

Enhancement Activities/Strategies for Gifted/High Ability Learners: Sample English Language Arts Learning Plan

Big Idea/ Topic

Phonological Awareness

Standard Alignment

ELAGSEKRF1b: Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.

ELAGSEKRF2: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

ELAGSEKRF3a: Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary or many of most frequent sounds for each consonant.

Advanced Research

- Students can explore the similarities and differences in spelling patterns as you read aloud a book with rhyming words. Have students record the rhyming pairs on one of these [Rhyme Hunt templates](#) and circle the repeating patterns they notice in rhyming words. This activity could be done as an independent center with recorded read-alouds. (If your students have Epic accounts, there are many great rhyming books options in the read-aloud section that also highlight the words as they are read so students can follow along.)
- Help students explore and acquire new vocabulary by having them create vocabulary webs for the stories you read together. Give students a piece of paper with a small picture of the book cover or main character in the center, and have students create a web to connect the new words from the story. (This [template](#) may be helpful.) Making the physical connections from the book to the word will help students make mental connections as well. This strategy also works to help students connect new vocabulary to science, social studies, or math concepts. Advanced students enjoy using new vocabulary, so any opportunities that allow them to research and use new words are engaging and important.

Communication

- Trying out Tongue Twisters is a great way to compare and contrast beginning sounds or vowel sounds. Have students listen and look for patterns as they read and practice Tongue Twisters. Challenge your students to write their own Tongue Twisters for classmates to try out too. Here are a few [examples](#).
- Listening to themselves as readers helps students build reading fluency. Have students record themselves reading books and replaying them. Challenge students to practice having good expression while they read. One way to make this fun for students is to let them make “movies” of the books they love best. For example, take pictures of the pages in a book and upload each picture to a separate page on a SeeSaw assignment, then have students record themselves reading the text on each page. As assignments are posted on your class feed, students will have a variety of stories read by their classmates that they can listen to and follow along with in the book. These entries are also helpful assessments that you can use to evaluate fluency and look for growth throughout the year.
- Have your students create “Secret Sound” bags for a class game. Give each student a paper bag with a sound you’d like them to focus on written on the bottom of the bag. You can differentiate this activity by having early readers investigate beginning sounds and challenging higher readers to explore vowel sounds. Students take their bags home and add 5 objects to the bag that contain their sound. Each day, use one “Secret Sound” bag to open your phonics lesson. Have the student whose bag you selected lead the activity by drawing one item from the bag and challenging classmates to try to write that word on their slate. Continue until all five items have been displayed. Encourage students to read the words they wrote to try to guess the secret sound. Circle and discuss the spelling patterns you used that made each sound.
- Play Spin-to-Win to practice building, reading, and explaining the meanings of words beginning with the digraphs ch, th, sh, and wh. Open [this slide deck](#), and click the link on Slide 2 to open the wheel in another tab. Display the word family on Slide 3, and allow each student a chance to spin the wheel. Each student should record the word they created on their slate or paper. Have each student read their word. They earn a point if they read it correctly. If they think they have made a real word, students can use it correctly in a sentence to earn a 5 point bonus. You can edit this document to add any word families students need to practice and you can create custom spinning wheels for your games at <https://wheelofnames.com/>.

Critical Thinking and Critical Problem-Solving Skills

- Hink Pinks are riddles whose answers are two words that rhyme. Try these [Hink Pinks](#) with your students, then challenge them to create their own. You can find many other examples online if you’d like to add your own slides too.

- Practice high frequency words or new spelling words using Scrabble tiles. Challenge students to find out how much each word is worth or give them a total value and them try to build a word. This is also a great activity to integrate math. You can download printable Scrabble tiles [here](#).
- Boggle is a great game to allow kids time to practice building words. You can download a set of 10 free Boggle games [here](#).

Creative Thinking and Creative Problem-Solving Skills

- Have students explore changes in word part sounds by building Word Ladders. [This set](#) gets students started by providing the words for them to select, or you can provide picture clues with puzzles like [this one](#). Some students will need more of a challenge and will enjoy solving [word ladder riddles](#) where clues are provided. You can really challenge your students by having them create their own by changing or adding one letter or sound with each climb up the ladder. [This template](#) can be used by students who would like to create their own puzzles. (All downloads are free.)
- Challenge students to create set of compound word matching cards where they illustrate each part of the compound word on a card. Then have other students try to guess the compound word. To promote creativity, have students create Crazy Compound Cards, where they put words together to create and define new words (for example, “moonbird—a flying animal that can only be seen at night”).
- Host a classroom “Phonics Parade” (or virtual “Phonics Photo” session if your students are at home and joining a live online class). Students choose a beginning blend or digraph and dress up as something that begins with that sound, for example, “a cheery chicken,” or a “crawling creature.” Classmates are challenged to guess and spell one another’s costume ideas.
- Practicing “sh” digraphs? Add [this slide](#) to SeeSaw, PearDeck, JamBoard or any other online drawing program, and challenge students to draw as many things as they can think of that contain the “sh” digraph in the picture. Then have students practice sounding out the words to spell what they drew.
- Help students build their creative thinking fluency by brainstorming as many words as they can that fit different categories. In these [Creative Thinking Fluency challenges](#), students draw as many items as they can think of that are cold, round, black, fast, or loud.

Awareness of Self—Student’s Well-being

- Gifted students may have asynchronous development, where they excel in one area, but not in others. Read [this article](#) by Ian Byrd to help understand how to recognize and help

students who may show asynchronous cognitive development.

- Encourage students to have grit and persevere when tasks seem difficult. [This article](#) from Ian Byrd suggests strategies teachers can use to help develop this mindset in students. [This information](#) about “imposter syndrome” is valuable to help young students begin to develop growth mindsets, rather than fixed mindsets.