



Advanced Decoding: Reading and building words with r-controlled vowels

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

Prepare



- Write a large er on the board
- Below the er, write:
- Write these words on index cards:
- Paper and pencil for each student

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

per, perk, perm, germ,
term, stern, fern, verb,
herb, herd, nerd

Introduce -er (5–7 mins)



- Write the letters er on the board; make them at least a foot tall. Alternatively, use a letter card large enough for the whole group to see easily.
- 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 /er/. It's the sound in the middle of the word fern: /er/. What's the sound?**
 - Look for students who are not saying the sound. Ask them: **What's the sound?**
 - Look for students who are making the wrong sound and model the sound for them until they have it right. **Well done everyone.**
- Erase er. Now write a mix of 15 letters and letter combinations on the board, arranged randomly: 6 of the items should be er and they should be interspersed with 9 other items dissimilar in appearance to er, such as ch and wr.
- 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.
- Your turn. Ready?** Point to items randomly, holding on each one for a few seconds.
 - If a student says the sound for one of the other items (not er), point to er and say: **You only need to make a sound for these letters. When I point to anything else, stay quiet. Ready?**

Review the Sound -er makes.

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

Model for the student.

Introduce -er (5–7 mins) *Continued*

- b. Look for individuals who are saying nothing when you point to er. 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 er, say the sound it makes /er/ and then trace it with your finger to erase it.**

Read words with -er - Chaining (8–10 mins)



1. **We are going to practice sounding out words with er. I'm going to show you a word and you will read it out loud. After you read the word, we will change one letter to make a new word.**
2. **Watch me do one.**
3. Write er on the board. **This is /er/. If I know "/er/" and add /h/ in front of it (write *h* in front), it becomes "her."**
4. Change her to per. **What's the word now?**
5. Continue with the following words:
 - per → perk → perm → germ → term
 - stern → fern
 - verb → herb → herd → nerd → nerve* → serve*

*These words might be more challenging to students.

Use these strategies below to scaffold instruction for students who need it

Support

1. **When I touch each letter, you 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 the er in each word you write on the board, so students read it as one sound.
2. **My turn first.** Start saying the first sound as you touch just beneath the first letter. Hold each sound for about one second. When you come to er, put your index and third finger underneath both letters, and read it as one sound. For example, **hhherrr. Now I say it fast. What's the word? her.**
3. **Your turn. Ready?** Make sure everyone is looking at you, then touch the first letter and let the students sound out without you. Students: **hhherrr. What's the word?** Students: her.
4. Continue with the other items on the board.

Challenge

1. Can you think of any other words that have the "/er/" sound, spelled with er?
 - a. As students suggest words, write them on the board.
 - b. Point out that there are other spellings for the /er/ sound (e.g. ir, ur), which we will cover later.
2. Have students practice reading the following multisyllabic words with the ar spelling:
 - mermaid, certain, pertain, server, termite, terminate, person, permission

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



1. Make sure you've erased the words from the board from the previous activity.
2. **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.**
3. **Let's practice.**
 - a. Give all students paper and pencil.
 - b. Pick a word to read from the same stack of index cards for the activities above.
 - c. Tell the rest of the students: **Spell out the word in your head, and write it down.**
4. **Are you ready? I'm going to count to three and we'll say the word together. 1, 2, 3!** Read the word with the student.
5. **Let's keep going. This time, I'll pick one of you to read the word on the card.**
 - a. Give all students paper and pencil.
 - b. Pick one student and give him/her a word to read.
Read this word.
 - c. Tell the rest of the students: **Spell out the word in your head, and write it down.**
6. **Are you ready? I'm going to count to three and we'll say the word together. 1, 2, 3!** Read the word with the student.