

Reading Clues: Hung Up on a Word

Learning to Decode:

Write a sentence that contains an unfamiliar word on a sentence strip, and include a simple picture next to the sentence. Guide students through each step of the *Reading Clues: Hung Up on a Word Chart* to help them decode the word. Reinforce the steps on the chart frequently to get students in the habit of trying to read unfamiliar words.

Daily Decoding:

Write a message on the board each day using one or two unfamiliar words. Post the message near the *Reading Clues: Hung Up on a Word Chart*. Instruct students to read the message and then use the chart to try to figure out what the new words mean, and how the words are pronounced.

Picture Book Words:

Select several simple picture books about a certain subject, such as space. On index cards, write a series of words that will be new to the students that might be found in each of the books. Words might include *planet*, *galaxy*, etc. As students read the books, have them match the cards to the same words in the text.

Give Your Partner a Clue:

Assign reading partners, pairing students who are familiar with the steps from the *Reading Clues: Hung Up on a Word chart* with students who are less familiar with the steps. Let the students read together to decode words using the chart, until all children are familiar with the steps used to decode words.

Cloze Clues:

A cloze sentence is a sentence with one word missing. Students should be able to guess the missing word from the context of the sentence. Display a magazine picture and write several cloze sentences. Display a magazine picture and write several cloze sentences about it. A possible sentence could be: *Cats have sharp _____ on their feet.* Have students look at the picture for clues to words that would make sense in the blanks. Discuss each suggestion and help students decide whether they are appropriate or not, and why.

What Does It Spell?

Write a cloze sentence on the chalkboard. Using magnetic letters, place each of the letters of the missing word below the sentence. Have volunteers come to the board to finish the sentence by rearranging the letters to spell the missing word correctly.

Fill in the Blank:

Give each student in your class an index card with a simple word written on it (run, walk, dog, car, bus, etc.). Write a sentence on the chalkboard, omitting one word. Have each student who thinks the word she is holding makes sense in the blank stand up. Let each student read the sentence, adding her word in the blank. Decide with the class which words make sense and which do not.

Leading Letters:

Reinforce word patterns to help students decode new words. Write words having similar beginning letters, such as drive, drink, drain, etc. have students compare the words letter-by-letter. Discuss what makes each word similar or different.

Student Sentences:

Write several sets of similar words on the board, such as *cat, car, can*, etc. Say one of the words and select a student to come to the board and circle it, then use it in a sentence. Have each student tell you why she chose a particular word.

What's the Next Word?

Select a picture book to read to the class. As you are reading, stop to show the illustration and see if the students can predict the next word by using the picture clue. Ask for several ideas before giving the class the answer.

Name the Whole Family!

Select a word family such as *-an*. Have the students work their way through the alphabet to find all of the words in the family (*ban, can, fan, man, pan*, etc.). Post a list of the words for each word family, with illustrations shown where appropriate. Have students refer to the list while reading when they come across troublesome word family words.

Sound it Out:

Write new vocabulary the students are learning on the chalkboard for the student to decode phonetically. As a class, sound out each word aloud. Remind students of phonics rules as they sound out each word.

Consonants Count:

To show students how important it is to look at the consonants in a word, write a sentence on the board without vowels. Have students figure out what it says and then fill in the missing vowels. For example, *The dog is chewing his bone*. Would look like this: *Th__ d_g __s ch_w_ng h_s b_n_*.

Sounds Like:

Play *I'm thinking of a word*. Give students clues about the word and see who can guess it. For example, say *I'm thinking of a word with four letters. It starts like glass and rhymes with dew*. Students should guess the word *glue*.

Word Family Matters:

Write a word family on an index card, such as *-ake, -an, -ike*, etc. Write several beginning consonants from that word family on other index cards. Have students match the letters to the word endings to make the correct words.

Do You Hear the Letters?

Cut out simple magazine pictures, such as a bike, a dog, a dish, etc., and hold them up for the children. As you hold them up, have students name the letters they hear at the beginning, middle, and end of the word.

Picture Word Flash Cards:

Cut out simple magazine pictures, such as a bike, a dog, a dish, etc., and attach the pictures to index cards. (I prefer using clip art myself.) Write the word for each item on the back. Write a cloze sentence on the chalkboard omitting one word. A sample sentence could be: *Joel wished for a new _____ for his birthday*. Have a student select a card from the box and read the sentence, using the chosen word card. Have the class listen to the sentence and decide whether the word makes sense in the blank.

Preview Review:

Before you read a book to the class, take a moment to explain the importance of previewing a book. Have the students look at the cover, the pictures, and the summary on the back. Using visual clues and hints from the title, have the students brainstorm a list of words they think will be in the book.

Banana Words:

Use the banana pattern below as an incentive to memorize new words. As students learn new words, have them write them on banana patterns and post them by the *Reading Clues: Hung Up on a Word* chart. You may wish to periodically quiz children on the banana words to see who remembers how to spell and pronounce them. Reward the class when there are a predetermined number of banana patterns around the chart.