Where Were You, Bert?

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Focus phonics

Long vowel sound ur (as in fur) made by er ir ur ear

Skills, concepts and knowledge covered by the Teaching Notes

Skills – Hear and identify long vowel sounds in words; Blend sound together to read words with long vowel sounds; Segment words with long vowel sounds into their individual sounds for writing

Concepts – A sound in a word can be represented by one letter or by more than one letter; There can be more than one way to represent a sound; The same spelling pattern can represent more than one sound

Knowledge – Focus phonics

Example phonic words

Bert her caterpillar mermaid Sir girl thirsty birthday bird circus purse furry nurse turtle earth pearl early

High frequency tricky words

some was were you

Challenge words

you’re

Letters and sounds

Phase 5

A sound in a word can be represented by one letter or by more than one letter; There can be more than one way to represent a sound; The same spelling pattern can represent more than one sound

Introducing the phonics

Robot Talk

Write words that contain the focus long vowel sound ur as in fur on cards and place them in a bag (shirt, fur, fern, first, verb, squirm, earth, burn, kerb, purple, third). Take a card from the bag and read it in a robotic way, saying all the sounds in the word separately. Ask the children to blend the sounds together to tell you what word is on the card. Ask the children to take turns to be the robot.

Word Sort

Use the word cards from Robot Talk. Make three columns, each labelled with a different common spelling pattern for the long vowel sound ur as in fur (er, ir, ur). Label a fourth column unusual. Sort the words on the cards into the right column. Tell the children to look out for new words to add to the columns.

Group or guided reading

Before reading

Explain that it is important when blending together the sounds in a word, to check to see if it sounds like a real word as some words are less regular. Remind the children of the context words (see page 4, or the inside back cover of Where Were You, Bert?) by writing them on a whiteboard. Read these words and point out the letters that make the usual sound in each word (e.g. the s in some). This will help the children to remember these words.
Strategy check

Ask the children to tell you the long vowel sound made by each letter pattern in the box on the back cover of their books. Tell the children that some of the words in this book use these letter patterns so they should look out for them as they read, remembering to sound out and blend words they do not recognise.

Independent reading

Encourage each of the children to read the whole book at his or her own pace, sounding out and blending words they do not recognise. Listen in to each child reading and provide lots of praise and support.

- Praise the children for sounding out and blending sounds to read words they do not recognise, and for recognising familiar words.
- Praise the children if they read with appropriate expression.

Assessment

Observe the children to check that they can:

- confidently give the sound for all the focus letter patterns
- successfully blend together the sounds of the words girl and purse
- successfully blend together all the sounds for the multi-syllabic word caterpillar by blending the sounds in each syllable together first.

Emphasise and model these skills for any child who needs help.

Returning to the text

Ask the children to:

( Clarifying) Describe Bert’s character. Tell you if he is always truthful. Find some evidence in the story to support their view.

Write a list of all the animals Bert helped. (caterpillar, dog, bird, worm, turtle) Look and find the words in the text to check.

Underline the letter patterns in each word which make the long vowel sound ur.

Find another word in the text where the letter pattern or makes an ur sound after the letter w as in worm (work).

Assessment

Observe the children to check that they can:

- follow the meaning of the text, going beyond the literal and locating evidence
- remember the letter patterns which make the long vowel sound ur when writing
- analyse the letter patterns used to write the long vowel sound ur.

Model the appropriate responses for children who need help. Follow this up with further practice using the Blending Activity, Letter Pattern Activity and Segmenting Activity for Where Were You, Bert? on the eSongbirds CD-ROM, as well as additional practice reading Where Were You, Bert? using the Talking Story version.

Where next?

Further phonic practice

Ask the children to find other words in the story, with the long vowel sound ur as in fur.

Ask the children to shut the book. Write the ur words on cards, by segmenting the words into separate sounds. Add the cards to the set created in Word Sort.
Extension phonic work

(Clarifying) Ask the children to discuss what is the same about all the text. (It is all speech.)

W Ask the children to draw a cartoon strip showing some of Bert’s excuses and write what each character is saying in speech bubbles instead of speech marks.