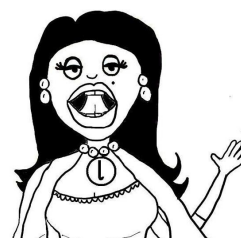




The **S**peech **S**ound **S**et ©

EARLY LITERACY PROGRAMMING Tips for Teachers

**How to use the SSS (and SVS)
in the Early Years.**



By Lucia Smith, Speech Pathologist
PELICAN TALK Speech Therapy Resources
www.pelicanstalk.com Email: lucia@pelicanstalk.com

Early Literacy teaching can be a great challenge. Research tells us that it is vital to incorporate many components – all of which are important.

A good literacy program should include activities that address oral narrative skills, vocabulary, comprehension, phonemic awareness, letter-sound links and high frequency words (sight words).

The Speech Sound Set (and Speech Vowel Set)© target primarily
phonemic awareness and sound-letter links.

The latest research is telling us that explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and sound-letter links is greatly beneficial in assisting students with literacy. My program encourages this mode of teaching.

Please note that some teachers like to use a less explicit program and simply incorporate components of The Speech Sound Set into their literacy program. This can also work well.

Many teachers comment that using The Speech Sound Set and Vowel Set © has made them better teachers of literacy because they can understand why students make errors.

What is THE SPEECH SOUND SET © ?

The SPEECH SOUND SET is a program about the consonant phonemes of English. Three vowel phonemes are included as samples only. If you wish to introduce vowel sounds and spelling, you will also need The Speech VOWEL Set program. This covers the 21 vowel sounds of English.

Vowel spelling can be very irregular and vowel mouthshapes are less interesting to “explore”. For this reason, most of the vowels can be left until after the consonant sounds have been studied.

Remember “consonant” phonemes are not just the 21 sounds made by the consonant letters in the alphabet. There are others, such as the digraphs:

“ ch, sh, th”.

The letter “x” is a combination of the phonemes “k” and “s” so is not represented in the set of pictures.

When students carry out activities with the SPEECH SOUND SET, they start to develop their awareness of phonemes, which in turn, assists both literacy and speech development. When delivered in a fun way, activities are seen as fun, and not work!

“One of the most compelling and well-established findings is the relationship between phonemic awareness and reading acquisition”. (Kame-enui, et. al., 1997). 1

The SPEECH SOUND SET was originally created as a tool for speech pathologists to help young children develop specific sounds in their speech. Since then, it has grown and been adapted to assist students with literacy development. Teachers now use The Speech Sound Set and The Speech Vowel Set in whole-class programming or sometimes with small groups of students who have low phonological awareness or are struggling with literacy-learning. Together the two programs constitute a comprehensive sound-based literacy program.

The Speech Sound Set and The Speech Vowel Set are resources that target phonemic awareness, a major component of phonological awareness.

NOTE: This manual refers mainly to The Speech Sound Set ©, although it is recommended, even in early literacy tasks, that some vowels are introduced (the short vowels a,e,i,o,u). These are part of the Speech VOWEL Set ©.

What is Phonemic Awareness?

Quite simply phonemic awareness is an understanding that words are made up of speech sounds (phonemes). It is a vital skill required in the mastery of reading and spelling. In fact, level of phonological awareness, part of which is phonemic awareness, is the strongest predictor of literacy success (Adams, 1990).²

The SPEECH SOUND SET has been designed to encourage students to think about, compare, contrast and explore the sounds that make up the words they speak.

What does my mouth do when I say that sound? Can I “hang on” to that sound or is it one that just pops out? Is it a loud or a soft whispery sound?

Not many young students spontaneously think about the characteristics of speech sounds. This explicit discussion around sounds, leads to a phonemic awareness that not only increases a student’s chances at success in literacy, but it can also help a student develop clearer speech.

What is Letter Knowledge?

Letter knowledge is also a very strong predictor of success in literacy (Adams, 1990).² It is the ability to recognise and form letters quickly. Letters are introduced with THE SPEECH SOUND SET when students are asked to find a letter on each sound character’s picture. (Eg. Munching Mama has her letter on her dress). Being able to reel off the alphabet does not imply good letter knowledge. Rote learning is almost useless when there is no meaning attached.

True letter knowledge is being able to see a letter and name it automatically,
and the ability to write a letter automatically when a letter is named.

Rapid automatic naming of letters is not a big part of
THE SPEECH SOUND SET... BUT LETTER-SOUND LINKS are a big part.

The idea that letters represent the sounds of spoken language is part of the The Alphabetic Principle and is a vital part of literacy learning. It is also the knowledge and ability to utilise the systematic relationships between a letter or letter group and a sound (the grapheme-phoneme link/ the letter-sound link) and vice versa. It is needed to code and decode new words.

The primary difference between a good and poor reader is the ability to use letter-sound correspondence to identify words. (Juel, 1991).³

But how do we teach this?

When students develop phonemic awareness they start to see and think of words in units. They can then link each unit to a letter or letter group.

For example: The word **SHARK** has three sounds (or phonemes)

PHONEME 1 SHARNA SHOOSH SOUND	PHONEME 2 AH-CRUNCH BARNEY SOUND	PHONEME 3 CATY KOOKABURRA SOUND
GRAPHEME 1 sh	GRAPHEME 2 ar	GRAPHEME 3 k

In the early stages, the simplest and most common letter-sound links are presented to students, but later on more letter options and patterns are taught for each sound.

The SPEECH SOUND SET and VOWEL SET reinforce the distinction between speech sounds and letter names... At ALL times, teachers should be very clear in this distinction when speaking with students.

(Too many times have I heard teachers saying “What letter can you hear at the start of that word?”

YOU CAN’T HEAR LETTERS – YOU CAN ONLY HEAR SOUNDS)!

For students who keep confusing the concept of letter names and sounds, it can be a longstanding problem.

These are the students who sound out “shark” and then write the letter “r” to represent the “ar” sound.

I tell students “Sounds are what we can hear” or “Sounds come out of the characters’ mouths” and I refer them to the SPEECH SOUND SET characters and point to their mouths. “What sound would this one make?” Then I explain “ Letters are what we can write or that we can find written on the character’s pictures”. I point to the character and name the letter.

I also tell these students; “Let your mouth say the sounds and let your pencil/pen turn it into a letter (or letters)”.

After working with THE SPEECH SOUND SET, students develop a deep knowledge and understanding of individual sounds. Even young students who dislike literacy tasks, enjoy looking at the colourful characters, exploring their sounds' characteristics and through this, become familiar with sounds and the letters that can make them.

STARTING OUT:

Introducing Sounds with THE SPEECH SOUND SET®

What to Prepare. Some resources can be prepared and used for all sounds.

Some are very handy teacher references to have on hand..

- Make up a set of the flashcards (6 Per Page Picture flashcards and Letter flashcards). The picture cards can be matched to letter cards.
- The Powerpoints can be put on class computers. You can delete pages that have not yet been studied.
- The reference cards can be printed and laminated and stuck on tabletops (Choose from MY ALPHABET or MY SOUNDS – cursive or non-cursive). This can help students with writing sounds in their spelling attempts. I prefer the ALPHABET cards as they contain the whole alphabet plus extra sounds (sh,ch etc...). The Sound Pairs reference card is also useful to show students and to use as a teacher reference. Sound Pairs are often confused in early spelling tasks.
- Print out the Hand Sounds booklet. Read about why they are beneficial in learning about sounds.
- Print out the Letter Options Workbook (for The Speech Sound Set and The Speech VOWEL Set)
- Print out the Making Sense of Spelling (for The Speech Sound Set and The Speech VOWEL Set) These will help you answer any curly questions about spelling!
- The SPEECH SOUND SET Stories can be printed out and kept by teachers as a useful resource highlighting all the speech sounds (phonemes), their features, the manner in which they are produced and the ages by which they are usually produced.

For each individual sound that you plan to introduce, you should prepare the following;

- Print out the story from the Sound Stories
- Print out a large colour picture (from JPEG Pictures) and laminate. A large picture is important for highlighting the mouthshape and locating the letter. The larger the better!
- Print out a line drawing (from JPEG pictures) as a colour-in and photocopy for the class.
- If you have an interactive whiteboard, you can display the three JPEG pictures this way.
- Print out a set of duplicated pictures (6 Per Page flashcards). Each student can stick the picture to a page and draw pictures around it that begin with that sound. They can also practise writing the letter – both capital and lower-case.

*If you have purchased The SSS Handwriting Sheets, you can print out the relevant page and photocopy for each student to practise writing the letter.

- Practise the song for each sound before singing it with the class. Remember the tune is “London Bridge is Falling Down”, but some lyrics need a bit of “playing with” to make them fit. Examples are shown on the disk.
- Familiarise yourself with the characteristics of each sound and which sounds it may be confused with. By doing this, you will be able to discuss it in depth with the class. Think about whether the sound is :LONG, SHORT, LOUD, SOFT, A NOSE SOUND or A MOUTH SOUND. Refer to the Sound Pair Reference card.
- You may wish to provide some mirrors, so students can watch their mouths making the sounds.
- Check out where the sounds appear on The Developmental Sequence – SSS or refer to the second page of the Speech Sound Set Stories. Do you expect the sound to be easily made by the students you are teaching? (The SSS Tip on the Sound Story page may help struggling students produce the sound). For further information about errors in sound production, see the free tipsheet at www.pelcantalk.com
- Learn the Hand Sounds for the sound you are introducing.

Introducing Letters first – and matching them to Sounds ... or Introducing Sounds - and matching them to Letters.

As a teacher, it is important that you work out what method YOU use.

Some teachers like to systematically introduce young learners to letters and talk about words that start with this letter. For example, a teacher may be introducing the letter “S”, talk about the shape of the letter and the sound it usually makes: The Sammy Snake Sound. The students might then set about searching for words that start with this new letter “S”. One student might stand up and say his name is “Sean” and it starts with “S”. At this point the teacher could pull out the Sharna Shoosh picture and explain that, in some words, the letter “S” can sometimes make the “sh” sound. This approach is the letter-to-sound approach, whereas the approach that I prefer is the sound-to-letter approach. I believe young learners are already using sounds (in their speech), so let’s start there and teach about letters that go with these sounds.

Remember, in all literacy teaching, it is best to look at spelling and reading from a student’s perspective, not from the view of a literate adult.

There is no set way to tackle early literacy, but over the following pages is the method that I use to introduce sounds and letters in the years of early literacy. It is fun, multi-sensory and suits all types of learners...

Begin by introducing a few sounds at a time in a “SOUND SESSION”. If you have purchased The Speech Vowel Set, you can introduce the vowel sounds also (in brackets below). Naturally vowels are vital for any word-making activities.

A suggested order for the introduction of sounds is below, however, no order is the “correct” one.

The timing of introduction depends on how quickly the students master the sounds.

Revision is recommended as each next set is introduced.

1. Sammy Snake, Drummer Dave, Munching Mama (a – Black Jack)
2. Nosey Nick, Hot Harry, Babbling Baby (o – Forgot-It Dot)
3. Furry Fred, Tapping Tessa, Padding Puppy , (l – Itchy Chimp)
4. Lovely Lara, Wonderful Worm, Gulping Gary, (e – Dreaded Meg)
5. Zippy Zac, Caty Kookaburra, Jumping Giant, (u – Grumpy Mum)
6. Rumbling Rudy, Yucky Yak, Sharna Shoosh
7. Charlie Choo-choo, Thirsty Theo, Victor Vampire
8. Letter x (Caty Kooka+Sammy Snake)

*Consider that sounds with similar characteristics are often confused, so talk about these when introducing them. For example, if you are at stage 3 and you are introducing Padding Puppy, be sure to mention that the mouthshape starts off the same as Munching Mama’s and Babbling Baby’s.

*I leave the Zsa Zsa Alien, Ding Dong Duck and The Echidna sounds until later. These can confuse young learners and I find it more appropriate to move on to common vowel sounds next. The introduction of vowel sounds is addressed more in the following pages.

I start with several contrasting sounds so that students can easily see, hear and feel the differences easily.

Longer sounds are easier to begin with also, because you can “hold on to” these sounds and perceive them more easily at the beginning of words. This way, students can understand how sounds relate to words.

The above order shows that three or four characters are introduced per session, but this may be too many.

Gauge how your students are coping and adjust the number accordingly. Over time, the students will become familiar with more and more sounds.

1. In your “sound session”, show the students the pictures of characters that you have chosen to introduce. Read each Sound Story, talk about how each sound is made (what does your tongue, lips, teeth, voice do?) and its characteristics (is it long? short? soft? loud?) After this, carry out the S Play activities (which can sometimes create quite a bit of noise as students love playing around with sounds). If you have a mirror nearby, get students to look at what their mouth is doing along with hearing the sound.

Use, teach and practise the Hand Sound as you make each sound. (Hand Sounds are extremely useful later on when students start writing words. They can really help to “show” students where a sound occurs in a word). If you like to sing in your class, sing the Sound Song and do the Hand Sound as an action.

2. It is important to refer to The SPEECH SOUND SET picture often, highlighting the mouthshape of the character and then relating this to how your (or their) mouth looks when the sound is made. Developing an

awareness of mouthshape allows students to develop visual and tactile cues relating to the sound. These, along with auditory cues, assist in strengthening phonemic awareness.

***If a student can't make a particular sound – check when they should be able to say the sound accurately by referring to the DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE or the ages listed at the start of the Speech Sound Set Stories booklet. Perhaps it is a much later developing sound? Try and assist the student in saying the sound using the S Tip. If it is still tricky, and there are a lot of sounds that student is unable to produce, a referral to a speech pathologist is highly recommended.

3. As mentioned earlier, phonemic awareness is very important. Letter knowledge is too (as is, the link between the two). Each character has its most common letter correspondence within its picture. It is recommended that students try and spot these letters and then a comment can be made such as “That’s right – there’s a letter. It’s a letter T, and it is how we usually write Tapping Tessa’s sound.... ‘t’ (make the sound.)

4. Remember there are two sides to the SPEECH SOUND SET - listening and production - just as there are two sides to early phonics.

Phonics =

Seeing a letter/s and making the corresponding sound AND

Hearing a sound in a word and finding the letter/s that matches it

The Speech Sound Set or VOWEL Set =

Seeing a character and saying its sound AND

Hearing a sound and finding the matching character

By making sure you carry out listening games with The SPEECH SOUND SET or VOWEL SET, students fine-tune their abilities to listen to, and where necessary pick up on mouthshape cues to discriminate between sounds.

For example, lay down a number of pictures in front of the students. Make one of their sounds. See if the students can pick the character that makes that sound. If they are having trouble, encourage them to look at your mouth and to look at the characters’ mouths, to think about the characteristics of the sound (Loud? Soft? Short? Long?). As an extra hint, you may do the Hand Sound as you make the sound.

To make this activity more difficult, make two sounds in succession. See if a student can pick the pictures in the order that you said their sounds.

5. Print out the session's characters in line-drawing (see JPEG LINE), photocopy and let the students colour them in. (You will be surprised at the sounds that are produced during the colouring-in time)!



6. When you have introduced a few sounds to the students, you can start to hang the pictures as posters around the room.

7. With the flashcard-sized pictures play SNAP or MEMORY. The students must say the sound when they upturn a card. As the students are introduced to more and more sounds, add more and more cards to the games.

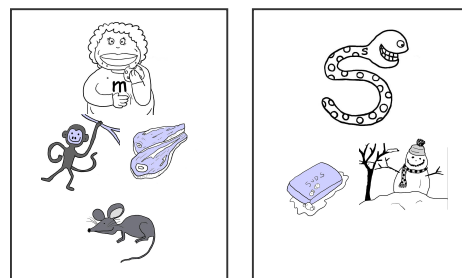
8. Use your imagination and produce more wonderful games (eg. BINGO by inserting JPEG images into a table).

9. When the class is really familiar with the characters and their sounds, try getting them to match the letter cards (6 Per Page Letters) with The SPEECH SOUND SET pictures. Make a set of letter cards and SPEECH SOUND SET characters. Play Memory where the students must find pairs comprising of a letter and the matching SPEECH SOUND SET character.

Introduce the concept of first sound awareness

There's no point learning about sounds and letters if you don't link them to words. This can be a difficult step to make for some young learners.

Think of some words that start with the sounds you are introducing. Give lots of examples and then see if students can think of others. If the students are having trouble, use the prompt, "Start your mouth like Munching Mama/Sammy Snake/etc... and then see if you can make a word...mmmmm.....mmmmmonkey".



1.To reinforce this activity, make some pictures to hang around the room:

Insert The SPEECH SOUND SET picture into a word documents and print out. Draw (or cut from magazines) pictures beginning with that sound and add to the page. (A4 is great, A3 is even better!)

2. Alternatively, do this as a table-top task. Provide each student with a scrapbook and distribute duplicates of the pictures from the 6 Per Page Booklets. Students stick a character on each page and draw pictures around them that begin with the sound.

3. Another activity is to lay out a few SPEECH SOUND SET pictures that have been introduced, for example, Sammy Snake, Munching Mama and Sharna Shoosh. Gather together a whole bag of objects (sock, shoe, shell, money, man, stamp etc...). See if the students can draw out an object and place it on the corresponding picture. If a student is struggling with this, tell them to say the word and “feel/hear/see where their mouths start”.

4. Show the relevant PowerPoint presentations. These show words starting with each sound (the vowels show the sounds in medial positions so are not appropriate for most young learners). You can get students to make their own slideshows too.



5. Start to incorporate The SPEECH SOUND SET into real spelling and reading activities as soon as possible. Model HAND SOUNDS as you spell and talk explicitly about your thought processes as you sound-out words. Eg. “That’s a buzzy sound... it must be Zippy Zac... let’s see, that’s the letter “Z”. By providing students with the ALPHABET Reference Cards on tabletops, you will be surprised how soon they start to refer to their own mouthshapes, to the characters and then to the letters ... and then to their own writing!

Be aware that some students become confused if you, as the teacher, use different language to refer to “first sounds”. For example, you may say; “What sound is at the start?” or “What’s the first sound?” or “What sound is at the beginning?” or “What’s the initial sound?”

It is fine to vary your language, but keep in mind this may cause problems for students who have language impairments.

Likewise, end sounds can be referred to as “sounds at the end” or “final sounds”.

Introduce the concept of last sound awareness

When you have studied a selection of sounds, you can start to listen for sounds on the end of words. I use the prompt, “Where does your mouth end?” if students are having trouble and as I say the word and point to my mouth at the end of the word. Alternatively, I may do the Hand Sound at the end of the word. It is better to do this with LONG sounds as you can “hold on” to them longer and they are more easily perceived.

Always try and link listening tasks to writing, by showing students how you relate the sounds they hear to the writing of letters and/or words.

If you have only studied first sounds, show them how you write the first letter and then say “I’ll write the rest of the word,” and model the writing of the remaining words.

If you had studied first and end sounds, you could say something like:

“We heard /p/ at the start, so I’ll write a letter p,

next comes /o/, and that’s an o and what sound can we hear on the end?

Let’s say the word again... “pot”. It’s Tapping Tessa’s sound ... /t/... so I need to write a t on the end of my word”.

This explicit hearing, thinking and writing helps students break the code of reading and writing.

- Note: Some students get stuck on saying the SSS characters’ names and are not able to hear the corresponding sounds. If you ask a student “What sound do you hear?” and they answer with the SSS character’s name, comment “That’s right, now what sound does _____ make?”

Introduce more VOWELS!

If you have the Speech VOWEL Set © you can start to systematically introduce more vowel sounds. This is usually not done until the second year of schooling. Again, like consonant sounds, there is no set order, however I prefer to choose quite regular vowels to start. Here are some below.

1. Short vowels – Black Jack, Forgot-It Dot
2. More Short Vowels - Itchy Chimp, Dreaded Meg, Grumpy Mum
3. Long vowels – Late Katy, Smiley Pete,
4. More Long Vowels - Pirate Mike, Rose in a Boat,
5. Hooty June, Hook Looker

*For early learners, I would introduce only the most common letter options for each.

*I also stress the concept of “short vowels” and “long vowels” even with early learners.

This becomes important for later on.

Did you know?

Letters NEVER make the same sound as their name – except for the letters a-e-i-o-u. This is why vowels are special!

Introduce the concept of blending and segmenting.

The ability to blend and segment phonemes is
extremely important for literacy...

BLENDING

Students who have developed basic phonemic awareness enjoy blending characters together to make words. Demonstrate how this can be done. This activity is blending, a skill required for decoding unfamiliar words in reading. For the purpose of this task, three vowel characters have been included in The Speech Sound Set as it is impossible to make words with consonant sounds alone! (The complete set of 21 vowels are provided on The Speech Vowel Set). Lay three cards down... Sharna Shoosh, Ah-Crunch Barney and Caty Kookaburra. Drag your finger along each card as you say each sound. Can the students blend the sounds and come up with the word "SHARK"? Other words to try: feet, farm, seed, park, move, loose, cart. Alternatively, when students have mastered awareness of single phonemes, you can do this exercise as an auditory task. That is, say two, three or four sounds and get students to blend them to make a word.

SEGMENTING

When students have mastered end sounds, try listening for start, middle and end sounds in three-sound words. Students should try and say each sound, and then find the three corresponding Speech Sound Set and Vowel Set pictures. Finally, they should try and write a letter for each sound.

*Further BLENDING AND SEGMENTING can be practised at four levels of difficulty using "SOUND SEGMENTER ©" from www.pelicanstalk.com

The previous pages have dealt mainly with early literacy in the first couple of years of formal teaching. Struggling students, however, can benefit from going back to learning the basics, even if they are in Grade Three, Four or Five. Of course, activities should be made age-appropriate at all times. The Speech Sound Set and Vowel Set is also used beyond early literacy with all students. Letter Options are introduced for each sound...

Letter Options.

Most sounds do not just have one letter correspondent. This is why, when introducing a new sound, it is wise to say, "We usually spell this sound with the letter ____"

You will know when your students are ready to learn more letter options for each sound. At this point, you can start to show the relevant pages from The Letter Options Workbook. These can be enlarged or shown on an interactive whiteboard. For those students who have mastered basic spelling of all the sounds, you can provide

them with a Letter Options Workbook. Systematically, focus on the letter options for each sound (eg. Furry Fred can use the letters f, ph, ff, gh and so on. Are there any patterns or rules as to when each letter combination is used? Of course!) You can either provide your students with the whole workbook – or provide them with a page at a time as each sound's spelling is explored.

Remember to have the Making Sense of Spelling booklets nearby as these explain many of the rules and patterns.

Students in the middle and later years of primary can learn much from studying each sound systematically and explicitly

Finally the Circle-a-Sound activities are for more advanced learners who are studying letter options. These activities promote a visual awareness of letters and letter groups that link to sounds.

If you have any questions about phonological awareness, phonics or speech development, get in touch with a speech pathologist or drop me a line at lucia@pelicantalk.com

I hope you enjoy the resources.

Lucia Smith

REFERENCES

- 1 Kame'enui, E.J, Simmons, D.C., Baker, S., Chard, D.J., Dickson, S.V., Gunn, B., Smith, S. B., Sprick, M., & Lin , S.J. (1997). Effective strategies for teaching beginning reading. In E.J. Kame'enui and D.W. Carnine (Eds) Effective Teaching Strategies That Accommodate Diverse Learners. Columbus, O.H. Merrill.
- 2 Adams, M.J. (1990) Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print. Cambridge,MA: MIT Press
- 3 Juel, C. (1991). Beginning reading. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), Handbook of reading research (pp. 759-788). New York: Longman.



TEACHER TEST - PRINT OUT AND TEST YOUR OWN PHONEMIC AWARENESS...

Note: Read the letters in inverted commas below as sounds.

1. How many speech sounds (phonemes) are in the following words?

Laugh ____ Teeth ____ Cart ____ Shape ____ Grow ____ /5

2. Approximately how many consonant phonemes are there in the English language?

24 26 21 44 /1

3. Thinking about mouthshapes, which of the following sounds would go together?

- a) "t" "g" "d"
- b) "k" "g" "n"
- c) "s" "sh" "z"
- d) "p" "b" "r" /4

4. Underline all the "voiced" (loud) speech sounds:

"m" "p" "t" "g" "b" "j" "k" "f" "v" "sh" "ch" "d" "z" "s" /1

5. Underline all the "long" speech sounds:

"m" "p" "t" "g" "b" "j" "k" "f" "v" "sh" "ch" "d" "z" "s" /1

6. Underline all the "nasal" speech sounds:

"m" "p" "t" "n" "b" "j" "k" "f" "ng" /1

7. Underline the words that start with the same sound:

- a) laugh phone paper feel /3
- b) try chain table pot
- c) cent same shape zoo

8. How would you describe the difference between a vowel and a consonant sound?

/1

9. Underline the vowel sounds in the following words:

Parting Laughter Flower Carport Fantastic /5

END OF TEST!

TOTAL: /22

HOW DID YOU GO?

FEEL YOU NEED TO BRUSH UP ON YOUR SOUND SKILLS?

Answers are on the disk "ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SPEECH SOUNDS" – a self-directed teacher training CD-ROM. See www.pelicanstalk.com for details.