

# Book Nook

This month's Book Nook topic is...



## Help Your Child Hear the Sounds in Words with *The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and The Big Hungry Bear*

Does your child know their ABCs? Maybe they can point out familiar letters they see on books, or cereal boxes, or even street signs? These are important steps on the path to literacy. However, there is another important lesson your child will need to learn before they are ready to read and write: that the letters they see all correspond with particular sounds. For example, the letter B makes the sound /b/ when you say it in the word “bat.

Recognizing that speech can be broken down into words, which can then be broken down into individual sounds is called “phonological awareness” or sound awareness. This is a skill that develops gradually. One of the first signs of sound awareness is when your child recognizes that words rhyme. Another sound awareness skill is recognizing alliteration, or that some words start with the same sound. Let’s look at a strategy called “Listen... and Find One Like It” to help your child pay attention to words that start with the same sound.

*Let’s get started!*

## The Book

*The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and The Big Hungry Bear* by Don and Audrey Wood, Illustrated by Don Wood

## Why we picked it

This story about a mouse who finds a red ripe strawberry, and needs to protect it from a big hungry bear. Not only is it fun to read, it also includes alliteration on almost every page – for example, red and ripe both start with the letter R and make the sound /r/.

## The first few times you read this

The first few times you read this book, focus on the meaning of the story. Read it through so they have a sense of the story and what the words on the page mean. You can [turn the book reading into a conversation](#), and help your child understand any new or unfamiliar vocabulary words in the story by [Shooting for the SSTaRS](#).

Once your child understands the story, you can then help them think beyond what the words mean to how they sound.

## Later readings: Listen... and Find One

Once you have read the story through with your child a few times, you can start to pause and use the “Listen... and find one like it” strategy throughout the book. The strategy works exactly like it sounds.

### Step 1 – Listen

When you are reading this book, you can start by putting an emphasis, or stress, on the words that start with the same sounds. This will tune your child to listen not just for the meaning of the words, but also to start to pay attention to how the words sound. Once you’ve stressed the words that start with the same sound you could say: “Listen, ‘red’ starts with the sound /r/. Let’s listen for the sound /r/. Rrred. ‘Red’ starts with the sound /r/.

## Step 2 – Find One Like It

Now it's time to encourage your child to find another word that starts with the /r/ sound. You could say: "Let's think of another word that starts with the sound /r/. How about 'ripe'? 'Ripe' starts with the sound /r/, just like 'red'; starts with the sound /r/."

## Keep it Going

Once you've played "listen... and find one like it" many times, if your child seems to be enjoying the strategy, you could start to ask them to think of words that start with the same sounds. You could say, "Can you think of another word that starts with the sound /r/ like 'red', and 'rain'?" Then wait to see if they attempt to fill in a word. If you wait (for five to ten seconds) and your child doesn't respond, then you can help by saying, "What about 'rose'? 'Rose', 'red' and 'rain' all start with the sound /r/."

Many children won't be able to think of a word that starts with the same sound, and that's fine! Exposing them to the idea of alliteration will build their sound awareness. Offer many of your own examples of words that start with the same sounds.

There are many natural opportunities to build your child's sound awareness throughout the day. Whether you're reading, going for a walk, making breakfast or playing, you can use these activities to build on your child's interests and talk about the sounds that we hear in words.