



MAGIC BIRD

Teacher Manual

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Goals/Objectives

English Language Arts Standard

Students will build spelling and phonics skills by selecting the correct letters to complete the spellings of spoken words.

Language/ Reading Skills

Students will...

- understand and recall the order of sounds and words (auditory sequencing)
- identify spoken words and distinguish between similar sounding words (auditory word recognition)
- recognize and manipulate units of sound in spoken language such as words, syllables, onset and rime, and phonemes (phonological awareness)
- relate speech sounds to specific letters and apply that knowledge to the process of sounding out and reading words (phonics)
- apply knowledge of letter-sound mappings, spelling rules and patterns, and irregular spellings to create a visual representation of a word (spelling)

Cognitive Skills

Students will...

- hold a word in working memory while recalling letter-sound associations from long-term memory (memory)
- focus on sounds within words and the letters that represent those sounds, sustain that focus, and ignore distractions while carrying out a task (attention)
- rapidly interpret and integrate auditory and visual information to identify the missing letters within partially spelled words (processing)
- use positional cues to identify missing letters (sequencing)

Social-Emotional/ Executive Function Skills

Students will...

- be motivated to write longer and more complex sentences and paragraphs as spelling becomes more automatic and less effortful
- be confident in their ability to write on demand for homework assignments and during tests
- be able to more fluently express thoughts and emotions in writing as one method of emotional self-regulation

Icon Key



Audio



Download



English Learner



Quick Check



Settings



Video

Exercise Screen



1 Menu

Shows:

- Time Spent / Time Scheduled for the exercise.
- Network connection status.
- Exit: Returns student to the Assignments screen.
- Continue: Returns student to the exercise.

2 Time

Bar fills in from left to right, counting up the time completed in the exercise.

3 Answer Buttons (Cards)

The spelling patterns available are presented on cards. The student must click on the correct card to complete the spelling of a word.

4 Go Button (Magic Box)

Clicking the Magic Bird's prop box presents a new word. When a word is displayed, students can click the Go button again to hear the word read aloud.

5 Number of Streaks (Hats & Carrots)

A smaller hat pops out of the magician's hat after the student makes each 3-in-a-row streak. After 3 streaks, a carrot appears in the smallest hat, and after the 5th streak it flies to a tree in the background (up to 9 carrots).

6 Progress Meter (Stars)

Tracks and celebrates every 10% of exercise content completion.

7 Points

Shows total points awarded across all of a day's sessions.

- Correctly selecting a missing letter:
 - First attempt: 2 points
 - Second or third attempt: 1 point
- Correct fluency round words: 3 points

8 Current Streak (Lights Under Hats)

The right corner of the table displays three lights, which illuminate to show the current number of consecutive correct answers. Resets after 3 correct in a row or an incorrect answer.

Exercise Overview

Task

In early levels of Magic Bird, the students change one word into another, by selecting the missing phonogram (spelling pattern) to correctly spell a word that is spoken aloud. In later levels, students build word families by selecting onsets (like *st*__) or rimes like (__*oad*) that make English words when added to a given word stem. The target words are not spoken aloud. Instead, students must use their spelling and decoding skills to try out different combinations and identify the ones that correctly spell words.

Speed (Fluency) Round

Periodically, Magic Bird presents a speed round, which gives the student an opportunity to review the material at a faster pace and earn extra points. The student performs the same tasks as before, but faster; they only have a few seconds to spell each word. The round automatically ends after one minute and returns to the regular exercise. By requiring students to respond more rapidly while maintaining high accuracy, Magic Bird increases the attention and memory demands of the task.

Content

Progression

In Magic Bird, the student is presented with more than 800 spelling questions, covering:

- Initial consonant blends & digraphs
- Final consonant blends & doubles
- Medial vowels, vowel digraphs, & silent-e
- Grammatical endings

As students progress, they are challenged to identify correct word spellings without aural prompting. This design helps students build phonics and word reading fluency, as well as spelling skills.

Did you know?

Teachers and parents may wonder why there is a need to focus on spelling in today's world, with spell-check readily available on digital writing platforms and text messaging that encourages anagrams and informal or simplified spelling. In fact, research indicates that spelling proficiency is important, not only for writing but in supporting reading comprehension, accuracy, and fluency.¹ Spelling requires the integration of phonology (spelling-sound relationships), orthography (knowledge of letter and grammatical symbols), and morphology (knowledge of prefixes, root words and suffixes),² skills that are also critical for reading. This is especially true in a language like English, where complex spelling rules and frequent irregularities put extra demands on both reading and writing. The 26 letters of the English alphabet can relate to approximately 44 sounds (phonemes) with up to 250 different spellings.³ This means that when a student attempts to compose a sentence, the extra demands on long term retrieval of the correct written spellings can interfere with holding the idea in mind, overtaxing working memory. Have you ever lost the thread of what you wanted to say while you were trying to spell an unfamiliar word? When students struggle with spelling, that phenomenon can occur repeatedly.

Magic Bird works to build spelling accuracy through systematic practice with common spelling patterns, such as consonant clusters, consonant digraphs, and Silent-E. It works to build spelling automaticity by providing repeated practice of each pattern with multiple examples, and periodically providing speeded practice of previously mastered words. Magic Bird also introduces morphology by having students complete words that may or may not require a suffix. By focusing on specific phonological, orthographic, and morphological rules the spelling activities in Magic Bird help students to develop spelling skills they can transfer to new, previously unstudied words.

1. Moats, L. C. (2005/2006, winter). How spelling supports reading: And why it is more regular and predictable than you may think. *American Educator*, 29(4), 12-22, 42-43
2. Reed, D. K. (2012). Why teach spelling? Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction
3. Ball, E. W., & Blachman, B. A. (1991). Does phoneme awareness training in kindergarten make a difference in early word recognition and developmental spelling? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 26(1), 49-66

Facilitate and Encourage

Introduce

Engage

Introduce the Magic Bird exercise to your students by reviewing how we spell words with regular patterns in them. Say: *We can spell most words in English if we think about the sounds that we hear, and then write the letters that represent those sounds. In Magic Bird, you will need to think about the sounds that you hear, and then choose the letter or letters that show those sounds in writing. Remember that sometimes we use more than one letter to spell the sounds that we hear. Let's practice together.*

Materials Needed: paper and pencil or dry-erase marker and whiteboard; letter tiles as desired

1. Say the word. Say: *I am going to say a word for us to spell today. The word is *stick*, /stiiiiick/. Ask students to repeat the word.*
2. Blend the sounds in the word. Say each sound in the word and ask students to blend the sounds with you. With your hand in front of you so that students can see the progression from left to right, hold up your first finger as you say /s/, your second finger as you say /t/, your third finger as you say /i/, and your fourth finger as you say /k/.
3. Identify the number of sounds in the word. Say: *How many sounds do you hear in *stick*? (Four sounds.)* If students do not identify the correct number of sounds, say and blend the word more slowly. If students still do not identify the correct number of sounds, tell them the answer. Say: *"There are four sounds in the word *stick*. How many sounds are there?"*
4. Ask students to identify each individual sound in the word. Say: *What's the first sound in *stick*?* and so on. If students misidentify a sound, tell them the sound and ask them to repeat it.
5. Ask students to share all the ways they can picture spelling the sound /k/. (They should share the phonograms [c], [k], and [ck].) If students do not identify one of these phonograms, write the letter(s) on the board and say the letter name(s) and sound. Ask students to repeat the name(s) and sound.
6. Spell the word. Have students write the word on a piece of paper or a whiteboard. Say: *Write the letters for each sound in *stick*.*
 - a. Variation 1: For students who struggle to hear the individual sounds in *stick*, draw a four-box grid on a whiteboard or piece of paper for them to write their letters in.
 - b. Variation 2: For students who struggle with writing letters, you may give them the option to spell with letter tiles, or to spell aloud while a partner writes the letters for them. If students spell the word aloud, make sure they say the letter names in the word rather than the sounds.
6. Check the spelling for errors. Ask students to point to the word that they wrote, blend its sounds, and read it aloud. Ask students to correct any mistakes that they see. If students do not self-correct, try one of these error-handling strategies:
 - a. Read what the student wrote and ask if it matches the target word. For example: *This word says *sick*, and we are spelling *stick*. Does that match? What letter do we need to add to make the /t/ sound?*
 - b. Model the correct spelling. Ask the student to repeat the word, write it, and then point to each letter as they read the word.

Facilitate and Encourage

As needed, repeat this routine using words with additional spelling patterns that students have learned. Tell students that they will practice matching the sounds that they hear to the letters we use to spell those sounds in Magic Bird.

Demo

1. Say: Today, we're going to practice changing one word into another by changing just one or two letters. Together, we'll work on an exercise called Magic Bird. I'll get us started, and then I'd like for you to try.
2. Project the "Introduction - English or Spanish" demo for Magic Bird.
3. Follow along with the demo, which explains how the exercise works.
 - Explain which letter is the best choice, and how you ruled out the other options.
 - Click the correct answer.
4. Demo the keyboard shortcuts:
 - Go button = Space bar
 - Answers left to right = Number keys 1 - 4

Direct students to log in and work individually on the Magic Bird Demo for approximately 10 minutes. This time period mimics the timing of the exercise once it's assigned. Debrief with students to ensure they understand the task and objective of the exercise. Ask: [What did you notice?](#) Have students share anything that they have questions about.



Magic Bird includes instructional audio for the exercise introduction and instructions. By default, these are presented in English. You can, however, select Spanish instructions for all, some, or individual students on the Manage page in mySciLEARN.

Facilitate and Encourage

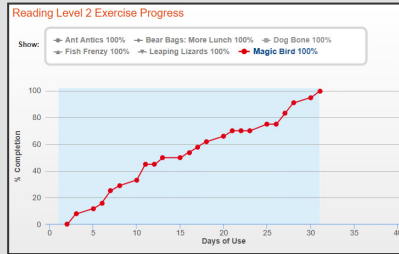
Monitor Student Progress

Review Magic Bird reports regularly to monitor student progress. Use the data to determine which students are succeeding and which students might be struggling to make progress.

Where to look...

PROGRESS: Reading Level 2 Exercise Progress - Magic Bird

The colored line shows student progress and their percent complete. Each dot indicates a day the student worked on the exercise.



What to look for... what it means

Is the line going up?

The student is completing content accurately and making progress.

Is the line flat across several dots?

The student may be struggling and you need to find out why.

Are there long lapses between dots?

The student may be skipping this exercise.

USAGE: Usage Details - Schedule

| Schedule | | Minutes/Questions | | Start Time | | Total Minutes | |
|-------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| Days of Use | Date | Ant Antics | Bear Bags: More Lunch | Dog Bone | Fish Frenzy | Leaping Lizards | Magic Bird |
| 6 | 04/12/2022 | | ● | | ● | | ● |
| 5 | 04/11/2022 | | ○ | ● | ○ | ● | ○ |
| 4 | 04/08/2022 | ● | | | | ● | |
| 3 | 04/07/2022 | | | | | | ● |
| 2 | 04/06/2022 | ● | | | | ● | |
| 1 | 04/05/2022 | ● | | | | ○ | ○ |

Schedule

See if the student has met their daily schedule, and check what's planned for the next few days:

- Time completed
- Time not completed
- Exercise Skipped
- Planned for day

Do you see half-filled gray circles?

The student is working on this exercise, but not meeting the scheduled time. Make sure that they have time to complete their daily schedule. If fatigue is an issue, add some breaks to their schedule.

Do you see red circles?

The student is skipping this exercise. Provide support to help them re-engage.

USAGE: Usage Details - Minutes/Questions

| Schedule | | Minutes/Questions | | Start Time | | Total Minutes | |
|-------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| Days of Use | Date | Ant Antics | Bear Bags: More Lunch | Dog Bone | Fish Frenzy | Leaping Lizards | Magic Bird |
| | | Min | Ques | Min | Ques | Min | Ques |
| 22 | 04/06/2021 | - | - | - | 30 | 33 | - |
| 21 | 04/05/2021 | 15 | 111 | - | 15 | 65 | - |
| 20 | 04/01/2021 | - | - | - | 15 | 75 | 15 |
| 19 | 03/30/2021 | - | - | - | 15 | 69 | 15 |
| 18 | 03/29/2021 | 15 | 130 | 15 | 19 | - | 11 |
| 17 | 03/26/2021 | 9 | 88 | 10 | 22 | 11 | 46 |
| 16 | 03/25/2021 | - | - | 15 | 29 | - | 15 |
| 15 | 03/22/2021 | 15 | 136 | - | 15 | 64 | - |
| 14 | 03/18/2021 | - | - | 11 | 24 | 11 | 41 |
| 13 | 03/16/2021 | - | 10 | 2 | - | 10 | 28 |

Are many days highlighted in red?

The student is not meeting their daily schedule. Check the Schedule tab in this report to investigate further.

Is the student answering fewer questions than usual?

They may be distracted or losing focus. In comparison to their previous activity, a low number of questions to minutes may indicate the student is not applying themselves to the task.

Is the student answering more questions than usual?

They may be rushing. In comparison to their previous activity, a high number of questions to minutes may indicate that the student is trying to amass points or progress through the content without actually learning it. Remind them that making progress depends on accuracy, not speed.

Facilitate and Encourage

Where to look...

PROGRESS: Progress Details - Magic Bird Progress

Magic Bird Progress

- Complete, advancement criteria met
- In progress
- Not started
- Advancement criteria not met*

| Category | Progress | Score | Attempts |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|-------|----------|
| Initial Consonant Blends & Digraphs | Complete | 98% | 56 |
| Final Consonant Blends & Doubles | Complete | 95% | 40 |
| Medial Vowels, Vowel Digraphs, & Silent-e | Complete | 98% | 56 |
| Grammatical Endings | Complete | 95% | 40 |

Percent Correct

To make progress, students must correctly answer at least 90% of spelling questions.

Questions

Easy Alternatives

- Initial Consonants: 60
- Final Consonants: 50
- Medial Vowels: 30
- Grammatical Endings: 10

Difficult Alternatives

- Initial Consonants: 120
- Final Consonants: 100
- Medial Vowels: 60
- Grammatical Endings: 20

Word Families

- Fewer Alternatives: ~122
- More Alternatives: ~243

If a group must be repeated, the student will only be required to repeat units on which they had demonstrated difficulty.

What to look for... what it means

Are there red bars under Progress?

Red bars indicate that the student was unable to pass one or more units within a group after 3 attempts, and will come back to that content after some practice. Make sure that the student remains focused and motivated and check the Errors section of this report to determine where the student is struggling so you can assist them with specific word families.

Is percent correct well below 80%?

The student may be struggling with specific spelling patterns. Check the Errors section of this report to determine where the student needs additional support.

Note that percent correct reflects performance across all of the units in a group, and up to three attempts at each unit, so early difficulties can mask later successes and successes on some units can mask difficulties on others. Check the Error Report for the most recent day's results.

Has the student taken too many questions without passing?

Students typically complete most groups within three attempts (one row). Two groups, Medial Vowels with Difficult Alternatives and Grammatical Endings with Difficult Alternatives, are more challenging and may require up to six attempts (two rows).

A student who is still working on a group after completing the typical number of attempts may be struggling. Check the Errors section of this report to determine where the student is struggling so you can assist them with specific word families.

See the "Adjust Instruction/Intervene" section in this teacher manual for suggestions on supporting struggling students.

PROGRESS: Errors - Magic Bird

Content the student is struggling with the most is indicated in red.

| Category | Easy Alternatives | | Difficult Alternatives | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | Errors | Errors / Questions | Errors | Errors / Questions |
| Initial Consonant Blends & Digraphs | | | | |
| bl | 5% | 1 of 20 | 28% | 5 of 20 |
| cl | | | 20% | 2 of 10 |
| sl | | | 12% | 2 of 16 |
| sw | | | 5% | 1 of 20 |
| th | 10% | 2 of 20 | 28% | 5 of 20 |
| Final Consonant Blends & Doubles | | | | |
| ff | | | 5% | 1 of 20 |
| ng | | | 20% | 2 of 10 |

Are specific spelling patterns highlighted in red?

Consider providing the student with instruction on the specific spelling patterns with which they are struggling the most.

See the "Adjust Instruction/Intervene" section in this teacher manual for suggestions on supporting struggling students.



Reading Level 2 Progress Monitoring Chart in [Student & Teacher Resources](#)

Facilitate and Encourage

Adjust Instruction/Intervene

Differentiation Activities

Differentiating instruction requires continually striving to know and to respond to each student's needs in order to maximize learning. Use the data in Magic Bird reports to adjust instruction to meet each student's needs and respond to variance among learners. The activities below are suggestions to support students who might be struggling with their progress in Magic Bird.



Does the student understand the exercise goal/task?

After initially reviewing the exercise goal/task with the student, if the student is demonstrating difficulty, consider clarifying the instructions, setting a goal based on the student's area of need, and modeling and practicing self-monitoring to encourage accuracy, confidence, and independence.

1. Set a clear goal.
 - a. Set a goal in student-friendly language prior to beginning the exercise. The goal should be positively stated, written using clear and concise language, and be observable and measurable.
 - b. Review the goal with the student and check for understanding.
2. Introduce and model how the student will monitor their goal.
 - a. Choose or create a self-monitoring chart for students to track their progress. Use the chart to motivate, encourage, and allow the student to practice self-monitoring. Include the goal on the self-monitoring chart.
 - b. Explain and model the steps needed to complete and interpret the self-monitoring chart.
 - c. Practice completing and interpreting the self-monitoring chart with the student.
3. Clarify the expectations by modeling and reviewing the specific steps required to complete the exercise:
 - a. Review the steps of the activity with the student.
 - b. Model or explain the steps of the activity.
 - c. Practice completion of the task with the student.
 - d. Encourage the student to explain or show you how to complete the task.
 - e. Monitor independent practice and provide feedback and prompts as needed.



Is the student on task and engaged with the activity?

When a student is struggling to stay on-task and engaged, consider the strategies below as a starting point to increasing student engagement.

1. Adjust the pacing or duration of instruction.
2. Provide built-in breaks and allow the student to request breaks as needed. Involve the student in determining their preferred and most successful work schedule. Some students prefer longer work periods and longer breaks while others prefer shorter work periods and more frequent breaks. Adjust as needed to increase student momentum, success and confidence.
3. Consider student motivation. Motivation can be intrinsic and extrinsic. How to motivate the student is largely dependent on their learning needs, preferences, and reinforcers. Student observation, reinforcer surveys, rapport building, and parent and student questionnaires can be helpful in determining how to increase student motivation.



Can the student hear the words clearly?

Check the student's headset, volume controls, and background noise level.



Is the student answering impulsively?

If the student is working quickly and responding without pausing to think through their answers, sit with them as they work through 2-3 words in Magic Bird. For each word, ask the student to repeat the word that they heard, blend its sounds, and identify the number of sounds that they heard. Then ask them to check for any sounds that we spell with more than one letter (such as [ea] for the sound /ē/).

Ask the student to select the missing letter(s) to complete the spelling of the word. Monitor the student as they work independently for 2-3 more words. If they continue to answer impulsively, prompt them to count the sounds that they hear for each word before selecting an answer.

Facilitate and Encourage



Is the student identifying the correct number of sounds in each word?

Sit with your student as they work through 2-3 words in Magic Bird. For each word, ask the student to repeat the word that they heard, blend its sounds, and identify the number of sounds that they heard. Watch for difficulty with identifying the sounds in consonant blends.

If your student does not identify the correct number of sounds, repeat and blend the word slowly, and ask them how many sounds they heard. If they still do not identify the correct number of sounds, tell them the answer and draw Elkonin Boxes* for each sound in the word on a piece of paper or whiteboard. Ask the student to name the letters that represent each sound, and write those letters in each box. Remind them that we sometimes use more than one letter to represent a sound (such as when we use the letter combination [ai] to spell the sound /ā/).

Monitor the student as they work independently for 2-3 more words. Encourage them to listen for each sound that they hear. As needed, prompt them to repeat and slowly blend each word that they hear before selecting an answer.

*Elkonin Boxes can be used to help bridge the connection between the sounds in a word and the letters or letter combinations that represent those sounds. In this strategy, each box stands for one sound—not one letter—in a word. For example, the words *seen* and *thick* both have three boxes, since they are each comprised of three individual sounds:

| | | |
|----|----|----|
| s | ee | n |
| th | i | ck |



Is the student struggling with a specific phonogram (letter-sound correspondence)?

A phonogram is a letter or a letter combination that represents a sound (for example, the letter combination [ck] makes the sound /k/). Look at the Errors section in the student's Progress Report to determine the specific phonograms they are struggling with. Review the sounds of these phonograms with the student.

To review:

- Write each phonogram on a flashcard.
- Show the student the phonogram card.
- Say the phonogram sound or sounds.
- Have your student repeat the sound or sounds.

Conduct a "speed round" where you point to each phonogram card and ask the student to say its sound. If the phonogram has several sounds, you may give your student a hint by holding up the number of fingers that correspond to the number of sounds (for example, hold up one finger for the phonogram [th]).

Lastly, call out one sound at a time and ask the student to point to the correct phonogram card (for example, *what letters say /th/? What letter says /ō/?*).

If the student does not identify the correct letter(s), tell them the answer and ask them to repeat it to you (for example, *the letters th make the sound /th/. What letters make the sound /th/?*).



Is the student struggling with specific spelling patterns or grammatical endings?

Use the worksheets below to support your student in understanding, identifying, and writing words with the spelling patterns and grammatical endings addressed in Magic Bird.

- [Magic Bird Worksheet: Consonant Doubling & Silent E](#)
- [Magic Bird Worksheet: -ing Endings](#)
- [Magic Bird Worksheet: -ed Endings](#)

Facilitate and Encourage

Adjust Instruction/Intervene

Student Resources

You may decide to use the following worksheet with your students:



[Reading Level 2 Completion Chart](#) in Student & Teacher Resources

Students can self-monitor their progress in each Reading Level 2 exercise by filling in the bar each day with their actual completed percentage. This provides students with an overall view of how much content they've completed compared to how much they have left to do. Students will need one copy.



[Magic Bird Worksheet: Consonant Doubling & Silent E](#)

If your student is struggling with the Consonant Doubling or Silent-E spelling patterns addressed in Magic Bird, use this worksheet to provide direct instruction and review examples of those patterns, and to give your student the opportunity to study and categorize words based on those spelling patterns.



[Magic Bird Worksheet: -ing Endings](#) and [Magic Bird Worksheet: -ed Endings](#)

If your student is struggling with the grammatical endings addressed in Magic Bird, use these worksheets to provide direct instruction about how these endings change the meaning of words, and to give your student the opportunity to identify and write words that use those endings.