

What preparation activities enhance the use of phonics/spelling *Rhyming-Word/Picture Cards at a Beginning Level?*

To be able to play competitive card *games* effectively with *Beginning phonics/spelling Rhyming Word/Picture Card Decks A-D*, novice language learners may need and/or appreciate preparation activities. Such instructional additions may also enhance or reinforce learning of phonics and spelling principles and patterns. Here are a few ideas to try, adapt, shorten, and/or expand:

SHOW THE CARDS. Hold up the appropriate number of card faces one by one. (If they can't be seen from a distance, enlarge and/or project them onto a screen.)

Rank beginners may learn more quickly if the cards are shown in some sort of order—the four rhyming cards of each set one after another; the items with the same vowel sounds together—first the basic simple (“short”) sounds *ă ě ĭ ǒ Ǔ*, then the complex (“long”) blends that mimic the names of the letters *ā ē ī ō ū*, and finally the diphthongs *au* and *oi*. Faster learners will also be able to deal with “more sophisticated” sounds like *ô, ä(r), ǒǒ, û(r)*.

PRONOUNCE THE WORDS. Say the item names and have learners repeat. Display the cards again so they can read the words aloud. Finally, cover the words and show just the illustrations. Can learners pronounce their names clearly and comprehensibly? (Pointing to just *printed words* puts the lesson focus on *oral reading*, while revealing only *pictures* emphasizes vocabulary acquisition.)

Shuffle and go through the cards as many times as beneficial; continue the activity as long as it's enjoyable.

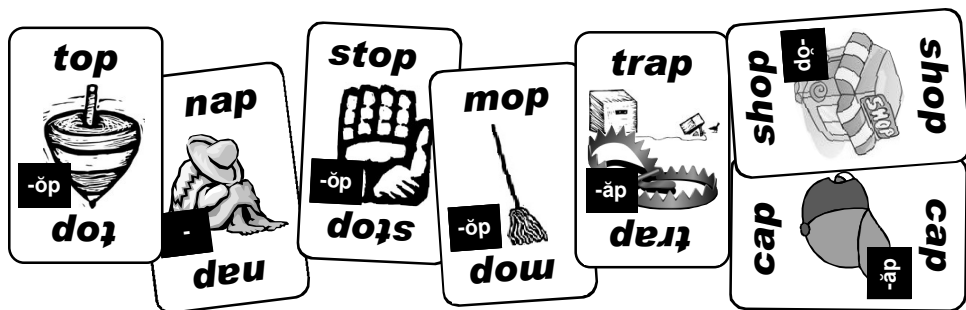
GIVE "ORAL VOCABULARY QUIZZES." For more reading and vocabulary practice, print the relevant items on a board, in rhyming-word or mixed-up order. Give "meaning clues" one at a time. For instance, here are sample explanations to elicit the four rhymes *mop*, *shop*, *stop*, and *top*:

- ◆ You use it to wash the floor.
- ◆ It's a small store.
- ◆ It's the opposite of "go."
- ◆ It's a toy to spin—not "the bottom."

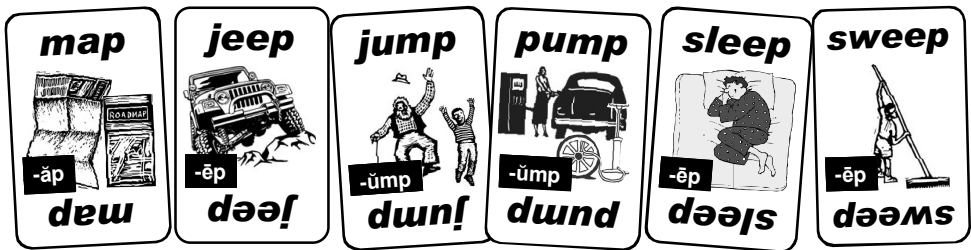


For learners at the lowest language-proficiency levels, it may help to say cues to the items in the order they are listed on the board. The group or individuals can simply read aloud the printed words as you point to them.

At the same time, they can look at, handle, arrange, and/or otherwise refer to the corresponding (sets of) *Beginning* phonicspelling *Rhyming Word/Picture Cards* laid out face-up on a surface in front of them.



Students needing more challenge might prefer to hear cues in *random sequence*—so they have to *locate* or *recall* each appropriate word before saying it aloud. If they hesitate in responding—or to boost memory, (enlarged) illustrations may help. This activity becomes more difficult as (groups of) items are added to the list—especially non-rhyming words with some sound and/or spelling similarities.



PREVIEW MATERIALS THROUGH COOPERATIVE ACTIVITY.

Before participating in structured activities or playing games, individuals, pairs, or small groups can look over and manipulate sets of cards on their own. For instance, they might spread cards out face up and cooperate in putting rhyming items together as quickly as possible. Then they can read aloud (pronounce) the words together.

Other preliminary activities might be to identify the items on two to four cards as either *rhyming* (e.g., *jeep, sleep, sweep*) or *not rhyming* (e.g., *jump, jeep, job*); finding the words that *do* rhyme within a stack of cards (e.g., nap, *stop, tip, cap, trap, ship, shape, keep, map*); or picking out the words that *don't* belong in a rhyming set (e.g., *book, cook, ~~make~~, look, ~~hike~~, ~~back~~, ~~luck~~, hook*).

PROVIDE "MINI-LESSONS." When participants ask questions or make mistakes, brief, well-timed instruction in pronunciation and/or the sound-letter relationships of the relevant items may prove useful. Tell curious learners other meanings of the words, including their uses as both nouns and verbs or other parts of speech. Give—or have others give—simple definitions, explanations, examples that illustrate meaning, word usage patterns and rules, etc.

More advanced participants may be able to suggest—and spell aloud—*other* items that rhyme with those on the board. If helpful, refer to rhyming-word lists. Talk about the more interesting or less familiar items.

What pronunciation, phonics, spelling, or other word-level instruction can help optimize the use of phonic/spelling Rhyming-Word/Picture Cards?

Not *all* language students benefit equally from formal, structured instruction in patterns, principles, and rules. Even so, when questions or problems come up, *teacher- or expert-centered* “mini-lessons” (explanations, rules, examples, and spontaneously created “oral exercises”) can provide a welcome “change of pace.” Basic info can be presented in simplified form and/or expanded upon:

- ◆ A *syllable* is a unit of organization for a sequence of speech sounds. In spoken language, it is a separate “beat.” Each syllable contains one—and *only* one—distinct vowel sound or diphthong. It may or may not include initial and/or final consonants.
 - ◆ The “nucleus” of each syllable is its *vowel sound*, usually pronounced with an open vocal passage (no mouth parts touching). Most often, the “simple” vowels ä ě ħ ö ô ô, ä(r), öö, û(r) are “pure, relaxed sounds” represented by one vowel letter each. In contrast, the “complex” vowels ā ē ī ō ū au oi are doubled sounds, glides, or diphthongs said with tense speech muscles. (These classifications of vowel sounds have nothing to do with their “length”—the amount of *time* it takes to pronounce them.)
- ◆ *Consonants*, on the other hand, like b p d t v f z s j ch m ng r l, etc. involve constriction or closure somewhere in the vocal tract. There are about 24 distinct consonant *sounds* in English, each spelled by one or two consonant *letters*. A consonant can occur at the beginning and/or at end of a syllable or word, alone or in combination (a cluster) with other consonants.
- ◆ Only the vowel (and consonant) sound(s) at the *end* of a one-syllable word—as opposed to those at its beginning—determine the rhyming characteristics of the item.

The gray boxes of the sideways chart below show the major spellings (those most likely to be included in *Beginning Level* instruction) of the 16 undisputed vowel sounds of American English.

-a-	-e-	-i-	-o-	-u-	-u-	-a--o-	-a(r)-
1. <u>ă</u> = /æ/ c <u>a</u> t	2. <u>ĕ</u> = /ɛ/ t <u>e</u> n	3. <u>ĭ</u> = /ɪ/ b <u>i</u> g	4. <u>ō</u> = /ɑ/ ch <u>o</u> p	5. <u>ŭ</u> = /ʌ/ g <u>u</u> m	6. <u>oo</u> = /ʊ/ l <u>oo</u> k, p <u>u</u> t	7. <u>ô</u> = /ɔ/ b <u>a</u> ll, d <u>o</u> g	8. <u>a:</u> = /ɑ/ st <u>a</u> r
-e-	-ai-	-ea-	-ie-	-oa-	-oo-	-ou-	-oi-
-i-	-ay	-ee-	-ie	-o-e	-oo	-ow-	-oy
-u-(r)	-a-e	-e-e	-i-e		-u-e	-ow	
9. <u>û(r)</u> = /ɜ(r)/ h <u>e</u> r, b <u>i</u> rd w <u>o</u> rk, f <u>u</u> r	10. <u>ā</u> = /eɪ/ or /e/ r <u>a</u> in, d <u>a</u> y c <u>a</u> re	11. <u>ē</u> = /i/ or /iː/ t <u>e</u> ach t <u>r</u> ee, <u>e</u> ve	12. <u>ī</u> = /aɪ/ or /eɪ/ c <u>r</u> ied t <u>i</u> e, w <u>i</u> ne	13. <u>ō</u> = /oo/ or /oː/ g <u>o</u> al v <u>o</u> te	14. <u>ū</u> = /u/ or /uː/ m <u>o</u> on, z <u>oo</u> J <u>u</u> ne	15. <u>ou</u> = /ɑʊ/ or /aʊ/ fl <u>o</u> ur d <u>o</u> wn, c <u>o</u> w	16. <u>oi</u> = /ɔɪ/ or /ɔɪ/ b <u>o</u> il t <u>o</u> y

The black boxes display two kinds of phonetic vowel sound-symbols in white print: those from a typical American dictionary = symbols from the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet). The symbols are numbered for reference: *Sounds 1-5* are nearly always classified as "simple" ("lax," "short," "one-letter") vowels; *Sounds 6 and 7* sometimes are. The simple *Vowel Sounds 8-9* appear only before /r/. *Sounds 10-14* are usually called "complex" ("tense," "long," "two-letter") vowels. The tense *Vowel Sounds 15-16* are "diphthongs," as is *Sound 12*.

In the white boxes are very basic beginning-level word examples, with the letters representing the vowel sounds underlined.

This useful chart can be copied, enlarged, and used for reference.