

Practice Eggshell Phonics

This is a phonics craft activity with a “teacher talk” introduction: “Short vowel” word families—such as “ing,” “ack,” and “ick,” get lots of attention in a first grade classroom. That’s because first graders need to be able to blend beginning sounds, called “onsets,” with word endings called “rimes.” Teachers use a variety of methods – oral, hands-on, and auditory – to practice the all-important skill of being able to blend onsets with rimes.

Whenever a child can make a strong, memorable association with a phonics skill, he is more likely to remember how to apply that skill quickly as he encounters it. For the “-ick” word family, for example, one of the first things that comes to mind for many children is the word “chicken.”

In this activity, your child gets to make a fun, hands-on tool that will help him practice short vowel words ending in “-ck” based on the “chicken” association. This same pattern can be adapted to make an adorable, creative paper duck!



What You Need:

- White construction paper, four half-sheets, plus two full sheets
- Yellow construction paper, two full sheets
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Black marker
- Brass fasteners
- Pencil
- Black marker

What to Do:

1. Assist your child in cutting out an egg shape from one half sheet of white paper. Then have him cut the egg in half with zig-zag cuts to make it look like it has been cracked open.
2. Push the egg halves together and overlap them slightly. Use a brass fastener to attach the two halves together so that the egg is still attached loosely on the left side of the crack.
3. Turn the egg sideways, so the crack now goes from top to bottom. Use a marker to write the word “chick” on the egg so that the “ch-” is on the left half of the egg and the “-ick” is on the right half.
4. Now assist your child in drawing a simple picture of a chick on a new piece of white paper. Have your child color the chick with crayons, and cut it out.
5. Attach the chick to the back side of the egg with the same brass fastener so that the chick is revealed when the egg is “cracked open.” Now when your child blends the onset with the rime and reads the word “chick,” he can open the egg to see if his decoding was correct.
6. Repeat these steps to make three more eggs to represent other short vowel words with “-ck” endings: for example, “peck,” “duck,” and “quack.” For the duck, simply draw a picture similar to the chick, only with rounded bill instead of a beak. For the word “quack,” draw another duck, and draw a speech bubble beside his head to indicate that he is saying something. For the word “peck,” draw another chick, and draw movement marks near his beak to show that he is making a pecking motion.

This craft is a great way to build up some important phonics skills in your first grader as she practices forming “short-vowel” words orally, pictorially and through writing.

Want another fun way to practice short vowel families with your child? Sit down to a Speakaboo screening of *Chicken Little*.

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