



2.2 Using song titles, slogans and rhymes to teach onsets and rimes

Notes on the Phonics Focus

What are onsets and rimes?

An onset is the opening unit of a syllable that comes before the vowel sound. For example, in the words “keep”, “sleep” and “chair”, the onsets are “k”, “sl” and “ch” respectively. A syllable is said to have a zero onset if its opening unit is a vowel sound instead of a consonant sound (e.g. the words “aim” and “ink”). The repetition of the same onset in two or more words produces an alliterative effect.

A rime is the ending unit of a syllable that includes the vowel and any consonant sound that follows. For example, in the words “tall”, “snow” and “fish”, the rimes are “all”, “ow” and “ish” respectively. The repetition of the same rime in two or three words produces a rhyming effect.

Why does the learning and teaching of onsets and rimes matter?

Knowledge of onsets and rimes can sensitise students to how letter sounds are manipulated to achieve alliterative or rhyming effects in contexts where such effects are critical for making a lasting impression (e.g. song and film titles, brand names, advertisement slogans, cheering chants, news headlines).

2.2.1 Using song titles and slogans

Suggested Activities

Level: S3

Materials:

- Activity Sheets (pp.27-28)
- Guidelines for Group Presentation (p.31)
- Audio clips of song titles (Tracks 3 & 4)


Objectives: Language-arts-related

- Identifying alliterative and rhyming features in song titles
- Understanding how vowel letter sounds and consonant letter sounds can be manipulated to achieve alliterative and rhyming effects
- Reading aloud song titles with alliterative and/or rhyming effects
- Creating slogans with alliterative and/or rhyming effects

Phonics-related

- Consolidating understanding of “onset” and “rime”

Summary of the activities: Students study pop song titles and identify the alliterative and rhyming letter-sound patterns. In groups of four, they then take on the role of a school activity publicity team and design slogans with alliterative and/or rhyming features to promote a school activity. They will present the slogan of their choice to the class with justifications.

Sharing learning intentions	
Step 1	Introduce the objectives of the activities.
Introducing pop song titles	
Step 2	Play two to three familiar pop songs with titles that have alliterative and/or rhyming effects, and invite Ss to name the songs (e.g. <i>Mamma Mia</i> by Abba, <i>Tik Tok</i> by Ke\$ha, <i>Eenie Meenie</i> by Sean Kingston & Justin Bieber). Write the song titles on the blackboard.
Focusing on phonics	
Step 3	Focus on the song titles. Break the song titles into their constituent syllables and highlight the relevant syllables (e.g. Mam/ma Mi/a , Tik Tok , Ee/nie Mee/nie). Tell Ss to identify the opening or the ending unit of the highlighted syllables. Introduce the terms “onsets” and “rimes”.
Step 4	Invite Ss to comment on the letter-sound patterns of the song titles (e.g. Mam/ma Mi/a – the onset for the first syllable of both words is “M”; Tik Tok – the onset for both words is “T”; Ee/nie Mee/nie – the rime for the final syllable of both words is “ie”). Revisit what alliterative and rhyming effects are, if necessary.
Step 5	Ask Ss to form groups of four. Give out the Activity Sheets on pp.27-28. Assign two to three song titles to each group and ask them to suggest if there is any regularity in the letter-sound patterns.
Step 6 	Discuss with the whole class what effects the use of alliteration and rhyme has on the song titles. Play Tracks 3 & 4 on the CD-ROM to let Ss listen to how those song titles are pronounced. Then invite Ss to provide three additional song titles that contain alliterative and/or rhyming effects and identify the onset and rime of the component syllables. Encourage them to read out the three song titles of their choice.



Applying phonics

Step 7	Tell Ss to form groups of four again and take on the role of a school activity publicity team. Explain that they are going to select a school activity for promotion and think of a slogan that will help make it appealing to students. Provide them with examples of slogans (e.g. If you <u>drink</u> , don't <u>drive</u> ; <u>Twice</u> as fast for half the <u>price</u> ; No more <u>drama</u> , vote for <u>Obama</u> !) and explain how slogans work the same way as song titles. Emphasise that many slogans include alliterative and/or rhyming features.
Step 8	Give out the Guidelines for Group Presentation (p.31). Explain how Ss can discuss their choice of activities and slogans.
Step 9	Have each group present their choice in the following lesson. Tell Ss that they need to conduct peer assessment of one another's performance based on pre-agreed criteria.

Reviewing progress

Step 10	Guide Ss to reflect on what they have learnt, with reference to the objectives of the activities.
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Activity Sheets

- (1) Study the pop song titles presented in Column 1. Complete Column 2 and Column 3 of the table by indicating which part(s) of each underlined word represent(s) the onset(s) and which represent(s) the rime(s). For multi-syllabic words, which may contain more than one onset and one rime, write the onsets and rimes in separate rows. Then provide three additional song titles that contain alliterative and/or rhyming elements and identify the onset and rime of the component syllables.

Column 1	Column 2 – the 1 st underlined word		Column 3 – the 2 nd underlined word	
	Onset	Rime	Onset	Rime
1. <u>Bad</u> <u>Boy</u> (by Beyonce)				
2. <u>Super</u> <u>Trouper</u> (by Abba)				
3. <u>Viva</u> la <u>Vida</u> (by Coldplay)				
4. <u>Love</u> the <u>Way</u> You <u>Lie</u> (by Eminem feat. Rihanna)				
5. <u>Man</u> in the <u>Mirror</u> (by Michael Jackson)				
6. <u>Bop</u> to the <u>Top</u> (by the cast of High School Musical)				
7. <u>Freaky</u> <u>Friday</u> (by Aqua)				
8.				
9.				
10.				

(II) Study the onset(s) and rime(s) in each song title. Based on your teacher's explanation about alliteration and rhyme, complete the following table by putting the song titles into the appropriate columns.

Song titles that contain alliteration	Song titles that contain rhyme



Answers

- (1) Study the pop song titles presented in Column 1. Complete Column 2 and Column 3 of the table by indicating which part(s) of each underlined word represent(s) the onset(s) and which represent(s) the rime(s). For multi-syllabic words, which may contain more than one onset and one rime, write the onsets and rimes in separate rows. Then provide three additional song titles that contain alliterative and/or rhyming elements and identify the onset and rime of the component syllables.

Column 1	Column 2 – the 1 st underlined word		Column 3 – the 2 nd underlined word	
	Onset	Rime	Onset	Rime
1. <u>Bad</u> <u>Boy</u> (by Beyonce)	<i>B</i>	<i>ad</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>oy</i>
2. <u>Super</u> <u>Trouper</u> (by Abba)	<i>S</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>Tr</i>	<i>ou</i>
	<i>p</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>er</i>
3. <u>Viva</u> la <u>Vida</u> (by Coldplay)	<i>V</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>i</i>
	<i>v</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>a</i>
4. <u>Love</u> the Way You <u>Lie</u> (by Eminem feat. Rihanna)	<i>L</i>	<i>ove</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>ie</i>
5. <u>Man</u> in the <u>Mirror</u> (by Michael Jackson)	<i>M</i>	<i>an</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>ir</i>
			<i>r</i>	<i>or</i>
6. <u>Bop</u> to the <u>Top</u> (by the cast of High School Musical)	<i>B</i>	<i>op</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>op</i>
7. <u>Freaky</u> <u>Friday</u> (by Aqua)	<i>Fr</i>	<i>ea</i>	<i>Fr</i>	<i>i</i>
	<i>k</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>ay</i>
8.				
9.				
10.				

(II) Study the onset(s) and rime(s) in each song title. Based on your teacher’s explanation about alliteration and rhyme, complete the following table by putting the song titles into the appropriate columns.

Song titles that contain alliteration	Song titles that contain rhyme
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Bad Boy</i> <i>Viva la Vida</i> <i>Love the Way You Lie</i> <i>Man in the Mirror</i> <i>Freaky Friday</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Super Trouper</i> <i>Viva la Vida</i> <i>Bop to the Top</i></p>





Guidelines for Group Presentation

Guidelines for the slogan presentation

- 1. Identify a school activity that you would like to promote (e.g. the school sports day, the English speaking day, the Student Union election).**
- 2. Brainstorm slogans that may help promote the activity. The slogans may come from pop song titles or may be original creations. They must, however, contain alliterative and/or rhyming letter-sound patterns.**
- 3. Discuss the merits of each of the suggestions, taking into account how easy it is to remember them because of the letter-sound patterns involved and how they can remind the students of the activity being promoted.**
- 4. Choose the most suitable slogan for the activity.**
- 5. Present the slogan to the class with reasons.**



References

There is a wealth of pop culture-related Internet resources that can be tapped for the teaching of creative manipulation of onsets and rimes. Here are some examples of useful links:

Advertising slogans:

AdSlogans

www.adslogans.co.uk/hof/index.html

Brand names:

Wikipedia

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_company_name_etymologies

Film titles and names of characters:

The Internet Movie Database

www.imdb.co.uk

News headlines:

The Guardian

www.guardian.co.uk

The Independent

www.independent.co.uk

South China Morning Post

www.scmp.com

Song titles:

Amazon

www.amazon.com

Billboard Magazine

www.billboard.com

Yahoo Music UK

new.uk.music.yahoo.com