

## Using the Lessons

Suggested wording for the instructor is in traditional print.

⇒ Notes to the Instructor are in smaller, traditional print and are bulleted.

*Suggested wording for the child is in italics.*

Suggested wording that the child is to read or follow is in larger, traditional print.

Letters that you will name, like **a**, **gl**, and **ought** are in larger, bold print.

The sounds of the letters are written with the special notation: /ă/

In the instructor's script or notes, the sample words are written in bold italics like ***apple***, ***egg***, and ***igloo***.

Also in the instructor's script or notes, terms are written in bold, traditional print as in **breve** and **vowel**.

### Lesson 1

#### The Vowel A a

\* You will need two blank index cards and a pen for this lesson.

⇒ Note to Instructor: Lessons 1-26 are "hear-see-and-say-after-me" exercises. The child is *not* expected to read words.

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

⇒ Note to Instructor: 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 (uppercase) **A**:

⇒ Note to Instructor: Point to the **A** below. Some people prefer to use the terminology **big** and **little** to describe the case of a letter; others prefer to use the terminology **uppercase** and **lowercase**. For that reason both terms are provided throughout the lessons. Choose the one you prefer.

**A**

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

⇒ Note to Instructor: Point to the little **a** and the little **ɑ** below.

**a**

**ɑ**

⇒ Note to Instructor: The first printed **a** is the kind the child will read in this book. The second printed **ɑ** is commonly used in children's penmanship books.

Instructor: I will write the vowel **a** on a card for you. First I will write the big (uppercase) **A** and then I will write the little (lowercase) **a**.

⇒ Note to Instructor: Write the big (uppercase) **A** and the little (lowercase) **a** side-by-side on the index card. Some children may need to see the letters in three dimensions. If you wish, you may substitute foam, wooden, or plastic letters for the index cards in Lessons 1-26.

Instructor: Now I will make another card for you. I will write the big (uppercase) **A** and then I will write the other kind of little (lowercase) **ɑ**.

Note to Instructor: Write the big (uppercase) **A** and the little (lowercase) **a** side-by-side on an index card.

⇒ Note to Instructor: 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 symbol over it (this symbol is called a **breve**): /ă/.

Instructor: When you see the letter **a** at the beginning or in the middle of a short word, you usually say this sound: /ă/. The letter **a** stands for the sound /ă/. The sound /ă/ is called the short-**a** vowel sound. Remember, the little (lowercase) **a** is written two different ways. I will point to the letter **a** and say the short-**a** vowel sound five times. Then I point to the other form of **a** and say the short-**a** vowel sound five more times.

**A a**

Instructor (pointing to the **A a** above): /ă/ /ă/ /ă/ /ă/ /ă/. Now I will repeat the sound as you say it with me.

*Together: /ă/ /ă/ /ă/ /ă/ /ă/*

**A a**

Instructor (pointing to the **A a** above): /ă/ /ă/ /ă/ /ă/ /ă/. Now I will repeat the sound as you say it with me.

*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 short-vowel sound of **a**.

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

⇒ Note to Instructor: 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 short-vowel sound of **a**.

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

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

⇒ Note to Instructor: The child should repeat the **a** verse the poem two more times throughout the day. You may also wish to record yourself or your child saying this verse onto a tape so that the child 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.

Make an effort to point out the letter **a** to the child whenever you see it (on signs, on food boxes or cans, in books you read aloud to him, etc...). Ask him to recite the verse from this lesson to you.

I encourage you to spend as many days as necessary on each lesson until you feel the child has mastered the letter and the sound. You may repeat a lesson for many days; knowing the letters and sounds thoroughly gives the child a solid foundation for reading.