

## Science of Reading Small-Group Activities: Early Elementary

### Phonemic Awareness Sorting Activity

**Objective:** Teachers will explore different types of phonemic awareness activities and discuss how they can incorporate them into their instruction.

**Materials:**

- **Phonemic Awareness Activity Cards:**
  - **Rhyming:** "Say a word that rhymes with *cat*."
  - **Segmenting:** "Break the word *dog* into its individual sounds: /d/ /o/ /g/."
  - **Blending:** "What word do these sounds make? /s/ /i/ /t/."
  - **Sound Isolation:** "What is the first sound in the word *bat*?"
  - **Phoneme Deletion:** "Say 'stop' without the /s/ sound."
  - **Phoneme Substitution:** "Change the /h/ in *hat* to /b/. What's the new word?"
  - **Alliteration:** "Which word does not belong: *cat, car, dog*?"
- **Sorting Mats:**
  - **Basic:** For simpler tasks, like rhyming and initial sound identification
  - **Intermediate:** For intermediate tasks, like blending and segmenting sounds
  - **Advanced:** For more complex tasks, like phoneme deletion and substitution

**Activity:**

1. In small groups, teachers sort the phonemic awareness activity cards into "basic," "intermediate," and "advanced" categories on the sorting mats based on the level of phonemic awareness required.
2. After sorting, each group shares their rationale, discussing the cognitive demands of each task.
3. Discuss how these activities could be incorporated into classroom routines and differentiated to meet students' varying needs.

### Fluency Practice and Reflection

**Objective:** Teachers will engage in fluency-building activities and reflect on how fluency practice can be implemented in their classrooms.

**Materials:**

- **Passages or Poems:**
  - **Kindergarten:** A simple poem like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" or a short, decodable text like *Pat the Cat*
  - **First Grade:** A slightly longer poem like "Humpty Dumpty" or a passage from a leveled reader like *Sam Sat*
- **Timers or Smartphones**

**Activity:**

1. In small groups, teachers choose a passage or poem and practice reading it aloud using different methods:
  - **Choral Reading:** The group reads the passage together.
  - **Echo Reading:** One person reads a line, and the others repeat it.
  - **Partner Reading:** Teachers take turns reading parts of the passage.
2. After practicing, each teacher reads the passage aloud while another person times them, noting any improvements in reading speed or fluency.
3. Groups discuss how repeated reading can enhance fluency, strategies for incorporating it into daily instruction, and any challenges they might face.

## Vocabulary Building With Word Maps

**Objective:** Teachers will create vocabulary word maps and discuss strategies for deepening students' vocabulary knowledge.

**Materials:**

- **Vocabulary Word Cards:** Select words related to a specific theme or unit. Here is an example:
  - **Theme: Community Helpers**
    - **Word 1:** *Firefighter*
    - **Word 2:** *Teacher*
    - **Word 3:** *Doctor*
- **Chart Paper or Large Sticky Notes**
- **Markers**

**Activity:**

1. Each group is assigned a vocabulary word from the theme.
2. Groups create a word map for their assigned word using the chart paper and markers. Each word map should include the following:
  - **Definition:** "A firefighter is someone who puts out fires and helps in emergencies."

- **Synonyms:** "Rescuer, fireman"
  - **Antonyms:** "Arsonist"
  - **Illustration:** A simple drawing of a firefighter in action
  - **A sentence using that word:** "The firefighter saved the cat from the tree."
3. Each group presents their word map to the larger group, explaining their choices.
  4. Discuss how word maps can be used in the classroom to deepen students' understanding of vocabulary and how to connect them to thematic units.

## Phonics Puzzles

**Objective:** Teachers will explore the progression of phonics instruction and consider how to effectively teach and differentiate phonics skills.

**Materials:**

- **Phonics Puzzle Sets:**
  - **CVC Words:** "c-a-t" with a matching picture of a cat
  - **Digraphs:** "sh-ip" with a picture of a ship
  - **Blends:** "bl-ock" with a picture of a block
  - **Vowel Teams:** "r-ai-n" with a picture of rain
- **Envelopes:** To organize the puzzle sets for each group

**Activity:**

1. Each group receives an envelope containing a phonics puzzle set at different difficulty levels.
2. Groups work together to match the word parts (letters or phonemes) to the correct pictures, discussing the progression from simple CVC words to more complex vowel teams.
3. After completing the puzzles, groups discuss their current phonics instruction practices, strategies for differentiating instruction, and how to support students at various stages of phonics development.

## Comprehension Strategies Gallery Walk

**Objective:** Teachers will review and discuss various comprehension strategies and how they can be applied in the classroom.

**Materials:**

- **Chart Paper or Posters:** Each poster or piece of chart paper should have the following written on it:
  - **Station 1:** Making predictions ("What do you think will happen next?")

- **Station 2:** Visualizing ("Draw a picture of what you see in your mind while reading this sentence.")
- **Station 3:** Questioning ("What questions do you have about the story?")
- **Station 4:** Summarizing ("What is the main idea of the story?")
- **Station 5:** Making connections ("Does this story remind you of something in your life?")

- **Markers**

**Activity:**

1. Set up the gallery walk with each station featuring a piece of chart paper or poster with a different comprehension strategy.
2. In small groups, teachers rotate through the stations, discussing the strategy and adding their thoughts, examples, or questions to the chart paper (using the markers).
3. After completing the gallery walk, the whole group comes together to share key takeaways and discuss how these strategies can be applied in their classrooms to improve students' comprehension skills.

## Oral Language and Listening Stations

**Objective:** Teachers will explore activities that promote oral language development and listening skills in young learners.

**Materials (Organized by Station):**

- **Station 1: Storytelling With Picture Cards:**
  - **Materials:** Picture cards depicting a simple sequence of events (e.g., a boy planting a seed, then the seed growing into a tree).
  - **Activity:** Teachers use the picture cards to create a story, taking turns adding details and expanding on each other's ideas.
  
- **Station 2: Conversation Starters:**
  - **Materials:** Cards with open-ended prompts, like "Tell me about your favorite book" or "What do you like to do on weekends?"
  - **Activity:** Teachers practice using open-ended prompts to encourage students to elaborate on their answers.
  
- **Station 3: Listening and Following Directions:**
  - **Materials:** A set of multistep instructions (e.g., "Draw a circle, then color it blue, and add a star inside the circle").

- **Activity:** Teachers practice giving and following directions, discussing the importance of clear communication and active listening.

**Activity:**

1. Set up the three stations, each focusing on different aspects of oral language and listening skills.
2. Teachers rotate through the stations, engaging in the activities as their students would.
3. After rotating through all the stations, discuss how these activities can be adapted for different age groups, the importance of integrating oral language into daily instruction, and how listening skills contribute to overall literacy development.

## Integrating Literacy Across the Curriculum

**Objective:** Teachers will brainstorm and share ideas for integrating literacy skills across different content areas.

**Materials:**

- **Blank Lesson-Plan Templates:** Include sections for objectives, materials, activities, and assessment.
- **Markers**
- **Chart Paper**

**Activity:**

1. Teachers are divided into small groups, and each group is assigned a different content area (e.g., math, science, social studies).
2. Groups brainstorm and map out a lesson plan (using the blank lesson-plan templates) that integrates literacy skills into their assigned content area. Here are some examples:
  - **Math:** Use a math storybook to introduce a concept, then have students write word problems based on the story.
  - **Science:** After a hands-on experiment, have students write a simple report explaining their observations and results.
  - **Social Studies:** Read a historical-fiction book related to the topic being studied. Then, lead a discussion on key vocabulary and have a writing activity, where students create a diary entry from the perspective of a historical figure.
3. Each group shares their lesson plan with the larger group, highlighting how literacy skills are woven into the content area.

4. Facilitate a discussion on the benefits of integrating literacy across the curriculum and how it can help reinforce students' literacy skills in various contexts.