

**Service Learning Literacy Strategies: ELLs in Elementary Education**  
by Kerry Purmensky, Shawn Pollgreen, and Carine Strebel Halpern

*Phonemic Awareness*

**Minimal Pairs BINGO for Phonemic Awareness**

Minimal pairs are two words that sound exactly alike except for one target phoneme/sound (e.g. light-right, bog-bug, back-bag). The purpose of creating activities with minimal pairs is to help ELL students hear the English sounds, identify them, and produce them (usually targeting sounds the student may be having problems with but can be used to practice phonemic awareness of any sounds).

There are many, many activities you can do using minimal pairs, from online listening activities <http://www.manythings.org/pp/> to classroom activities such as minimal pair BINGO. Here we present a minimal pair BINGO game.

Supplies needed:

BINGO cards (create ahead of time or have students create them in class)

word markers (cardboard squares or plastic chips so students can mark the words on their cards)

Instructions:

1. Pass out BINGO cards.
2. Model how to play: show a BINGO card; call out a word; search the card; find the wrong word and don't mark it; find the right word and mark it. Show how BINGO is reached when all words in a line are marked.
3. Choose a caller. It can be the teacher or a student (or a pair of students).
4. Call the words slowly and clearly.
5. Let students ask for repetition as needed. If they are not sure what word they are hearing, remind them to look at how the person is articulating the word/sounds. They may ask for spelling if they cannot get it after three tries.
6. The first person to get BINGO calls out their words to have them checked. They get both listening and pronunciation practice.

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**Treasure Hunt**

In this activity the class goes on a hunt of items that start with different letters with the help of self-made binoculars.

Supplies needed:

1 Kitchen towel roll cut in halves (use a kitchen knife) or 2 toilet paper rolls for each child

Crayons or markers

Masking tape

Some string or yarn

Index cards

Instructions:

1. Attach the rolls together side-by-side using the packaging tape.
2. With the masking tape, attach string or yarn across from where tubes are taped together, about 1" from rim.
3. Allow students to decorate their binoculars.
4. Pick 3-5 letters to work on and write one on each index card.

5. Start the hunt. Each time a student spots an item that starts with one of the letters, ask the group to say the word and ask them to point out the corresponding alphabet index card.
6. Continue hunt until at least 5 items for each letter have been spotted.

Possible Extensions:

- Students can keep a treasure hunt journal. Note the items found during the hunt and write the words on the board after returning to the classroom. Students can draw a picture of their favorite item for each letter of the day, and label the picture in their journal. The treasure hunt can be included in creating an alphabet book.
  - Students pick 2 letters and take home binocular to hunt for items. This extension invites parental involvement.
  - This activity can be used while creating a word wall, or the items found can be added to an existing word wall.
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***Vocabulary Building***

**Found Poems – Vocabulary and Writing**

Students compose found poems based on a descriptive story, passage or book they are reading. They pick out words, phrases and lines from the story and arrange and format the excerpts to compose their own poems. This process of recasting the text they are reading in a different genre helps students become more insightful readers and develop creativity in thinking and writing. It also helps them examine vocabulary words in a new way and to “write” poems without having to produce all of the language themselves. Our pre-service teachers have successfully used found poems with ELL students in the very early stages of L2 development. Of course, the reading material used should be grade/age and L2 stage appropriate.

Supplies needed:

storybook or other reading material that catches students’ interest

paper and pencil

illustration materials (if students want to illustrate their found poem)

Instructions:

adapted from “Found and Headline Poems” from *Getting the Knack: 20 Poetry Writing Exercises* by Stephen Dunning and William Stafford.

1. Read the story (individually, in group, with teacher/mentor) and discuss meaning and feelings.
2. Write down the words and phrases that you find interesting, keeping them in the order that you found them and double spacing each line. Teachers might leave this completely open or guide the students to choose a certain number of words/phrases that are about a particular theme such as adventure, love, etc.
3. Make any minor changes necessary to create your poem. You can change punctuation and make little changes to the words to make them fit together (such as change the tenses, possessives, plurals, and capitalizations). If students want to, they may add a word or two to make the poem flow more smoothly, to make sense.
4. Choose a title.
5. Copy the words and phrases into your journal or type them in a word processor. Space or arrange the words so that they’re poem-like. Pay attention to line breaks, layout, and other elements that will emphasize important words or significant ideas in the poem.

\*Read aloud as you arrange the words. Arrange the words so that they make a rhythm you like. You can space words out so that they are all alone or allruntogether. You can also put key words on lines by themselves.

\*You can illustrate your poem or shape the entire poem so that it's wide or tall or shaped like an object (e.g., a heart, a mountain).

\*Emphasize words by playing with boldface and italics, different sizes of letters, and so forth.

6. At the bottom of the poem, tell where the words in the poem came from. For example, From "A kind word goes a long way" by Rachel Yoder, on Stories of Love Page on The Mystery of Love Web Site.

### Extensions:

- Use this lesson as a book report or chapter summary alternative. Ask students to choose descriptive passages from two or three key moments in the text and then compose found and parallel poems from those passages. Add a reflective piece where students explain why they chose the passages they did.

### Sample found poem

Passage from Page 127 of *Holes* by Louis Sachar:

There was a change in the weather. For the worse. The air became unbearably humid. Stanley was drenched in sweat. Beads of moisture ran down the handle of his shovel. It was almost as if the temperature had gotten so hot that the air itself was sweating. A loud boom of thunder echoed across the empty lake. A storm was way off to the west, beyond the mountains. Stanley could count more than thirty seconds between The flash of lightning and the clap of thunder. That was how far away the storm was. Sound travels a great distance across a barren wasteland.

Found Poem:

There was a change for the worse.  
The air became humid.  
Beads of moisture ran down  
The air itself was sweating  
Thunder echoed across the empty lake  
A storm beyond the mountains.  
Thirty seconds between the flash and the thunder  
Sound travels a great distance  
Across a barren wasteland

Parallel Poem (same structure and phrases, but students change words to talk about a new subject):

There was a change For the team The crowd grew restless Beads of moisture pooled In the corners of his eyes  
It was almost the same As the time he blew the touchdown Thunder grew in the crowded stands  
Anger building on the sidelines Thirty seconds on the game clock And he kicked Sound exploded as the ball flew  
Across the end zone And through the uprights

## Flip Chute Vocabulary Activity

In this activity, we are using a flip chute for vocabulary study/practice/review, but it can be used for any kind of activity from math to content area Q&A. Flip chutes maintain student interest and enthusiasm and accommodate tactual learning needs. Small cards are created with a “question” on one side and the “answer” on the other.

We have written a variety of card types, with target vocabulary words in English. For example, some cards have a picture from the current science chapter (e.g., a volcano, lava, eruption) and the ELL student has to recall and produce the word. The card is put into the flip chute picture side up and the answer shoots out the bottom saying “volcano,” confirming the student’s answer. You might write the word in the student’s L1 on one side of the card and in English on the other, to build on the student’s schema in the L1 and encourage biliteracy. You might write a sentence using a vocab. word on one side, and the student has to identify the vocab word (which is written on the other side).

### Supplies needed:

1 orange juice carton (washed and dried)  
masking tape  
self-stick contact paper  
scissors  
cardboard or plastic for the chute (I used transparencies)  
cardboard for vocabulary cards (If laminated, you can use a dry erase marker and use the same cards over and over. Or you might make a permanent set for each chapter/unit vocab. list.)

### Instructions for constructing a flip chute:

<http://triton.oldwestbury.edu/oconnors/My%20Webpage/flipchutedirections.htm>

### Uses/Extensions:

- Make flip chute vocabulary cards for every chapter/unit’s vocabulary list and have ELLs use them to review vocabulary frequently. Students can have their own flip chute and set of vocab. cards.
- Tie the exercises in with the textbook by referring to the chapter/page where the words are used, and make a page-on-tape that ELL students can listen to and read along with as they work through the vocab. cards using the flip chute.

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## *Decoding/Chunking*

### **Noise Maker**

This activity is to enhance sight word recognition.

### Supplies needed:

2 Paper Plates  
Crayons  
Dried Beans  
Stapler  
Craft Stick  
Tape

Instructions:

1. Have students decorate the paper plates.
2. Put one paper plate on the table, with the right side up. Tape a craft stick to the rim of the plate leaving out part of the stick for a handle.
3. Place the other paper plate on top of the first one, right side down. This will make a gap in the middle.
4. Start stapling the edges together. Leave an opening to slide a handful of dried beans in.
5. Finish stapling it shut.
6. Write 3-5 sight words of the day on the board.
7. During the first 5-10 minutes of daily silent reading time, ask students to rattle the noise maker whenever they come across one of the sight words of the day.
8. After 10 minutes, ask students to re-read the section covered during the activity in case they were so focused on finding the sight words of the day that they didn't pay attention to what they read.
- 9.

Possible Extension:

- Students can keep track of how many times they come across each sight word of the day in their reading. The entire class can be polled.
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## **Alphabet Book**

Supplies needed:

Old magazines, catalogs, or newspapers with pictures

Glue stick or glue

Scissors

Construction paper (14 pages per child)

Crayons or markers

Hole punch

Some string or yarn

Instructions:

1. Punch a few holes along the margins of 14 pieces of construction paper
2. Tie the book together with string or yarn
3. Write student's name and "ABC book" on cover
4. Write a large letter on each page of the book
5. Ask students to personalize the cover with his/her photo, a drawing, or pictures for an "A" word, a "B" word, and a "C" word
6. Give students time to cut out simple pictures for easy words that start with different letters of the alphabet.
7. Ask students to say the words out loud as they place 2-3 pictures on each page.
8. Assist student in labeling the picture.

Alternatives or Extensions:

- Students can draw pictures on the pages.
  - Students can write adjectives and verbs as well as nouns.
  - These books can be themed to integrate content.
  - Students can add to the alphabet book over an extended period of time by bringing pictures they find at home. This extension allows them to revisit the letters and adds to parental involvement.
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## Roots of Language Competition

This is a true collaborative group activity.

By studying and learning Latin/Greek roots, and prefixes and suffixes, ELLs are better prepared to infer the meaning of words which they do not recognize in the English language. Because they can infer the meaning of an unrecognized word with some accuracy, they are able to read faster, with more confidence, and with more accuracy.

### Supplies Needed:

Enough copies of 4 handouts for everyone: 1) a list of **Latin Roots**; 2) a list of **Greek Roots**; 3) a list of **prefixes**; and 4) a list of **suffixes**. Each person in every group should have one copy of each of the categories. Ideally, each group will consist of 4 members, and each member of the group will get 4 handouts. You will also need whiteboard and different colored whiteboard markers; and paper to match the whiteboard colors (example: red, green, blue, and black).

### Sources of material:

<http://abasiccurriculum.com/homeschool/roots/>

[http://www.kent.k12.wa.us/KSD/MA/resources/greek\\_and\\_latin\\_roots/transition.html](http://www.kent.k12.wa.us/KSD/MA/resources/greek_and_latin_roots/transition.html) (an elem. school)

[http://www.edhelper.com/Word\\_Roots.htm](http://www.edhelper.com/Word_Roots.htm) (word roots activities)

### Instructions:

1. Create groups (groups of 4 work best). Have the students give themselves a name, and give them a “color.” This color should be their whiteboard marker color.
2. Give students the handouts; you can assign each student to be an expert in one of the categories or you can allow them to choose for themselves. Have them study the lists overnight or for a number of days (depending on the level of your students). The goal is for each student to become an **expert** at ONE of the handouts (i.e. Greek roots), and become **familiar** with all of the handouts. In the days leading up to this activity, you can be studying and working with these roots and affixes in class. To encourage students to study hard, let them know that they will be working as a group to compete against each other during the **Roots of Language** competition
3. On the day of the activity, students are to get in their groups WITHOUT their handouts. Students should have become experts at their one area: **Latin Roots, Greek Roots, prefixes or suffixes**. Give each group one piece of paper corresponding to the colors of the groups. For example, if you have 4 groups (red, blue, black, green), each group should get one piece of paper of that color (if black, black trim works best).
4. In their groups, students should work together to come up with 4 nonsense words (2 Latin/2 Greek) made of a prefix, root or roots and a suffix. They should come up with an original definition that makes sense according to the meaning, but can also be very creative. You can give them anywhere from 15 minutes to 30 minutes depending on your class time. You can write some examples on the board such as
  - Tricaputor (a three-headed person)
  - Contradentance (someone who hates teeth)
5. Once all groups are finished, each group should have one member write their 4 words on the whiteboard in their color of marker. After all words are up, the other groups have to write all the words down on the same color of paper as the group (i.e. students will write all the red words down on the red piece of paper), and then guess their definitions. They should write the definitions on the

paper. **Every student will have to contribute his/her special knowledge and the groups will have to communicate and work together to create definitions. No member can stay silent if the group is to succeed.** Be sure students put their group name on all their papers.

6. After 15-30 minutes, collect all the papers, and give the correct color paper to the correct group, so that group can “grade” the paper according to their definitions and how close the other groups are. For example, the Red group should get all the red papers to grade. You will need to monitor this to make sure they are being fair!.
7. After 5 minutes, pass all the papers back and have groups add up their scores. See which group got the most words correct!
8. Have groups share their definitions, and then everyone can vote on their favorite word.
9. Have students post their words around the classroom, with the correct definitions. Students can even adopt a word for that week to use whenever they can.

Alternatives:

- You can allow students to use more than one root or affix to make it more challenging.
- You can limit the number of roots and affixes to make it easier. Or, you can allow students to use their handouts during the activity.

## References

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### Literacy Building

K-5 Literacy building reading websites

PBS Between the Lions <http://pbskids.org/lions/>

PBS Kids <http://pbskids.org/>

Starfall <http://starfall.com>

Audio Stories [http://www.beenleigss.qld.edu.au/requested\\_sites/audiostories/index.html](http://www.beenleigss.qld.edu.au/requested_sites/audiostories/index.html)

Kidspiration <http://www.coweta.k12.ga.us/cweb/Kidspiration/KidActivities.htm>

<http://www.primarygames.com/>

<http://www.puzzlemaker.com/>

Clifford the Big Red Dog interactive storybooks <http://teacher.scholastic.com/clifford1/>

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/> - interactive reading/audio activities such as I Spy, etc.

Reading Workshop/ Phonics page <http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/elementary/palmasola/phonpage.htm>