



Break it Down

Words in Motion

Beginner: Demonstrate how words form a sentence by jumping or clapping each time you say a new word.

[Tip]: Using floor tiles, sidewalks, or tape on the floor, show that “I love you” has three words and three jumps.

Intermediate: Demonstrate how words can be broken up into pieces (syllables) by jumping or clapping each time you say parts of a word.

[Tip]: Using floor tiles, sidewalks, or tape on the floor, show that “funny” has two jumps (fun-ny), and “banana” has three jumps (ba-na-na).

Experienced: Demonstrate how words have many parts by breaking them into their individual letter sounds, jumping or clapping each time you say a letter sound. Here are some examples:

[Tip]:

- “Go” has two sounds /G/-/o/
- “Cat” has three sounds /C/-/a/-t/
- “Itch” has three sounds /I/-/t/-/ch/
- “Mask” has four sounds /M/-/a/-/s/-/k/
- “Banana” has six sounds /B/-/a/-/n/-/a/-/n/-/a

Why is this important? Understanding the connection between letter sounds, syllables, and words helps to develop reading skills.

References:

Huang, F. L., Tortorelli, L. S., Invernizzi, M. A. (2014). An investigation of factors associated with letter-sound knowledge at kindergarten entry. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 29(2), 182-192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2014.02.001>

Fox, B., Routh, D. K. (1975). Analysing spoken language into words, syllables, and phonemes: A developmental study. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%252FBF01067062>