

E l k o n i n

B o x e s



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Elkonin Boxes

Elkonin boxes can be used to teach phonemic awareness by having students listen for individual sounds and marking where they hear them in the boxes. Each box in an Elkonin box card represents one phoneme, or sound. So the word fish which is spelled with four letters has only 3 phonemes: / f / / i / / sh /.

Segmenting words is one of the more difficult skills students acquire. Some say it is also one of the best predictors of future success in reading. Elkonin boxes are a physical segmentation of words into phonemes.

I make my boxes a bit longer when a digraph or blend is involved because it fixes the spelling in a child's mind. There are several activities that teachers can do with Elkonin boxes, but the main activity teachers usually use them for is to 'stretch' out words, identify similar or different sounds and then guess at spelling.

I've made an alphabetical list of some of the more popular words for kindergarten and first grade. You can use them as skill sheets or run them off and laminate them and use them as flashcards or a center activity.

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Why should you use Elkonin Boxes?

- They help students build phonological awareness.
- They help students segment words into sounds or syllables.
- They teach students how to count the number of phonemes in a word.
- This is not always the number of letters in a word.
- They help students understand the alphabetic principle in decoding.
- Although they were not meant for spelling they help students guess at spelling, and are a nice transition into that.

Directions For Using Elkonin Sound Boxes

- Run off the templates.
- You can laminate them and use them as a “dry-erase” type center, or use counters, chips, unifix cubes, or run them off on copy paper and have the children WRITE letters in the boxes, or use bingo dot markers.
- Model what you want your students to do.
- Say the word.
- For example fish.
- Children put 3 chips (one for each phoneme) **above** each of the 3 boxes.
- Remind them to do this in a left to right progression.
- Now children move the counters/chips that represent the sounds that they hear in the word into the boxes. They can hear an f and i and a sh.
- If they are using a bingo dot marker they dab 3 dots into the squares.
- You can also have children listen for a specific sound in the word, and place their chip or bingo dot in the first box if they hear the sound in the beginning of the word, in the middle box if they hear the sound in the middle of the word, or in the last box if they hear it at the end of the word.
- For example, listen for the n sound in can. Where do you hear it? In the beginning, middle or end?
- You hear the n sound in can in the end, so put the dot in the last or 3rd square.

- Children can also put letter tiles in the squares or write letters in the squares.
- For example, the word is cat. Stretch it out. You can hear c-a-t. Write the letters c-a-t in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd boxes.

Research that supports this reading strategy: can be found in the following articles:

Blachman, B. A., Ball, E. W., Black, R., & Tangel, D. M. (2000). *Road to the code: A phonological awareness program for young children*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Clay, M. (1993). *Reading Recovery: A Guidebook for Teachers in Training*. NH: Heinemann.

Elkonin, D. (1971). "Development of Speech". In A.V. Zaporozhets and D. B. Elkonin (Eds.). *The Psychology of Preschool Children*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

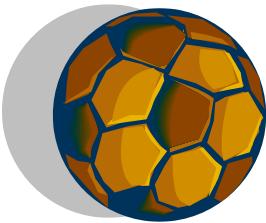
How Now Brown Cow: Phoneme Awareness Activities By: Edwin S. Ellis (1997) is an excellent article that also includes some information on the Elkonin Sound Boxes. Click on the link to read it. <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/388>





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ball

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bat

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bed

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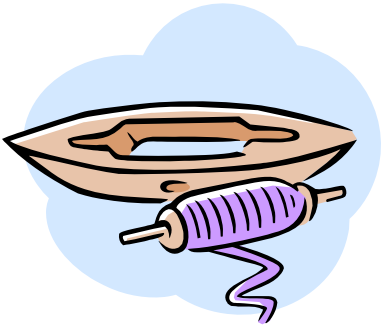
bee

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bell

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boat

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book

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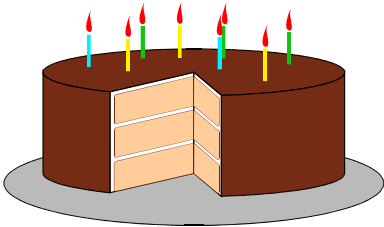
box

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bus

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cake

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can

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cat

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corn

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cow

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cup

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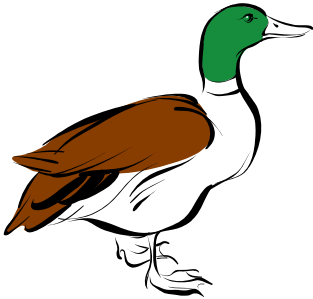
dog

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doll

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duck

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feet

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fire

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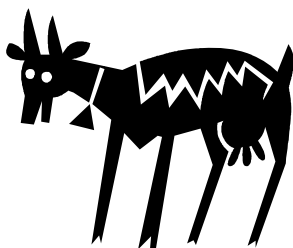
fish

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frog

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goat

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hand

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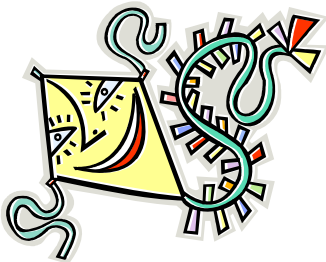
hat

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jet

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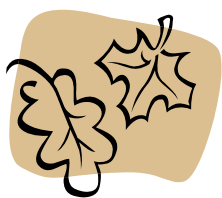
kite

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lamp

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mask

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milk

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moon

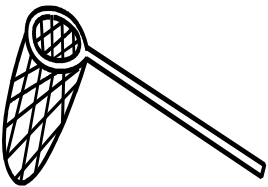
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nest

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net

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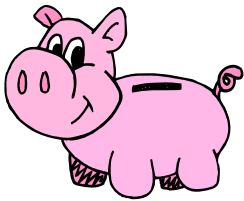
nut

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pen

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pig

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pot

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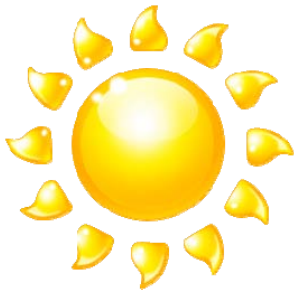
ring

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sheep

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sun

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tooth

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whip

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SAY the word. WRITE the word. Use the word in a sentence.

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