



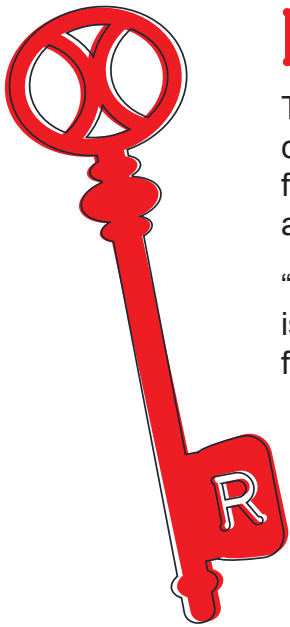
# Stretch and Blend Words

Keys to  
Accuracy

**Ruby  
Reader**

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# Stretch and Blend Words



## Keys for the Teacher

This strategy gives students a tool to use to stretch words apart into smaller components and then recombine them into words. This is accomplished orally first; then sounds are matched to letters within words. For many children, this is a complicated process that requires repeated practice.

“Reading and phonemic awareness are mutually reinforcing: Phonemic awareness is necessary for reading, and reading, in turn, improves phonemic awareness still further.” (*Shaywitz, 2003*).

## Keys for the Children

Good readers stretch a word apart by saying each letter sound, one by one. Next, blend or push the sounds together and say the whole word.

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## Lesson

A fun way to introduce stretching and blending is with a coiled spring. Begin by holding each end of the spring while saying a word like “cat.” Say each phoneme individually while pulling the spring apart and then snap it together again while saying the entire word. After several demonstrations pass out individual springs so the children can also practice with words as you say them. (Important note. . . give the students a few minutes to play with the springs before asking them to stretch words with you. Also, ask them to treat the springs very carefully. Demonstrate how the action is to pull apart and push together. They need to know that twisting can ruin a spring.) Keep a spring handy by your teaching chair and in your conferring bag to use whenever the need arises.

**“Turtle Talk” or “Sloth Speak” is another way to describe slowing down and stretching a word into individual sounds.**

“Push boxes” can be made by drawing a rectangle divided into three horizontal sections. The student pushes a penny into each section while saying individual sounds. Children underline the entire rectangle with a finger as they say the word.

One more kinesthetic technique to help children learn this skill is to gently take their hands in yours and move them apart distinctly with each sound. Then clap hands together as you blend and say the word together. Children can use this movement independently as they read and write.

For many children, practicing multiple ways will aid in mastery of this strategy.

