



## 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

- Write a large *wr* on the board
- Below the *wr*, write:
 

pl	wr	ay	wr	kn
wr	ee	ea	kn	wr
kn	wr	oi	wr	kn
- Write these words on index cards: wrap, wrack, wreck, wren, wrench, wrest, wrist, writ, wring, write, writhe, wrong, wrote, write, writ, wry, wren, wreck, wreak, wreath, writhe.
- Provide paper and pencil for each student.

### Introduce *wr* (5–7 mins)



- Write the letters *wr* on the board; make them at least a foot tall.
- 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 /r/, like in *wrap*. It's the sound in the beginning of the word *wrap*: /r/. 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 *wr* and write a mix of 15 letters and letter combinations on the board, arranged randomly: six of the items should be *wr* and they should be interspersed with nine other items dissimilar in appearance to *wr*, such as *th* and *wr*.

pl	wr	ay	wr	kn
wr	ee	ea	kn	wr
kn	wr	oi	wr	kn

Review the Sound *wr* makes

- 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.

Model for students.

## Introduce *wr* (5–7 mins) *Continued*

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 *wr*), point to *wr* and say: **You only need to make a sound for these letters. When I point to anything else, stay quiet. Ready?**
  - b. Look for individuals who are saying nothing when you point to *wr*. 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 *wr*, say the sound it makes /r/ and then trace it with your finger to erase it.** Call on one student at a time to come to the board, find *wr*, trace it, and say /r/.

## Read words with *wr* — Chaining (8–10 mins)



1. **We are going to practice reading words with *wr*. 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.** Write *wr* on the board and point to it. **This is /r/. If I know /r/ and add /a/ and /p/ after it (write *ap* after *wr*), it becomes *wrap*.**



3. **Let's do one together.** Write *wrack* on the board. **What's the word?** Students should read the new word, *wrack*.
4. **Change *a* to *e*. What's the word now?** Students should read the new word, *wreck*.
5. Continue with the following words. Tell students which letters to change and have them read the new word

*wrap* → *wrack* → *wreck* → *wren* → *wrench*

*wrest* → *wrist* → *writ* → *wring* → *write* → *writhe*

*wrong* → *wrote* → *write* → *writ* → *wry* → *wren* → *wreck* → *wreak* → *wreath* → *writhe*\*

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.

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 *wr* 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 *wr*, put your index and third finger underneath both letters, and read it as one sound. For example, **rrraaak. Now, say it fast. What's the word? Wrack.**
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, **rrreeek. What's the word?** Students should say *wreck*.
4. Continue with the rest of the words.

## Challenge

1. **Can you think of any other words that have the /r/ sound spelled with *wr*?** As students suggest words, write them on the board.
2. Have students practice reading the following words with the *wr* spelling: *writh*.

## 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.**
  1. 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 *wr* spelling.
  2. **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.
  3. **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 *wr* spelling. Have them correct their spelling and underline *wr* in each word.