



Photo by David R. Neilson

Making Big Raptor Words

Summary

Making Big Words is an active, hands-on, manipulative activity in which students discover letter-sound relationships and learn how to look for patterns in words. Students are given individual letters and use these letters to make words. During the fifteen- to twenty-minute activity, students make approximately fifteen to twenty words, beginning with short words and continuing with bigger words until the final word is made. Students are usually eager to figure out what one word can be made from all letters.

Education Standards

Common Core State Standards: Reading Foundational Skills, Phonics and Word Recognition

Learning Objectives

After this activity, students should be able to:

- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- Decode multisyllable words and develop a better understanding of word relationships.
- Understand how words are related through their morphemes - roots, prefixes, and suffixes. *An example are the words: act, actor, acting.*

Materials List

Each student should have access to:

- Student Word List in letter format.
- Paper or whiteboards to record words they make from the letters.

Procedure

Before the Activity

1. From the “Teacher Word List,” select and organize the word most appropriate for your students.
2. Copy a “Student Word List” for each student or group of students (if you use in a center, for example.)

With the Students

1. Once each student has received their letter set and their whiteboards and markers or paper are ready for use, set a timer for 2-4 minutes. Students work independently to manipulate the letters and record words on their whiteboard as they find them. Once they have finished creating and finding words, you can record their list on a whiteboard or SmartBoard.
2. For words students have not yet identified, provide clues to help students identify the unknown words. Wait a short period of time between each word before writing the word and its spelling on a whiteboard or SmartBoard.
3. The teacher dialogue should sound similar to the following and should move students through the word list fairly quickly.

The first word is a three-letter word that is the contraction for "it is." Briefly pause while the students collaborate. If you said, "it's" you are correct. Write and spell the word on the board for the class.

The next word is a three-letter word that is a homophone for the first word and shows ownership. Briefly pause while students collaborate. If you said "its" you are correct. Write and spell the word on the board for the class.

This word has four letters and is in the same word family as "last" and "fast" and means what happened yesterday. Briefly pause while students collaborate. If you said "past" you are correct. Write and spell the word on the board for the class.

Now using all of your letters, can you guess today's theme word? Briefly pause while students collaborate. If you said "adaptations" you are correct. Write and spell the theme word on the board for the class and have each student copy it down.

Theme Word Discussions

1. Take a few minutes to discuss the definition of the chosen theme word and how it is relevant to the study of raptors (birds of prey). Also, discuss the meaning of the prefixes or root words with the students.

Source: This activity was adapted from HawkQuest. The original activity and credits can be found at: <http://www.hawkquest.org/TA/XL/Building-words.pdf>

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Teacher Word List

1. Extinction - to no longer be in existence.

From Latin: to quench or extinguish; ex - a prefix meaning "out of," "from," and hence "utterly," "thoroughly," and sometimes meaning "not" or "without"

Connections to Raptors: All species of raptors are protected by law; the Bald Eagle was recently removed as a threatened species on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's list of endangered and threatened species; the Peregrine Falcon was once on this list, and the Aplomado Falcon and the Spotted Owl remain endangered.

(3 Letter Words) con, cot, ice, inn, net, not, one, ten, tie, tin, toe, ton, tot

(4 Letter Words) cent, coin, cone, exit, icon, into, neon, next, nice, nine,
none, note, once, oxen, tent, text, tint, tone, tote

(5 Letter Words) octet, toxic, toxin

(6 Letter Words) exotic, intent, notice

(7 Letter Words) content, context, extinct

(10 Letter Words) extinction

2. Camouflage - the use of color, texture, and design to disguise an animal.

From French *camouflier*, meaning "to disguise."

Connections to Raptors: Camouflage is used by both predator and prey, but is particularly important for owls, who sleep during the daylight hours when many predators are hunting.

(3 Letter Words) mug, ace, age, cue, ego, elf, elm, flu, fog, gel, gem, gum,
leg, log

(4 Letter Words) mule, leaf, loaf, mace, male, meal, mole, glue, goal, golf,
gulf, lace, lame, aloe, café, cage, calf, calm, came, clam, clue, coal,
cola, coma, come, face, fame, flag, flea, foam, foal, fuel, fume, game

(5 Letter Words) algae, camel, cameo, flame, gleam, mogul

(8 Letter Words) glaucoma

(10 Letter Words) camouflage

3. Nocturnal - to be active at night.

From Latin: *nocturnalis*, "belonging to the night."

Connections to Raptors: Most owl species are nocturnal, hunting at night. The Great Horned Owl is not a true nocturnal species, rather it is crepuscular which means it prefers to hunt at dusk and dawn. Both the Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagle are diurnal, or daytime hunters.

(3 Letter Words) act, ant, arc, art, can, car, cat, con, cot, cut, lot, not, nut, oar, oat, our, out, ran, rat, rot, run, rut, tan, tar, ton

(4 Letter Words) alto, aunt, auto, can't, cart, clan, clot, coal, coat, cola, colt, corn, curl, loan, noun, oral, rant, runt, taco, torn, tour, tuna, turn, ulna

(5 Letter Words) acorn, actor, canon, carol, coral, count, court, lunar, talon, ultra

(6 Letter Words) cannot, carton, ocular, toucan

(9 Letter Words) nocturnal

4. Adaptations – something an animal has or does that helps it survive in its habitat.

Based on the word adapt: "to fit (something, for some purpose)," from Middle French *adapter*, from Latin *adaptare* "adjust," from *ad-* "to" + *aptare* "join." Meaning "to undergo modification so as to fit new circumstances."

The Bald Eagle, for example, has spicules or tiny rough structures on the bottom of its feet to better hold on to fish. The owl's feathers are frayed on the edges to help silence their flight, and the Peregrine Falcon has a corkscrew-shaped tubercle in its nostril structure which some believe baffles the wind as it reaches speeds at least as high as 240 m.p.h. in a dive.

(3 Letter Words) aid, and, ant, dip, dot, its, it's, nap, nip, nod, not, oat, pan

(4 Letter Words) anti, data, into, paid, pain, pant, past

(5 Letter Words) adapt, adopt, ditto, paint, panda, pasta

(6 Letter Words) attain

(7 Letter Words) distant

(11 Letter Words) adaptations

Student Word List

Have students tear or cut each letter apart so they can begin making words.

1. t n c e n i t o i x

2. e g a m c o u f l a

3. l a u r n c o t n

4. s i a d n o p t t a a