



Beginning Letter Blends with s & l

For the Homeschool Educator

Beginning blends refers to two or more consonant letters that are commonly found together at the beginning of words and each retain their sound when blended. This lesson focuses specifically on blends that consist of a consonant followed by the letter “l” or beginning with the letter “s.” Recognizing these common patterns assists with both decoding and **spelling** practice.

Signs of Readiness

This lesson was designed for children ages 6–8 who have demonstrated basic reading skills such as decoding words (single- and multi-syllabic). In addition, your child should have experience with basic writing and the concept of translating the sounds (*phonemes*) of words to their written form (**spelling**). Your child should be ready to apply some of the rules and knowledge of common letter patterns to their writing.

Common Misconceptions

It’s not exactly a misconception but developing spellers often “mishear” the sounds in words which makes it difficult to spell them accurately. If your child struggles, check that they have heard each sound in the word correctly. They may need you to pronounce the word slowly and clearly so that they can hear and echo all the sounds. Consider talking about the ways we distort sounds during natural speech.

Key Vocabulary

Use these definitions to explain key terms that are used in the activities below.

Word or Phrase	Definition
letter blends	“consonants that appear together in a word and each retain their sound when blended”
spelling	“letters used to stand for sounds”

Lesson Options:

Use the lesson elements below to create a single-day or multiday lesson.

Digital Playlist: Generally, your child will complete the Digital Playlist first, then follow up with some or all of the activities described below. As you select and do those activities with your child, you may wish to reassign some or all of the digital activities for additional practice.

Explore Activity: This follow-up is designed to be used closely with the Digital Playlist to help your child understand the topic.

Dig Deeper Activity: This offline activity provides an additional learning experience with the same topic.

Extend Activity: This offline activity extends your child’s understanding and application of the same topic.



Explore Activity

Steps

1. Rewatch the video *Maggie and Marie: Letter Blends with s*. Observe the process Maggie and Marie use to spell new words. After Marie guesses each new word, pause the video and invite your child to “air spell” it with you. For example, the first full word is “sled.” Pause the video and prompt your child to say the sounds they hear at the beginning of the word. Next, using your pointer finger, model writing the letters “s” and “l” in the air. Continue watching and pausing the video for each additional sound.
2. Repeat the process for air **spelling** the remaining words. If your child shows interest, continue air **spelling** with more “s”-blend words such as star, slip, snow, spark.
3. Consider having your child switch from “air **spelling**” to “writing” on your back with their pointer finger to increase engagement.

Modifications

- **Beginning learners** will benefit from watching you model how to air-spell complete words and repeating after you. As your child becomes more comfortable with the process allow them to take the lead.
- More **advanced learners** may enjoy **spelling** more complex compound words with “s”-blends such as starfish, sunscreen, snowman.

Dig Deeper Activity

Steps

1. Review the concept of **letter blends**. Ask: *What are some of the letter blends you already know?*
2. This activity will provide a review with “l” **letter blends**. Choose a word from the following list: flip, fly, plug, plan, clap, clip, blink, blank.
3. On a sheet of paper, write the word and omit one letter. Say the word and invite your child to guess and write in the missing letter. Once complete, ask them to spell the entire word aloud.
4. Continue the process with additional words. As your child becomes more familiar with the words, remove more than one letter for them to guess.

Materials

- Writing materials (examples: paper and pencil or a tablet)



Modifications

- **Beginning learners** may benefit from seeing your word list in advance. Point to each word and read it together.
- **More advanced learners** may have fun swapping roles with you. Invite them to choose a word and have you guess the missing letters.

Extend Activity

Steps

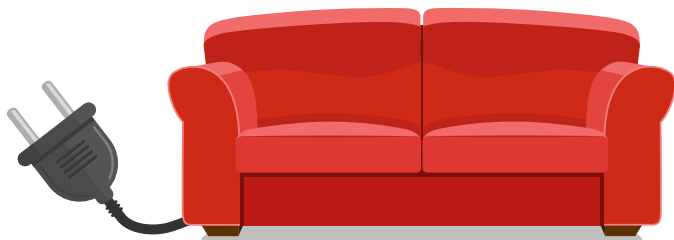
1. Review the words your child has spelled (with the digital puzzle or letter tiles).
2. Let your child know that for many spellers, the second sound in the **letter blend** is hard to hear.
3. Guide your child to complete the following steps to play Shush the Sound.
 - a. Spell a word that starts with “l”-blend. (See below for an example, and see the following page for a list of words to try.)
 - b. Say the word, then say the word in a short sentence.
 - c. “Shush” the /l/ sound by sliding the “l” tile out of the word. Have fun saying “Shush!”
 - d. Push the remaining letters together and pronounce the new word.
 - e. Repeat your sentence but swap the original word with the word without the /l/ sound. Change additional words as needed to make a coherent, even if silly, sentence.
 - f. Enjoy the new silly sentence. Choose your silliest sentence pair and draw a picture of what it means

Materials

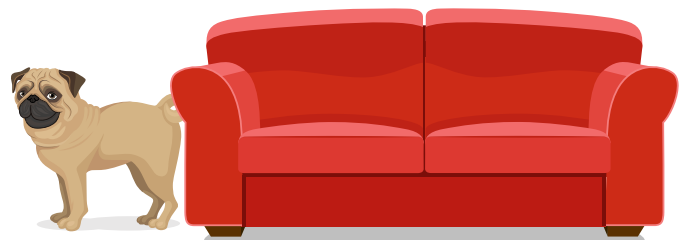
- Letter tiles (commercial or DIY)
- Writing materials (examples: paper and pencil or a tablet)
- Word book created in the previous lesson in this course, Short Vowels

Example: plug/pug

There is a plug behind the couch.



There is a pug behind the couch.





Spelling

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Choose from the following words. Help your child with the vowel **spellings** and double **consonants** as needed—the focus should be on the **letter blend**.

- plug/pug
 - blank/bank
 - slip/sip
 - plan/pan
 - clap/cap
 - slam/Sam
4. After the game, have your child add a Beginning Letter Blends page to their word book.
 - a. Create sections on the page for “r”-blends, “s”-blends, and “l”-blends.
 - b. List three to five words for each **letter blend** pattern they’ve learned (including those from the previous lesson in this course, Beginning Letter Blends with r). Check the list for accuracy.
 5. Praise your child for their growing bank of **spelling** patterns and store the word book for future lessons.

Modifications

- **Beginning learners** will benefit from using only the noun form of the words. This is to make swapping out the target work in the sentences a simpler task.
- More **advanced learners** may enjoy finding additional “l”-blend words that can be changed into non-“l”-blend words. Be sure to explain that some words that sound alike may not have the same vowel **spelling**.