

Detecting Beginning Sounds Test

Being able to detect beginning sounds is a key phonemic awareness skill. At the easiest level, beginning sounds can be assessed by having students note words that begin with the same sound.

Explain to students the purpose of the Detecting Beginning Sounds Test. Tell students that you are going to ask them questions about the sounds of words. Tell them that this will help you to plan ways for helping them to become good readers. Before administering the Detecting Beginning Sounds Test, make sure that students know what is meant by beginning sounds. Tell students that you are going to say two words. Ask them to listen to see if they can tell what is the same about the words. Emphasizing the beginning sound /k/, say *key* and *king*. Discuss the fact that they begin with the same sound /k/. Follow a similar procedure with *lock* and *ladder*. Once you have explained what is meant by beginning sounds, say, “Listen to these words. Which one begins with the same sound as *soap*? *socks—cat—dog*. Which one begins like *soap*? *socks—cat—dog*.” Give help as needed. Administer the following items in the same way. The words in the first column are the test words.

Sample	man	bell	toy	map
1.	pig	moon	pie	sign
2.	dog	door	rake	wagon
3.	tie	map	name	tire
4.	ring	penny	deer	rug
5.	nail	saw	lamp	nest
6.	ball	nose	book	hand
7.	cake	cow	mouse	dish
8.	girl	jet	farm	game
9.	hat	sun	horse	key
10.	fish	foot	car	nail

Interpretation: An adequate performance is 8/10. If students have difficulty with the task, you can make it into a combined testing/learning task. Help them with the items that they are unable to complete. Show them how to tell if two words begin with the same sound. Have them observe how the beginning sounds are formed. For instance, for /p/, show them how the lips make a popping sound. Note how well they respond to instruction and whether they learn the task.