

PHASE 02 · BLENDING TRAIL · STARTER SET

02 Blending CVC Words

Three sounds become one word. This is the engine of the whole system.

TOOL: THE BOLT + SINGLE-LETTER NUTS

CVC stands for consonant, vowel, consonant, the shape of simple three-letter words like **map**, **sip**, and **fun**. Three nuts sit on the bolt, one per position, and the short workout below is the core of the Starter Set. After the first full run, it starts to feel like second nature.



- 1 Build a word.** Three nuts on the bolt. Keep it simple: **s, a, t**. Real words and nonsense words both count. A nonsense word cannot be guessed, so the only way through it is to blend.
- 2 Tap each sound.** Tap the top of the first nut and wait. Give your child a moment to find the sound. When it comes, a warm “that’s right,” then the next nut. You are building the runway, not rushing to the blend.
- 3 Stretch and blend together.** Start the first sound and hold it, “say it with me, sssss,” and wave your child in to join you. They will struggle at first, so move slowly through the whole word, holding each sound, **ssssaaaat**. In time they start joining in, and the instant you hear their voice, drop yours and let them finish alone. Then confirm it cleanly: “That’s right. **Sat**.”
- 4 Rotate one nut, then run it again.** Turn a single nut to its next face and read the new word. One sound changes, everything else holds, then do it again. Which nut you turn, and in what order, is the part that matters most.

The heart of the Word Nuts routine is this:

The order of the turns is the secret, and it runs from the back of the word to the front. Start by rotating the **pink ending nut first**: so that, for example, **sat** becomes **sap**, rotate that same nut again so that **sap** becomes **sad**, rotate again, **sad** becomes **san**. The front holds still, so your child tracks only the last sound. Then the clear vowel, the hardest sound of the three: **sat · sot · sit · set**. The beige beginning nut comes last, on purpose, where the magic unfolds: **sat · mat · fat · lat**. By now the ending runs on its own, so each turn lands a whole new word your child already knows, a family of real words read on sight.

When blending feels stuck

Some children take a while to fuse the sounds into a word, and that is normal. If your child can say each sound alone but cannot run them together, slow the stretch down and carry more of it yourself. Hold the first sound longer, glide into the next without a gap, and let your child join wherever they can. This is where stretchy starting sounds earn their keep, because a sound you can hold leaves no silence for the word to fall apart in. **sssss-aaa-t** blends more easily than a word that starts with a hard stop like **cat**. And on a hard day, drop back to two-sound words for a while, a vowel and an ending, then build back up to three. Going slower costs you nothing.

MOVE ON WHEN

Move toward Phase 03 when your child runs a full rotation without hesitation and reads three-letter words as whole units, not three separate sounds.
