

penicillin, are recognised for what they are because of the learning that had taken place before the event.

A solid knowledge base is required for discoveries to be recognised and for creativity to happen. The old adage, 'going from the known to the unknown' is especially pertinent here in that skills that are far too difficult to master on one's own can be achieved more accurately and earlier with the help of expert guidance from a more knowledgeable person.

## Teaching ideas for the sounds and words of *b* for *balloon*

This example shows some 'tip of the iceberg' teaching possibilities that can be transferred to each book in the READING WORKS series.

The example comes from the *Consonants* book, and is given the full treatment to demonstrate the depth of learning that can be achieved within all the pages of this series.

<p>b b</p> <p>balloon</p>		<p>'At last a breeze has begun to blow our beautiful big balloon.'</p> <p>'Wow! Look at the number of baby-sized people down below!'</p>
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Note: The first person technique is used for ease of explanation only. Teachers use their own words, and pick and choose what to use from the many ideas set out here.

- Look at my mouth and listen carefully to hear what I do. (Say *buh – balloon*, *buh – baby*, *buh – big* etc together several times. (Play some oral/aural games with these words. e.g. I'm thinking of a word that starts with *buh* and which describes something that often cries ... )
- I'll read the sentences to you and then you read them back to me. Follow my hand as it goes under the sentences with your eyes. I might go slowly or I might go quickly ... or I might even stop somewhere. Make your eyes follow my hand as you look at the words. (Learners will not be reading in the true sense of the word, but will be saying the sentence from memory. However, there are many benefits here, including learning that written language moves from left to right and that words are set out in groups of letters with gaps in between.)
- What does your mouth look like when you say the letter *bee* and the sound *buh*? Is there much difference? Look at the person beside you as you say them slowly. (Small mirrors for this activity add to the learning impact.)
- I think the shape of the letter *bee* is a bit like a bat and a ball – like this ... (Draw the letter slowly and correctly to demonstrate its correct formation.)
- There are other letters in the alphabet that look a bit the same. Can you see any other

letters in the prose that also have a stick and circle shape? (*p* as in *people* and *d* as in *down*. (Teach these sounds in all sorts of ways – such as looking at children's names, thinking up words which have these sounds and watching teacher write them. *Oral Language in Action for Beginner Readers* in the *Mighty Mouth Mover* Series by this author has further ideas for teaching similar letters.)

- Some letters are tall and others are small in *balloon*. Work out with your eyes the difference between the tall letters and the small letters? What have you noticed?
- What letter goes lower than the rest? (*p*)
- What words would you say if the picture had unhappy faces and there were dark clouds building up in the sky? Make up some words with a partner. (Optional extra: Present as a snappy around-the-circle performance. Model some dialogue examples first.)
- Follow my hand and read the sentences in your mind. Watch closely because I'm going to stop suddenly and take my hand away. Hold the word I stopped at in your mind. When I give you a silent signal, (head nod or similar), call out the word once. Is there someone who would like to come out and be the leader for this activity?
- I'm going to read the sentences again, but this time I'm going to change one word. Wait until I've finished and then tell me that different word. (e.g. *At last a wind has begun to blow ...* and *At last a breeze has begun to bombard our beautiful ...*) Does this new word have a *buh* in it?
- How many people do you think are speaking in this little story? (Read the text as two groups, as two individuals and as a solo with different vocal expression for each speaker.)
- Look at the word *balloon*. Has anyone noticed some double letters? Does anyone know these double-letter names or sounds? (Explore the answers.)
- Are there other words in the text that also have double letters side by side? Are the two letters in the word *baby* doubles? Explain your answer clearly in words.
- Is there another word which has two of the same letter also not together? (*Wow*). One of the *w* letters has a capital letter and the other one a small *w*. Why would that be?
- What do you think these marks mean? (Inverted commas, exclamation marks, hyphen, full stops. Explore.)
- How many capital letters on this whole page? Why do we have capital or upper case letters?
- Look what happens when I write the first few words of the first sentence without a space between the words. Is there a problem?
- I'll write it again, and tell me when I need to put a space between the words. Also check to see if I make any other mistakes such as no capital letter, short letters too tall, tall letters too short, spaces missing or in the wrong place. (This teaches