The Phonics Dance
First Grade
Dance Lessons
Ginny A. Dowd
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Why do we need the Phonics Dance?

Reading is a difficult process. Here’s why:

84% of the words in the English language are phonetically correct. BUT... the 16% that are not phonetically correct, appear in all types of literature 80% of the time.
The Phonics Dance
Six Steps to Literacy in the Primary Grades

1. **Sound Attack:** Daily review and introduction of consonants, short and long vowels, digraphs and variant vowel sounds.

2. **Word Wall:** Daily review and introduction of high frequency words in association with Language Arts concepts.

3. **Treacherous (Unreliable) Word Training:** Teaching the eye to look for big “hunks” and “chunks” and parts of words in the decoding process.

4. **Creative Writing:** Student writing (both fiction and non-fiction) composed on a daily basis in correlation with weekly themes.

5. **Student/Teacher Conferencing:** Revising and editing ~ immediate feedback on student writing with emphasis on structure, spelling and punctuation.

6. **Reading:** Daily practice ~ Guided, independent, choral, or partner reading in correlation with literature that is teacher chosen and / or student selected; coinciding with comprehension lessons.
Let’s get started!

**Step 1: It all starts with a spell! (Page 10)**

Tell the class you are going to cast a spell on them that will help them remember all the sounds in the alphabet they learned in kindergarten. Take your magic wand and cast your spell by tapping on the top of the sprinkle container and saying the magic chant. Next put a few sprinkles in each student’s hand. With their empty hand, have them cast their own spell over the magic sprinkles. As they wave their hand with nothing in it over the hand with the sprinkles, they will say, “I am smart! I am smart! I am smart!” Finally, they get to eat the sprinkles. That’s the best part!

**Step 2: Let’s review all of the letters and sounds we learned in kindergarten!**

Now it’s time for the alphabet review. (Use your magic wand to point to each letter.) You will point to the letter a on your alphabet chart and make its short vowel sound. The students will repeat what you say. Then you will say the chant, “A – a – a. Abby is sad. A-a-a is A! WAHHH!” Don’t forget to show your muscles when you make the long strong vowel sound! Again, the kids will repeat what you say. Next make the b sound. The class repeats. Say, “B- b-b. Baby wants a bottle. Now burp your baby!” The class repeats after you. This process will be repeated with each letter in the alphabet. ***Refer to Phonics Dance Audio CD.

**Step 3: By day five it will be so easy!**

Don’t get discouraged! It may take your class about a week to get proficient with this process. At the end of five days your class will be able to chant along with you. The biggest advantage will be moving to all of the short and long vowels. The carry over into the writing process will be an easy one.
Beginning of the Year  
First Grade Alphabet Review  
And Word Associations

“a”: Put one hand on the top of your mouth and the other below. As you say the short a sound, pull the hand above your mouth up. Move the bottom hand down. Chant, “a – a – a! Abby is sad. a – a – a is a!” Then have the class cry, “WAHHHHHHH!” (Show your muscles when you say the letter a. This will reinforce that it is a long strong vowel sound.)


“c”: C says “cah”. Cat, meow!

“d”: d – d – d. I’m a digging dog!

“e”: (Hands in motion like a train) chant, “e – e – e – e – e – e – e – e – e – e”. Pointing up in the air chant, “e – e – e – e – e. Eddy loves his teddy, and Eddy loves e!” (Show your muscles when you say the letter e. This will reinforce that it is a long strong vowel sound.)

“f”: f – f – f. Froggy loves flies!

“g”: g – g – g. Goat! Goat! (Sound like a goat when you say this chant. Don’t forget to make your goat horns with your pointer and middle fingers.)
The First Ten Days of First Grade

For the first ten days of first grade you will follow the alphabet review with an activity called "What letter is it?" You will review each short vowel for two days. (During the Language Arts block you will work with each vowel for a longer period of time.) These ten lessons are a review of the short vowel sounds and word families that were learned in kindergarten. (On day eleven you will start the Phonics Dance. It is important that the class work with the short vowel sounds so the students are able to spell a variety of words that contain them.) Our big goal is to become word detectives and start identifying phonograms and consonant blends. Use the blank worksheet on page 34, to design similar lessons. Four more common rimes are ap, est, in and it. They can be reviewed on this generic page. Don't limit yourself to just phonograms. You can design lessons for consonant clusters, long vowels and hunks and chunks.

**Step 1:** You can start with the Alphabet review.

**Step 2:** Pass out the "What letter is it?" sheet.

**Step 3:** The Consonants: In random order, ask the students to identify the consonants at the top of the page. Here are some options:

1. Say the alphabet chant for a specific letter. Ask the students to identify that letter and color it in a specified crayon color.
2. Say the sound the consonant makes. Example: The sound is 'ch'. Find the letter that makes this sound and color it blue.
3. Say the letter name. Example: The letter is 'l'. Find the letter l and color it purple. Ask, "Can someone tell me a word that starts with the letter l?"
4. Say a word. Ask the class what its initial sound is. Example: My word is "pig". What sound do you hear at the beginning of the word? Find it and color it red.
5. Say a word. Ask the class what its ending sound is. Example: My word is "cat". What sound do you hear at the end of the word? Find it and color it green.

Before calling out a sound, letter or word: hold up an index card with a color word written on it. Have the group show you they know that word by holding up that color crayon. It's a good way to review basic sight words that were taught in kindergarten. Change the color word you hold up each time you ask the students to find a consonant.

**Step 4:** Review the consonants at the top of the page. Say each letter name and each letter sound.

**Step 5:** The Vowels: Each lesson concentrates on one specific vowel sound and coinciding rime. (You will know which vowel and rime to focus on by looking at the top of the page.) Review each vowel motion and sound. As you do, have the
Name ____________________________

What letter is it?

\[ a - t = at \sim a - t = at \]

\[ C - a - t = Cat, \ Cat, \ Cat! \]

Consonants

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{s} & \text{c} & \text{f} & \text{t} & \text{d} \\
\end{array}
\]

Vowels

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{a} & \text{e} & \text{i} & \text{o} & \text{u} \\
\end{array}
\]

Can you write the word I say?

1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________

3. ____________________________

Be an “at” expert! Every time you see it, underline it! Then read the words!

\[ \text{at} \quad \text{cat} \quad \text{bat} \quad \text{hat} \]

“at” detectives at work!

\[ \text{an at ag at at at ap as at} \]

24
Here comes super silent e! Make it long and make it strong! (When you write a word, draw a cape on your super silent e! Draw the long vowel symbol over the long strong vowel. Underline the ending.)

\[
\_ake \quad \_ike
\]

Can you write the word I say?

1. \hspace{1cm} \\
2. \hspace{1cm} \\
3. \hspace{1cm} \\
4. \hspace{1cm}

Can you read these words?

- rake make bake
- bike like Mike

What ending do you hear in the word I say?

1. \hspace{1cm} \\
2. \hspace{1cm} \\
3. \hspace{1cm} \\

Draw a bike and a cake on Super Silent e’s cape.
Name _____________________
What’s my ending?

<p>| | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an</td>
<td>en</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>un</td>
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</table>

Can you write the word I say?

1. __________________  4. __________________

2. __________________  5. __________________

3. __________________  6. __________________

Can you read these words?

- Ben ten men
- win spin pin
- bun fun bun
- tan van pan

What ending do you hear in the word I say?

1. ______  2. _____  3. _____  4. _____
The Haunted Alphabet

To be chanted the whole month of October

“a”: a – a – a. Abracadabra! a – a – a is A!

“b”: b – b – b. Black bats, BOO!

“c”: C says cah. Cats love candy on trick or treat night! Meow!

“d”: d – d – d. Dracula Dog! Woof! Bite!

“e”: (Hands in motion like a train) e – e – e – e – e – e – e – e. (Pointing in the air) e – e – e – e – e. Eddy loves his teddy! And Eddy loves e! (Our teddy bears help us feel safe when we get scared by spooky costumes on Halloween night!)


“g”: G. Ghost, BOO!

“h”: h – h – h. Happy Halloween!

“I”: i, dot it! i, dot it! i – i – i! Iggy loves her wicked witch’s wiggy and Iggy loves i!


“k”: k – k – k. Kissing kangaroos love Hershey’s Kisses! (Don’t forget to take a pretend bite of that Kiss!!)

“l”: l – l – l. Lions love lollipops. Lick!

“m”: m – m. Mean Monster! (Don’t forget to sound mean and scary!!)
How to Read the Phonics Dance Chants

When you see letters divided by a hyphen, say each individual letter name. For example, if you see o–w, you would say the letter o and then the letter w.

When you see “hunks” and “chunks”, you will say the actual sound the letter combination makes. For example, if you see ow and it is not divided by a hyphen, say the ow sound.

Practice before you teach each “hunk” and “chunk”.

For the best results you should “Dance” EVERYDAY!

Most of all ~ have FUN with it! Let it fit your teaching style! Let your class help you change the chants to fit their style.

The Phonics Dance Sample Timeline

In first grade, starting on day 11 of the new school year, students learn two new hunks and chunks a week. First grade students spend two days learning each new hunk and chunk. On Friday we do a review of both hunks and chunks that we learned the last four days.

A question commonly asked is, “How do I choose the hunks and chunks for the week?” There is no set order. As a classroom teacher you decide what hunks and chunks will be taught. I look for hunks and chunks that are in stories or themes that we will be working on as a class. For instance if we are doing a shared reading and the title of the story is My New Boy, I would introduce “ew” and “oy” as my hunks and chunks for the week. If we are doing a unit on Neighborhoods, “eigh” would be one of the hunks and chunks I would introduce and review during the week.
**Six Week Sample**

(Starting at the Beginning of **Week Three** of the New School Year)

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<tr>
<td>Tuesday ~ review “sh”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday ~ introduce the “ch” hunk and chunk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday ~ review “ch”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday ~ review “sh” and “ch”</td>
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<td>Monday ~ introduce the “ow” hunk and chunk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday ~ review “ow”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday ~ introduce the “ou” hunk and chunk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday ~ review “ou”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday ~ “ow” and “ou” review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday ~ review “oo”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday ~ introduce the “oo” hunk and chunk (book)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday ~ review “oo”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday ~ (sweet) “oo” and (bully brothers) “oo” review</td>
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<td>Tuesday ~ review “ing”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday ~ introduce the “all” hunk and chunk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday ~ review “all”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday ~ “ing” and “all” review</td>
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The Phonics Dance

- **sh:** s – h. Sh. sh! S – h. sh. Sh. Sh! (Put your finger to your lips and make the sh sound as you say the sh sound three times.)

- **ch:** (It’s time to do the chicken cha cha dance!) C – h. Ch. Ch. Ch! (Flap your arms to resemble chicken wings.) C – h. Ch. Ch. Ch! (Cha Cha down.)

- **th:** Point to the linking card and say, “This is a thorn, and that is a thistle.” (Chant the hard th first.) t – h. th. th. th. (As you say the hard th, think this and that. Repeat saying the soft th.) t – h. th. th. th. (As you say the soft th, think thorn and thistle.)

- **ow:** o – w. OW! There’s a cow going down, d – o – w – n! That’s the way to get down! Yeah! (Make the letter o with your right hand and the letter w with your left hand. Hit them together as you say the letters o – w).

- **ou:** o – u. Ou. o – u – t. o – u – t. Get out of here you bumble bee. o – u – t. out! out! out! o – u – t. out! out! out! (Make the letter o with your right hand and the u with your left hand. Hit them together as you say the letters o – u).

- **ar:** Car. Car. C – a – r. You stick your arm in a jar of stars. (Pretend to put your arm in a jar.) a – r. Ar. Ar. Ar. a – r. Ar. Ar. Ar. (As you chant the ar sound three times try to sound like a pirate, and cover one eye to represent a pirate’s eye patch.)

- **or:** o – r. Or. Or. Or. o – r. Or. Or. Or. I want more fish! (Put your hands in the air and clap three times like a seal as you say the or sound three times. Then point to yourself as you chant, “I want more fish!”)

- **ing:** (This is the King of ing’s dance.) i – n – g. Ing. Ing. ing. i – n – g. Ing. Ing. Ing. (Turn in a circle three times as you chant the ing sounds.)

- **all:** a – l – l. a – l – l. all. all. ______ that ball! (Decide what the class would like to do to a ball, and insert that word on the line. For example: **Throw that ball!** Or **Spike that ball!** March each time you chant the letters a – l – l. End the chant by doing the action.)
Teaching a Single Concept

This step can be used to teach or review any Language Arts concept.

Example:

On this particular day you are introducing nouns to your class. You would start by teaching them the noun rhyme (see Word Wall Chants).

Next you would ask the students to identify nouns around the classroom.

Once your class understands what a noun is, ask them to look at the list of words that they have written at the top of the page. On line one of Word Wall Fun, have them write a noun from the list. Our first word for Word Wall Fun **ALWAYS** comes from one of the four words we have written at the beginning of the lesson. Check to see that the word the students have written is a noun.

At this point you are finished with the list that is on your paper, and you will ask the kids to look at a certain letter on the Word Wall to find a noun. For example: Look at the letter **m** on the Word Wall and find a noun that is a person. Write it on line number 2 of Word Wall Fun. The class writes **mother**.

Once again, using your Word Wall, ask the kids to look at another letter to find a noun. For example: Look at the letter **c** and find a noun that is an animal. Write it on line number 3 of Word Wall Fun. The class writes **cat**.

Using the Word Wall for the last two games gives the class the opportunity to not only practice writing high frequency words but to review and learn Language Arts concepts.
Name ____________________________

Sh! Sheep love the quiet! 🐐
sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh

1. _________________ 2. _________________
3. _________________ 4. _________________

wish       fish      dish      swish

Does the word I say have the “sh” hunk and chunk?

1. __________   2. _________  3. __________

Name ____________________________

Sh! Sheep love the quiet! 🐐
sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh

1. _________________ 2. _________________
3. _________________ 4. _________________

wish       fish      dish      swish

Does the word I say have the “sh” hunk and chunk?

1. __________   2. _________  3. __________
Sh! Sheep love the quiet!

sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh, sh

1. _______________________ 2. _______________________
3. _______________________ 4. _______________________
Name _______________________________

**Chicken Cha Cha!**

ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch

1. _________________ 2. _________________

3. _________________ 4. _________________

munch crunch bunch punch

Does the word I say have the “ch” hunk and chunk?

1. _________ 2. _________ 3. _________

Name _______________________________

**Chicken Cha Cha!**

ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch

1. _________________ 2. _________________

3. _________________ 4. _________________

munch crunch bunch punch

Does the word I say have the “ch” hunk and chunk?

1. _________ 2. _________ 3. _________

83
Name _______________________________

ch ~ ch, ch, ch! Chicken Cha Cha!

ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch

1. _________________ 2. __________________

3. _________________ 4. __________________

match     batch     patch     chip     chop

Word Wall Fun!

1. ________  2. ________  3. ________

-----------------------------------------------

Name _______________________________

ch ~ ch, ch, ch! Chicken Cha Cha!

ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch, ch

1. _________________ 2. _________________

3. _________________ 4. _________________

match     batch     patch     chip     chop

Word Wall Fun!

1. ________  2. ________  3. ________

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Name _______________________________

sh, ch, sh, ch, sh, ch, sh, ch

1. _________________ 2. __________________

3. _________________ 4. __________________

much    such    hush   blush   chip   ship

Does the word I say have the “sh” or “ch hunk and chunk?”

1. __________   2. _________  3. __________
Beyond the Hunks and Chunks
Extension Lessons and Worksheets

After your class has been introduced to and had an opportunity to review each of the hunks and chunks, these extension lessons will be the word work that coincides with the Phonics Dance for the remainder of the year.

Remember NEVER stop chanting the alphabet or the Phonics Dance. They must be done each and every day.

- Old: pages 186 - 187
  o-l-d! Old granny says don’t give it an e!
- Ell and Ill: pages 188 - 189
  i-l-l. i-l-l. I’m ill. I’m ill. I have a chill.
  e-l-l! e-l-l! ell. ell. As you chant “ell” slide into it with both arms moving in front of you.
- Plurals: pages 190 - 194
  With a noun: s or es mean more than one! With a noun: s or es mean more than one! Practice adding “s” and “es” to nouns such as girl, lunch, school, box, and branch. Drop the y add ies. (Example: baby ~ babies)
- Irregular Plurals: pages 195 - 198
  Silly plurals don’t have e - s or s. Do you know what they are or will you have to guess?
  Drop the y, add i-e-d: pages 199 - 200
  (Example: hurry becomes hurried)
- Soft C and Soft g: pages 201 - 208
  Silly, silly I and E. How will you say the letter c? SSS! Smarty, smarty A, O, U. When you see C what will you do? CAH! Review that c is making the s sound because it is a silly c!
With a noun ~ s or e-s mean more than one!
s or e-s mean more than one!

1. ____________________    2.___________________
3._____________________   4.____________________

bush   bushes   girl   girls   box   boxes   flower  flowers

Word Wall Fun!

1.______________ 2. _____________ 3. _______________

Name ______________________________

With a noun ~ s or e-s mean more than one!
s or e-s mean more than one!

1. ____________________    2.___________________
3._____________________   4.____________________

bush   bushes   girl   girls   box   boxes   flower  flowers

Word Wall Fun!

1.______________ 2. _____________ 3. _______________
Silly, silly i and e. How will you say the letter c?
Smarty, smarty a, o, u. When you see c what will you do?

1. ______________________ 2.______________________
3._______________________ 4.______________________

rice      ice      nice     lettuce      prince

Word Wall Fun!

1. ____________ 2. _____________ 3. _____________
Contraction, Contraction!
You shorten it up! You pound it out!
Don’t forget your apostrophe fingerprint!

1. ____________________   2._____________________
3. _____________________  4._____________________

I’m      I’ve     I’d      I’ll    you’re     we’re     they’re

Word Wall Fun!

1. _____________ 2. ____________ 3. ____________

Name ________________________________
Contraction, Contraction!
You shorten it up! You pound it out!
Don’t forget your apostrophe fingerprint!

1. _______________ 2. _______________
3. _______________ 4. _______________

I’m      I’ve     I’d      I’ll    you’re     we’re     they’re

Word Wall Fun!

1. _____________ 2. ____________ 3. ____________
Mystical Magical y at the end of a word says e or i!

***The general rule is long words that end in y usually say the long strong E! Short words that end in y usually say the long strong I! Can you find four rhyming words for each column below?

fly

1. _____________________ 1. _____________________
2. _____________________ 2. _____________________
3. _____________________ 3. _____________________
4. _____________________ 4. _____________________

Does the word I say need mystical magical y, igh, or an i with a super silent e?

1. _______ 2. _______ 3. _______ 4. _______ 5. _______

Word Wall Fun!

1. ______________ 2. ______________ 3. ______________
Name _________________________

Possessive, Possessive ~ what’s that you have?
Possessive, possessive ~ what’s that you possess?
You can show me what it is with an apostrophe s!

a dog’s paws
three dogs

1. A bottle of a baby is a __________________________.
2. A mom of a little girl is a ________________________.
3. A crown of a king is a __________________________.
4. The rays of the sun are ________________________.
5. The hands of a clock are ________________________.

Listen to the sentence I say. Do you hear a possessive or a plural? Write ‘s for the possessive and s for the plural.

1. _______ 2. _______ 3. _______ 4. _______ 5. _______

Word Wall Fun!

1. _______________ 2. _______________ 3. _______________
**Word Wall Words: How do I spell that?**

What are my word detective strategies?

After a word has been introduced and placed on the Word Wall the fun begins! The class plays a number of games using the Word Wall words. It is a fast, fun way to introduce and reinforce Language Arts concepts. It also gives the students the chance to reference and write high frequency words.

**How do I write that?**

Choose a word from your sight word list. On the board draw boxes to indicate how many letters are in the word. Each box shows the position of the letter.

- A sky letter touches the third line or goes above the second line if you are using Handwriting Without Tears.
- A grass letter is in between the first two lines.
- A dirt letter goes underneath the bottom line.

For example: This would be how the boxes would look for the word _tap_. The word _tap_ has one sky letter, one grass letter and one dirt letter. As you draw the boxes on the board say, “Sky letter. Grass letter. Dirt letter.”

The Puzzle Before                               Once the Puzzle is Solved
The Word Detective Agency

Hunks and Chunks ~ Circle any boxes of letter combinations that are “hunks” and “chunks”.

Phonograms ~ underline common phonograms.

Consonant Clusters ~ underline consonant clusters.

Spell the word in two parts. Say: fl at.

Next, read the word in two parts, saying the sounds not the letter names. Sound out fl at.

Finally, have the class read the word fast and fluently.

Place it on the Word Wall. Be sure the consonant cluster is underlined.
Root Words ~ You take a root word put the prefix before. Who's that knocking on the root word door? Always bracket the root word and box the prefix.

\[ \text{un} \underline{\text{do}} \]

You take a root word put the suffix at the end. That makes friendly instead of friend.

\[ \text{friend} \underline{\text{ly}} \]

Mystical Magical Y ~ Mystical magical Y at the end of the word says E or I! Cross out the y. If the ending sound is an I, write a capital letter I above the y. If the ending sound is an E, write a capital E about the y.

\[ \text{i} \rightarrow \text{E} \\
\text{Cry} \rightarrow \text{baby} \]

Super Silent e ~ Here comes Super Silent E! Make it long and make it strong! Draw a cape on the Super Silent E. Put the long strong vowel symbol above the vowel.

\[ \text{ate} \rightarrow \text{use} \rightarrow \text{note} \]
Monster Words

What are Monster Words?

Monster words are the basic sight words that students just have to know. Even if you are hunking and chunking and looking for parts of the word you know, it is impossible to sound them out, Monster Words have chants that help the class remember the correct spelling. Place these cards at the bottom of the Word Wall letter they coincide with.

(The Word Wall Monster Cards that coincide with these chants can be found in the supplemental section in the back of the manual.)

2. what: wh-at. What is that in the hat???
3. when: wh-en. When, when will you kiss a hen? 
   The answer: NEVER!
4. where: wh-ere. Where, where, where???
   The answer: Here! Here! Here!
5. why: wh-y. Why is there a w-h?
6. which: wh-ich. It’s not a wicked witch!
7. went: w-ent. We went to the ____!
8. want: w-ant. I want to go on a picnic, but I don’t want ants in my pants!
10. friend: f-r-i-end. A friend until the end.
11. said: s-a-i-d. Dot that i. Dot that i! I said...
12. have: h-av. Don’t forget the e!
Step 4:
Creative Writing

For more lessons on Creative Writing refer to Creative Writing the Phonics Dance Way, Morning Questions the Phonics Dance Way and Another Good Morning ~ Morning Questions Volume 2.
Step 1:

Begin the writing lesson by reading a story to the class that is related to the theme.

Next, choose a writing assignment for the day that will coincide with the theme. Just like the stories we are reading at the beginning of first grade, most of the stories that we are writing at the start of the school year are predictable.

For example: Our Word Wall word of the day is can. Say, “Today we are going to write an I can story. Let me tell you things I can do, and then you will tell me things you can do!”

Model how to write the story on the board. Talk out loud saying, “I know every sentence in the whole wide world begins with a capital letter. Do you see me starting my sentence with a capital?”

Write: I can on the board. As you write the word can, have the class spell it with you.

Continue to compose the sentence, sounding out each word as you go. When you come to the vowel, do the motion from the alphabet that reinforces it. I can (thinking out loud say the word run. Together as a class sound it out.)

r u (do the vowel motion that reinforces the short u sound.) n. As the year progresses, if the word has a hunk and chunk, say the Phonics Dance chant to remind the class of the letter combination.

Finally, ask what kind of sentence stopper should be at the end of the sentence. I can run. Write the period and read the sentence together.

Repeat with one to two more sentences.
Beyond Predictable Writing

You will see phenomenal growth in your first grade students when they write every day. Writing enhances reading and reading enhances writing. After a month of composing predictable stories, the first graders will be ready to branch out. The steps listed at the beginning of this section continue even when the students are becoming more independent writers. It is the writing expectations that change. Once a first grader is comfortable writing simple pattern sentences, the expectations for writing increases.

Creative Writing Ideas beyond Predictable Stories

- **Who is it? Can you guess?** Students write clues describing a person.
- **What is it? Can you guess?** Students write clues describing an animal or a thing.
- **Letter Writing** ~ Students write to a character in a book, another student in the room, a friend or a family member.
- **Making Lists** ~ Students make lists for what they would need to plan a birthday party or what they would need to go on a trip, etc.
- **Meet My Family** ~ Students write non-fiction sentences introducing their family members.
- **That’s good! That’s bad!** ~ Students write about something good that happened that turned into something bad.
- **Laws for a Town** ~ Students pretend they are the mayor of a town and write the laws they would like to see in place.
- **Rules for a Classroom** ~ Students write rules they would like to see followed by their classmates.
- **Wise Old Owl Says** ~ Students write sentences describing what a wise old owl would say that the perfect friend should do.
- **If I were a .......** ~ Students pretend they are an animal and write sentences describing how their life would be.
Research indicates that the reading and writing correlation enhances literacy. Writing and reading should be given equal amounts of time and energy during the school day. Providing students with daily feedback about their writing is vital. That is the significance of the student ~ teacher conference. It does not require a lot of time, but it is most beneficial if it is done on a regular basis.

It is important for parents to know that their children’s spelling is developmental. The way their children spell at the beginning of the year will be entirely different from the way they spell at the end of the year. The more phonograms and hunks and chunks students know, the better writers they become. It gives them a confidence when they are sounding out words.

As the year progresses, the first graders will become more assured in their writing. Four times a week, walk around the classroom with your eraser and provide mini-conferences during the writing process. Let parents know if they see a writing that looks pretty spectacular, it’s because their child had help. Once a week, tell the class they will be asked to write a story without any assistance from the teacher. Those stories will show the parents the true writing ability of that child.

**Step 1: Let’s write!**

🌺 Once the teacher has modeled the writing lesson for the day it is time for the students to write their own stories. As the students are writing, walk around the class and read what’s on their pages. Look for mistakes. Erase them and have the writer fix them immediately.

🌺 If students do not have a capital letter where one is needed, talk about what should be done to fix the sentence.
Beyond Predictable Stories

Creative Writing: February of First Grade

Who will help me?
By Mackenzie

Today I needed help. This is my story. I need help Swimming. I asked mally and she sed no I am going shopeing. I asked Beth and she sed no I am akting cool. I asked Ryan and he sed no I don’t like grls. I asked my dad and he sed yes I will. I can lirn to swim.

Mackenzie’s Conference

Mackenzie was a Title One, first grade student who had spent the previous year in a transitional kindergarten class.

Before I even began Mack’s conference, I saw that the word *said* was spelled incorrectly throughout her story. I asked her to go back to her seat and fix the word. She was able to find the word on the Word Wall and I also reminded her that *said* is one of our monster words, and we knew a special way to spell it. (**Students who have special needs may need you to underline the word they have repeatedly misspelled.) As she was fixing her paper I called another student up to conference with me. When we were finished I called Mackenzie back to the table.

I started reading her story out loud, asking her how to fix mistakes in her writing. If Mack could tell me the corrections that needed to be made to a misspelled or misused word, I erased and she fixed the errors. If she did not know how to make a correction, I would tell her how and she would fix her story. I continued this process with Mackenzie through the rest of her story.
Step 6: Comprehension

****For more lessons on Reading Comprehension refer to Beyond the Phonics Dance, Language Arts and the Creative Arts Connection, and Way Beyond the Phonics Dance ~ Volumes 1 & 2. These are the supplement manuals to step 6.
How do I use my reading log?

Reading logs are used for Independent and Guided Reading. They are stapled to the inside of a folder. The kids keep track of the books they are reading by writing the dates they start and finish a story and the title of the book. Once I have had a conference with a reader I initial the box next to the title. I can also keep track of the level book each student should be reading by writing it beside the next line.

For example: On line one Amanda writes the title of the story she has read: Frog and Toad are Friends. This is a level k book. Amanda reads to me and does a great job. The story seems to be too easy for her. I initial the box next to the story title and on the next line write the level book I would like her to read the next time. In this case I would choose a level L book.

If Amanda comes to conference and struggles as she reads Frog and Toad are Friends (level k book), I initial the box next to the story title and on the next line write the level book I would like her to read. In this case I would ask Amanda to choose a book from the J group since the selection she read to me was too difficult for her.

If Amanda comes to conference and does a fine job reading Frog and Toad are Friends (a level k book), she comprehends what she’s read, though at times she struggled through some of the words I will know to keep her at her current level. I initial the box next to the story title and on the next line write the level book I would like her to read next time. In this case I would ask Amanda to choose another K book.

Keep two reading log folders, one for independent reading and one for guided reading.
### Student Responses for Teacher Read Alouds, Shared Reading, Guided Reading and Self-Selected Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I began to think of</td>
<td>______________.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t believe</td>
<td>_______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wonder why</td>
<td>_______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I noticed</td>
<td>_______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not sure why</td>
<td>_______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My favorite part was when</td>
<td>_______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My favorite character was</td>
<td>___ because ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The character I am most like is</td>
<td>___ because ______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt</td>
<td>___ when _______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The character that reminded me of someone I knew</td>
<td>was ___ because ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This reminded me of a time when</td>
<td>_______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this book to</td>
<td>___ because ____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought it was funny when</td>
<td>_______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The part of the story I didn’t like was when</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was surprised when</td>
<td>_______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The setting of this story was</td>
<td>_____. It had _____.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>