

Sounds of English

We use this workbook to reinforce the phonics that students have learned in class. There are listening, writing and speaking exercises to be done at home. Students then check their own answers with the attached answer booklet before coming to class. The book is divided into halves: the first half is required in the 7th Rank; the second half, the 5th Rank.



Before beginning Sounds of English, students should have:

- Studied Phonic Charts #1 & #2
- Learned neat writing with the Korectable ABCs workbook

The kids will likely have begun to study Phonic Chart #3 at around the time you launch Sounds of English. It is important to remember that this workbook has not been designed to teach phonics, but to reinforce it. Their progress through the workbook should keep pace with the phonics they're learning in class. If the next page in the workbook covers a topic not yet taught, take a break from assigning Sounds of English for a week or two until they've caught up.

How to Launch the Workbook

Hand the workbooks out in class and have the kids open to the inside front cover. There is a comic explaining the goals of the workbook, which you can all read together. Beneath that is a key explaining the symbols that appear throughout the book; briefly read this together too.

Explain to the kids that they're to listen to the CD and complete the exercises at home, according to this plan:

1. Listen to the CD carefully while looking at the book. Don't write or draw anything yet. Do this twice.¹
2. The third time you listen to the CD, complete the exercises in the book. You may listen as many times as you like.
3. After you've done your best to complete the exercises, use the answer booklet to check your answers. Correct any mistakes in a different color pencil. Do not look at the answers for the next pages!
4. Finally, listen once more to the CD while looking at the workbook, to dou-

¹ More listening times can be assigned during the second half of the book, which contains more words which may be unfamiliar. Acquisition of this vocabulary is one secondary goal.

ble-check your answers.

Look at the first two pages together and make sure the students know what they're to do, then assign pages 1 and 2 for homework.

How to Assign Homework

As a rule, assign 1 to 2 pages per week. However, make sure you do not assign pages which cover topics not yet taught in class. In particular, the book shifts from consonants to short vowels sounds at page 9; begins three-letter words on page 13; begins blends and digraphs on page 25; covers 'Magic E' starting on page 34; and touches on the two sounds of 'y' on page 38. Each of these topics must be taught in class before relevant workbook pages are assigned; otherwise, the workbook should be paused.

Some pages feature lines on which to practice neat writing of capital and lowercase letters. Tell students that you'd much rather have a few specimens of their very neatest writing, rather than a long string of dashed-off, malformed characters.

There is no homework sheet for Sounds of English. Assignments should be written on the Super Homework Sheet.

How to Check in Class

There are a number of effective and efficient ways of checking the workbook. Here are two we often use and advocate:

- Students all hand their workbooks to the teacher (perhaps via the TA) already opened to the page in question. While students are busy with other work—taking attendance, doing a pair-based activity like PCC or PIC, doing Team Challenge Lite, etc.—the teacher quickly checks the workbooks and marks errors. As a general rule, when checking written homework, mark the place an error is, but do not correct it yourself; that is what the student should do.
- Students all open their workbooks to the correct page and answers are checked round-robin. This style of checking can be more time-intensive, but it gives greater opportunity to quiz students on content, expand upon the material, and use classroom English communicatively.

You may discover that a student has made quite a few errors, but then properly checked and self-corrected at home (using a different color pencil).

Praise such students for doing their homework diligently.

However, storm clouds gather ominously overhead when we find a student's uncorrected errors! We strongly encourage self-checking at home. This fosters responsibility and also saves class time. Uncorrected mistakes must be fixed on the spot.

Finally, stamp (or sign) the page in the box provided.

The Two Halves of the Book

When students reach page 23 of the workbook, they have completed the first half. Sign the certificate on page 24 and congratulate them for their achievement! At this point, they may color in the Sounds of English box on their 7th Rank progress charts.

The second half of the book, which covers blends, digraphs, 'Magic E' and other topics, is a significantly higher challenge than the first; students will need to have been exposed to Phonic Chart #5 before starting. Most classes will not be ready for this until the 5th Rank, so we usually put Sounds of English on hold until then. The comic on page 24 introduces the idea of blends, so have kids read it when you restart the workbook in the 5th Rank.

Be Strict

If students make three or more mistakes on a page, withhold your stamp or signature, and have them redo the page for homework. Likewise, require that any messy writing (or circling, line-drawing, etc.) be redone on the spot, or at home if this will take too long.



Sounds of English is a great way to polish kids' phonics and reading skills, and forms a natural step in our progression toward reading and writing full sentences and beyond.