

Learning together

Short Vowel Sounds: Reading Closed Syllables

ACTIVITY #4

SEQUENCE: SPELLING AND SENTENCE STRUCTURE
1ST CYCLE – PRIMARY

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Purpose of the activity

The aim of this activity is to teach your child to recognize vowel sounds by recognizing syllable structures.



Relevance of the activity

In English, each vowel (a, e, i, o, u) has 2 pronunciations. To read a word correctly, we must recognize which vowel pronunciations apply to which syllable type. By knowing basic syllable types, you will be able to instantly recognize which of the two pronunciations to choose.



Supplies

- The word lists 1 to 3 (see Appendix)
- The blending memory aid and vowel sound memory aid (see Appendix)
- Your child's vocabulary list
- Words from a text or book your child has read



Blending Memory Aid
Listen to the sounds
Blend the sounds together
Say the Word

LET'S GO!

What?



Today, we are going to discover Reading by *Syllable Type*, and the first type of syllable we will practise is the *closed syllable*. You will learn that in a closed syllable, we pronounce the *short vowel* sounds like the ones we hear in the words *cat*, *red*, *lip*, *dog* and *run*.

Why?



This reading strategy is one of the most important strategies because each vowel makes two sounds, and it is the type of syllable that will tell you which vowel sound to pronounce. For instance, the letter A is not pronounced the same way in the words *mat* and *mate*.

When?



At first, you will use this strategy to read words with one syllable, where one letter = one sound. These syllables will be made up of 3 letters, and the middle one will be one of the 5 vowels: a, e, i, o or u. There are thousands of such words in English so this strategy will come in very handy. Once you can use the strategy to read 3-letter words, you will learn harder 4-letter words. Later, you will also be able to apply this strategy to longer words.

How?



You will learn three syllable types: CVC, CCVC and CVCC, where C is a consonant and V is a vowel.

These are called *closed syllables*. In a closed syllable, we pronounce *short vowel* sounds such as *cat, red, lip, dog* and *run*. These 5 short vowel sounds are easiest to isolate when you use a **keyword** to confirm the sound you hear. We suggest that all key words start with the targeted vowel sound, if possible.

The 5 short vowel sounds/key words

- /a/ as in *apple*
- /e/ as in *elephant*
- /i/ as in *insect*
- /o/ as in *octopus*
- /u/ as in *up*.

(See the Vowel Sound Memory Aid)

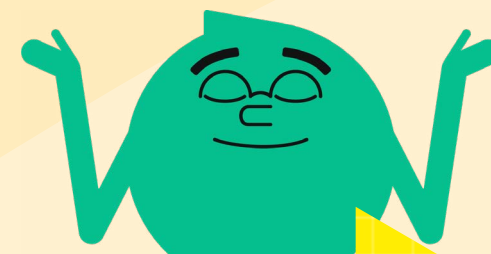


You must learn these by heart so we will repeat this sentence every day, for each vowel, until you've got it:

(The letter name) says /the letter sound/ like (the key word).

Example: A says /a/ like apple.

Start by practising 3-letter CVC words with your child. (See word list 1.) Once your child can read these words with the correct vowel sound, move on to 4-letter words with the CCVC structure, such as **crab**. (See word list 2.) Finally, when your child is ready, practise 4-letter CVCC words, such as **last**. (See word list 3.)



Don't forget!

Start with one vowel at a time. The recommended order is **a, e, o, i, u**. The letters **e** and **i** are practised separately because their sounds are very similar. The same is true for **o** and **u**. It is best to practise one before introducing the other. If your child already knows all the vowel sounds, you can review them together.

i

Here are some examples of questions you could ask your child:

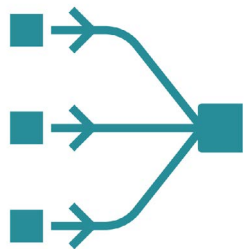
- What do you call a syllable that ends with a consonant → Closed syllable
- What do you call the sound of the vowel in a closed syllable? → Short vowel sound
- If you see the letters D-O-G, what sound do you make for the letter O?
What word does it spell?
- Let's try putting together 3-letter CVC words. What is the sound of the vowel?
Can you repeat the sounds of each letter and blend them together into a word?
- Let's try putting together 4-letter CCVC words. What is the sound of the vowel?
Can you repeat the sounds of each letter and blend them together into a word?
- Let's try blending consonant sounds. How do you pronounce the letters **M** and **P** together? **S** and **T**? **R** and **T**? **N** and **K**? **N** and **G**?

Notes

If your child confuses certain vowel sounds, practise those sounds more often. You can compare them using word pairs or small groups of words, such as bet/bit, cup/cop, rid/bib/bed, or hen/ham/him. Always check the vowel sound by matching it to the keyword.

Blending Sounds into Words

Listen to the sounds

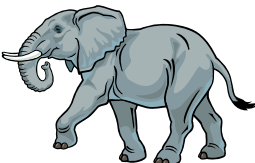


Blend the sounds together



Say the Word

Vowel Sounds

Vowel	Short Sound Keyword	Long Sound Keyword
a	 apple	 ace
e	 elephant	 equal
i	 insect	 ice
o	 octopus	 open
u	 up	 unicorn

Lexie's lessons – short vowels

Lists 1, 2 and 3

LIST 1 (CVC)	LIST 2 (CCVC)	LIST 3 (CVCC)
/a/ like apple		
cat	crab	past
mad	flat	sand
fan	slam	lamp
sad	flag	mask
bag	snap	grand
/e/ like elephant		
hen	step	rest
bed	flex	felt
leg	stem	bend
vet	dress	desk
yes	smell	spend

/i/ like insect

fin	flip	mint
big	slim	list
dip	trip	disk
fix	twin	wisp
sit	still	milk

/o/ like octopus

dog	stop	bond
pod	slot	lost
hop	snob	soft
fox	prom	bond
boss	blog	stomp

/u/ like up

fun	drum	lump
hug	glum	bulb
gum	stub	dust
bus	plug	bump
rub	bump	crust