

# READING UNIVERSE

All About Teaching Reading & Writing



## Onset-Rime Facilitator's Guide

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

# Onset-Rime

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

**Skill:** Blending Onset-Rime

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SECTION 1 — USING THIS GUIDE

## Introduction

The Reading Universe Professional Learning Community (PLC) series provides guidance to reading coaches, principals, and team leaders on how to lead teacher professional development training sessions about reading instruction.

This Facilitator's Guide focuses on teaching Onset-Rime. All of the resources and materials you need for the session are available for free to all teachers on [ReadingUniverse.org](http://ReadingUniverse.org). You may download, share, or stream the media with teachers in any setting – at your school or in a virtual meeting room. No special login is required.

### Learning About Phonological Skills

	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	SESSION 4	SESSION 5
<b>Skills</b>	Syllables	Onset-Rime	Phoneme Identification	Phoneme Segmentation & Blending	Phoneme Manipulation
<b>Subskills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counting</li> <li>Segmenting</li> <li>Identifying First, Middle, and Last</li> <li>Blending</li> <li>Manipulating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isolate Initial Sound</li> <li>Blending</li> <li>Segmenting</li> <li>Rhyming</li> </ul>	Identify Sounds in the Beginning, Middle and End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Segmenting</li> <li>Blending</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deleting</li> <li>Adding</li> <li>Substituting</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	30 - 45 minutes	30 - 45 minutes	30 - 45 minutes	30 - 45 minutes	30 - 45 minutes

*Note: This is a scope and sequence for teaching teachers, not for teaching phonological awareness to students. There is research to indicate that most students will not need instruction in the larger units of sound.*

#### OBJECTIVES FOR THIS PLC

**By the end of the session, teachers will be able to:**

1. Define onset-rime and explain its relevance to reading instruction
2. Determine if a student has the prerequisite skills necessary to successfully blend onset-rime.
3. Model how to blend onset-rime into words using manipulatives
4. Provide positive corrective feedback and adjust teaching in response to student error
5. Provide practice in blending onset-rime into words
6. Recognize when students have acquired enough letter-sound knowledge to begin teaching orthographic mapping with the use of letters

#### MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Here is a list of the resources that you will need to prepare for and facilitate this PD experience with teachers.

**The Facilitator's Slide Show** loaded with everything you need to present and deliver this PD session.

**Participant's Guide** for teachers that provides background on the skill, information about the student, and questions to consider while viewing the video.

**Answer Keys** to guide facilitators' feedback and discussion with the teachers.

**Links to media & resources** that facilitators and participants will use.

- [Why Phonological Awareness is Important for Reading and Spelling](#) (Moats & Tolman)
- [Blending Sounds in Syllables with Autumn](#)

## Using This Guide for Professional Development

### WHAT TO EXPECT

Centered around a model teaching intervention video, [Blending Sounds in Syllables with Autumn](#) (12:30), participants will analyze and discuss reading specialist Linda Farrell's 1:1 session with Autumn, a reader who is struggling to blend sounds.

Participants will use the Participant's Guide as they watch the entire video as the initial step in the PD, either on their own or in a group. The [Participant's Guide](#) (PDF) includes the following sections:

1. Video overview
2. Autumn's student profile
3. Video Viewing Guide for previewing with questions and answer key

In advance of the session, we recommend PD participants read [Why Phonological Awareness is Important for Reading and Spelling](#) (Moats & Tolman) on Reading Rockets. (3 minutes)

The facilitator will use this Guide to engage teachers in insightful and constructive conversation about Linda's intervention with Autumn. This is not a lecture. The video discussion is organized into short thematic segments for discussion during the PD sessions. Each theme includes one to three short video clips for viewing, and one to five questions for immediate discussion after each clip. Here are the themes:

- A. Preparing for Blending Sounds in Syllables
- B. Autumn Struggles with Blending Onset-Rime
- C. Autumn Learns Blend Ending Sounds
- D. Next Steps in Teaching Autumn to Blend Onset-Rime

**In preparation**, we recommend that you carefully review all of the materials we have provided, then plan your session according to your participants' needs.

Make copies of the Moats & Tolman article, the Participant's Guide, and the questions in Section 2 of the Facilitator's Guide for each participant. You may want to make a copy of the discussion questions for each participant so they can write notes during the session.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR USE IN A SERIES OF SHORT SESSIONS

#### Consider an agenda as follows:

You can easily organize this PLC into five short sessions, following the thematic segments outlined in this Guide.

Session 1: Facilitators might want to use the first short session to view the video and discuss the questions in the Participant's Guide.

- At the top of the PD session, review Onset-Rime with participants. Make sure they all have a good understanding of its relevance to reading instruction.
- Ask participants to read the Participant's Guide before viewing the entire video. As they watch the video, participants should answer the questions provided.
- Discuss the questions in the Participant's Guide while viewing the video.

Session 2 through Session 5: Facilitators may select thematic segments from this Guide to fit their time frame and participant needs. View and discuss each segment during one whole session. Facilitators may want to make a copy of the discussion questions for each participant so they can write notes during the session.

At the final session, allow time for small group discussion about the summarizing questions and action items before the session ends.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR A HALF-DAY SESSION

### Consider an agenda as follows:

1. At the top of the PD session, review Onset-Rime with participants. Make sure they all have a good understanding of its relevance to reading instruction.
2. View the entire video together. Discuss the questions in the Participant's Guide while viewing the video.
3. View the short thematic clips. Follow the Guide for discussion questions and answers.
4. Allow time for small group discussion about summarizing questions and action items before the session ends.

## USING THE ANSWER KEY

Answer keys provide facilitators and participants with insightful suggestions for answers to each question. Of course, you can adapt the answers to address the needs of participants in your session.

## SECTION 2

# Skill Overview & Video Viewing Guides

## VIDEO OVERVIEW

In the video, Autumn learns how to blend two speech sound units, onset and rime, into a single syllable word. Autumn's teacher is Ms. Farrell. She is a reading specialist and educational consultant working with Autumn for the first time. The video clips of Autumn are taken from a 25-minute lesson. Ms. Farrell's lesson is purposefully not from any program. She and Autumn demonstrate teaching techniques that can work with any program. To prepare for the lesson, Ms. Farrell made a list of multi-syllable words for working at the syllable level and a list of one-syllable words without initial blends to work on with Autumn.

## AUTUMN'S PROFILE

Autumn is a kindergartener who struggles with phonological awareness activities at the onset-rime level.



## OVERVIEW OF ONSET-RIME

### Relevance of Onset-Rime to Reading Instruction

Blending onset-rime is a pre-reading phonological skill that supports students' understanding of the phonological aspects of words. Segmenting the onset from the rime helps students see that word parts can be broken down to the individual sound (phoneme) level. Not all students will need

instruction at this level. Blending onset-rime is a phonological awareness skill that is slightly easier than blending phonemes, and is the first attempt to break words apart at the phoneme level. Difficulty with phonological awareness is an early indicator of potential future struggles acquiring reading and spelling skills.

### Quick Overview of Onset-Rime

Onset and rime are two parts of a spoken word. The onset is the initial consonant sound, digraph, or blend that comes before a vowel sound, for example, /b/ in the word bug. The rime includes the vowel and all consonant sounds that follow it in a one-syllable word or in the same-syllable of a multisyllabic word, like /ug/ in the word bug.

Recognizing and producing onset-rime are essential skills on the path to learning to read and spell. As students learn about these common chunks within words, they lay the foundation for later phonemic awareness skills.

Onset-rime is a phonological skill. Practicing it provides children with their first chance to isolate a single sound in a word. Students do not use letters as they learn onset-rime. Instead, you will teach the skill using manipulatives such as felt squares.

We usually use the term onset-rime rather than onset and rime because onset-rime is taught as a single skill within the phonological skill sequence.

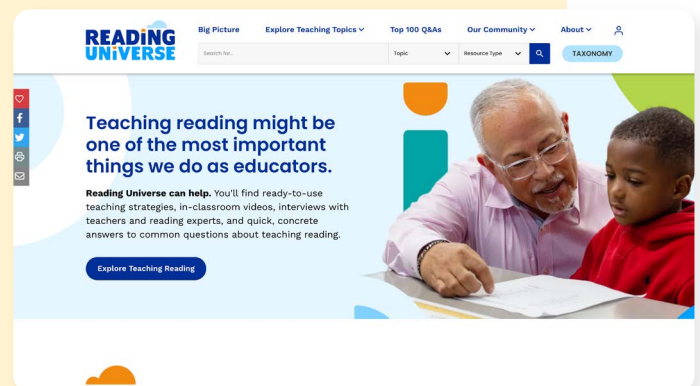
For an in depth explanation of this skill, visit the Onset-Rime Skill Explainer on [ReadingUniverse.org](https://www.readinguniverse.org).

### Terms to Know

**Onset-rime** is an entry skill to phonemic awareness that builds an understanding of rhyming.

**Onset** is the initial consonant, consonant blend, or consonant digraph, in a syllable or word. Not all words have onsets (at, in, oar).

The **rime** is the first vowel sound and any other letters that follow it in a syllable. For example, in the word jog, the onset is /j/ and the rime is /ɔg/.



## VIEWING GUIDES

## Questions & Answers for the First Viewing

- 1. At the beginning of the video, which two skills does Ms. Farrell check to see Autumn has before teaching onset-rime?** Blending syllables and identifying first sounds.
- 2. Why does Ms. Farrell check whether Autumn can blend syllables into a word?** Blending syllables is an easier phonological awareness task than blending onset-rime. If Autumn had difficulty blending syllables, Ms. Farrell would have begun by teaching her to blend and segment syllables.
- 3. Why did Ms. Farrell check to see if Autumn could easily identify the first sound in a spoken word after Autumn showed she has mastered blending syllables?** Being able to identify the first sound in a word is the first step in understanding that syllables, which are easily heard and understood as units of speech sound, can be broken into smaller units and that one of the units is the first sound. Students who cannot identify the first sound in a word are not ready to learn to practice blending onset-rime.
- 4. Autumn easily blends /s/ /un/ into the word 'sun'. Why does Ms. Farrell give her more words?** Being able to blend onset-rime into one word is not enough evidence to be certain that Autumn has mastered the skill. On the second word, 'make', Ms. Farrell learns that Autumn is not automatic at blending onset-rime.
- 5. When Autumn cannot blend /m/ /ake/ into a word, how did Ms. Farrell change the task?** Ms. Farrell backs up a half step on the phonological continuum and has Autumn try to blend the initial sound and the vowel sound as a unit and then the sound or sounds after the vowel to make a word. It is easier for a student to blend the vowel sound into a consonant than to blend the initial consonant into the rime.
- 6. The video shows that Autumn has been taught to identify which parts of a word?** First sound and last sound.
- 7. If Ms. Farrell has future lessons with Autumn, what would she include in the lessons?** Ms. Farrell would start with something Autumn has mastered, move to what Autumn has mostly mastered, and finish with working on a yet-to-be-mastered skill. She would start with a warm-up working at the syllable level where Autumn is confident. Then she would have Autumn practice blending the initial sound and vowel sound as a unit where Autumn has shown she can do the task, and then transition to onset-rime blending.

## Questions & Answers for Viewing the Short Segments

Note about time stamps: The location for the part of the video related to the question is in parentheses. The start and stop times are shown as minutes:seconds. For example, the first question starts at 30 seconds and ends at 56 seconds. The total time for each clip is also shown in minutes and seconds.

### VIDEO SEGMENT A: PREPARING FOR BLENDING ONSET-RIME

Note: A good time to review the relevance of onset-rime and the hierarchy of phonological awareness skills is right after the introduction.

#### Review with teachers:

- The order of difficulty for blending and segmenting single syllable spoken words is (from easiest to most difficult): syllables, onset-rime, phonemes.
- When a student has difficulty blending and segmenting words at any of the levels, the teacher should determine if the student can blend and segment at the next lowest level. For example, when a student has difficulty with onset-rime, the teacher should see if the student can blend syllables. If the student cannot blend syllables, the teacher needs to start at that level. (There is no lower level than syllables.)

#### A.1 Understanding the Importance of Phonological Awareness Skills (0:30 – 0:56) 0:26 total time

- 1. What phonological skill does the narrator say Autumn needs to have?** The student needs to understand that words are composed of individual sounds, and she must be able to blend individual sounds into a word. The example given is blending /k/ /ă/ /t/ into *cat*.

#### A.2 Checking Whether Autumn Has the Necessary Prerequisite Skills (0:56 – 2:25) 1:29 total time

- 2. Why does Ms. Farrell start by asking Autumn to blend a two-syllable word and then a three-syllable word?** The teacher starts her quick assessment at the easiest level of phonological awareness: syllables. If the student can quickly blend two and three syllables into words, she has demonstrated mastery of blending syllables.
- 3. What is the other pre-reading skill Ms. Farrell checks before asking Autumn to blend onset-rime into a word?** The teacher checked to see if the student could identify the first sound in a spoken word. If the student can do this, she has a critical skill necessary for understanding that a syllable can be broken into parts. If a student cannot identify the first sound in a word, it is unlikely that the student can master blending and segmenting at the onset-rime level. When a student can identify the first sound in a word, they are learning that syllables can be broken into parts.
- 4. Why does Ms. Farrell use pictures rather than printed words for the words when she is asking Autumn for the first sound in words?** The teacher uses pictures to give the student a visual representation of the word without using print. Using a picture has two purposes. First, when working on phonological awareness, we want to keep students focused on just the sounds in words and not have print as a distraction. Second, this teacher had never worked with this student before, and a picture helps to ensure that the student hears the word that the teacher says correctly.

#### A.3 Ms. Farrell Asks Autumn to Blend Onset-Rime (2:26 – 4:22) 1:56 total time

- 5. When Autumn successfully blends /s/ /un/ into 'sun,' why does Ms. Farrell ask her to blend another word?** To determine if the student is truly adept at blending onset-rime, the teacher gave the student another word to try. It turns out that the student was not able to blend the second word. That shows the teacher that the student needs to work on learning to blend onset-rime.



- 6. How does Ms. Farrell use the felts to help Autumn understand blending the sound parts?** The teacher uses felts to visually demonstrate how she is blending the onset sound into the rime to make a whole word. She demonstrates by sliding the onset felt across the desk to join the rime felt. Using felts provides a concrete representation of sounds, which are abstract.

## VIDEO SEGMENT B: AUTUMN STRUGGLES WITH BLENDING ONSET-RIME

### B.1 Autumn Blends *make* and Attempts to Blend *sick* (4:23 – 5:39) 1:16 total time

- 1. Why is working with onset-rime harder for students than working with syllables?** A syllable has a vowel sound, which is an open push of air. It has what is called an acoustic clue that makes it easy to hear and separate each syllable from the rest of the word. You can count the syllables you hear when someone is speaking a foreign language even if you cannot distinguish individual words and do not know the meaning of the words. There is no such acoustic clue for breaking a spoken syllable into parts to get closer to the phoneme level. This makes working at the onset-rime level challenging for some students who do not easily grasp the concept that a single syllable can be broken into parts.
- 2. Why does Ms. Farrell ask Autumn to point to the felts and say the sounds when she is struggling with blending *make*?** The manipulatives are a concrete representation of the sounds, which are abstract. By having the student touch the felts and say the sounds the teacher is helping the student make the connection that the felts represent the sounds. The teacher is adding both touch and sight to the work with sounds.
- 3. How does Ms. Farrell try to help Autumn blend /s/ /ick/ into *sick* after she responds *sit*?** The teacher demonstrates blending and tells the student the word is sick. Even after doing that, the student still responds incorrectly with *sit*.

## VIDEO SEGMENT C: AUTUMN LEARNS TO BLEND ENDING SOUNDS

### C.1 Autumn Learns to Blend the Initial Consonant and Vowel with the Ending Consonant Sound (5:40 – 6:29) 0:49 total time

- 1. Why did Ms. Farrell rearrange the two sizes of felts so that the large one was first and the small one was second?** The teacher switches the felts to give the student a visual clue that she is now blending a large chunk of sound with a smaller chunk. The teacher is backing up a little step on the phonological continuum by shifting the task from blending onset-rime to blending the body of the syllable with the final sound.
- 2. Why is it easier to blend /sīīī/ /k/ than /s/ /īīīk/?** There are two reasons it is easier to blend /sīīī/ /k/ than to blend /s/ /īīīk/. First, blending the larger part of the syllable first is easier because the student has said most of the sounds and needs only to add the last sound. Second, it is easier to blend a vowel sound into a subsequent consonant sound, then to blend a consonant sound into a subsequent vowel sound.

### C.2 Autumn Blends *rat* (6:30 – 6:56) 0:26 total time

- 3. Why does Ms. Farrell ask Autumn to tell her the parts of *rat* again after she was successful in blending *rat*?** The teacher is reinforcing what the student has just successfully accomplished and helping the student to articulate both parts of the word after she says it. The student has not yet mastered the concept that a syllable can have two parts. Saying both parts of the syllable while touching the felts after she blends the word correctly gives the student another exposure to the concept.

**C.3 Autumn Guesses *Strawberry for Shop* (6:57 – 8:20) 1:23 total time**

- 4. How does Ms. Farrell respond positively to Autumn's incorrect response of *strawberry for shop*?** The teacher tells the student that strawberry and shop both start with the letter 's'. The teacher is using positive error correction by telling the student something that was similar to the word she guessed and the correct response. Ideally, the teacher would have been able to say something like "you got the first sound right" or "the word you said has one syllable" or "you got the last part right." However, strawberry and shop do not start or end with the same sound. The student's guess is so far off the mark that the teacher has to stretch to come up with something that isn't a negative response like "no, that isn't right."
- 5. Autumn's response of *strawberry* is completely incorrect. Previously, her incorrect responses included at least one of the word parts. What does this tell Ms. Farrell about Autumn at this point in the lesson?** The student is getting tired and is wildly guessing.
- 6. If Ms. Farrell were to work with Autumn again, what is one thing Ms. Farrell would teach Autumn to do if she wasn't sure of an answer?** Begin with a few tasks the teacher knows that the student will be successful at. The teacher would teach the student to ask for help instead of just guessing.

**C.4 Autumn Blends *Mop* (8:21– 9:32) 1:11 total time**

- 7. Why does Ms. Farrell stop and ask Autumn to find the picture of the word she is blending (*mop*)?** The teacher wasn't sure if the student was saying mom or mop. The teacher checks with the picture to confirm that the student said *mop*.
- 8. Why does Ms. Farrell ask Autumn to say the parts of *mop* again after showing her the picture?** The student struggled a bit before she finally responded *mop*. The student gets a chance to solidify her understanding that the two sound parts /m/ and /ɒp/ make the word *mop*.
- 9. What does Autumn still need to accomplish before she will be ready to start learning to read with phonics lessons?** The student needs to master and be automatic with her pre-reading skills. After she can confidently and accurately blend and segment onset-rime, she will need to confidently and accurately blend and segment two- and three-sound words. She will also need to be automatic with all her letter names and most of the letter sounds.

**VIDEO SEGMENT D: NEXT STEPS IN TEACHING AUTUMN TO BLEND ONSET-RIME**

**D.1 Next Steps for Autumn (9:32– 11:33) 2:01 total time**

- 1. If Ms. Farrell had been able to continue with Autumn, what step would she take to help Autumn understand blending two parts of a syllable better?** Ms. Farrell would model blending body and coda for 5 or so words, with Autumn copying her right after. After that, Ms. Farrell would ask Autumn to blend body and coda into words on her own. Once Autumn masters the task, she would move on to onset-rime blending. (When we talk about the body of a syllable, we are referring to all of the phonemes through the vowel. Any consonants that come after the vowel is called the coda. For example, in the word dream, /drE/ is the body of the syllable and /m/ is the coda.)
- 2. Why might Ms. Farrell include blending syllables in future lessons that focus on blending onset-rime?** Blending syllables is easy for Autumn. Warming up with an easy task — blending 2 or 3 syllables into words — could help Autumn have a positive attitude and stay open to learning while she practices a skill she is still learning.
- 3. How does the lesson end?** Autumn easily blends /s/ /oap/. She ends with a success.
- 4. How does Autumn seem to feel about her lesson?** Autumn skips her way to the door, so it seems she enjoyed her time with Ms. Farrell.

## Summarizing Questions & Action Items

### 1. Do you have any students who might benefit from improving their phonological awareness skills?

Use this question to have participants discuss their students who might be struggling with blending onset-rime.

Thoughts for teachers to consider:

- What student behaviors do they observe that might be clues to difficulty with blending onset-rime?
- Do teachers have any data from assessments that might indicate a student's difficulty with blending onset-rime?
- Do the students they are thinking about have the prerequisite skills for blending onset-rime?

Note: The prerequisite skills for blending onset-rime are (1) being able to blend syllables and (2) being able to identify the first sound.

- If students not do not have all the prerequisite skills, what will they need to learn and practice before moving to practicing at the onset-rime level?
- How will teachers go about teaching the missing skills and having students practice them?

### 2. Let's recap. What did you learn?

Use this question to have participants reflect on and consolidate their learning by expressing it aloud.

### 3. How do you plan to use what you learned in your instruction?

Use this question to have participants develop and express specific action plans for teaching their students: Who? What? When? How will you measure student progress?

### 4. How can you use what you learned with a small group?

Teaching students to blend onset-rime is easy in small groups with two to five students who are similar in their instructional needs. This can work even if some students are working at the syllable level, some are at the body-coda level, some are at the onset-rime level, and others are at the phoneme level. In other words, a group can be composed of students working at different levels of phonemic awareness; however, it is always better if students are close in their instructional needs. Small group instruction is difficult and unlikely to work if some students are working on phonics skills and others are not.

The same steps will need to be taken for all the skill levels students are working on. For example, if some students are working to blend syllables, the teacher will model syllables when the first student working on syllables has a turn. Likewise, for blending onset-rime and phonemes.

Step 1 – I DO: The teacher demonstrates how to use the strategy for the group.

Step 2 – WE DO: The teacher and all the students use the strategy for one or two words. Each student blends syllables, onset-rime, or phonemes. The other students are silent while the student uses the strategy to blend. To keep students engaged, after a student blends, the teacher can randomly call on a different student to give a thumbs up. Some teachers call on all students to chorally blend, but only after the individual student has successfully blended.

Step 3 – YOU DO: The teacher calls on one student at a time to blend syllables, onset-rime, or phonemes, depending on the student's level. As a student becomes more proficient at blending, the teacher moves to having the student blend at the next hardest level. Students have mastered blending onset-rime when they can accurately repeat a segmented target word and restate it as a blended word. For example, if you say *soap*, they can repeat it as /s/, /ōp/ and then say *soap*. Segmenting is a more difficult skill. Students have mastered segmenting onset-rime when they can accurately repeat a target word and stretch the onset from the rime. For example, if you say *barn*, they can repeat *barn* and then say /b/, /arn/.

**5. Action Items: How can you put what you've learned in this session into practice?**

- a. Would you be willing to model a lesson on blending onset-rime for your colleagues?
- b. Select a struggling student with whom you can practice this lesson. We'll compare notes in the next PLC session! Things to consider when selecting a student to work with: their grasp of syllables, ability to isolate initial phoneme, ability to blend onset-rime, readiness for isolating beginning, middle, and final phonemes within a CVC word.