

Letter-Sound Linking Chart: Teacher's Notes

By Linda Peteherych

Quick Notes:

- Start off teaching the students the difference between letter names and letter sounds.
- Students should master the letter sounds before the names. This enables literacy learners to use letter-sound relationships instead of naming letters when trying to read.
- Place sticky notes over the long vowel sounds, city, and 'wh' until after the students have mastered the other sounds.
- Teach only as many sounds each lesson as the students can manage.
- Insist on correct pronunciation, as it will affect learning to read.
- Do about 15 - 20 minutes of teaching and practice or review each school day until all letter sounds have been mastered in listening, speaking, and reading. After that, do a 5-minute review most days for lower literacy levels.



Teaching Letter Names vs. Letter Sounds

- Elicits the names of students, classroom objects and then a few letters you write on the board by pointing to these things and asking "Name?"
- Next, draw a happy face with ears on the board and draw sound waves entering the ear while saying "Sound." Then elicits what sounds the students can hear outside or in the hall.
- Next, mime things that make sounds and elicit those sounds from the students.
 - I mime petting a cat and say "Cat. What sound?" The students meow.
 - I mime walking a dog and say "Dog. What sound?" The students bark.
 - I mime holding a baby and say. "Baby. What sound?" The students cry or say Mama.
- Point to the letters on the board and elicit or say the letter sounds. Make the point that letters have names and sounds, but you want the students to forget the letter names for now and learn the letter sounds.

Chanting

Using a rhythmic chant helps the students to remember the content.

- For each letter, the teacher points to the English Letter Sounds chart and chants, then the students repeat.
Point to the upper-case letter, then the lower-case letter, and then the picture during the chant.
Teacher: A [æ], a [æ], apple ⇔ Students: A [æ], a [æ], apple
Teacher: B [b], b [b], baby ⇔ Students: B [b], b [b], baby
Teacher: C [k], c [k], Canada ⇔ Students: C [k], c [k], Canada
etc.

Listening Activities

- Say the chant for a letter sound and the students point to the correct letter on the English Letter Sounds chart.
- Say a sound only and the students point to the correct letter on the chart.
- Say the chant or only a sound and the students write the letter on the board (if you have enough board space in your classroom). This is a great way to quickly evaluate the students' mastery of the sound-symbol relationships.
- Pairs of students can practice the activities above.
- Say a word NOT on the English Letter Sounds chart, and the students point to the letter having the same first sound of that word.

Speaking Activities

- During printing practice, have the students say the letter sound each time they print the letter.
- Memory Game in pairs or small groups. Each player says the letter sound as they turn over a letter card from each of two different coloured sets of lower-case letter cards. If the student finds a match, he/she goes again. Keep all cards in place. Use only as many letters as the students can manage, and no more than 9 so that the game does not take up too much of the lesson time. Copy a design onto the backs of your cards or copy cards onto card stock paper so that students cannot see the letter through the paper.
- UPPER-CASE and lower-case Memory Game. Play the game the same as above, but with a set of upper-case cards and a different coloured set of lower-case cards.
- The teacher says a word NOT on the English Letter Sounds chart, and the students say the first sound of the word.
- Pairs of students turn over letter cards and say the letter sound along with 3 words that begin with the letter sound. For example: "The sound is [æ]. Apple, address, apartment."