

WORD SORTING ROUTINE

1. Identify the words that contain the orthographic pattern you will ask the students to sort for.
2. Create word card sets that can be used for the sort. Have enough sets to accommodate all the individuals or pairs who will be doing the sort. You may want to conduct the sorts within a guided reading group if your students have a wide variance of either phonics or word knowledge.
3. Introduce students to the word sorting routine. You may want to use closed sorts until the children master the concept. Explain that the words should be placed in either the pile that **Does** contain the targeted feature or that **Does Not** contain it. For example, the targeted feature might be all words that end with the letter *t*, that begin with the letter *b*, or that contain the /ick/ pattern and sound.
4. Model a closed sort for the children. While doing so say, “This word (name the word) goes in the **Does** pile because . . .,” or “this word (name the word) goes in the **Does Not** pile because. . .”
5. Provide ample time for the students to complete the sort. As they do so, watch them closely, and ask them why they are choosing and not choosing to put words into either pile. This is a perfect time to assess what your students have learned about the orthographic features you have taught.
6. When students finish the sort, have them write the words in the **Does** pile on whiteboards, or better yet, provide each child with a notebook for recording words they know. They can write the words in their word notebooks. You can also make word notebooks with students.
7. Once students have mastered the routine of closed sorts, introduce them to open sorts. Make packets of cards that include all their newly learned patterns, or of words that have become a part of their sight vocabulary, and invite students to sort and then to share the categories they used for their sorts. As you listen to their rationales, you will be able to assess how well they have learned the word and phonics patterns you’ve taught. This information will help you to identify individuals or groups who need scaffolds to help them acquire previously shared information and those children who are ready to move forward.