Sound – Letter Maps

Domain: Phonics

Objective: To practice associating phonemes with graphemes

**Target students:** K – 1st graders

Materials: Phoneme-Grapheme Map[1] or graph paper with numbered rows, **t**okens[2]; list of words[3]

Background information for this activity:

To master the alphabetic principle, students must identify the number of sounds (phonemes) in a word[4] and then associate the letter or letters (graphemes) that represent each sound. Mapping the graphemes to the phonemes moves students from phoneme awareness to phonics. The acquisition of this knowledge—namely the predictable relationship between spoken sounds and the written letters that represent them—is at the heart of mastering the code to read and spell.

How to do activity: Note: This activity builds upon *Say It and Move It* in the **Index of Activities for Phonological and Phoneme Awareness**.

1. Provide each student with a Phoneme-Grapheme Map, tokens, and a pencil.
2. Model the procedure as follows.
   a. First, identify the number of sounds in a word:
      i. Say a word on the list (e.g., **mat**)
      ii. Place one token per sound on the Phoneme-Grapheme Map (i.e., move one token for / m /, another for / ă /, and another for / t /)
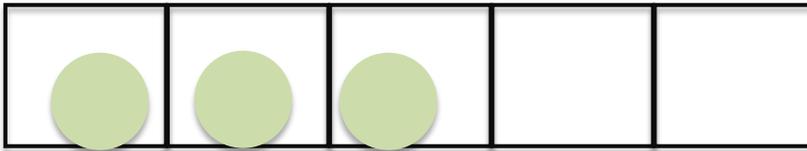
      iii. Identify the number of sounds in the word (3)
      iv. Point to each token and say the sound that corresponds from the word (/ m / / ă / / t /) and repeat the word (**mat**)
   b. Next, replace the token by writing the grapheme to represent each sound in the corresponding box. Name each letter aloud as you write it.
      i. Ask students: What sound do you hear? (/ m /)
      ii. Then ask: What letter(s) do you write? (**m**)
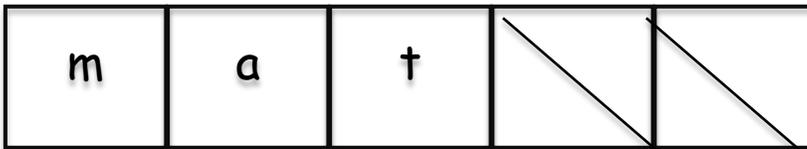
   c. Continue with other words on the list. Check that students are pronouncing the word correctly and synchronizing saying the sounds as they name and write each letter. Provide additional modeling of the task and immediate corrective feedback.
   d. Finally, have students write the letters for the word on the line to the right of the boxes to form the word. Be sure to have students read the whole word after they write it. At the end, have students read the column of words to practice reading the words they just mapped.

[1]The Phoneme-Grapheme Map is a template to help students develop the sound-to-letter correspondences by making the process concrete. The map, composed of a row of five boxes, can be duplicated on paper for students and used with a document camera to model the process for students.

[2]Tokens can be chips, magnets, cubes or other manipulative that fit on the Phoneme-Grapheme Map.

[3] Follow the scope and sequence of sound/spelling associations used by the teacher, school or district. Doing this reinforces the sounds and ensures greater accuracy in doing the task. Within that scope and sequence, it is most effective to start with continuant sounds (e.g., / m /, / s /, / a /) that have a one-to-one correspondence of sound to symbol (i.e., phoneme to grapheme).

[4]This activity builds upon the skill developed with *Say It and Move It* in the Index of Activities for Phonological and Phoneme Awareness.

Use this activity to reinforce the phoneme to grapheme relationships beyond those conditions where there is a one-to-one correspondence, including teaching phoneme/grapheme correspondences in which a speech sound can be represented by more than one letter (e.g., / ch / represented by **ch**; / a / represented by **ai**) and consonant blends (e.g., **cl-**; **-st**), since hearing each sound separately can be difficult for some students. Examples of maps for these types of phoneme/grapheme correspondences follow.

Consonant digraphs—one sound represented by two letters—write two letters in one box of the Phoneme-Grapheme Map. For example, for the word **chat**, the map would look like this with the first sound / ch / represented by the letters **c** + **h** in one box.

| ch	a	t		
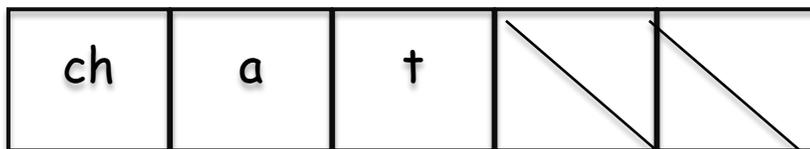
Consonant blends—two sounds represented by two letters—write one letter per box. For the word **clap**, the letters are mapped with each letter of the blend (**cl**) in its own box.[4]

c	l	a	p	
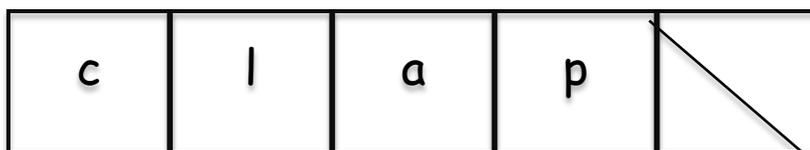
Silent e Pattern—one of the ways to represent a long vowel sound—maps each sound in a box. The role of the final **e** (i.e., silent **e**) is shown with a small **e** next to the final consonant letter, a signal that the first vowel sound / *a* / is long. This is the map for the word **grape**.

g	r	a	p_e	╲

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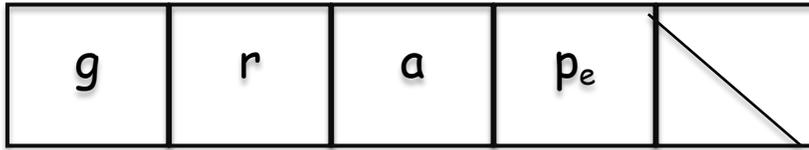
Vowel Teams—a long vowel sound represented by two letters—are represented with two letters in one box for one sound. For the word **rain**, the letters are mapped with the long / *a* / sound in one box.

r	ai	n	╲	╲

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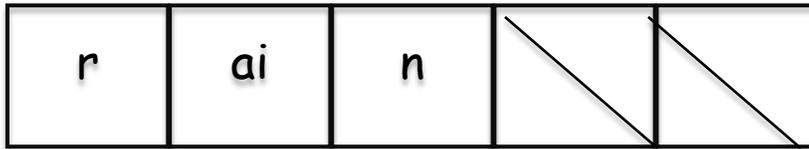
R-Controlled Vowels—vowel letter followed by r—are represented with two letters in one box for one sound. For the word **cart**, the letters are mapped with the r-controlled vowel / *ar* / in one box.

c	ar	t	╲	╲

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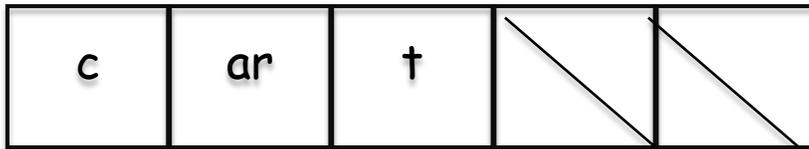
[4] When moving to more difficult sound sequences, such as words containing initial or final consonant combinations (i.e., blends), develop the sound segmentation skill by building from the rime. For example, begin with the rime (e.g., / *op* /), add a consonant (e.g., / *top* /), and end with another consonant (e.g., / *stop* /). This approach is termed building from the "inside out." As students gain skill with blends this way, move to practice with blends building from the "outside in." For example, begin with / *an* /, add a consonant (e.g., / *pan* /), and end by inserting another consonant (e.g., / *plan* /).

[5] As students gain proficiency segmenting words with tokens, students can use their pencils to place a small dot in the boxes on the Phoneme-Grapheme Map rather than moving the tokens. This step ensures that students have processed the word phonemically before writing the letters for the sounds they hear.