase the speed with which they place the letters on the mat.

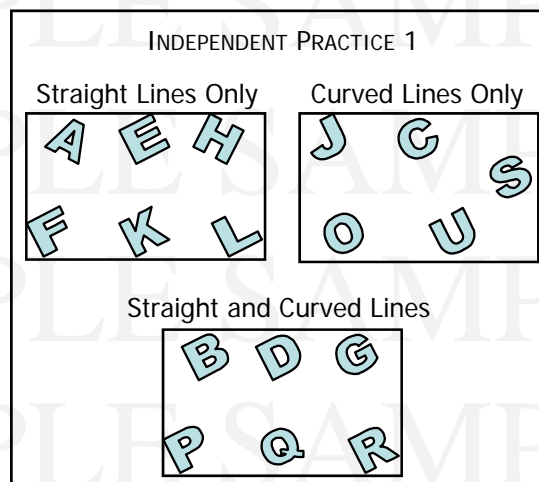


Figure 3.4

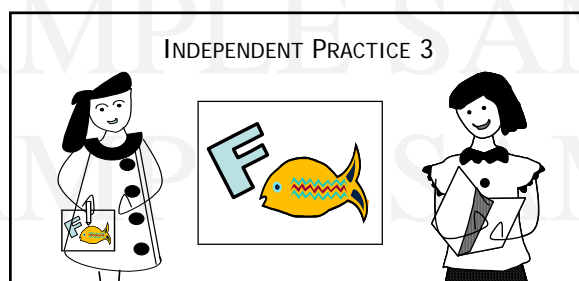


Figure 3.5

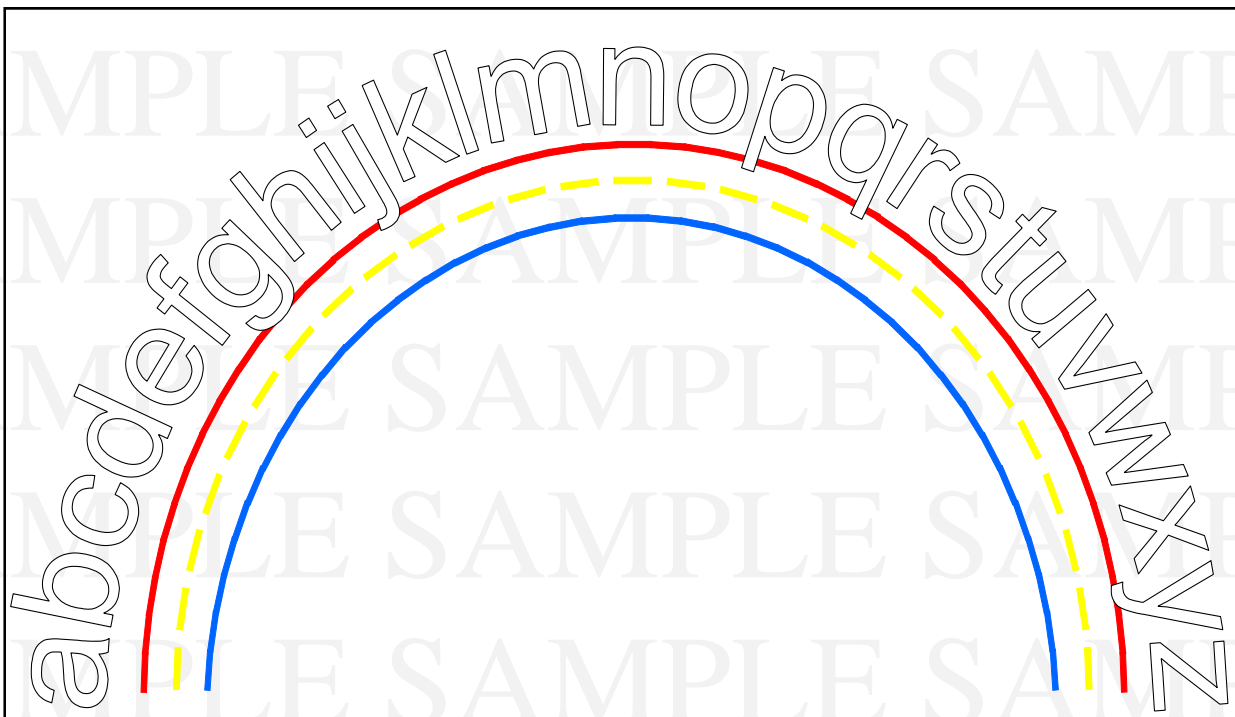
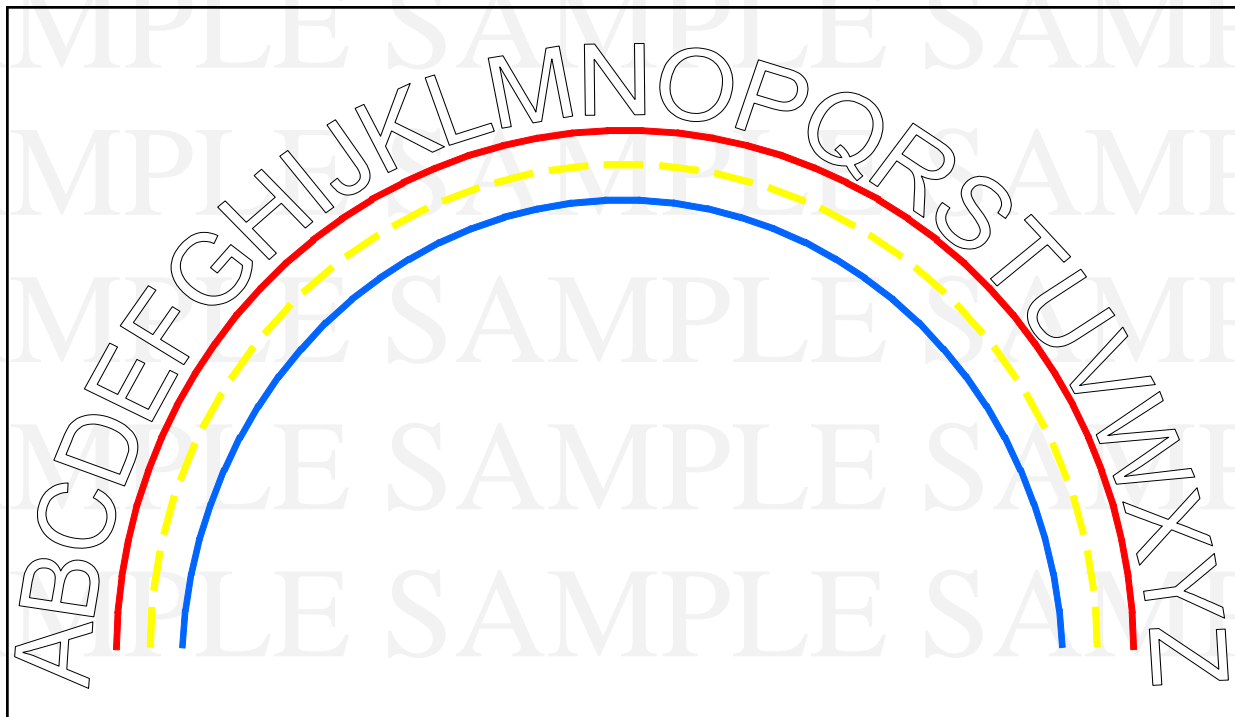
Independent Practice 3: Use the alphabet sequence as a guide to create an alphabet book on a particular topic. Students write one letter on each page and add words and illustrations appropriate to the topic that start with that letter (Figure 3.5).

Monitoring Progress

Determine if the student can do the following.

- Recite the alphabet using the mat as a visual aid.
- Match the plastic 3-D letters to the printed letters on the mat.
- Name letters on the mat when they are pointed to randomly.
- Put the plastic letters in alphabetic order without using a visual aid.
- Identify which letter on the mat has been covered with a stick-it note.
- Copy the alphabet using the mat as a visual aid.
- Write the alphabet without the mat as a visual aid.

These arcs are models of the Rainbow Alphabet Arcs which are available for purchase through Region IV ESC. An order form is available at the back of this manual.



SECTION IV: APPENDIX B

RAINBOW ALPHABET ARCS AND ACTIVITIES

Touch and Name Letters on the Alphabet Arc

- Accent vowels
- Accent every second, third, fourth, or fifth letter

Introduce New Concepts in the Alphabet

- Initial letter (A)
- Final letter (Z)
- Middle letters (M, N)
- Medial letters (B-Y)
- Number of letters in the alphabet (26)

Sequencing Using 3-D Letters

- Students are given an alphabet arc and letters. They place the letters right side up on their desk and position the letters in the correct alphabetic order on the arc starting with A. (Do not allow students to randomly place the letters at first.) They touch and name the letters as they proofread them. The initial goal is to place all letters in correct order in 2 to 3 minutes and ultimately, in 60 to 90 seconds.
- Once the students can form the arc quickly, they can be asked to place both index fingers on one letter and then move the “before” hand to the letter that comes before that letter. (Explain “before” hand. Example: “Place both fingers on F. Now move your “before” hand to the letter that comes before F.” Students move one hand to E.)
- Students make an arc with the letters and are asked to pull down the vowels as the class touches and names all the letters together.

Accent and Rhythm

- Introduce the concept of accent by having the class say several students’ names with their hands under their chins. First they will discover how many syllables each name has by the number of times their mouths open. Then have them discover that their chin hits their hand harder on one of the syllables. Explain that that syllable is the accented one. It is the strongest syllable and as it is spoken the mouth opens wider, the voice is louder, and the tone is higher. Show what an accent mark looks like.
- Practice touching and naming the alphabet, accenting different patterns.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Alphabet Conversation

Students recite the alphabet as if having a conversation. Students can group two, three, or four letters and the sequence can be given as a statement, a question, or an exclamation.

ABC? DE! FGHI. JK? LMNO. PQRS? TU! VW. XYZ?

Alphabet Battle

Each student has a mat and a set of letters. Students work in pairs. Each student draws a letter without looking from his set of letters. The player whose letter comes closest to Z is the winner. The player says aloud, "I win because ___ comes after ____."

The winners put their letters at the top of their mats, and the losers put their letters on the arc of their mats. This way the students keep their letters separate. The one in each pair with the most letters at the top of the mat wins.

This also can be played with "before" but only after the students are successful with "after." For "before," the player whose letter comes closest to A is the winner. The player says aloud, "I win because ___ comes before ____." Students first should be taught "after," as it is the easier concept. When that is mastered, the concept of "before" may be taught.

Alphabet Bingo

Students choose nine plastic letters from their letter bag and place them on their desk. The teacher draws one letter at a time from his or her own set of letters. The teacher names the letter and places it on the overhead, and proceeds through all nine letters. The first student who has all of the letters called is the winner. This game can be shortened by reducing the number of letters drawn initially.

- This game can be extended to include the sounds of the letters.
- The overhead can be off until someone calls bingo and then turned on for students to check.

Blind Man Tells

With 3-D letters out of sight, students identify the hidden letters by touch. The students should work in pairs. Use the capital letters first as they are easier to identify. Later, lowercase letters can be used for identification.

SECTION IV: PHONICS GLOSSARY

Affix—Most commonly a suffix or prefix attached to a base word, stem, or root.

Alphabetic—A writing system containing characters or symbols representing sounds.

Alphabetic principle—The concept that the sequence of letters in written words represents the sequence of sounds (or phonemes) in spoken words.

Analogy-based phonics instruction—Phonics instruction using activities and procedures in which students identify unknown words by comparing and contrasting them to known words.

Analytic phonics—An approach to phonics teaching that emphasizes the discovery of letter-sound through the analysis of known words.

Base word—A word to which prefixes and/or suffixes are added.

Blends—An orthographic term referring to consonant blends.

Closed sorts—Word sorts that classify words into predetermined categories.

Closed syllable—Ends with or is “closed” by a consonant sound. In polysyllabic words, a closed syllable contains a short-vowel sound that is closed by two consonants.

Complex consonant patterns—Consonant units occurring at the end of words that correspond to the vowel sound in the middle of the word. Final *tch* corresponds to the short-vowel sound in the middle of *fetch* and *batch*, while final *ch* corresponds to the long-vowel sound in the middle of *peach* and *coach*. Other complex consonant patterns include final *ck* (*pack* vs. *peak*) and final *dge* (*badge* vs. *cage*).

Consonants—The sounds represented by letters of the alphabet except *a, e, i, o, u* (vowels). Consonants conform fairly closely to one-to-one correspondence—for each letter there is one sound. This property of consonants makes them of great value to the reader when attempting to sound out an unknown word.

Consonant blends—A combination of two- or three-letter sequences that are blended together, but with each consonant retaining its original sound. There are l-blends (*bl, cl, fl, gl, pl, sl*), r-blends (*br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, tr*), and s-blends (*sc, scr, sk, sp, st, squ, sw*). Although the letter-sounds are blended together quickly, each one is pronounced. A two-letter blend represents two sounds; a three-letter blend represents three sounds. Consonant blends occurring at the beginning of words are onsets and are treated orthographically as a unit.

Consonant digraphs—Two consonants that make one sound. Common consonant digraphs include *sh, ch, th, wh, ph, gh, -nk, -ng*.