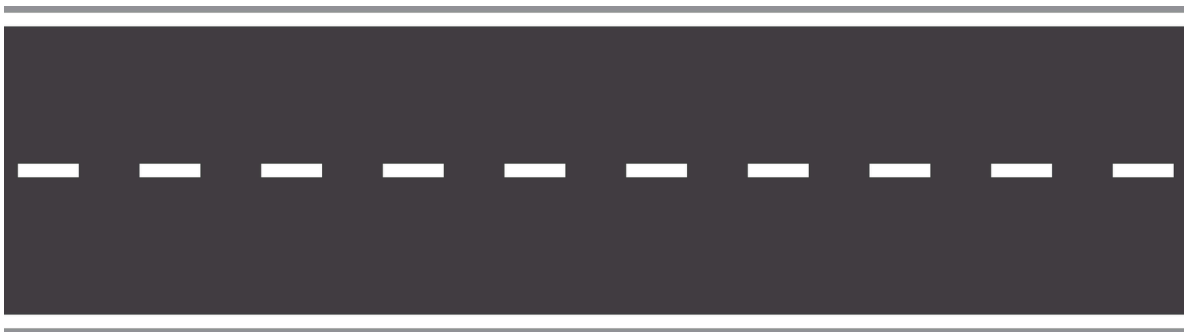


lit to lead

Let's Continuous Blend!

Write a word and teach your child to drag the sounds together without pausing between them. Tell them to keep their motor running, like a car engine that doesn't stop making noise!



How to teach blending

Your kiddo knows their letter sounds, but sounding out isn't turning into reading yet. That's normal. Blending isn't intuitive for most kids, so it has to be taught on purpose. Here's the one strategy that's the G.O.A.T. for teaching it, step by step.



Watch me do it first (it's short!)

youtube.com/watch?v=t8ekRqizgr4

1

Skip the pauses

Most of us teach "sound it out" as each sound with a pause in between: *c... a... t*. Then we ask our kiddo to glue the sounds back together. For some kids that clicks. For a lot of others, it leads to:

- Saying each sound, then getting stuck on the word itself
- Slow blending, mixed-up sounds, or guessing
- Saying every word twice (once to sound it out, once to read it), which makes sentences a slog

2

Keep your motor running

Instead, drag the sounds together with no stops, stretching the vowel. Tell your kiddo:

SAY THIS

"Pretend your mouth is a car. The motor makes noise the whole time it runs. Keep your motor running, with the sound coming out, until you reach the end of the word."

Then model it: slide your finger under the letters and drag the sounds with your voice. For *at* you say **aaaaaat!** Now slide **their** finger along the word and have them stretch it just like you. The goal is one smooth pass, so the word only gets said once.

3

Start with 2-sound words

Write one in the box on the car mat and practice until these feel easy:

at it in an up on am if

4

Move up to 3-sound words

Same move: drag your finger and stretch the vowel. If your kiddo has a hard time connecting the first two sounds, start with words that begin with a **stretchy** sound. You can hold these as long as you want:

m r l n v f z s

So *sit* becomes **sssiit**, and *mug* becomes **mmmuug**. The word cards on pages 4–6 start with the easiest words to blend. Cut them apart and save pages 7–8 for when those feel smooth.

5 Drive the car mat

Write a word in the box on page 1, or set a word card on top of it. Your kiddo drives a toy car (or their finger) along the road, saying the sounds the whole way, with no stopping until they reach the stop sign. At the stop sign, they say the word.



6 Repeat, repeat, repeat

Repetition is the step that makes it stick. Five minutes a day is plenty. Turn the cards into games: read a card, then drive the car one space, or hide cards around the room and read each one you find.

Don't move on too soon. Stay on CVC words (like *jug*, *lap*, *red*) until your kiddo reads them quickly and easily, without saying words twice. Hold off on heart words like *the*, *said*, and *you* until then. So many longer words are built from this same pattern (*picnic*, *running*, *uncommon*), so this is the foundation for every phonics skill that comes next.

If it's not clicking yet

They say the sounds, then stop

Your voice may be pausing too. Model slower and keep the sound going. Drop back to 2-sound words.

They add "uh" (buh-a-tuh)

Keep bouncy sounds like b, t, p quick and tiny, and slide right into the vowel.

They land on a close word ("mat" for "map")

Point to the last letter: "Check the end. Drive it again."

Tears or wiggles

Stop for today. A happy two minutes beats a hard fifteen.

Ready for what comes after blending?

Play to Read+ gives you every next skill in order, with games for each one, in less than 15 minutes a day. **Let's make reading easy!**

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zap

zip

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