

J14: Hop, Stop & Drop

Lesson Objective: Children will hear and count the number of sounds in each of two onesyllable spoken words containing three to five phonemes, comparing them to determine which word has more phonemes.

Materials & Preparation

- game board
- word cards
- game pieces — one per player, preferably in different colors

Print out the word cards and game board, preferably on sturdy card-stock paper. Trim the white edges and tape together the pages of the game board, and cut apart the word cards.

Shuffle the cards and place them in a face-down stack next to the game board. For each player, put one game piece on the first (“Start”) lily pad.

Activity

Video: How to play Hop, Stop & Drop

For each card, the adult will say the first word, and the child must say and count the individual sounds (phonemes) in the word. Then the adult will say the second word on the card, and the child will count the sounds in that word and decide which word has more sounds or whether the words have the same number of sounds. For the adult’s reference: the first word on every card has three sounds. The second word will be a similar word with two, three, or four sounds.

If the child correctly answers that one word is longer than the other, she moves her game piece and “hops” forward to the next lily pad on the path across the pond. If she answers incorrectly, she “drops” backward to the previous lily pad. If she says (correctly) that the two words have the same number of sounds, she “stops,” or stays put, on the same lily pad.

To start the game, have the child pick a card from the stack and hand it to the adult to read. The child does not need to look at the card herself.

J14: Hop, Stop & Drop (continued)

Adult: I'm going to read the first word on this card.

You say and count the sounds in the word on your fingers,
and tell me how many sounds you hear.

Ready? Listen: rain.

Child: rrr, āāā, nnn. Three sounds!

Adult: Okay. Now I'll read the last word on the card.

You say and count the sounds in this word,
and tell me how many sounds you hear.

Get ready: train.

Child: t, rrr, āāā, nnn. Four sounds!

Adult: Good. Which word has more sounds: rain or train?

Child: Um...

Adult: You said rain has three sounds, and train has four sounds.

Is four more than three? Use your fingers if you aren't sure.

Child: Yes, four is more.

Adult: That's right. So "hop" forward to the next lily pad!

For the next two cards, intentionally select one where the second word has just two sounds and one where both words have three sounds. This way the child will see what the different possibilities are. After that introduction, select cards randomly from the shuffled stack. Place the used cards in a discard pile.

Continue until the child successfully gets her game piece to the "Finish" lily pad. Alternately, play until she has gone through about 20 word cards or loses interest.

Groups (2-5 children)

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

Divide the group into two teams, with one game piece per team. Fan out the cards, keeping them face down. Have a member of Team A pick a card and hand it to the adult. The adult then presents the word pair on that card to Team B. If Team B answers correctly, it gets to "hop" forward on the board. If not, then Team A gets a chance to give the correct answer and "hop" to the next lily pad.

Alternate between teams in this manner until one team reaches the last lily pad. If you run out of cards before the game ends, just reshuffle and reuse the cards in the discard pile.