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Introduction

Do your students have trouble recognizing sight words? Do they make the same spelling mistakes over and over again in their writing? Do they pass their spelling test on Friday but misspell those same words when using them in a different context on Monday? *Making Your Word Wall More Interactive* helps resolve these problems. This resource guide targets a variety of skill areas and is designed to help students learn and REMEMBER new words in a fun and exciting way!

What Is a Word Wall?

A word wall is an organized collection of words written in large print and displayed in an area of the classroom where it can be easily seen. Designed to promote group learning, a word wall serves as a great classroom tool for individual students. It provides a rich context for

active and ongoing learning that meets the needs of all students. A word wall is a constant work in progress as students practice and master each new set of words.

Why Use a Word Wall?

A word wall serves a variety of purposes, including the following:

- provides a visual for students that helps them remember connections between words
- serves as an important tool for helping students learn to read and spell new words
- fosters student independence
- promotes reading and writing
- holds students accountable for spelling specific words correctly at all times

This book features dozens of games and activities to engage students in literacy skill learning. So why wait? Let the games begin!

Aa about and	Bb been	Cc could come	Dd do
Ee	Ff for first	Gg go good	Hh have

Getting Started

Before you implement the games and activities in this book, think about the organization and visual presentation of your word wall. Whether you already have a word wall in your classroom or you want to create one, consider the following questions:

- Is my word wall large enough to be viewed by all students from any part of the classroom?
- Is my word wall visually unified so that viewers will perceive it as a collection of words?
- Is it obvious how the words are organized?

Selecting a Style

Word walls come in many different shapes and sizes. Create a word wall that will complement your classroom setup, teaching style, and instructional goals. Many teachers choose to include the uppercase and lowercase version of each letter of the alphabet (e.g., *Aa*) on the word wall. Use premade die-cut letters, or cut letters out of construction paper. Here are just a few styles of word walls:

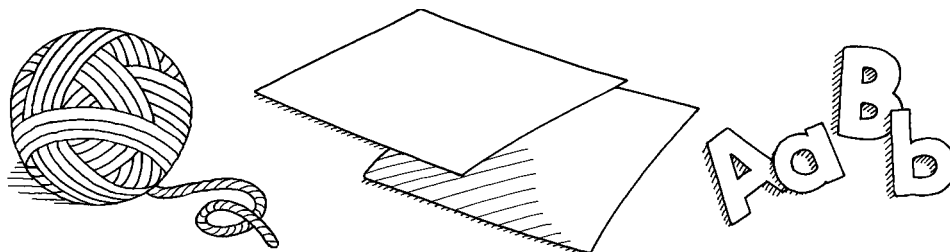
1. Display large letters in one row on a wall.
2. Glue each pair of die-cut letters (e.g., *Bb*) onto a separate piece of construction paper. Place the letters *Xx*, *Yy*, and *Zz* on the same piece of paper. Display the papers on a wall.

3. Use yarn to outline 24 squares on a wall. Place each pair of die-cut letters inside a separate square. Place the letters *Xx*, *Yy*, and *Zz* in the same square.

Choosing Words

It is important to begin with a blank word wall and add new words each week. Write the word wall words on colored paper, in large print, with black ink. The words can be cut in the shape of the letters, but it is not necessary. Avoid writing on red, dark purple, dark blue, or dark green construction paper because it is too hard for students to read the words. Tape the words onto your word wall rather than stapling them so they can be easily removed for use with some of the games and activities described in this book. Introduce approximately five words a week, depending on your grade level and the difficulty level of the words. Carry over to the following week any words students are still having difficulty spelling.

It is important to expose students to many different types of words. Use high-frequency words along with phonograms (word families), contractions, antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and other words to give your students an opportunity to become better at reading, spelling, and writing. Choose words wisely. It is better for students to know five words very well than ten words slightly. Add to the word wall any words several students misspell.



Preparation Tips

Many of the activities in this book require word cards and letter, word, or number dice. Here are some suggestions to minimize your preparation time:

Word Cards

- Give students blank index cards, and have them write the word wall words on the cards.
- Type word wall words in a large font size on a computer. Print several copies of the words on colored paper (to make sure the words do not show through). Cut the papers into word cards.
- Recycle the word cards for each activity. Add or eliminate words as needed.

Dice

- Invite students to assemble the dice.
- Recycle the dice for use with additional activities.

Covering the Word Wall

- Some activities suggest covering the word wall with butcher paper. It is important to make sure students are unable to see the words on the wall. An alternative is to have students face away from the word wall.

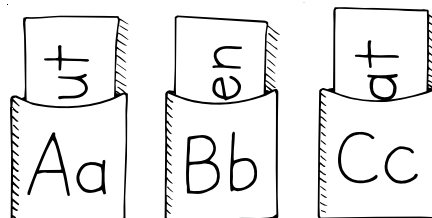
Word Wall Variations

There are many variations in the types of word walls that you can use with your students. Some word walls focus on a particular theme or content area. Others focus on parts or types of words. Use various types of word walls to teach students different ways to analyze

words. Try some of the following variations once students are familiar with your classroom word wall.

Library Pocket Word Wall

Write each letter of the alphabet on a separate library pocket, and place the pockets in alphabetical order along the bottom of your word wall. Each time you add a new word to the word wall, write it on an index card, and place the card in the corresponding library pocket. Invite students to choose the cards they need and return them to the pockets when they are finished. This will be extremely helpful for students who are kinesthetic learners. (The word cards you create for this type of word wall can also be used in many of the games and activities in this book.)



Phonogram Word Wall

Create a separate word wall for the letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*. Write each new phonogram on an index card, and place each card under the appropriate vowel.

Individual Word Wall

Give each student the My Portable Word Wall reproducibles (pages 89–90). Have students place the reproducibles in their student writing journals. When you add a new word to the classroom word wall, invite students to write it on their portable word wall. This is a helpful resource for students to have when they write outside the classroom.

Using This Book

This book is divided into four sections. The first three sections feature whole-class, small-group, and independent games and activities. Use them in any

order, and repeat them throughout the year with new words. The fourth section provides a variety of supplemental materials to help you get the most out of your word wall activities.



Whole Class

Use the interactive whole-class activities in the first section to teach language concepts and reinforce learning word wall words. Start with this section to familiarize students with the organization and purpose of the word wall.



Small Group

The second section includes interactive small-group activities that are designed to have students practice some of the same strategies, skills, and activities that are presented in the whole-class section. After introducing a small-group activity, students will be able to work independently. These activities work well in learning centers, and students can complete them every week.



Independent

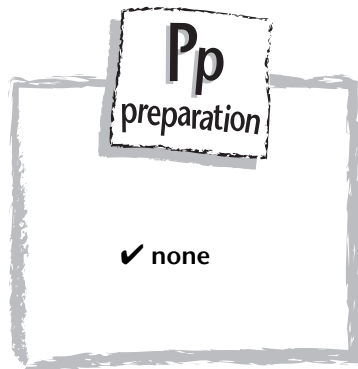
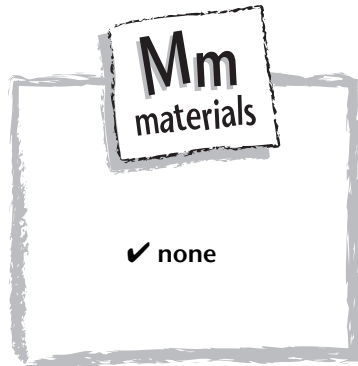
Have students complete the open-ended reproducibles in the third section as independent activities. Or, use them for additional teaching opportunities or for guided practice with small groups of students who need extra help. These activities also work well as a follow-up to the whole-class and small-group lessons. The activities are presented in order by increasing levels of difficulty. Begin with the first few activities in this section, regardless of your students' ability level, and then use the independent activities as they pertain to what you are teaching.

Additional Resources

The fourth section includes a variety of reproducibles and word lists. Have students complete the Word Wall Spelling Quiz reproducible (page 88), and use it to track their progress. Use the results to determine which words to target with individual students in small-group activities. Use the lists of high-frequency words, compound words, antonyms, synonyms, phonograms, and homophones (pages 91–96) as a handy resource for developing new word wall words.



Get Moving



Explain to the class that “tall letters” go from the top line to the bottom line on the paper (e.g., *d*). Tell students to put their arms in the air when they see these letters. Explain that “small letters” go from the dotted middle line to the bottom line (e.g., *a*). Ask them to put their arms straight out when they see these letters. Explain that “dropped letters” drop below the line (e.g., *y*). Ask students to squat when they see these letters. Invite one student to choose five to ten favorite word wall words. Ask the student to point to a word. Invite the class to say the word, “spell” it with the movements, and then say it again. Have the class repeat the activity with the rest of the student’s words.

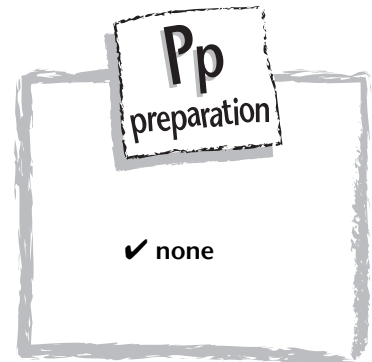
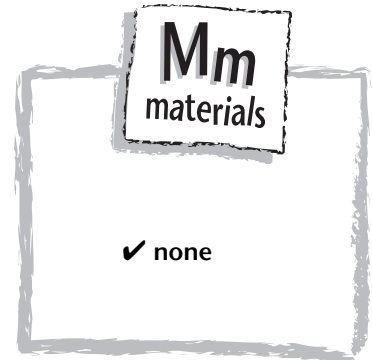


Invite a student to choose a word from the word wall and, without saying the word aloud, demonstrate the movements of the word. Encourage the other students to guess the word.



The Missing Word

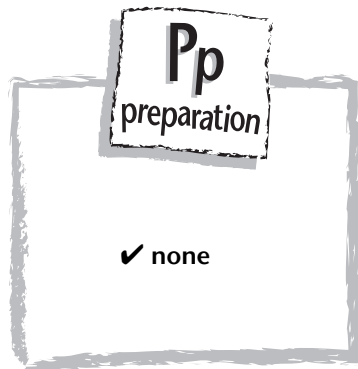
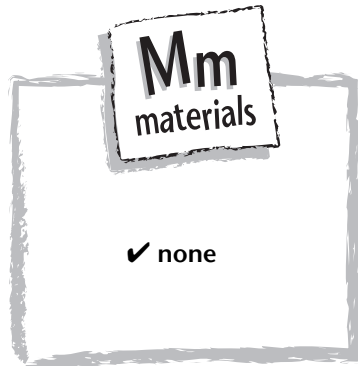
As a class, read aloud the words on the word wall. Ask students to close their eyes as you remove one word from the word wall. Have them open their eyes and try to identify the missing word. Ask students to whisper the word and its spelling to a classmate. If they are having difficulty identifying the word, give location clues such as *The word is in the top row of the word wall* or *The word belongs somewhere between Aa and Ee*. Repeat the activity using different words from the word wall.



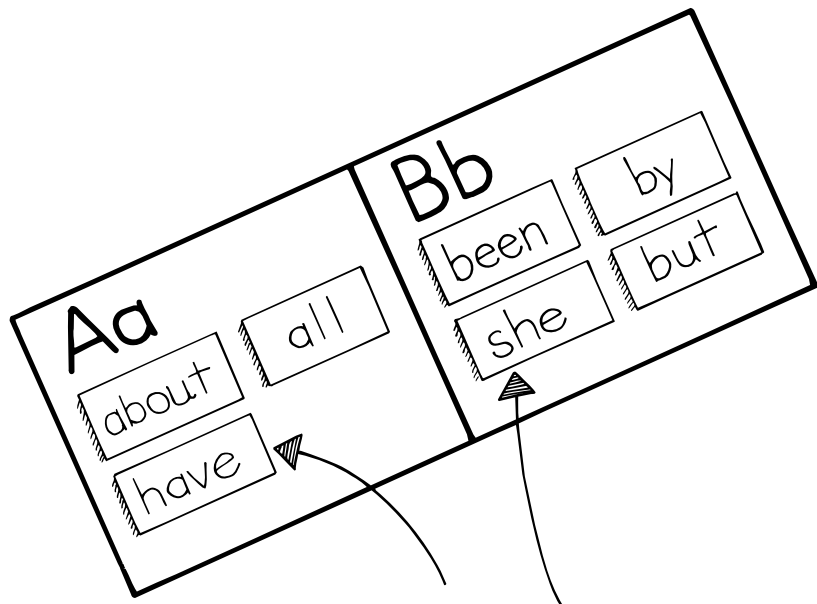
Use a large envelope to make a “sleeve” to cover the word card. Place the word card into the sleeve. Slowly slide the card out of the sleeve, showing one letter at a time. Have students spell the word as you pull it out.



All Mixed-Up



As a class, read aloud the words on the word wall. Ask students to close their eyes while you remove five words and place them under the wrong letters. Have students open their eyes and look for the misplaced words. Give students time to think, and then ask them to whisper to a classmate which words are misplaced. Invite the class to say and spell one misplaced word at a time and tell which letter it belongs under. Move each word back to the correct letter. Repeat this process with the remaining misplaced words.

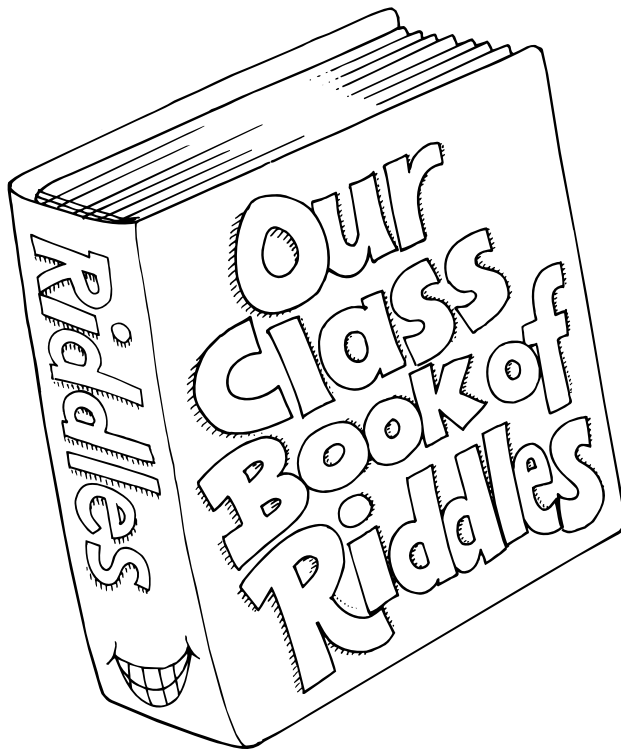
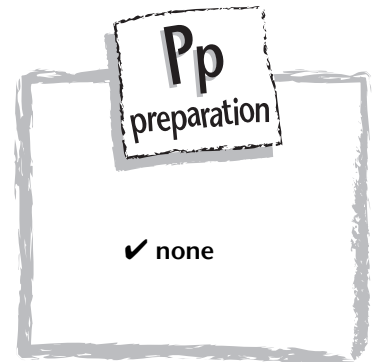
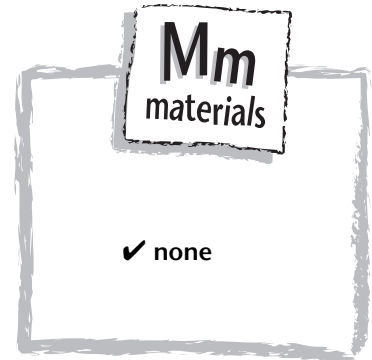


Have students complete this activity at their seats with an individual dry erase board or a piece of paper. Ask them to write down all the misplaced words and which letters they should go under. Have more advanced students write down the misplaced words and list all the words on the word wall that begin with the same letter. Invite students to put these words in alphabetical order.



Riddles, Riddles, Riddles

Explain to the class that a riddle is a puzzling question posed as a problem to be solved or guessed. Tell students that they will each create their own riddle as a clue to a word from the word wall (e.g., *What has three letters, rhymes with **rat**, and starts with the letter **c**?*). Model a “think aloud” to help students learn how to create a riddle. For example, say *First I will choose a word in my head. Now I will try to think of challenging clues to make you think. I’m thinking of a word that has three tall letters, and so on. The clues could include the number of letters in the word, a word that rhymes with the word wall word, a range of letters it is located between (e.g., between **c** and **f**), the number of vowels or consonants it has, the number of tall or dropped letters it has, or the row in which the word can be found on the word wall. Invite students to take turns sharing their riddle.*



Invite each student to write a riddle that uses a word from the word wall. Combine the students’ riddles into a class riddle book.