



## *Sights: First Grade*

# Words Are All Around Us

### **The Unit of Practice**

#### **Invitation**

How can we help early readers to become more aware of the written words that are all around them? How can we teach early readers to recognize the most frequently used sight words? How can we make their early writing attempts less intimidating?

It starts with the realization that words are all around us. In their everyday lives, emerging readers and writers encounter a multitude of words that they already know how to read. This “environmental print” often goes by unnoticed; but once pointed out, the children who claim that they don’t know how to read discover that they actually have a rather vast vocabulary.

The environmental print posters and word wall created in this unit serve as easy-to-access references throughout the school year.

#### **Tools**

Students need access to the following materials in order to complete this activity:

- A computer
- A printer
- Magazines
- Catalogs
- Scissors
- Glue

They also need access to the following software programs:

- Scholastic SuperPrint
- Kid Works 2 Bilingual
- Teacher’s Font Series

- Arthur's Reading Race
- Interactive Reading Journey 1
- Read, Write & Type!
- ReadingMaze
- Phonics Alive!



### **Situations**

This activity can take place in a classroom setting with one computer or in a computer lab setting. If computer access is difficult, many of the activities may be done away from the computer or in a small group setting.

### **Interactions**

Students work independently, in small groups, and as a whole class. For some portions of the work, students may need the help of a teacher or teacher's aide.

### **Assessment**

Students are evaluated on their ability to read and write simple environmental print and basic sight words. Throughout the year, students will be observed as they embark on independent reading and writing activities. Students are also evaluated on how well they work with classmates.

In addition, the students' work—whether it concerns creative writing, simple curriculum practice sheets, or a journal entry—may be scanned and placed in their electronic portfolio to be used as a part of their overall assessment later in the school year.

### **Standards**

The skills acquired during this Unit of Practice align with the following IRA/NCTE (International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English) standards.

The vision guiding these standards is that all students must have opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society. These standards assume that literacy growth begins before children enter school as they experience and experiment with literacy activities—reading and writing, and associating spoken words with their graphic representations. Recognizing this fact, these standards encourage the development of curriculum and instruction that make productive use of the emerging literacy abilities that children bring to school. Furthermore, the standards provide ample room for the innovation and creativity essential to teaching and learning. They are not prescriptions for particular curriculum or instruction.

Although we present these standards as a list, we want to emphasize that they are not distinct and separable; they are, in fact, interrelated and should be considered as a whole.

- Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
- Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).



In addition, the skills acquired through this project meet many state and local knowledge and skills standards required for language arts, technology, and research.

*(Standards for the English Language Arts, by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. Copyright 1996 by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. Reprinted with permission.)*

## Tasks

Students create two large visual references that will become part of a yearlong classroom display. The first, a wall of environmental print (words they see every day, such as fast food names, movie titles, and favorite toys) serves as a reminder that they can already read many words. The second, an ongoing word wall, serves as a visual reference for commonly used sight words; each time a word's spelling is requested, the child adds that word to the wall. As the wall continues to fill throughout the year, it will serve as an excellent reference for young writers.

## The Project: Creating a Word Wall

Environmental print is everywhere. Recognizing environmental print and basic sight words is one of the earliest reading experiences a child has. The following activities culminate with the creation of a class word wall containing environmental print and frequently used words. This wall can be added to throughout the school year and will serve as a quick reference as students embark on early writing activities.

### We're Going on a Word Hunt!

- 1 Begin this activity by showing the students a variety of familiar environmental print. You might want to bring in bags from their favorite fast food restaurants, grocery store flyers, movie advertisements, empty cereal boxes, and ads for popular toys. As you hold up each item, ask, "Who can read this?"
- 2 Post each of the environmental words on a nearby bulletin board or poster and tell the students that they're going to create their own poster of words that they can already read.
- 3 Using Scholastic SuperPrint, have students create and print a poster (single page size) entitled "Words I Know."
- 4 Next, send them off in pairs with a variety of printed material (magazines, newspapers, catalogs, mail flyers, and so on), scissors, glue, and their poster. Instruct the students to fill the poster with printed words that they can read on their own.
- 5 When the posters are finished, display them on a bulletin board entitled "We Can Read!" The board serves as a reminder that even the youngest readers have a rather large list of readable vocabulary.

### Take It to the Wall

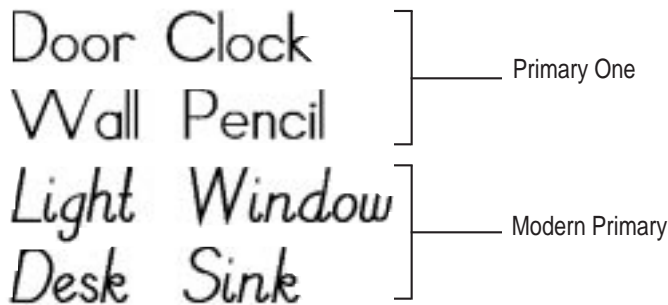
After you've created your environmental reading area, it's time to create a wall of frequently used sight words—words that students always want to use in their writing but aren't quite sure how to spell.

- 1 Choose one wall (or a portion of a wall) in your classroom to serve as your ongoing sight word reference area. From this day forward, this wall will now be known as the "Word Wall."

- 2 Add new words to this wall whenever a student asks you how to spell a word. This could happen during journal time, during creative writing, or when they're working on practice sheets for other subject areas. If a word is already on the wall, refer the student to the word by helping them sound the word out or by identifying initial and final consonants. The student who asks for the word actually creates the word for the wall; typing the word and printing it is another valuable way to reinforce sight recognition and spelling.
- 3 Use Scholastic SuperPrint and Teacher's Font Series (mentioned in the next section) to create the words for your wall. In the beginning of the school year, it might also be helpful to add clip art images (when possible) to the printed words.

**Let's Label Everything!**

On the Forest Technologies *Teacher's Font Series* CD, you'll find two great fonts to put to use throughout the school year: Primary One and Modern Primary. Follow the directions in the "Getting Started" section to load the fonts on your computer. Depending on the style of handwriting you teach in your school, either the Primary One or the Modern Primary font will work for this activity.



- 1 After you've loaded the fonts, create labels for everything in the classroom. Choose a font size of 48 pt. or larger so that the words can be easily seen from a distance. Type one word per line (or better yet, have students take turns typing the words for you).
- 2 Print the words, cut them apart, and tape them all over your classroom.

You can also use Teacher's Font Series to do the following:

- Create practice handwriting sheets that feature letters and basic sight words that you've been discussing in class.
- Use the larger size of the font (48 pt. or higher) and create desk name tags for each student.
- Use the dotted versions of the fonts to create early sight word flash cards. You might even want to use the exact words that you've posted on your word wall.



## **Options and Extension Activities: Further Use of the Primary Language Connections Software**

Although the activities within this unit of practice rely heavily on sight word reading skills, phonics still has an important place in the acquisition of early reading and writing skills. The software titles listed here are excellent sources for phonics instruction and are also a part of your Primary Language Connections Kit. As a teacher, you know that a variety of teaching approaches and continual exposure are some of the best ways to reinforce a new skill or concept.

### **Arthur's Reading Race**

This program is delightful—and just right for the first grader who is learning to love the written word. After students have listened to the entire story, be sure to have them play the Reading Race game. The phonics skills involved with the game create a nice balance to the sight word.

### **Interactive Reading Journey 1**

Interactive Reading Journey 1 could work as an entire reading curriculum on its own. You're given the books that incorporate sight word reading and the software activities that rely heavily on reading. The program also keeps track of each child's individual progress. If you have a lab setting or simply one computer in your classroom, this program works as a valuable enrichment to your already existing reading program.

### **ReadingMaze**

When set up for first grade students (you do this as you enter each student's name), this program provides terrific phonics instruction. In addition, the challenge of finding all the items within the maze atmosphere keeps students excited about working through the problems.

Each time students stop working with ReadingMaze, the program remembers where they left off and starts them back at the correct spot the next time they open the program. Printing the certificates for completing each level of the ReadingMaze is a rewarding way to reinforce early reading skills.

This program is wonderful for the one computer classroom.

### **Read, Write & Type!**

Like Interactive Reading Journey 1 and ReadingMaze, Read, Write & Type! keeps track of each student's progress. With younger students, actually locating the letters to use while they are at the computer for creative writing is the hardest part. This program helps students become aware of the location of letters on the keyboard. This program also does a great job with phonics instruction—challenging the students to type what they hear.

### **Phonics Alive!**

This entire program is perfectly suited for beginning readers and writers. For best results, have students work through the exercises sequentially. Kids love the entertaining animation and reward language. You'll like the way the skills are sequenced and the order in which the letters and their sounds are presented.

### **The School-to-Home Connection**

Keeping the lines of communication between school and home open is an important part of any successful education program. Parents appreciate teachers who share information about what's going on in the classroom. The following ideas that are designed to extend the learning that occurs with the activities from this unit. You might also want to share these activities individually in your weekly newsletter or make a copy of the "Making the School-to-Home Connection" sheet for every student.

Encourage parents to create their own version of the "Word Wall" in their home. This wall could be as simple as words taped to the refrigerator or the back of their child's bedroom door—or as elaborate as an entire wall near their child's desk.

Suggest that parents purchase a picture dictionary for their children. Having easy access to the words they need makes it more likely that children will decide to write on their own. This reference also comes in handy when children embark on their first independent reading adventures.

You might also suggest that parents make a wide variety of writing tools and papers available to their children. At this age, kids love to use markers of every kind, colored pencils, and unusual paper. They also like to staple, punch holes, or ring things together as a means of publishing their works.

If the family has a computer, be sure to point out the wide variety of noteworthy early literacy software on the market. Even an adult word-processing program is appealing to children who are just beginning to discover words.

A local library card and the freedom to choose their own reading materials are also a great way to encourage literacy in children at an early age.



### **Resources**

- Ahlberg, A. (1985). *Fee Fi Fo Fum*. New York: Random House.
- Allington, R. (1983). *Words*. Milwaukee: Raintree Children's Books.
- Bunting, E. (1996). *My First Action Word Book*. New York: DK Publishing.
- Burningham, J. (1984). *Skip Trip*. New York: Viking Press.
- Burningham, J. (1985). *Slam Bang*. New York: Viking Press.
- Cushman, D. (1987). *The Vanishing Professor*. New York: Checkerboard Press.

- Davenport, Z. (1990). *Mealtime*. New York: Orchard Books.
- Gibbons, G. (1984). *Department Store*. New York: Crowell.
- Gibbons, G. (1994). *Emergency!* New York: Holiday House.
- Gibbons, G. (1988). *Farming*. New York: Holiday House.
- Gibbons, G. (1984). *Fire! Fire!* New York: Crowell.
- Gibbons, G. (1984). *Halloween*. New York: Holiday House.
- Gibbons, G. (1986). *Happy Birthday*. New York: Holiday House.
- Gibbons, G. (1983). *New Road!* New York: Crowell.
- Gibbons, G. (1985). *Playgrounds*. New York: Holiday House.
- Gibbons, G. (1982). *The Post Office Book*. New York: T. Y. Crowell Jr.
- Gibbons, G. (1995). *The Reasons for Seasons*. New York: Holiday House.
- Gillham, B. (1982). *The First Words Picture Book*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.
- Gillham, B. (1983). *The Early Words Picture Book*. New York: Coward-McCann.
- Maestro, B. (1981). *Harriet Reads Signs and More Signs*. NY: Crown Publishers.
- Marzollo, J. (1986). *The Rebus Treasury*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.
- McNaught, H. (1984). *Words to Grow On*. New York: Random House.
- Scarry, R. (1971). *ABC Wordbook*. New York: Random House.

## Video

- Scarry, R. (1989). *Richard Scarry's Best ABC Video Ever!* Random House Video.



## World Wide Web Sites

**Note:** The Web sites and addresses listed here were current at the time the guide was printed. However, this information is subject to change.

**Children's Software and More:** Great language shareware site.

<http://www.gamesdomain.com/tigger/sw-kids.html>

**Platypus Children's Garden:** A site that includes activities, puzzles, games, and shareware.

<http://www.peak.org/~platypus/in.html>

**Kidz Game Connection:** Two pages filled with educational shareware. Takes a long time to load so be patient.

<http://www.mdex.net/~kentr/sharedu.htm>

<http://www.crl.com/~colocomp/kidzmr.htm>

**Brent & Woofy Fun Book:** Interactive site with letter and word games to print or complete online.

<http://www.nisa.net/~brentw/funbook1.html>

**WorldVillage Kidz:** A fun site for all elementary school kids. Online games, shareware to download and a question-and-answer column where you are able to write and post questions about homework or other activities.

<http://www.worldvillage.com/kidz/>

**Educational Shareware:** A site of Macintosh educational shareware, including some entertaining reading games.

<http://www.macintoshos.com/shareware.library/educational/educational.shtml>

**Kids Academy Home Page:** An engaging site with easy reader books and other activities.

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

**M&M Software—Educational Shareware:** Shareware for all subject areas including many good language arts programs.

<http://www.mm-soft.com/>

**Billy Bear Storybooks:** A site with wonderful midi files, and animated shareware books featuring Billy Bear that you can download.

<http://www.worldvillage.com/kidz/bilybear/wbooks.htm>

**Cyber-Seuss:** A site dedicated to Dr. Seuss and his books.

<http://www.afn.org/~afn15301/drseuss.html>

**Web-a-Sketch!:** A site with real-time activities which emulate the popular Etch-A-Sketch.

<http://www.digitalstuff.com/web-a-sketch/>

**T-Zone:** A site sponsored by the children's book club company, Troll, which contains games and puzzles.

<http://www.ljbank.com/ship051.htm>

**Master Developer Shareware:** A site originally developed for home-schooled children, but which contains several very good reading shareware programs for use in the classroom.

<http://members.aol.com/MasterDev/index.html>

**The Family Games Homepage—Educational Adventure Fun For Kids:** A page for the whole family with fun reading shareware to download.

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

**Jumbo Shareware:** One of the largest shareware collections on the Internet. Search for a particular title or browse the educational offerings.

<http://www.jumbo.com>



# Making the School-to-Home Connection

Below you will find lists of activities, educational software titles, quality children's literature, videos, and Web sites that will enhance your child's beginning literacy experiences.

## **Activities**

Try creating your own version of our classroom "Word Wall." This wall could be as simple as words taped to the refrigerator or the back of your child's bedroom door—or as elaborate as an entire wall near the desk or bed.

A picture dictionary for your child provides easy access to the words they need and makes it more likely that they will decide to write on their own. This reference also comes in handy as they embark on their first independent reading adventures. If you don't already have a dictionary, consider purchasing one for your home library.

You might also want to make a wide variety of writing tools and papers available to your child. At this age, kids love to use markers of every kind, colored pencils, and unusual paper. They also like to staple, punch holes, or ring together their works.

If your family has a computer, be sure to check out the long list of wonderful early literacy software on the market. An adult word-processing program is also appealing to children who are just beginning to discover words.

Give your child his or her own local library card. Young readers enjoy the freedom of choosing their own reading materials.

## Home Computing Software

Phonics Alive! (Forest Technologies)  
Interactive Reading Journey 1 (The Learning Company)  
Read, Write and Type! (The Learning Company)  
Alphabet Express (School Zone Publishing Company)  
ReadingMaze (Great Wave Software)  
Arthur's Reading Race (Brøderbund Software, Inc.)  
Kid Works 2 Bilingual (Davidson & Associates)  
Scholastic SuperPrint (Scholastic Inc.)

## Children's Literature

Ahlberg, A. (1985). *Fee Fi Fo Fum*. New York: Random House.  
Allington, R. (1983). *Words*. Milwaukee: Raintree Children's Books.  
Bunting, E. (1996). *My First Action Word Book*. New York: DK Publishing.  
Burningham, J. (1984). *Skip Trip*. New York: Viking Press.  
Burningham, J. (1985). *Slam Bang*. New York: Viking Press.  
Cushman, D. (1987). *The Vanishing Professor*. New York: Checkerboard Press.  
Davenport, Z. (1990). *Mealtime*. New York: Orchard Books.  
Gibbons, G. (1984). *Department Store*. New York: Crowell.  
Gibbons, G. (1994). *Emergency!* New York: Holiday House.  
Gibbons, G. (1988). *Farming*. New York: Holiday House.  
Gibbons, G. (1984). *Fire! Fire!* New York: Crowell.  
Gibbons, G. (1984). *Halloween*. New York: Holiday House.  
Gibbons, G. (1986). *Happy Birthday*. New York: Holiday House.  
Gibbons, G. (1983). *New Road!* New York: Crowell.  
Gibbons, G. (1985). *Playgrounds*. New York: Holiday House.  
Gibbons, G. (1982). *The Post Office Book*. NY: T. Y. Crowell Jr.  
Gibbons, G. (1995). *The Reasons for Seasons*. NY: Holiday House.  
Gillham, B. (1982). *The First Words Picture Book*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.  
Gillham, B. (1983). *The Early Words Picture Book*. New York: Coward-McCann.  
Maestro, B. (1981). *Harriet Reads Signs and More Signs*. New York: Crown Publishers.  
Marzollo, J. (1986). *The Rebus Treasury*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.  
McNaught, H. (1984). *Words to Grow On*. NY: Random House.  
Scarry, R. (1971). *ABC Wordbook*. New York: Random House.

## Video

Scarry, R. (1989). *Richard Scarry's Best ABC Video Ever!* Random House Video.

## Web Sites to Explore at Home

**Note:** The Web sites and addresses listed here were current at the time the guide was printed. However, this information is subject to change.

**Children's Software and More:** Great language shareware site. <http://www.gamesdomain.com/tigger/sw-kids.html>

**Cyber-Seuss:** A site dedicated to Dr. Seuss and his books. <http://www.afn.org/~afn15301/drseuss.html>

**Kidz Game Connection:** Two pages filled with educational shareware. Takes a long time to load so be patient.  
<http://www.mdex.net/~kentr/sharedu.htm>  
<http://www.crl.com/~colocomp/kidzmr.htm>

**WorldVillage Kidz:** A fun site for all elementary school kids. Online games, shareware to download and a question-and-answer column where you are able to write and post questions about homework or other activities. <http://www.worldvillage.com/kidz/>

**Educational Shareware:** A site of Macintosh educational shareware, including some entertaining reading games. <http://www.macintoshos.com/shareware.library/educational/educational.shtml>

**Kids Academy Home Page:** An engaging site with easy reader books and other activities. <http://www.kidsacademy.com/>

**M&M Software—Educational Shareware:** Shareware for all subject areas including many good language arts programs. <http://www.mm-soft.com/>

**Billy Bear Storybooks:** A Site with midi files, and animated shareware books featuring Billy Bear that you can download. <http://www.worldvillage.com/kidz/bilybear/wbooks.htm>

**Platypus Children's Garden:** A site that includes activities, puzzles, games, and shareware. <http://www.peak.org/~platypus/in.html>

**Web-a-Sketch!:** A site with real-time activities which emulate the popular Etch-A-Sketch. <http://www.digitalstuff.com/web-a-sketch/>

**T-Zone:** A site sponsored by the children's book club company, Troll, which contains games and puzzles. <http://www.ljbank.com/ship051.htm>

**Master Developer Shareware:** A site originally developed for home-schooled children, but which contains several very good reading shareware programs for use in the classroom. <http://members.aol.com/MasterDev/index.html>

**The Family Games Homepage—Educational Adventure Fun For Kids:** A page for the whole family with fun reading shareware to download. <http://www.familygames.com/>

**Jumbo Shareware:** One of the largest shareware collections on the Internet. Search for a particular title or browse the educational offerings. <http://www.jumbo.com>

## Activity Card 2

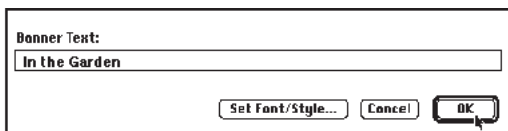
# Making Banners Using Scholastic SuperPrint

Banners made with Scholastic SuperPrint are perfect for introducing a new topic of study (such as a new thematic unit), celebrating birthdays, or making signs for special projects. You—and your students—can make ABC banners, 1-2-3 banners, theme banners, and so on. To create a banner, follow the steps listed below.

- 1 Click the Scholastic SuperPrint button to open the application. You see the main menu with its four design format options.
- 2 Click Banner; then click OK.



- 3 Click the Set Font/Style button. A new window appears. Place the pointer on the box to the right of Font, and hold down the mouse button. You see a list of the available fonts. Scroll down until your choice is highlighted; then release the mouse button. Choose the type style you wish. (Notice the sample in the top portion of the window.) Click OK when you see a sample font and style you like. (Helvetica® and Bold are common choices for banners.)
- 4 Type the text for your banner, double-check your spelling, and then click OK. (Text cannot be changed once you click OK.) If your text is too long, you'll get a reminder to limit your banner text to the box provided.



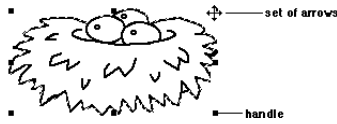
- 5 A design window appears. Below it, you see a Page View box with your text. This box contains a small box on its left side. Whatever you draw in your design window or whatever clip art you add appears in this small box. Use the placement of the small box to determine where your graphics will be placed. You can drag the small box to any place on the banner, even on top of text. The graphics will appear in the background of the text.



- 6 Use the paint tools on the tool palette at the far left of your design window to add freehand drawing.
- 7 If you want to use clip art to decorate your banner, click clip art from the art palette; then find the picture you want to use and click OK. The clip art picture appears on your design window with shimmering lines around it. Move the clip art by clicking someplace on the picture and dragging it to a new place. If you wish to resize your clip art, do the following:
  - Select the clip art using the lasso or marquee tool. Select with the lasso by clicking and drawing a circle completely around the object. Select with the marquee by clicking and dragging across the object until it is completely enclosed in the marquee rectangle.



- Move the pointer near one of the handles, until the pointer becomes a set of arrows.



- Hold down the mouse button and drag the arrows. Dragging the arrows toward the picture causes the picture to get smaller. Dragging the arrows away from the picture causes the picture to get bigger.
  - Release the mouse button when the image is the desired size.
- 8 Click in the design window to make your clip art stationary. The shimmering lines disappear, and the picture itself stops shimmering.
  - 9 Continue decorating your banner using clip art or your own drawings. You may wish to color some of the clip art.

- 10 Choose Print from the File menu to preview your banner and to select the size at which you want to print. Check the appropriate box—Standard, Big, or Large. Then click OK.
- 11 When you see a Print dialog box, select the options you want.  
Click Print.
- 12 If you want to save your banner to your At Ease Document panel, choose Save from the File menu. Type a unique name for your banner (such as the name of the theme) and click Save. Saving the banner allows you to access the banner and print it again at a later date.
- 13 Click the close box. If you haven't saved the banner, you will be given the choice to save. If you don't want to, click Don't Save.
- 14 Choose New from the File menu and repeat the above steps to make additional banners or choose Quit from the File menu to quit Scholastic SuperPrint.