

UNIT STRUCTURE
Teaching Reading Skills
CLASS – II

Unit Over-view	Rationale	Unit Outcomes				Methodology Support					Additional Reading	
		Learning Outcomes	Learning Gaps to be addressed	Related Lessons	Unit Objectives	Introduction	Case Study 1	Activity 1	Case Study 2	Activity 2 Summary		Suggested Questions
Overview of the language skill What the Gunotsav assessment shows us		LO 2.02 : The learner responds to comprehension questions related to stories and poems, in home language or English or sign language, orally and in writing(phrases/ short sentences) LO 2.04 : The learner expresses verbally her or his opinion and asks questions about the characters, storyline, etc. in English or home language.	Sub Area : i. pronouncing words with consonant clusters with ease. Sub Area : ii. identifying silent letters in words and pronouncing them appropriately.	Lesson 3 Traffic Lights Lesson 4 Keep Healthy	In this unit you will read ways of helping learners- a) pronounce words with consonant clusters with ease. b) identify silent letters in words and pronounce them appropriately.	What this unit will teach you	Kavita Baruah's class on consonant clusters	Playing with Consonant clusters	Teaching the long vowel sounds	Identifying letter patterns in words with silent letters What you learnt in this unit	Sample Questions : Q1. Write the names of colours which begin with bl : Q2. I am in know but not in now . Say who I am.	↪ www.tess-india.edu.in ↪ http://juniorlearning.com ↪ Learning English, the lively way, a DVD by SCERT, Assam ↪ Milne, D. (2014) Teaching the Brain The New Science of Education ↪ Consonant clusters and Silent letters

Overview

This unit deals with the skill of reading. At the elementary level, reading includes the ability to pronounce words correctly and understand the meaning of words. To pronounce words correctly, students have to be able to relate letters to sound. In English, this is not easy, because English words have 'clusters' (as in 'stop' or 'brick') as well as 'silent' letters (as in 'chalk' or 'comb'). Some clusters, such as 'st' or 'nt' are not difficult for most of our students, as there are similar sound structures in their home languages. But there are many other combinations of consonants such as 'school', 'brush' or 'cry' that children may find difficult to pronounce. Similar is the case with silent letters. To make students confident and good readers, the teacher will have to give them constant practice, both by using lists or words as well as sentences. In the following sections, we will discuss these problems of pronunciation and reading abilities of Class II children. We will also read about ways of solving these problems.

Rationale

As you are aware, Gunotsav 2017 tried to assess the language skills of students of all classes. The performance of the students was analyzed, and the results identified reading abilities at Class II level as a 'grey' area, i.e. an area where students performed very poorly. Although pronunciation is only one aspect of reading, this aspect is very important at the elementary level. If it is not taken care of at this stage, the learners will carry this learning gap to the next class, and will find it very difficult to

read their lessons.

One of the main reasons why our learners perform very badly when asked to read words with consonant clusters, silent letters or vowel combinations is because there is no one-to-one correspondence between the English letters and their sounds. For example, the letter 's' is pronounced 's' in some words (e.g. sea and send), while it is pronounced as 'sh' in other words (e.g. sugar and sure). When it comes to consonant clusters, the difficulty level increases. This is partly because of the influence of the home language, but also because children do not get enough practice in reading. To overcome these gaps, teachers will have to give their learners practice in reading words containing these difficult sound combinations. In this unit, we will try to show how this can be done.

Introduction

"My students can read three-letter words like cat, dog, etc. But they find it difficult to read words with consonant clusters. They cannot combine the sounds that the letters represent. I have also noticed that when they read words with silent letters like chalk or comb, they always pronounce the sound of the silent letters. What can I do to help my students read words with consonant clusters and silent letters so that they can read their lessons correctly and fluently?"



One of the most common problems in our English classes is reading a text fluently. As reading requires the ability to convert letters into sounds, the learners feel lost. Do your students read fluently? The ability to make a connection between the letters of a word and their sound is called decoding. Decoding is a necessary step towards developing fluency.

Unit Objectives

In this unit you will read ways of helping learners-

- a) pronounce words with consonant clusters with ease.
- b) identify silent letters in words and pronounce them appropriately.

Case Study 1: Kavita Baruah's class on consonant clusters

Kavita Baruah teaches English in Class II in a government school. Her students find it difficult to read English, and she tries out different techniques to make them better readers. Let's read what she says: My learners are more or less able to associate the English letters and their sounds. But they face difficulty in reading words with consonant clusters. I discussed the problem with my colleagues and came up with a list of consonant clusters. After making the list, I realized that I wasn't very confident in pronouncing some of the consonant clusters like st, sm, sl, sk, sch etc. So what I did before I taught my students to read words with consonant clusters was that I started listening to English news on the radio and T.V. I also watched English movies with English subtitles. I even went to one of my neighbours whose English pronunciation is very good and corrected my pronunciation with her help.

After taking care of my own pronunciation, I started planning for my class. I duplicated some of the activities that I did to teach letter- sound association. They are as follows-

1. I took words with consonant clusters from the textbook, such as flower, grapes, sky, butterfly, brush, crow, train, etc. I collected the pictures of these objects. Then I prepared flashcards, pasting the picture on one side and writing the word on the other side of the flashcard. I showed them the picture and said the names of the objects so that the learners could connect the letters, the sounds and the meaning. Then I hung the flashcards with the pictures facing the students. The next thing I did was to say a particular consonant cluster and asked them to say the name of the object with that consonant cluster. After doing this several times, I turned the flash cards over. This time the learners

- could see the words. Then I said a particular consonant cluster and asked them to locate it in the word. If they found it difficult, I read the words slowly again.
2. I created short reading texts. I made it sure that the size of the letters was quite big. The text consisted of words with the particular consonant cluster that I wanted my learners to practise.. I used my finger to show the part that I was reading. I read the text slowly, took pauses where that particular sound occurred and sometimes asked the learners to identify the sound and the letters.
 3. Sometimes I said a word with a consonant cluster and asked the learners to spell the word. I helped the learners to spell the words by giving clues about which letter has which sound. I wrote the spelling on the board. Sometimes I asked them to look at words with consonant clusters and pronounce them. I helped them to convert the letters into sounds.
 4. I used tongue twisters that have words with consonant clusters.
 5. I have hung charts of consonant clusters on the wall.

Whenever the learners find words with consonant clusters, I always encourage them to combine the sounds of the consonants and pronounce them by themselves. I try to lessen their dependence on picture clues.

The learners need to practise this constantly. And I took care that enough scope was given to do this through every lesson of the textbook.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How did Kavita Baruah prepare for her class?
- ★ Can you think of introducing consonant clusters according to difficulty level? On what basis will you decide the difficulty level?
- ★ How can you adopt the activities that Kavita Baruah did to teach the consonant clusters that are present in Lessons 3 and 4?
- ★ Can you think of ways to use the activities mentioned in the Case study to teach letter-sound association?

Activity 1: Playing with consonant clusters

You can try this activity in your class. This type of activity can help you motivate the learners and also assess the progress of learning. Here are the steps of the activity:

- ★ Draw on one side of the blackboard, or bring pictures of, common words beginning with a consonant cluster, such as a star, the sky, their school, a stem of a plant, a 'stop' sign. (The examples are all words beginning with 's'; you can make them practise with other clusters too).
- ★ On the other side of the board, write the words in a jumbled order.
- ★ Show them one picture at a time, and ask them to read aloud the correct word from the board.
- ★ Now rub the words out, and ask them to look at the pictures and say the words from memory. Also ask them to write the word in their notebook.
- ★ Help them with the spelling.
- ★ Ask them to think of another word with the same consonant cluster to each of the words they had practised.
- ★ Write all the words they give you, on the board.
- ★ Ensure that the learners know the meaning.

Ask the class to make meaningful sentences with the help of the words on the board.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Do you think the activity described above will make your learners interested in practising consonant clusters?
- ★ Besides pictures, what other resources can you use to teach and practise consonant clusters?

Case Study 2: Teaching the long vowel sounds

Robin Das is a Primary School Teacher. He teaches in Class II. Here he talks about problems faced by his students in reading words with two vowels, and what steps he takes to make them overcome this problem. Let's read what he has to say:

My learners are able to read three letter words with one vowel between two consonants. For example, they can read words like mat, cat, get, bin, sun, hot etc. with ease. But they struggle a lot when they are asked to read words where two vowels are placed together. For example they find it difficult to read, and are confused by words like read, meat, goat, gain, feet etc.

In order to help the learners overcome this problem I decided to teach them to pronounce the long vowel sounds represented by a,e,o., such as the long a sound realized in words like mate, gate,rate etc. or the long e sound as realized in words like be, he, she, etc. The long o sound is realized in words like hope, rope etc.

I used flash cards to teach these long vowel sounds. I wrote the vowel on one side and the word with the vowel on the other side of the flash card. I used both the sides alternatively and made the students say the words aloud till they were able to pronounce the long sounds of the vowels correctly. Then I made them practise words where these vowels occurred. I knew that when one of these three vowels (a,e,o)is followed by another vowel,the long sound of the first vowel is realized and the other vowel remains silent. So I took some words from the text and made flash cards of such words.

I said the words in the flash cards slowly so that they could hear the pronunciation clearly. I showed them the flash cards so that they could see the words. Then I put each word on the board and crossed out the silent vowel, like this: read, boat, main. The I made them say each word after me. I explained to them that the silent letter was needed to spell each word, but not when they read it.

Then, I asked the learners to identify the words with ea, ee, oa, ai vowels in the text and read the words aloud. Now, they could read the words quite correctly. Interestingly, they also read words like head, ready heavy etc. by pronouncing the long e and didn't pronounce the a at all. Then I told them the correct pronunciation of these words. But I also used this opportunity to encourage my learners to explore why some words are pronounced differently though they share the same pattern. I wanted them to realize that the rule that they just learnt about two adjacent vowels has got some exceptions, and I decided to teach this in my next class.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How is your learners' knowledge of consonants and vowels of the alphabet going to help you in planning your class?
- ★ Why is it a good idea to show the silent letter crossed out?

Activity 2: Identifying letter patterns in words with silent letters

You can try this activity in your class to help your students read words with silent letters. This type of activity will enable the learners to find letter patterns of words regarding which letter will be silent and where.

- ★ Make lists of words with the same silent letter such as *comb, lamb*, etc., and ask students to copy down the words in their notebooks.
- ★ Announce that you will read the words aloud, and they should underline the letter they do not hear.
- ★ Practise the exercise with one word first.
- ★ After they have finished, make them read word after you again.
- ★ Then make them look for patterns of the letters in the words. For example- which letter

is before or after the silent letter (whichever is applicable).

- ★ Help them to formulate rules on the basis of their findings.
- ★ Make them find other such words in their lesson, and ask them to read each word aloud.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Besides consonant clusters and silent letters, what other difficult words can be taught using flash cards?
- ★ How will you make the learners realize that the rules have exceptions?
- ★ What preparations will you have to make to use the flash card technique in your own class?

Unit Summary

In this unit we have discussed ways of helping our learners read words with consonant clusters and silent letters fluently. You have read about reasons like mother tongue pull, differences between letters and their sounds and the difficulty level caused by the combination of two or three consonant letters. These issues are why the learners of Assam find it difficult to read words with consonant clusters and words with silent letters. The case studies and the activities have tried to show practical ways in which these problems can be solved in the class. We hope you find the unit useful and helpful to improve your students' reading skills. You may share your personal experiences or success stories with your colleagues in the neighbouring schools.

Additional Reading

Resources:

Beginners' English II-SCERT, Assam

www.Tess-India.edu.in

<http://juniorlearning.com>

<http://www.syntheticphonics.com/phonics-methods.html>

Learning English, the lively way, a DVD by SCERT, Assam

Milne, D. (2014) Teaching the Brain-The New Science of Education

Literacy teaching guide: Phonics, NSW Department of Education and Training

Liu, CK, Phonics: Theory and Practice

Consonant clusters

There are some consonants which are placed together in words. When two or more such consonants are together in a word, the individual sound of each consonant can be heard while pronouncing the word. Such adjacent consonants are called **consonant clusters**. Another word used for consonant clusters is **blends**. There are many blends in the English language. They are mostly categorized as **r-blends** like *br, cr, tr, gr*, etc, **s-blends** like *sk, sc, sch, sm*, **l-blends** like *bl, cl, fl, gl, pl, sl*.

There are some consonants which produce a single sound when they are together instead of retaining their individual sounds unlike the blends. These adjacent consonants are called **digraphs**. There are seven basic consonant digraphs. They are- *ch, sh, th, ph, ng, wh* and *ck*. Another interesting fact is that some digraphs have more than one pronunciation. For example *ch* has three kinds of pronunciation. They are *ch* as in *chin*, *sh* as in *machine* and *k* as in *chorus*.

Silent letters

There are almost 60% English words which have silent letters in them. Silent letters are those letters which are there in the spelling of the word but are not pronounced. But they bring differences in pronunciation and in meaning. For example- the pronunciation of *whole* and *hole* are the same. But the silent letter *w* in *whole* brings a difference in meaning between the words. Silent letters are there

for reasons like origin of words. **H** is silent in words which have French origin, such as **honest, honour, heir** etc. Most of the silent letters were pronounced for centuries, but later they letters became silent in speech, but the spelling remained. For example, the first letters in the clusters **kn, gn, wr** were pronounced at one point, but they are no longer pronounced.

There are some rules to predict which letters will be silent and where. But these rules also have some exceptions. Children can be made to realize these exceptions by encouraging them to read as much as possible. Reading will enable the learners to automatically remember which letters will be silent after or before certain other letters.

Here are a few rules to predict which letters will be silent before and after other letters-

- **B** is usually silent after the letter **m** in words like **comb, lamb** and before the letter **t** in words like **subtle, doubt**.
- **E** is silent at the end of a word. For example, **mate, blue, change, use, have** etc.
- **K** is silent before the letter **n**. For example, **know, knife, knock** etc.
- **C** is silent before the letters **z, l** and **k**. For example, **Czar, muscle, block, clock** etc.
- The saying goes-. This means when there are two vowels together generally the first vowel is pronounced.
- **I** is silent before the letter **k** as in **chalk, talk, walk** etc.

Here are a few more things about silent letters in words -

- The letter **e** at the end of short vowel sound words changes the short vowel sound into a long one. For example- **rid/ride, hat/hate** etc.
- A silent letter brings changes to the pronunciation and meaning of words. For example- **sin/sign, mat/mate** etc.
- Silent letters help one to differentiate the homophones. Homophones are words that have same pronunciation but different spelling and meaning. For example, **know/no, whole/hole** etc.
- When two vowels are together in a word of **cvvc** (consonant vowel vowel consonant) pattern, generally the first vowel is long and the second one remains silent. For example, in words like **read** the two vowels are together. Here the **long e** sound is pronounced while the sound of **a** remains silent. Some similar patterns that follow this rule are the **oa, ee** and **ai** patterns. There are exceptions to this rule.

Suggested Questions

1. Choose and complete the word:



__ og

gr

fr

tr

cr



__ apes

sm

bl

gr

br



__ ain

bl

tr

cr

st

2. Write the names of colours which begin with **bl** :

3. Circle the correct spelling:

- a) tainr rtain train
 b) rgeen green grene
 c) swlo slow lsow
 d) crwo corw crow

4. Rearrange the letters to make words:

a) EALNC _____

b) RBUSH _____

c) INDRK _____

d) WLFOER _____

5. Fill in the blanks with bl, gr, st, br, sm, tr, sk to make meaningful words.

___ack ___apes ___op ___een

___ush ___all ___unts ___eats

___ass ___ain ___y ___ue

6. Ask the learners to choose any two consonants and use them to make words.

7. Match the words with the same sound (consonant cluster) in the beginning :

Black	stop
Grass	flower
Star	blue
Fly	green

8. Write another word that ends with - **alk**

Chalk walk — —

9. I am in 'flow' not in 'low'. Say who I am.

10. Write another word by using two consonants at the beginning.

flow ___ow

Silent letters

1. Read the words and circle the letters which are silent :

comb bomb blue chalk write make know

2. Read the pairs of words. They are pronounced the same. Why are the silent letters written in the second word in each pair?

sin	sign
rein	reign
not	knot
hole	whole

3. Match the words with the same beginning sound:

no	hear
ate	hour
our	know
here	eight

4. I am in **know** but not in **now**. Say who I am.

5. Write the rhyming words

Know hole

6. Read the words and underline the silent letters. Say why that particular letter is silent.

comb lamb

