

# WHAT IS Phonological Awareness AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?



# Blog post by Clever Classroom

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## What is Phonological Awareness?

Hey-ho! Well you know that phonological and phonemic awareness skills are important and also necessary to understand as a Pre-K-2 teacher. It is vital that you know and understand what phonological and phonemic awareness is as it is the foundation for reading success.

According to Calfee, Lindamood & Lindamood, 1973, Children's ability to attend to, and manipulate phonemes strongly correlate with their reading success through to the end of their schooling.

You may be confused by the terminologies, definitions, skills sets and acquisition. Well this is the place for you!

Lap it all up in one neat blog post that can also be downloaded fo' free you all! This is the first post about phonological and phonemic awareness in the series. Let's get down to it straight up!

## What is Phonological Awareness and why is it so Important?

Phonological awareness skills are the basis for reading. Without these important skills, potential reading difficulties may arise in the early years.

A child who has concrete phonological skills will have a strong platform in which to develop reading skills.

## What is Phonological Awareness?

Phonological awareness is the ability to *hear and manipulate sound structures within words*.

### Phonological skills include:

- **Rhyme:** rhyme awareness and construction
- **Alliteration:** Discrimination and production
- **Sound and Word Discrimination:** Hears units of sounds within a sentence, identifies which word is different
- **Syllabification:** Syllable segmenting and blending
- **Onset and Rime:** Blending and segmenting

Don't confuse phonological awareness and phonemic awareness! While phonemic awareness

falls under the umbrella of phonological awareness, it is just one aspect of phonology.

## **What is Phonemic Awareness?**

Phonemic awareness deals with the phoneme. Phonemic awareness is *the ability to hear and manipulate sounds aurally*.

A phoneme is usually defined as the smallest unit of sound.

Phonics is the system in which sound structures and phonemes are represented.

**Phonemic Awareness Skills** (also fits under the phonological awareness skills umbrella) **include:**

Individual Phoneme Skills (aural, no print involved):

- **Individual Phoneme Isolation:**(beginning medial and final): Isolates phoneme in given word
- **Individual Phoneme Blending:** Blends phonemes to make a word.
- **Individual Phoneme Segmenting:** Identifies phonemes in words

Syllable Manipulation:

- **Syllable (onset-rime) Deletion:** Deletes onset and then rime in given words
- **Syllable (onset-rime) Substitution:** Substitutes onset and then rime to make new words

## Phoneme Manipulation:

- **Phoneme Deletion:** beginning and final
- **Phoneme Addition:** Adds phoneme to make a new word
- **Phoneme Substitution:** Substitutes a phoneme to make a new word

Note: Phonological skill sets seen above are in chronological order of assessment and teaching.

## **Why is Phonological Awareness so Important?**

Phonological awareness is a vital set of skills that allows us to learn how to read.

Phonological awareness skills provide children with a means to access the written form; phonics. You might know phonics as sound and letter combinations used to represent words.

**Research suggests that trouble with phoneme awareness and phonological skills early on is a gage for poor reading and spelling skills.**

According to the National Reading Panel Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000), "The level of phonemic awareness that children possess when first beginning reading instruction and their knowledge of letters are the two best predictors of how well they will learn to read during the first two years of

formal reading instruction.” (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg, & Beeler: 1998 -Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: A Classroom Curriculum.

### **What does this Mean for me as an Educator?**

Did you know that:

“According to the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 37 percent of fourth graders and 26 percent of eighth graders cannot read at the basic level; and on the 2002 NAEP 26 percent of twelfth graders cannot read at the basic level. That is, when reading grade appropriate text these students cannot extract the general meaning or make obvious connections between the text and their own experiences or make simple inferences from the text. In other words, they cannot understand what they have read.” Reference: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Based on this and similar research outcomes, it is vital that early childhood educators understand both phonological and phonemic awareness skills. It is necessary that these skills are explicitly assessed in the first year of formal schooling and again in the second year.

Moreover, teachers need to understand how to integrate phonological and phonemic awareness curriculums for their emergent readers.

Most importantly, it is essential that teachers have access to systematic intervention resources that complement individuals. These skills are most important for Pre-K, to first grade as they are the foundation for reading, as covered. Children with reading difficulties, may benefit in re-assessment and interventions.

### **How will Assessing and Providing Interventions Help my Students with their Phonics Development?**

We know that a robust phonics base curriculum (amongst other things like: comprehension, vocabulary and fluency) lends itself to higher reading outcomes.

Comparatively, the same applies with the relationship between phonological and phonemic awareness skills, and phonics skills.

We spend a lot of time planning, implementing and assessing phonics skills and knowledge. Is this to the detriment of more foundational skills? Do the students struggling to grasp: letter-sound relationships, vowel sounds, r-controlled vowels, and other spelling conventions actually struggle on a deeper level? **Have you accessed these students' phonological and phonemic awareness skills?** Are they missing something that can easily be revisited with an intervention session?



## **Where can I Find Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Assessments and Interventions for my Students?**

There are many sites on the net that provide basic assessments. However, I found many of them frustrating as I needed a more global assessment that was explicit for the developmental ranges in my students. After a year of investigating, what will work, I came up with my own systemic and explicit assessment.

I'm just about finished the HUGE phonological and phonemic awareness assessment and intervention bundle that is conveniently, a 'grab and go' resource. I wanted to create intervention printables that involve very minimal prep, just copy, grab counters and die, and that's about it!

In the digital download you have access to: information pages, tracking pages, assessment pages, as well as print and go games for interventions. I know children learn best from hands-on activities like games so I have included a few for each skill (as seen in skills listed above in the boxes). The games are all black and white so you can place them in a binder, each inside plastic sleeves, or laminated. They will be ready to use at a moment's notice with individuals or small groups.

If you would like to pre-order the bundle, you can join in with hundreds of other Pre-K to grade 2



teachers to get notice of the bundle when it's first released and listed at 50% off for a short time.

This will be a great time saver, not to mention an explicit and systematic way to ensure you're assessing and teaching phonological and phonemic awareness skills and preparing competent readers.

Cut and paste this into an email, if you would like exclusive notice of the downloads coming very soon.

"Please let me know the moment the assessment and intervention resources are uploaded to your Tpt store. I want to receive them at 50% off!"

My email is: [emma@cleverclassroom.com.au](mailto:emma@cleverclassroom.com.au)

### **In this series you will read more about:**

- Phonological and phonemic awareness assessments and tests
- Phonological and phonemic awareness interventions
- Phonological and phonemic awareness curriculum and program resources
- Phonological and phonemic awareness activities and games.

Thanks so much for dropping by. If you would like to keep up to date with this series or other word work

and reading themed posts, you can follow this blog by [clicking here](#).

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Clever Classroom

# Phonological AWARENESS RECIPE

Phonemic Awareness

Onset-Rime Blending & Segmenting

Alliteration

Phoneme Manipulation

Syllable Segmenting & Blending

Word Discrimination

Phoneme Deletion

Phoneme Addition

Phoneme Blending & Segmenting

Phoneme Isolation

Syllable Manipulation

Phoneme Substitution

# Phonological AWARENESS

## Syllable Segmenting and Blending

**Syllable Segmenting**  
 Claps syllables in 2 syllable words.  
 Tells how many syllables in a word.

**Syllable Segmenting**  
 Claps syllables in 3 and 4 syllable words.  
 Tells how many syllables in a word.

**Syllable Blending**  
 Says the word when given 2 syllables.

**Syllable Blending**  
 Says the word when given 3 syllables.  
 Says the word when given 4 syllables.

## Individual Phoneme Segmenting

**Phoneme Segmenting**  
 Says phonemes in words with 2 phonemes.

**Phoneme Segmenting**  
 Says phonemes in words with 3 phonemes.

**Phoneme Segmenting**  
 Says phonemes in words with 4 phonemes.

## Phonological Awareness Assessment Teacher Questioning Page

**Teachers:** Ask the following questions to complete the assessment. Only mark the box on your assessment page if the student gets 3/4 sample tasks correct. If a child gets 3/4 whole tasks in a row incorrect, cease the assessment.

<b>Task 12</b>	<b>SKILL DOMAIN</b> <b>Syllable Segmenting</b> <b>DESCRIPTION</b> Claps syllables in 2 syllable words. Tells how many syllables in a word.	<b>SAMPLE TASKS</b> Can you clap the syllables in ____ How many syllables do you hear? 2 - Sunday (Sun-day), toaster (toast-er), fourteen (four-teen)
<b>Task 13</b>	<b>SKILL DOMAIN</b> <b>Syllable Segmenting</b> <b>DESCRIPTION</b> Claps syllables in 3 & 4 syllable words. Tells how many syllables in a word.	<b>SAMPLE TASKS</b> Clap the syllables in ____ How many syllables do you hear? 3 - computer (com-pu-ter), waterfall (wa-ter-fall), happiness (hap-pi-ness) 4 - everything (ev-er-y-thing), celebrat-ion, watermelon (wat-er-mel-on)
<b>Task 14</b>	<b>SKILL DOMAIN</b> <b>Syllable Blending</b> <b>DESCRIPTION</b> Says the word when given 2 syllables.	<b>SAMPLE TASKS</b> Tell me the word I said. 2 - again, base-ball, Mon-day, bett-er
<b>Task 15</b>	<b>SKILL DOMAIN</b> <b>Syllable Blending</b> <b>DESCRIPTION</b> Says the words when given 3 syllable words. Says the words when given 4 syllable words.	<b>SAMPLE TASKS</b> Tell me the word I said. 3 - fam-ily, an-i-mal, ele-phant 4 - tech-nol-o-gy, veg-e-table, wat-er
<b>Task 16</b>	<b>SKILL DOMAIN</b> <b>Onset-Rime Blending</b> <b>DESCRIPTION</b> Blends onset and rime to make a new word.	<b>SAMPLE TASKS</b> What word do you hear? h-ead, m-eed, s-i-t, n-oat, bug
<b>Task 17</b>	<b>SKILL DOMAIN</b> <b>Onset-Rime Blending</b> <b>DESCRIPTION</b> Blends onset and rime to make a new word.	<b>SAMPLE TASKS</b> What word do you hear? b-ake, sn-ark, f-ell, bent, h-ide, sing, ch-ack, tr-uck, jump

# Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

## ASSESSMENT BINDER

Explicit and Systematic Skill Assessment

Word Discrimination

Rhyme Alliteration

Segmenting

Blending

Phoneme Isolation

Phoneme Manipulation

# Phonological AWARENESS RECIPE

Phonemic  
Awareness

Onset-Rime  
Blending &  
Segmenting

Alliteration

Syllable  
Segmenting  
& Blending

Word  
Discrimination

Phoneme  
Deletion

Phoneme  
Manipulation

Phoneme  
Addition

Phoneme  
Blending &  
Segmenting

Phoneme  
Isolation

Syllable  
Manipulation

Phoneme  
Substitution

# Phonological AWARENESS



# Phonological Awareness Skills

<b>Rhyme Awareness &amp; Construction</b>	<b>Alliteration Discrimination &amp; Production</b>	<b>Sound and Word Discrimination</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies words that rhyme</li> <li>Produces words that rhyme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discriminates initial phoneme in a selection of words</li> <li>Produces alliteration with initial phoneme in at least 2 words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Segments sentence into words by counting the words in a short sentence</li> <li>Identifies which word is different</li> <li>Identifies which sound is different</li> </ul>	
<b>Syllable Segmenting</b>		<b>Syllable Blending</b>	<b>Onset-Rime Blending</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claps syllables in 2 syllable words</li> <li>Tells how many syllables in a word</li> <li>Claps 3 syllables in a word.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Says the word when given two syllables</li> <li>Blends 3 syllable words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blends onset and rime to make a word</li> </ul>
<b>Onset-Rime Segmenting</b>		<b>Individual Phoneme Isolation: Beginning, Medial &amp; Final (BMF)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Says onset and rime in given words</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isolates the beginning sound in given words</li> <li>Isolates the final sound in given words</li> <li>Isolates the medial sound in given words</li> </ul>	
<b>Individual Phoneme Blending</b>		<b>Individual Phoneme Segmenting</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blends 2 phonemes to make a word</li> <li>Blends 3 phonemes to make a word</li> <li>Blends 4 phonemes to make a word</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Says phonemes in words with 2 phonemes</li> <li>Says phonemes in words with 3 phonemes</li> <li>Says phonemes in words with 4 phonemes</li> </ul>	
<b>Syllable Manipulation: Syllable (onset-rime) Deletion</b>		<b>Syllable Manipulation: Syllable (onset-rime) Substitution</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deletes onset in given words</li> <li>Deletes rime in given words</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substitutes onset to make a new word</li> <li>Substitutes rime to make a new word</li> </ul>	
<b>Phoneme Manipulation: Phoneme Deletion</b>	<b>Phoneme Manipulation: Phoneme Addition</b>	<b>Phoneme Manipulation: Phoneme Substitution</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deletes beginning phoneme</li> <li>Deletes final phoneme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds beginning phoneme to make a new word</li> <li>Adds final phoneme to make a new word</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substitutes beginning phoneme to make a new word</li> <li>Substitutes final phoneme to make a new word</li> <li>Substitutes medial phoneme to make a new word</li> </ul>	

# Thank you

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