

That's a Long Word!

Compound Words

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Grade Level	2nd Grade	**Time Frame**	165 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	2-3 periods
Course	Oklahoma Young Scholars/Javits		

Essential Question

How can I read big words and know what they mean? How are compound words different from other words?

Summary

In this 2nd grade lesson, students discover how two words can be joined to form a compound word. Beginning with a read-aloud of Once There Was a Bull...Frog, students use Elbow Partners to recall story words—bullfrog, toadstool, cowboy—and notice that each word is built from two smaller words. Through guided discussion, they test a working definition against questionable examples, then use Card Matching to generate new examples before illustrating their own on a trifold foldable for a class word wall. Students then listen to an extension story and use the Not Like the Others strategy to identify compound and non-compound words within sets of related words.

Snapshot

Engage

Students listen to *Once There Was a Bull...Frog* and predict story characters, building curiosity and prior knowledge that the story will convert into compound word awareness.

Explore

With Elbow Partners, students recall the story's characters and objects, then share and read them aloud as a class, noticing that each is built from two smaller words.

Explain

Students examine borderline cases (such as *river* and *napkin*) to test a working definition of compound words, then use Card Matching cards to generate new examples before illustrating their own on a trifold foldable for a class word wall.

Extend

Students listen to an extension story, “An Afternoon with Salamander,” and use a whole-class response strategy to sort underlined words as compound or not compound.

Evaluate

In small groups students apply their understanding by using the Not Like the Others strategy to identify

the non-compound word in each of ten sets.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 2)

2.2.PWS.3: Decode words by applying knowledge of structural analysis:
- compound words
- inflectional endings (e.g., -s, -ed, -ing)
- contractions
- abbreviations
- common roots and related prefixes and suffixes

Attachments

- An Afternoon with Salamander (Key)—That's a Long Word.docx
- An Afternoon with Salamander (Key)—That's a Long Word.pdf
- An Afternoon with Salamander—That's a Long Word.docx
- An Afternoon with Salamander—That's a Long Word.pdf
- Card Matching cards—That's a Long Word.docx
- Card Matching cards—That's a Long Word.pdf
- Compound Words Hunt—That's a Long Word.pdf
- Lesson Slides—That's a Long Word.pptx
- Not Like the Others—That's a Long Word.docx
- Not Like the Others—That's a Long Word.pdf

Materials

- *Once There Was a Bull...Frog,* Rick Walton (book, ISBN 978-1423620808) or the video version at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UM6XxCVPSM
- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Card Matching Cards (attached, cut and laminate, one set per group)
- An Afternoon with Salamander (attached, optional, one copy per student or group)
- An Afternoon with Salamander—Key (attached, one copy per instructor)
- Not Like the Others (handout, attached, cut into half sheets, one per student or group)
- Not Like the Others—Key (handout, attached; one copy per instructor)
- Compound Words Hunt (attached; one copy per student)
- Chart paper
- copy paper
- dry erase boards and markers (optional)

10 minutes

Preparation

Print and cut the **Card Matching cards**, using two colors of paper: one color for Component 1 and another for Component 2. Make as many sets as you would need for partner groups in your class and laminate for future use. These cards will be used in the Explain section.

10 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to follow along with the lesson. Begin the lesson by displaying **slides 3-4** if desired and tell students that today they are going to listen to a book about a frog -- and not just any frog but a *bullfrog*! Show the cover of the book.

Ask students questions like:

- Does anyone have any ideas what this book might be about?
- What other characters might be in the book?
- Bulls, cows, cowboys, cowgirls, frogs etc.... What made you think of these?
- Ah yes, the cowboy hat, the blue sky, the frog.

Write these names on a chart.

Prompt students, “So let’s find out who and what are in this book!” Read *Once There Was a Bull...Frog or* display **slide 5** to view.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=7UM6XxCVPSM?si=w17PKQakl832gxG7

20 minutes

Explore

After reading or viewing the story, have students talk with an Elbow Partner about objects and characters the frog visited to find his hop! You might have to flip back and look at the book again.

Ask students who is the main character? Bullfrog! Write this on your chart as *bullfrog = bull + frog*.

Then have each pair of students give you one of the words they discussed. Write these clearly on chart paper. Possible answers:

- bullfrog
- toadstool
- doghouse
- hedgehog
- boxcar
- grasshoppers
- cowboy
- strawberries
- catfish
- ladybug
- rattlesnake
- sunflowers
- stagecoach
- horsefly

Ask students what they noticed about these words and what they have in common.

Teacher's Note: Possible Student Responses

- "The author made them really long because of the way he read them!"
- "At first I thought it was one thing, but then it was another thing!"
- "They are made from two words."

Have the class read the words aloud and tell you what the two words are that the bigger word is made from. If necessary, draw pictures to illustrate the thinking process, as in *cow + boy = cowboy*.

Continue in the same way, writing example words on the chart, continuing with *toadstool = toad + stool,* etc. If desired, reinforce this concept by showing **slides 6-8**.

40 minutes

Explain

After exhausting the list in the Explore section, suggest adding another non-compound word like *river.* Ask students if *river* would fit on the list. Ask them to explain why or why not.

Teacher's Note: Possible Teacher-Student Dialogue

Teacher: Why doesn't it fit?

Student: It isn't made up of two other words.

Teacher: You are right. It doesn't fit. The words on our list are called compound words.

Pose another word, such as *napkin*. Ask, "What about napkin? Would it fit? It is made of two words *nap* + *kin*. *Nap* means to sleep and *kin* means a relative—so is *napkin* a sleeping relative?" Laugh with the kids!

Title your word chart "Compound Words." Collaborate with the class to write a definition for what a compound word is and write that on chart paper.

Guide students toward agreement that a compound word is formed by joining two complete, recognizable words together to make a new word with a unique meaning.

Teacher's Note: Understanding Compound Words

Often the meaning of the new word comes from both parts—a *bathtub* is a tub for bathing, a *cowboy* works with cows—and when that's true, it's a strong sign that you have a compound word. But sometimes the connection is hidden, as with strawberries or butterfly. The most reliable test is whether two real, complete words are joined inside the new word. Not all words follow this reasoning: a napkin fails this test not because *nap* and *kin* don't make sense together, but because *napkin* was never actually formed by joining those two English words—it came from a different language entirely. A good way to put this for students: "If two real words are hiding inside that point to the word's meaning, it's probably a compound word, even if the meaning is a surprise." Emphasize that there will be exceptions to this rule!

Pose the question, "Where else do you think Bullfrog and his friends could go to find his hop?"

Have students work with a partner or in groups of three. Distribute the modified Card Matching **cards**. Explain that each word-starter card (Component 1 words printed on one color of paper) will match with at least one word-ender card (Component 2 words printed on a different color of paper). Create context for this activity by asking students if they can think of somewhere else bullfrog could have gone to look for his hop that would fit this list. If needed, offer some hints to get them started. For instance, the starter word *play-* might be correctly paired with ending-words to create *playground, playhouse,* and *playroom.* Give students time to think and work in pairs, using dry erase boards to jot down their ideas.

After several minutes, reconvene the groups and add their compound words to the anchor chart list.

Next, give each student a piece of copy paper and have them trifold the paper. Have students choose words from the list or allow them to choose their own to illustrate on their trifold paper in the same way the *cow* + *boy* = *cowboy* pictures are illustrated on **slide 8**.

Teacher's Note

You may choose to cut the paper in half horizontally before folding the trifold.

When completed, have students meet in groups of four to share their compound words. Display papers in the classroom as a Compound Word Wall.

20 minutes

Extend

Use the **An Afternoon with Salamander (Key)** to tell an extension story of another day in the life of Bullfrog.

Teacher's Note

If you are beginning this part of the lesson on a subsequent day, ask students to quickly retell the Bullfrog story using the compound words chart the class completed earlier.

Students will use identified words from the story to determine whether each word is a compound word or not. First, read the story together. Then have students focus on the underlined words and decide whether each one is a compound word or not. If using the slides, display **slides 9-34** so that students can clearly see the words as they make their decisions.

Teacher's Note

Choose the path that is most effective for your group: you might read the whole story once all the way through or read paragraph by paragraph, returning to the target words.

In response to whether or not the target words are compound or not, students can give a simple thumbs-up, hold up a green or red card to indicate their answer, use the Sounds Right, Sounds Off strategy or, for more physical activity, the Walking Vote strategy where areas of the room have been designated “Compound Words” and “Not Compound Words.”

15 minutes

Evaluate

Form partners or groups of three and display **slides 35-36** to share the instructional strategy Not Like the Others with your students. Alternatively, distribute copies of the **Not Like the Others** handout. Allow time for students to discuss their thinking with their partner(s) before reviewing the answers. For groups that finish early, have them identify how the words are related. Refer to the **Not Like the Others Key** if necessary.

- toothpaste, napkin, hairbrush
- picture, birthday, cupcake
- backpack, problem, classroom
- grasshopper, salamander, bullfrog, rattlesnake
- bedroom, mailbox, carpet, doorbell
- hospital, airport, bookstore, library
- freeze, playground, teammate, cartwheel
- washcloth, bathtub, mirror, curtain
- snowflake, thunder, lightning, raindrop
- sunglasses, beachball, blanket, surfboard

60 minutes

Opportunities for Advanced Learners

Students identify compound words in additional books and then complete the **Compound Word Hunt** handout.

Resources

- Bay, R. (n.d.). Oyster mushroom – 2. [Photograph]. Adobe Stock.
- Bronwyn Photo. (n.d.). Sheep in barnyard. [Photograph]. Adobe Stock.
- Erik. (n.d.). Monarch caterpillar on milkweed leaves. [Photograph]. Adobe Stock.
- Google. (2026). Clock showing 1:15 p.m. [Image generated by Gemini].
- Google. (2026). AI-generated drawing of mail, a box, and a mailbox. [Image generated by Gemini].
- Google. (2026). AI-generated drawing of snow, a man, and a snowman. [Image generated by Gemini].
- Hamilton. (n.d.). Spotted salamander on a lichen-covered rock (Ambystoma maculatum) [Photograph]. Adobe Stock. Asset ID: 335153727
- Hofacker, B. (n.d.). Healthy organic applesauce with cinnamon. [Photograph]. Adobe Stock.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card matching. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1837
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
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- Kraus, M. J. (n.d.). Sunset. [Photograph]. Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/kraus/55262863152/
- m.lexandrovna. (n.d.). Round brown sunglasses isolate. (AdobeStock_536803548) [Stock photograph]. Adobe Stock.
- nanskyblack. (n.d.). Handshake isolated on white background. [Stock photograph].
- OpenAI. (2026, April 3). AI-generated drawing of a cow, a boy, and a cowboy. [Image generated by ChatGPT].
- Peter. (n.d.). Monarch butterflies (Danaus plexippus). [Stock photograph].
- Pixel-Shot. (n.d.). School backpack on white background. [Photograph]. Adobe Stock. Asset ID: 276472512
- Pixel-Shot. (n.d.). Ripe blueberries on white background. [Photograph]. Adobe Stock. Asset ID: 276472512
- StoryTime with Charlie. (2021). *Once there was a bull(frog)* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UM6XxCVPSM
- zozulinskyi. (n.d.). Tranquil underwater scene 3D render. [3D render]. Adobe Stock.