

"Sorting Words"

(Word Identification)

Why?

- One way to help students decode and spell new words is to have them compare the words to spelling patterns of words they know.
- To build word identification skills by analyzing words according to patterns.

How?

- Create word cards representing three or four categories. (e.g., you may use three categories and one "other" for words that don't fit because they do not sound or look the same as the category words.)
- Depending on the students' level, sorting can be done in many ways, including by initial sounds, rhyming words, vowel patterns, prefixes, suffixes, or by more difficult multisyllabic patterns.
- Students can sort words as a whole class, in small groups, or in pairs. Index cards can be used to make word cards, with the category cards written in a different color.
- There are different kinds of categories. Students can find words that match category heading words or, in a more advanced sort, students can categorize words and then determine the category rules or heading. As students become familiar with spelling patterns, list the category heading on the board and call out words that students write down in the appropriate columns.

In the following example, the categories are words with medial *ou*, short vowel *o*, and long vowel *o* with silent *e*. Note that words do not all rhyme, but each word contains the same sound and spelling combinations as one of the category headings.

Categories: house lock bone

Possible words to sort:

mouse	sock	grouch	clock	pole	loud
hot	slot	stone	phone	rope	pound

(Adapted from Cunningham, 1995; Henderson, 1990)