

# Decoding and Spelling Short Vowel Words From A Chalkboard

This activity can be a regular routine for students who are learning how to spell short vowel words. Students take turns decoding (sounding out) words from the chalkboard. Then they immediately segment the word (say the separate sounds) and write each letter on lined paper to make the word.

Plan which words you want the students to read and spell. Write them on the chalkboard ahead of time. If you are only working with one student, or working with a small group, you can write the words on paper or a chart. The students will be sorting these words onto their papers as they write, so keep in mind which classifications you want to use. If the list of words all contain the same short vowel, you could have students sort words according to beginning or ending sounds. If the list contains more than one short vowel sound, the students could sort the words into columns according to vowel sounds.

Before you begin the lesson, fold wide, lined handwriting paper into four columns. Pass out the papers and have students write their names and the date on the top line. Next, write the headings for each column on the board. Students are to copy these headings on the row just below their name. For example, if all the words have the same short vowel sound, students might write b\_, c\_, f\_ and h\_, with each letter at the top of a different column. This would show that students are looking for words that begin with these letters. Hold up the paper of a student who does this task quickly, so others can see what to do.

Now you are ready to begin. Call on students one at a time to read a word from the board, holding your hand under the word. Students do not have to sound out the word if they already recognize it, but they may sound it out if they need to. Always have a student repeat the word normally if he had to sound it out. The goal is not sounding out. The goal is recognizing the word. Sounding out is just a tool used to recognize unknown words. Students need time to practice sounding out. With time, the process will become automatic and they will just be able to say the word.

Immediately after a student tells the class the word, all the students should repeat the word in unison. Then ask for a volunteer to tell you which column the word should go in on the paper. For instance, if the word is *fan*, the student will say that the word goes in the third column, under /f/ (saying the sound of the letter). Students point to the correct position on the paper and immediately segment the word orally, all together. They say each sound separately and distinctly, writing the letter exactly when they say each sound. Finally, they repeat the word as a whole one more time. Student may look at the word on the board if needed as they write the letters.

The activity continues as students read each word on the board, say where to write it on the paper, say the sounds, and write the word. The steps should be done at a reasonably fast pace, with everyone staying together. The requirement to sort the words helps students pay attention to every letter in the word and helps them notice similarities and differences between the words.

Sight words may be included in the lists. Students should read them and then write them in the last column. Students should draw a small flag at the top of the column to show that these words can't be decoded in the usual way. When writing sight words, students should spell the word by saying the letter names instead of saying the letter sounds.

As soon in the year as possible, begin planning a sentence which contains several of the words. Dictate the sentence after the students have finished reading and writing the words from the list on the board. Students should remember to use capital letters where needed and the correct punctuation mark.

See the next page for sample dictation pages that have been completed.

Name		August 22, 2009	
b	c	f	h
bat	can	fan	hat
bag	cat	fad	ham
bad	cap	fat	had

Name		September 14, 2009	
a	i	o	u
man	in	on	was
rag	dig	hot	a
sat	will	log	A
A man	was	on	a log.