The Phonics Dance
Kindergarten
Beginning Dance Lessons

Ginny A. Dowd
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References
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 and Comprehension**: Daily practice ~ Guided, independent, choral, and partner reading in correlation with literature that is teacher chosen and/or student selected; coinciding with comprehension lessons.
How do I start if I am a Kindergarten teacher?

The first day all of your students are in the classroom at the same time, you should begin the Alphabet Chant. It will only take you 2 to 3 minutes. You will start by chanting the first four letters your curriculum dictates. Each week you will add one, two, three, or four letters to your chant. The amount of letters you add to your alphabet chant will depend on the developmental level of your class.

Place the chants (pages 20 – 22) below the pictures for each of the 4 letters your class will be learning the first week. Each time you add a letter to the chant, place its card under its picture in the alphabet. Once the majority of your class has mastered a letter, put a sticker or a star on the alphabet picture - that way your class can tell what letters they are experts at recognizing.

If you begin the year introducing letters out of a-b-c order, say only the letter names in the order they appear in the alphabet until you get a letter that has a sticky note on it. You will chant that letter.
Beginning of the Year
Kindergarten Alphabet Review

“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.

“b”: b – b – b, is baby, baby. b – b – b is b!

“c”: C says “cah”. C says “cah”. C says “cah”. Cat! Meow!

“d”: d – d – d. I’m a digging dog! d – d – d. I’m a digging dog. d – d – d is d!

“e”: (Hands in motion like a train) chant, “e – e – 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.)
Name ______________________

Abby is sad. Wahhhhhh! 😢

Abby is a special name! Big A is a capital letter. Trace.

[Trace the letter A]

Abby wants to see you write capital A!

_______________________________________

_______________________________________

_______________________________________

Letters and Alphabet Fun!
Abby wants you to be a capital A detective!

B A A C A A A D A

Sentences are made of letters and words!
Did you kiss a period at the end?

A b b y i s s a d .
u - u - u ~ fussy funny underwear!

Little u is lower case! Follow the pattern, trace, and then write.

Can it go up? If your answer is yes, write ~ Yes, it can. If your answer is no, write ~ No, it can’t.

It is a plane. Can it go up?

It is a snowman. Can it go up?

What are two things that can go up?

Name ______________________
Name ______________________

\[x - x - x \sim \text{The x-ray's in the box!}\]
Little \(x\) is lower case! Follow the pattern, trace, and then write.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\_\_\_\_\_ \\
\_\_\_\_\_ \\
\_\_\_\_\_ \\
\_\_\_\_\_ \\
\end{array}
\]

Circle the rhyming word in each row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mix</th>
<th>fix</th>
<th>box</th>
<th>wax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ax</td>
<td>mix</td>
<td>box</td>
<td>wax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fox</td>
<td>mix</td>
<td>box</td>
<td>wax</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There is something \textbf{amazing} in the box!
What is in the box?
Name ______________________

P – P – P ~ Popcorn PLEASE!

Big P is a capital letter. Trace.

Please write capital P!

_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

Sound and Color Fun!

Pop to it! I will call out a letter or a sound. Circle it in the color I say!

a m l O B p

What comes next?
Write the lower case letter.

d, _ j, _ e, _ n, _

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Let’s segment!

1. Look at the picture.
2. Touch each letter and say its sound.
3. Then say the whole word.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>a</th>
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<td>f</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man</td>
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<td>r</td>
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</table>
What letter is it?

How do I get started?

When you are ready to introduce the onset and rimes of words, you will follow the alphabet chants with an activity called “What letter is it?” The following worksheets give you the opportunity to introduce or review high frequency endings. These lessons start to get your class in the habit of sounding out words with the five short vowel sounds. They are also great lessons for reviewing word families. What’s the beginning sound? What vowel and consonant do you hear at the end? At this point in the year, it is important for kindergarteners to start looking at words in parts. It is easy to introduce the onset and the rime with these worksheets. Our big goal is to become word detectives and start identifying parts of words. Use the blank worksheet on page 150 to design similar lessons.

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 cah. 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.
Name ____________________________

What letter is it?

\[ a - t = at \quad a - t = at \quad c - a - t = cat, \text{ cat, cat!} \]

Consonants

| m | s | b |

Vowels

| a | e | I | o | u |

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!

at \hspace{1cm} cat \hspace{1cm} bat

“at” detectives at work!

at \hspace{1cm} ag \hspace{1cm} at \hspace{1cm} at \hspace{1cm} am
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

Can you write my Super Silent e word?

1. __________________   2. __________________
3. __________________   4. __________________

Can you read these Super Silent e words?

cake  rake  lake  make

Name _____________________

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

Can you write my Super Silent e word?

1. __________________   2. __________________
3. __________________   4. __________________

Can you read these Super Silent e words?

Cake  rake  lake  make
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” EVERY DAY!
- 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.

Questions about “Hunking and Chunking”

- When do I start the Phonics Dance and the Art of Hunking and Chunking? Most kindergarten teachers start the Phonics Dance in the fourth grading period. They will teach one hunk and chunk a week. The most common hunks and chunks taught at the end of the year in kindergarten are sh, ch, th, ing, all, ar, or, oo (school), and ow.
- What are “hunks and chunks”? “hunks and chunks” are the terms referring to letter combinations that make up variant vowels, r-controlled vowels, digraphs and diphthongs.
- What is “hunking and chunking”? “hunking and chunking” is a decoding strategy. Hunking and chunking trains the eye to look for letter combinations and their sounds in words. This allows your students to concentrate on parts of words rather than individual sounds and letters. (Both hunking and chunking are used synonymously.) We can hunk and chunk a hunk and chunk by simply circling the letters that come together to make a sound you can’t sound out. This lets the brain know that it cannot sound out a word by looking at just the letters. It has to think about the new sound the letter combination will make.
Sh! That sheep is asleep! You should not try to wake him.

Sh! That fish is asleep! You should not try to shake him.

Sh! That sheep and fish are snoring on a ship!

Crash!

I woke them up when I broke a dish!
Name __________________________

sh ~ sheep say hush!  sh, sh, sh, sh, sh

1. _____________  2. _____________  3. _____________

fish          wish        swish

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

1. __________  2. __________  3. __________

sh ~ sheep say hush!  sh, sh, sh, sh, sh

1. _____________  2. _____________  3. _____________

fish          dish        swish

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

1. __________  2. __________  3. __________
sh ~ sheep say hush! sh, sh, sh, sh, sh

1. _______________  2. _______________

3. _______________

ash    mash    cash

Word Wall Fun!

1. __________  2. __________  3. __________

ash    mash    cash

Word Wall Fun!

1. __________  2. __________  3. __________
Name _____________________________

Sh ~ sheep say hush! sh, sh, sh, sh, sh

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Be a “sh” detective!

1. Circle sh each time you see it!
2. Read each sentence.
3. Be an illustrator! Draw a picture to show what the sentence says!

The fish is on the dish.

I can make a wish.

Splash! The sheep is in the tub!
Be a “sh” detective!
1. Circle sh each time you see it!
2. Read each sentence.
3. Be an illustrator! Draw a picture to show what the sentence says!

The fish is on the dish.

I can make a wish.

Splash! The sheep is in the tub!
Be a “sh” detective!

1. Circle sh each time you see it!
2. Let’s read a poem about “sh!”

Sh!!!!!!!!!!!

Sh! That sheep is asleep!
You should not try to wake him.

Sh! That fish is asleep!
You should not try to shake him.

Sh! That sheep and fish are
snoring on a ship!

Crash!

I woke them up when I broke a dish!
Sh ~ sheep say hush! sh, sh, sh, sh, sh

Sh! The sheep are asleep! How are you going to wake them up?

Illustrate.
Step 2: What is the Word Wall word of the day?

Tell the class that the word of the day has two parts. There is the hunk and chunk at the beginning and a vowel at the end. Circle the hunk and chunk. A circle indicates that the word has letter combinations that cannot be sounded out, even if you know the sounds they make in the alphabet.

Ask them to guess letters that might be in the word.

As the class calls out letters, let them know if they are wrong or right. If a student calls out the letter o you can say, “I like that vowel, but it’s not part of our word. Write the letter o under the box where the vowel in the word is located. If a student calls out the letter x. say, “I like that consonant, but it's not part of our word. Write the letter x under the box where the consonant would be in the word. If a student calls out the letter t say, “I like that consonant, but it’s not part of the word.” Write the letter t under the sky letter box. The same rule would apply if a student guessed the letter y. y is a dirt letter and not part of the puzzle. This is what the game board would look:

```
  s    h    e    y
\_____x_____
  t    o
```

Step 3: Identifying the Word

When the class has correctly identified the word of the day, have them spell it over and over.
Tell the class that good readers get their mouths ready to make the first sound they see in a word. But our word has a hunk and chunk, so your brain needs to think of the sound that letter combination makes.

Spell the word in two parts. Say: sh e.

Next, read the word in two parts, saying the sounds not the letter names. Sh e.

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

Then place it on the Word Wall. Be sure the hunk and chunk is circled.

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.
Children learn to write before they read. When you use the *Phonics Dance*, the first place you will see growth and development will be in creative writing. In order for this piece to be effective creative writing must be done *every day*. Students should be given the opportunity to write in a variety of genres. In line with Common Core, first grade teachers should give their students a writing assignment that coincides with the theme that is being studied in the classroom. This gives the class the chance to write thematic words over and over again. It also allows for the opportunity to model a variety of different writing styles.

### When do I use a capital letter?
- Every sentence in the whole wide world begins with a capital letter!
- Capital I. Capital I. I starts with a capital I!
- The only other time to use a capital letter: Special Names, Dahling! Those are the special names of people, places, animals, and things.

### What's my sentence stopper?
- Kiss a period. Kiss a period. Kiss a period at the END!
- You asked me a question! Where's your question mark?
- Exclamation! Exclamation! Exclamation! Say it with expression! Exclamation! Exclamation! Exclamation! Say it like you mean it!

### How do I space when I am writing?
The *spaghetti and meatball way*, of course!
- In between the letters of words, you want the equivalent of a piece of spaghetti.
- In between the words you are writing, you want the equivalent of a meatball. This just so happens to be the size of your pointer finger!
Student / Teacher Conferencing

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 important. 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, your kindergarteners 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 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.
When do I respond to a story?

In kindergarten, begin by having verbal discussions about stories that have been read in class. After the class has listened to a story, students can talk about it in a variety of ways. There is a book response list in this chapter that allows children to think outside of the box when making connections to a story.

These class discussions can help students identify characters, setting, voice, problem and solution, feelings, genres and other concepts in the Common Core. As the year progresses, conversation and discussion will lead to written responses as the students become capable to write on their own. There are a variety of book response forms that can be used at the end of a read aloud or guided reading.

Example 1:
At the beginning of the year I read the story *Click Clack Moo* to my kindergarten class. I ask them to tell me who the characters are in the story. I ask about the setting and the problem the farmer had with the animals. Then I ask them to tell me what part they thought was funny. We share our opinions verbally.

Example 2:
Mid-year I read the story *Ruby the Copycat*. I ask what were ways Ruby copied Angela and Miss Heart? Then I ask the class ways they can be a copycat. This time, instead of talking about our response, each student will write on a book response: *I can ______ just like a ______.*

Example 3:
At the conclusion of a guided reading group, book responses are good ways to get a class to make a connection to literature they have been exposed to. Before a group reads, let them know what the response is that they will be writing about. They are to think about the connection as they are reading. When they are finished reading and writing their responses, they share their thoughts and ideas with the group. The class is getting ready to read a level B book called "*The Treasure Hunt*." I tell my group that when they are finished reading they will each need to tell me a part of the story that surprised them. The level of the group will dictate whether they will share verbally or in written form.