

20

Recognizing letters automatically

Goal

Students practice their ability to recognize letters and syllables at a glance. This leads to an enhanced reading speed.

1st – 9th grade

10–15 minutes



Materials:
prepared worksheets
for particular exercises,
see below.

Procedure:

The goal of identifying graphemes in the first language- most of those that students do not know based on their school language should be automated as much as possible and can be pursued with various exercises.

Examples:

- Collecting letters (see exercise a; the tasks can also be modified according to needs).
- Assembling letters. Ideal for this exercise are two or three strips of paper with the alphabet legibly written on them. The strips can be placed next to each other or one on top of the other and moved about in a way that produces new combinations of letters.
- Recognize letter combinations quickly (see exercise b).
- Combining syllables (works well also with strips of paper as described above in “assembling letters”).
- Reading unusual typefaces (for this exercise, the teacher can convert a text into different font types).

Remarks:

- The graphemes, which are not taught in regular classroom instruction, naturally play a significant role in this type of exercise. See also chapter 1a in the introduction.
- Many exercises are also suitable for working with a partner.
- Many of the required exercise sheets can also be prepared by older students for the younger ones.
- These kinds of exercises can also be used with older students if they still experience difficulties with identifying graphemes in their first language.

Exercise a)

How many letters M can you find?
Find all letters P!
Are there more or fewer than 5 letters W?

P T U F M W H J K F M L R W D M N P Q M Z G G O
P H W M N W S L R J L M W N D H B W B E W M W
K R Ö Ü N O Y P B M W Z K P W N L R N P E R N L G
P A M E J L K A G T H I R W L B P M T A B P W N R
M S L F J P Q X Y G I D M T K T Ü W Ä A Ä Q M O D
G F H K R O E N W M W N V C I K T L W P N E M O
U T F W G Ü N O Y P B M W Z K P W N L R N P E R
N L G P A M E J L Ü N O L R N P E N L G P A M E J L

Exercise b)

In the words below, look for sh, sp and th.
Write down how many you have found.

sh ○ sp ○ th ○

shipshape, witchcraft, moonlight, distinguish, knowledge, shreds, brainstorm, glimpse, scallop, embellishment, theater, goldfish, heather, splice, zenith, sniffles, ghostly, featherweight, cyclist, diminished, smooth, rather, spinach, replenish, scholastic, duckling, scientist, industrious, puppet, thimble, uncertainty, gnash, footprint, splash, opulent, thrifty, spaceman, junction, highlight, scissors, fatherland, sprightly, snowflake, otherwise, airspeed, ghoulish, scrutiny, tarnish, shade, astonish, shocking, catlike, fishpond, throughout, shrimp, jestingly, spoilsport,..).

21

Reading words faster and faster

Goal

The object of this exercise is quick word recognition as well the practice and expansion of frequent word images, which are identified immediately, thus eliminating the deciphering of letter by letter (sight vocabulary). This leads to an improved reading speed.

1st–4th grade

10–15 minutes



Materials:
appropriately prepared
worksheets for the exercises,
see below.

Procedure:

The goal of a mostly automatic identification of particularly frequent word images can be approached with different exercises. Examples:

- Reading words with obstacles (see exercise a below).
- Recognizing frequent mini words immediately (see exercise b below).
- Reading words with mis-aligned letters (see exercise c below).
- Finding rhyming words for frequent words (house – mouse – louse...).
- In a text taken from a newspaper article or a story, find frequently used words and highlight them in colors (e. g. "much or many", "very", "maybe", or other, frequently repeated words in this text).
- Connecting words: the students receive a worksheet with word pairs that belong together, but are written separately and jumbled up. They must connect with arrows the words that belong together (e. g. mechanic – wrench; dog – barking, etc.).

Remarks:

- Many exercises are also ideal for working in pairs.
- Many of the required worksheets for this kind of exercise can be prepared by older students for the younger ones.
- These kinds of exercises can of course also be conducted with older students if they still experience difficulties with word recognition in their first language.