



Word Wall Activities

- 1. Word Sorts** Words are removed from the wall and sorted in a variety of ways
 - first letter (or last letter, or second letter, etc.)
 - vowel sound (short /a/ etc.)
 - spelling pattern (double consonants, etc.)
 - rhyming pattern (eat, ight, ar, etc.)
 - silent letters
 - concepts (living things, adverbs, solids, etc.)

- 2. Guess the Word** The teacher thinks of a word on the word wall and gives the children clues to guess the secret word. The students write down a guess after each clue is given.

Example:
Clue 1: I'm thinking of a word with five letters. (Children write a word from the wall.)
Clue 2: It has two vowels. (Children can write a different word from the wall or stay with the first guess.)
Clue 3: One of the vowels is silent. (Children write a word.)
Clue 4: It begins with a /t/. (Children consider all four clues and write their final guess.)

- 3. Find a Rhyme** The teacher tells the children to find the word that starts with a letter and rhymes with a word. For example, "Find a word that begins with /b/ and rhymes with 'toy'".

- 4. Which Word Fits?** Students must decide which wall word makes sense in a sentence and begins with a given letter. For example, "Find a word that starts with /f/ and fits in this sentence, 'I like to play with my _____.'"

- 5. BINGO** Children select wall words to write on a bingo-type grid. The teacher takes the words off the wall and randomly reads them. Children chant the spelling of each word and then cover it with a marker. The first student to complete a row wins.

- 6. Word Search** The teacher asks the students to find all of the wall words that have a particular feature. For example, find all of the words with 'an' in them (can, and, want, Anthony, clean).

How can we help children see patterns in words?

Word Building Strategy Give children letter cards to make words. Start with a vowel such as a or a phonogram such as *-at*. Use letter cards to form words such as *bat, rat, sat, mat, fat, cat, hat, chat,* and *flat*. A child who can use letters to form *at* and *cat* can be guided to read and spell other *-at* words.

Word Sorting Strategies Word sorts help children discover spelling patterns. First, you can model the word sort, using familiar words. Group the words into categories, and then help children think of other words that fit the categories. These categories might include words that rhyme, begin with the same sound, end with the same sound, or share the same spelling for a given vowel sound. After guided practice, children can sort their own sets of word cards independently or with partners. These sorts might later be written on a Word Wall or in columns in a notebook, or filed together in a word file. Following are some different kinds of word sorts:

Closed Sort Teacher selects the categories and models the procedure.

Open Sort Children sort words according to their own categories. They explain their choice of categories.

Blind Sort In this variation of the closed sort, the teacher determines the categories. Then one child or the teacher can call out a word while another child points to the key word it would follow. Children are not using written words, so more attention is paid to sounds than visual patterns.

Writing Sort In this variation of the closed and blind sort, the teacher calls out a word while the child writes it in the proper category.

Speed Sort Once children are proficient at sorting, they can time themselves during each sorting activity and chart their progress.

Word Wall Strategies The building of a Word Wall develops children's ability to see words in terms of letters and patterns that will help them become effective decoders. Word Walls provide opportunities for children to generate words and become an accessible resource for troublesome words and checking words in writing. Play guessing games with words on a wall, or have children make Wordo (a form a Bingo) games. Or, choose words from the wall to form different kinds of sentences for children to write each day. Some examples of different kinds of Word Walls follow:

Key Words on a Wall As children are introduced to high-frequency words, add them to a Word Wall in alphabetical order. Draw a shape box around each word to emphasize its configuration, one strategy children use to recognize words.

Tricky Words on a Wall Make a wall of words that are most often misspelled. List them alphabetically. Do at least one daily activity in which children find, write, and chant the spelling of some of these words. Use the words in context to check meaning.

Rhyming Words on a Wall Words are listed in groups by spelling patterns, for example, words with the phonograms *-eet* and *-eat*. Play riddle games and write rhymes, using the list as a resource.

Portable Word Walls Children can copy the words from the Word Wall onto file folders that can be carried to a desk, the library, or another classroom. As words are added to the Word Wall, do the same to the portable version.