



Doxey Elementary

What is FSF?

First **S**ound **F**luency: A word is said and the student says the first sound they hear in that word. This back-and-forth sequence is repeated for one minute. **FSF** is a brief assessment of a student's fluency in identifying the initial (first) sounds in words.

Why is it important?

The ability to isolate the first sound in a word is an important phonemic awareness skill (hearing sounds in words) that is highly related to learning to read well. The ability to isolate and identify the first phoneme (sound) in a word is a beginning reader skill. **FSF** is used as a measure of developing phonemic awareness at the beginning and middle of kindergarten.

Who is tested and what are the benchmarks?

Kindergarten students should be able to say at least 30 sounds in one minute by the end of January. If this benchmark is not obtained, don't lose hope. Continue with specific practice until they can say the first sound they hear in a word with little to no difficulty.

How can I help my child?

Phoneme awareness is the ability to identify phonemes (sounds) when they are found in their natural context as spoken words. Children need phoneme awareness to learn to read because letters represent phonemes (sounds) in words. Therefore, learning to read begins by making friends with phonemes – becoming comfortable and familiar with them. Informally, children develop this familiarity in conversations. (Bruce Murray)

Thus, practicing this beginning reading skill is easy and can be fun. You can practice anywhere and anytime you have a chance to talk – make a game of it! (5-10 minute sessions work best)

*Note: Kindergartners should practice words that begin with consonant sounds.

Examples:



At breakfast -

- “We are having pancakes. What sound does *pancake* begin with?” /p/
- “I’m going to put jam on my pancake. What sound does *jam* begin with?” /j/
- “Do you want syrup on your pancake? What sound does *syrup* begin with?” /s/
- “Let’s use a fork to eat our pancakes. What sound does *fork* begin with?” /f/



In the car –

- “We just passed Walmart. What sound does *Walmart* begin with?” /w/
- “Now we passed Chili’s. What sound does *Chili’s* begin with?” /ch/
- “We’re almost to McDonalds. What sound does *McDonalds* begin with?” /m/
- “I need to answer my phone. What sound does *phone* begin with?” /f/



Learning to tie shoe laces –

- “I am going to teach you to tie your shoes. What sound does *shoes* begin with?” /sh/
- “A shoelace is like a fat string. What sound does *string* begin with?” /s/
- “There you go, you just tied your shoe! What sound does *there* begin with?” /th/
- “Now you are ready to go to the bus stop. What sound does *bus* start with?” /b/



At the zoo –

- “I just saw a lion. What sound does *lion* begin with?” /l/
- “Is that a parrot in that cage? What sound does *parrot* begin with?” /p/
- “I love watching the polar bear in the water. What sound does *water* begin with?” /w/
- “That giraffe is coming to see us! What sound does *giraffe* begin with?” /j/
- “Isn’t that gorilla enormous? What sound does *gorilla* begin with?” /g/

You get the idea – anywhere/anyplace. You CAN practice first sound phonemic awareness. *Your kindergarten children will not be asked to produce first sounds for words that begin with vowel sounds.

Once your children become proficient at recognizing the beginning sounds of words, move to identifying the ending sounds of words using the same strategies. It will help their acquisition of reading and writing skills significantly to know how to identify the beginning and ending phonemes (sounds) of words.

What do you do if your child is struggling with this skill? Practice beginning sound fluency using the script from this research based routine. (Keep sessions to 5-10 minutes.)

Identifying Beginning Sound Instructional Routine

<p>Say the word slowly.</p>	<p><i>/m/--/o/--/m/</i></p>
<p>Notice the changes in your mouth and changes in the sound as you say the words slowly again.</p>	<p><i>/m/--/o/--/m/</i></p>
<p>Begin to say the word slowly again, but stop before your mouth and sound changes to the second sound.</p>	<p><i>/m/</i></p>
<p>Say just the first sound. This is the beginning sound of the word.</p>	<p><i>The word mom begins with the sound /m/.</i></p>