

Cora and the Firestorm
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Fluent Level 14
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Phonemic Awareness

1. Manipulating sounds to make new words

What words would we make if we dropped the first sound in each of these words?

Meat without the 'm' - *eat*

four without the 'f' - *or*

came without the 'k' - *aim*

stalk without the 's' - *talk*

across without the short 'u' - *cross*

smelt without the 's' - *melt*

stung without the 't' - *tongue*

What words would we make if we dropped the last sound in each of these words?

while without the 'l' - *why*

safe without the 'f' - *say*

went without the 't' - *when*

meat without the 't' - *me*

cave without the 'v' - *Kay*

dawn without the 'n' - *door*

Extension

What words would we make if we swapped the vowel sound in the middle of each of these words?

The 'or' in *stalk* for a long 'a' - *steak*

The short 'i' in *wind* for a short 'o' - *wand*

The short 'a' in *back* for a short 'oo' - *book*

The 'ow' in *ground* for a long 'o' - *groaned*

The 'or' in *warm* for an 'er' - *worm*

The 'or' in *dawn* for an 'ow' - *down*

Phonics

NOTE

The 'or' sound is one of the most difficult to spell because there are many different ways it can be written. In the US and in other parts of the world the **r** is pronounced in these patterns – **or, oar, our, ore, oor** – and they are considered to be one sound ending in 'r' – 'or'. These patterns **-aw, au, augh, ough, a, ar, al-** are pronounced 'aw', without an 'r' sound.

In most parts of New Zealand, Australia and the UK, the **or** in *organ* and the **aw** in *awful* are pronounced the same way – without the **r** being pronounced, so in these countries the following spelling patterns are all pronounced 'or'.

Common spelling patterns for 'or':

or – organ, for, fortune (occur anywhere in a word)

ore – shore, more (common when 'or' is the last sound in a word)

oar – board, soar (common when 'or' is the last sound in a word, but also elsewhere)

oor- poor, floor (common when 'or' is the last sound in a word)

our – four, your (common when 'or' is the last sound in a word)

aw – awful, jaw, lawn (occur anywhere in a word)

awe – awesome, awe

au – August, pause, cause (not used at the end of a word)

a – water, ball, tall (only in the middle of a syllable. Common in 'all' words)

al – walk, talk, chalk (Usually before a 'k' in words that rhyme with talk)

ar – war, warden, warble (Not used at the start of a word or syllable)

augh – caught, taught, naughty (only occur before a **t**)

ough – sought, fought, thought (only occur before a **t**)

1. Introducing the 'or' sound

Ask students to practice saying the 'or' sound. 'or', 'or', 'or'

2. Brainstorming words that contain the 'or' sound

Brainstorm words that begin with an 'or' sound.

(*organ, organise, ought, August, always, awesome*)

Brainstorm words that end with an 'or' sound.

(*door, pour, poor, saw, shore, claw, more, sure, soar*)

Brainstorm words that have an 'or' sound inside the word

This is quite a difficult task so you might need to give clues such as:

I can run fast or I can _____ slowly. (walk)

This is a yellow vegetable we eat off the cob. (corn) If night is at the end of the day, what is at the start? (morning)

3. Looking for the spelling patterns for the 'or' sound

Say the word *corn* and count the sounds. Draw three sound boxes on the board.

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Write the word *corn* on the board and ask students to help you fill in the sound boxes. Circle the spelling pattern for the 'or' sound.

c	or	n
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Say the word *yawn* and count the sounds. Draw three sound boxes on the board.

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Write the word *yawn* on the board and ask students to help you fill in the sound boxes. Circle the spelling pattern for the 'or' sound.

y	aw	n
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Say the word *thought* and count the sounds. Draw three sound boxes on the board.

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Write the word *thought* on the board and ask students to help you fill in the sound boxes. Circle the spelling pattern for the 'or' sound.

th	ough	t
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Say the word *walk* and count the sounds. Draw three sound boxes on the board.

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Write the word *walk* on the board and ask students to help you fill in the sound boxes. Circle the spelling pattern for the 'or' sound.

w	al	k
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Say the word *board* and count the sounds. Draw three sound boxes on the board.

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Write the word *board* on the board and ask students to help you fill in the sound boxes. Circle the spelling pattern for the 'or' sound.

b	oar	d
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Write the patterns you have found on the board. Add others as you find them.

or	aw	ough	al
oor	ore	oar	our
a	ar	awe	au

Write some of the words students brainstorm under these spelling patterns.

Explain to students that these are the most common spelling patterns for the 'or' sound, but they might find more!

4. Finding the words that contain the 'or' sound in Cora and the Firestorm

As students read Cora and the Firestorm, ask them to listen for words that contain the 'or' sound. When the book has been read, go back and re-read it a page at a time. Ask students to identify the 'or' words on each page and write them on the board under the correct spelling pattern heading. Ask students to colour-code the spelling patterns for the 'or' sound in the words on the board.

5. Extension

Write the 'or' words from the book and from students suggestions onto cards. Students could sort the cards into spelling pattern groups.

Students could then sort the words into three categories – words that start with, end with or have an 'or' sound in the middle. They could then look at where in the word the spelling patterns occur most commonly.

Vocabulary Development

Crept

Read page 7 aloud. *Cora began to stalk the warthog. She **crept** forward on silent paws.*

Ask children to demonstrate the act of creeping.

What does the word *crept* mean?

Why do you think Cora *crept* towards the warthog? Why didn't she just run?

What words in these two sentences give you a clue about the meaning of *crept*? (stalk, on silent paws)

Look at the illustration on page 7. Describe what Cora looks like and how she is moving.

Think of a situation where you might creep towards something or someone. Tell a partner about it.

Warning

Read Page 9 aloud. *A wind blew across the grass and she smelt something awful in the air. Smoke! It brought a terrible **warning**.*

What is a warning? Have you ever had a warning? What was that for?

Discuss children's examples.

Discuss weather forecasts. Ask children to explain how they help us to avoid problems.

Can a weather forecast bring a warning?

What gave Cora the terrible warning? (the smoke)

What was it warning her about? (the firestorm coming and the danger that would bring)

When she smelt the smoke what message did Cora get? (danger!)

Adjectives

Think of some adjectives to describe Cora on the following pages:

Page 2 (*hungry*)

Page 3 (*alert, thoughtful*)

Page 7 (*fierce, quiet, scary*)

Page 10 (*shocked, worried, scared, panicked*)

Page 13 (*hurt, frightened, scared*)

Page 15 (*exhausted, relieved, happy, tired, happy*)

Comprehension

Linking illustrations to the story

Look at pages 12 and 13 and talk to a partner about what is happening on these pages. Why are the animals running? How do they feel? What will happen if they don't run fast enough?

Use Activity Sheet 1 to draw a picture of the animals and the firestorm. Write a short story underneath your picture to describe what is happening in your picture.

Story Structure

This story has a beginning, middle and end. Think about the events that happened at the start of the story, what happened in the middle of the story and how the story ended. Which part of the story was most exciting?

Use Activity Sheet 2, the excitement graph, to record the events that happened and how exciting they were.

Generating Questions

Look at page 16. Ask children to pretend they are Cora's cubs and to think of a question they would ask Cora as they sit outside the cave the morning after the firestorm.

Write the questions the children think of onto cards. Put the cards into a bag and each child has a turn drawing out a card and asking the question. All children can contribute to the answers. If children do not know the answers help them find out (For example: How does a firestorm start?).

Fluency

Phonics focus words

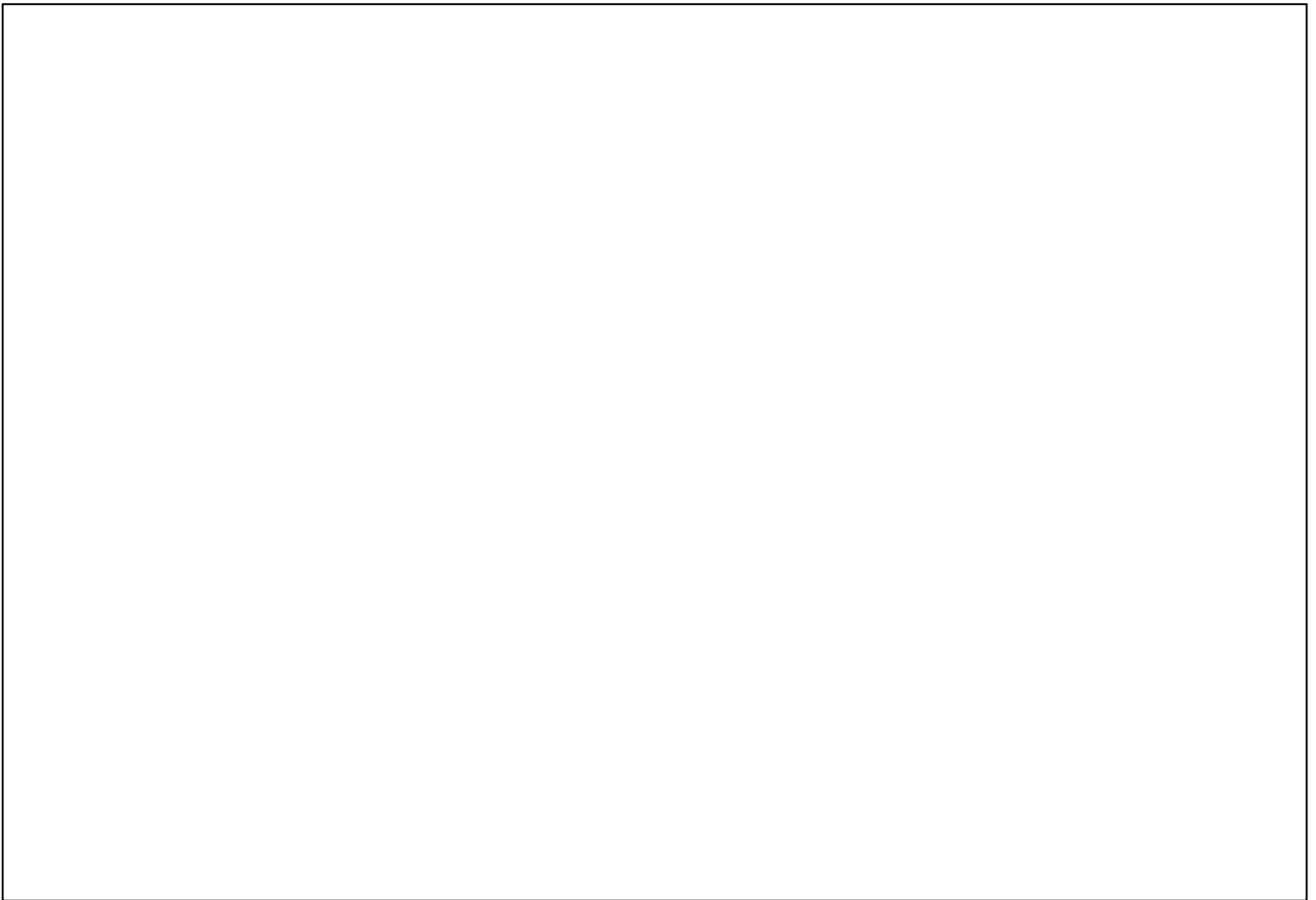
Make up these phonics focus words into cards – either colour-code the 'or' spelling patterns or print them in colour. These cards can be used for quick word recognition or for word sorts to identify spelling patterns for the 'or' sound. Other 'or' word cards can be added to expand the words students are sorting by spelling pattern. This can be a group or individual independent activity.

Phonics Focus Words

Cora	firestorm
more	morning
four	daughters
dawn	paused
saw	warthog
hawk	forward
warm	awful
stalk	brought
paws	warning

storm	ordinary
forgot	thought
corner	warned
explore	exhausted
or	oor
oar	ore
our	a
ar	al
au	aw
ough	augh

Activity Sheet 1: The Firestorm



Activity Sheet 2 Excitement graph

High

Low

<p>Cora leaves her cave to go and hunt for food for her cubs</p>	<p>She sees a hawk in the sky above.</p>	<p>Cora smells a warthog and sees his tail above the grass. She creeps forward and begins to stalk the warthog.</p>	<p>A wind blows across the grass. Cora smells smoke.</p>	<p>Cora realises that a firestorm is coming. She forgets the warthog and turns to run back to her cubs.</p>	<p>Cora and the animals race through smoke and ash. They are frightened. Cora's eyes are stinging and she can hardly see.</p>	<p>Cora reaches her cave. She flops down inside. Her cubs are safe. They stay in the cave while the firestorm passes.</p>	<p>The next morning Cora and her cubs go outside. Everything is burnt and black but they are safe.</p>
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