

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS FOCUS

Phonological Awareness: Sentence Segmentation and Word Awareness

PHASE 1

MINI-LESSON

Listen . . . Hear . . . Count

Inform

Today we will spend some time thinking and noticing how our spoken language, or what we say to communicate with each other, can be broken down into sentences and words. Just as bricks are important to building the walls of a house, words are important to building or expressing our thoughts and ideas. We use words to build the sentences we say when we are talking with each other, or telling stories.

Present

Let's have some fun taking apart our language and listening for individual words. Listen closely as I say a familiar sentence that I use when I greet you each morning.

Say aloud a simple sentence, such as "Good morning boys and girls." Then repeat the sentence word by word, clapping for each word and placing clear pauses between the words.

The second time, I paused between the words and clapped so we could easily hear each word in the sentence.

Display an enlarged copy of the appendix "How Many Words Do You Hear?" to model how to use the appendix and manipulatives.

Now let's take a look at this paper. It's a chart for us to keep track of how many words we hear in each sentence we say aloud. Watch me as I repeat my morning greeting and push a counting chip into a

box on this grid for each word that I say. I'm going to start here on the left side of the paper, just like when I am reading.

Say "Good morning boys and girls" twice, the first time using typical fluent speech and the second time saying it more slowly, word by word. Model for the students how to move one counting chip into the appropriate space for each word in the sentence.

Did you notice how I repeated the sentence more slowly so I could match the individual words with a counting chip? How many chips did I use? So, how many words were in that sentence? Show me with your fingers.

Acknowledge student responses and model another example, if necessary.

Yes, there are five words in the sentence I say to you every morning.

Great job! Now, are you ready to listen, hear, and count on your own?

Engage

Distribute copies of the appendix "How Many Words Do You Hear?" and individual bags of 7 concrete manipulatives to each student. Reference the appendix "Breaking Language Apart" for sample sentences, or create your own.

Rationale

Readers, writers, and speakers understand that individual words make up sentences in our language. Students will hear and count the number of words in spoken sentences.

Preparation

- Concrete manipulatives: small plastic bags, each filled with 7 blocks or counting chips
- Appendix: "How Many Words Do You Hear?" (make copies for students)
- Appendix: "Breaking Language Apart" (reference for whole-class lesson and small-group guided practice extension)
- Appendix: "Parent Letter – Breaking Language Apart"
- Appendix: "Phase 1 Kid-Watching Notation Tool"

Monitor/Assess

During whole-class and small-group practice, observe students' ability to identify and count the number of words they hear in spoken sentences.

Throughout Phase 1, you may use the appendix "Phase 1 Kid-Watching Notation Tool" to note daily observations and instructional next steps.

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Now let's go, word detectives. Listen, hear, and then count. I'll say each sentence twice. Just listen the first time that I say the sentence. Then get ready to push your counters into the spaces on the counting grid when I repeat the words slowly. Check your counters and turn and check your grid against your partner's.

Let's do the first one together. "Today is Monday." Now listen and push your chips, "Today . . . is . . . Monday."

How many chips did you place on your counting grids? Did your partner push the same number of chips? How many words were in that sentence? Show me with your fingers.

Read aloud the remaining sentences from the appendix "Breaking Language Apart," slowly repeating each sentence word by word to allow ample time for students to push their counters into the spaces. Observe partners checking their responses with each other and offer assistance as needed.

Reiterate

Great work today, everyone. You were able to listen and count the words you heard. It is important to pay attention to the words we hear or say to make sense of our world. The next few days, we'll continue exploring the words in our language that we use not only to speak but to read and write.

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What's Next

Based on your kid-watching and assessment, you may use the following suggestion(s) to provide additional practice and differentiate instruction in response to student needs.

Small-Group Guided Practice

Use a "Make the Sentence" activity for guided practice with segmenting sentences. Write the words from the sentences in the appendix "Breaking Language Apart" on individual cards and distribute them to the children in a small group. Read students' individual word cards as you hand them to each student. Explain that they are going to remake the sentence together.

As you read the sentence, one word at a time, invite students to stand and arrange themselves in the proper order to "make the sentence." Then invite students to count how many of them are standing and thus how many words were in the sentence. (This activity was adapted from Words Their Way: Letter and Picture Sorts for Emergent Readers and Spellers, 3rd ed., Bear et al., Pearson, 2019.)

Extensions and Connections

These are opportunities to reinforce, practice, and connect what students are learning throughout the day as readers and writers.

Home-School Connections

Distribute copies of the appendix "Parent Letter – Breaking Language Apart," inviting parents to practice segmenting sentences with their children at home.

How Many Words Do You Hear?

								1
								2
								3
								4
								5
								6
								7

Breaking Language Apart

Today is Monday.

It is a sunny day.

We are going to read a story.

We are sitting on the rug.

Parent Letter – Breaking Language Apart

Dear Parents,

Today we kicked off the yearlong Word Study portion of our English language arts program. Your kindergarten child will spend about 20 minutes each day exploring the sounds of our language—breaking our language into sentences, words, and individual letters.

Research has clearly shown that children who acquire essential phonological awareness (sound structure of our language) and phonics (sound/letter associations) skills have greater success in learning to read and write.

Today, we practiced segmenting, or breaking sentences into their individual words. It is helpful if you are able to practice this newly learned skill at home with your child. The following word-awareness practice activity should take about five minutes:

Please invite your child to practice saying a short sentence, clapping out the individual words: “Today I had fun at school” or “I played with my friend, _____.”

Your child should first say the sentence using typical fluent speech. Then have your child repeat the sentence, but pause between the individual words and clap while saying each word.

Next, repeat the sentence for your child and clap each word as you invite them to count how many words were said.

Thank you for your support.