



## **Providing repeated practice: Oral blending in Reception**

Teaching children to tune in to the individual sounds within words and blend them together enables the development of phonemic awareness, a crucial skill for learning phonics. For this reason, oral blending is incorporated into every Little Wandle phonics lesson, in all phases.

All children will benefit from practising oral blending but some children need more practice to develop this skill. To help you provide your children with plenty of practice, you can incorporate oral blending games and incidental practice into your everyday provision alongside your daily phonics lessons.

Evidence tells us that learning oral blending alongside learning GPCs works well, particularly for children who need additional practice (Ehri, 2021). Continue to practise oral blending both in your lessons and throughout the day right through the Reception year.

### **Oral blending games**

During the day, aim to play two or three of these short games either with your whole class, in smaller groups or with individual children who need more one-to-one attention. You will know these games well from your Phase 2 planning.

As each game lasts no more than two minutes, you can play them whenever you have a spare moment – after the register, lining up for assembly or lunch, at the end of the session or after story time.

### Game 1: Can you do the actions?

- **Say:** *Let's play Can you do the actions?*
- For each action:
  - **Say:** *Can you [e.g. c-l-a-p your hands]?*
  - Check that the children are doing the correct action.
  - Sound-talk and blend the word [e.g. c-l-a-p, clap your hands].

#### Use these words:

CVC		CCV/CCVC/CCVCC/CCCVCC
n-o-d your head	h-ea-d	c-l-a-p your hands
t-a-p your foot	n-oa-z (nose)	s-t-ir the pot
r-u-b your tummy	ch-i-n	f-l-a-p your arms (like the chicken dance)
p-a-t your arm	m-ou-th	s-t-a-n-d on one leg
m-ar-ch like the Grand Old Duke of York	ch-ee-k	s-t-a-m-p your foot
h-o-p like a bunny	l-e-g	do the t-w-i-s-t
r-o-ll the bobbin up	f-oo-t	s-c-r-u-n-ch your nose
p-a-t your shoulders	sh-i-n	t-w-ir-l your wrists
r-ea-ch up high	b-a-ck	
	b-u-m	
	n-ai-l	

## Game 2: Can you touch your ... ?

- **Say:** *Let's play Can you touch your ... ?*
- For each body part:
  - **Say:** *Can you touch your [e.g. b-a-ck]?*
  - Check that the children are touching the right part of their body.
  - Sound-talk and blend the word [e.g. b-a-ck, back].

### Use these words:

CVC	VC/CV	CVCC
h-ea-d n-oa-z (nose) ch-i-n m-ou-th ch-ee-k l-e-g f-oo-t sh-i-n b-a-ck b-u-m n-ai-l	ear ar-m kn-ee t-oe th-igh h-air	h-a-n-d w-ai-s-t wr-i-s-t

### Game 3: What's that noise?

- **Say:** *Let's play What's that noise?*
- For each animal:
  - **Say:** *What sound does a [e.g. f-r-o-g] make?*
  - Check that the children say the right animal.
  - Sound-talk and blend the word [e.g. f-r-o-g, frog].

#### Use these words:

CVC	VC/CV	CCVC/CVCC
<p><b>Animals</b></p> <p>What sound does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a d-u-ck make?</li> <li>• a d-o-g make?</li> <li>• a f-o-x make?</li> <li>• a c-a-t make?</li> <li>• a h-e-n make?</li> <li>• a ch-i-ck make?</li> <li>• a sh-ee-p make?</li> <li>• a g-oa-t make?</li> <li>• a b-ir-d make?</li> <li>• a m-ou-se make?</li> <li>• a g-oo-se make?</li> <li>• a s-ea-l make?</li> </ul> <p><b>Vehicles</b></p> <p>What sound does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a b-u-s make?</li> <li>• a sh-i-p make?</li> <li>• a b-igh-k (bike) make?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Animals</b></p> <p>What sound does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an ow-l make?</li> <li>• a c-ow make?</li> <li>• a b-ear make?</li> <li>• a b-ee make?</li> </ul> <p><b>Vehicles</b></p> <p>What sound does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a c-ar make?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Animals</b></p> <p>What sound does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a s-n-ai-k (snake) make?</li> <li>• a f-r-o-g make?</li> <li>• a w-o-s-p (wasp) make?</li> </ul> <p><b>Vehicles</b></p> <p>What sound does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a t-r-ai-n make?</li> <li>• a p-l-ai-n (plane) make?</li> <li>• a t-r-u-ck make?</li> </ul>

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## Incidental oral blending

As well as playing games, you can incorporate oral blending into your everyday routines. Use the 'How to say pure sounds' video within the Reception programme content area to make sure your whole team feel confident pronouncing pure sounds so that they provide a clear model for oral blending.

Here are some common sentences that work well for oral blending:

- After an activity:
  - Time to s-t-o-p!
  - Tidy up the b-oo-k-s/t-oy-s/p-e-n-s.
  - Come and sit d-ow-n.
  - Put your hands in your l-a-p.
- Before lunch or play:
  - It's time for s-n-a-ck/l-u-n-ch.
  - Line up by the d-oor.
  - First let's wash our hands with s-oa-p.
- At the end of the day:
  - Let's get ready for home t-igh-m (time).
  - Go and get your c-oa-t-s/b-a-g-s.
  - Listen for your n-ai-m (name).

Make sure the children repeat the sounds after you and then say the whole word, just as they would in the oral blending part of the phonics lesson.

If you want to use your own phrases, please do; just remember to segment the word at the end of your sentence. This makes it easier for the children to hold the sounds in their heads to blend them.

## Children who need additional support

Some children might find it harder to hear individual sounds within words and not be able to blend them together. Look out for these children when you practise blending and provide them with additional one-to-one support.

Try these tips to help them:

- Start with CVC words first, then move onto longer CCVC or CVCC words.
- Choose words in which the first sounds are continuant sounds (s, f, l, m, n, r, s, v, z, sh, th) so you can connect the sounds more easily. For example, sssss-uuuuu-nnnnn. This is called 'connected phonation' and has been shown to support children to develop blending skills (Ehri, 2020).
- Slow down your blending, merging the sounds together in an obvious way at first. Then gradually speed up the blending and encourage the children to join in.
- Provide lots of repeated practice with the same words.