



The Kindergarten Chronicles

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Making the Most of Your Word Wall

It is never too early to use a word wall, even in kindergarten. How do we use this tool to help our students access troublesome and frequently used words? In the book, *Classrooms That Work*, Patricia Cunningham and Richard Allington suggest using a word wall as a teaching tool. Considering the fact that high frequency words comprise 60% of the text primary students read, it makes sense to expose students to these words in order to build familiarity and automaticity. To make the most of your word wall, we prescribe using the "gradual release of responsibility" model, starting with teacher modeling, offering guided practice, and giving

your students independent practice time. Throughout this edition of *The Kindergarten Chronicles*, you will gain ideas for generating and practicing your own classroom word wall.

Quick Tips for Word Walls in Kindergarten

- Add 1-3 new words to the wall each week
- Words can come from Shared Reading, Shared Writing, Guided Reading, students writing (journals)
- Write the words on different colored paper, large enough to be seen from anywhere in the room
- Put the word on the wall with the students so they know where to locate it, what color paper it is on, etc.

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Whole Group Activities

Guess the Word: The teacher thinks of a word on the word wall and gives the students three clues to guess the secret word.

Word Search: The teacher asks the students to find all of the word wall words that have a particular feature such 'th'.

Word Wall Rhymes: Number a paper 1-5. Students write a word that rhymes with the word you give.

Guess the Covered Word: Have a word covered on the overhead. Students try to guess the word wall word by revealing one letter at a time.

Flashlight: Turn the lights out. Have the students flash the light on a wall word and read the word or you flash the light on a wall word and ask them to guess the word.



Center Ideas

Discovery Bottles: Fill an empty bottle with salt. Place small wall word cards in it. Make a sheet with wall words written on it. Students turn the bottle. When they find a wall word they highlight it on the sheet. They are finished when they find all of the words.

Read the Room: Make pointers (chopsticks work well) using the wall words. Tape on a piece of paper with the "new" wall word on it. Students find that word as they "read the room".

Word Stars: Write wall words on die cut stars. Make two sets. Keep them in a baggie. Students can find matching words or pick a star out of a basket and recreate that word using magnetic letters, foam letters, or white boards and markers.

Cubes: Use a wooden cube. Write wall words on it. Make a graph that lists the words in squares at the bottom of the graph. Student roll the cube, read the word & color a square in the proper column.

Small Group Activities

Wordo: (like Bingo) Children select words off the wall & randomly read them. Children chant the spelling of each word and then cover it with a marker. The first student to complete a row wins.

Magnetic letters: Teacher puts letters for the word on a magnetic board to show how the word looks. Students use their own magnetic letters to create the word with the model. Teacher takes the model away and students construct the word again.

Fluent Writing/White Boards: Once students write words correctly, encourage them to build speed and bring words to automaticity with a white board. Teacher calls out wall words. Students write a word quickly. Continue with more words. Go back and call out words in random order and students erase them one at a time.

Word Wall Chants

Movie Star Kisses: Put hands to your mouth. Throw each letter a kiss, like a movie star.
Nose: Hold your nose and spell it.
Opera: Sing the letters in opera fashion.

Ketchup: One hand open, the other closed. Pound hands together like you pound a bottle of ketchup.
Raise the Roof: Push up toward the ceiling, one push for each letter.
Beat it: Beat it out on the desk.

Disco: Pretend to be John Travolta in Saturday Night Fever.
Motorcycle: Hang on to pretend handle bars & do wheelies for each letter.