

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

Phonemic awareness

**DESCRIPTION**

Children will sing a familiar song by first changing the initial sounds of the song's words to make silly words.

**TARGETED SKILL(S):**

Vary the initial phoneme in words to create new real and nonsense words.

**SUITABLE FOR**

Whole class or small group

**PREP-TIME**

0-5 min.

**DURATION OF ACTIVITY**

20 min.

**MATERIALS**

- **You find:** OPTIONAL: Chart paper, whiteboard, or interactive whiteboard and corresponding writing tools (e.g., markers, whiteboard markers)

**PREPARATION**

1. Choose a familiar song (e.g., *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, which is featured in this activity).
2. You may want to think of approved initial sounds ahead of time to avoid possible inappropriate words during the activity (e.g., some appropriate sounds for *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*: /b/, /f/, /z/).  
Optional: If you would like to point to the words while singing the song, print the song lyrics on chart paper, a whiteboard, or an interactive whiteboard. Substitute the initial sound of each word with a line (e.g., \_winkle, \_winkle, \_ittle \_tar, \_ow \_l \_onder \_hat \_ou \_re! \_p \_bove \_he \_orld \_o \_igh, \_ike \_a \_iamond \_in \_he \_ky. \_winkle, \_winkle, \_ittle \_tar, \_ow \_l \_onder \_hat \_ou \_re!").

**What will we learn?**

"We are going to play a sound swap game with a song we know! We will change the first sound in each word, and then we will discover if we are singing real words or silly words!"

**What do we know?**

1. "We know that words are made up of letters and each letter or letter combination makes a different sound."
2. "Let's think about the letters in our names. Sometimes the letter at the beginning of our name is different than the first letter of our friend's name." Say one of the children's names, emphasising the initial sound. "Do any of your names start with the same sound?"
3. "Let's see what happens when we change all of our names so they sound the same at the beginning!" Have fun saying their names with the same initial sound as the first child.
4. "Let's change our names so they all start with\_\_\_\_(e.g., /p/)!" One at a time, ask them to say their new name.

**Watch me first!**

1. "I am going to sing one of my favourite songs. Let's see if you can guess what it is." For example: "Whenever I sing this song, I think about the night sky and I feel calm and peaceful!"
2. Hum the tune of your song choice (e.g., *'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'*) and see if the children can guess the song.
3. "Yes! It is *'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'*! I am going to be a bit silly and change the sound to\_\_\_\_(e.g., /b/) at the beginning of each word: "Bwinkle, bwinkle, bittle btar, bow by bonder bhat bou bar! Bup babove bhe borld bo high, bike ba biamond bin bhe bky. Bwinkle, bwinkle, bittle btar, bow by bonder bhat bou bar!"
4. "Let's all sing the silly song together with the same sound\_\_\_\_(i.e., /b/) at the beginning of each word!" Sing together at a slow pace, assisting the children as needed to determine the next real or silly word.  
NOTE: If you decided to print and display the song lyrics, point to each word as you sing.

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### Let's try it!

1. "Let's change the first sound again to see what other silly words we can make!" As the children become more comfortable singing with your new chosen sound, allow them to take the lead in figuring out what the next real or silly words will be in the song.  
NOTE: Continue to point to the words if you have them displayed.
2. As time permits, sing the song as many or as few times as you like with a new initial sound each time.

### What did we learn?

- "Today, we learned how to change the sound at the beginning of each word! Did we end up making more real words or more silly words?"
- "Can you remember a new real word that we made? What was your favourite silly word?"
- "We had fun singing a song we know in different ways! What other songs could we sing together and change the sounds?" Sing only the first line of some new songs, changing the initial sound (e.g., Mary Had a Little Lamb = "Kary kad ka kittle kamb").

### Let's do more!

- Ask the children to count how many real words and silly words are in the original song as well as the new versions that you sing. Compare how many real words versus silly words are in the different song versions.
- Add percussion instruments, finger-snapping, clapping, or other movement that encourages the children to bring both sides of their bodies together or to cross midline. Each movement may represent a different letter.

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## EXTENDING THE LESSON

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### Less Challenging



- Only sing the opening chorus, or part of it, each time you change the initial sound (e.g., "\_winkle, \_winkle, \_ittle \_tar." or "\_winkle, \_winkle, \_ittle \_tar, \_ow \_(l) \_onder \_hat \_ou \_re!").
- Choose specific letter-sounds that will be more easily remembered by your group of children. Each time you sing the song, begin by saying the sound a few times. Then use a gesture that represents the sound and/or show the letter each time you sing it.

### More Challenging



- Choose letter sounds that the children may not know as easily. You could also choose consonant blends as well (e.g., /ch/, /sh/).
- Ask individual children or groups of children to determine the next word or phrase in the song according to the assigned initial sound.
- Change the initial sounds in additional verses from your chosen song.
- Instead of changing the initial sounds, change the middle or end sounds (e.g., change a short vowel to a different short vowel; change the end consonant; add an 'y' to the end of each word).



### TIPS

This activity can be repeated by changing the initial sounds of words in other favourite songs, rhymes, or storybooks!

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