

**Worms, Worms, Worms**  
**by Joy Allcock**  
**Fluent Level 13**  
**Teacher notes by Joy Allcock**

## **Phonemic Awareness**

### **1. Manipulating sounds to make new words**

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

*Starts* without the 's' - *tarts*

*turn* without the 't' - *urn*

*soak* without the 's' - *oak*

*planned* without the 'p' - *land*

*school* without the 's' - *cool*

*my* without the 'm' - *eye*

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

*start* without the 't' - *star*

*next* without the 't' - *necks*

*soak* without the 'k' - *so*

*drawn* without the 'n' - *draw*

*heard* without the 'd' - *her*

*soaked* without the 't' - *soak*

### **Extension**

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

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

The 'er' in *turn* for an 'or' - *torn*

The long 'oo' in *food* for a long 'a' - *fade*

The short 'a' in *scraps* for a long 'a' - *scrapes*

The short 'oo' in *put* for an 'ou' - *pout*

The 'ir' in *dirt* for an 'ar' - *dart*

# Phonics

## Note

The 'er' sound is a vowel sound that can be heard at the beginning, inside and at the end of words (*urgent, her, person*). It is most commonly written in one of three ways – **er, ir, ur**. However in a small number of words it is written **ear** (*learn, heard, early, earth*) and when it follows a 'w' sound it is usually written **or** (*word, world, work, worst*). Also, in the word *were*, it is written **ere**!

The **er** spelling pattern occurs on the end of many words. However, when it is on the end of most two-or-more-syllable words, it is part of an unstressed syllable and is pronounced as a schwa vowel sound. In many English speaking countries this **er** schwa pattern is pronounced like a short 'u' – *teacher – teach 'a'*.

Many words end with **er** but not with an 'er' sound!

### 1. Introducing the 'er' sound

Ask students to repeat the words *her, stir, fur, purr* and to listen to the 'er' on the end of these words. Practise making the sound.

### 2. Brainstorming words that contain the 'er' sound

#### Words that begin with 'er'

Only a few common words begin with the 'er' sound. (*earth, early, urgent, Ursula*)

#### Words that end with 'er'

Think of one-syllable words that end with 'er'. Two-or-more-syllable words rarely end with the 'er' sound although many may end with **er**. Students could think of words that rhyme with *stir* (*purr, her, fur, sir, whirr*)

#### Words with an 'er' sound in the middle

Students could think of words that rhyme with these words:

burn (*turn, fern, learn, yearn, churn*)

bird (*curd, heard, nerd, stirred, word, third*)

Bert (*curt, dirt, hurt, skirt, shirt*)

nurse (*curse, verse, purse, terse, worse*)

first (*burst, cursed, nursed, worst, thirst*)

In multi-syllabic words the 'er' sound will be heard in the stressed syllable. (*birthday, curtain, person, dirty, journal, learning, murky, certain*)

### 3. Looking for the spelling patterns for the 'er' sound

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

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Write the word *purse* on the board. Ask students to help you write each sound in its sound box.

p	ur	se
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Circle the box that contains the 'er' sound. How is it written?

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

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Write the word *heard* on the board. Ask students to help you write each sound in its sound box.

h	ear	d
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Circle the box that contains the 'er' sound.

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

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Write the word *stir* on the board. Ask students to help you write each sound in its sound box.

s	t	ir
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Circle the box that contains the 'er' sound.

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

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Write the word *work* on the board. Ask students to help you write each sound in its sound box.

w	or	k
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Circle the box that contains the 'er' sound.

Say the word *person* and count the sounds. Draw five sound boxes on the board.

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Write the word *person* on the board. Ask students to help you write each sound in its sound box

p	er	s	o	n
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Circle the box that contains the 'er' sound.

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## Extension

Say these words to students: *worm, work, word, world, worst, worth*

Write them on the board and say each one again.

Say: 'All these words have an 'er' sound, but what sound comes before the 'er' in these words? '

Repeat the list of words.

'There is a 'w' before the 'er' in these words.

'How is the 'er' sound written in these words? There is an **or** spelling pattern for the 'er' in these words.'

Most words that have a 'w' sound before the 'er' use an **or** pattern to write the 'er'. One exception is the word *were* – let's see how the 'er' sound is written in this word.'

Draw two sound boxes on the board and fill in each sound box with the spelling patterns for the word *were*. Circle the **ere** pattern for 'er'.

w	ere
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Write the spelling patterns for the 'er' sound on the board.

**er**                      **ur**                      **ir**                      **ear**                      **or**                      **ere**

#### 4. Finding the words that contain the 'er' sound in *Worms, Worms, Worms*

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

## Vocabulary Development

### Synonyms

Think of some other words or phrases that could replace these words in the story.

**burst**                      He *burst* through the door (*rushed, ran, flew, tore, raced* etc.)

**soaked** ...they had *soaked* in water (*dampened, wet, moistened* etc.)

**awesome**                      Worms are *awesome!* (*fantastic, great, wonderful* etc.)

Describe these words as they are used in the story.

**project**                      study of something, an assignment – about worms in this story

**monitor**                      a person with responsibility for something - for looking after the wormery

**fertiliser**                      a substance added to soil that helps plants grow –the worms made the fertiliser

**plans**                      a diagram that shows how something is to be done or made – the design of the wormery

What could you do a project about?

What other kind of monitors could you have in your school?

What kinds of things could you grow in soil that has had fertiliser added to it?

What other things would we need plans for?

### **Word Associations**

Students work with a partner and take turns thinking of things they associate with the following words. You can make this a one minute task for each word.

end of term

holidays

worms

project

newspaper

Food

## **Comprehension**

### **Story Structure**

Use Activity Sheet 1 to organise the events of the story into the correct sequence. Read the result to a partner.

### **Method**

Mr Dixon and Kurt had a plan or method for making the wormery. It began with Mr Dixon drawing up the plans. He and Kurt then followed a series of steps until the wormery was finished and they shut the lid. Use Activity Sheet 2 to record each separate step Mr Dixon and Kurt followed to complete the wormery. These steps are described on pages 7 to 12.

## **Fluency**

### **Phonics focus Words**

Make up these words into cards – either colour-code the ‘er’ spelling patterns, or print the cards in colour. These cards can be used for quick word recognition or for word sorts to identify spelling patterns for ‘er’.

## **Activity Sheet 1: Story Sequence**

**Cut up the strips and rearrange in the correct order to tell the story.**

**On the first day of the holidays, Kurt went back to school to help Mr Dixon build a wormery.**

**Kurt and Mr Dixon filled the wormery with dirt, worms and food scraps.**

**The school caretaker, Mr Dixon, heard about Kurt's project and decided to build a wormery. He asked Kurt to help him.**

**Everyone had turns being a worm monitor and looking after the wormery.**

**By Thursday, the worker was finished.**

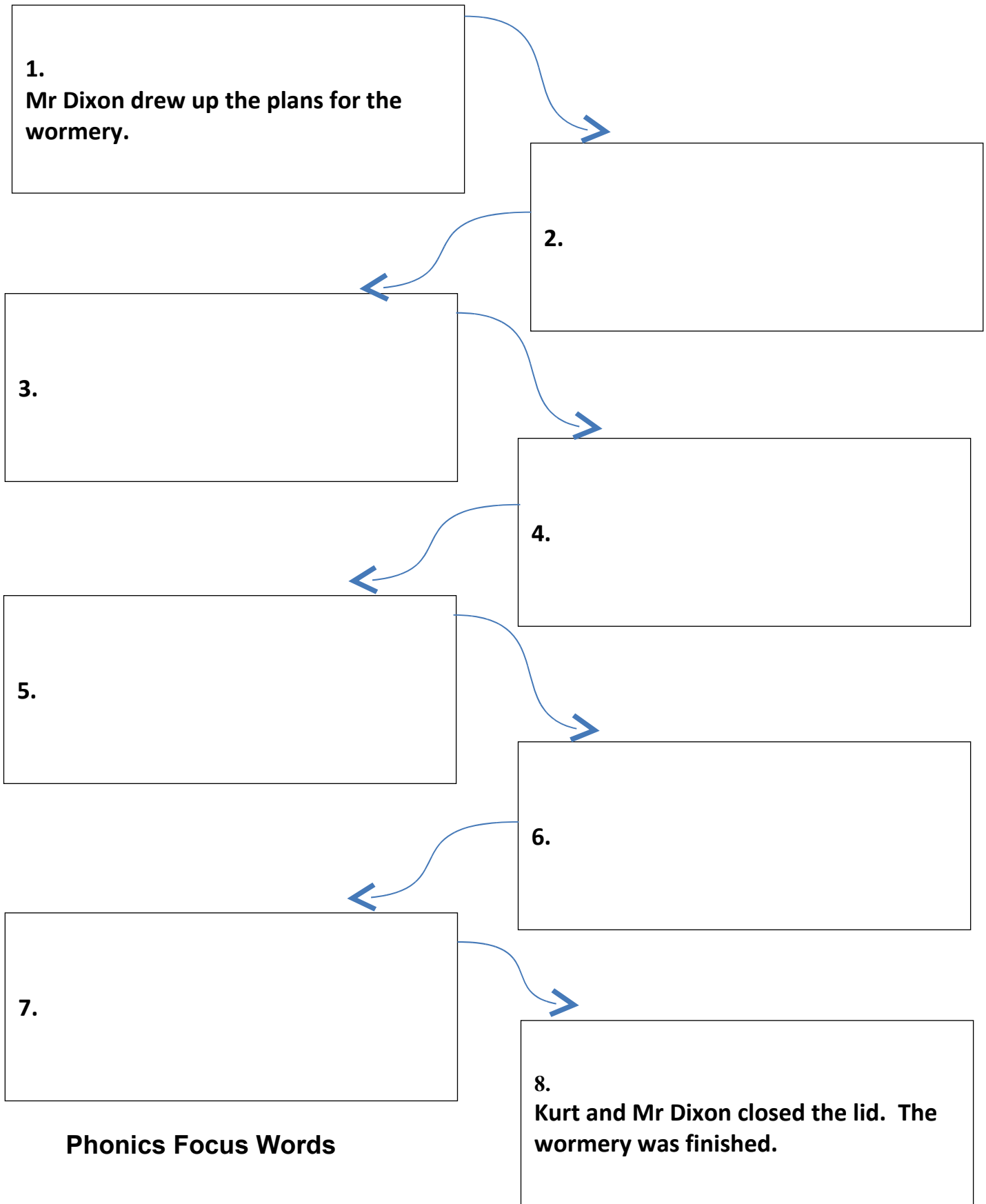
**On the first day of term, Kurt and Mr Dixon talked to the students at school about how a wormery works.**

**The worms turned the food scraps into fertiliser for the garden.**

**Kurt finished his project on Worms in the last week of term.**

## Activity Sheet 2:      Instructions for making a Wormery

Using the story and illustrations on pages 7-12, fill in each step of this graphic organiser to explain the steps Mr Dixon and Kurt followed to make the wormery.



term	Kurt
worms	work
burst	heard
wormery	early
Thursday	perfect
first	dirt
turn	or
fertiliser	
er	ir
ur	ear



