



# Viewer's Guide

This guide was produced in partnership with the **National Education Association**



## EPISODE 2

# Blending Sounds in Syllables with Autumn (Kindergarten)

**Video length:** 13 minutes

**Watch the video here:**

[ReadingRockets.org/interventions/blending-sounds-in-syllables-with-autumn-kindergarten](https://www.readingrockets.org/interventions/blending-sounds-in-syllables-with-autumn-kindergarten)

## Autumn's profile

Autumn is a kindergartener who struggles with phonological awareness activities at the onset-rime level. Blending onset-rime is a pre-reading phonological skill that must be mastered before students can successfully blend individual sounds into words. Difficulty with phonological awareness is an early indicator of potential future struggles acquiring reading and spelling skills.



## Video overview

Autumn learns how to blend two speech sound units, onset and rime, into a single syllable word. "Onset" is the consonant sound or sounds before the vowel sound within a single syllable. "Rime" is the vowel sound and any sound or sounds after the vowel sound. For example, in the word 'mat' the onset is /m/ and the rime is /at/. For 'brush' the onset is /br/ and the rime is /ush/. Blending onset-rime is phonological awareness skill that is slightly easier than blending phonemes.

Autumn's teacher is Ms. Farrell. She is a reading specialist and educational consultant working with Autumn for the first time. The video clips of Autumn are taken from a 25-minute lesson.

Ms. Farrell's lesson is purposefully not from any program. She and Autumn demonstrate teaching techniques that can work with any program. To prepare for the lesson, Ms. Farrell made a list of multi-syllable words for working at the syllable level and a list of one-syllable words without initial blends to work with Autumn on first sound and then onset-rime.



## Ms. Farrell's lesson plan is to:

1. Check to make sure Autumn has the prerequisite skills necessary to succeed with the strategy she will teach her.
2. Teach Autumn how to blend onset-rime into words.
3. Give Autumn practice in blending onset-rime into words.

## Things to notice while watching the video

- As you watch the video, notice Ms. Farrell's style of instruction.
- Ms. Farrell uses no letters and does not refer to letter names when teaching phonological awareness.
- Ms. Farrell models each activity before asking Autumn to try it.
- Ms. Farrell has Autumn copy her after modeling the task.
- When Autumn makes a mistake, Ms. Farrell responds by telling her what part of her response is correct, and then guides Autumn to come up with a completely correct answer.

## Questions to consider while viewing the video the first time

1. At the beginning of the video, which two skills does Ms. Farrell check to see Autumn has before teaching onset-rime?
2. Why does Ms. Farrell check whether Autumn can blend syllables into a word?
3. Why did Ms. Farrell check to see if Autumn could easily identify the first sound in a spoken word after Autumn showed she has mastered blending syllables?



## Questions to consider while viewing the video the first time

4. Autumn easily blends /s/ /un/ into the word 'sun'. Why does Ms. Farrell give her more words?
5. When Autumn cannot blend /m/ /ake/ into a word, how did Ms. Farrell change the task?
6. The video shows that Autumn has been taught to identify which parts of a word?
7. If Ms. Farrell has future lessons with Autumn, what would she include in the lessons?

**Answers:** see the next page for the answer key.

Watch the whole "Looking at Reading Interventions" series here:  
[ReadingRockets.org/interventions](https://www.ReadingRockets.org/interventions)



## Answer key

1. At the beginning of the video, which two skills does Ms. Farrell check to see Autumn has before teaching onset-rime?

Blending syllables and identifying first sounds.

2. Why does Ms. Farrell check whether Autumn can blend syllables into a word?

Blending syllables is an easier phonological awareness task than blending onset-rime. If Autumn had difficulty blending syllables, Ms. Farrell would have begun by teaching her to blend and segment syllables.

3. Why did Ms. Farrell check to see if Autumn could easily identify the first sound in a spoken word after Autumn showed she has mastered blending syllables?

Being able to identify the first sound in a word is the first step in understanding that syllables, which are easily heard and understood as units of speech sound, can be broken into smaller units and that one of the units is the first sound. Students who cannot identify the first sound in a word are not ready to learn to practice blending onset-rime.

4. Autumn easily blends /s/ /un/ into the word 'sun'. Why does Ms. Farrell give her more words?

Being able to blend onset-rime into one word is not enough evidence to be certain that Autumn has mastered the skill. On the second word, 'make', Ms. Farrell learns that Autumn is not automatic at blending onset-rime.

5. When Autumn cannot blend /m/ /ake/ into a word, how did Ms. Farrell change the task?

Ms. Farrell backs up a half step on the phonological continuum and has Autumn try to blend the body (initial sound and the vowel sound as a unit) and the coda (the sound or sounds after the vowel) to make a word. It is easier for a student to blend the vowel sound into a consonant than to blend the initial consonant into the rime.

6. The video shows that Autumn has been taught to identify which parts of a word?

First sound and last sound.

7. If Ms. Farrell has future lessons with Autumn, what would she include in the lessons?

Ms. Farrell would start with something Autumn has mastered, move to what Autumn has mostly mastered, and finish with working on a yet-to-be-mastered skill. She would start with a warm-up working at the syllable level where Autumn is confident. Then she would have Autumn practice blending the initial sound and vowel sound as a unit where Autumn has shown she can do the task, and then transition to onset-rime blending.