

# Blends and Digraphs

## Phonics Dominoes

Phonics Dominoes are a fun, hands-on way for beginning readers to practice word-formation skills and build their confidence on the road to reading success. Included are 84 dominoes with *r*-, *l*-, and *s*-blends and the digraphs: *ch*, *sh*, *th*, and *wh*. Also included are short and long vowel phonograms (word families). Learning common phonograms is an important step to developing reading fluency.

The following blends are included: *br*, *cr*, *dr*, *fr*, *gr*, *tr*, *bl*, *cl*, *fl*, *pl*, *sl*, *sk*, *sm*, *sn*, *sp*, *st*.

The following digraphs are included: *ch*, *sh*, *th*, *wh*.



## Activities

### Word Train Race

Set the dominoes face up on a table. Encourage two or more students to compete to make the longest "word train" possible by connecting dominoes. If you wish, allow a specific amount of time for the race. When time is called, students read the words in their trains aloud.

**Variation:** Have students use dominoes in only one or two specific colors to create their trains.



### WARNING:

CHOKING HAZARD—Small parts.  
Not for children under three (3) years.

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## Word Train Game

Play this game with a group of four or more students. Place the dominoes face down on a table. Each player draws five dominoes and stands them on edge so other players can't see them. Turn one domino face up in the center of the table. Place the rest of the dominoes in a small paper bag within reach of all players. Player 1 tries to use one of his dominoes to make a word with the domino in the center of the table. He may add his domino before or after the domino as long as he makes a word. If he cannot make a word, he draws another domino from the bag. Play passes to the next player. Player 2 then tries to make a word, adding her domino either before or after the dominoes in the center of the table. Like Player 1, if she can't make a word, she takes a domino from the bag. Play continues in this way until one of the players gets rid of all of his or her dominoes and wins the game, or there are no dominoes left in the bag. If this happens, the player with the fewest dominoes left is the winner.

## Word Bag

Place some dominoes in a small paper bag. Have several students sit in a circle. The first student takes a domino from the bag and identifies the blend (for example, *br*). The student then says a word that contains that blend (*bread*). He passes the domino and the bag to the next student. If the student can think of another word that begins with the *br* blend, she says it aloud (*brown*). If she can't think of another word, she draws a domino from the bag (for example, a domino with the blend *fr*), and says a word that contains that blend (*frame*). Continue until all the tiles in the bag have been used.

## Word Race

Place five to ten dominoes in a small paper bag. Give the bag to a pair of students. Provide paper and pencils. When you say "begin," the students remove one domino from the bag. Students then race to write down as many words as possible with the blend or digraph shown on the domino before you call "time." Give students about a minute. The students then read their words aloud to each other and tally the number of words each has written. The student with more words wins the round. Play continues until all dominoes in the bag have been used.

**Variation:** Give teams of students a domino with the same blend or digraph and let the teams compete against one another. Whichever team writes down the most words wins.

## Before and After

Work with one or two students to practice manipulating phonemes and build phonemic awareness. Depending on the student(s), set out a dozen or more dominoes. Choose a target domino. Have the students take turns adding a domino *before* the target domino to make words. Then have students take turns adding a domino *after* the target domino to make words. Change the target domino several times during the activity.



### Look for these additional Phonics Dominoes sets:

EI-2940 Phonics Dominoes Short Vowels

EI-2941 Phonics Dominoes Long Vowels

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