

LEVEL  
**3**

## Level 3 Sequence of Sounds

Students in the early stages of phonemic development have difficulty sequencing sounds. Many times a word will sound like one big sound, especially when knowledge of the alphabet is limited. At level three, children direct their attention to specific positions of sounds within a word. This is early training for segmenting sounds independently. Once recognition of beginning, middle, and ending sounds is acquired, children are better able to isolate sounds and hear them separately.

### TASKS

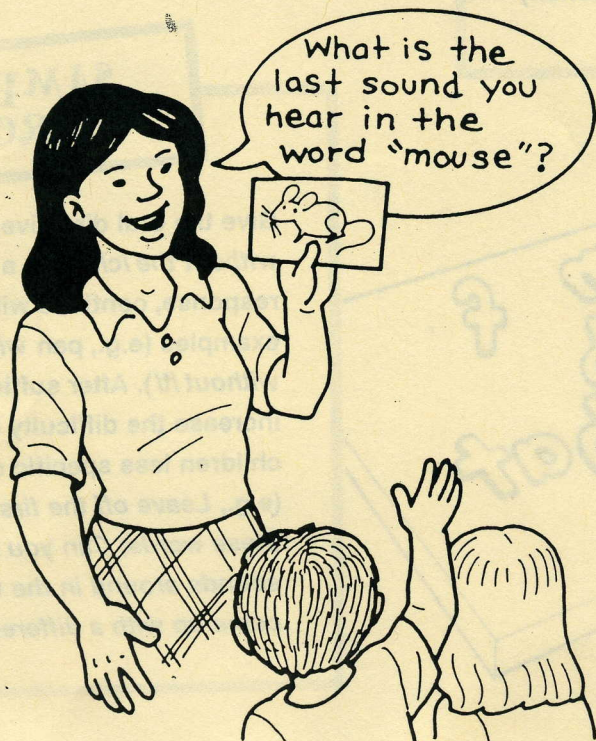
- Identifying where a given sound is heard in a word (approximation)
- Identifying beginning, middle, and ending sounds in a word (phoneme isolation)

### Instruction Guidelines

Begin by identifying a target sound, then say words and have children identify whether the sound is heard at the beginning, middle, or end of the word. Children do not have to know the names of letters to master this level—the emphasis is on *listening*, not letter recognition. Have them repeat the sound heard, not the letter name, when identifying phonemes.

### SAMPLE EXERCISE

Say the word *book* and ask children, *What sound did you hear first?* (/b/). After a correct response, continue with beginning and middle sounds. Repeat with other words, having children randomly identify the beginning, middle, and ending sounds. After further practice, change the format by giving the directive first, followed by the words (e.g., *Listen to these words and tell me what sound you hear at the end of the word*).



**LEVEL**  
**4****Level 4**  
**Separation of Sounds**

By this level, children have acquired a good sense of phonemic awareness and are ready to acoustically divide words into separate sounds or phonemes. This skill is reverse of phoneme blending, where "sound units" are combined (see Level 2). While separation of sounds (phoneme segmentation) appears to be a simple feat, many children, even older ones, struggle with this skill. They may be able to identify isolated sounds (recognition), but cannot break a word into separate phonemic components.

**TASKS**

- Counting the number of phonemes in a word (phoneme counting)
- Identifying individual sounds within a word (phoneme segmentation)

**Instruction Guidelines**

Before attempting to split apart and identify individual phonemes, have children count the number of sounds in a word. Say each word slowly as children listen for, tap out, and count the number of phonemes they hear. After they master this skill, move on to the more difficult task of identifying individual phonemes. (Remember to have children repeat the individual sounds they hear, not letter names.)

**SAMPLE EXERCISE**

Say two- and three-phoneme words one at a time. Ask children to orally separate the sounds so that each phoneme is repeated. For example, *no* /n/-/o/, *up* /u/-/p/, *egg* /e/-/g/, *bit* /b/-/i/-/t/.

