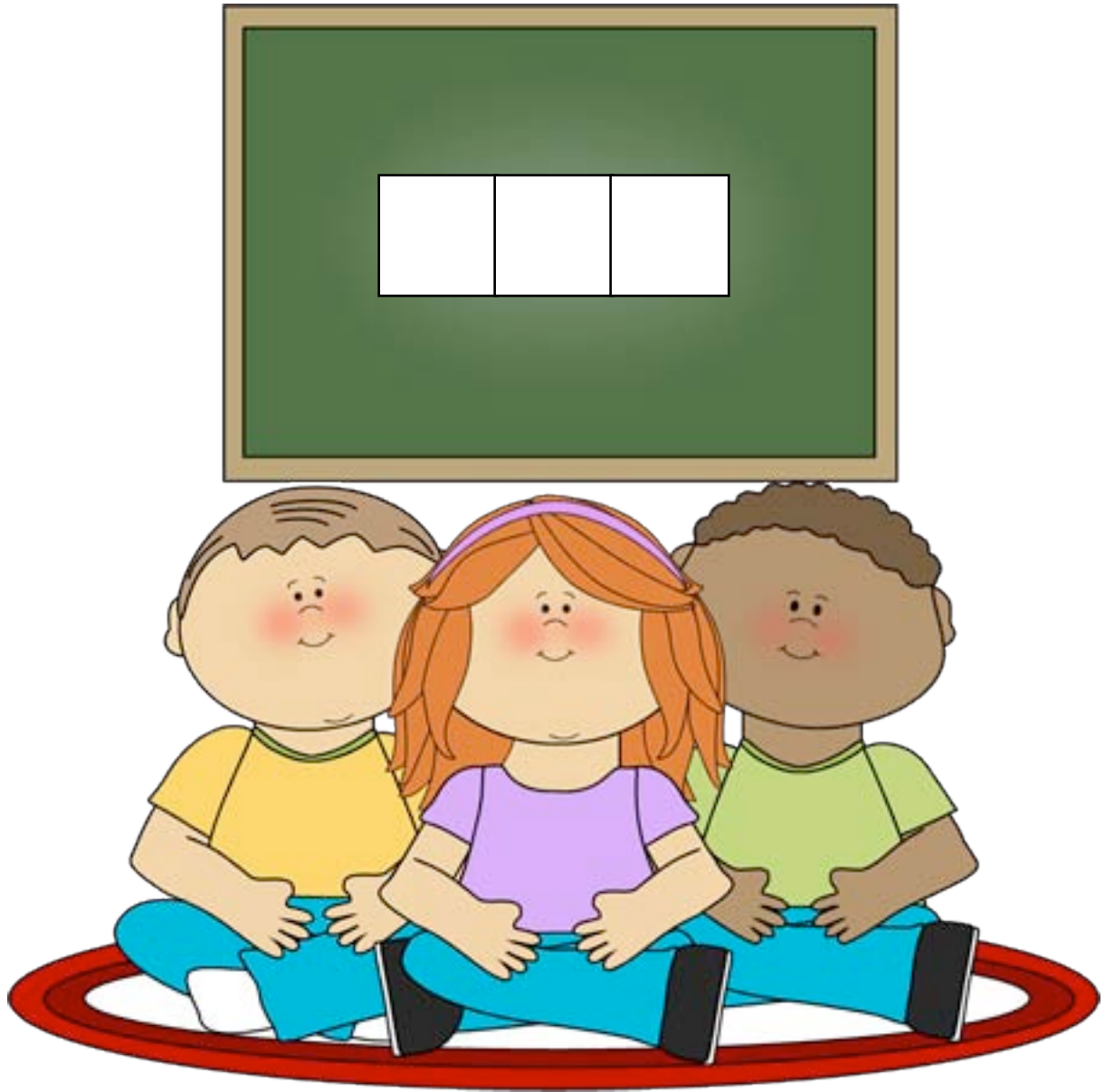


# Introduction To Elkonin Blocks



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# Directions For Introducing Children To Elkonin Sound Boxes

**Elkonin boxes** are an instructional method used in early elementary grades to build phonological awareness by segmenting words into syllables or sounds.

They are named after D. B Elkonin. He was a Russian psychologist who pioneered their use. The "boxes" are squares. They can be drawn on a piece of paper or a chalkboard, with one box for each syllable, which is also called a phoneme.

I have provided templates because I feel it is less frustrating to younger students and expedites the lesson.

To use Elkonin boxes, a child listens to a word and pushes a manipulative into a box for each syllable/phoneme.

Elkonin boxes can be used to teach phonemic awareness by having students listen for individual sounds and marking where they hear them in the boxes.

They are a visual representation that help students count, pronounce, blend and segment syllables in spoken words, thus they help teach ***Common Core State Standard: RF.K2b***

Each box in an Elkonin box card represents one phoneme, or sound.

Elkonin boxes are a physical segmentation of words into phonemes. I make my boxes a bit longer when a digraph or blend is involved because it fixes the spelling in a child's mind.

There are many activities that teachers can do with Elkonin boxes, but the main activity teachers usually use them for is to 'stretch' out words, identify similar or different sounds and then guess at spelling.

Students can use counters, chips, or unifix cubes to mark the boxes or run the masters off on copy paper and have students use a bingo dot marker or write in the letters.

Use the 3 box templates first as CVC words are easier for little ones to wrap their heads around first, when introducing the concept, then you can move to blended phonemes and digraphs, once they have the hang of the concept.

Run off, laminate and cut out the Elkonin box templates. You can use dry erase markers on these and have students write in letters.

Besides using letters, switch things up and allow them to use counters, like chips, and unifix cubes. Use manipulatives first as this is quicker and a lot more fun for them.

It's also fun to run off copies on regular paper and allow students to use different colored bingo dot markers, dabbing a dot for each sound that they hear.

You can also write in a list of words for students and have them dab a dot, circle or put a manipulative on the sound that you want them to hear. This is a great way to whole-group assess to weed out who still needs help.

## Here's how to begin:

1. Model an example for your students. "I am going to say a word and then I am going to stretch it out saying it slowly to see how many sounds we can hear." "We are going to count these sounds and for each one, we are going to push a counter in a box (from left to right.)" "The word is CAT CCCC AAAAA TTTTT." "How many sounds did you hear?" "Count and say them with me. ""CCCC (1) AAAAA (2) TTTTT (3) right!" *(Place 4 or 5 counters under the Elkonin box template.)* "Now let's push those counters into their boxes when we say the sounds. *(As you say the sounds, push a counter into a box.)*
2. Ask students if they have any questions. Remind them that a question starts with the words: who, what, why, when, where, how.
3. Do another example and then pass out materials to your students.
4. Distribute a laminated Elkonin box template and 4 or 5 colorful counters to your students. If you don't have chips or unifix cubes, an inexpensive manipulative you can make, is to laminate a selection of colored paper. Purchase a circle, square or triangle paper punch and punch out various colors. Keep them in a Ziploc Baggie.

# What else can I do with Elkonin Boxes?

## 1. TWM 1214 Elkonin Box Packet #2

I have made templates for students to write down a word on the top and then break it down on the bottom, creating their own boxes by simply adding lines. I find this is a lot less labor intensive, moves the lesson along quicker and is simply less frustrating for young students who find it difficult making squares.

The lesson is to work on phonemes, not see how terrific we are at drawing a box. So I empower children with this template, while expediting the activity.

This also gives them a chance to work on their letters.

In this packet, I've given you a list of 53 Dolch nouns that I have not made Elkonin box templates for. You can also choose to use other word wall words, spelling words etc.

2. Say a word and then CLAP out the syllables/phonemes. Have students count as they clap. Use the above template for students to write the word on the top and then number the boxes for how many times they clapped.

3. Hop out a word. There's nothing like getting the wiggles out and involve a gross motor activity to enhance learning. Use the template above. Have each student think up their own word. Have them put their word in a bag. Gather students in a circle and pass the bag around. Each student picks out a word. They stand up, read the word sloooooowly saying it phonemically. Then fast hopping out that many syllables.

4. Give students the 3 different laminated Elkonin box templates and some counters. Tell them you are going to play "Speed!" Say a word fast and then say it slow Phonemically. They decide which template to use and put their counters on it. When they have completed a template they raise their hand. The 1<sup>st</sup> one to raise their hand with the correct answer gets to do the next word.

5. Use the same templates above and ask students to listen for a certain sound in a word. Say the word that has that sound, then ask your students to place a counter in the 1<sup>st</sup> box if they hear the sound in the beginning of the word, (i.e. F in fish) in the middle box if they hear the sound in the middle of the word, (i.e. a in man) and in the last box if they hear it at the end of the word. (i.e. t as in cat) Give examples as I have to explain this. This activity is a terrific way to whole-group assess as well. Keep a class roster of names so you can check off who is having difficulty, + a pack of sticky notes on stuck to your clipboard so that you can jot down names of students who are having problems and what specifically they are having problems with.

6. Get a class supply of stretchy soft hair bands (not rubber bands) at The Dollar Store. (I got 50 in a pack!) Cut up index cards into 1/4ths. Hole punch the corner. Write each student's name on a card. Cut a slit into it and insert the hair tie. Sprinkle them on the floor and have students find their name.

Make one for yourself. Demonstrate how you stretch out your name into phonemes (stretching the hair tie as you say it.) Make an Elkonin Box template under your name on the index card. Have students do the same.

I always like to give a visual to my students. It helps the concept stick in their brain. A stretchy hair tie will definitely stay in their head, especially after the following fun activity.

Children might want to "ping" these hair ties through the air. This is why you do NOT want to use rubber bands. Simply tell them: 1. If they do you will take their name stretchy away. 2. If they do NOT they will get to take part in the "pinging" contest to see who can "zing" their stretchy the farthest, after stretching their name for the class.

Children gather on the sidelines.

Mark off the starting point with a piece of masking tape.

Each student stands on the masking tape.

They say their name. They stretch their name stretching their hair tie as they do, and then state how many syllables it has. They show their Elkonin box card.

They aim at the wall or board, they shoot. You attach their stretchy to their index card where it landed.

The child who shot the farthest gets some sort of prize.

When everyone is done, the name stretchies go to their lockers and into their backpacks.

7. Children love making noise. You can have students buzzzzz and flap their wings, for a beginning sound; say mmmmmmm, and rub their tummies, for a middle sound, and shriek eekkkkk, look scared and throw up their hands for an ending sound. After you've given them words and asked them to listen for the specific sounds. Give them Elkonin boxes, more words and have them write the letters of those sounds in the correct boxes.

8. Have students use one color of counter for consonants and another color for vowels so you are also reviewing that standard as well. You can also ask students if vowels are long or short. It's nice when you can "kill several birds with one stone." when you are doing a lesson.

8. Since one of my reading helper animals is the ostrich (*stretch with the ostrich*) a good visual is to get a *Beanie Baby* ostrich or stuffed animal at a garage sale. Cut off the leg of a pair of panty hose. Tie the ostrich to the middle. Choose two students to hang on to each end of the panty hose leg. Write different words on index cards that you want to "stretch". Hole punch these and tie with string. Loop one around the neck of the ostrich. Have students stretch the panty hose as far as they can while saying the word, stretching it out phonemically. Another student goes to the board to write out the word in an Elkonin box. Flip the index card over to show the word written in Elkonin boxes. Did the student at the board get it correct? Choose another card to put on the ostrich and 2 more students to stretch the nylon. Play continues til everyone has had a turn doing something.

The "Stretch With The Ostrich" animal cards can be found in the *Little Bit Of This Reading Packet*.

# Elkonin Boxes

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