

Dear Parents,

The following Word Ladders activities are not only fun, but build student fluency. Reading fluency is the accurate and rapid naming or reading of letters, sounds, words, sentences, or passages. When students can perform reading and reading-related tasks quickly and accurately, they are on the path to fluency, as essential element of comprehension. These Word Ladder games will provide both student and parent with fun with words while also boosting student fluency.

Example 1: Start with the word *vegetable* and then follow the clues in the 2nd and 3rd column to change the word *vegetable* into the word *radish*. The answers to the word ladders are given in the first column. Cover the first column with a slip of paper to hide the answers until you have completed the word ladder!

Vegetable to Radish

Target Word

Letter Changes Required

Clue

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Vegetable		
Table	- 4	A piece of furniture at which meals are eaten.
Stable	+ 1	Steady. Or a place to keep horses or other animals.
Stab	- 2	To wound or pierce with a pointed weapon.
Slab	Chg 1	A flat piece of concrete pavement.
Slob	Chg 1	An untidy, messy, or slovenly person.
Slosh	Chg 1	To splash about with a liquid.
Slash	Chg 1	To cut with sweeping strokes.
Dash	- 2, + 1	A small amount of a something, usually a seasoning for food.
Dish	Chg 1	A plate on which food is eaten.
Radish	+ 2	A red colored root vegetable.

Nickel to Dime

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Nickel		
Pickle	Chg 1 and rearrange last 2 letters.	A small cucumber that has been preserved in vinegar. Or a difficult situation.
Pick	- 2	To choose.
Pink	Chg 1	A light red color.
Stink	- 1, + 2	To be smelly or odiferous.
Sting	Chg 1	What a bee or wasp does when angry.
Sing	- 1	To say words musically.
Sang	Chg 1	To have sung words musically.
Sane	Chg 1	Mentally sound or health.
Same	Chg 1	Resembling something in every respect.
Dame	Chg 1	A woman of authority and status.
Dime	Chg 1	What two nickels make.

Sweater to Coat

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Sweater		
Sweat	- 2	Perspiration
Sweet	Chg 1	Opposite of sour.
Sweeten	+ 2	To make sweet.
Ten	+ 2	Number of cents in a dime.
Ton	Chg 1	2,000 pounds.
Stone	+ 2	A small rock.
Notes	Rearrange letters	Short messages to help a person remember. Or, what musicians read to play music.
Not	- 2	A word that means the "no."
Jot	Chg 1	To write.
Jock	- 1, + 2	Short for jockey. Slang for an athlete.
Jack	Chg 1	A nickname for John.
Jacket	+ 2	An outer covering worn for warmth, like a sweater.

Car to Driver

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Car		
Scar	+1	A mark left on the skin after a wound has healed.
Scare	+ 1	A fright.
Share	Chg 1	To give part of what one has to others.
Sharp	Chg 1	Made for cutting or slicing; having a thin keen edge or point.
Harp	- 1	A stringed musical instrument, often associated with angels.
Hare	Chg 1	A kind of rabbit.
Dare	Chg 1	To challenge to perform an action.
Dave	Chg 1	A shorten version of the name David.
Dive	Chg 1	To descend in the water.
Diver	+ 1	One who descends.
Driver	+ 1	A person who operates a car.

Give to Take

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Give		
Live	Chg 1	To be alive.
Liver	+ 1	An organ in the body.
Diver	Chg 1	A person who dives.
Dive	-1	To descend in the water.
Hive	Chg 1	The place where bees live.
Have	Chg 1	To possess something.
Shave	+ 1	To cut or remove hair close to the skin by use of a razor blade.
Shake	Chg 1	To vibrate or move irregularly back and forth.
Snake	Chg 1	A legless and sometimes poisonous reptile.
Stake	Chg 1	A pointed piece of wood driven into the ground as a support or marker.
Take	- 1	To grasp or seize. The opposite of give.

Vampire to Bat

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Vampire		
Empire	- 2, + 1	A large area under the authority of a sovereign.
Expire	Chg 1	To breathe; to breathe one's last – to die.
Retire	Chg first 3	To go to sleep; to withdrawal from one's professional career.
Tire	- 2	A circular rubber object used on cars and trucks as wheels.
Fire	Chg 1	What is made when logs are set ablaze.
Fine	Chg 1	A sum of money imposed as punishment for an offense.
Tine	Chg 1	A prong on a fork.
Tone	Chg 1	Vocal or musical sound.
Ton	- 1	2, 000 pounds.
Ten	Chg 1	5 + 5
Net	Rearrange letters	What is used by fishermen.
Bet	Chg 1	A wager or guess that something will happen.
Boat	- 1, + 2	A vessel for traversing.

Tooth to Dentist

Target Word

Letter Changes Required

Clue

Tooth		
Toot	- 1	Sound made by a train.
Shoot	+1	What is done with a gun.
Soot	- 1	A black substance made from the burning of wood.
Soon	Chg 1	As soon as possible; immediately.
Son	Chg 1	The male child of a father and mother.
Don	Chg 1	Shortened form of the name Donald.
Don't	- 1	Contracted form of the phrase "do not."
Dent	Chg 1	A depression or indentation on something.
Dentist	+ 3	A doctor who cares for teeth.

Picture to Photo

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Picture		
Capture	Chg first three letters.	To catch or gain control over something.
Cap	- 4	A head covering.
Cape	+ 1	A kind of coat without sleeves.
Escape	+ 2	To get away.
Estate	Chg 2	A large piece of land with a large house on it owned by one person.
State	- 1	The U. S. originally had 13 of these.
Taste	Rearrange letters	A sense that allows a person to distinguish between sweet, sour, bitter, and salty.
Haste	Chg 1	In a hurry.
Hate	- 1	To dislike very much.
Hat	- 1	A covering for the head.
Hot	Chg 1	Very warm.
Photo	+ 2	Short for photograph. Another word for a picture.

Hat to Cap

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Hat		
Hate	+ 1	Opposite of love.
Haste	+ 1	In a hurry.
Waste	Chg 1	Something worn out or no longer needed.
Aster	-1, + 1	A flower in the shape of a star.
Asterisk	+ 3	A symbol in the shape of a star -- *
Risk	- 4	To expose oneself to injury or harm. To take a chance.
Disk	Chg 1	A flat circular object such as a record or a computer disk.
Duck	Chg 1	An aquatic bird that quacks.
Luck	Chg 1	A force that brings good fortune. "It was luck that allowed me to win the game."
Lack	Chg 1	To be deficient or missing of something.
Lap	- 2, + 1	To drink water with the tongue. "When my dog is thirsty he laps water anywhere he can find it."
Cap	Chg 1	A type of hat. Also, a covering for a bottle.

Million to Dollars

Target Word

Letter Changes Required

Clue

Million		
Billion	Chg 1	A thousand millions.
Lion	- 3	A large animal belonging to the cat family.
Stallion	+ 4	A male horse.
Stall	- 3	A place in a barn where a horse is kept. Also, to delay.
Still	Chg 1	To be quiet or motionless.
Till	- 1	A box or drawer for keeping money. Also, a function word that means until.
Tall	Chg 1	Not short.
Toll	Chg 1	A fee paid for a service.
Doll	Chg 1	A small scale figure of a person, played with by children.
Dollars	+ 3	What most people would like to have a million of. A form of money.

Convention to Meeting

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Convention		A meeting of people with a shared interest.
Invention	-2, + 1	Something invented; a discovery.
Intention	Chg 1	What a person intends or plans to do.
Tension	-2, chg 1	A feeling of stress.
Pension	Chg 1	A regular payment made to a person after they retire from work.
Suspension	+ 3	The act of suspending or hanging. "On the Brooklyn or Golden Gate Bridges the roadway hangs from cables strung high across the water."
Suspense	- 3, + 1	A feeling of uncertainty about the way events may turn out.
Suspend	- 2, + 1	To hang something.
Spend	- 1	To use something up, especially money.
Speed	Chg 1	How fast something travels.
Seed	- 1	What farmers sow in order to make plants grow.
Meet	Chg 2	To come into the presence of someone.
Meeting	+ 3	Another name for convention.

Ice to Water

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Ice		
Alice	+ 2	A girl's name. The name of the main character in "...Through the Looking Glass."
Malice	+ 1	A feeling of ill will towards another. A grudge.
Chalice	- 1, + 2	A drinking cup or goblet often used in religious services.
Chalk	- 3, + 1	A whitish material use for marking.
Stalk	Chg 2	To follow another person. The stem of a plant.
Talk	- 1	To speak or tell.
Walk	Chg 1	To transport oneself by means of leg power.
Walker	+ 2	A device to aid a person in walking. Often used by babies and older people.
Water	- 2, + 1	What happens to ice when it melts.

Medicine to Physician

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Medicine		Substances used to treat illnesses.
Medic	- 3	A person without the training of a doctor who attends to the needs of the ill.
Medical	+ 2	Referring to medicine.
Ethical	- 2, + 2	Referring to moral issues.
Radical	- 2, + 2	Something that is extreme.
Physical	- 3, + 4	Referring to a person's body. Or an examination of one's current state of health.
Physician	- 2, + 3	A doctor.
Physics	- 3, + 1	The study of nature, matter, and energy.
Phil	-5, + 2	Short for Phillip
Pill	- 1, + 1	The form than many medicines come in.

Country to Nation

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Country		
County	- 1	A state is divided into sections called these.
Count	- 1	To name the numbers in order.
Aunt	- 2, + 1	The sister of one's mother.
Tuna	Rearrange letters	A fish that is popular for eating.
Tundra	+ 2	A level treeless plain in arctic areas.
Drain	- 3, + 2	To remove the water from something.
Rain	- 1	Precipitation in the form of water.
Rail	Chg 1	A long narrow metal or wooden pole.
Nail	Chg 1	A pointed device to holding two pieces of wood together.
Nation	-1, + 1, + 2	Another word for country.

Bed to Room

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Bed		
Bled	+ 1	To have lost blood.
Red	- 2, + 1	The color of blood.
Read	+ 1	What is done with a book or magazine.
Bread	+ 1	A food made from the grain of wheat.
Break	Chg 1	To separate into parts.
Brook	Chg 2	A small river or creak.
Brood	Chg 1	To think about something anxiously or with anxiety.
Broom	Chg 1	An instrument for sweeping dirt from floors.
Boom	- 1	A loud explosive noise.
Room	Chg 1	A chamber or walled off area in a house.

Pillow to Blanket

Target Word

Letter Changes Required

Clue

Pillow		
Pill	- 3	A tablet; a form in which many medicines are made.
Fill	Chg 1	To make full; what is done when water is placed in a glass.
Fall	Chg 1	To descend rapidly. Or, another word for autumn.
Tall	Chg 1	Not short.
Talk	Chg 1	To speak or tell.
Tank	Chg 1	A large container for liquids. Also, an armored vehicle used in war.
Bank	Chg 1	A container for money.
Blank	+ 1	Empty, without markings.
Blanket	+ 2	Something that goes with a pillow.

Grateful to Thankful

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Grateful		
Grate	- 3	A metal frame used for cooking over a fire.
Gate	- 1	A door or opening on a fence or wall.
Gateway	+ 3	An opening for something. A starting place.
Getaway	Rearrange letters	A brief vacation.
Away	- 3	From this or that place. “Go away now.”
Way	- 1	A route or road.
Yaw	Rearrange letters	A side to side motion.
Thaw	- 1, + 2	To unfreeze.
Than	Chg 1	A word used in comparisons. “I am bigger than my older brother.”
Thank	+ 1	To express gratitude for something.
Thankful	+ 3	Another word for grateful.

Deliver to Send

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Deliver		To bring to someone.
Liver	- 2	An organ in the body.
Live	- 1	To be alive.
Line	Chg 1	A long straight mark without.
Lime	Chg 1	A citrus fruit.
Slime	+ 1	A soft moist and gooey substance.
Slim	- 1	Thin.
Slam	Chg 1	To shut.
Sam	- 1	Short for Samuel.
Sad	Chg 1	Unhappy.
Sand	+ 1	Grainy substance found on beaches.
Send	Chg 1	The opposite of deliver.

Rain to Cloud

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Rain		
Ran	- 1	To have walked fast.
Raw	Chg 1	Not fresh.
War	Rearrange letters	Opposite of peace.
Wore	- 1, + 2	To have had clothes on one's body. Past tense of wear. "I wore my best clothes to my sister's wedding."
Swore	+ 1	To take an oath.
Sword	Chg 1	A long cutting instrument.
Words	Rearrange letters	What we are making in this activity.
Word	- 1	Three words minus two words equals one _____.
Lord	- 2, + 1	A person who has power or authority over others.
Loud	Chg 1	Noisy. A big sound.
Cloud	+ 1	What causes rain.

Private to General

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Private		Lowest rank in the military.
Pirate	- 1, rearrange 2 nd and 3 rd letters.`	One who robs others on the high seas.
Irate	- 1	Anger.
Rate	- 1	To judge or grade others or things.
Grate	+ 1	To make something into small particles by rubbing it on a rough surface.
Generate	+ 3	To produce or make. The word used to express the making of electricity. “The power plant generates enough electricity for our entire town.”
Generation	- 1, + 3	A group of people born and living at the same time. “My parent’s generation is all through with school.
Generally	- 4, + 3	Referring to the overall picture.
Generalize	- 2, + 4	To apply to a larger group or wider body of others. “Since the medicine works well with boys, we will generalize that it will work with girls as well.”
General	- 3	Highest rank in the military.

Bucket to Pail

Target Word

Letter Changes Required

Clue

Bucket		
Buck	- 3	Another word for a dollar.
Duck	Chg 1	An aquatic bird that quacks.
Duct	Chg 1	A tube or pipe for carrying substances such as air or wiring in a house.
Conduct	+ 3	To lead or guide.
Conductor	+ 2	A person who leads or guides – an orchestra or a passenger train.
Doctor	- 3, chg 1	A person who specializes in medicine.
Dock	- 3, + 1	The walkway at which boats are parked for loading and unloading.
Mock	Chg 1	To deride or ridicule another person.
Mick	Chg 1	A nickname for Michael.
Pick	Chg 1	To choose or select. To gather by plucking.
Pack	Chg 1	To store away clothes.
Pail	Chg 2	Another name for a bucket.

Carmel to Sweet

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Caramel		A chewy candy.
Camel	- 2	An animal fitted well for living in the desert.
Came	- 1	To have come.
Cane	Chg 1	A long stick used by people to support themselves while walking.
Sane	Chg 1	Rational. Mentally sound or in good health.
Same	Chg 1	Like something else in all ways.
Seam	Rearrange letters	The place where two pieces of cloth are sewn together.
Seat	Chg 1	A place where one can sit.
Sweat	+ 1	Water that comes from the body to cool it. Perspiration.
Sweet	Chg 1	The flavor of caramel.

March to Walk

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
March		To move along in a steady rhythmic stride.
Marsh	Chg 1	Soft wet land.
Mars	- 1	The red planet. Where Martians come from.
Mare	Chg 1	A female horse.
More	Chg 1	Opposite of less.
Wore	Chg 1	"Yesterday I wore my favorite shirt."
Were	Chg 1	Past tense of are. "Where were you last night?"
Where	+ 1	Referring to a place or location.
Here	- 1	Referring to a place that a person is at.
Hire	Chg 1	To employ another person. To engage the personal services of another for a period of time.
Hare	Chg 1	A kind of rabbit.
Ware	Chg 1	Articles of fired clay, such as pottery or dishes.
Wart	Chg 1	A small bump on the skin.
Walk	Chg 2	Besides march, another way to move with the legs.

Digest to Eat

Target Word

Letter Changes Required

Clue

Digest		To absorb food into the body.
Diet	- 2	What people go on to lose weight. Food and drink that is regularly consumed.
Die	- 1	Death. To expire. To pass from existence. Opposite of live.
Dim	Chg 1	Light that is not bright.
Dam	Chg 1	A structure used to hold back water.
Dame	+ 1	A woman of great status.
Made	Rearrange letters	To have built something.
Mad	- 1	Angry or irate.
Mat	Chg 1	A floor covering.
Eat	Chg 1	What one does to food before it is digested.

Television to Radio

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Television		
Vision	- 4	The ability to see.
Visit	- 2, + 1	To pay a call on another as an act of friendship.
Sit	- 2	To be seated.
Set	Chg 1	A collection of related items.
Seat	+ 1	Something that one sits on.
Heat	Chg 1	That which makes something hot.
Hat	- 1	Something worn on the head.
Rat	Chg 1	A large rodent.
Ratio	+ 2	The relationship in quantity or amount of two things.
Radio	Chg 1	As a television is an instrument for transmitting sound and pictures over distances, this is an instrument used to transmit sound only.

Forgive to Forget

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Forgive		
Give	- 3	What is done with a present.
Live	Chg 1	To be alive.
Liver	+ 1	An organ in the body that secretes bile and causes changes in many of the substances contained in the blood.
Liter	Chg 1	A unit of volume, slightly smaller than a quart.
Later	Chg 1	At some time in the future. "We will go to the park later in the week."
Lather	+ 1	A foam or froth that is produced when soap is agitated in water.
Gather	Chg 1	To collect or accumulate.
Together	+ 2, chg 1	In one place or as a group. "We walked to school together."
Get	- 5	To obtain or gain possession of something.
Forget	+ 3	To not remember.

Automobile to Car

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Automobile		
Mobile	- 5	Capable of moving or being moved.
Mob	- 3	A large unruly crowd.
Cob	Chg 1	Part of an ear of corn.
Cot	Chg 1	A small bed.
Scot	+ 1	A person from Scotland.
Scat	Chg 1	To shoo away.
Scab	Chg 1	A hardened crust of blood over a wound. Or a person who takes employment from a company during a labor strike.
Cab	- 1	Another name for a taxi.
Car	Chg 1	Another name for an automobile.

Uncle to Aunt

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Uncle		
Unclear	+ 2	Not clear
Nuclear	Rearrange letters	Relating to atomic energy.
Clear	- 2	Transparent. Easily seen through.
Learn	- 1, + 1	To gain knowledge.
Earn	- 1	To make money by work.
Earnest	+ 3	A serious and intent mental state. "He worked in earnest on that exam."
Ear	- 4	A part of the head used for hearing.
Are	Rearrange letters	"Where are you going today?" "We are the best students in the school."
Art	Chg 1	Works designed to give intellectual pleasure – music, sculpture, etc.
Ant	Chg 1	A common insect that walks and lives in colonies, usually in the ground.
Aunt	+ 1	Female equivalent to an uncle.

Dog to Bone

Target Word	Letter Changes Required	Clue
Dog		
Dig	Chg 1	What dogs like to do in the dirt.
Ding	+ 1	To make a ringing sound.
Ring	Chg 1	A small circular object worn on the finger.
Wring	+ 1	To squeeze or twist a cloth to make any water come out of it.
Bring	Chg 1	To carry something.
Big	- 2	Large; not small.
Bag	Chg 1	A paper, plastic, or cloth sack used for carrying things.
Bang	+ 1	A sudden, loud, and explosive sound.
Bong	Chg 1	The deep sound made by a bell.
Bone	Chg 1	What a dog likes to chew.

For more on Word Ladders see – Scholastic, (Tel: 800-242-7737, choose option #3)
Daily Word Ladders for Teaching phonics and vocabulary, Gr 2-3
Daily Word Ladders for Teaching phonics and vocabulary, Gr 4+

For More Making and Writing Words -- Teacher Created Materials
www.tcmpub.com (search for “Rasinski”)
Tel: 800-858-7339

Texts for Fluency Practice: Grade 1
Texts for Fluency Practice: Grades 2 and 3
Texts for Fluency Practice: Grades 4 and Up

Making and Writing Words, Gr 1
Making and Writing Words, Grs. 2-3