

SAY THE WORD SLOWLY		
UNDERSTAND	Definition	Beginning readers take the individual sounds of letters (phonemes) and connect the sounds together smoothly to read the word accurately.
	When to Teach This Strategy	If you see students who . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know the sounds of letters in isolation but are unable to smoothly hook them together. • use the first letter or pictures to guess when reading words.
PREPARE	Why We Teach It	Proficient reading requires smooth blending of sounds. Readers often learn sounds in isolation, and this strategy helps them bring those sounds together.
	Secrets to Success	When saying a word slowly, all the sounds must stay hooked together or the word will come apart.
TEACH	How We Teach It	<p>A favorite way to teach this strategy is to give each student a rubber band. Then proceed as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a simple consonant-vowel-consonant word on a whiteboard or chart. 2. Have students take their bands between their hands. 3. Have them pull the band apart a bit as they say each sound in the word. 4. When each sound has been said, and the band is taut, have students move their hands quickly back together as the band springs back to its original state. 5. Everyone says the word fast at the same time, thus blending the sounds together. <p>Stretch and Read is an activity for teaching students to say the word slowly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students take one button or counter for each sound in the word they are reading. 2. Students lay the buttons down on the table in a row. 3. As the reader reads each sound in the word, students push a button forward. 4. When all sounds have been said, everyone uses both hands to push the buttons together, saying the word quickly.
		<p>Suggested Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read the sound, not the letter name.</i> • <i>Let's look at this word. Stretch it out and then say it fast.</i> • <i>Try to stretch each of the sounds out.</i> • <i>How many sounds do you hear?</i>
SUPPORT	Instructional Pivots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to the students that when we unhook the sounds of a word, the word comes apart just like the cars on a train. When the cars of a train are unhooked, the train comes apart. If that happens, the conductor has to hook them back together so the train can continue on its trip. Words are similar: The letter sounds need to stay hooked together for us to continue reading. • To get the feel for saying the word slowly, show the students how to sing the sounds in the words. Here is how: <i>Class, I am going to sing a song we already know but change the end of each line to help us blend the word mom. Here goes: "If you're happy and you know it, say the word mm-ah-mm [mom]." Using the tune of the song, keep the sounds of the words hooked together. Try it!</i> • Some sounds are able to be stretched (<i>a,e,f,i,l,m,n,o,q,r,s,u,v,w,x,y,z</i>), and others are fast or stop sounds (<i>b,c,d,g,h,j,k,p,t</i>). Knowing this distinction will help when readers come to words that are harder to stretch and reread. <p>Also consider materials, setting, instructional practices, and cognitive processes.</p>
	Partner Strategies	<p>These strategies may provide support before, during, and after teaching this strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Look Carefully at Letters and Words</i> • <i>Try a Different Letter Sound</i> • <i>Listen Carefully to Sounds</i> • <i>Map It</i>