

Section 1

SHORT-VOWEL SOUNDS

By now your child knows how to talk, and you have read books to him. It will help his progress if he knows the names of the alphabet letters in sequence (either by saying or singing) and recognizes all of the individual big and little alphabet letters when they are not in **a-z** sequence.

Lessons 1-26 are “hear-see-and-say-after-me” exercises. The child is *not* expected to read words. Spend as many days as necessary repeating Lessons 1-26 until the child has mastered each letter and the sound. In the lessons, the sounds of the letters are written with special notation, such as /ă/. A complete list of the phonetic symbols used in this book is located on page 369.

Some of the lessons require the use of word cards (to learn the letters and sight words and to use in games). You may make up these cards yourself by writing the words or phrases on 3 x 5 index cards as you go through the lessons, or you may purchase a set of printed cards from Peace Hill Press (www.peacehillpress.com). The set contains all the cards you will need for this book: over three hundred. If you purchase this set, you will show the appropriate card when the instructions in the book tell you to “write on a card.”

You will also need a magnetic board with alphabet tiles. You may purchase this from Peace Hill Press or from a store that sells education products. If you would like to keep the letter-tiles organized, you should consider purchasing another magnetic board (without the tiles). You can use one board to store the letters and the other for the lesson activity.

An on-line resource is available: www.ordinaryparents.com. This site contains recommendations for phonetic readers (for additional reading), questions and answers, a message board, and other product recommendations.

You will need for the lessons:

a magnetic board with alphabet tiles

3 x 5 index cards (or use the printed word cards you can purchase), scissors, pens, pencils, and drawing supplies

paperclips, yarn, magnets, and a dowel (for one special activity)

Using the Lessons:

Instructor: Words that the instructor will say to the child are written in this format.
If the instructor is to spell letters aloud, they will be written like this: the vowel **a**, the consonant **b**, the ending **ing**.

Notes that the instructor reads to himself are written in this format.

Child: *Suggested wording for the child is written in this format.*

Lesson 1: The Vowel A a

You will need the following: a blank index card and a pen. If you purchased the printed cards, use the card marked for Lesson 1. Anytime the lesson materials call for blank index cards, substitute the appropriate printed cards (each card is marked with its lesson number). When the lesson tells you to write a letter or a word on a card, you will just show the already printed card.

Some children may need to see the letters in three dimensions. You may substitute foam, wooden, or plastic letters for the index cards in Lessons 1-26.

The **a** vowel sound in this lesson is the sound at the beginning of **apple**. It is the short sound of **a** and is marked in the dictionary as **a** with a breve over it: /ă/.

Instructor: Today we are going to learn the letter **a**. **A** is a special kind of letter called a *vowel*. All letters stand for sounds. Your tongue or lips do not block the sounds of the vowel letters when you say them. Watch my mouth as I say the names of the vowels. I will not close my lips or use my tongue to block the sound.

Prolong each vowel name so the child can see that you do not block the sound.

Instructor: **a, e, i, o, u. A** is the first vowel you will learn. This is the big **A**. It is also called the capital or uppercase **A**. We will say big **A** from now on.

Point to the letter below.

A

Instructor: There are two ways to write the little or lowercase **a**. You will need to know them both because different books print the little **a** different ways.

Point to the letters below.

a a

Instructor: The first **a** is the kind you will read in this book. The second **a** is used in handwriting books. I will write the vowel **a** on a card for you. First I will write the big **A**, and then I will write both kinds of little **a**'s.

Write **A** and **a** and **a** side-by-side on a card (or show the purchased **A a a** card).

Instructor: When you see the letter **a** at the beginning or in the middle of a short word, you usually say this sound: /ă/ in **apple**. The letter **a** stands for the sound /ă/. The sound /ă/ is called the short-**a** vowel sound. Remember, the little **a** is written two different ways. I will point to the card and say the short-**a** vowel sound five times: /ă/, /ă/, /ă/, /ă/, /ă/. Now we will say the sound together.

Together: /ă/, /ă/, /ă/, /ă/, /ă/.

Instructor: I am going to teach you a poem that will help you remember the sounds of the short vowels. It is called "The Five Vowels." This is the first verse:

A is the first vowel we will say.
/ă/ is the short-vowel sound of **a**.

Instructor: I will say this to you three more times.

Say the verse slowly three times, taking care to emphasize the sound /ă/.

Instructor: Now repeat after me: “**A** is the first vowel we will say.”

Child: A is the first vowel we will say.

Instructor: /ă/ is the short-vowel sound of **a**.

Child: /ă/ is the short-vowel sound of a.

Instructor: Now let’s say both lines together three times.

Together (three times):

A is the first vowel we will say.

/ă/ is the short-vowel sound of **a**.

Instructor: What is the short-vowel sound of **a**? The answer is the last part of the verse.

Child: /ă/ is the short-vowel sound of a.

Follow-Up:

Ask the child to repeat the **a** verse from the poem two more times during the day. You may also record yourself or your child saying this verse onto a tape so that he can listen to the poem over and over. As each verse of the poem is added in subsequent lessons, record them onto the same tape. Point out the letter **a** to the child whenever you see it (on signs, on food boxes or cans, and in books you read aloud to him). Ask him to recite the verse from this lesson to you.

Lesson 2: The Vowel E e

You will need the following: *the a card you previously used, one blank index card, and a pen.*

The **e** vowel sound in this lesson is the sound at the beginning of **elephant**. It is the short sound of **e** and is marked in the dictionary as **e** with a breve over it: /ĕ/.

Review

Instructor: Let's begin this lesson by saying the first verse of the poem "The Five Vowels" together three times.

Together (three times):

A is the first vowel we will say.
/ă/ is the short-vowel sound of **a**.

Instructor: Now I will show you the card from last lesson. Remember there are two ways the little **a** is written.

Point to the **a** card.

Instructor: Now I am going to ask you some questions about the sounds of the short vowels. What is the short-vowel sound of **a**? The answer is the last part of the verse we said together.

Point to the **a** card. If the child can't remember the answer, say the first part of the verse as a reminder.

Child: /ă/ is the short-vowel sound of a.

New

Instructor: Today we are going to learn the letter **e**. **E** is also a vowel. This is the big **E** and little **e**:

Point to the letters below.

E e

Instructor: I will write the vowel **e** on a card for you. First I will write the big **E**, and then I will write the little **e**.

Write **E** and **e** side-by-side on a card (or show the purchased **E e** card).

Instructor: When you see the letter **e** at the beginning or in the middle of a short word, you usually say this sound: /ĕ/ in **elephant**. The letter **e** stands for the sound /ĕ/. The sound /ĕ/ is called the short-**e** vowel sound. I will point to the card and say the short-**e** vowel sound five times: /ĕ/, /ĕ/, /ĕ/, /ĕ/, /ĕ/. Now we will say the sound together.

Together: /ĕ/, /ĕ/, /ĕ/, /ĕ/, /ĕ/.

Instructor: I am going to teach you the next verse of the poem "The Five Vowels." This is the second verse:

E is the next vowel, don't you see?
/ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of **e**.

Instructor: I will say this to you three more times.

Say the verse slowly three times, taking care to emphasize the sound /ĕ/.

Instructor: Now repeat after me: “**E** is the next vowel, don’t you see?”

Child: E is the next vowel, don’t you see?

Instructor: /ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of **e**.

Child: /ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of e.

Instructor: Now let’s say both lines together three times.

Together (three times):

E is the next vowel, don’t you see?

/ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of **e**.

Instructor: Now let’s combine the verse you learned last lesson with the verse you learned today. Let’s say this together three times.

Together (three times):

A is the first vowel we will say.

/ă/ is the short-vowel sound of **a**.

E is the next vowel, don’t you see?

/ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of **e**.

Instructor: What is the short-vowel sound of **e**?

Child: /ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of e.

Follow-Up:

Ask the child to repeat the **e** verse from the poem two more times during the day. If you recorded a tape, record the new verse onto the same tape. Point out the letter **e** to the child whenever you see it (on signs, on food boxes or cans, and in books you read aloud to him). Ask him to recite the verse from this lesson to you.

Lesson 3: The Vowel I i

You will need the following: *the cards you previously used, one blank index card, and a pen.*

The **i** vowel sound in this lesson is the sound at the beginning of **igloo**. It is the short sound of **i** and is marked in the dictionary as **i** with a breve over it: /i̇/.

Review

Instructor: Let's begin this lesson by saying the first and second verses of the poem "The Five Vowels" together three times.

Together (three times):

A is the first vowel we will say.

/ă/ is the short-vowel sound of **a**.

E is the next vowel, don't you see?

/ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of **e**.

Instructor: Now I will show you the cards from the previous lessons. Together let's point to the **a** card and say the short-**a** vowel sound: /ă/. Now let's point to the **e** card and say the short-**e** vowel sound: /ĕ/.

Instructor: Now I am going to ask you some questions about the sounds of the short vowels. What is the short-vowel sound of **a**?

Point to the **a** card. If the child can't remember the answer, say the first part of each verse as a reminder.

Child: /ă/ is the short-vowel sound of a.

Instructor: What is the short-vowel sound of **e**?

Point to the **e** card.

Child: /ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of e.

New

Instructor: Today we are going to learn the letter **i**. **I** is also a vowel. There are two ways to write the big **I**. You will need to know them both because different books print the big **I** different ways. The second printed **I** is the kind you will read in this book.

Point to the letters below.

I I

Instructor: This is the little **i**.

Point to the letter below.

i

Instructor: I will write the vowel **i** on a card for you. First I will write both kinds of big **I**'s, and then I will write the little **i**.

Write **I** and **I** and **i** side-by-side on a card (or show the purchased **I I i** card).

Instructor: When you see the letter **i** at the beginning or in the middle of a short word, you usually say this sound: /i/ in **igloo**. The letter **i** stands for the sound /i/. The sound /i/ is called the short-**i** vowel sound. Remember, the big **i** is written two different ways. I will point to the card and say the short-**i** vowel sound five times: /i/, /i/, /i/, /i/, /i/. Now we will say the sound together.

Together: /i/, /i/, /i/, /i/, /i/.

Instructor: I am going to teach you the third verse of the poem "The Five Vowels."

I is the third vowel that goes by.
/i/ is the short-vowel sound of **i**.

Instructor: I will say this to you three more times.

Say the verse slowly three times, taking care to emphasize the sound /i/.

Instructor: Now repeat after me: "**I** is the third vowel that goes by."

Child: I is the third vowel that goes by.

Instructor: /i/ is the short-vowel sound of **i**.

Child: /i/ is the short-vowel sound of i.

Instructor: Now let's say both lines together three times.

Together (three times):

I is the third vowel that goes by.
/i/ is the short-vowel sound of **i**.

Instructor: Let's add today's verse to all the verses you have learned, and say them together three times.

Together (three times):

A is the first vowel we will say.
/ă/ is the short-vowel sound of **a**.
E is the next vowel, don't you see?
/ĕ/ is the short-vowel sound of **e**.
I is the third vowel that goes by.
/i/ is the short-vowel sound of **i**.

Instructor: What is the short-vowel sound of **i**?

Child: /i/ is the short-vowel sound of i.

Follow-Up:

Ask the child to repeat the **i** verse from the poem two more times during the day. If you recorded a tape, record the new verse onto the same tape.