

# Introduction

Meet the needs of various students with the Specific Skills series. Here at your fingertips is a collection of activities to introduce students, especially struggling learners, to the concept of word families and to help them gain mastery of letter patterns in words. The hands-on activities, puzzles, practice pages, and easy-to-play games inspire students to use word parts (phonograms) and context to decode new words. Also included in this reproducible resource book is a pretest/posttest that is formatted according to national standards.

*Specific Skills: Word Families* supports the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) and IRA (International Reading Association) Standards by offering materials that help students acquire literacy skills. The practice pages and games have been designed to introduce, recognize, and identify a variety of word families. These materials can be used as whole group lessons, as independent student work, in learning centers, and as at-home enrichment activities.

## Read-Aloud Picture Books

Build awareness of word families by sharing picture books that have rhyming text. Listed below are just a few of the many titles that could be read aloud to students. Dr. Seuss books are also a wonderful resource for rhyming text. If a word wall is used in the classroom, be sure to display words for selected word families that are discovered by your students.

- *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming (Henry Holt, 1993)
- *In the Tall, Tall Grass* by Denise Fleming (Henry Holt, 1991)
- *Is Your Mama a Llama?* by Deborah Guarino and illustrated by Steven Kellogg (Scholastic Inc., 1989)
- *Pigs, Pigs, Pigs!* by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Erika Oller (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003)
- *Rub-a-Dub Sub* by Linda Ashman and illustrated by Jeff Mack (Harcourt, 2003)
- *What Time Is It, Mr. Crocodile?* by Judy Sierra and illustrated by Doug Cushman (Gulliver Books, 2004)



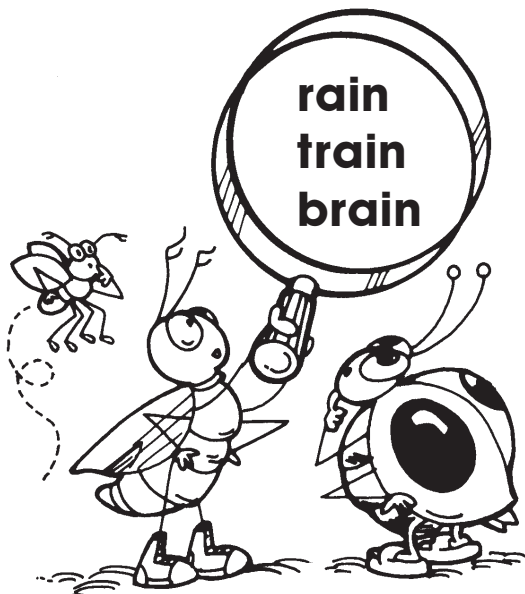
Dear Parent,

Over the course of several weeks, our class will be learning about word families (phonograms). The students will be completing activity sheets and participating in hands-on, fun activities to recognize many common word families. This skill is important because children can use this knowledge of word parts when decoding new words in stories.



Perhaps, you are thinking "What are word families?" Many single-syllable words have common endings known as *phonograms*. For example, when the words *cat*, *bat*, *hat*, *mat*, and *rat* are compared, all of these words end with the word part "at." Thus, they belong to the *-at* word family. Other common word families include *-ack*, *-ain*, *-ake*, *-ame*, *-an*, *-ank*, *-ap*, *-eat*, *-est*, *-ice*, *-ick*, *-ide*, *-in*, *-ing*, *-ink*, *-ip*, *-ock*, *-ook*, *-oom*, *-oon*, *-op*, *-ug*, *-unk*, and many more.

You may see some of the activity sheets in your child's homework folder. Please review the work with your child to become informed about which word families are being discussed. As you share a bedtime story each night, encourage and assist your child in listening for the different phonograms. Discuss the location of word families in a variety of words. Also, invite your child to think of other words that rhyme with the selected word family. They do not necessarily have to be real words; nonsense words are encouraged! This simple, playful exercise makes those word families memorable for your child. Whenever possible, locate picture books with rhyming text and encourage your child to find and compare the words on the pages to look for common word families. Dr. Seuss books are a wonderful resource for rhyming text.



Please help your child maintain a good attitude and self-confidence about the ability to recognize word families. This will promote an eagerness to read as well as the knowledge that we are all working together to achieve success!

Thank you so much for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,