

Games and Activities

Using games in the classroom can be an effective way of presenting phonics targets to students from an alternative perspective. In doing so, students ideally may learn the various elements of phonics in a way that leads to a deeper and more well-rounded level of understanding. The following list includes instructions for games and activities that are compatible with the School Phonics series. Though specific games are recommended for the warm-up and wrap-up of each lesson, feel free to substitute them with anyone on this list whenever it may seem appropriate.

Ball Battle

Materials: a ball, a whiteboard, a marker

- ① Write all of the target sounds on the whiteboard.
- ② Have students toss the ball to each other, each time saying a target sound that is on the whiteboard and a corresponding word.
- ③ Every time a target sound is said erase it from the whiteboard.
- ④ Have students continue tossing the ball and saying the target sounds and related words until all of the target sounds have been erased from the whiteboard.

Bingo

Materials: pieces of paper, pencils, a whiteboard, a marker

- ① Have students make a 3x3 table for their Bingo cards.
- ② Write all of the target words on the whiteboard.
- ③ Ask students to fill in their cards by choosing from the targets written on the whiteboard.
- ④ Once students have finished filling in their cards, call out the targets one by one.
- ⑤ Have students cross the targets off when they hear them.
- ⑥ The first student to make three lines wins the game.

Catch the Ball

Materials: a beach ball, a marker

- ① With the marker, write the target sounds all over the beach ball.
- ② While holding the ball, call out a hand and a finger.
For example, *Left hand! Pinky!*
- ③ Pass the ball to a student.
- ④ After the student catches the ball, they should say a word that matches the target sounds that the finger you called out is touching.
- ⑤ Then the student calls out a hand and a finger and throws the ball to another student.
- ⑥ Repeat steps ④-⑤ until all students have had at least one turn.

Cross the River

Materials: flashcards

- ① In a spacious area, disperse flashcards on the floor as if they are stepping stones in a river. Place the flashcards with the picture side facing up.
- ② Ask students to line up next to each other on one side of the flashcard river.

- ③ One by one, ask students to take turns jumping to a flashcard.
- ④ Once they land on a flashcard, have them say the word along with the target sound.
- ⑤ If a student does not land on a flashcard or cannot say the word along with the target sound, they must return to their previous position.
- ⑥ The first student to successfully cross to the other side of the flashcard river wins the game.

Eye Doctor

Materials: a Snellen chart* containing target words, pieces of paper, pencils

- ① Prepare a Snellen chart of target words by writing words in the biggest sized font along the top row, and words in increasingly smaller sized font in each of the rows below. The words along the bottom rows should be challenging to see from the designated distance.
- ② Divide students into groups of four and give each group a piece of paper.
- ③ Have each group come up one by one to take a look at the chart from a designated distance.
- ④ After looking at the chart, have the group sit down and write as many words that they saw on their paper as possible.
- ⑤ Once all groups have had a turn, have students from each group take turns reading out the words that they were able to see and write down on their piece of paper.
- ⑥ The group that was able to see, write, and correctly read out the most words from the chart wins.

*A Snellen chart is a chart that an eye doctor uses to check your eyesight.

Face Up

Materials: flashcards

- ① Have one student come to the front of the class.
- ② Without letting them see it, give the student a flashcard and ask them to put it on their forehead with the picture side facing out.
- ③ Have the other students give the student hints about the word.
- ④ Once the student correctly guesses the word, have another student come up and take a turn.
- ⑤ Continue playing until all flashcards have been used at least once each.

Finger Letters

Materials: a whiteboard, markers

- ① Divide the class into two teams and have them line up in front of the whiteboard.
- ② Stand at the back of the class and have the two students at the front of each line come stand next to you.
- ③ With your finger, write one target sound from the unit on the students' backs.
- ④ Have the students then write the target sound with their finger on the back of the student at the end of their line.
- ⑤ The last student to be written on runs to the whiteboard and writes the letter(s).

- ⑥ The team who writes the correct target sound first gets a point.
- ⑦ Repeat steps ②-⑥. The team with the most points at the end wins the game.

Flash Action

Materials: flashcards

- ① Tape flashcards with the picture side facing out on the board and ask students to identify them.
- ② Perform an action that represents one of the flashcard words.
- ③ Ask students to say which flashcard you acted out.
- ④ Create an action for each flashcard with students.
- ⑤ Practice the actions with students.

Flash Action Hot Seat

Materials: flashcards, chairs

- ① Divide students into two teams and place one chair at each end of the board.
- ② Ask one student from each team to sit in the chairs and have them face away from the board.
- ③ Tape one flashcard with the picture side facing out on the board.
- ④ Have students from each team perform actions that represent the target word for their teammate.
- ⑤ The first student to guess the word correctly gets a point for their team. The team with the most points at the end wins the game.

Flashcard Duel

Materials: flashcards

- ① Divide students into pairs and have both students hold a set of flashcards.
- ② Have each pair stand back-to-back.
- ③ Ask both students to slowly take three steps forward, counting off each step aloud.
- ④ On three, have both students quickly turn around and show the picture side of anyone of their flashcards to their dueling partner.
- ⑤ The first student to say the word on their partner's flashcard wins the duel.

Flashcard Hide and Seek

Materials: flashcards, a whiteboard, a marker

- ① Hide flashcards around the classroom before students arrive.
- ② Divide students into teams of two and give students three minutes to find the hidden flashcards.
- ③ Write the target sounds on the whiteboard.
- ④ Once all the flashcards have been found or time runs out, have students return to their seats.
- ⑤ Pointing to one of the target sounds on the whiteboard, ask students: *Who found an /_ / word?* Have the student who found the word sound out the target sound and read the word. Then collect the flashcard from the student.
- ⑥ When all the flashcards have been collected, go over the words together as a class.

Flashcard Hold-up

Materials: flashcards

- ① Put students into pairs.
- ② Have each pair sit facing each other with a set of flashcards spread out between them and the picture side facing up.
- ③ Read a story to students.
- ④ At random, skip a target word and pause. Have students quickly find and hold up the missing word's flashcard.

How Many Times?

Materials: N/A

- ① Tell students to look at the sight words at the bottom of one of the unit story pages.
- ② Shout out a sight word and ask students to count how many times it's in the story.
- ③ Repeat with new sight words.

Memory Ball

Materials: a ball

- ① Have students form a circle.
- ② Toss the ball to one of your students and call out a target word.
- ③ After catching the ball, have the student repeat the called out word before saying a word of their own.
- ④ Then have them toss the ball to another student, who repeats the previously called out words plus one of their own.
- ⑤ Have students continue tossing the ball and repeating the growing chain of words until all students have had a chance to participate.

Mystery Bag

Materials: a blindfold, a bag, target word-related objects

- ① Prepare a blindfold and a bag with various target word-related objects inside.
- ② Tell students that the bag is full of objects that they have learned in previous units.
- ③ Ask them what they think could be in the bag.
- ④ Blindfold a student, have them pull out one object from the bag and guess what it is just by feeling it.
- ⑤ Ask the student to remove the blindfold to see what it is and have other students say the word with them together.
- ⑥ Repeat steps ④-⑤ until all the objects have been chosen.

Pattern Building

Materials: flashcards

- ① Divide students into teams of two and have each team spread one set of student flashcards out on a table with the picture side facing up.
- ② Call out target words and have the teams put them in order according to a particular pattern.
- ③ Have students raise their hand when they have finished putting the flashcards in order.
- ④ The team that put the flashcards in the correct order the fastest will call out the next group of target words.

Pick a Side

Materials: flashcards, a whiteboard, a marker

- ① Write one target sound on one side of the whiteboard, and another target sound on the opposite side.
- ② Have students stand in a line near the middle of the whiteboard.
- ③ Hold up a flashcard with the picture side facing the students.
- ④ Students must carefully walk to the side of the whiteboard that matches with the picture you held up.
- ⑤ Students that walk to the incorrect side must sit down.
- ⑥ Repeat steps ②-⑤ with a new word. The last student standing wins the game.

Picture Slam

Materials: flashcards

- ① Divide the class into two teams.
- ② Have students spread flashcards out on a table with the picture side facing up.
- ③ Ask one student from each team to come up to the table and put their hands on their head.
- ④ Call out a target sound and a corresponding word.
- ⑤ The student who slams their hand on the correct flashcard first gets a point for their team.
- ⑥ Repeat steps ③-⑤ until all students have had a turn. The team with the most points wins the game.

Quick Cards

Materials: small pieces of paper, pencils

- ① Give each student a few small pieces of paper to draw on.
- ② Call out a few target words and give students ten seconds to draw each of them.
- ③ After all the pieces of paper have been drawn on, collect them and show them to the class.
- ④ Have students guess which words the pictures represent.
- ⑤ If the class cannot agree on a picture, ask the student who drew the picture to reveal the word they drew.

Quick Fire Flashcards

Materials: flashcards, a timer

- ① Divide students into pairs with one being Student A and one being Student B.
- ② Have Student A hold one set of flashcards.
- ③ Set a timer for a given amount of time. For example, 30 seconds.
- ④ Once the timer starts, have Student A show the word side of the flashcards one by one to Student B, while Student B says the words aloud.
- ⑤ Encourage students to do this as quickly as possible.
- ⑥ Once time is up, have students count how many flashcards they were able to say in the given time. Then have pairs switch roles.
- ⑦ Repeat steps ②-⑥ a few times so that students have a chance to beat their previous scores.

Run to the Board

Materials: flashcards, a whiteboard, markers

- ① Divide the class into two teams and have them line up in front of the whiteboard.
- ② When students are ready, gradually reveal the contents of a flashcard with the picture side facing the students.
- ③ The first student in each line runs to the whiteboard and writes the word.
- ④ The first student who writes the word neatly and correctly gets a point for their team.
- ⑤ Play until all the flashcards have been used two or three times each. The team with the most points wins the game.

RPS Battle

Materials: flashcards

- ① Put flashcards in a line on the floor with the picture side facing up.
- ② Divide students into two teams and line them up at each end of the row of flashcards.
- ③ The first student from each team starts by pointing to the card nearest to them, saying the target sound and word, and then moving on to the next flashcard.
- ④ Have the two students play rock-paper-scissors when they meet in the middle of the flashcard line.
- ⑤ The winning student continues and the student who lost goes to the back of their team's line while another student from that team takes over.
- ⑥ The first team to reach the other end wins the game.

Sentence Sequence

Materials: N/A

- ① After listening to a story, assign a sentence to each student.
- ② Read the story as a class by having students read out their sentences when it's their turn.
- ③ Then ask students to close their books.
- ④ Read the story again as a class by having students read out their sentences from memory in the correct order.

Show Me!

Materials: flashcards, pieces of paper, pencils

- ① Have students make target sound cards by writing down target sounds on separate pieces of paper.
- ② On the count of three, show a flashcard with the picture side facing the students.
- ③ Ask students to hold up the corresponding target sound card above their heads.
- ④ The student who raises their target sound card first and is correct gets a point.
- ⑤ The student with the most points wins the game.

Sight Word Memory

Materials: a whiteboard, a marker

- ① Write all of the sight words from a unit story on the whiteboard.
- ② Give students some time to commit the words to memory.

- ③ Then have students close their eyes.
- ④ While students' eyes are closed, erase one sight word.
- ⑤ Ask students to identify the word that you erased from the whiteboard.

Sit Down!

Materials: flashcards, chairs

- ① Divide the class into two teams.
- ② Make a row of six to eight chairs side by side to one another.
- ③ Put one flashcard on each chair with the picture side facing up.
- ④ Have one student from each team come stand in front of the chairs.
- ⑤ Call out a target word.
- ⑥ The first student to sit on the correct chair gets a point for their team.
- ⑦ Repeat steps ③-⑥. The team with the most points wins the game.

Sketch It

Materials: flashcards, a whiteboard, a marker

- ① Choose a student to come up to the whiteboard.
- ② Secretly show the student a flashcard so that the other students cannot see it.
- ③ Have the student quickly draw a picture of the flashcard on the whiteboard and ask the other students to guess which flashcard the picture represents. Give the student a 10 second time limit.
- ④ The first student who correctly guesses the flashcard comes up to the whiteboard and becomes the next drawer.
- ⑤ Play until all flashcards have been used.

Snowball

Materials: flashcards

- ① Spread one set of student flashcards out on a table with the picture side facing up.
- ② Ask a student to stand up and choose any card, then have them say it aloud. Then ask another student to choose a card and repeat the first student's word before saying a word of their own.
- ③ Have students continue choosing cards and repeating the growing chain of words.
- ④ If a student forgets a word or makes a mistake, they must sit down.
- ⑤ Play until all of the flashcards have been practiced. The students standing at the end win the game.

Speed Read

Materials: a timer

- ① After listening to a story, put students into pairs.
- ② Have one student be the reader and the other the timer.
- ③ Ask the readers to properly read the story as fast as they can.
- ④ When finished, have students switch roles. Then, record times.
- ⑤ Repeat steps ③-④ to allow students to improve their times.

Story Strips

Materials: pieces of paper, pencils

- ① Make multiple story strips for each scene from one of the unit stories and blank out the target words.
- ② Divide students into groups of two to four, depending on how many sets of story strips you have.
- ③ Give each group a set of story strips.
- ④ Ask students to put the strips together in the right order according to the story, and fill in the blanks with the correct target words.
- ⑤ Have each group read the story aloud.

The Missing Card

Materials: flashcards

- ① Spread flashcards out on a table with the picture side facing up.
- ② Ask students to memorize the flashcards and then have them close their eyes. Remove and conceal a card while their eyes are closed.
- ③ Once you have concealed a card, tell students to open their eyes.
- ④ Ask students to raise their hand when they have identified the missing card. If correct, the student gets a point.
- ⑤ Repeat steps ②-④. The student with the most points wins the game.

Whisper Word Race

Materials: flashcards, a whiteboard, markers

- ① Divide the class into two teams and have them line up in front of the whiteboard.
- ② Stand at the back of the class and have one student from each team come stand next to you.
- ③ Secretly show a flashcard to the two students. Have them return to their teams and whisper the word on the flashcard to the student at the back of the line.
- ④ The student who heard the word proceeds to whisper it to the next student in line and so on.
- ⑤ The last student to hear the whispered word runs to the whiteboard and writes the target sound or word.
- ⑥ The team who has written the correct target sound or word first gets a point.
- ⑦ Repeat steps ②-⑥. The team with the most points at the end wins the game.

You Can Act!

Materials: N/A

- ① After reading a story, divide the class into two groups: Readers and Actors.
- ② Ask the Actors to come to the front of the class.
- ③ Assign the Actors specific roles. More than one student can act out each character role from the story.
- ④ Have the Readers read the story aloud while the Actors act out the story simultaneously.
- ⑤ Switch the Readers and Actors and perform the story again.