

The Story Behind Teaching Compound Words

In the classroom library, children eventually encountered compound words. A **compound word** is created when two words are joined together to form a new word with a new meaning. **Example:** house + boat = houseboat

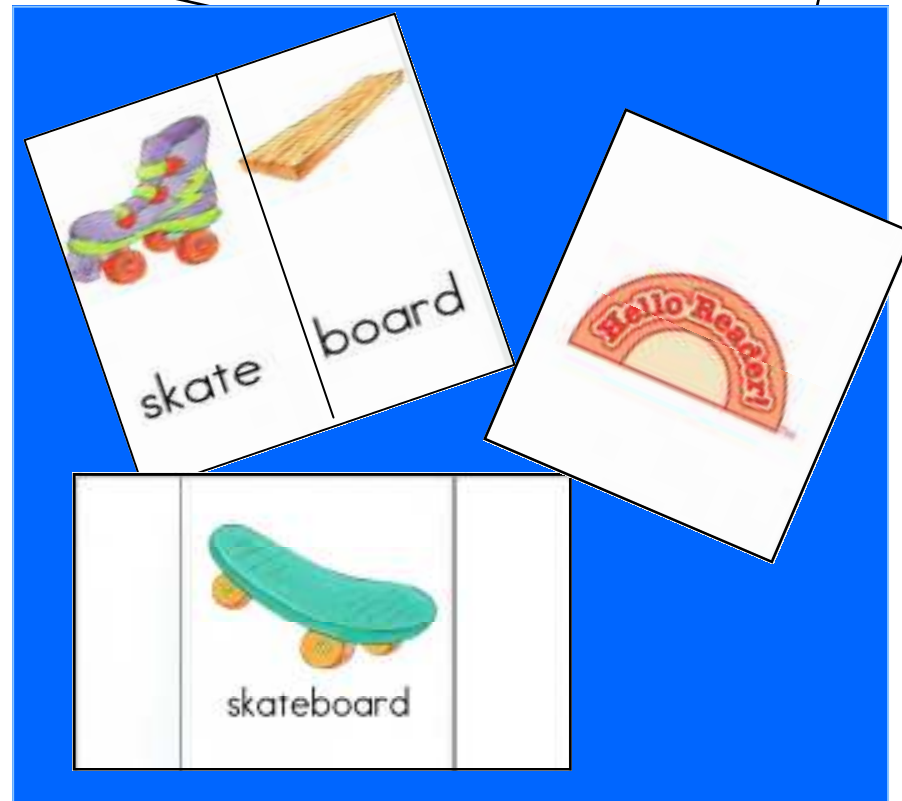
The length and complexity of compound words was intimidating for my early readers and I began looking for teaching strategies. One month the Scholastic Book Club advertised a set of compound word cards created by **Hello Reader**. I ordered a set and was delighted with them. Each card was a fold-out illustrating the meaning of two separate words. When the card was opened to the inside, it illustrated the meaning of the compound word (see sidebar). This strategy not only showed children that compound words were a combination of two words, it also built comprehension through the illustrations!

Through mini-lessons, I began introducing a compound word per day and had the children create their own fold-out cards (see next page) which were hole-punched and held together by a twist-tie. The compound words were then reviewed at the same time as the repeated reading sight word book. The children found the fold-out cards fun to make and to read. They were foundational in helping the children apply decoding skills to compound words and in widening their reading vocabulary.

NOTE: I based the daily exercises for compound words contained in the revision of Smart Start in Language Arts (2009) on this activity. These exercises provide more practice in a shortened time frame.

- **Compound Words** are created by joining two words together to form a **new word** with a **new meaning**.

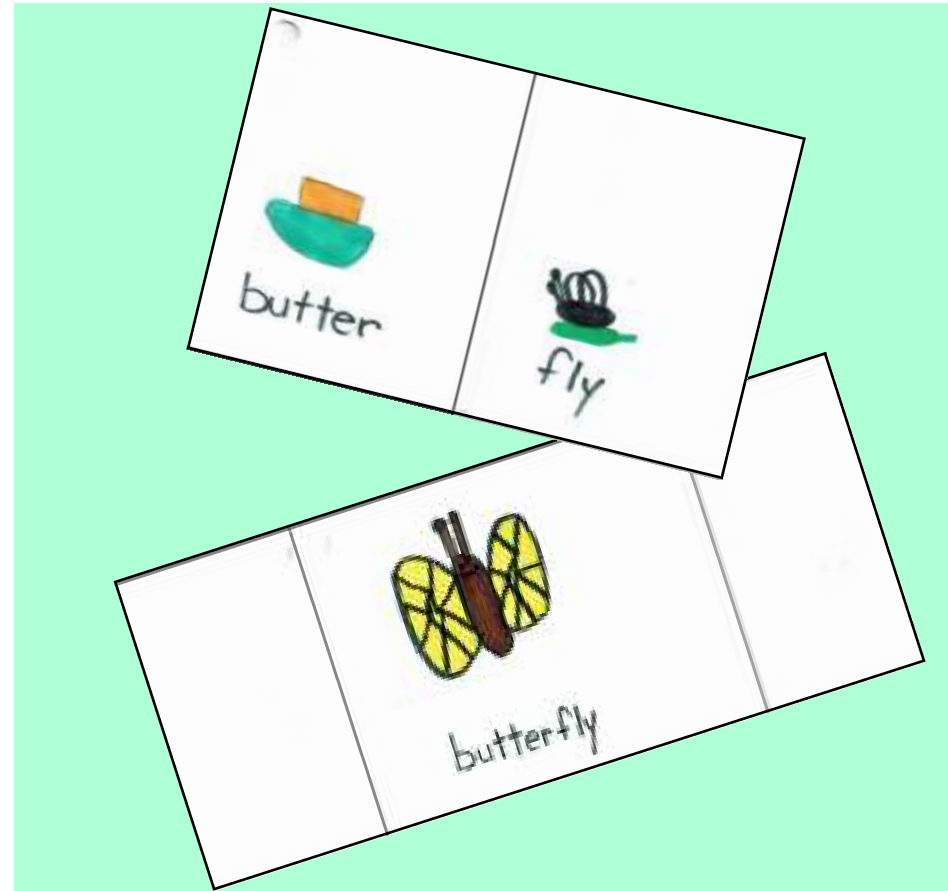
- **Example:**
fire + man = fireman



The Culmination of Decoding Skills in Grade One

Compound words are the ultimate practice and review of phonics. Decoding them requires children to apply all their understanding of how to decode words. The skills required to accurately decode compound words include:

1. **Individual letter sounds and consonant blends** (grassland)
2. **Short vowels** (forget)
3. **Long vowels with silent e** (campfire)
4. **Long vowels with 2 vowels together** (seaweed)
5. **Long vowels with 2 vowels ending in silent e**
Tug of war rule: 2 vowels together beat silent e
Example: housecoat
6. **Y at the end of one and 2 syllable words** (firefly, anytime)
7. **Word Keys**
digraphs: seashell (vowel digraph ea, consonant digraph sh)
diphthongs: newspaper (ew)
r-controlled vowels: corncob (or)
variant consonant sounds: gingersnap (gi, ge)
8. **Sight words:** whenever (when, ever)
9. **Word Families:** goldfish (old) highway (igh)
10. **Word Endings:** something (ing) inlands (s)



Note: Student examples were created by one of our daughters when she was learning to read. She has generously granted permission to share them here.

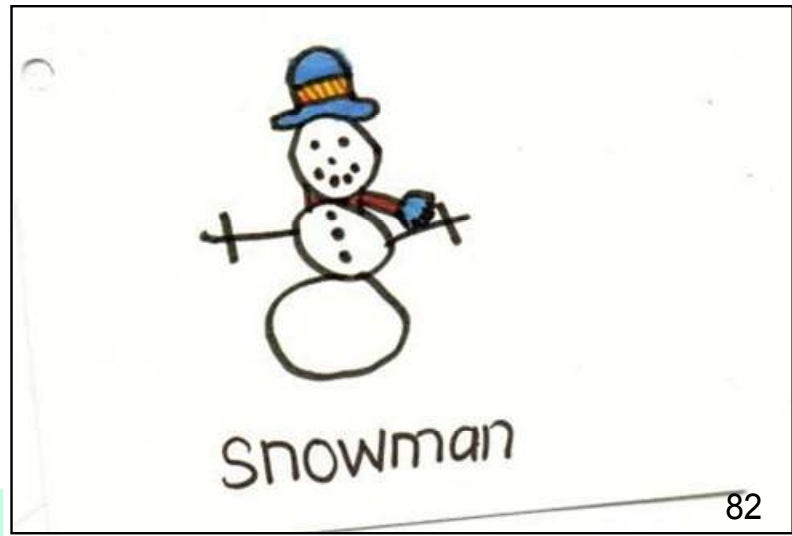
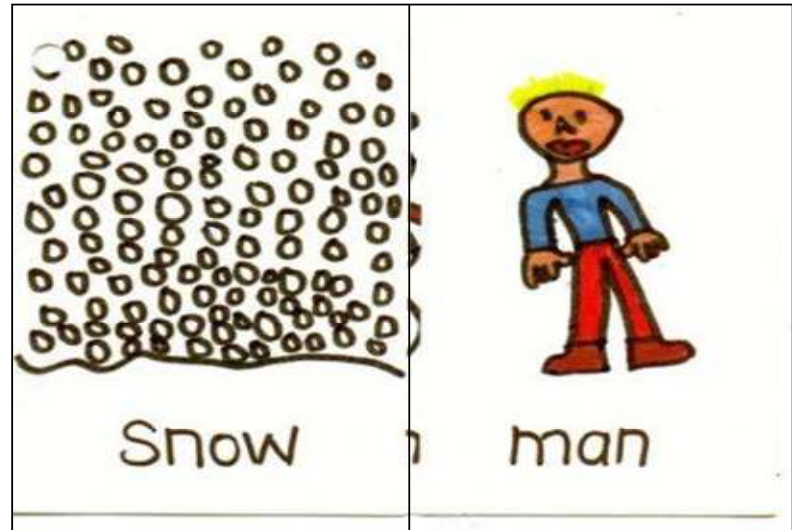
NOTE:

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Compound Word Activity



1. Cut $8\frac{1}{2}$ by 11 inch paper into two pieces of $4\frac{1}{4}$ by 11 inches.
2. Take one piece and fold both ends of the paper to meet in the middle.
3. On the outside separate the compound word into two words. Print one word on the bottom left side of the paper and the second word on the bottom right side of the paper. Illustrate each one.
4. Open up both sides of the paper and print the compound word at the bottom of the center panel. Illustrate the compound word.
5. Hole punch in the top left-hand corner and place on a metal ring. Add new words to the ring. Review words on the ring to build decoding confidence and comprehension.



Note: All student examples are from our daughters who generously granted permission to share them here.

In 2009, I revised the school edition of Smart Start in Language Arts (also included in Smart Start Home Education edition). At that time, I created this daily exercise to provide students with practice applying their decoding strategies to compound words.

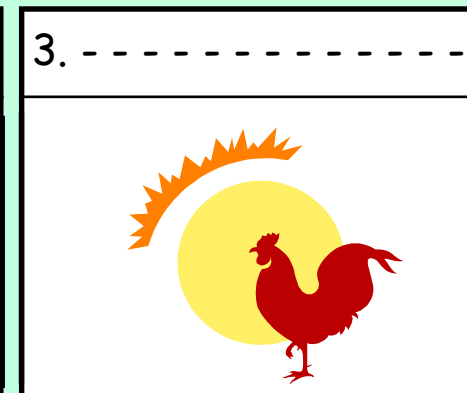
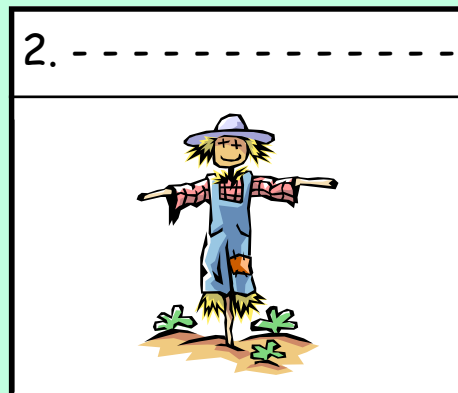
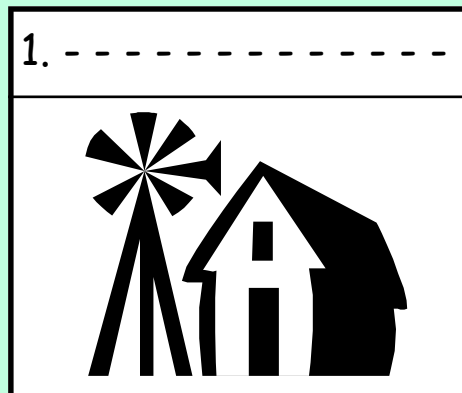
1. Match two words to make a compound word.

1. wind	 rise
2. sun	<u>crow</u>
3.  sc̄are	mill

butter + fly =butterfly



2. Copy the compound word from above to its matching picture below.



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