

PART A

For the Teacher

Understanding Phonological Awareness

Research over many years has shown that **phonological awareness** is essential to the task of learning to read English. In fact, a child's phonological awareness ability at preschool has been shown to be a potent predictor of later success with **reading** and writing (Torgesen, Wagner & Rashotte 1994).

What Is Phonological Awareness?

Phonological awareness is 'The conscious realisation that words can be decomposed into discrete single sounds (**phonemes**). It enables the beginning reader to appreciate the logic of the alphabetic system'. (Hempenstall 2005)

Phonological awareness is not the same as being able to hear, discriminate between sounds or say words. Some teachers may confuse phonological awareness with **phonics**. Phonological awareness tasks require the student to 'tune into' or make judgements about sounds, segment words into sounds or manipulate the sounds of a spoken word. On the other hand, phonics is a method of instruction that requires students to make use of letter symbols. A successful phonics program for young children should include explicit instruction in phonological awareness.

Phonological awareness skills develop over time. Very young children focus on the meaning of the words they speak. It is not until later, as they prepare to learn to read and spell, that they need to consciously think about the sound structure of language. First, children become aware that the flow of spoken language is made up of individual words. Then they begin to understand that words can be divided into **syllables** and that words may share common parts, such as the ending sounds in the rhyming words *dog* and *frog*. Finally, they come to attend to the individual sounds within words. This awareness of the smaller, less tangible units within words—the sounds or phonemes—is an essential skill for early literacy development and is often referred to as **phonemic awareness**.

Singing Alphabet Cards

It is important to provide a meaningful association for students when they are learning the match between sounds and letters. An alliterative phrase will be helpful when introducing the sound–letter links. This will act as a reliable trigger when the student needs to recall the sound–letter match.

Make a large card for each letter of the alphabet plus the digraphs 'sh', 'ch' and 'th'.

- Choose a short alliterative phrase, such as *angry ants* or *five foxes*.
- Draw a clear picture representing the phrase.
- Write the phrase.
- Write upper- and lower-case letters on the reverse of the card using the script recommended in your school region.
- Sing the phrase to the tune of 'Skip to My Lou'. For example: Monkeys munching—/m/ /m/ /m/ (repeat 3 times)
Skip to my Lou my darling!

Suggestions for Singing Alphabet Cards

(Some of these are suggestions from *The Singing Alphabet*, Love and Reilly 1991.)

a angry ants	k kings kicking	u under the umbrella
b balls bouncing	l licking lollipops	v vacuum the van
c cuddly cat	m monkeys munching	w waddling wombats
d dizzy dingoes	n number nine	x ox on a box
e empty eggs	o orange octopus	y yellow yachts
f five fish	p pink and purple	z zebras zigzag
g gorillas gardening	q queen's quilt	sh shiny shoes
h helicopters hovering	r rusty robots	ch chattering children
i in the igloo	s sausages sizzling	th thumbs thinking
j jars of jellybeans	t tiny teddies	

Use these cards to:

- promote awareness of a particular sound
- link the sound with the letter
- practise writing the letter for the sound
- practise recalling the sound when shown the letter
- practise recalling the letter when hearing the sound.

BLM

What's Left? 1

Name: _____

Date: _____

What is left if you take one word away from the compound word?
For example, take **stick** from **broomstick**.



Teacher Notes:

See page 74. Students make new words from compound words by circling or placing a counter on their answer.

Sorting Sounds and Letters

Word-sorting activities require sound analysis and letter knowledge. Students need to think about the individual sounds in words and sort them according to certain criteria. There are many picture and letter card resources in this book that can be used to facilitate sound awareness and sound–letter match.

- Students sort pictures from magazines or small objects from the teacher's sound bag and match these to letters.
- Students work independently or in pairs to sort pictures according to:
 - initial consonant
 - final consonant
 - short or long vowel
 - medial vowel
 - consonant blend.

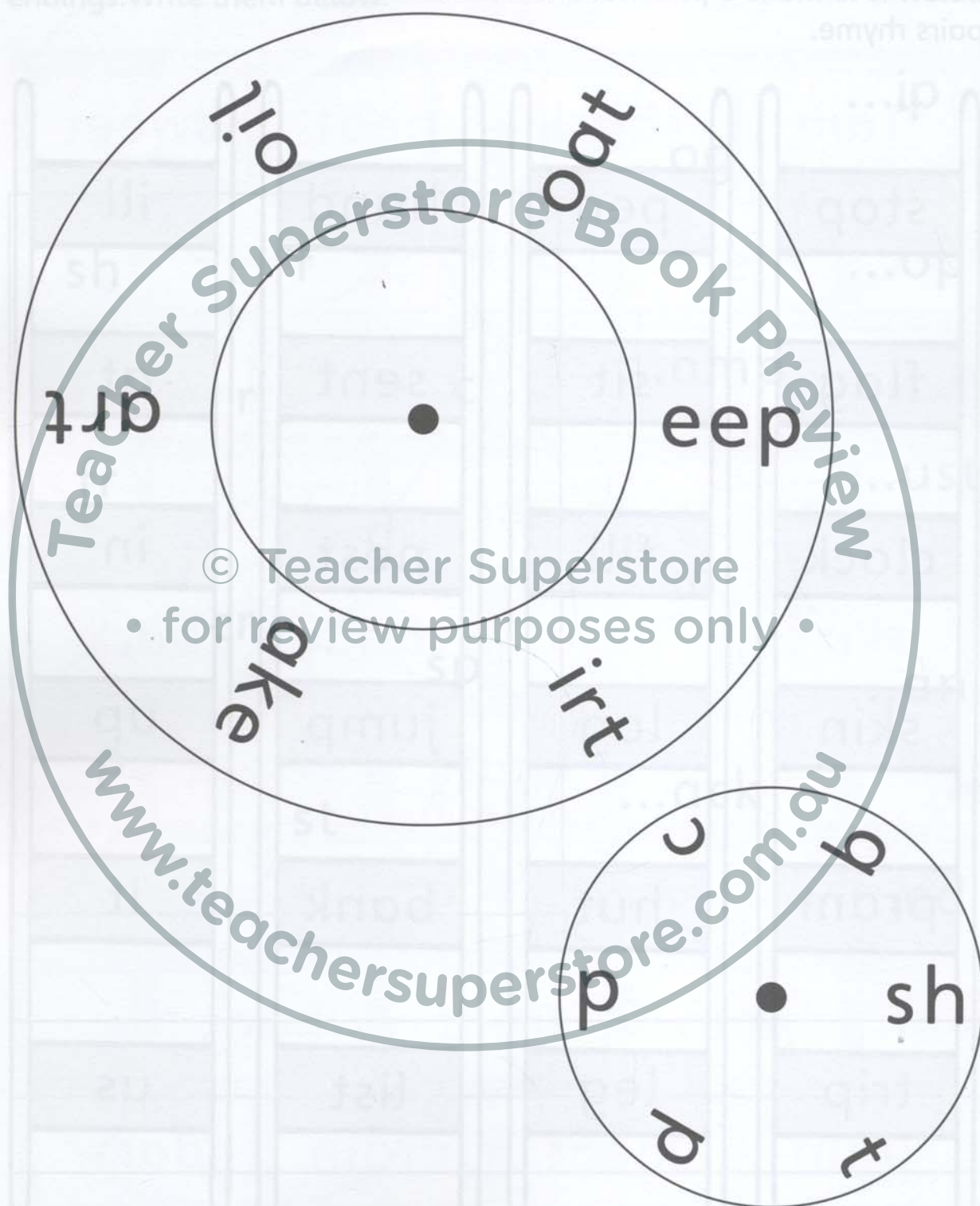
Alternatives

- Students 'fish' for a picture from a sound pond.
- Students 'fish' for a letter from the letter bucket then find an object that starts with that letter.
- Students create their own Odd One Out sequence (see pages 114 to 116).
- Students set up different sound shops, for example a /s/ shop. They then display items such as sauce, scissors, sticky tape, a stapler and sand.
- Students attach selected pictures with Velcro to a large 'class' letter, to alphabet charts, to game boards or to a felt board.
- Students post word cards in the appropriate sound or letter postbox, for example *man* goes in the /m/ or 'm' box, *penguin* in the /p/ or 'p' box, *violin* in the /v/ or 'v' box.
- Peg letter cards to a clothes line. Students choose a picture that starts with that letter and peg it on the line.

BLM

Word Wheel

Make a word wheel. How many real words can you make?



Teacher Notes:

Cut out the circles and pin them together (the smaller circle on top) with a butterfly clip. Turn the circles to make real words. Write them on a separate piece of paper.