**Activity One:** Phonics Baskets      
    Phonics baskets are a low-preparation phonics tool that can be adapted in a variety of ways for a variety of needs and learners. You begin with four or five small baskets each labeled with a particular letter or sound that you want that particular child to learn. For example, one basket could be labeled "c," one "p," one "d," and one "t" or any combinations of letters or sounds that you wish to choose. You then place a variety of objects in front of the basket whose names begin with one of the sounds presented. The child then sorts these objects into the correct baskets.  
    I like this activity for two reasons, one it can be easily adapted. For older students, you could place the sounds on the board and ask every student to move around the room counting as many objects as they can find that begin with one of the sounds. You could also use the activity to find syllables or rhyming words. Instead of sorting by sound the student would sort by the number of syllables the word contained or by objects that rhyme with the presented word. Second, it is a great activity to use for ELL students. It is hands on, allows them to learn vocabulary in context, as well as involves visuals, which is essential for ELL students.  
  
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**Activity Two:**Making Words Lessons  
    Making words lessons are an easy and fun way to give your students some practice with phonics. These lessons help students learn how to construct longer words by applying familiar patterns. You begin by selecting a secret word. This will be long word that your students are working up to through the lesson. Choose one that is interesting or connected to a theme you are studying. Be careful to select a word that is in your students listening vocabulary, especially if you have ELL students. After you have selected your secret word, make a list of all the words that can be made using letters from your secret word (wordplays.com can help with this task). After you have completed this list, pick around 12 to 15 words that children can sort for patttern, little and big words, words than can be made with the same letters in different order, a proper noun or two, and again make sure all words are in your students' listening vocabulary. Write down the words in the order you want the students to create them.  
    On the day of the lesson the students will be presented with all the letters needed to make the secret word. Then you will speak out the words on your list one by one. The children will pronounce them out loud and then use their letters to create that word. Walk through every word until you have reached the secret word. Emphasize the patterns that children are seeing as you walk through the lesson. At the end, teach the students some transfer words that use the same pattern they just sorted for, but are uncommon.   
  
  
Example: The secret word is teacher  
at, cat, eat, ear, hear, heat, each, reach, teach, there, teacher  
Sort related words: teach, teacher  
Sort rhymes: at/cat, eat/heat, reach/each/teach, ear/hear  
Transfer Words: spear, peach, beach, treat