

## Ladders

### College- and Career-Ready Standard Addressed: RF.1.3a–b

Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

- Know the spelling-sound correspondences for common consonant digraphs.
- Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words.

**Objective: Students will use their knowledge of letter-sound correspondence and their awareness of phonological sound placement to write and change words.**

#### Materials

- For each student, paper or white board showing a drawing of a ladder.
- Sheet of chart paper or the equivalent with a ladder drawn on it (for teacher modeling).
- Markers or the equivalent.
- Word list (See sample below).

#### Suggested Schedule and Group Size

**Schedule:** Daily, no more than 5 minutes to 10 minutes per session.

**Recommended group size:** Individual or small group (up to four to six students).

**Note:** The following script is intended as a model.

#### Activity

##### Intervention Principle

Use precise, simple language to introduce and model new procedures.

##### Sample Script and Procedures

*Students will work together as partners for part of this lesson. For ideas about how to partner students, please see the “Instructional Considerations” section below.*

**Today we will practice writing new words by changing one letter at a time in a word. We can change a word into a new word by changing just one letter. Watch me. Write the word “bat” on the bottom of the ladder on the whiteboard.**

**This word is /b//a//t/ bat. “Bat” has three sounds. I can use a bat to hit the ball. What word? (Bat.) Now watch me as I change the word “bat” to “sat.” I know that “bat” and “sat” rhyme because they have the same ending sound /at/. (Point to “at” in the word “bat.”) That means I just have to change one letter—the first letter—to make the new word.**

Adapted with permission from The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts. (2002). *Word study for students with learning disabilities and English language learners* (p. 24). Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin.

<p>Explicitly model your thinking aloud to demonstrate a new procedure.</p> <p>Work through the next example together with the student(s).</p> <p>Provide repeated opportunities to correctly practice the step and provide feedback.</p>	<p><b>Watch and listen while I think out loud:</b></p> <p><b>I can say the sounds in the word “sat”:</b> /s//a//t/. The first sound in “sat” is /s/. The letter “s” makes the /s/ sound. The second sound is /a/. The letter “a” makes the /a/ sound. The last sound is /t/. The letter “t” makes the /t/ sound.</p> <p>Since the word “sat” ends in the sound /at/ and so does the word “bat,” I know I just need to change the first letter. The word “sat” starts with /s/, which is the letter “s,” so I need to change the letter “b” in “bat” to an “s” to make the word say “sat.”</p> <p><b>Watch me as I write the new word on the next ladder rung above the word “bat.”</b> <i>Model writing the word “sat” above “bat.”</i></p> <p><b>Now it’s your turn. Write the word “sat” on the bottom rung of your ladder.</b> <i>Check to make sure students write the word correctly.</i></p> <p><b>Great! Now we have made two words. Sometimes, we can even change other parts of the word to make a new word. This time, we’ll change a new part of the word. Let’s try this one together.</b></p> <p><b>I’ll give you a word, and you will tell your partner which part of the word—the beginning, the middle, or the ending sound—you’ll need to change to make “sat” into a new word. Each word we make today will have only three sounds in it. The new word is “sad.” What word?</b> <i>(Sad.)</i></p> <p><b>Now turn to your partners, and 1s whisper to 2s which part of the word—the beginning, the middle, or the end—needs to be changed.</b> <i>(Solicit partner answers.)</i> <b>That’s right! You told me that we would need to change the letter at the end of the word to make the word change from “sat” to “sad.” I can say the sounds in the word “sad”:</b> /s//a//d/. That’s different than “sat,” which is /s//a//t/.</p> <p><b>The words have different ending sounds. The /d/ sound is made with the letter “d,” so I know I need to change the “t” at the end of the word “sat” to “d” to make the word “sad.” Watch me write the word on my next ladder rung.</b> <i>(Model writing the word “sad.”)</i> <b>We did it! We made a new word just by changing one sound. Now it’s your turn to write the word “sad” on your ladder.</b> <i>(Pause as students respond.)</i></p> <p><b>Nice job. Let’s try one more. Let’s change the word “sad” to “mad.”</b> <b>2s whisper to 1s the sound that needs to change and tell your partner what letter to change in “sad” to make “mad.”</b> <i>(Solicit partner answers.)</i> <b>Great! You told me that to make the word “mad,” you need to change the letter “s” in “sad” to “m” as in “mad.” Now it’s your turn to write the word “mad” on your ladder.</b> <i>(Monitor students and provide feedback if necessary.)</i></p> <p><b>Now that you have the hang of it we are ready to practice making new words. I will give you a word and you will decide which letter to change and then write it on the ladder above the last word. Remember that all of the words we practice with today will have only three sounds in them, and you can always change the beginning, middle, or ending sound to make a new word. Ready?</b></p>
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<p>Have students explain new concepts in their own words, incorporating the important terms you have taught.</p>	<p><i>Give students a new word from the sample word list and monitor as they change parts of the word to make a new word. Note that you can ask partners to reword the directions in their own words before beginning independent practice.</i></p>
<p><b>Error Correction</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Intervention Principle</u></b></p> <p>Provide immediate and explicit error correction. Have the student practice the correct response.</p>	<p><b><u>Sample Script and Procedures</u></b></p> <p>Student changes the wrong letter in the word:</p> <p><b>That’s not quite right. My turn. We want to make the word “sat” change to “sad.” That word you wrote is “sap.” Watch me segment the word: /s//a//p/. I can segment “sad” like this: /s//a//d/. Be sure to isolate each sound as you segment the word and emphasize the ending sound that was incorrect.</b></p> <p><b>You wrote the first two sounds correctly, /s//a/; but the last sound in your word says /p/ as in the letter “p.” To make the last sound say /d/, we need to make it the letter “d.” (Model writing the correct word.) Now you try blending the new word. (Repeat as needed when additional mistakes occur.)</b></p>
<p><b>Instructional Considerations</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Intervention Principle</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Sample Script and Procedures</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity can be repeated over time with additional example words.</li> <li>• Introduce nonsense word examples.</li> <li>• Once students have a list of words, have them read the words for fluency practice. They can take turns in each small group or do this with partners.</li> <li>• When partnering your students, it is a good idea to use their Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) scores to rank them from highest to lowest in a group or class. Next, split the list in half and move the top student in the second half to the top of the list in the first half. The goal is to pair a student who is functioning at a level slightly higher than another student to serve as a model for the student who is functioning at a somewhat lower level. However, you want their skills to be somewhat close together so they can provide adequate feedback to each other. The higher-level student should be assigned as Partner 1, and the lower-level student should be Partner 2.</li> </ul>

**Sample Word List (print and cut)**

<b>bat</b>	<b>top</b>
<b>sat</b>	<b>pop</b>
<b>sad</b>	<b>pad</b>
<b>mad</b>	<b>dad</b>
<b>map</b>	<b>mop</b>