

Phonics--Segment Eight > *Flashcards for Fluency*

Teaching Process

Note:

Prepare the flash card sets prior to the introduction of the text. Begin the flash card drill ONLY after all students in the group can quickly read all the words from the board.

1. Prepare the Cover Card

A cover card is a 3"x 5" index card that is ruled into approximately 28 boxes, with a 1/4" margin at the top of the card for the title and page numbers of the story or section of the story. Each of the words that you have identified as difficult for your students to decode is written in a box, along with any HR Phonic Elements that are in the word. Also, variations and phonograms for the word are often written in the box with the word. Always include a group of review words from previous stories. Prepare a cover card for each set of flash cards. (See Appendix in the Guidebook on pages 97 and 98 for examples of cover cards and flash cards.)

2. The Flash Card Set

Unlined 3"x 5" index cards are used for flash cards. Each flash card set has three cards for each word. On one of the three cards, only the word is written. The other two have the word plus one or more phonic clues (written in small print) or phonograms. A pack of flash cards generally has 65 to 85 cards. Mix the cards thoroughly before use.

3. Flash Card Practice for Mastery

After fanning the cards out so that you can easily and quickly flip them, flash one card to one student at a time. You must hold the cards and position the students' chairs so that all students can see the cards at all times. Students have to remain alert as they never know when, during the quick-paced drill, their turn will come. Don't call students' names. Instead, point a card or finger toward a student as you quickly and randomly skip around from one child to the next. Sometimes flash two cards consecutively to one student before skipping to another.

If every student cannot read all of the cards fluently by the end of the time allotted, make a note of the group's progress and stop the lesson. The next day, quickly reintroduce the words using Phonic Pattern Hopscotch, lead a practice drill on the board for those words that some in the group are not yet fluently reading, and then continue the flash card drill from the day before.

4. Homework Cards

Keep a large box of small (2"x 3") cards cut from card stock and a bag of rubber bands next to the chalkboard. At the end of each session, quickly write five to seven homework practice cards (some are duplicates) for the students who have not yet mastered a few of the words taught through the board drill and practice. To keep students' attention, quickly toss one to each student as you write them. Students attach a rubber band and put the cards in their pocket or book bag. There will always be students who were absent and who will need reintroduction and review. These homework cards can be used to help those students more quickly catch up with the group.

5. Reading Phrases and Sentences from the Board

Copying exactly from the student book, quickly write on the board at least 6-7 phrases and sentences from various pages throughout the story to be read. (Prior to the beginning of the class, you may have written these on chart paper to be taped up on the board). The students read these silently as you write. The phrases and sentences are written in random order and the students understand that they are not in the same order as in the story they will read. Model reading each one fluently, with appropriate voice expression, obeying the punctuation marks, etc. Then, as you slide the pointer along under each phrase or sentence, individual students practice reading them until fluent.

CAUTION

NEVER ask students to read the phrases and sentences from the board if they are not yet reading the flash cards quickly and smoothly.

6. Reading the First Page of the Text from the Board

Quickly write (or use the handwritten page that you have prepared on chart paper) on the board the first page verbatim from the book that you have been preparing students to read. The students read it silently as you write. Model the oral reading of this page with appropriate voice expression and fluency. Each student practices reading the page from the board. When each student can read the page fluently, obeying the punctuation and with good voice expression, they are ready to read the text selection from the book.