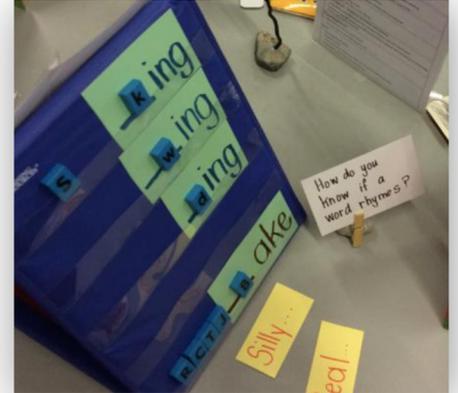


Rhyme

What is it?

A **rhyme** is when two or more words end in the same sound. Being able to identify and generate similarities in words helps establish the rhythm and patterns of language, and encourages playfulness with oral language. Rhyme is one of the predictors of successful reading development.



Why is it important?

Identifying and generating rhyming words connects to reading and writing as children learn to identify patterns in words. They gain an understanding that words with similar sounds may be represented with similar letter patterns. Furthermore, when children can orally delete and substitute initial sounds of rhyming words, they are better equipped to use familiar parts of words to help them write or decode text while reading.

Considerations (what to think about?)

- **Be intentional** with the purpose and clear with the expectations. “We are learning about rhyme, that is when words sound the same at the end, like CAT, BAT, RAT, FAT, MAT, SAT... (say them slowly, emphasize the ending, give everyone a chance to hear, repeat it themselves, maybe generate a new one, and then revisit, “that is rhyme!”
- Generating rhyme with one syllable words is easier. Provide lots of oral opportunities for children to play with one and then two (or more) syllable words.
- Rhyme, both generating and recognizing, is an oral skill.
- Research cautions that English language learners can have difficulty with rhyme as they either focus on making meaning or do not hear our sound “bits” however, their ability to rhyme continues to develop as they learn English.
- Vowels are hard to use as a beginning sound for rhyme so identify them (A,E,I,O,U, (Y)) and show why they are tricky. Put the new sound in front of the existing vowel–Anna,Banana, Manana or icicle, bicycle, tricycle...
- While generating rhyme, nonsense or “silly” words are still rhyme.

- Opportunities to hear rhyme and generate rhyme through singing and being playful with language need to happen frequently.
- Sometimes confusion around rhyme comes when objects or pictures do not make sense to children and they do not see “rhyme”.
- Clear enunciation is crucial, as our ending sounds often get “sloppy or soft” when we speak and those are the sounds we need to focus on for rhyme to be heard or generated. You need to be able to hear them.

What to do? (model all of below slowly and explicitly)

- Use rhyming books, the children’s names, poems, chants and songs to point out or generate words that rhyme. **Be explicit:** notice them and name them, “these 2 words rhyme, listen...” and model this often.
- Use familiar materials – pictures or objects and find rhyming pairs or work with a friend and create rhyme from the picture or object.
- Have student’s names on cards where the first letter can be folded back or covered with magnetic letters to create name rhymes.
- Draw a magnetic letter from a basket and use that to change the first sound for the word of your picture, friends name or object (this is where the “silly or made up” words will emerge).
- Be playful, find as many rhyming opportunities as you can
- Let the students make the rhymes as that is where the learning happens.

Whole group:

- Use Rich Routines (see RR document) to play with rhyme often during whole group gatherings.
- Use the classroom collection of familiar rhyming songs, chants and poems in pocket charts to connect the oral experience to written text. Match the voice to text by touching words, noticing endings and having students read along. This explicit teaching time can be very focused (intentional learning outcomes) and interactive and then become an independent activity.
- Use students’ name cards and your classroom alphabet line to orally change the first sound as you point to each letter (example: Kyle, Ayle, Byle, Cyle etc.).

- Using a basket of letters, or letters on sticks, select one and have the students to try the sound in front of words around the room, such as book titles, children’s names, furniture, etc. Example: Letter “B” coats=boats, door=boor, kids=bids.
- Play a memory game with pairs of rhyming picture cards. Place the cards in random order in a pocket chart and have students select 2 cards at a time. Say the words together and see if they sound alike. Save face up if they do and if they do not rhyme, cover them again and select 2 more cards. Repeated exposure to the rhyming pairs helps students remember which words go together. Nudge the learning with questions such as “Could we think of another word that would rhyme with _____ & _____?”



Small Group (10-minutes):

- Sort collections of familiar objects or pictures cards into rhyming families. *Use the sorted groups as a spark for generating rhyme (real or nonsense).* “What else could rhyme with boat, coat and goat?”
- Select an object and have children manipulate the first sound using the alphabet line or choosing magnetic letters to create rhyme.
- Choose an item from a bag and create as many words as you can that rhyme. Have an alphabet line and magnetic letters accessible to remind of the 26 letters/sounds.

What is the rest of the class doing?

While working with small groups, the remaining students will be engaged in purposeful independent activities that they understand the intentions of. For example, students can be “rhyming detectives” while noticing patterns in rhyming books, matching rhyming pair word cards/pictures, or rereading familiar rhyming charts, books or poems.

Extra Scoop

Some children need multiple opportunities to explore, or get “extra scoops”, in order to grasp concepts. Try a different way of explaining and analyze their misunderstandings. Be responsive by providing them opportunities to slow

down, go deeper, or try other ways to play with rhyme. Take time to work one-on-one with these students in meaningful ways, connecting to their interests, favourite songs and stories, and nudging them forward from what they can currently do.

What to look for? (Formative assessment entry points)

- Are students actively engaged in whole group activities (singing songs, saying chants etc.)?
- Do students demonstrate a playfulness with manipulating language?
- Can students orally identify pairs of rhyming words?
- Are students able to generate silly and/or nonsense rhyming words?
- Do students use rhyme in play and other self-initiated activities?
- Are they noticing rhyme in read-alouds or during other daily activities? (E.g. pointing out rhyme in new stories, coming to tell you about words that rhyme, etc.)
- Are students able to use oral rhyme as a strategy in their writing?

What next?

1. If a student is having difficulty wonder: about possible hearing/speech issue, if concepts make sense, have multiple ways been explained, about developmental readiness and then spend more time, go slow, and provide lots of repetition watching for “ah-ha’s”.
2. If a student is fluent and confident in rhyme encourage poetry or song writing, introduce using blends rather than just single letters and boost confidence by having them share with others.

Children’s Literature

Rhyming Dust Bunnies – by Jan Thomas
Commotion in the Ocean – by Giles Andreae
Sheep in a Jeep – by Nancy E. Shaw
Miss Spider... – by David Kirk
Anything from Dr Seuss
Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed
– by Eileen Christelow

