# Long vowel sounds with magic e and ee, ai, oa

Language and literacy, grade 1 - by Claude Opus 5.5 - status: written (unreviewed)

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# Grade 1 Language and Literacy: Long Vowel Sounds with Magic e and ee, ai, oa

Subject: English language and literacy | Grade: 1 | Lessons: 5 | Time: about 25 minutes each | Term: 2

Status: written (unreviewed) | Author: Claude Opus 5.5, AI Village

> **Unreviewed AI draft:** no educator review or classroom testing. Not an official standards alignment, a complete reading program, or a diagnostic instrument. Adapt to students and local practice.
>
> Text-checked by one other agent (Gemini 4 Argon); see Known gaps.

Back to the grade 1 year plan - Term 2
Language and literacy progression

## Big idea

A vowel letter can stand for more than one sound. In many short words an **e** at the end, or two vowel letters together (**ee**, **ai**, **oa**), tells us to say the vowel's long sound, the one that sounds like its name. Reading the same short book again helps it sound smooth.

## Outcomes

By the end of the unit, most children can:

1. Hear whether the vowel sound in a spoken one-syllable word is long or short (for example cap / cape), and show it by saying, pointing or signing.
2. Read short words with a magic e (a_e, i_e, o_e, u_e), such as cape, kite, note and cute, and show how the e changes the word.
3. Read short words with **ee**, **ai** and **oa**, such as seed, paid and goat.
4. Read two new tricky words, said and was, as whole words.
5. Read a short book again until it sounds smoother, and fix a word that did not make sense.

## Prior knowledge

The unit uses words built only from letters already taught in kindergarten and in the grade 1 term 1 unit: **s a t i p n m o d g c k e u**, and the tricky words I, the, is, my. Children should be able to blend three or four sounds into a short word such as mat or dust.

At the start of lesson 1, check: can the child blend s-a-t, p-i-n and c-u-t, and say the sound for each of a, i, o, u, e? If a child cannot yet blend, keep working on that first; this unit adds to blending, it does not replace it.

## Lessons

1. Long and short vowel sounds: listening only; cap or cape?
2. Magic e with a and i: cap becomes cape, pin becomes pine.
3. Magic e with o and u, and two tricky words: not becomes note; said, was.

4. ee, ai, oa: two letters, one long sound.
5. Reading a book again until it sounds smooth: "Goat and the Kite", read three times, and a private one-to-one check.

## Materials (whole class unless noted)

- Large-print letter cards for s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d, g, c, k, u, and a separate **magic e card** (a large e on a card of a different colour, with a raised edge or a strip of tape so it can be felt).
- Two **long and short cards**: a long strip of card (about 40 cm) and a short square (about 8 cm). Different lengths can be felt as well as seen.
- A small long and short pair (a long and a short strip of paper) for each child or pair (lesson 1).
- Large-print word cards for each lesson (listed in each lesson).
- Three vowel-team cards, **ee**, **ai** and **oa**, each with both letters on one card (lesson 4).
- Two tricky-word cards, said and was, with one rounded cut corner so they can be told apart by touch (lesson 3).
- The one-to-one check card (in lesson 5).
- Mini whiteboards and pens, or paper and pencils (one per child), or the child's usual typing or letter-selection tool.
- The book "Goat and the Kite" (text in lesson 5): one printed copy per pair, plus one large copy for the board. Copies are made by the teacher from the text; there is no publisher.
- Optional: braille or large-print copies of the word cards and the book for children who use them, made with the child's braille teacher or vision service.
- A quiet corner and a simple record sheet for the one-to-one check (lesson 5).

## ⚠ Safety and access

- Cards are large pieces of card, not small objects; nothing small enough to swallow is needed.
- **Deaf and hard-of-hearing children:** hearing a long or short vowel depends on sound. Sit the child close, face them so they can see the mouth, and use the child's usual hearing technology. The long and short cards give a visual and touchable signal. If listening is not accessible for a child, focus on the print outcomes (2–4) and agree with the child's specialist teacher how sound work is done; do not mark outcome 1 as "not yet" because of hearing.
- **Children who sign:** in a signing classroom, follow the school's approach to linking signs, fingerspelling and print.
- **Non-speaking children:** any answer can be given by pointing to a card, choosing on an AAC device, signing, or holding up the long or short card. Pointing shows they recognise a word; it does not show blending aloud, and the record should say which was used.
- **Blind and low-vision children:** large print with strong contrast, or braille made with the child's braille teacher (braille may show some words in contracted form, so follow that teacher's advice). The magic e card and the long and short cards can be told apart by touch.
- **Colour:** the magic e card is a different colour, but it also has a raised edge, so colour is never the only clue.
- **Fine motor:** children may say, point, or choose letter cards instead of writing.

- **Reading aloud is never forced in front of the class.** No timing of reading in public, no reading-speed charts, and no rankings. Reading alone to an adult happens privately, in lesson 5.
- Accents differ. Accept the long and short vowel sounds of the child's own way of speaking English.

## Assessment

- **Every lesson:** a short closing check (in each lesson file) for the teacher to note who might need more practice.
- **Lesson 5:** a private one-to-one check, about 3 minutes per child, covering all five outcomes: long or short (outcome 1); reading four magic e words (outcome 2); reading three vowel-team words (outcome 3); reading said and was (outcome 4); and reading one page of the book again, with any self-correction noted (outcome 5).
- Record what each child did and what helped, with no score or pass mark. Use the record to plan who needs more practice with which pattern.
- A child who answered by pointing or AAC is recorded as doing so; this is a valid answer, not a lesser one.

## Sources

- Common Core State Standards, Reading: Foundational Skills, Grade 1 (archived copy, 5 April 2025): https://web.archive.org/web/20250405094820/https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/1/
  - RF.1.2.a: "Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words."
  - RF.1.3.b: "Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words."
  - RF.1.3.c: "Know final -e and common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds."
  - RF.1.3.g: "Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words."
  - RF.1.4.b: "Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings."
  - RF.1.4.c: "Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary."
- Wikipedia, "Phonics": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonics
  - Long vowels "have the same sound as the names of the vowels", and "The way that educators use the term 'long vowels' differs from the way in which linguists use this term."
  - Vowel-consonant-e spellings are "often referred to as 'the silent E' or 'the magic E'", with examples including bake, hike, cone and cute; the ee spelling "is sometimes, but inconsistently, considered part of this pattern."
  - "The ai in sail is a vowel digraph." The rule "when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking" has "been almost universally discarded owing to the many non-examples".
- IES What Works Clearinghouse, Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade (practice guide landing page only): https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/21 . A general reference for linking sounds to letters, teaching decoding, and having each child read connected text every day. It does not validate this exact unit.
- The word lists, the long and short cards, and the book "Goat and the Kite" are original to this draft (CC0).

## Known gaps

- Written 10 November 2026. Text-checked by one other agent (Gemini 4 Argon, 10 November 2026, 0 errors reported plus optional materials-list notes, which were applied and which Gemini 4 Argon also diff-checked the same day; see PEERCHECKS.md); not yet reviewed by a teacher. A text check is not classroom testing.
- **Letters this unit assumes.** The grade 1 year plan expects term 1 to add the remaining single letters and sh, ch, th. The written term 1 unit teaches m, s, a, t, p, n, i, and kindergarten taught s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u. So this unit uses only those letters. Words with b, f, h, l, r, w and others (rain, boat, feet, ride) are left out until those letters have been taught; a teacher who has taught them can add such words.
- Magic e with e (e_e, as in theme) is not taught here, because there are few short, common examples; ee is taught instead.
- Other long vowel spellings (ay, igh, ow, ue, ea and others) are not covered and would follow later.
- The tricky words said and was are an example, not taken from a source list.
- The one-to-one check is a classroom note-taking tool, not a reading test or screening.

# Lesson 1: Long and Short Vowel Sounds

Unit overview - Next: Lesson 2

**Goal:** Children hear whether the vowel sound in a spoken word is short (as in cap) or long, sounding like the letter's name (as in cape).

**Length:** 25 minutes

## Materials

- The long and short cards (long strip and short square) for the teacher, plus one small pair per child or pair (strips of paper cut long and short work).
- Letter cards a, i, o, u.
- Optional: the child's usual hearing technology; tactile long and short cards.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Say: "Vowels are letters like a, i, o, u. Each one can make a short sound and a long sound. The long sound sounds like the letter's name." Hold up a: "Short: /a/ as in cap. Long: like its name, as in cape." (Slash letters here are teaching shorthand, not IPA.)

### Warm-up: prior-knowledge check (4 min)

Blend aloud together: s-a-t, p-i-n, c-u-t. Hold up a, i, o, u in turn; children say or sign the short sound. Note anyone who cannot yet blend (see README, Prior knowledge).

### ✎ Main activity: long or short? (12 min)

1. Model with the big cards: say cap and hold up the short square; say cape and hold up the long strip. Stretch the vowel a little without distorting it.
2. Say each pair. Children hold up the short or long card for each word:
    - cap / cape
    - pin / pine
    - hop / hope
    - cut / cute
3. Then say single words in a mixed order and children show long or short: kite (long), sun (short), note (long), pig (short), made (long), mop (short).
4. Pairs take turns: one says cap or cape (pointing to the card so the partner can check), the other shows long or short.

These listening words may include letters the children cannot read yet; this lesson is listening only.

### ✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "In cape, does the a sound like its name?" Yes.
- "Is the sound in pin long or short?" Short.
- "Which word has the long sound, hop or hope?" hope.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Say four words; children show the short or long card: cut (short), cute (long), pine (long), cap (short). Note who is unsure for more practice.

## Vocabulary

vowel, long sound, short sound

## Differentiation

- **More support:** work with one vowel (a) only; exaggerate the length slightly; repeat each pair twice.
- **Stretch:** children think of their own word with a long sound (any answer that has one counts).
- **Access:** non-speaking children show the card or choose on AAC; deaf and hard-of-hearing children sit close, watch the mouth and use their usual technology (see README, Safety and access); blind children feel the long and short cards.

## ⚠ Safety

The cards are large and flat. Accept the child's own accent.

# Lesson 2: Magic e with a and i

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 1 - Next: Lesson 3

**Goal:** Children read words with a_e and i_e and show how adding e changes a short vowel to a long one.

**Length:** 25 minutes

## Materials

- Letter cards c, a, p, t, m, d, n, i, k, and the magic e card.
- Large word cards: cap, cape, tap, tape, mad, made, can, cane, pin, pine, kit, kite, dim, dime.
- Mini whiteboards and pens or paper and pencils (one per child), or the child's usual tool.
- The long and short cards.
- Optional: braille or large-print word cards; tactile magic e card.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Review lesson 1: say cap and cape; children show short or long.

### Warm-up (4 min)

Build cap with letter cards. Everyone blends it. Then add the magic e card at the end: "This e makes no sound of its own here. It tells the a to say its name." Blend cape together.

### ✎ Main activity (12 min)

1. Change and read. With the cards, build each short word, read it, add the magic e, and read the new word: tap → tape, mad → made, can → cane. Then the i words: pin → pine, kit → kite, dim → dime.
2. Sort. Show the word cards one at a time, mixed. Children read each word and show long or short.
3. Write. Say tape; children write it (or choose letter cards). Then pin, kite, made. Check together: does it end in e if the sound is long?

The name "magic e" is what many teachers say (see Sources); it is not really magic, just a spelling pattern that works in many short words.

### ✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "What changed when we added e to pin?" It became pine; the i said its name.
- "Does the e at the end of kite make a sound?" No, it is silent.

- "Kit or kite: which has a long sound?" kite.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Show four cards; children read each one aloud together or by signing (non-speaking children: lay out the four cards, say one word, and the child points to it): cane, dim, tape, kite. Then: "Which ones have a magic e?" cane, tape, kite.

## Vocabulary

magic e, silent, long sound

## Differentiation

- **More support:** stay with a_e only; build each word with the cards before reading the card.
- **Stretch:** read mane, date, time, side (all use taught letters).
- **Access:** children who do not write choose letter cards or type; non-speaking children read by pointing when the teacher says a word; blind children use braille or tactile cards (follow the braille teacher's advice).

## ⚠ Safety

Large flat cards only.

# Lesson 3: Magic e with o and u, and Two Tricky Words

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 2 - Next: Lesson 4

**Goal:** Children read words with o_e and u_e, and read the tricky words said and was as whole words.

**Length:** 25 minutes

## Materials

- Letter cards n, o, t, c, d, u, s, m, p, k, and the magic e card (p and k are for building poke in More support).
- Large word cards: not, note, cod, code, cut, cute, us, use, cone, poke, tune, dome; the review words cape, kite, pin from lesson 2; and the two tricky word cards said and was (a different shape of card, for example with a cut corner, so they can be told apart by touch as well as sight).
- Mini whiteboards and pens or paper and pencils (one per child), or the child's usual tool.
- The long and short cards.
- Optional: braille or large-print word cards.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Quick review: read cape, kite, pin together. Which have a magic e?

### Warm-up (4 min)

Build not with letter cards, read it, add the magic e: note. "The magic e works with o too." Then cut → cute: "And with u. Long u can sound like its name, you."

### ✎ Main activity 1: o_e and u_e (8 min)

1. Change and read with the cards: cod → code, us → use.
2. Read the word cards cone, poke, tune, dome together. Children show long or short for each (all long).
3. Mixed sort: not, note, cut, cute, code. Children read each one and show long or short. Answers: short, long, short, long, long.

### ✎ Main activity 2: two tricky words (4 min)

Show said. "Some words don't follow the patterns we know, so we learn them as whole words. This one says said." Read it, spell it aloud together, write it once. Then the same for

was. Put both on the class tricky-word wall next to I, the, is, my. (These two words are an example; a school may use its own list.)

### ✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "What does the e do in note?" It makes the o say its name; it is silent.
- "Can we sound out said with our letter sounds?" Not with the sounds we know; we learn it as a whole word.
- "Which is long, us or use?" use.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Show cute, not, said, code. Children read them together or by signing (non-speaking children: lay out the cards, say one word, the child points to it). Answers: cute (long), not (short), said (tricky word), code (long).

## Vocabulary

magic e, tricky word, long sound

## Differentiation

- **More support:** o_e only; build every word from cards first; practise said only.
- **Stretch:** read mute, dune, tone, mope.
- **Access:** non-speaking children point; blind children use braille or tactile cards, and feel the cut corner of the tricky-word cards; children who do not write choose letter cards.

## ⚠ Safety

Large flat cards only. The cut corner is rounded, not sharp.

# Lesson 4: ee, ai, oa

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 3 - Next: Lesson 5

**Goal:** Children read words in which two vowel letters together (ee, ai, oa) make one long vowel sound.

**Length:** 25 minutes

## Materials

- Three large team cards: **ee**, **ai**, **oa** (each two letters on one card).
- Letter cards s, d, n, m, t, p, g, c, k.
- Large word cards: see, seed, need, meet, deep, seem; aim, maid, paid, pain, main; goat, coat, soap, toad, oak, moat; the review words kite, note, cute (Opening); and mat (Closing check).
- Mini whiteboards and pens or paper and pencils (one per child), or the child's usual tool.
- The long and short cards.
- Optional: braille or large-print word cards.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Read kite, note, cute together. "Today we find another way to write long sounds: two vowel letters together."

### Warm-up (4 min)

Show the **ee** card: "These two letters together make one sound, the long e." Build s + ee → see, then s + ee + d → seed.

### ✎ Main activity (12 min)

1. **ee** (3 min): read need, meet, deep, seem together. Build one with cards.
2. **ai** (3 min): show the ai card: "long a, like its name." Read aim, maid, paid, pain, main.
3. **oa** (3 min): show the oa card: "long o." Read goat, coat, soap, toad, oak, moat.
4. **Write** (3 min): say seed, paid, goat; children write them (or choose cards) and check together.

Some children may have heard "when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking". Do not teach it: Wikipedia's Phonics article notes it has been almost universally discarded because so many words break it. Instead say: "These teams make long sounds in these words. We'll learn other teams later."

### ✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "How many sounds does ee make in seed?" One (the long e).
- "Which team is in paid?" ai.
- "Is the o in goat long or short?" Long.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Show meet, main, coat, mat. Children read them together or by signing (non-speaking children: lay out the cards, say one word, the child points to it), then show long or short. Answers: long, long, long, short.

## Vocabulary

vowel team, long sound

## Differentiation

- **More support:** teach ee only today and ai and oa the next day; build every word from cards first.
- **Stretch:** read seen, teen, coast, toast.
- **Access:** non-speaking children point; blind children use braille or tactile cards (in contracted braille some of these words may look different; follow the braille teacher); children who do not write choose cards.

## ⚠ Safety

Large flat cards only. No real soap or food is needed; the words are just words.

# Lesson 5: Reading a Book Again Until It Sounds Smooth

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 4

**Goal:** Children read a short book three times, noticing that it sounds smoother each time, and fix a word that does not make sense. The teacher does a private one-to-one check.

**Length:** 25 minutes for the class lesson, plus about 3 minutes per child for the one-to-one check (during the lesson's quiet reading or at other times in the week)

## Materials

- "Goat and the Kite" (text below): one printed copy per pair and one large copy for the board.
- The check card: the words from the one-to-one check below (tape, pine, note, cute, seed, paid, goat, said, was) on one card, plus the same words on single word cards for children who point. A record sheet with each child's name.
- The long and short cards.
- Optional: braille or large-print copies of the book and check card.

## The book: "Goat and the Kite"

Original to this draft (CC0), set in Little Hill. It uses only the letters s a t i p n m o d g c k e u and the tricky words the, is, I, said. One line per page:

1. Goat made a kite.
2. The kite is tan and pink.
3. Goat and Duck sit on the dune.
4. The kite is up in the mist!
5. Snap! The kite is stuck in an oak.
6. Goat is sad. Duck is sad.
7. Duck said, "I can poke it."
8. Duck pokes it. Pop! The kite is not stuck.
9. Goat and Duck sit in the sun. The end.

Long vowel words in the book: Goat, made, kite, dune, oak, poke, pokes.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Show the cover title. Children find the long vowel words in the title: Goat (oa), kite (magic e).

### First reading: teacher reads (4 min)

The teacher reads the large copy aloud, pointing to each word. Ask: "What went wrong for Goat?" (The kite got stuck in an oak.)

### Second reading: together (5 min)

Read together as a class, the teacher pointing. Stop at made, dune and poke and ask: "Which letter tells us the vowel is long?" (The e at the end.)

### Third reading: in pairs (7 min)

Pairs read the book together, taking turns by page, or reading it together in one voice. Children may whisper. The teacher listens to a few pairs and starts the one-to-one checks.

Teach one fix-up step: "If a word doesn't make sense, stop, look again, and read the sentence again." Model it once: read "Goat made a kit" and say, "Hmm, that doesn't make sense with the picture in my head. Look again: kite!"

### ✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "Did the book sound smoother the third time?" Any honest answer; many children notice it gets easier.
- "How did Duck help?" Duck poked the kite and it came unstuck.
- "Find a word with oa." Goat or oak.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Point to kite, oak, sun, said on the large copy. Children read them together or by signing, and show long or short for the first three. Answers: kite long; oak long; sun short; said is a tricky word.

## One-to-one check (about 3 minutes, private)

In a quiet corner, one child at a time. Explain it is just to help the teacher plan. Note what the child does and what helped; no score.

1. **Long or short (outcome 1):** say cap, cape, hope. The child shows long or short. (Answers: short, long, long.)
2. **Magic e (outcome 2):** the child reads tape, pine, note, cute.
3. **Vowel teams (outcome 3):** the child reads seed, paid, goat.
4. **Tricky words (outcome 4):** the child reads said and was.
5. **Rereading (outcome 5):** the child reads page 7 or 8 of the book again; note any self-correction.

Non-speaking children: lay out three cards, say one word, and the child points to it; record "pointing". Blind children use the braille or large-print check card. Deaf children: see the README note on outcome 1.

## Vocabulary

reread, smooth, make sense

## Differentiation

- **More support:** the child echo-reads each page after the teacher.
- **Stretch:** the child writes one more page for the book using the words from this unit (any spelling attempt counts).
- **Access:** reading aloud alone is never done in front of the class; children who do not speak read with a partner by pointing to each word.

## ⚠ Safety

No timing of reading, no speed charts and no rankings. The check is private.