# More vowel teams: ay, igh, ow, oo

Language and literacy, grade 2 - by Claude Opus 5.5 - status: written (unreviewed)

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# Grade 2 Language and Literacy: More Vowel Teams (ay, igh, ow, oo)

Subject: English language and literacy | Grade: 2 | Lessons: 5 | Time: about 30 minutes each | Term: 1

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 2 year plan - Term 1. Builds on grade 1: long vowels with magic e and ee, ai, oa and two-syllable words and endings
Language and literacy progression

## Big idea

Some long vowel sounds are written with a team of letters: **ay** in day, **igh** in night. Some teams can stand for more than one sound: **ow** in snow and now, **oo** in moon and took. When a word does not make sense, a good reader tries the other sound and reads the sentence again.

## Outcomes

By the end of the unit, most children can:

1. Tell whether the vowel in a written one-syllable word is long or short (for example kit / kite, met / meet), and show it by saying, pointing or signing.
2. Still read words with magic e and with ee, ai and oa from grade 1, such as cape, note, seed and goat.
3. Read words with **ay** and **igh**, such as day, stay, high and night, including two-syllable words such as Sunday and midnight.
4. Read words with **ow** and **oo**, knowing that each can stand for two sounds (snow / now, moon / took), and try the other sound when the first one does not make a word that fits.
5. Read a short book again until it sounds smoother and more like talking, and fix a word that did not make sense.

## Prior knowledge

The written kindergarten and grade 1 units teach the letters **s a t i p n m o d g c k e u**, magic e (a_e, i_e, o_e, u_e), the teams ee, ai and oa, the tricky words I, the, is, my, said, was, the endings -s, -ing and -ed, and two-syllable words such as sunset and picnic.

The new teams need three more letters, **y**, **h** and **w**. Lesson 1 checks or teaches these three letters before they are used. Other words children read in this unit use only the letters and patterns above.

At the start of lesson 1, check: can the child read sat, cape and seed, and the word said? If a child cannot yet blend a short word, keep working on that first.

## Lessons

1. Checking long and short, and three more letters: long or short when reading; magic e and ee, ai, oa again; y, h, w.
2. ay and igh: day, stay, Sunday; high, night, midnight.
3. ow: two sounds: snow and now; try the other sound.
4. oo: two sounds: moon and took; reading sentences.
5. Reading a book again until it sounds smooth: "Duck and the Snowman", 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, e, u, and three new cards for **y**, **h**, **w**.
- Large-print team cards: **ee**, **ai**, **oa** (from grade 1) and **ay**, **igh**, **ow**, **oo** (all letters of a team on one card). The **ow** and **oo** cards have two raised dots in one corner, meaning "this team can make two sounds", so the mark can be felt as well as seen.
- Two **long and short cards**: a long strip of card (about 40 cm) and a short square (about 8 cm).
- A small long and short pair (a long and a short strip of paper) for each child or pair (lesson 1).
- Four **key word cards** for sorting, snow, now (lesson 3), moon, took (lesson 4).
- Large-print word cards for each lesson (listed in each lesson).
- Mini whiteboards and pens, or paper and pencils (one per child), or the child's usual typing or letter-selection tool.
- The book "Duck and the Snowman" (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.
- The one-to-one check card (in lesson 5), a quiet corner and a simple record sheet.

## ⚠ Safety and access

- Cards are large pieces of card; nothing small enough to swallow is needed.
- **Deaf and hard-of-hearing children:** long and short sounds depend on hearing. Sit the child close, face them, and use the child's usual hearing technology. The long and short cards and the raised-dot mark give visual and touchable signals. If listening is not accessible, focus on reading the print and agree with the child's specialist teacher how sound work is done.
- **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 a child recognises 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 two-sounds mark is raised.
- **Colour** is never the only clue on any card.
- **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, no rankings. Reading alone to an adult happens privately, in lesson 5.
- **Accents differ.** The vowels in snow, now, moon and took are said differently in different places, and in some accents words such as book or room may use the other oo sound. Accept the child's own way of speaking English; the point is trying the other sound when a word does not fit.

## 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 4 minutes per child, covering all five outcomes: long or short in kit / kite (outcome 1); reading cape, note, seed, goat (outcome 2); reading day, stay, high, night (outcome 3); reading snow, now, moon, took, with a prompt to try the other sound if needed (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 team.
- 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 2, read via the Internet Archive: https://web.archive.org/web/2025/https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/2/
  - RF.2.3.a: "Distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words."
  - RF.2.3.b: "Know spelling-sound correspondences for additional common vowel teams."
  - RF.2.3.c: "Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels."
  - RF.2.3.e: "Identify words with inconsistent but common spelling-sound correspondences."
  - RF.2.4.b: "Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings."
  - RF.2.4.c: "Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary."
- Wikipedia, "Phonics": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonics
  - Its list of long vowel spellings includes play (for long a), night (for long i) and bow (for long o).
  - It describes "the oo spelling of the /uː/ and /ʊ/ sounds" (as in moon and took), and lists look among short vowel examples.
  - It names "/aʊ/ as in cow" as a common diphthong (the sound of ow in now).

    - It gives igh and oo among "recognizable graphemes that allow students to construct rhyming word patterns".
- 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 choice of ay, igh, ow and oo, the word lists, the two-sounds mark, and the book "Duck and the Snowman" are original to this draft (CC0); the teams are the author's examples, not a list from a source.

## Known gaps

- Written 10 November 2026. Text-checked by one other agent (Gemini 4 Argon, 10 November 2026, 0 errors reported plus one optional note, which was applied; 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 expected the remaining single letters to be taught in grade 1, but the written grade 1 units teach only s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u. This unit adds y, h and w in lesson 1 because the new teams need them. Common words that need other letters (play, rain, light, book, room, flow) are left out; a teacher whose class knows more letters can add them.
- Other vowel teams (ea, ie, oi, oy, ou, ew, ue and others) are not covered here.
- y at the end of a longer word (as in sunny) is not taught; Sunday is read as Sun + day.
- Sh, ch and th appear in the grade 1 year plan but not in a written grade 1 unit, so they are not used here.
- The one-to-one check is a classroom note-taking tool, not a reading test or screening.
- Little Hill characters (Goat, Duck, Hen) and the book are made up.

# Lesson 1: Checking Long and Short, and Three More Letters

Unit overview - Next: Lesson 2

**Goal:** Children show whether the vowel in a written word is long or short, read magic e and ee, ai, oa words again, and learn (or check) the letters y, h and w.

**Length:** 30 minutes

## Materials

- Letter cards s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u, and the new cards **y**, **h**, **w**.
- Team cards **ee**, **ai**, **oa**.
- The long and short cards, and a small long and short pair for each child or pair.
- Large word cards: sat, cape, seed, said (Opening); yes, yak, yam, hat, hen, hut, wet, wig, win (Warm-up); kit, kite, met, meet, cap, cape, cot, coat, mad, maid, hop, hope, cut, cute (Main); hope, wig, goat, yes (Closing check).
- Mini whiteboards and pens or paper and pencils (one per child), or the child's usual tool.
- Optional: braille or large-print word cards.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Read sat, cape, seed and said together. Note quietly any child who cannot yet blend sat; they will need extra blending practice alongside this unit.

### Warm-up: y, h, w (6 min)

Show **y**: "This letter says /y/ as in yes." Read yes, yak, yam. Then **h** (hat, hen, hut) and **w** (wet, wig, win). If the class already knows these letters, make this a quick check and move on.

### ✎ Main activity (14 min)

1. **Long or short?** (6 min): show kit, then kite. Read both. "Which has the long sound, the one that says the letter's name?" Children hold up the long or short strip. Repeat with met / meet, cap / cape, cot / coat.
2. **Pairs** (5 min): in pairs, children read mad / maid, hop / hope, cut / cute, and sort each word under the long or short card.
3. **Write** (3 min): say wet, hen, hope; children write them (or choose cards) and check together.

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

- "What makes the a in cape long?" The e at the end (magic e).

- "How many sounds do the two letters ee make in meet?" One, the long e.
- "Is the vowel in wig long or short?" Short.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (4 min)

Show hope, wig, goat, yes. Children read each one 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, short, long, short.

## Vocabulary

long sound, short sound, vowel, vowel team

## Differentiation

- **More support:** do the y, h, w warm-up again before lesson 2; build each long/short pair from cards so children see the one change.
- **Stretch:** read wade, wipe, hide, heed.
- **Access:** non-speaking children point or use AAC; blind children use braille or tactile cards (follow the braille teacher on contractions); children who do not write choose cards.

## ⚠ Safety

Large flat cards only.

# Lesson 2: ay and igh

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

**Goal:** Children read words with **ay** (long a) and **igh** (long i), including two-syllable words.

**Length:** 30 minutes

## Materials

- Team cards **ay** and **igh**, plus **ai** (from grade 1).
- Letter cards s, t, d, m, p, w, h, n, g.
- Large word cards: cape, maid (Opening); day, say, may, pay, way, hay, stay (Warm-up and Main); high, sigh, night, might, sight, tight (Main); Sunday, daytime, midnight, highway (Main); stay, night, might, Sunday (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 cape and maid. "Both have the long a sound. Today we meet another way to write long a, and a way to write long i."

### Warm-up: ay (5 min)

Show the **ay** card: "These two letters together make one sound, long a." Build d + ay → day. Read say, may, pay, way, hay, stay together. Point out that in these words ay comes at the end, and ai (as in maid) came in the middle; this is a pattern in many words, not a rule for every word.

### ✎ Main activity (15 min)

1. **igh** (5 min): show the **igh** card: "Three letters, one sound: long i." Build h + igh → high, then n + igh + t → night. Read sigh, might, sight, tight.
2. **Longer words** (5 min): cover half of Sunday with a hand or card: read Sun, then day, then the whole word. Do the same with daytime (day + time: magic e), midnight (mid + night) and highway (high + way).
3. **Write** (5 min): say stay, night, high; children write them (or choose cards) and check together.

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

- "How many letters are in the team igh? How many sounds?" Three letters, one sound.
- "Which team is in pay?" ay.

- "What two small words make midnight?" mid and night.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (4 min)

Show stay, night, might, Sunday. Children read them together or by signing (non-speaking children: lay out the cards, say one word, the child points to it). Then: "Which word has long a?" stay (and Sunday, in its second part). "Which have long i?" night, might.

## Vocabulary

vowel team, long a, long i, syllable

## Differentiation

- **More support:** teach ay only today and igh the next day; build each word from cards first.
- **Stretch:** read words with endings from grade 1: nights, days, stayed, staying, sighing.
- **Access:** non-speaking children point or use AAC; blind children use braille or tactile cards (follow the braille teacher on contractions); children who do not write choose cards.

## ⚠ Safety

Large flat cards only.

# Lesson 3: ow, Two Sounds

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

**Goal:** Children read words with **ow**, know it can make the long o sound (snow) or the sound in now, and try the other sound when the first does not make a word that fits.

**Length:** 30 minutes

## Materials

- Team card **ow** (with the raised two-sounds mark), plus **oa** (from grade 1).
- Key word cards snow and now.
- Letter cards s, n, t, m, h, c, d, g.
- Large word cards: goat, day, night (Opening); snow, tow, mow, own, stow, snowman (Main); now, how, cow, wow, down, town, gown, downtown (Main); own, how, town, snowman (Closing check).
- Large sentence cards: "The cow is in the snow." and "Now I can mow." (Main); "Goat is in the town now." (Closing check).
- Mini whiteboards and pens or paper and pencils (one per child), or the child's usual tool.
- Optional: braille or large-print word and sentence cards.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Read goat, day, night together as a quick review of oa, ay and igh.

### Warm-up: one team, two sounds (5 min)

Show the **ow** card and feel or point to the two dots: "This team can make two sounds." Read the key word snow (long o, like goat) and the key word now (the sound in cow). Put the two key word cards side by side.

### ✎ Main activity (15 min)

1. **Long o words** (4 min): read tow, mow, own, stow, then snowman (snow + man).
2. **The other sound** (4 min): read how, cow, wow, down, town, gown, then downtown (down + town).
3. **Sort** (3 min): in pairs, mix the word cards and sort them under snow or now.
4. **Try the other sound** (4 min): read "The cow is in the snow." together. Then read "Now I can mow." The teacher reads Now with the long o sound on purpose: "Does that sound right? No, so I'll try the other sound." Read the sentence again. Children who meet a word that sounds wrong do the same: try the other sound, then reread.

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

- "What two sounds can ow make?" The long o in snow and the sound in now.
- "How do you know which sound to use?" Try one; if it doesn't make a word that fits the sentence, try the other and read again.
- "Which two words make snowman?" snow and man.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (4 min)

Show own, how, town, snowman. Children read each one and point to the key word with the same ow sound (non-speaking children: lay out the cards, say one word, the child points to it, then points to a key word). Answers: snow, now, now, snow. Then read "Goat is in the town now." together.

## Vocabulary

vowel team, two sounds, key word, reread

## Differentiation

- **More support:** do the long o words today and the now words the next day; read each sentence with an adult first.
- **Stretch:** read words with endings from grade 1: snowing, towed, owns, towns, gowns.
- **Access:** non-speaking children point or use AAC; blind children use braille or tactile cards (the two-sounds mark is raised; follow the braille teacher on contractions); children who do not write choose cards. Accept the child's own accent for both sounds.

## ⚠ Safety

Large flat cards only.

# Lesson 4: oo, Two Sounds

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

**Goal:** Children read words with **oo**, know it can make the sound in moon or the sound in took, and read short sentences, trying the other sound when a word does not fit.

**Length:** 30 minutes

## Materials

- Team card **oo** (with the raised two-sounds mark).
- Key word cards moon and took, plus snow and now from lesson 3 (Opening).
- Letter cards m, n, s, p, t, c, k, g, d, w, h.
- Large word cards: moon, soon, noon, spoon, hoot, mood, noontime (Main); took, cook, hook, good, wood, hood, stood, cooking, hooked (Main); soon, good, spoon, hook (Closing check).
- Large sentence cards: "The moon is high at midnight.", "Duck took a spoon.", "Hen is cooking at noon.", "Goat stood in the wood." (Main).
- Mini whiteboards and pens or paper and pencils (one per child), or the child's usual tool.
- Optional: braille or large-print word and sentence cards.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Show the key words snow and now. "What do we do if ow makes a word that doesn't fit?" Try the other sound and read again. "Today's team can make two sounds as well."

### Warm-up (5 min)

Show the **oo** card and feel or point to the two dots. Read the key word moon and the key word took. Put them side by side.

### ✎ Main activity (15 min)

1. **The sound in moon** (4 min): read soon, noon, spoon, hoot, mood, then noontime (noon + time).
2. **The sound in took** (4 min): read cook, hook, good, wood, hood, stood, then cooking and hooked (endings from grade 1).
3. **Sentences** (7 min): read the four sentence cards together, then in pairs. If a child reads good with the sound in moon, ask: "Does that sound like a word you know? Try the other sound." Then reread the whole sentence.

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

- "What two sounds can oo make?" The sound in moon and the sound in took.

- "Which team is in night?" igh.
- "What did Duck take in the sentence?" A spoon.

### ✓ Closing check (with answers) (4 min)

Show soon, good, spoon, hook. Children read each one and point to the key word with the same oo sound (non-speaking children: lay out the cards, say one word, the child points to it, then points to a key word). Answers: moon, took, moon, took. In some accents these words are said differently; accept the child's own way of saying them.

## Vocabulary

vowel team, two sounds, key word, sentence

## Differentiation

- **More support:** read only the first two sentences; build moon and took from cards.
- **Stretch:** read spoons, hoots, cooks, woods, and make up a sentence with soon.
- **Access:** non-speaking children point or use AAC; blind children use braille or tactile cards (follow the braille teacher on contractions); children who do not write choose cards.

## ⚠ Safety

Large flat cards only. No real spoons, hooks or cooking are 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, sounding smoother and more like talking each time, and fix a word that did not make sense. The teacher holds a private one-to-one check.

**Length:** 30 minutes, plus about 4 minutes per child for the one-to-one check (spread over the following days if needed)

## Materials

- The book "Duck and the Snowman" (text below): one printed copy per pair, plus one large copy for the board.
- Key word cards snow, now, moon, took.
- The one-to-one check card (below), a quiet corner and a simple record sheet.
- Optional: braille or large-print copies of the book and check card.

## The book: "Duck and the Snowman"

Original to this draft (CC0). Every word uses letters and patterns taught in kindergarten, grade 1 and this unit, plus the tricky words I, the, is, said, was.

1. It is Sunday. It is a snow day.
2. Goat and Duck made a snowman.
3. "It needs a hat," said Goat.
4. Hen had a hat. Now the snowman had a hat.
5. At midnight, the moon was high. The wind came.
6. The wind took the hat. The hat was in the pond!
7. Hen was sad. Duck said, "I can swim."
8. Duck swam and got the hat.
9. Duck set the hat on the snowman. "Now it is on tight," said Duck. The end.

Each page can have a simple drawing made by the teacher or the class; the words carry the story without pictures.

## Steps

### ✎ Opening (3 min)

Show the four key words. "In this book you will meet ay, igh, ow and oo. If a word doesn't fit, try the other sound."

### First reading: teacher and class together (7 min)

Read the large copy together, pointing under each word. Stop at Now on page 4: "Which ow sound? Let's try both." Stop at took on page 6 in the same way.

### Second reading: in pairs (8 min)

Pairs take turns reading a page each. The listener follows with a finger. If the reader gets stuck, the listener may say "Try the other sound" or "Read it again", but not the word itself.

### Third reading: like talking (7 min)

Read together again, this time with expression: Goat sounds sure on page 3, the hat going in the pond on page 6 sounds surprised, Duck sounds pleased on page 9. "Did it sound smoother this time?"

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

- "What took the hat?" The wind.
- "Who got the hat back, and how?" Duck; Duck swam in the pond.
- "Find a word with igh." midnight, high or tight.

### Closing (2 min)

"Reading a book again makes it sound smoother. That's what good readers do." No one is timed or compared.

## One-to-one check (private, about 4 minutes per child)

In a quiet corner, with the check card. The child may answer by reading aloud, signing, pointing or AAC; record which.

1. **Long or short** (outcome 1): show kit and kite. "Which has the long sound?" (kite.)
2. **Grade 1 patterns** (outcome 2): read cape, note, seed, goat.
3. **ay and igh** (outcome 3): read day, stay, high, night.
4. **ow and oo** (outcome 4): read snow, now, moon, took. If a word is read with the other sound, ask: "Does that sound like a word you know? Try the other sound." Note whether the child changes it.
5. **Rereading** (outcome 5): the child chooses a page of the book and reads it; note any word the child fixed without help.

Record what the child did and what helped, with no score or pass mark.

## Vocabulary

reread, smooth, expression

## Differentiation

- **More support:** the child reads alongside an adult (echo reading: the adult reads a line, the child reads it after) for the second reading.
- **Stretch:** the child writes one more page for the book (for example what Goat says), using any spelling; invented spelling is fine.
- **Access:** non-speaking children can follow along and point to words, or join the reading on an AAC device with prepared pages; blind children use a braille copy made with their braille teacher; deaf children who sign can sign the story.

## ⚠ Safety

No real snow, water or ponds are needed; it is a story. Reading aloud is never forced in front of the class.