

Blending and Segmenting games

Blending is a skill needed for reading. Segmenting is used for writing. Whereas blending involves merging the phonemes (sounds) you hear together to make words up into their phonemes.

There are two main types: oral blending which comes first, and then blending for reading.

Oral blending is hearing verbally a word broken up into sound talk, for example, c – a – t when blended together makes the word, 'cat'.

When children are able to at least have a go of this with support, they will be ready to have a go of blending for reading. The process then is that when shown a word, they point to each phoneme in turn and sound it out, e.g. 'c-a-t.' Then they will hopefully be able to 'blend' the word, i.e. hear that it says 'cat'.

Segmenting is in many ways the opposite of this process.

Like blending, there are two main types: oral segmenting which children begin to learn first, and then segmenting for writing (which is actually pretty similar to oral segmenting).

Oral segmenting is quite simply getting a word such as 'tap' and being able to split it up into its phonemes verbally – 't-a-p.'

Segmenting for writing is pretty much the same skill. You split up a word into sounds, but you write each sound as you say it.

Below is a list of games to help support your child with their blending and segmenting:

- **Dress the Baby!** Have a toy baby and some clothes. Say things to your child like 'Put on the h-a-t' and see if they can put the right piece of clothing on.

- **Robot talk.** Using a robot to segment words in 'robot' talk. This involves the children bending their arms at ninety degrees at the elbow and moving them like robot arms, whilst they say things like 's-a-t. Sat!'
- **Three claps game.** Think a word, and clap three times whilst saying the sounds, e.g. 'D-o-g. Dog!'
- **Three fingers game.** Ask your child to show you three fingers. Now get them to 'put' a three-sound word onto their fingers, e.g. pot. For example, they put 'p' onto their ring finger, 'o' onto their middle finger, and 't' onto their index finger. They point to each in turn, saying 'p-o-t', and then go back to their ring finger and sweep over the three fingers whilst saying 'pot'. Again, ask your children to repeat the word at least three times to start with. Then repeat with different words.
- **Sound puppet.** Have a puppet and a bag of simple objects, each with three sounds in their names, e.g. a pin, a dog and a pig. The puppet picks out an object and the children try to say the name of the item in sound talk. For example, the pin would be 'p-i-n.
- **Cross the river.** 'Cross the River' is a classic game that can be used in many different ways, and is great for maths skills as well as a wide range of phonic possibilities. Give your child a picture of a CVC word, for example, a can, a pig or a bag. Have a 'river' on floor, such as a piece of blue material. Ask your child to segment their object, e.g. 'c-a-n', to be able to jump over the river. To make it easier practice saying all of the objects like robots before you begin the game.
- **Rhythm sticks!** Using a pair of sticks (or twigs), give your child a word and ask them to hit the sounds of the word on the rhythm sticks. For example, pot would become 'p-o-t'.
- **Jump the word.** Ask your child to stand up and then give them a word, e.g. 'tap'. They jump three times whilst saying 't-a-p. Tap! T-a-p. Tap!' It is a good idea for your child to repeat the word as repetition breeds confidence

which in turn generates success. This game could be done for clapping, clicking etc.