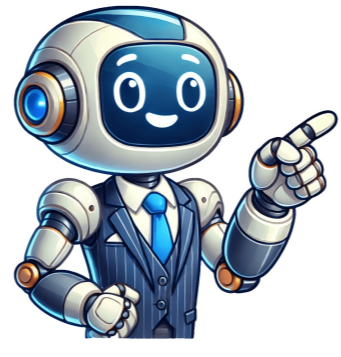


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help you target those essential skills while still helping your students have fun! Phonemic awareness games that are super simple, and super fun! Whenever my students hit a brick wall and stop progressing, that's my huge sign in flashing lights that I need to take a step back and focus on phonemic awareness. Throughout my teaching, I've witnessed the impact of phonemic awareness activities in developing strong reading foundations. It does wonders! (especially when paired with phonics) Phonemic awareness is the missing link for so many struggling readers. Studies show that in 9 out of 10 cases of reading difficulties, a phonological core deficit is the main culprit. They Need Phonemic Awareness People used to think that you only need to know letter sounds or memorize sight words to read. They didn't realize that there is a COMPLEX process going on each time a student learns a new word: Orthographic Mapping- how your brain turns a new word into an automatic sight word. At the very core of orthographic mapping is phonemic awareness. It is the first building block of reading and without it, students will never learn sight words efficiently. (Read more about orthographic mapping here). How do I get them to WANT to practice? Reading words is exciting. Practicing sounds can be a little... overwhelming. Especially if the kids don't understand how it relates to reading. I've got two ideas for you. Teach them that there are two steps to reading: (1) learning sounds, and (2) learning letters. To be the best reader you can be, you need to learn both. Then, play GAMES! Phonemic awareness can be fun! Add a smidge of creativity, a sprinkle of competitiveness, and BAM. It will be their favorite part of the day. Bonus: because phonemic awareness deals only with spoken sounds, it's an opportunity to do some easy no-prep activities (without creating or printing anything). It can be so easy! 7 phonemic awareness activities to help your students enjoy learning! The Best Phonemic Awareness Activities So, let's dive into some super fun and engaging phonemic awareness activities! All of these activities use science-backed strategies that will boost your students' reading skills. I'm so excited for you to try them out! (find more strategies for practicing phonemic awareness here!). Kids getting rowdy standing in line? Here's a quick phonemic awareness game to stave off mass chaos. 1. Phoneme I Spy This game has SO many different variations! Plus it is great as a time filler for transitions or blank time because it has ZERO prep! Play the normal "I Spy" game but instead of using a color as a clue, use different reading skills! For example... I spy something that starts with the sound /b/ I spy something that ends in the sound /g/ I spy something that rhymes with the word "hike" I spy something that has 3 syllables Mischievous kiddos LOVE trying to trick the teacher with this phonemic awareness game. 2. Guess My Word Segmenting This is another great time-filler game with no prep involved. It is awesome for practicing blending and segmenting skills. Think of a word. (ex. dog) Say the sounds in the word out loud. (ex: /d/ /o/ /g/) Let the child guess what word it is. Try using longer and longer words. For younger kids: break it into compound words or syllables (ex: /hot/ /dog/ or /um/ /brel/ /la/) For older kids: let THEM choose the mystery word and give you the sound clues to guess the word! This is a FANTASTIC way to build phonemic awareness (which is essential to reading success)! You start by giving the "clues" as the sounds in the word, and then the student tries to guess what word it is. For example: "My word has the sounds /b/ /u/ /g/. Can you guess what word it is?" Students guess the word "bug" When students get good at this, you can switch roles and have them choose a word and give you the sounds for you to guess! Great for practicing blending AND segmenting! Harness the power of competition to get your kids pumped for phonemic awareness practice. 3. Rhyme War One more zero-prep game idea! It's a great way to get students to practice getting a feel for rhyming words. Have one person say the starting word. The next person says a word that rhymes with that word. Take turns going back and forth until someone can't think of a new rhyme. The last person to think of a rhyme wins! Let your kiddos squish their little fingers into some playdough- it will make learning even more powerful! 4. Playdough Smash Phoneme Identification This phonemic awareness game is a great way to add multisensory learning AND engagement to your phonemic awareness practice. This kids looove the playdough! Start with 3 dots (or empty squares or soundboxes) in front of the student. Place 1 ball of playdough under the sound you are isolating (under the first dot if you are practicing beginning sounds, middle dot for middle sounds, and the last dot for ending sounds). Say a word (optional: show a picture of the word too). Students say each sound they hear in the word, but smash the playdough ball as they say the target sound. Then they say what the target sound is (beginning, middle, or ending) as they point to the smashed playdough ball. (Here's another post with a way to make play dough into a fun phonics activity). Keep these phonemic awareness task cards on hand for the next time your dog eats your lesson plans. © Hot Tip: Phonemic Awareness Task Card Activities This one goes along with the playdough smash! These phonemic awareness task cards are perfect for identifying beginning, middle, and ending sounds (plus ALL of the other essential phonemic awareness skills). Use them on their own, OR add playdough. Task Cards + Playdough: Print and laminate the task cards. Roll balls of playdough & place them on the dots. Smoosh, swap, or take away the playdough balls as you do the activities! Enjoy a little nostalgia with this classic game- turned phonemic awareness style. 5. Phoneme Manipulation Telephone Pass Often the higher phonemic awareness skill of phoneme manipulation (addition, deletion, substitution) gets overlooked and skipped-but it is just as essential! This game is great for identifying and manipulating sounds in words. Start by saying a word. Then tell the students to make one change to the word (adding, taking away, or changing a sound) and say the new word. Then the student tells YOU one change to make to the word and you say the new word. Keep taking turns telling the other person what sounds to change. See how different you can make the final word from the original word! Counting phonemes is so much more fun with these cute poppers you can grab on Amazon! 6. Counting Sounds on Poppers These fun little gadgets are super satisfying to play with and are a great way to add multisensory learning into your phonemic awareness practice. You can get these mini poppers I like to use on Amazon for a good price! Segmenting with Poppers: Say a word "Pop" a bubble for each sound in the word Go back and count how many bubbles are popped to see how many sounds are in the word Poppers are also great for word mapping practice, like I show you in this blog post! Put your feet up and let the binder do the work for you. (Grab it here- Phonemic Awareness Intervention Binder) 7. No-Prep Phonemic Awareness Activities Sometimes teaching gets hectic and you just need some print-&-go activities that you do not have to prep at all! That's where these intervention binders come in handy. Just print, slip into page protectors, stick in a binder, and you have ready-to-go phonemic awareness practice. Click here to check out my Print-&-Teach Phonemic Awareness Intervention Binder! Print, slip into a binder, and do a happy dance because this Phonemic Awareness Binder is as easy as it gets. Not only are these activities fun and engaging, but they also build phonemic awareness skills that are crucial for a strong reading foundation for life. It's a win-win! So the next time your students run into that brick wall, don't get discouraged. Instead, bust out these phonemic awareness activities and games to get them back on the road to reading.