

Rabbit Hole Learning's

Lvl. 0 # Reading

Unit 2: Playing with Rhyme and

Prewriting

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Learning to Rhyme Guide

What is Rhyming?

Rhyming words sound the same at the end. Like **cat** and **hat**, or **log** and **frog**. Learning to hear rhymes helps kids get ready to read.

Why Rhyming Matters

- Builds **phonological awareness** (hearing how words sound)
- Helps with **memory and recall**
- Supports **early reading and spelling**
- It's **fun and playful**—great for bonding and language development

Step 1: Exposure to Rhyming Sounds (Passive Listening)

- **Goal:** The child hears rhymes and begins to notice patterns, even if they can't identify them yet.
- **What it looks like:** Enjoying songs, poems, and rhyming books without needing to respond.
- **Activities:**
 - Listening to rhyming read-alouds
 - Singing simple rhyming songs and fingerplays
 - Emphasizing the rhyming parts of words ("cat, hat, sat!")
- **Adult role:** Model and emphasize rhymes with enthusiasm, no pressure on the child to produce or identify.

Step 2: Rhyme Recognition (Can Tell If Words Rhyme)

- **Goal:** The child can begin to recognize and point out whether two words rhyme.
- **What it looks like:**
 - Laughing or noticing when words "sound the same at the end"
 - Responding to yes/no questions about rhyme

- **Activities:**
 - “Do these rhyme: pig and wig?”
 - “Point to the two words that rhyme: sun, run, dog.”
 - Rhyming memory games or match-ups.
- **Adult role:** Give two or three options, and help the child listen carefully. Praise effort, not correctness.

Step 3: Rhyme Matching (Can Find Rhymes)

- **Goal:** The child can find a rhyming pair from a group or match rhyming pictures/words.
- **What it looks like:** Given a word like “log,” the child can pick “frog” out of a group. They start to match words with similar endings.
- **Activities:**
 - Picture sorting by rhyme.
 - Matching games (“Find the rhyme for ‘bat’”).
 - Object hunts (“Find something that rhymes with ‘box’”).
- **Adult role:** Help the child focus on the ending sound. Accept close approximations and nonsense rhymes at first.

Step 4: Rhyme Production (Can Say a Word That Rhymes)

- **Goal:** The child can say a rhyming word when given a prompt.
- **What it looks like:** Adult says “tree,” and child replies “bee!” or even “mee!” (nonsense is okay).
- **Activities:**
 - “Tell me a word that rhymes with ____.”
 - Fill-in-the-blank rhymes (“I saw a cat sitting on a ____!”)
 - Rhyme chain games (“What rhymes with fun? Run! What rhymes with run? Sun!”)
- **Adult role:** Celebrate all attempts—even made-up words—as long as the end sound matches.

Notes:

- Children may hover between steps or move back and forth before mastering each one.
- Nonsense rhymes are a natural, normal, and important part of the process.
- Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic supports help (songs, puppets, pictures, movement games).
- Rhyme awareness generally develops before the ability to read. This is pre-phonics and foundational.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is my child ready for Unit Two?

Can they do these skills?

- Can they follow two-step directions? (turn around, then hop)
- Do they notice if a word is wrong in their favorite songs?
- Can they answer first, next, and last questions?
- Can they count the number of words in a simple sentence?

If your child is younger than four,

- Expect to do the activities multiple times and do not expect mastery.
- They might not be ready for the fine motor activities. Leave those out until they are ready for them.

Can my child skip Unit Two?

If your child is four or older, ask yourself the following questions.

- Can they notice rhyme in familiar and unfamiliar songs?
- Can they tell if words rhyme? If you say “do cat and bat rhyme” can they tell you yes?
- Can they find a rhyming word? If you say which word rhymes with frog, do they point to a picture of a dog?
- Can they produce rhymes? If you say. “what rhymes with cat?” Can they tell you bat/rat/mat?”

Does my child need to do prewriting?

If the prewriting doesn't work for your child or your child isn't ready for it, do NOT do the fine motor activities.

To know if your child is past the prewriting stage of Unit One, read this article:[Pre-writing shapes – what are they and how to teach them?](#)

Unit Two: Scope and Sequence

Lesson	Concept	Activities	Handwriting
1	Rhyming Songs	Sing familiar songs with rhyming words, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and pause during key moments for the child to guess the rhyme.	Cup and Hump
2	Rhyming Basket	Place a few objects in the basket that rhyme with each other. Have the child pull out objects individually and decide which ones rhyme.	Zig Zag
3	Mystery Box	Try to figure out the mystery object is in the box with only a rhyming clue.	Wavy Line
4	Creating a Silly Rhyming Song	Sing a familiar song, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and replace one of the words with a silly, made-up word that rhymes with the original (e.g., "Twinkle, twinkle, little car").	Spiral
5	Rhyming with Nonsense Words	Start by saying a silly word, like "flop," and ask the child to come up with a rhyming word (e.g., "pop," "top," "mop"). Encourage the use of made-up words that rhyme (e.g., "blop,")	Loop
6	Rhyming Hopscotch	Using a hopscotch outline, have the child name a rhyme for each square they jump.	Cane
7	I Spy a Rhyme	Play a game of I-spy using rhymes (e.g. "I spy something that rhymes with cat")	Hook

Unit One: Book Recommendations

- *Nothing Rhymes with Orange* by Adam Rex
- *Beauty Woke* by NoNieqa Ramos
- *Little Messy Marcy Su* by Cheri Fu
- *Bannock in a Hammock* by Masiana Kelly and Amiel Sandland
- *Under My Hijab* by Hena Khan

All the books listed are merely suggestions. If you're on a tight budget or aiming to minimize the number of books in your home, consider exploring what you already own or what your local library has available, and make your selections from there.

New York Public Library also put out a list of [diverse nursery rhyme books](#).

This unit does **not** provide specific story time recommendations; however, we strongly encourage you to read any rhyming books you have on hand, ideally as often as possible!

Unit Two Supplies

Coloring Supplies

Whatever works best for you and your child! This could mean generic crayons from the Dollar Tree or top dollar 100% organic beeswax crayons. Our favorites are rock Crayons, block crayons, and broken stick crayons

Paper

That's it. Paper. A ream of copy paper and/or construction paper. BIG paper is nice for little learners. I like the 16x12 size and rolls of butcher paper.

Rhyming Objects

Look around your house for things that could rhyme. Some easy ones include.

- sock – block, clock, rock (decorative or garden), lock
- chair – bear (stuffed), hair (brush, tie), pair (shoes, socks)
- book – hook
- bed – red (crayon, toy), thread
- cat – hat, mat, bat (toy or stuffed)
- plate – gate (baby gate), crate (storage bin), skate (toy or image)
- frog – log, dog, cog (gears)
- jar – car, star, bar (snack bar)
- mop – top
- rag – bag, tag, flag

- door – floor, drawer
- box – socks, rocks, locks, fox (toy or picture)
- fan – can, pan, man (figure), van (toy)
- hat – bat, mat, rat (toy or image)
- light – kite, right (direction sign)
- fork – cork, stork (toy or image), pork (pretend food)
- soap – rope

*** There is an optional printable pack available on the RHL Website! I created this

printable pack to go with the lessons in this unit! Use what works for your kiddo

Lesson 1: Rhyming Songs

Main Concept:

Children will begin recognizing rhyming words by listening to and singing along with familiar songs, pausing to identify rhyming pairs.

Warm-Up Activity: Review Familiar Rhymes

Review rhyming songs your child already knows. The child must be familiar with the poem/rhyme in order to do this activity.

Sight Words Dot Com has a great list [here](#)

Main Activity: Hearing the Rhyme

Part 1

Sing a simple nursery rhyme together, but say the rhyming words louder. "Twinkle, twinkle, little, STAR. How I wonder what you ARE." You could also reverse this and say the rhyming words softly.

Possible songs:

- "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" (stream/dream)
- "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" (spout/out)
- "Mary Had a Little Lamb" (snow/go)

Part 2

Sing a simple nursery rhyme together, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Emphasize the rhyming words by slightly pausing before saying them, allowing the child to anticipate the sound.

Part 3

Sing together but pause longer before the second rhyming word in each pair. Let the child fill in the blank.

- If the child struggles, give them two choices: one rhyming word and one non-rhyming word (e.g., "Are or boat?").
- Repeat with other songs, gradually allowing the child to anticipate the rhymes independently.
- Optional: Play with rhythm by singing the song in different styles (fast, slow, whispering, clapping, etc.).

- As the child gets more familiar with the activity, use rhymes that the child is less familiar with.

Prewriting: Cup and Hump

(Letter shapes like lowercase "n," "m," or "u")

- **Paint the Cup and Hump Path:** Use toy cars dipped in paint to follow a path made of alternating “cup” (down and curve up) and “hump” (hump over and down) shapes on paper.
- **Animal Walks:** Pretend to be animals going over “humps” (e.g., camels) or into “cups” (e.g., turtles crawling into a shell). Walk over pillows (humps) and crawl into hula hoops (cups).
- **Rainbow Cups & Humps:** Draw giant versions on the sidewalk and trace with sidewalk chalk in rainbow colors.

Lesson 2: Rhyming Basket

Main Concept:

Children will recognize and match rhyming words by sorting objects into rhyming pairs.

Warm-Up Activity: Is It a Rhyme?

- Say two words: “book/look?”
- They jump or clap if it rhymes, stay still if not.
- Make it silly by tossing in non-rhymes like “book/banana.”

Main Activity: Rhyming Basket

*** There is a optional printable for this instead of collecting objects ***

Part 1

Gather a small group of rhyming objects (e.g., cat/hat, ball/doll, spoon/moon, bear/chair). This is about the sounds NOT the spelling. Show two objects at a time and ask, “What are these?”. Once they’ve correctly identified the objects ask, "Do these sound the same at the end?" If they do, place them together. If not, set them aside.

Part 2

Place a collection of small objects in a basket. Ensure that there are multiple rhyming pairs.

1. Have the child pull out an object and say its name aloud.
2. Ask them to find another object in the basket that rhymes with it.
3. If they struggle, offer two choices: one that rhymes and one that doesn’t.

Prewriting: Zig Zags

(Sharp angles, precursors to letters like "z" and "v")

- **Zig Zag Dance Path:** Lay out painter’s tape in zigzag lines on the floor—have kids dance or stomp along the pattern.

- **Zig Zag Zip Line:** Use a marble or toy sliding down a zigzag cardboard ramp; kids trace the path it travels.
- **Fold-a-Zig-Zag:** Give strips of paper and help kids accordion-fold them—then glue to paper to make zigzag art.

Extensions:

- **Rhyme Match Hunt:** Hide small objects or pictures around the room. Have the child find two that rhyme and bring them back together.
- **Continue the Rhyme Basket:** Encourage the child to find rhyming objects around the house and create their own rhyming basket.

Lesson 3: Mystery Box

Main Concept:

Children will listen to a rhyming book and practice identifying rhyming words.

Warm-Up Activity:

Begin with a simple call-and-response rhyme. Say, "I say cat, you say ___!" (hat).

Continue with other rhyming pairs (e.g., sun/fun, log/frog).

Main Activity: Mystery Box

- Hide familiar items in a mystery box. Say, "What's in the box that rhymes with sock?"
Let them feel and guess before pulling out the block.
- Let them take a turn hiding something in the mystery box for you to figure out.
- To make this activity easier, you can do just one item in the box at a time.

Prewriting: Wavy Lines

(Found in letters like "s" and "c")

- **Ocean Waves Sensory Tray:** Fill a tray with blue sand or salt, and have kids draw wavy lines with fingers or sticks (like waves).
- **Wiggly Worm Race:** Use yarn "worms" and have kids guide them along a taped-down wavy line.
- **Dance the Waves:** Play gentle music and move arms like wavy lines in the air or with streamers.

Extensions

- **Sight Words Dot Com Rhyme Match Game**

<https://sightwords.com/phonemic-awareness/rhyming/rhyme-match/>

- **Sight Words Dot Com Catch the Match** <https://sightwords.com/phonemic-awareness/rhyming/catch-the-match/>
- **Sight Words Dot Com Rhyme Memory**
<https://sightwords.com/phonemic-awareness/rhyming/rhyme-memory/>
- **Sight Words Dot Com Rhyme and Movement** (if you have multiple children)
<https://sightwords.com/phonemic-awareness/rhyming/rhyme-movement/>

Lesson 4: Creating a Silly Rhyming Song

Main Concept: •

Children will practice identifying rhyming words and create their own silly rhyming song using familiar tunes.

Warm-Up Activity: Nursery Rhyme Review

Review the main activity from Lesson 1.

Begin by singing a favorite song, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and pause occasionally, prompting the children to guess the rhyming word.

Example: "Twinkle, twinkle, little ____ (star). What goes there? How I wonder what you ’’

Main Activity: Creating a Silly Rhyming Song

Sing a familiar song, such as “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” and encourage the child to come up with a silly, made-up word to replace one of the original words in the song.

For example, you might change "star" to "char," and sing: "Twinkle, twinkle, little *char*."

Encourage the child to think of other silly word substitutions and sing them together.

Prewriting: Spirals

(Precursor to "e," "o," and circular control)

- **Spiral Spin Art:** Use a salad spinner with paint and paper circles to make spirals, then trace the shapes.
- **Follow the Snail:** Draw a big spiral on the ground and have kids pretend to be snails crawling the spiral path.
- **Spaghetti Spirals:** Use cooked spaghetti to form spirals on a tray or playdough mat.

Extensions

- **Creative Performance:** Invite children to perform their silly rhyming song to the family.

- **Interactive Rhyming Craft:** Have children create a "songbook" by drawing pictures for the rhyming words they used in the song. They can glue their picture next to the written or traced word.

Lesson 5: Rhyming with Nonsense Words

Main Concept:

Children will practice rhyming by creating and identifying silly, made-up words that rhyme with common words.

Warm-Up Activity: Real or Rubbish?

Give your child a few rhyming words but make one a “rubbish” word. E.g. cat, bat, rat, ZAT. Can your child tell which one is made up?

Main Activity: Rhyming with Nonsense Words

- Start with a simple word like "top" and ask the children to come up with as many silly, made-up words as they can that rhyme with it (e.g., “bop,” “flop,” “zop,” “plop”).
- As you go, encourage the children to be as creative and silly as possible with their word choices!
- After creating some nonsense rhyming words, make up a little rhyme using the words (e.g., "Bop, flop, plop, stop!").

Prewriting: Loops *Loops appear in letters like "l," "e," and cursive forms*

- Ribbon Loop Dance: Use ribbons or scarves to make big loopy motions in the air with music.
- Loop the Hoop: Create loop patterns on paper with a marker tied to a string. Kids hold the string and loop it around paper obstacles.
- Bubble Wand Loops: Use loop-shaped bubble wands to blow bubbles and trace their motion in the air.

Extensions

Rhyming Game: Have a “Nonsense Word Challenge” where you say a nonsense word, and the children take turns coming up with a rhyme for it. Whoever comes up with the funniest or most creative rhyme gets to pick the next nonsense word.

Lesson 6: Rhyming Hopscotch

Main Concept

Children will practice rhyming by incorporating physical activity through a fun game of hopscotch, where they jump and rhyme with each square.

Warm-Up Activity: Silly Stories

- Take turns making up a rhyming story
 - You: “A cat with a hat sat on a mat...”
 - Child: “...Then met a rat swinging a bat!”

Main Activity: Rhyming Hopscotch

- Set up a hopscotch grid outside using sidewalk chalk or indoors using painter's tape
- As the child hops on each square, say a word aloud (e.g., "cat"), and ask the child to jump to the next square while saying a word that rhymes with it (e.g., "hat," "bat," "mat").
- Continue with other words, mixing both familiar rhyming words and made-up silly ones (e.g., "slop," "flop," "mop").
- Make it playful by encouraging children to hop or skip, matching the rhythm of the words with their movements.

Prewriting: Canes *Down-and-curve shape like in "j" or "r"*

- Candy Cane Draw: Use red and white crayons to make “candy cane” strokes on festive paper.
- Fishing for Canes: Hide paper candy canes in a sensory bin. Have kids fish them out and trace the shape with fingers or crayons.

- **Cane Walk:** Make a large “cane” shape on the ground with tape—walk or drive toy cars along the path.

Extensions

- **Rhyming Dance Party:** Play some music, and when it stops, call out a word. Children have to freeze and come up with a rhyme for it before the music starts again.
- **Rhyming with Actions:** Have children come up with an action for each rhyming word (e.g., "hop" for "top," "clap" for "map") and incorporate the actions while hopping on the squares.

Lesson 7: I Spy a Rhyme

Main Concept:

Children will practice identifying rhyming words through a fun, interactive game of "I Spy."

Warm-Up Activity: Regular I-Spy

Play a regular game of I-spy with colors. Example of this would be: "I spy something that's red." Answer: a red block on the floor

Main Activity: Rhyming I-Spy

- Play an "I Spy" round with the learner, but with a twist: the objects they need to guess will rhyme with the clue you give them. For example, say, "I spy something that rhymes with *hat*," and the children can guess "bat," "cat," or "mat."
- Encourage the learner to take turns giving clues and guessing rhyming words themselves.
- You can make it fun by using silly objects or challenging them with more difficult rhyming words.

Prewriting: Hooks *(Hook shapes appear in ("j," and "q")*

- Hook Toss: Use pipe cleaners bent into hook shapes and toss onto sticks or pegs.
- Draw the Hook: Pretend you're drawing pirate hooks or fishing hooks in shaving cream or kinetic sand.

Extensions

- **Hook the Treasure:** Use toy fishing poles with magnets to "hook" letters or rhyming picture cards from a sensory bin.

- **Rhyme Climb** With each rhyming word they say, they move up a step. If they're stuck, you give a rhyming pair and they stay on the same level. Great for outdoors or large motor movement.
- **Rhyming Art** (great for older learners!) Give them a word ("bee"). They draw two things that rhyme with it ("tree" and "knee"). Bonus if they draw a silly scene using the rhyming words!