Building and Decoding Words With *ai*

Advanced Decoding: Letter Combinations

Given a printed letter combination, students can: say its sound, read words with the letter combination, build or spell words with the letter combination.

Prepare

1. Write a large *ai* on the board.
2. Below the *ai*, write:

ch	ai	sh	th	ai
fl	ai	ng	ai	ph
ai	qu	ai	ch	wr

3. Write these words on index cards:

   paid, maid, braid, bail, fail, jail, hail, mail, pail, nail, snail, snail, sail, tail, rail, frail, wail, wait, bait, gain, grain, rain, main, vain, chain, drain, stain, stain, strain, train, pain, paint, quaint, saint, faint, faith, air, fair, hair, chair, stairs.

4. Provide paper and pencil for each student.

Introduce *ai* (5–7 mins)

1. Write the letters *ai* on the board; make them at least a foot tall.
2. **Some letters stick together, so they make one sound even though they are two letters. Here are two letters that stick together. The sound for these letters is /A/, like in *aim*. It's the sound in the beginning of the word *say*: /A/. What's the sound?**

   a. Look for students who are not saying the sound. Ask them: **What's the sound?**

   b. Look for students who are making the wrong sound and model the sound for them until they have it right. **Well done, everyone.**

3. Erase *ai* and write a mix of 15 letters and letter combinations on the board, arranged randomly: six of the items should be *oa* and they should be interspersed with nine other items dissimilar in appearance to *ai*, such as *th* and *wr*.

4. **When I point to the letter combination we just learned, say the sound. When I point to anything else, give a thumbs down. My turn first.** Point to a series of items and either say the sound or make a performance of saying nothing, as appropriate.

5. **Your turn. Ready?** Point to letter combinations randomly, holding on each one for a few seconds.

   a. If a student says the sound for one of the other items (not *ai*), point to *ai* and say: **You only need to make a sound for these letters. When I point to anything else, stay quiet. Ready?**

> Review the Sound *ai* makes.

th	ai	sh	th	ai
fl	ai	ng	ai	ph
ai	er	ai	ch	wr

> Model for the student.

Introduce *ai* (5–7 mins) *Continued*

    b. Look for students who are saying nothing when you point to *ai*. Have those students try items individually until they have it (but don't call only on struggling students). Keep going until everyone has the new sound.

6. **Now, each of you will take a turn finding *ai*, saying the sound it makes /A/ and then tracing it with your finger to erase it.** Call on one student at a time to come to the board, find *ai*, trace it, and say /A/.

Read words with *ai* - Chaining (8–10 mins)

1. **We are going to practice reading words with *ai*. I'm going to show you a word and you will read it out loud. After you read the word, we will change one or two letters to make a new word.**

2. **Watch me do one.** Write *ai* on the board and point to it. **This is /A/. If I know /A/ and add /m/ after it** (write *m* after *ai*)**, it becomes *aim*.**

3. **Let's do one together.** Write *paid* on the board. **What's the word?** Students should read the new word, *paid*.

4. **Change *p* to *m*. What's the word now?** Students should read the new word, *maid*.

5. Continue with the following words. Tell students which letters to change and have them read the new word.

    paid → maid → braid

    bail → fail → jail → hail → mail → pail → nail → sail
    snail →sail → tail → rail → frail → wail → wait → bait

    gain → grain → rain → main → vain → chain* → drain → stain
    stain → strain → train → pain → paint → quaint* → saint → faint → faith*

    air* → fair* → hair* → chair* → stairs*

> To increase student engagement, pose the question first, provide wait time, and then call on individually selected students or on the whole group.

> *These words might be more challenging to students.

Read words with *ai* - Chaining (8–10 mins)

Use the strategies below to scaffold instruction for students who need it.

Support

1. **When I touch the letter combination, say its sound and keep saying it until I touch the next letter. Don't stop between sounds. After you sound out the word correctly, say it fast.** Underline *ai* in each word you write on the board, so students read it as one sound.

2. **Let's try it together.** Start saying the first sound as you touch just beneath the first letter. Hold each sound for about one second. When you come to *ai*, put your index and third finger underneath both letters, and read it as one sound. For example, *pAAAd*. **Now, say it fast. What's the word?** *Paid*.

3. **Your turn. Ready?** Make sure everyone is looking at you, then touch the first letter and let students sound it out and stretch out the sound. Students should say, *mmmAAAd*. **What's the word?** Students should say *maid*.

4. Continue with the rest of the words.

Challenge

1. **Can you think of any other words that have the /A/ sound spelled with *ai*?** As students suggest words, write them on the board.

2. Have students practice reading the following words with the *ai* spelling: chain, quaint, faith, air, fair, hair, chair, stairs.

Say It, Write It, Read It Word Game (5–10 mins)

Make sure you've erased the words from the board from the previous activity. Get the words you wrote on index cards and shuffle the stack.

1. **We are going to play a game called Say It, Write It, Read It. I'm going to give one of you an index card with a word to read out loud. The rest of you will spell and write the word down. Once you finish writing the word, I will count to three and we will all read the word at the same time. Then we will check our spelling of the word.**

2. **Let's practice.**

   a. Hand out paper and a pencil to each student. Pick a student and hand out a word to read. The student should say, "the word is (*word*)." **Spell out the word in your head, then write it down.** Watch for students who don't get the *ai* spelling.

   b. **Are you ready? I'm going to count to three and we'll say the word together. One, two, three!** Read the word with students.

   c. **How did you spell (*word*)?** Call on one student to share out the correct spelling while the rest of students check their spelling of the word.

3. **Let's keep going.** Repeat the steps above and watch for students who don't get the correct *ai* spelling. Have them correct their spelling and underline *ai* in each word.