



CONSONANT MULTIPLES

A game to teach the multiple spellings of consonants

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Consonant Multiples

Consonant Multiples is a game with a hands-on approach to the “rehearsal” of the multiple spellings of consonant sounds for the purpose of bringing the choice between the various spellings to a level of “automaticity”. It is designed to provide such practice and reinforcement with a minimum of teacher time. It can be used with second graders or adults in regular or remedial classes as preparation for both reading and spelling. Internalization of these choices will permit students to make increased use of dictionaries to find needed words.

How to Use Consonant Multiples:

1. Start all students on the first letter of the alphabet for which there are multiple spellings, “c”. The teacher may write the heading on the overhead projector or on the chalkboard, giving sample words at the same time. Students should be asked to “take notes” as this information is presented. Student notebook paper should be turned sideways in order to begin learning the choices in chart form. The teacher will need to use judgment in deciding how many choices are appropriate to the age and ability of the student or students to whom the instruction is being given

Basic Consonant Multiples: The following consonants and consonant digraphs can be spelled in multiple ways.

c d f g j m n r s t z ch sh

The first consonant that can be spelled in multiple ways is the letter c, representing the hard sound of that letter, which the same sound produced by the letter k. The possible spelling choices, in order of probable occurrence and relative place value within words, are listed here, accompanied by sample words.

1. c (hard sound) cat, cattle, category
2. k kit, kite, kettle

3. -ck back, sick, deck
4. ch chemistry, school, psychology
5. -que unique, antique

The first choice for the spelling of /k/ is the letter “c”. More words use this spelling for that sound, but in order for “c” to have the hard sound, it must be followed by an “a”, “o”, “u” or a consonant. At beginning levels, no mention is made of the letters that follow it, as all effort must be made to keep instruction as simple as possible. Discussion of this information should be provided only when the topic is suggested by students, or when a student experiences great difficulty in deciding when to use “c” rather than “k”. The second choice for /k/ is the letter “k”. This letter is used in front of “e”, “i”, or “y”. (When the letter “c” is followed by “e”, “i”, or “y”, it shifts to the sound of the letter “s”.) The third choice for /k/ is “-ck”. This spelling is found at the end of one syllable words following short vowels. By the time this “rule” is over-learned, students do not find the two or three words that “break” the rule difficult to manage. If those two or three words do present a problem for a particular student, they may be taught using the S.O.S. method of Orton/Gillingham, or a modified Fernald approach. The fourth choice is the Greek spelling “ch”. This spelling generally occurs in words used by older students in more sophisticated subject matter, particularly in scientific and technical terms such as: chrome, chronology, psychology, and chemistry. The fifth choice for the spelling of /k/ is the French spelling “-que”. Students will find it at the end of infrequently used words such as unique, antique, and boutique. The preferred spelling for /k/ at the end of a polysyllabic word is “-c” as in Arctic, terrific, or Atlantic. One syllable words having double vowels, “r-controlled” vowels, and or a consonant between the short vowel and the final /k/ sound most often take the “-k” sound as the preferred spelling.

Sample Consonant Multiples Board Game

