-at Nonsense Words: Drill Cards

Cards marked made-up are not real words. Say each sound, then blend them into one word.

cat	glat made-up
smat made-up	hat
sat	snat made-up
trat made-up	mat
bat	rat

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-at Nonsense Words: How to Use the Cards

For the grown-up. One minute a round, after your child knows the basic letter sounds.

Before you start

Cut out the cards and shuffle them. Show your child the (made-up) mark and tell them those words are not real: they are the names of tiny aliens, and the only way to read an alien's name is to sound it out.

Three steps for every card

1. **Isolate the sounds.** Your child points under each letter and says its sound aloud: **/s/ /i/ /g/** (two letters such as *sh* or *ck* make one sound).
2. **Blend them together.** Your child slides the sounds smoothly into one word: **sig**.
3. **Move on.** Next card. If your child gets stuck, say the sounds with them, blend it together once, and go to the next card.

One minute, then repeat

- **Set a timer for one minute** and go through as many cards as you can. Stop when it rings, even mid-deck.
- **Repeat the same deck on another day.** The goal is comfort with saying sounds and blending them, so smooth beats fast.
- **Watch for memorizing.** The made-up words are there to make your child think and sound them out. If your child reads a made-up card instantly from memory, switch to a different deck, or mix two decks together.
- **Help, then move on.** A stuck card is a card to come back to tomorrow, not one to finish now.
- **Stop using made-up words** once your child reads real words with this sound easily. These cards are not practice for a school reading test.