

Combining letters—“T” & “H”

Age: 6- 8

Unit length: single lesson

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Description

This lesson uses a narrative to help students understand the sound that the letter pair "TH" makes. T and H make different sounds when they are together. They don't make the sounds they are supposed to make. By personifying the letters and placing their actions into a narrative we can see the change in sounds as something as a reaction to an event in a story, giving the change a purpose. T and H have their own proper sounds, but for some reason, when they are together, it changes, and they misbehave.

Unit Outline

PLO's

demonstrate auditory discrimination and orally manipulate sounds in words (i.e., use phonological awareness)

demonstrate awareness of the connection between reading, writing, and oral language

Cognitive tools used:

Story, Binary Opposition, Mental Imagery, Metaphor, Games, Drama, and Play, Rhyme, Rhythm and Pattern,

What is emotionally engaging about the topic? How can it evoke wonder? Why should it matter to us?

The sounds that the letters “t” and “h” make different sounds when they are together. They don't make the sounds they are “supposed” to make.

By personifying the letters and placing their actions into a narrative we can see the change in sounds as something as a reaction to an event in a story – giving the change a purpose.

T and H have their own “proper” sounds, but for some reason, when they are together, it changes – they “misbehave”.

What binary concepts best capture the wonder and emotion of the topic? If this were a story, what would the opposing forces be?

Behave / Misbehave

Secondary Binary Opposite: Quiet / Loud

Using the binary opposites as our criterion of relevance, what content should be used to “tell the story” of the topic?

Why and how they misbehave – (they don’t like each other so they stick their tongues out)

Other content to consider:

The position of the tongue when making the “th” sounds. (between the teeth)

The reason for the two different sounds that “th” can make (voiced and unvoiced) – Or for younger kids loud and quiet.

What parts of the topic most dramatically embody the binary concepts? What image best captures the dramatic contrast?

The Letters “t” and “h” misbehaving together – sticking their tongues out at each other and resulting in a different sound

How can we organize the content that best articulates the topic into a developing story form?

The Letters T and H don’t get along very well. Everyday at letter school the letters are arranged into words so that they can learn their proper place and sound. H and T were both very eager to be first in line, H started jumping up and down and called out demanding the teacher to pick an “h” word. The teacher, who was annoyed by H’s disruptive behavior picked the t to go in front and said that she would only pick quiet students to go first. The letter T, wanting to flaunt being first, stuck her tongue out at the letter H. The teacher tried to get them to talk out their problems, but whenever they were together, one or the other was sticking his/her tongue out. All she could hear T saying was /th/ (as in this). Even H, who was usually rather quiet, started sticking his tongue out at T and said /th/ (as in thanks).

To this day, whenever T and H are together, they stick their tongues out at each other and behave very improperly – making sounds that sound nothing like the /t/ and /h/ sound they are supposed to make. The letter H, when standing apart from the letter T is always very quiet – sometimes even silent – always hoping to be chosen first.

How does the story end? How do we resolve the conflict set up between the binary opposites?

We want the children to understand that “t” and “h” always misbehave when they are together. They were unable to solve their problems.

They behave only when they are alone.

We want to modify the tongue position of the sound slightly so that they don't think they need to stick their tongues right out of their mouth every time they see the letters "th".

But now, they don't want to get caught – so they don't stick their tongues all the way out, they just put it between their teeth and lip – just enough to make sure that the other letter can see it.

How can one know whether the topic has been understood, its importance grasped and the content learned?

After the story the children could be asked to create an image in their mind (and possibly also on paper) of the two letters together sticking their tongues out between their teeth.

Ask the children to re-tell the story – to other classmates, or to their parents.

Assign a simple story to be read – or a group of words - that use the "th" letter combo. Observe when reading.

Ask students to create their own list of "th" words. Ask them which letter is sticking out the tongue (listening to different "th" sounds) They could even draw tongues on the letter.