

# User Guide to the Really Great Reading Sound-Spelling Wall

Welcome to Really Great Reading's brand new *Sound-Spelling Wall*! This resource will provide a wide range of opportunities for your students to discover connections between the sounds we hear in speech and the words we see in print. While typical sound walls include a picture of a guideword that begins with a given speech sound (*phoneme*), along with the letter(s) (*grapheme*) that usually represents that sound, the *Really Great Reading Sound-Spelling Wall* also provides:

- a phoneme's most common spelling pattern highlighted in the context of the printed guideword, followed by additional spellings (each highlighted in a printed word and supported by a picture icon);
- pictures displaying correct mouth postures along with articulation tips provided through lines indicating airflow and voicing; and a handwriting sample modeling accurate letter formation and line placement.

## Print and Digital Options

Really Great Reading is excited to offer printable Sound-Spelling Cards for users of our foundational literacy skills programs. This printable resource is accessible in the Instructional Resources area of the Supply Room of *Countdown Online*, *Blast Online*, *HD Word Online*, and *Boost Online* under "Interactive Resources" and also under "Posters, Other."

A free, basic digital version of Really Great Reading's *Sound-Spelling Wall* will be available for all educators on Really Great Reading's website this fall. A more advanced digital version, with additional features for Really Great Reading users, will be accessible in the online tools.

## Sound Wall vs. Word Wall

The use of "Word Walls" was popular in the past, but now we know they are not an effective tool for teaching students to accurately and proficiently read words. In contrast, a "Sound Wall" (and even more so, a *"Sound-Spelling Wall"*) can be a highly effective component of structured literacy instruction. To learn some key differences, see the table below:

Word Walls	Sound Walls
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use a "print-to-speech" approach</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use a "speech-to-print" approach</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• take a teacher's perspective (previous knowledge of the spellings of sounds)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• take a student's perspective (discover knowledge of the spellings of sounds)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• consist of single letters; usually arranged in alphabetical order; followed by words beginning with the featured letter rather than sound (may have supporting pictures)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• consist of images representing a single "phoneme" (speech sound), such as pictures of items starting with the sound; usually arranged by articulation features; followed by "graphemes" (one or more letters that spell a phoneme) and sometimes printed words</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sounds in words may be inconsistent ("s" in "sun" does not sound like "s" in "she"; "knot" does not start with the sound /k/)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• images and printed words consistently contain the featured phoneme; common spellings are displayed</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• learning is limited to the words presented; words may change over time (cycle in or out)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• learning is unlimited as mastered skills can be applied to countless new words</li></ul>

# User Guide to the Really Great Reading Sound-Spelling Wall

Effective use of the *Sound-Spelling Wall* can promote increased student awareness of how reading and writing are grounded in speaking and provide students with the ability to “self-teach” (or discover) new words by applying knowledge of learned (not memorized) patterns, structures, and strategies. This resource supports your students in speaking, reading, spelling, and handwriting, resulting in greater student independence in reading and writing throughout the day!

## Why use a Sound-Spelling Wall to support student learning?

Learning to speak is natural and is learned by repeated exposure to spoken language. Reading is *not* learned by immersion in print. It must be explicitly taught. This speech-to-print resource provides opportunities for direct, explicit teaching and modeling of foundational phonological skills so that students can gradually become more independent learners. Over time, they will be able to make observations about what they hear, see, and feel; to describe what they’ve observed; and then to organize this information and apply it to new learning. Lessons addressing these critical skills (observing, describing, categorizing, and understanding concepts such as 1:1 correspondence, same/different, and first/next/last) are addressed in Really Great Reading’s *Launchpad* and *Countdown* programs.

## Skill development supported by use of the Sound-Spelling Wall

Prior to using the *Sound-Spelling Wall*, it is important for students to understand that spoken words are made up of a sequence of sounds (phonemes); that these individual sounds can be isolated; and that these sounds can be distinguished from one another. These early phonemic awareness skills provide a framework for understanding the *alphabetic principle* (letters represent speech sounds) and phonics. Lessons addressing skills such as sound isolation, blending sounds, and segmenting sounds are taught and practiced throughout the *Launchpad*, *Countdown*, *Blast*, and *HD Word* programs.

As part of a structured, sequential, explicit, and multisensory literacy approach, the *Sound-Spelling Wall* supports continued development of the following critical skills:

Goal	Skills needed	Supporting Sound-Spelling Wall Components
<b>Correct sound articulation and perception</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use sensory feedback to correctly produce sounds; use this ability to identify phonemes by their spoken features</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mouth pictures show place of production and posture of <i>articulators</i> (lips, tongue)</li><li>• Mouth pictures include various lines that indicate voicing and airflow</li></ul>
<b>Increased phonemic awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognize isolated phonemes by spoken features to differentiate between them</li><li>• identify phonemes in words; segment, blend, and manipulate sequences of sounds</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visual portrayal of phoneme production features allows for identification of isolated sounds using multisensory cues</li></ul>
<b>Understanding the alphabetic principle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1:1 Correspondence between phonemes and graphemes</li><li>• knowledge that these relationships are fairly consistent and predictable</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation of the most common spelling of a phoneme within a printed word</li><li>• examples of alternative spellings, also in the context of printed words</li></ul>
<b>Increased orthographic knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decoding and encoding words using a specific sequence of phonemes connected to a matching sequence of graphemes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual phoneme cards can be arranged to match a specific sequence of sounds, revealing the correct spellings of words</li></ul>
<b>Accurate and legible handwriting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correct formation of different lines in specific combinations to accurately write the letters used to represent sounds</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear handwriting sample modeling line placement for accurate letter formation</li></ul>

For the *Sound-Spelling Wall* to be used most effectively, it should be displayed in a place that is easily accessible to students during reading and writing activities, and ideally the teacher should refer to it throughout the day.

## How to Use the Sound-Spelling Wall

Once students have a grasp on phonemic awareness, the *Sound-Spelling Wall* provides a perfect bridge connecting spoken sounds (phonemes) to their written spellings (graphemes). Students learn to interpret and use the information on each phoneme card of the *Sound-Spelling Wall* through teacher guidance, modeling, and the use of multisensory cues. Students can then independently leverage their existing knowledge of *speech* (“What sound is at the beginning of ‘big’... /b-b-b-b/. I feel my lips popping and I hear that it’s a quick sound. My voice is on... there’s /b/!”) and connect it with the *print* information on the corresponding card (“Now I see the letter ‘b’. I’ll write the straight line first, then add the round part on the right. Great! Now where’s /ī-ī-ī-ī/?”).

## How to Display the Sound-Spelling Wall Cards

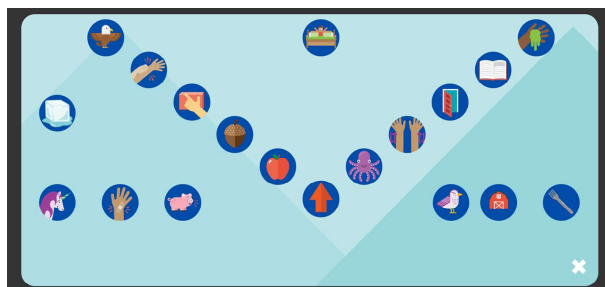
Rather than displaying these phoneme cards in alphabetical order (as seen with letter cards in many traditional classrooms), it is recommended that you organize the *Sound-Spelling Wall* cards by *type of phoneme*, determined by how each sound is produced. The most significant division of speech sounds involves separating **consonants** from **vowels**, then arranging individual cards within these groups by their physical features (*place* and *manner* of production). The logic of this arrangement is made clear through the explicit and **multisensory** teaching of speech sound features.

Teachers must guide students to be aware of the differences they **hear** between isolated phonemes. Students must notice how their mouths **feel** when they make these sounds (“*What part of my mouth is moving or touching? Is the sound fast or stretched out? Is my voice vibrating?*”). They can look at a teacher’s or peer’s mouth or use a mirror to **see** what is happening as they produce a phoneme. The connection of *auditory, visual, and tactile* features strengthens students’ memories for a specific sound, allowing them to independently navigate the *Sound-Spelling Wall* to identify a phoneme and connect it to its corresponding grapheme.

# The Vowel Valley

Vowels are a class of phoneme defined by airflow that is not restricted as it moves through the vocal tract. All vowels are *continuous* (“stretchy”) and *voiced* (“noisy”), changing only by the shape of the mouth. These similarities make it especially difficult for students to discriminate between vowel sounds.

When organizing the vowel *Sound-Spelling Wall* cards (the “Vowel Valley”), arrange them in a downward slope that shows the gradual change from a relatively closed and smiling mouth (/ē/) to an open mouth /ū/, then slope back up to show the change from an open mouth posture to a rounded one (/ōō/). Vowels that change mouth shape during production (/or/, /ou/) are placed outside of the arc. This “Vowel Valley” arrangement allows the teacher to highlight these subtle changes while modeling vowel phonemes. The use of mirrors can be especially beneficial for students when learning vowels.



## The Consonant Canyon

Consonants are a class of phoneme defined by airflow that is restricted, or even stopped, as it moves through the vocal tract. Consonants are generally easier for students to discriminate between because they can vary by several features:

- **place** of production: location of articulator contact or restriction (lips, tongue, teeth, throat)
- **voice**: voiced (noisy) or unvoiced (quiet)
- **manner** of production: variation in the airflow *duration* (a quick *stop consonant* as in /b/ or a stretchy *fricative consonant* as in /s/) and airflow *force* (*pushed* as in /ch/ or *leaky* as in /l/)

The teacher can highlight these differences (“*What did you feel or see your mouth do? Was the sound quick or stretchy? Was your voice turned on?*”) while modeling consonant phonemes. The use of mirrors can be beneficial for students when learning consonants.

When organizing the consonant *Sound-Spelling Wall* cards (the “*Consonant Canyon*”), the teacher may arrange them in groups based on *place* or *manner* of production. Primarily, arranging them by *place* of articulation will provide the most noticeable visual and tactile cues to students. Later, the arrangement can be changed to challenge students to notice the more subtle differences in *manner* of production. These cards need not be placed in a “canyon” shape (as with the *Vowel Valley*), but simply clustered by their common feature. Voiced and unvoiced phoneme pairs should be displayed next to one another.

### Arranging by *place* of production:

Lip Sounds	Teeth Sounds	Tongue Sounds	Throat Sounds
(bilabial: 2 lips) p, b m w	(labiodental: lip/teeth) f, v  (interdental: tongue/teeth) th, <u>th</u>	(alveolar: front) t, d, s, z, n, l  (palatal: middle) sh, zh, ch, j, r  (velar: back) k, g, ng, qu, x	(glottal: throat) h

### Arranging by *manner* of production:

Quick Sounds	Stretchy Sounds	Pushed Sounds	Glide Sounds
(stops) p, b t, d k, g	(fricatives) f, v s, z sh, zh th, th h	(affricates) ch, j	(glides) y, w
	Buddy Sounds	Nose Sounds	Flow Sounds
	qu (stop + glide) x (stop + fricative)	(nasals) m, n, ng	(liquids / laterals) r, l

## Card Design

The Really Great Reading *Sound-Spelling Wall Cards* are designed for multiple purposes. The trifold design allows the educator to display one, two, or all three sections of a card, with each section providing unique information about a phoneme, or sound. Simply fold back the sections you do not wish to display.

When the focus of an activity is on phonemes alone, the top third of the card can be displayed. This top section displays only the guideword icon and the mouth picture for the phoneme. The middle third of each card shows the most common spelling of the phoneme in both capital and lowercase letters on handwriting lines, demonstrating correct formation and position. This middle section also includes the most common spelling within the context of the written guideword. Finally, the bottom third offers alternative common spellings of the phoneme in the context of a word alongside picture icons.

