



Introduction

The hands-on reading activity of assembling “cut-up” or “mixed-up” sentences is a strategy that has been well documented as an effective tool for teaching young children how to read. This approach is currently being utilized by a wide variety of reading philosophies and practices. It has been integrated into many of the most prominent basal reading programs and is considered an essential activity in the prescribed lessons of the Reading Recovery® program. It can also be found in the Four-Blocks® Literacy Model. If you think back, you may even remember that when you were in school you assembled mixed-up words to create meaningful sentences.

This is an old theory that has been proven to be effective — not to mention a great deal of fun for children. Learning to read while getting to talk, listen, look, cut, color, and paste makes this a wonderful multi-sensory experience that helps meet the needs of a wide variety of ability levels and learning styles.

Cut-up sentence activities also assist children in meeting many of the national and state reading standards established for kindergarten and first grade. Children will also develop skills and strategies that will assist them in comprehending, evaluating, interpreting, and appreciating what they read.

When children are presented with cut-up sentence activities, they are provided opportunities to practice many different skills:

- one-to-one correspondence between the spoken and written word
- understanding left to right directionality
- understanding return sweep
- locating capital and lowercase letters identified by a period or question mark
- distinguishing letters from words
- reading high-frequency words
- connecting experiences to text and using sentences to share information
- English Language Learners (ELL) can also practice common English sentence structures through cut-up sentence activities.

The procedures outlined on the following pages (pages 5 and 6), together with the reproducible cut-up sentence books, will provide our students with fun, successful, and effective experiences to help develop their reading skills and strategies.

This book supports the NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts and the recommended teaching practices outlined in the NAEYC/IRA position statement Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children

NCTE/IRA STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Each activity in this book supports one or more of the following standards:

1. **Students read many different types of print and nonprint texts for a variety of purposes.** Students must read the cut-up sentence words in this book in order to create the sentence books.
2. **Students read literature from various time periods, cultures, and genres in order to form an understanding of humanity.** Several of the themes in *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* include literature selections for teachers to read to children.
3. **Students use a variety of strategies to build meaning while reading.** The activities in *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* reinforce many essential reading skills and strategies such as directionality, correspondence between spoken and written words, recognition of high-frequency words, understanding return sweep, and students connecting their own experiences to the text they read.
4. **Students communicate in spoken, written, and visual form, for a variety of purposes and a variety of audiences.** Activities in *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* allow students to communicate verbally through class discussions, in writing by completing their sentences with words they select, and visually through drawing.
5. **Students use the writing process to write for different purposes and different audiences.** *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* includes simple writing activities such as choosing words to create the cut-up sentences, labeling images, and writing lists.
6. **Students incorporate knowledge of language conventions such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation; media techniques; and genre to create and discuss a variety of print and nonprint texts.** Students must recognize the proper use of capitalization and ending punctuation to successfully complete the activities in *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books*.
7. **Students become participating members of a variety of literacy communities.** Creating class books from the cut-up sentence activities helps teachers build a classroom literacy community.

NAEYC/IRA POSITION STATEMENT LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE: DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Each activity in this book supports one or more of the following recommended teaching practices for kindergarten and primary students:

1. **Teachers read to children daily and provide opportunities for students to read independently both fiction and nonfiction texts.** *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* contains many opportunities for teachers to read to their students, and students must also independently read the words in the cut-apart sentences in order to build the sentences.
2. **Teachers provide balanced literacy instruction that incorporates systematic phonics instruction along with meaningful reading and writing activities.** *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* provides meaningful reading and writing activities to be used alongside phonics instruction.
3. **Teachers provide opportunities for students to write many different kinds of texts for different purposes.** Assembling and completing the sentences in *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* gives students practice in a beginning form of writing.
4. **Teachers provide writing experiences that allow children to develop from the use of nonconventional writing forms to the use of more conventional forms.** The building of sentences from cut-apart words is an early nonconventional form of writing that prepares students to learn more traditional writing forms.
5. **Teachers provide challenging instruction that expands children’s knowledge of their world and expands their vocabularies.** The activities in *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* introduce both thematic vocabulary and essential high-frequency words to students.





Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books

The reproducible cut-up sentence books found in *Creating Cut-Up Sentence Books* were designed around the most popular themes taught in kindergarten. Each book can be presented as a whole group activity — by having each child contribute a page to create one large classroom book — or as an individual activity in which all of the students make their own cut-up sentence books.

Whole Group Activity

1. Choose one of the stories. Write each word from the story on an **index card** (*one word per card*).
2. Read the words together, making sure that you read them out of order. Discuss how the words do not make any sense.
3. Randomly hand out the cards to individual students.
4. Have the students place the cards in proper sequence in a pocket chart. Practice reading the sentence each time a word is added to help establish the meaning of the sentence.
5. At this stage, decide whether the children will make their own books or if they will create one whole classroom book. Then follow the procedures described below for creating the pages.

Individual Procedures

1. If you use **table or center rotations**, the cut-up sentence activity can be one of the table rotations. Alternatively, children may simply work at tables at the same time.
2. Each child should have an **envelope labeled with his or her name**. The envelope can be reused for each story. Put the **words from the cut-up sentence** inside the envelope. You can precut the words or give the children copies of the sentence and have them cut out the words themselves.
3. Have the children **place the words face-up** on the table and attempt to **arrange the sentence** without a model. Children can check their work by looking at the classroom sentence that is in the pocket chart. Incorrect sentences can be corrected.
4. Provide each child with a **Level 1, 2, or 3 reproducible page** according to individual abilities. (*Reproducible pages are included for each story. See the examples below.*)

Level 1 (easiest): The child glues the cut-up words on top of the words on the page.

Level 2 (difficult): The child glues the cut-up words below the words on the page.

Level 3 (most difficult): The child glues the cut-up words on the page in proper order without any model.

The image shows four examples of reproducible pages for the 'My Name Is...' activity:

- Reproducible page of sentences to be cut up:** A page with ten rows of 'I am _____ .', each row enclosed in a dashed-line box for cutting.
- Cover for cut-up sentence book:** A cover featuring a cartoon boy, the title 'My Name Is...', and the author 'By: Mrs. Stroh's Kindergarten'.
- Level 1:** A page with a cartoon girl and the sentence 'I am Sophia.' The words 'I am' and 'Sophia' are on a separate cut-out card placed on top of the printed words.
- Level 2:** A page with a cartoon girl and the sentence 'I am Julie.' The words 'I am' and 'Julie' are on a separate cut-out card placed below the printed words.
- Level 3:** A page with a cartoon boy and the sentence 'I am Ben.' The words 'I am' and 'Ben' are on a separate cut-out card placed in the correct order on the page.

