

Singing and Songwriting to support Early Literacy

High interest and fun activities are particularly effective in encouraging early readers to establish letter-sound correspondences. These activities may also be used to promote the following: *phonemic awareness; knowledge of print conventions, and background knowledge.*

Letter Names and Sounds

ABC Song (Twinkle Twinkle Little Star)

a b c d
e f g
h l j k
l m n o p
q r s
t u v
w x
y z

Now I know my ABCs

Next time won't you sing with me?

Old MacDonald Had Some (chickens, cheese, chocolate)

ce-i-eeioh

With a ch, ch here

And a ch, ch there

Here a ch, there a ch

Everywhere a ch, ch

Old MacDonald had some Chickens, cheese, chocolate) ee-i-ee-i-oh.

Short and Long Vowel Song

Short A sounds like *bat, bat, bat*.

Long A sounds like *bait, bait, bait*

Short E sounds like *set, set, set*

Long E sounds Re *seat, seat, seat*

Short I sounds &e *bit, bit, bit*

Long I sounds like *bite, bite, bite*

Short O sounds like *knot, knot, knot*

Long O sounds like *note, note, note*

Short U sound like *cut, cut, cut*

Long U sounds like *cute, cute, cute*

Chorus: *Vowels are short and vowels are long Oh we love to sing this song*

Phonemic Awareness

Singing is a fun way for students to learn that letter sounds can be manipulated and recombined to create many spoken words.

The popular traditional song, *Oopples and Boo-noo-noos*, gets students to create silly new words as they substitute the five long vowel sounds into the words, I like to eat, eat, eat, apples and bananas.

I like to ate ate, ate, apples and bay-nay-nays

I like to eat eat eat, ee-ples and bee-nee-nees.

Print Conventions

An innovative way to teach left-to-write, top-to-bottom, and punctuation is a musical version of the language experience approach.

Select popular songs in which the: First line is repeated several times. For example, *The farmer in the Dell*, *She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain*,

Skip to M'Lou.

The students would rewrite focusing on the verse elements of the songs such as, place, action, names etc.

Sample

Skip to M'Lou

Cows in the bedroom sleeping on the bed (Rep. 3 times) Skip to M'Lou my darling.

As in the language experience approach, write the students' dictated words on chart paper, commenting on directionality, letters and words, sentences and punctuation.

Follow-up activities could include:

[a] matching word cards

[b] sentence strips

[c] making individual illustrated song booklets.

These provide further opportunities for teaching and reinforcing print conventions.

Background Knowledge and Vocabulary

Students can be taught background knowledge and vocabulary through writing and singing simple songs that contain content concepts.

Transportation (Glory, Glory, Hallelujah)

Transportation is moving things around,
Transportation is moving things around,
Transportation is moving things around,
Things and people move from town to town.

Ships carry goods across the ocean,
Ships carry goods across the ocean,
Ships carry goods across the ocean
And bring them to our country.

Trucks carry goods on the highway,
Trucks carry goods on the highway,
Trucks carry goods on the highway,
And bring them to our town.

Familiar Tunes for Songwriting Activities

Familiar Tunes

Amazing Grace
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah
Home on the Range
Oh Where Has My Little Boy Gone
Red River Valley
Row, Row, Row Your Boat
The Hokey Pokey
This Old Man
Three Blind Mice
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
You are my Sunshine

Repetitive Songs

Are you Sleeping
Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush
If You're Happy and You Know it
London Bridge
She'll be comin' Round the Mountain
Skip to My Lou
The Ants Go Marching
The Wheels on the Bus
This Little of Mine
This Old Man
Three Blind Mice

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