

Phonemic Awareness Games

10 listening games — no paper, no prep. Play them anywhere.

Phonemic awareness is hearing and playing with the sounds in words. It happens with your ears, not your eyes — so you can practice in the car, at the sink, or waiting in line.

How to use this page

- Pick one game. Play for 3–5 minutes, not more.
- Say sounds, not letter names: /m/ like the start of **map**, not “em.”
- If your child misses one, say the answer cheerfully and move on.

The 10 games

Game	How to play
1. Sound Hunt	“I spy something that starts with /b/.” Take turns being the spy.
2. Robot Talk	Say a word in slow robot sounds: /c/ /a/ /t/. Child blends it: cat .
3. Break It Apart	You say ship ; child says the sounds: /sh/ /i/ /p/.
4. Rhyme Tennis	You say cake , child says lake , back and forth until someone is stumped.
5. Chop the Word	Clap the syllables in family names: Grand-ma (2), Ol-i-vi-a (4).
6. First / Last Sound	“What sound do you hear at the <i>end</i> of dog ?”
7. Take a Sound Away	“Say smile without the /s/.” (mile)
8. Swap a Sound	“Change the /c/ in cat to /h/.” (hat)
9. Odd One Out	sun, sock, moon — which one doesn’t start the same?
10. Silly Name Game	Change everyone’s first sound: Mom becomes Bom , Dad becomes Bad .

Progress check

By the end of kindergarten most children can blend and separate the sounds in short words like **map**, **fish**, and **sun**. If that is still hard, play games 2, 3, and 6 most often.