

Wordo = Phonics Phun!

(Musselwhite, 2009)

What Is Wordo?

Wordo is a wonderful version of 'Bingo' that supports students in working on words. Specifically, high frequency or high utility words (e.g., words from the classroom word wall) are presented on a grid. Students are given print clues (e.g., 'It has 5 letters.') or sound clues (e.g., 'It starts with the /b/ sound.'), and locate the one word that reflects that clue. For more information and ideas about Wordo, see: *Classrooms That Work* (Cunningham & Allington, 2007) and *Children with Disabilities: Reading and Writing the Four-Block Way®* (Erickson & Koppenhaver, 2007).

How to Select Words for Wordo

Wordo words are typically taken from the classroom word wall. Thus, words used in Wordo games are:

- 1) high frequency (see High Frequency Words Tip, November, 2006).
- 2) high utility (that is, words that are useful in reading and spelling other words; see High Utility Words Tip, February, 2007).

Giving Wordo Clues

Wordo clues should encourage students to carefully **look at** and **listen to** words on the board, to figure out the correct answer. Sample clues:

Print Clues	Sound Clues
It has 3 letters	It starts with /p/
It has two tall letters	It has silent letters
It has one letter that hangs down	It rhymes with bed
It starts with the letter 'B'	It starts with /st/ (don't break up onsets!)
It starts with 'PL' (don't break up onsets!)	The word is 'the'
It has a capital letter	

Teaching, Not Testing!

The purpose of this activity is to help students examine print and sound features of each of the important words on their gameboard. Many students will struggle, and will make wrong answers, often resorting to guessing. Use these guesses to give evaluative feedback. Below is a sample Wordo board (words taken from the Literacy Starters story, *Play Ball*, in the Sports series, www.donjohnston.com).

Clue: It starts with the letter L.
Response: Points to word look
Feedback: Right - 'look' starts with L
Response: Points to word ball
Feedback: If this (ball) started with L it would be 'lall'; may give one more chance (again with evaluative feedback), or help student find correct answer

Clue: It has six letters
Response: Points to there
Feedback: Let's count - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 - this word has 5 letters. We're looking for a word with 6 letters.

look	here	there
ball	FREE	play
number	up	me

Having Fun with Phonics!

Use a variety of markers such as:

- Cheerios (eat them after getting Wordo)
- Pennies (count them after getting Wordo)
- Bugs, lizards, or other fun critters (may make students want to play multiple games, to get to use all of the critters)
- Fun Foam or knockoffs - note, for students with ASD, I've found it helpful to give each student one color, to avoid focus on color-sorting!



Resources & References

Cunningham, P., & Allington, R. (2007). *Classrooms that work: They can all read and write*. Pearson Allyn & Bacon: ISBN: 0205355412.

Erickson, K. and Koppenhaver, D. (2007) *Children with Disabilities: Reading and Writing the Four-Block Way®*. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa.

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