

Compound Combos

(from Ch. 12 Cunningham, *Phonics They Use* 7th ed.)

The most transparent morphemic relationships can be seen in compound words. Your students already know lots of compound words—football, snowman, classroom, lunchbox, bookstore—and they understand that the meanings of the compound words is related to the root words that combine to create them. English has a lot of compound words and new ones such as *freeware* and *cyberbully* are constantly being created. Compound word study makes a great introduction to the topic of morphemes. Unlike prefixes and suffixes, the meaning relationships in compound words are easily understood and there are no spelling changes or pronunciation changes. I created Compound Combos as an engaging activity to introduce students to morphemes. Compound Combos teaches students to read, spell and analyze 40 common compound words. These words are taught in sets of five and then student are challenged to spell other compound words by combining the parts of the original compound words.

Teach the First Five Compounds

snowman superstar firestorm baseball workplace

1. Display the words, arranged by first letter, somewhere in the room. Devote some clearly visible space in your room to displaying these words. Students will need to be able to find them to combine them and spell other compounds so arrange them alphabetically under the first letter. Using different color markers (or printing them in different colors) makes the words more appealing and the display more attractive.
2. Analyze the words and how the two small words combine to make a compound word.
3. Cheer the words.

Tell students that one way to learn to spell words is to say the letters in them aloud in a rhythmic chanting fashion. Point to each word and have students say the word, cheer the letters three times and pausing briefly between the parts of the compound word.

“snowman s-n-o-w---m-a-n; s-n-o-w---m-a-n; s-n-o-w---m-a-n”

“superstar s-u-p-e-r---s-t-a-r; s-u-p-e-r---s-t-a-r; s-u-p-e-r---s-t-a-r;

“firestorm f-i-r-e---s-t-o-r-m; f-i-r-e---s-t-o-r-m; f-i-r-e---s-t-o-r-m;”

“baseball b-a-s-e---b-a-l-l; b-a-s-e---b-a-l-l; b-a-s-e---b-a-l-l;”

“workplace w-o-r-k---p-l-a-c-e; w-o-r-k---p-l-a-c-e; w-o-r-k---p-l-a-c-e;

4. Write the words.

Once you have analyzed the components of each word and cheered for each word, have students write each word. Writing the word with careful attention to each letter and the sequence of each letter helps students use another mode to practice the word. (Do not however assign students to copy words five times each. They just do this "mechanically" and often do not focus on the letters.) Students enjoy writing the words more and focus better on the word if you make it a riddle or game. You can do this simply by having them number from one to five and then giving clues to the word you want them to write such as:

1. Number 1 is a sport played by Atlanta Braves and Boston Red Sox.
2. For number 2, write the word that would be very hot.
3. For number 3, write the word that would be very cold.

4. For number 4, write the word that we would call you if you became a famous rock musician.

5. Number 5 is your school and my _____.

After writing the words, have students check their own papers by once more chanting the letters aloud underlining each letter as they say it.

5. Practice the words.

For the next few days, use the cheering and writing activities (with different clues) when you have a few minutes of down time to practice the words.

6. Combine the parts to spell new words.

Once students can automatically, quickly and correctly spell all five words, say some other compounds and have students tell you which words from their original compounds they can combine to spell the new words. Have students explain the meanings of these new compound words and cheer and write the “combos” they have created.

snowstorm snowball superman baseman fireplace fireball fireworks workman

Add Five More Words

birthday raindrop skateboard sleepover nighttime

1. Add these words to the display in your room.
2. Analyze the parts of the compounds and how they contribute to the meaning of the compound word.
3. Lead students to cheer and write the new compound words until everyone can spell them.
4. Have students combine parts of all 10 words to spell and explain meanings for new compound words.

birthplace rainstorm snowboard overboard oversleep baseline
overhead headboard fireline

Continue to Add Words and Create New Combos

Continue to add five words and practice spelling these words through cheering and writing them. When everyone can spell them, have them create combos by combining parts of all the words. There are over 100 words that students can spell by combining the parts of 40 common compound words.

underground playmate classroom sunlight nighttime

underline playground groundwork classmate roommate playroom ballroom sunroom
overtime overnight headlight playtime starlight nightlight timeline daylight

houseboat homerun walkway inside outdoor

boathouse playhouse homework sidewalk sleepwalk runway doorway outrun
outplay boardwalk indoor outside sideline workout lighthouse dropout firehouse
fireside fireboat outhouse housework boathouse printout housemate timeout headway

comeback handstand kickoff footprint bookstore

income outcome overcome outback backboard background backfire backdrop
playoff runoff offline offside headstand understand football footwork handprint
backdoor backroom handover storeroom bookroom superstore workbook playback
standoff kickstand kickball sidekick underfoot storehouse Sunday handbook handoff
handout handball underhand overhand backhand

strawberry blackfish bluebird lifeguard watchdog

blueberry blackberry strawman blackboard blackout starfish sunfish blueprint
lifeboat lifetime lifeline guardhouse doghouse underdog firedog dogfish watchman
birdhouse snowbird

airfield seaport lunchbox spacesuit horsefly

airport airdrop airline airway airtime infield outfield snowfield backfield seabird
seaside lunchroom lunchtime fieldwork fieldhouse spaceman spacewalk backspace
horseback horseman housefly seahorse flyover firefly blackfly snowsuit

anyone everything nobody somewhere waterfall

anything anybody anywhere anytime anyway anyplace everyone everybody
everywhere nowhere someone something somebody someday sometimes rainfall
snowfall fallout waterway waterside seawater rainwater groundwater underwater
bodywork bodyguard