1 On Your Marks!

Objective

To leave spaces between words

Key definition

A word is a single unit of meaning in speech and writing, made of letters.

Words are almost always separated from one another by spaces, which are the gaps not filled by letters or other marks.

2 Get Ready

Prior knowledge

Children should have a solid understanding of the following.

- Using a bank of high-frequency words
- Identifying a word orally
- Identifying a sentence orally
- Composing a sentence orally

Recap on previous grammar, punctuation and spelling knowledge acquired, and touch on areas of uncertainty highlighted in the Diagnostic Check, particularly regarding identifying individual words.

Explain that this session will develop children's understanding of how to use spaces between words in their writing, so that someone reading their work can tell which word is which and understand the sentence.

Terminology

For this unit, children only need to know that words separated by spaces make up sentences.

A word is a single unit of meaning. Words are made up of letters, and can be put together to make sentences.

Letters make up the words that we write. These are all the letters:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

A <u>capital letter</u> is a type of letter used at the start of a sentence or name. These are all the capital letters:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A <u>sentence</u> is a group of words that expresses a complete idea.

(**NB:** Further information about what defines a sentence will be taught in later units.)

Purpose and application

A space shows where one word ends and the next one begins. Leaving spaces between the words in written sentences allows people to read what each word says more easily.

3 Get Set

Resources

- The *Words and Sentences* diagnostic check PDF
- This *Words and Sentences* teaching sequence
- The *Words and Sentences* video
- The *Words and Sentences* game sequence (see below)
- The *Words and Sentences* assessment PDF
- Class texts
- Mini whiteboards and whiteboard pens
- Laminated word cards or word banks (optional)

Activities

1. Begin the topic by splitting the class into two teams: the 'word' team and the 'sentence' team. Use a class text to read out some simple sentences and some single words. (Avoid single-word sentences, e.g. imperatives such as '**Run!**'.)

When you read a single word, the 'word' team should cheer or raise their hands. When you read out a sentence, the 'sentence' team should cheer or raise their hands. Children will find cheering fun, but it may be more difficult to spot if individual children are having difficulty distinguishing between words and sentences.

If many children in the class seem to find this difficult, perform the exercise in pairs instead, with one child in each pair noticing words and the other noticing sentences. This way, it is easier to give further attention to pairs that seem to be struggling.

2. Ask the children to listen to you as you say a sentence aloud. For example, '**My bag is big and red.**' Say the sentence twice, once at your usual speed, and once very slowly. The second time you say the sentence, ask the children to clap every time they hear the end of a word. Repeat with different sentences, until the children are secure with the idea. Explain that in written sentences the claps become spaces. Write one of your sentences on the board and then reread it aloud together. As you do so, point out the spaces you have left between the words.

3. Say two simple sentences aloud. For example, '**My bag is red. It is very big.**' Can the children hear the two sentences? Say them again, asking the children to raise their hands when they think they hear the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next one. How did they know where the first sentence ended?

Talk about how our voices might change as we finish saying sentences; how we might pause for longer than between words; and how the idea about which we are talking is 'complete'.

Ask the children, in pairs, to each think of two sentences and then take it in turns to say them to their partners. Can their partners identify the two sentences? Share some as a class to check learning.

4. Write one of the children's sentences on the board, but 'forget' to put in any spaces between words. Can the children still understand it? Now repeat this, using a new sentence of your own. Can the children read it? What makes it difficult to read? Model how to rewrite the sentence using spaces – pointing out that this makes each word easier to see.

Prepare some sentences with the spaces missing in advance, using an interactive whiteboard with each word entered separately. Bring children up to the board to separate each individual word, by dragging it to leave a space.

Provide some more examples of sentences, with no spaces between words, and ask the children to rewrite them with spaces. You might like to introduce a physical reminder for the children to use at this point, such as their finger or their own individual 'spacer' (e.g. made from a lolly stick) to allow them to check that they have left a space.

5. Working in pairs, ask the children to have a go at writing their own sentences on mini whiteboards (using laminated word cards or word banks, if needed). Get the children to use their fingers or a 'spacer' to check they have left spaces between words. Once children are confident, they can work on paper or in their books.

Practising with the Bug

Words and Sentences Game 1	Hear and identify separate words.
Words and Sentences Game 2	Recognise and identify sentences.
Words and Sentences Game 3	Insert spaces accurately between words in sentences.
Words and Sentences Game 4	Complete simple sentences, using spaces correctly.

4 Go!

Noticing words and sentences

Point out spaces between words when reading any text from the interactive whiteboard or in books. Remind the children to look out for the spaces as they read, and talk about how this helps them to read the sentences.

Shared reading

Ask children to point to individual words as they read and use shared reading as an opportunity to identify how spaces between words help with reading and making sense of the sentences.

Every now and again, rewrite a sentence from a shared text on the board, without any spaces, and prompt the children to remark on how much easier it is to read with spaces.

Shared writing

Children could use laminated word cards to build sentences; ensure they arrange the cards leaving space between the words. What happens if we put the cards too close together, without spaces? Use these to help children to build and then copy and write their own sentences, remembering to use the spaces.

Independent reading and writing

When children start to write independently, remind them to check for spaces between words as they write. Supply them with a 'spacer' (e.g. a lolly stick) or remind them to use their finger as a physical 'check'.

GRAMMAR & SPELLING

Give children a simple success checklist, showing spaces between words as one key point to check.

After they have finished, ask children to peer assess each other's work, checking they have used spaces between words, using 'spacers' or their finger.