

Grocery Store Decoding

This quick and easy activity teaches kids how to break words down by introducing them to word families. With little more than a stack of magazines and a spiral notebook, you can help your first grader tackle common word families and start him on the road to reading success.

What's a word family? Word families are groups of words that share a common ending as well as a common sound. All words containing the "ook" ending, for example, are in the same word family: hook, book, took, look, etc.

What You Need:

- Old magazines or grocery store advertisements
- Composition or spiral notebook
- Glue
- Pencil

What You Do:

1. Start by looking through the magazines or grocery store advertisements with your child for a picture of a product that contains a word family chunk in its name. For example, if you find a picture of grapes, you can use the "ape" word ending for the activity. You can use any picture that's simple enough to build a word family around.
2. After selecting a picture, have him cut it out and glue it at the top of the first page of the notebook.
3. Review the word ending with him. How does it sound? Under the picture, have him spell out the word family. Example: for dog food, write the letters "-og" under the picture.
4. Now ask him to write all of the words he can think of that end in "og" and are pronounced the same. Give him a few hints to get him started, then let him take the reins. Words he could write could include dog, fog, smog, jog, log, etc. Encourage him to sound out each word as he writes it down.
5. Over the course of the school year, continue to add more pictures to the notebook for new word families. As he becomes more familiar with the activity, he can start choosing his own sound chunks to focus on. The more he practices, the better he'll be at recognizing word families!

Be creative! Look for possible product names to use everywhere in your environment. You can choose names of restaurants, stores, toy brand names—anything he may be familiar with. The more creative you can get the more likely he will be to remember that word family.

