

J13: Turtle Talk

Lesson Objective: Using sound counting cards as visual aids, children will hear the individual sounds in three-to-five-phoneme spoken words, count the number of phonemes, and blend the phonemes into a spoken word.

Materials & Preparation

- [word list](#)
- [sound counting cards](#)

Print out the word list and sound counting cards, preferably on sturdy card-stock paper. Cut apart the sound counting cards. The word list is for the adult's reference only — do not show it to the child.

Activity

Video: How to play Turtle Talk

Explain to your child that you are going to play a game with Tommy the Turtle (or Tammy the Turtle, if you prefer), a special turtle who can talk! Remind him that turtles are very sssllllloooooowww animals, and talking turtles talk just as slowly as they move! Because Tommy the Turtle is so slow, he says his words one sound at a time, and your child will have to put the sounds together into words to figure out what the turtle is saying.

Adult: Tommy Turtle says words just one sound at a time.

So you need to listen really well to the sounds he says,

then put them together to understand the word Tommy is saying.

Ready? Listen:

Selecting from the provided word list, pronounce one of the words one sound (phoneme) at a time, with a one-second pause (written as ••) between sounds. Use your best turtle voice!

Adult: sss •• uuu •• nnn.

Again: sss •• uuu •• nnn.

What's the word?

Child: Sun!

Adult: Yes, sun.

J13: Turtle Talk (continued)

Once the child has successfully blended the sounds into a word (synthesis), take the activity one step further by prompting him to divide the word into sounds again (analysis) in order and count the sounds. Have the child use the sound counting cards or his fingers to count the number of sounds he hears.

Adult: Now, say sun very slowly, just like Tommy Turtle.

Count the sounds as you say them.

Then tell me how many sounds you count. Get ready: sun.

Child: [while counting] sss • • uuu • • nnn.

Three sounds!

Adult: Good job counting the three sounds in sun! Let's do some more...

Go through 15-20 words in a session. Give the child words containing 3, 4, or 5 sounds, mixed together. This way, the child doesn't know in advance how many sounds the word will have.

NOTE: Children usually do well with blending the sounds into a word, but may have some difficulty repeating the individual sounds slowly and counting the sounds — especially with words containing 4-5 sounds (phonemes).

Groups (2-5 children)

Additional Materials: optional: craft sticks or cards labelled 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Adaptation: Read the main activity, watch the video, and follow the instructions above, with the following changes:

Warm up by asking the children what they can tell you about turtles. Prompt if necessary until they say that turtles do everything slowly. Then give each child a set of numbered craft sticks or cards. Alternatively, they can just hold up their fingers.)

Say a word from the word list. All the children will repeat the word sound by sound, counting the number of sounds. Each child will hold up the corresponding craft stick or card. Guide the children through a few examples first. For example: “sss • • uuu • • nnn. How many sounds did we say? Three? Hold up your “3” stick. Say the word again, slowly. Now say it fast. What's the word? Yes, sun!”