WARNING: CHOKING HAZARD - Small parts. Not for children under 3 years.
Look for these other Reading Mentor™ products from Learning Resources®:

- LER 7011 Letters & Sounds Activity Cards
- LER 7012 Word Families Activity Cards
- LER 7013 Word Building Activity Cards
- LER 7014 Sentence Building Activity Cards

Find more quality language arts products at our Web site:

www.thereadingmentor.com

The Reading Rods® teaching method is covered by U.S. Patent No. 6,885,477. Other U.S. and foreign patents pending for Reading Rods and Reading Mentor.
Reading Mentor™

Instruction and Activity Guide
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Introduction

Congratulations on your purchase of the Reading Mentor™. Your new machine is a technological marvel that will quickly become an integral part of your reading program. The Reading Mentor is the world’s first system to integrate proven hands-on reading instruction with an electronic device that speaks. By sliding Reading Rods® into the Reading Mentor, students will immediately hear the letter name, word, or sentence they have built and they will read it on the screen. This amazing tool lets students hear individual phonemes’ sounds and will pronounce words that students might have a difficult time sounding out. Plus, the Reading Mentor will enhance absolutely every reading program because it focuses on reinforcing the very basic skills all readers must master:

- Letter recognition
- Letter-sound associations
- Phonological awareness
- Sight-word reading
- Decoding
- Spelling
- Word recognition
- Vocabulary development

The unique Reading Rods color-coding system allows students to literally see the connection between words and sounds and between language concepts and sentence structures. Teaming Reading Rods with the Reading Mentor creates an auditory experience that provides a self-correcting format and increases successful learning outcomes.

Unique Features of the Reading Mentor™
The Reading Mentor has unique features that will make it very appealing to you and your students. You can be confident that the Reading Mentor will always pronounce letters and words accurately
from its database of more than 23,000 words. Plus, the Reading Mentor is never impatient. A student can repeat a sound, a word, or a sentence once, twice or a hundred times. You will also appreciate the versatility that the Reading Mentor brings to your instructional program. The machine works as well with one student as it does with a group.

One of the Reading Mentor’s greatest strengths is that it allows students to learn reading skills through a multi-sensory approach. Students have the opportunity to use their hands as they build words and sentences with Reading Rods. The Reading Mentor can show students what they have built, read the word or sentence aloud, or pronounce a word phoneme by phoneme when the appropriate buttons on the machine are pressed. And the color-coded rods help students easily identify consonants, vowels, blends, and different parts of speech. Finally, the Reading Mentor activities are fun to do. This makes the machine a truly motivational learning tool.

The Reading Mentor™ Enhances Every Reading Program

Schools select their reading programs in order to follow their state’s curriculum standards as well as to be sure that their students will do well on state and national reading tests. The Reading Mentor supports every reading program because it focuses on reinforcing basic language acquisition skills. Any basal or supplementary reading materials, especially Reading Rods products, that are already in your classroom can be used with the Reading Mentor. This includes books, blackline masters, games, teacher-created lessons, all 22 activities in this guide, and any ancillary Reading Mentor products (sold separately). Another bonus is that the Reading Mentor can be used effectively to teach spelling words as well as vocabulary in social studies, science, or any other curriculum or content area.
The Reading Mentor™ Works with All Students

Having only a limited amount of instructional time available to teach your students how to read, you will welcome the Reading Mentor’s invaluable assistance in providing practice, remediation, and challenges for every student in your classroom. For fledgling readers, the Reading Mentor supplies the practice needed to help develop phonemic awareness. For students who have not mastered a skill as quickly as their classmates, the Reading Mentor provides the additional practice needed to catch up to the group. For the average reader, it offers the necessary reinforcement for learning essential skills quickly. For the special needs student, the Reading Mentor offers the support and repetition needed to train the ear and acquire basic reading skills. And the Reading Mentor supplies advanced readers with the challenge of building above-grade-level words and creating imaginative sentences. Because of the Reading Mentor’s versatility, all students can build on their successes as they learn to read.

Although the Reading Mentor will be used primarily by classroom teachers, its flexibility makes it a great tool for other educators as well. Special education teachers can match their students’ varied reading skill levels with appropriate Reading Mentor activities. The Reading Mentor is also a powerful aid for teachers of gifted education students who can use the machine to work with materials far beyond their grade level. The Reading Mentor can be used effectively by teachers of English Language Learners as well as speech/language therapists whose students need to hear and practice the correct pronunciation of letters, vocabulary, or key phrases. For every teacher, having the Reading Mentor in the classroom is like having an additional teacher’s aid working right beside you and your student. Students will enjoy answering their own questions by sliding a letter, word, phrase, or sentence through the Reading Mentor and hearing it read aloud.
# Reading Mentor™ Diagram

1. Carriage Lock Switch
2. Battery Compartment
3. Release Button
4. Adapter Jack
5. Headphone Jacks A and B
6. On/Off Volume Control
7. Contrast Control
8. Headphone Jacks C and D
9. Extension Bridges
10. Mode Buttons
   - 10a. Mode Indicator Lights
   - 10b. Letter
   - 10c. Word
   - 10d. Sentence
11. Response Buttons
   - 11a. Read It
   - 11b. Sound It
   - 11c. Directional Keypad
12. Power Light
13. Speaker
14. Display Screen
15. Rod Channel
16. Protective Channel Covers
Quick Start

1. Remove the Reading Mentor™ from its protective case and place it on a hard, level surface.

2. Make sure the Carriage Lock Switch (1) on the bottom of the Reading Mentor is in the unlocked position. The unit will not operate unless the switch is in the unlocked position.

3. Make sure the Reading Mentor is supplied with adequate power. See pages 12 and 13 for proper battery and adapter installation.

4. Turn on the Reading Mentor using the On/Off Volume Control (6). If the unit was turned off during the last session, turn the control toward you. If the unit automatically shut off after the previous session, you will need to return the control to the off position (turn the dial away from you) and then turn the control to the on position (turn it toward you). The red Power Light (12) will be lit when the unit is turned on.

5. The Reading Mentor has three modes: Letter Mode, Word Mode, and Sentence Mode. Select the mode you wish to use by pressing the corresponding Mode Button (10b, 10c, or 10d) on the front of the unit. See pages 16-23 for details on each mode. You must select a mode before the unit will scan the rods.

6. Attach the Extension Bridges (9) to either side of the machine when building sentences. The bridges are magnetic; you only need to hold them in position for them to attach to the Reading Mentor.

7. The Reading Mentor reads the top side of the rods. Insert a rod or string of connected rods into the Rod Channel (15) from the right side. Gently push the rods forward to the line indicated by the arrows at the opening of the rod.
channel. The rods will automatically begin to feed into the unit. The letter, word, or sentence will appear on the display screen.

**IMPORTANT**

Do not continue to push the rods once they begin to move on their own, or pull the rods out of the exit channel on the left-hand side of the machine while they are still moving. This may result in damage to the unit.

8. Press the button (11a) to hear a letter, word or sentence read aloud.
9. Press the button (11b) to highlight and hear the individual sound/s that make up a letter, word or sentence. In word or sentence mode, press the arrow on the *Directional Keypad* (11c) to highlight the letter, sound in a word, or word in a sentence you wish to hear.
10. The letter, word, or sentence will remain on the screen until the next rod or rod chain is inserted.
11. To turn the Reading Mentor off, turn the on/off volume control dial away from you.
12. The Reading Mentor will automatically shut off after 10 minutes if left idle. Remember to return the on/off volume control dial to the *off* position before turning the Reading Mentor on again.
The Reading Mentor has a database of more than 23,000 words. This database was designed to include the typical vocabulary for emerging readers (Kindergarten through second grade), plus extension vocabulary (see page 72). The purpose of this section is to get you started with the Reading Mentor and familiarize you with all of its basic functions and capabilities.

Power Up!
In order to get started, you will need to install 4 C batteries, or plug the power adapter into the adapter jack on the back of the Reading Mentor and then into an electrical socket.

Make sure the Carriage Lock Switch is in the unlocked position. The Reading Mentor will not operate in the locked position.

Battery Installation
You will need to have a Phillips-head screwdriver and 4 C-size, alkaline batteries to open up the Battery Compartment (2). Carefully turn the Reading Mentor upside down. Use the Phillips screwdriver to remove the screw securing the battery door. Remove the battery door. Insert the batteries one at a time, paying careful attention to the diagram in the battery compartment showing the proper position of the positive and negative ends of each battery.
IMPORTANT BATTERY INFORMATION

To ensure proper functioning:

- Battery installation and replacement should be done by an adult only.
- Do not mix old and new batteries.
- Do not mix alkaline, standard, or rechargeable batteries.
- Non-rechargeable batteries are not to be recharged.
- Rechargeable batteries are to be removed from the product before being recharged (if removable).
- Rechargeable batteries are only to be charged under adult supervision.
- Only batteries of the same or equivalent type as recommended are to be used.
- Batteries are to be inserted with the correct polarity.
- Exhausted batteries are to be removed from the product.
- To avoid leakage, remove batteries if product is to be inactive for long periods of time (such as summer vacation).
- The supply terminals are not to be short-circuited.
- Replace batteries at the first signs of erratic operation.

WARNING: DO NOT DISPOSE OF BATTERIES IN FIRE. BATTERIES MAY EXPLODE OR LEAK.

Using the Power Adapter

For optimal performance, and when you use the Reading Mentor for extended periods of time, we suggest that you use the power adapter included with the Reading Mentor. This adapter has been designed especially for the Reading Mentor and it is not to be substituted with any other adapter. The Reading Mentor’s adapter is designed to protect the unit from fluctuations in power that could cause the motor to wear out prematurely. Using a different power adapter could damage the unit.
To use the power adapter, first make sure that the on/off volume control is turned to the off position. Plug the adapter into the Reading Mentor’s Adapter Jack (4) before plugging it into the electrical outlet. Plugging the adapter into the electrical outlet before plugging it into the unit could result in a damaging power surge to the unit. When you are ready to disconnect the adapter from the unit, turn the unit off and unplug the adapter from the unit before unplugging the cord from the electrical outlet.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- The electronic product is not intended for children under 3 years old.
- The electronic product must only be used with the recommended transformer.
- The electronic product transformer is not a toy.
- Disconnect electronic product from transformer before cleaning the electronic product with liquid.
- Check adapter cord frequently and do not use if wire is damaged or exposed.

Headphones
The Reading Mentor allows you to connect up to four sets of headphones into the Headphone Jacks (5, 8). Plugging headphones into the first headphone jack (marked “A”) will disable the main speaker on the unit. This allows the Reading Mentor to be used in a classroom without disturbing other activities.

Contrast Control
You can adjust the contrast of the display screen using the Contrast Control (7) on the left side of the unit. Refer to the markings on the unit to make the screen lighter or darker.
Rod Channel Release Button
On the back of the Reading Mentor, you will see a rectangular *Release Button* (3). This button disengages the mechanism that moves the rods through the channel and stops the motor. Should a rod (or string of rods) become stuck in the channel, hold the release button, turn the unit off, and unplug the adapter from the unit. While holding the release button down, gently free the rods from the channel.

It may be necessary to remove the *Channel Covers* (16) to free the rods. To remove the channel covers, pull up on the outside edge until the cover pops out of the channel. The channel covers fit snugly, but should pop out with gentle pressure.

If a foreign object becomes entangled in the belt, press the release button to stop the motor and belt from moving. Turn the unit off immediately and unplug the adapter from the unit. While holding the release button down, gently free the object from the channel.

Carriage Lock Switch
The Carriage Lock Switch located on the bottom of the Reading Mentor must be in the unlocked position in order to operate the unit. This lock prevents the internal components from moving freely during transport. Carefully reach under the Reading Mentor. Move the Carriage Lock Switch to the left into the unlocked position. This switch should be returned to the locked position before transporting the Reading Mentor.
Basic Operation

To Begin

1. Make sure the Carriage Lock Switch on the bottom of the Reading Mentor is in the unlocked position.
2. Make sure the Reading Mentor is supplied with adequate power. See pages 12-14 for proper battery and adapter installation.
3. Turn on the Reading Mentor using the on/off volume control on the right side of the unit. First, turn the dial away from you to make sure it is in the off position, then turn the control toward you until the red power light comes on, indicating the Reading Mentor is ready to use.

**NOTE**

The mode and response buttons on the Reading Mentor feature color-coded graphic icons. These icons are also featured throughout the activity cards created especially for the Reading Mentor (sold separately). Use the icons as a visual cue for pre-readers, ELL and special needs students.

Selecting a Mode

The Reading Mentor will not operate until a mode has been selected. The modes are Letter Mode, Word Mode, and Sentence Mode. To select a mode, press any one of the three mode buttons on the left side of the unit and a green *Mode Indicator Light* (10a) will illuminate. The type of reading activity will dictate which mode to select. Refer to the Letter Mode, Word Mode and Sentence Mode sections on the following pages for further information.
Scanning the Rods
The Reading Mentor will read the letters on the topmost surface of the Reading Rods. Insert the rods into the rod channel from the right side of the unit.

Reading Rods travel through the Reading Mentor from right to left. You will notice arrows at the entrance to the Rod Channel; these indicate the direction of movement. Always insert the rods from the right and push them forward gently to the line indicated. The Reading Mentor will automatically begin to pull the rods into the machine.

The display screen will show an animated line with dots as the Reading Mentor is scanning the rods. Once a letter, word or sentence has been scanned, the screen will display the scanned letters. The image will remain on the screen until the next rod is inserted.

IMPORTANT!
Do not continue to push the rods once they have started to move. Allow the rods to move completely through the rod channel before removing them. Do not pull the rods out of the channel. Pushing or pulling the rods through the Reading Mentor will damage the unit.

Using the Read It and Sound It Buttons and the Directional Keypad
The buttons and the directional keypad have different functions in each of the Reading Mentor’s three modes as described in the following sections.
**Letter Mode**  
*Scan individual letter rods only.*

Use Letter Mode for learning individual letters and their sounds. In this mode, the Reading Mentor will recognize individual letter rods only, inserted one at a time. Multiple rods linked together will not be recognized in this mode. The Reading Mentor does not recognize picture rods. The directional keypad is not used in this mode.

1. Scan a letter rod (for example, B).

2. Press .

3. Press .

The uppercase and lowercase letter will both appear on the screen after you press or . There are two pictures for each letter, one for lowercase and one for uppercase, to provide additional reinforcement of initial consonant and initial short vowel sounds. Refer to the activities on pages 28-35 for further ideas to develop the learning of letters and letter sounds.
Word Mode

Scan word rods or words built with letter, word family, word building or prefix/suffix rods (up to 16 characters).

Use Word Mode for exploring and forming complete words. In this mode, the Reading Mentor will read and sound out whole words and their phonemes. Scan one word at a time. All letters connected together will be interpreted as one word by the Reading Mentor in this mode.

Please note, the Reading Mentor will not read yellow word family rods with red printing. Use the rods with black printing only.

1. Build and scan a word (for example, shine).

![Image of a word made of letter rods]

“shine”

2. Press .

“shine”

3. Press .

“sh” “i” “n” “The e is silent.”

Each phoneme will be highlighted as it is read aloud. (If there is a silent e at the end of a word, the Reading Mentor will say, “The e is silent.”)

4. Press to highlight and hear specific phonemes.
5. Press 🔄 to repeat the highlighted phoneme.

6. Press 🔄 to hear the entire word again.

7. Press 🔄 (right arrow) until the whole word is highlighted and 🔄 to hear each phoneme in sequence again.

You may wish go back and forth between listening to a specific highlighted phoneme and the entire word to reinforce the connection between the phoneme and how it sounds in the word. The activities on pages 28-55 and 68-71 focus on a variety of phonics, spelling, and vocabulary building skills.

**Sentence Mode**

*Scan sentences built with sentence rods only (whole words printed on rods). The maximum length of the connected rods is 15 inches. Use the extension bridges when scanning sentences.*

Use Sentence Mode to hear multiple words in a sequence and to explore sentence building. In this mode, you can highlight a specific word in a sentence and hear that word, or the phonemes of that word read aloud. (Please see the note about word ending rods and punctuation on pages 22-23.)

1. Scan a sentence (for example, *He can jump*).

2. Press 🔄. 

   “He can jump”
3. Press 🔄 to highlight a specific word.

![Highlighting a word]

You must highlight a word before pressing 📞 in Sentence Mode.

4. Press 📞.

"jump"

5. Press 📞.

"jh ... ah ... m ... p"

6. Press 🔄 (right arrow) until no words are highlighted and 📞 to hear the sentence again.

The screen will display up to four lines of text. If the sentence is longer than four lines, it will continue on to the next screen. Press 🔄 to go to the next screen.

If there is a word in a sentence that you need help pronouncing, you may want to shift into Word Mode and scan the word independently for easier repetition of the word and each of its phonemes. The activities on pages 56-67 include ideas that focus on a variety of sentence building skills.
Word Ending Rods

In Sentence Mode, you can add one word ending to any base word in order to change its tense or meaning. For example, 「hat」 + し will be recognized and read as hats; 「climb」 + い will be recognized and read as climbing.

Sometimes, you may want to change the spelling of a word in order to change its tense or meaning. When using the Reading Mentor, you may only add one rod to the end of a word to do this. For example, if you want to change swim to swimming, you may build it with two rods: 「swim」 + い. Words built with more than two rods (「swim」 + い + い) will not be read properly. Special word ending rods are included with the Reading Mentor to make such spelling changes possible.

Special word ending rods included for use with Simple Sentence rods:
- Yellow rod: い, い, い, い
- Yellow rod: だ, だ, だ, だ

Special word ending rods included for use with Sentence Building rods:
- Yellow rod: い, い, い, い
- Yellow rod: だ, だ, だ, だ
- Yellow rod: い, い, い, い
- Red rod: で, で, で, で
- Red rod: で, で, で, で
- Red rod: で, で, で, で

Punctuation

You may use periods, commas, and hyphens when building sentences, however due to the small size of the marks, the Reading Mentor has a limited ability to read and display these. The marks that will be
displayed are the question mark (?) and the apostrophe (’) in common contractions. The Reading Mentor will not recognize or display other punctuation.

“Word Not Found” Message
If you scan a word that isn’t in the Reading Mentor’s database or a word that is not recognized (for example a misspelled word), the letters will be displayed on the screen but you will hear an error tone. When you press , a “Word Not Found” message will flash briefly on the screen. When you press , the unit will sound out each letter, one at a time, using the most common consonant pronunciations and the short vowel sounds only. In this circumstance, the Reading Mentor will not be able to highlight the phonemes that make up the word, because the word is not in the unit’s database.

Blocked Words
We have blocked as many inappropriate words as possible. These words will never be displayed, read, or sounded out. If an inappropriate word is scanned and it has been blocked, the unit will make the error tone and display “Word Not Found” immediately. When is pressed, you will hear an error tone. When is pressed, you will hear an error tone.
Helpful Hints

Tips for Best Recognition of Rods

- There will be a small percentage of readability errors. If you receive an error tone, or if the display shows * * * * for a word, first try entering the rods again.
- Use only rods printed with black letters; rods with red lettering will not be recognized.
- Make sure all rods are tightly connected to each other.
- Make sure the rods are oriented correctly for scanning, remembering that the Reading Mentor always scans the letters found on the topmost face of the rods.
- Clean rods with a soft, damp cloth if they become dirty.
- Replace scratched rods.
- Do not affix tape to the rods, as it may leave a residue.
- Do not write on the rods.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Which Reading Rods® can be used with the Reading Mentor™?**
   The Reading Mentor is compatible with all Reading Rods except the following: Spanish Reading Rods®, rods with red print, picture rods, and blank rods with hand printed letters. The Reading Mentor will only work reliably with authentic Reading Rods.

2. **What does it mean when the Reading Mentor displays the “Word Not Found” message?**
The “Word Not Found” message appears in Word Mode only, and indicates that the word you have asked the Reading Mentor to read is not in its database of more than 23,000 words or is a blocked word. The “Word Not Found” message will appear under any of the following circumstances:

a) the word you requested is on the list of blocked words (see page 23 for more about blocked words),
b) the word you requested is misspelled,
c) the word you requested is not a real word, or
d) the word you requested is not in the Reading Mentor’s database.

Occasionally, a word that should be recognized will not be recognized. Frequently, simply trying the word again will result in its recognition by the Reading Mentor. Please also see page 24 for tips on how to optimize rates of recognition.

3. What does it mean when the Reading Mentor makes an error tone?

The error tone indicates one of the following conditions:

a) The machine did not properly read the rod(s). Try entering the rod(s) again. Be sure that the rod(s) is facing the correct direction—with the characters to be read on the topmost face of the rods.
b) In sentence mode, rods other than whole word rods were used.
c) No mode was selected. Press a mode button: Letter Mode, Word Mode, or Sentence Mode.
d) A blocked word was entered. The Reading Mentor will not display, read, or sound out blocked words.
e) A word that is not in the database was entered. The Reading Mentor will sound out, but not read, unknown words.
f) There is a low power supply. Check the batteries and/or the adapter connection. (See pages 12-14 for more information.)

4. What does “No Rod Entry. Please Try Again.” mean?
The “No rod entry. Please try again.” message appears on the display screen when a rod is not placed far enough into the rod channel to move through the Reading Mentor. Gently push the rods into the rod channel until they begin to move on their own.

5. What do I do if I plug in headphones but sound is still coming from the speaker?
Make sure one set of headphones is plugged into jack “A”. This is the only jack that disables the speaker.

6. What if a word has more than one pronunciation?
The Reading Mentor uses Standard American English pronunciation. In case of homographs (two or more words that are spelled the same but pronounced differently), the Reading Mentor will use the more common pronunciation and meaning of the word. For more information on homographs, please see page 72.

Troubleshooting

1. What do I do if the Reading Mentor™ won’t turn on?
   a) Make sure the Carriage Lock Switch is in the unlocked position.
   b) Check to make sure the Reading Mentor is being supplied with power. Make sure the adapter is plugged
in properly, and that fresh batteries are correctly installed.
c) Check the on/off volume control switch and make sure it is in the \textit{on} position. Try turning the on/off volume control switch to the \textit{off} position then turning it back on.

2. \textbf{What do I do if there is no sound?}
   a) If there is no sound coming from the Reading Mentor, make sure the volume control is turned up. Also make sure there are no headphones plugged into headphone jack “A”.
   b) If there is no sound heard through the headphones, make sure the headphones are plugged in properly. If you are listening with headphones, make sure headphone jack “A” is used first. This will disable the speaker on the Reading Mentor so the sound will only be heard through the headphones.

3. \textbf{What do I do if the display screen is too dark or too light?}
   The screen contrast dial on the left side of the Reading Mentor can adjust the darkness and lightness of the display screen. Move the dial toward you to make the screen lighter; move the dial away from you to make the screen darker.

4. \textbf{What do I do if the sound is slow or scanning is always incorrect?}
   Check to make sure the Reading Mentor is being supplied with sufficient power. Make sure the adapter is plugged in properly and/or that fresh batteries are correctly installed.

5. \textbf{What do I do if something gets caught in the rod channel?}
   Press the Rod Channel Release button on the back of the Reading Mentor. See page 15 for more information.
Uppercase and Lowercase Letters

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)

Explore the Skill
The traditional alphabet song can be broken down into groups of letters. Sing a section of the song such as “ABC.” While you sing, point to each uppercase letter if the letters are displayed in your classroom or write the uppercase letter on the board. Then have a student put Reading Rods® for the letters A, B, and C through the Reading Mentor™ one at a time. Continue singing the song in sections, stopping to put individual letter rods through the machine. Repeat this activity using the lowercase letters. Another alphabet activity can begin by having individual students or a small group look at “ABC” books. After students look at each letter, the Reading Mentor should read its name.

Group Learning
Look at the Reading Rods with your class and have your students observe that each rod has both large (uppercase) and small (lowercase) letters on it. Give each student a card with his or her first and last name printed on it, or have them print their own names on cards.
Ask students to circle the uppercase letters in their names. Next, have a student find the uppercase letters used in his or her initials and put them through the Reading Mentor one letter at a time. Continue this activity until all the students have had their initials read by the machine.

**Expanding the Lesson**

On a card, write the alphabet in order in groups of five or six letters. Leave out one letter in each group. Ask a student to find the rod with the missing letter, and insert it in the Reading Mentor. The other students are to decide if the correct choice was made.

Have the students use all the letter rods to play “I Spy.” A letter rod is chosen at random and read by the Reading Mentor. Students then try to find something in the classroom that starts with that letter. (Some letters will be more difficult than others!)
Activity 2: Letter Rods

Identifying Initial Consonant and Vowel Sounds

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)
Picture rods (light-blue)
Picture rods (pink)

Explore the Skill
Start with the easy consonants (t, n, r, m, d, s, l, c, p, b, f, and v). Ask a student to put the lowercase letter t in the Reading Mentor™ and press . Have another student place the uppercase letter T in the machine, and repeat the same steps. After each letter appears on the screen, the students are to make a card with a picture of the image from the Reading Mentor’s screen, and print the uppercase or lowercase letter that goes with that image. Repeat this activity with the remaining consonants before moving on to the vowels, where only the short vowel sounds will be given.

Group Learning
Begin by having students shuffle their picture cards. Have each student working with the Reading Mentor select one of his cards, say the name of the picture, and make the initial sound of the word. Then
ask the student to put the corresponding letter rod into the machine and press 🎤 to verify that he made the correct sound of the letter. Allow each student to provide the sound for at least five letters.

TIP

🎵 is pressed to hear short vowel sounds. 🎧 is pressed to hear long vowel sounds.

Expanding the Lesson

Have students play the “Throw It Away” game using all the consonant rods and the light-blue picture rods. A dealer gives five to seven picture rods to each player and then randomly selects a consonant rod—without letting the other players see it. Place the rod in the Reading Mentor and press 🎌. Any player with a rod whose pictures start with that sound places the rod in the discard pile. The game continues until a player has thrown away all of his or her picture rods. For a greater challenge, include the red vowel rods and pink picture rods.
Activity 3: Letter Rods

Sight Words

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)

Explore the Skill
Start with a list of five to eight sight words you want your students to know. Define sight words as those words we read just by looking at them (not by sounding them out). Then ask a student to build one of the words using the consonant and vowel rods. The Reading Mentor™ should read the word. Continue in this way until all of the words on the list have been built and read by the Reading Mentor. The students should write down all the words that they could not read instantly. Next, individual students should build these words for the Reading Mentor to read.

TIP
A word can be read more than once by pressing repeatedly.

Group Learning
Give two teams of two students each the following list of sight words: the, and, you, was, for, is, it, he, up and all the letter rods. Let the teams build any word they want from the list provided. The first team
to finish building a word with lowercase letters gets to check it in the Reading Mentor. If the word is built correctly, it is crossed off the list. Play then alternates between teams. Repeat this activity until all the words on the list have been built. Other lists of sight words to use with the teams are: *with, word, may, had, by, be, just, if, on* and *what, all, were, your, this, go, us, in, my."

**TIP**

If you would like a longer activity, you may combine these lists and instruct students to build one word at a time.

**Expanding the Lesson**

Have the group that is working with the Reading Mentor use the lowercase Reading Rods® to build these sight words: *the, of, and, but, his, was, by, we, if, do, up, my.* Then have each student make a “Word-O” card (similar to a Bingo card) that has nine of the twelve words randomly selected and written on the card. (There is no FREE space.) Place the sight word rods in a container and draw them out one at a time for the Reading Mentor to read. The winner of “Word-O” is the first student to cover three words in a row vertically, diagonally, or horizontally. The sight words for, *from, she, when, my, can, it, at, us, did, up, by* can also be used.
Activity 4: Letter Rods

Spelling and Vocabulary

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)

Explore the Skill
Provide an individual student or a group of students with a list of spelling or vocabulary words. Using the Reading Rods®, build each word and place it in the Reading Mentor™ to be read. Next, ask students to write the word they heard. Then have students check their spelling by looking at the word on the Reading Mentor’s screen. If the word is misspelled, students should press \[\text{ presses button }\] and listen to the word’s individual letter sounds. By using their listening skills, students may be able to spot their spelling error/s. Students should correct their spelling before going on to the next word.

Group Learning
The Reading Mentor can be used to give spelling and vocabulary pretests and even actual tests. Give a group of students working with the Reading Mentor a short list of spelling or vocabulary words to build with the rods. One of the students will be designated as the tester. This student will build a word, put it in the Reading Mentor and press \[\text{ presses button twice}\] twice. Without looking at the screen, the other students are to write that word while the tester holds it out of sight. The rest of
the words should be presented in the same way. Once the students have finished writing, the tester should read the names of the letters on the rods, then unveil the rod for double-checking by the group. Then, the student to the tester’s left becomes the tester for the next word.

**Expanding the Lesson**

Using a spelling assignment, select several singular nouns that form their plurals by adding –s or –es. After explaining that you can add –s or –es to the end of most nouns to show “more than one,” give a group working with the Reading Mentor a list of the singular nouns you’ve selected. The students should build each word using the rods and then have the Reading Mentor read the words. Then the students are to add –s or –es to the word and have the machine read its plural form.

**TIP**

When students begin a new story or content area chapter, there are frequently lists of vocabulary words provided. Students should use the rods to build these words and then have the Reading Mentor say the word so they will know how to read them.
Activity 5: Word Family Rods

Rhyming Words

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Word Family rods (yellow with black letters)

Explore the Skill
Start with the simplest rimes, such as –at, –ap, and –in. Ask a student to build several rhyming words by linking a blue consonant (onset) rod to a yellow word family (rime) rod. Each word should be read by the student and then by the Reading Mentor™. After several words have been built for a word family, ask the student to explain what happens when she changes the initial consonant. (Answer: It changes the spelling and meaning of each word.)

Once students have demonstrated the ability to build rhyming words with two-letter rimes, challenge them to build as many rhyming words as they can with three-letter rimes. You will be able to assess how well students know these rimes by their ability to build real words and read these words without hesitation.

Group Learning
Divide the class into several teams to play the “Rhyme Making” game. Give one team a two-letter word family rod and all the consonant rods. The team members have three minutes to write down as many rhyming words as they can build. Then have the teams use the
to finish building a word with lowercase letters gets to check it in the Reading Mentor. If the word is built correctly, it is crossed off the list. Play then alternates between teams. Repeat this activity until all the words on the list have been built. Other lists of sight words to use with the teams are: *with, word, may, had, by, be, just, if, on and what, all, were, your, this, go, us, in, my.*

**TIP**

If you would like a longer activity, you may combine these lists and instruct students to build one word at a time.

**Expanding the Lesson**

Have the group that is working with the Reading Mentor use the lowercase Reading Rods® to build these sight words: *the, of, and, but, his, was, by, we, if, do, up, my.* Then have each student make a “Word-O” card (similar to a Bingo card) that has nine of the twelve words randomly selected and written on the card. (There is no FREE space.) Place the sight word rods in a container and draw them out one at a time for the Reading Mentor to read. The winner of “Word-O” is the first student to cover three words in a row vertically, diagonally, or horizontally. The sight words *for, from, she, when, my, can, it, at, us, did, up, by* can also be used.
Activity 4: Letter Rods

Spelling and Vocabulary

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)

Explore the Skill
Provide an individual student or a group of students with a list of spelling or vocabulary words. Using the Reading Rods®, build each word and place it in the Reading Mentor™ to be read. Next, ask students to write the word they heard. Then have students check their spelling by looking at the word on the Reading Mentor’s screen. If the word is misspelled, students should press and listen to the word’s individual letter sounds. By using their listening skills, students may be able to spot their spelling error/s. Students should correct their spelling before going on to the next word.

Group Learning
The Reading Mentor can be used to give spelling and vocabulary pre-tests and even actual tests. Give a group of students working with the Reading Mentor a short list of spelling or vocabulary words to build with the rods. One of the students will be designated as the tester. This student will build a word, put it in the Reading Mentor and press twice. Without looking at the screen, the other students are to write that word while the tester holds it out of sight. The rest of
the words should be presented in the same way. Once the students have finished writing, the tester should read the names of the letters on the rods, then unveil the rod for double-checking by the group. Then, the student to the tester’s left becomes the tester for the next word.

Expanding the Lesson
Using a spelling assignment, select several singular nouns that form their plurals by adding –s or –es. After explaining that you can add –s or –es to the end of most nouns to show “more than one,” give a group working with the Reading Mentor a list of the singular nouns you’ve selected. The students should build each word using the rods and then have the Reading Mentor read the words. Then the students are to add –s or –es to the word and have the machine read its plural form.

**TIP**
When students begin a new story or content area chapter, there are frequently lists of vocabulary words provided. Students should use the rods to build these words and then have the Reading Mentor say the word so they will know how to read them.
Activity 5: Word Family Rods

Rhyming Words

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Word Family rods (yellow with black letters)

Explore the Skill
Start with the simplest rimes, such as –at, –ap, and –in. Ask a student to build several rhyming words by linking a blue consonant (onset) rod to a yellow word family (rime) rod. Each word should be read by the student and then by the Reading Mentor™. After several words have been built for a word family, ask the student to explain what happens when she changes the initial consonant. (Answer: It changes the spelling and meaning of each word.)

Once students have demonstrated the ability to build rhyming words with two-letter rimes, challenge them to build as many rhyming words as they can with three-letter rimes. You will be able to assess how well students know these rimes by their ability to build real words and read these words without hesitation.

Group Learning
Divide the class into several teams to play the “Rhyme Making” game. Give one team a two-letter word family rod and all the consonant rods. The team members have three minutes to write down as many rhyming words as they can build. Then have the teams use the
Reading Mentor to verify that they have built real words. Tally how many real words the team made, then pass the rods to the next team. The winning team is the one that has built the most real words. This game can be repeated using different two-letter word family rods.

Expanding the Lesson
No one writes silly rhymes with more humor and imagination than Dr. Seuss. Read excerpts from a favorite, such as *The Cat in the Hat* or *Green Eggs and Ham*. Ask students to identify their favorite rhyming words in the stories. Have them build these words using Reading Rods then check them with the Reading Mentor. Students can then write a silly rhyme using the words they built, and read their rhymes aloud to their classmates.

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cat
mat
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hat
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that
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used
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to be
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amat.
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Activity 6: Word Family Rods

Short Vowel Word Families (Three Letters)

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Word Family rods (yellow with black letters)

Explore the Skill
Rhyming words are fun words that can be used to teach short vowel sounds. Have students working with the Reading Mentor™ connect a b consonant rod to the –ack rod. Place the word in the machine and press to hear the word repeated. Next, additional rhyming words should be built with the –ack rod using the consonants l, p, r, s, and t with the Reading Mentor reading each word as it is built. The entire activity should then be repeated. This time, press , so the students can hear the Reading Mentor sound out the word. Then, have the students sound out each word in unison. A similar activity can be used to learn the rimes –ell, –ing, –ock, and –ump letting the students select the consonants they will use with each rime to build real words.

Group Learning
Divide the students working with the Reading Mentor into two teams. Place the short a three-letter word family rods into a container. Have a member of the first team reach into the container and draw out a
rime. Then that team should try to build as many words as they can in one minute by linking different consonants to the short a rime. A designated recorder should write down the words the team builds. When the time is up, each word should be placed into the Reading Mentor to determine whether or not it is a real word. If a word is not real, the Reading Mentor will beep and display the “Word Not Found” message. The number of real words built is the team’s score. The second team will do the same thing. The highest score wins. This game can also be played with the other three-letter short vowel word family rods.

Expanding the Lesson
Create a deck of cards with 15 pairs of rhyming words (such as bump, jump and sock, rock). Have a small group of students play a card game following the rules of “Go Fish.” Players ask other players if they have a word that rhymes with one in their hand. When a pair is found, both words are built with rods and put through the Reading Mentor to make sure they are real words and that they rhyme.
Long Vowel Word Families
(Three Letters)

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Word Family rods (yellow with black letters)

Explore the Skill
Start with the rhyming words cake, bake, and make. Ask a student to build the words using the consonant and word family rods. After a word is built, the Reading Mentor™ should read it. Next, ask the students if they can hear the a say its name in the three words. Explain that when this happens, the students are hearing the long sound of a vowel rather than its short sound. Repeat this activity having students identify the vowel sounds after the Reading Mentor reads each group of words: (1) week, seek, peek; (2) like, bike, hike; (3) poke, woke, joke, and (4) cute, mute.

Group Learning
Provide a small group of students with a list of words: cape, cute, broke, gate, deep, tone, heel, mile, seat, and bite to build with the rods. Next, have one of the students secretly choose one of the words for the Reading Mentor to read. The other students should listen and decide which long vowel sound they hear. If they disagree, the
Reading Mentor should repeat the word until the students can come to a consensus. Pressing will verify their answer. To continue the activity, let students build the following words: game, fine, weep, cone, seek, time, cage, hope, and lute.

Expanding the Lessons
Put all the word family rods (short and long vowel word families) in a container. Divide the students working with the Reading Mentor into two teams. The consonant rods should then be divided evenly between the teams. A team selects a word family rod from the container and uses a consonant rod to build a word for the Reading Mentor to read. The other team decides if the word has a long vowel sound or a short vowel sound. Press to verify the answer. Word building alternates between the teams as long as words can be built.

TIP
For a shorter version of this activity, focus only on the word family rods for a single vowel.
Activity 8: Word Family Rods

Introducing Consonant Blends

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Blend rods (green)
Word Family rods (yellow with black letters)

Explore the Skill
Ask students to think about a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and how the two flavors blend together yet you can still taste each one. Explain how some consonants blend together in much the same way so both letter sounds are heard. Have a student build the word spin with a blend rod and a word family rod and insert it in the Reading Mentor™ to be read. Then ask the student what the initial consonant blend sounds like. Press 🎧 to hear the word as many times as needed. Repeat this activity with several different words beginning with blends (crop, flop, drop, spot).

Group Learning
Have each group of students working with the Reading Mentor build as many words as they can in three minutes using the blend rods and the two-letter word family rods. Have the Reading Mentor read each word to verify it is a real word.

Students will enjoy changing words into other words by substituting a consonant blend for a single consonant. For example, they could
change *smog* to *dog* and *snug* to *bug*. Have a group of students change the following words into other words by substituting a blend rod for the initial consonant (*cab, win, dim, lip, rug, top, car, lap*). Use the Reading Mentor to read each new word.

**Expanding the Lesson**

Divide the class into groups and have each group see how many more rhyming words they can build for each word in the previous activity. For example *cab* could become *slab* or *grab*. Use the Reading Mentor to verify that the students have built real words. Next, challenge each group to select two or more three-letter word family rods and build as many rhyming words as they can by using different blend rods. Again, use the Reading Mentor to check that the students have built real words.
Activity 9: Word Building Rods

Short Vowel Words (CVC)

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)

Explore the Skill
Have individuals or small groups of students use Reading Rods® to build such words as nap, bed, sit, hot, and cup. Elicit from them that the letters on the blue rods are consonants and those on the red rods are vowels. The next step is to have the students observe that all the words have been built using the consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) pattern. Ask the students to place the words in the Reading Mentor™ and press to determine if the vowel sound is short or long. You may want to remind them that long vowels say the letter’s name. If necessary, they can use the directional keypad and press to hear an individual sound as many times as they like.

TIP
Toggle back and forth between and to hear individual phonemes in a word. Toggling will help students learn to recognize sounds in words and to associate them with the proper letters.
Group Learning
Ask students to build the word *pan*. They should explore the word by having the Reading Mentor read it and sound out the word’s individual phonemes, paying close attention to the short vowel sound. Next, the students should build as many new words as they can by substituting different initial or final consonants for the *p* or *n* in *pan*. For example, they could build *ran*, *tan* or *pat*, *pad*. The Reading Mentor will read the word. Then press to sound out each word. The students should build new words in the same way with *net*, *fin*, *mop*, and *bug*.

Expanding the Lesson
The “Vowel in the Middle Game” challenges students to build as many words as they can, using the same initial and final consonants for each word but substituting a different medial vowel (*fan*, *fin*, *fun*). Use the Reading Mentor to verify that the words are real.

**TIP**
Set a time limit for this activity and keep a running assessment record of how many real words each student builds.

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f   n             m   p
  p   t             b   g
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Activity 10: Word Building Rods

Long Vowel Words (CVCe)

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)
Silent e rods (white)

Explore the Skill
Have individuals or small groups of students build the words rat, mad, pal, and cap and point out that the spelling pattern is consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC). Students should press to hear the sounds of the phonemes in each word. Elicit from them that the vowels make the short vowel sound. Next, the white silent e rod should be linked to the end of each of the previously built words. Then use the Reading Mentor™ to read and sound out each word. Ask the students how adding the letter e to the end of the CVC words changed the vowel sound. (Answer: The short a sound changed to the long a sound.) After the students have worked with the letter a, they should follow the same steps with the letters i – pin, bit, rip, rid; o – cod, hop, not, rob; and u – cub, cut, hug, tub.

Group Learning
Remind students that long vowels say their names. Have students build the following list of words: page, lime, note, and mule. After building a word, the students should say it and sound it out. Then
each word should be placed in the Reading Mentor to check that it was spelled correctly. Press to hear if the word was sounded out correctly. Continue this activity by having the students build CVCe words found in their readers or elsewhere.

Expanding the Lesson
To increase your students’ understanding of CVC and CVCe words, they can play the “Take Away the e Game.” Two teams of one or more students are to write ten CVCe words. The teams then exchange word lists and take turns telling whether a word on the list would still be a real word if the final e were removed. The new CVC word is then built with Reading Rods® and inserted in the Reading Mentor to check that it is a real word.
Activity 11: Word Building Rods

Initial Blends (s, l, r)

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)
Blend rods (green)

Explore the Skill
Using the s blend rods along with the consonant and vowel rods, have a student build the following words: snap, skin, stop, and swam. Press to have the Reading Mentor™ read each word one or more times, then ask the students to identify the initial blend sound. Repeat this activity for the l blend words (clap, glad, flip, and blue) and the r blend words (drop, grin, trap, and from).

Group Learning
Divide the class into groups to work with the Reading Mentor. Have each group choose one of the s blend rods and build a word for each blend on the rod. Have the Reading Mentor read every word. Then have the students identify each blend. The groups should repeat this activity for the l and r blends.

Have students join consonant and vowel rods to form the word endings: –ot, –im, –ug, –an, and –ed. Then have students use the blend rods to make as many words as they can with these endings. Use the Reading Mentor to verify that real words have been built.
Expanding the Lesson
Divide the class into groups of three or four students to play “Blenders” with the Reading Mentor. All the vowel and consonant rods should be divided evenly between the students, and the blend rods should be placed in a container. Play begins by having a student draw a blend rod from the container. When the student makes a word using a blend, a vowel, and a consonant rod, the word should be read by the Reading Mentor. These rods are then removed from the student’s pile of rods. If the student cannot make a real word, he should draw another blend rod. Play then passes to the next player. The game ends when there are no more blend rods, or no student can form a real word. The student with the fewest rods remaining is declared the winner.
Activity 12: Word Building Rods

Final Consonant Blends

**Which rods should I use?**
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)
Blend rods (green)

**Explore the Skill**
Ask students to use the consonant, vowel, and blend rods to build the following words: *skip*, *slim*, and *grin*. Have the Reading Mentor™ read each word. Elicit from the students that the consonant blends are at the beginning of each word. Next, they should build the words *cold*, *jump*, and *bank*. Press to hear the Reading Mentor read each word several times. The students should then be asked where the consonant blends are in these words. (Answer: They are at the end of each word.)

**Group Learning**
Ask a student to use the consonant, vowel, and blend rods to build two words with initial blends and two words with final blends. The student will then put a word in the Reading Mentor, and the other students will tell whether the blend is found at the beginning or at the end of the word without looking at the screen except to resolve any questions.
Expanding the Lesson
In order to play “Cross Out,” the consonant and vowel rods should be divided as evenly as possible between two groups of students. Each group will also choose one rod from the green final consonant blend rods. Set a timer for three minutes, and have both groups write down all the words that can be built using their consonant, vowel, and final blend rods. A blend can be used more than once. At the end of three minutes, compare lists. Cross out any word found on both lists. Have the Reading Mentor read the remaining words to make sure they are real words. The group that builds the greatest number of unique words wins. The game can be played again with different final blend rods.

- milk
- silk
- elk
- bank
- bunk
- honk
- junk
- link
- cold
- gold
- bald
- bolt
- colt
- salt
- find
- hand
- wind
- wand
- camp
- dump
- lump
Consonant Digraphs and Final Letter Patterns

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel rods (red)
Blend rods (green)

Explore the Skill
Have three student volunteers build the words *ship, what,* and *chip,* then have the Reading Mentor™ read each word several times. Ask the class to repeat the initial sound of each word. When all the words have been read, explain to the students that when two consonants come together to make one sound, this combination is called a *consonant digraph.* Repeat this activity using the words *fish, back,* and *with* to show that words can also end with consonant digraphs.

Group Learning
Assign each student in the group the task of building one or two specific words from the following list: *chin, ship, when, photo, than, what, phone, why, thick, that.* Each student should insert her word or words into the Reading Mentor to be read aloud *twice* by pressing the button. The other students in the group should then write the word before looking at the screen to check that they have spelled it correctly.
TIP

For an easier version of this activity, ask students to write only the initial digraph they hear.

Have students build these more challenging words ending with the final letter patterns –dge, –tch, and –ng. Students should notice that final letter patterns work together as a unit, much like digraphs. Use the Reading Mentor to read them:

- **–dge**
  - pledge
  - badge
  - bridge
  - budge
- **–tch**
  - ditch
  - crutch
  - stitch
  - match
- **–ng**
  - ring
  - sting
  - rang
  - song

Expanding the Lesson

Let students use the Reading Mentor to scan the missing words and verify that they have completed these well-known rhymes correctly. Each missing word includes a consonant digraph or final letter pattern.

- Baa, baa, black ___________.
- Old ___________ Cole was a merry old soul.
- London ___________ is falling down.
- The mouse ran up the ___________.
- Here we go ‘round the mulberry ___________.
- One, two, buckle my ___________.

Have students answer the following questions and use the Reading Mentor to verify that their answers are spelled correctly.

1. What animal makes the sound *quack, quack*? (duck)
2. What makes the sound *tick-tock*? (clock)
3. What makes a ringing sound? (phone)
Activity 14: Word Building Rods

Vowel Patterns and r-Controlled Vowels

Which rods should I use?
Consonant rods (blue)
Vowel Pattern rods (violet)
Blend rods (green)

Explore the Skill
Ask a student to build *rain* and *day* one at a time, using the violet vowel pattern rods. Have the Reading Mentor™ read the words. Next, you should ask the students to explain what letters are used in each word to make the long *a* sound. Draw their attention to the vowel patterns *ai* and *ay*. Repeat the activity with *loan* and *boat*, and *deep* and *beat*, so the students respectively become aware of the vowel patterns used to make the long *o* and long *e* sounds.

Group Learning
Give each group of students the following list of words: *pail, may, toad, coat, weed*, and *deal*. Have students take turns building one word at a time and having the Reading Mentor read each word. Each student should write a word that rhymes with the built word, and circle the letters in the new word that make the long vowel sound. All the students’ rhyming words should be built with rods and then read.
by the Reading Mentor. Continue this activity for each word on the list.

Have students use paper and pencil to change one word into another word, one letter at a time. Then students should show the path they took by having the Reading Mentor read each word in their “word chain.” Here are some possible choices: boat to goal, weak to seem, heal to meet, and laid to sail.

weak → week → seek → seam

Expanding the Lesson
Remind students that not all vowel sounds are long or short. Point out that when a vowel is followed by the letter r, it has a blended sound that is neither short nor long. Students can hear this sound by building the following words one at a time and having the Reading Mentor read each one several times: ar (car, dark, sharp), er (verb, germ, clerk), ir (fir, bird, girl), or (fort, cord, pork), ur (curb, fur).
Identifying Nouns in Sentences (Plural and Pronouns)

Which rods should I use?
Noun rods (green)
Pronoun rods (light green)
Verb rods (yellow)
Article rods (red or pink)
Punctuation rods (white)
Reading Mentor™ Verb Ending rods (yellow)

**TIP**
In Sentence Mode, the Reading Mentor™ recognizes only one suffix rod per root word. Use the set of special verb ending rods (included with the unit) when you would otherwise need to add more than one rod. For example: pat + ing, not pat + t + ing.

Explore the Skill
Begin this activity by telling students that a noun is a naming word. It names a person, place, or thing. Give each student a noun rod, and call on individual students to insert person, place, or thing words for the Reading Mentor™ to read.

Ask a student to use a noun rod to complete and build the sentence: *The girl likes __________*. The sentence is to be read by the...
Reading Mentor. Then the noun that names what the girl likes is to be highlighted using the directional keypad , and read aloud by pressing . The other students are to listen and tell if this noun names a person, place, or thing. Repeat this activity by having different students build sentences telling what the girl likes.

**Group Learning**
Continue this activity by having a student build a sentence telling what another person likes. Have the Reading Mentor read the new sentence. Then, substitute pronouns for the nouns. For example, *Mom likes pizza* becomes *She likes it.* Listen as the Reading Mentor reads the new sentence. Next, use the directional keypad to hear each pronoun read individually. Have students name the noun the pronoun replaced. Repeat this activity with other sentences.

Have a student build the sentence: *The girl ate the banana* for the Reading Mentor to read, and then the sentence: *The girl ate the bananas.* Tell students that by adding *–s* to *banana,* it changes from a singular to a plural noun. The students should continue building sentences substituting other food words for *banana* and then creating new sentences making these nouns plural.

**Expanding the Lesson**
Students should build sentences telling what different people have. *(My mom has a dog.)* The Reading Mentor reads this sentence before another sentence is built by replacing the nouns with pronouns or making the nouns plural. *(She has a dog. My mom has dogs. Or, My mom has two dogs.)*
Activity 16: Sentence Building Rods

Working with Verbs
Present and Past

Which rods should I use?
Pronoun rods (light green)
Verb rods (yellow)
Adverb rods (orange)
Punctuation rods (white)
Reading Mentor™ Verb Ending rods (yellow)

Explore the Skill
Explain to students that words that tell about an action or something you can do are called action verbs. Give students the yellow verb rods, and have them select action verbs that they can easily act out. After acting out a word, a student should have the Reading Mentor™ read it. Next, ask students to build sentences with Reading Rods® telling about something that they do at recess. (I play.) After a sentence is read by the Reading Mentor, the verb should be highlighted with the directional keypad and read aloud by pressing . Repeat this activity by having other students build sentences telling what they do at recess.
Group Learning

Use the verb rods jump, play, run, count, and walk. Ask students to build sentences about something they do with their friends. (We jump.) Have the Reading Mentor read each student’s sentence. Then a new sentence should be built telling what the students did yesterday with their friends. (We jumped.) Have students use the directional keypad ➥ to highlight the verb that tells what they did yesterday. Remind students that many past tense verbs end in –ed. Continue until every student in the group has built sentences with present and past tense verbs and had them read by the Reading Mentor. Elicit from the students that adding the –ed ending changed these verbs from telling about the present to telling about the past.

Expanding the Lesson

Ask students to select rods for the following verbs that tell about the present: write, come, find, know, give, think, say, get, and go. A student is to select one of these verbs and build a sentence telling about the present. (I go to school.) After the sentence is read by the Reading Mentor and the verb highlighted with the directional keypad and read aloud by pressing ➤, another student should rebuild the sentence changing the verb to tell about what happened in the past. (I went to school yesterday.) The Reading Mentor will read the new sentence. The student should highlight ➥ the past tense verb and press ➤. Repeat this activity until all the verbs have been used in sentences. Guide students to the conclusion that many verbs do not add –ed to tell about the past; they actually change their spelling. These are called irregular verbs.
Activity 17: Sentence Building Rods

Using Describing Words

Which rods should I use?
Noun rods (green)
Pronoun rods (light green)
Verb rods (yellow)
Adjective rods (red)
Article rods (red or pink)
Punctuation rods (white)

Explore the Skill
Have a student find all the red Reading Rods® with color words on them. Then ask a student to build a sentence describing something that he or she wants in a specific color. (I want a red ball.) The Reading Mentor™ should read this sentence. Another student should be asked to highlight the describing word using the directional keypad , and then to press . Repeat this activity several times before having students build sentences using words that describe the size of an object they would like to have. (I want a big ball.)

Group Learning
In this group activity, ask students to pretend that they have a pet dog, cat, duck, or fish. Once they have a pet in mind, they will build a sentence using two red adjective rods to describe that pet. The other students in the group are to listen as the Reading Mentor reads one
of their classmate’s sentences. *(I have a small blue fish.)* Next, the sentence builder highlights each describing word and presses for the Reading Mentor to read the describing words aloud. Continue with this activity until all of the students have described their pets. Each student should draw a picture of his or her pretend pet as well as write the sentence describing it. The describing words should be circled.

**Expanding the Lesson**

In order to play “Draw Five,” the students first need to separate the noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, and article Reading Rods into separate piles. (Place the piles into separate hats, bags, or bowls to make the game more challenging, if appropriate.) The first player draws a rod from each pile and tries to build a sentence. If he or she can, then a period rod is placed at the end of the sentence and the sentence read by the Reading Mentor. If a student can’t build a sentence, all the rods are kept and one additional rod can be drawn from any pile at his or her next turn. Play then passes to the next player. Students should play “Draw Five” until all players have built at least one sentence. Students may need to share the period rods.

**T I P**

- Article rods in the Sentence Building set are found on pink rods.
- Article rods in the Simple Sentences set are found on red rods.
Activity 18: Sentence Building Rods

Sentence Patterns
N-V, N-V-N, N-V-ADJ

Which rods should I use?
Noun rods (green)
Verb rods (yellow)
Adjective rods (red)
Article rods (red or pink)
Punctuation rods (white)

Explore the Skill
Have a student build the sentence *The boy ran* or *Grandpa ran*. Continue by having the Reading Mentor™ read the sentence. The student will then highlight each word and press . The student should identify the highlighted word as a noun or verb. Build similar sentences, then ask the students to describe the word pattern in these sentences. (Answer: It is called the noun-verb [N-V] pattern.)

Repeat the activity with the sentence: *The boy ran home* or *Grandpa ran home*. The Reading Mentor will read the sentence. Then highlight each word and have the Reading Mentor read and identify each one by pressing . Ask the students to tell what this new sentence pattern is. (Answer: It is the noun-verb-noun [N-V-N] pattern.) Help the students recognize the noun-verb-adjective (N-V-ADJ) pattern in the same way by asking them to build the sentence: *The boy is happy* or *Grandpa is happy.*
Group Learning
In this sentence-building activity, tell students that they can use the article rods. First, they need to look through all the noun rods and find rods that name food, and set them aside. Next, students should take turns building basic N-V pattern sentences using the verb *ate.* *(*The children ate.* ) Use the Reading Mentor to read each sentence. The noun and verb should then be highlighted and read aloud by pressing . Then build N-V-N sentences telling what foods the children ate. *(*The children ate fish.*)*

Next, have students use adjective rods and the verb *is* or *are* to build N-V-ADJ sentences that describe different foods *(*The banana is good.*) After the Reading Mentor has read a sentence, students should use the directional keypad to identify the noun, verb, and adjective in the sentence.

Expanding the Lesson
Encourage your students’ creativity in building sentences. Ask a student to build a sentence using one of the three basic sentence patterns: N-V, N-V-N, or N-V-ADJ. After the Reading Mentor has read the sentence, the other students should say what the sentence pattern is.
Activity 19: Sentence Building Rods

Adverbs and Prepositions

**Which rods should I use?**
- Noun rods (green)
- Pronoun rods (light-green)
- Verb rods (yellow)
- Adverb rods (orange)
- Adjective rods (red)
- Preposition rods (blue)
- Article rods (red or pink)
- Punctuation rods (white)

**Explore the Skill**
Begin by having a student link together pronoun, verb, and adverb rods to form sentences (for example: *I ran there*). After the Reading Mentor™ reads the sentence, use the directional keypad to highlight the verb and press to hear the word read aloud. After all the sentences have been read, guide your students to understand that the words on the orange rods are called *adverbs* and are used to describe or tell more about verbs, adjectives, or another adverb.

Give students the blue preposition rods and explain that *prepositions* show how two words or phrases are connected to each other. Have several students build sentences using noun, pronoun, verb, preposition, and article rods to tell where they live. *I live in a house. I live by the zoo. I live with my dad.* Then have the Reading Mentor read each sentence. Highlight the preposition and press to hear it read aloud.
Group Learning

Explain to students that by adding the –ly ending to some adverb or adjective rods they can build new adverbs. Have them turn the following adjectives into adverbs: warm, quick, beautiful, cold, great, kind, large, nice, and slow. Sentences can then be built using these words for the Reading Mentor to read.

**NOTE**

If you have Simple Sentences rods you will not be able to complete this activity. Adverbs with the –ly ending are provided with the Sentence Building rods.

Expanding the Lesson

Working with prepositions becomes fun when students can play “Reading Mentor Says.” Students should choose a small object for game play. One student builds the sentences for the Reading Mentor to read. Each sentence tells the students in the group to put the selected object in a particular location. Instructions such as the following can be given: It is under a book. It is on the table. It is by a girl. Every student in the group should create several instructions for the Reading Mentor to read, and several opportunities to follow instructions.

**TIP**

Have students expand their sentences by adding another word or phrase to make the sentence more interesting.
Antonyms and Synonyms

Which rods should I use?
Noun rods (green)
Pronoun rods (light-green)
Verb rods (yellow)
Adverb rods (orange)
Preposition rods (blue)
Article rods (red or pink)
Punctuation rods (white)

Explore the Skill
Start by defining synonyms as words that have the same or similar meaning as other words. Give separate groups of students the noun, verb, and adjective rods. Have each group make a list of all the synonyms in their set of rods. The Reading Mentor™ should read every pair of synonyms. Most pairs can be linked together and read as a unit; some will have to be read separately. Next, a student should build a sentence using one of the synonyms the students identified. After the Reading Mentor has read this sentence, a new sentence should be built and read by the machine using a synonym for a word that was used in the first sentence. The students should listen carefully and identify the synonyms used in the sentences. Repeat this entire activity to introduce students to antonyms (words that have opposite meanings).
Group Learning
Have students use their synonym and antonym lists to build sentences. Have each student build two sentences using either synonyms or antonyms in the sentences: *My cat is big. My cat is large.* or *My cat is small. My cat is large.* Then have the Reading Mentor read both sentences while the other students listen to the sentences and tell whether synonyms or antonyms were used in them.

Expanding the Lesson
Students can show their knowledge of synonyms and antonyms by playing a matching game. Have one student select a word from the noun, verb, or adjective rods that is the synonym or antonym for another word. Then have the Reading Mentor read this word. Next, challenge another student to find either a synonym or antonym for that word. Have the Reading Mentor read the individual word rods either linked together or separately. A third student will tell if the two words are synonyms or antonyms. Continue playing until the students have found all the possible word pairs.
Activity 21: Prefix and Suffix Rods

Using Word Parts (Prefixes and Suffixes)

Which rods should I use?
Base Word rods (green)
Prefix rods (yellow)
Suffix rods (orange)
Vowel rods (red)

Explore the Skill
Ask a student to locate the rods printed with the words fair, kind, like, and safe. Have the Reading Mentor™ read the word fair and have the students define the word. Next, the student finds the un– prefix rod and links it to fair. The Reading Mentor reads the new word, and the students define it. Repeat the same steps with the remaining words. Identify un– as a prefix, and guide students to understand that this prefix means “not.”

TIP
In this activity only complete words should be used as base words. Follow the steps above in introducing students to suffixes. Use the words: help, self, care, and home and the suffix -less, which means “without.”
Group Learning
By learning the four most common prefixes (un–, re–, in–, and dis–), students will have clues to the meaning of approximately two-thirds of all words with prefixes. Have students build as many words with prefixes as they can using re– (again), un– (not), in– (in, into, not), and dis– (opposite). Only complete base words should be used as noted in the tip box on page 68. The Reading Mentor should read each word, and students should define it and explain how the prefix changed the meaning of the base word. When students are not sure of a word’s definition, a dictionary should be consulted.

Following the same steps, have students build words using the suffixes: –less (without) and –ful (full of).

Expanding the Lesson
Students are to build real words using the base words and suffix rods except for –s, –es, –er, –est, –ed, and –ing. Each student should build at least ten words. Remind them to drop the final e in a word before most suffixes beginning with a vowel, and that the final y on a word will need to be changed to i before adding certain suffixes. Put each word through the Reading Mentor to hear it read aloud.

**TIP**
For a more challenging game, build as many words as possible with both a prefix and a suffix. Then try to build words with two suffixes.
Base Word and Root Word Families

**Which rods should I use?**
Base Word rods (green)
Prefix rods (yellow)
Suffix rods (orange)
Latin/Greek Root Words (green)
Vowel rods (red)
Consonant rods (blue)

**Explore the Skill**
Point out to students that words, like people, belong to families. Introduce them to the base word *help*. Have the Reading Mentor™ read the word. Then ask students to link one of the suffixes *–er, –ful, –s, –ed, or –ing* to the word. Have the Reading Mentor read each new word. Ask the students to explain how the different suffixes changed each base word’s meaning and spelling. Continue in the same way by having students find all the suffixes that can be linked to *act* to form a word family (*actor, acted, acting*). Have the Reading Mentor read each word aloud.
Group Learning

Before beginning this activity, remind students that in words ending with *e*, the final *e* is usually dropped before adding a suffix beginning with a vowel. Illustrate this fact by having the Reading Mentor read the words *date*, *dated*, and *dating*. Then have students build the words *store* and *stored* and *wave* and *waved* for the Reading Mentor to read.

Next, show students how a single final consonant usually needs to be doubled in one-vowel words if you add a suffix beginning with a vowel. Have the Reading Mentor read *stop* and *stopping* before the students build *win* and *winning*.

Have each student select a green word rod. Then, instruct students to add suffixes to the base words, building as many new words as possible. Additional rods can be drawn for more practice.

Expanding the Lesson

Latin and Greek root words have meaning and can be used to build words by linking prefix, suffix, vowel, and consonant rods to the Latin or Greek rods. For example, *photograph* is built by using the *photo* and *graph* rods. And the more challenging *phonograph* is built by using the *phon*, *o*, and *graph* rods. Have students work together to build as many of these words as they can for the Reading Mentor to read.

**TIP**

For further learning, have students make a list of the Latin or Greek root words they used and consult a dictionary to list their meanings.
Homographs
There are many homographs in the English language. A homograph is defined as one of two or more words that are spelled alike but pronounced differently or have different meanings (for example, a live concert and the verb to live). The Reading Mentor includes a single pronunciation for each homograph; the pronunciation included is for the meaning of the word most likely to occur in a young students’ vocabulary. Thus, you will find contest (noun) rather than contest (verb), since students are far more likely to talk about a race or other contest than they are to discuss contesting a point of an argument. Other key homographs and their preferred pronunciations include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homograph</th>
<th>Pronounced as in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bow</td>
<td>Take a bow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>Close the door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does</td>
<td>He does his chores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>This is my house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live</td>
<td>I live here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>Please read this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sow</td>
<td>I sow the seeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tear</td>
<td>Don’t tear the page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Use caution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>The wind blew.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Words in the Database
The Reading Mentor’s database includes the following themed word lists that expand its usefulness in the content areas of any curriculum. These key words include:

- 50 US state names
- 9 planets
- 12 months of the year
- 4 oceans
- 7 days of the week
- 7 continents