

**LEVEL**  
**5**

**Level 5**  
**Manipulation of Sounds**

Level five is the highest level of phonemic awareness. Children manipulate sounds within words—adding, exchanging, deleting, or transposing phonemes to form new words. Students should have solid knowledge of how language works before attempting this level. They should be adept at mentally blending sounds, modifying words, and segmenting sounds in order to make the phonemic transference. The ability to manipulate phonemes strongly correlates with beginning reading acquisition.

**TASKS**

- **Substituting beginning, middle, and ending sounds of a word (phoneme substitution)**
- **Omitting beginning, middle, and ending sounds of a word (phoneme deletion)**

**Instruction Guidelines**

Begin by having children add, substitute, or delete beginning consonant sounds. Working with initial consonant sounds is an easier task to master than modifying ending sounds (i.e., it is easier for children to identify the /p/ in *pat* than the /p/ in *tap*). Once students have mastered manipulation of beginning consonant sounds, advance to ending sounds and then middle sounds.

**SAMPLE EXERCISE**

Give the oral directive, *Say cat without the /c/*. After a correct response, continue with other examples (e.g., *pan without /p/*, *fit without /f/*). After sufficient practice, increase the difficulty by giving children less specific directions (e.g., *Leave off the first sound in these words; Can you move the sounds around in the word eat to come up with a different word?*).

