Reading a little book, tricky words and my first sentence

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

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Source: https://k12-curriculum-drafts-328176.gitlab.io/ (commit 09103e72, built 2026-11-16)

Kindergarten Literacy: Reading a Little Book, Tricky Words and My First Sentence (5 lessons, about 3 weeks)

> **Unreviewed AI draft.** Written by Claude Opus 5.5 on 9 November 2026. No human teacher has reviewed this unit. CC0 1.0 (public domain).
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> Text-checked by one other agent (Gemini 4 Argon); see Known gaps.

Part of the kindergarten year plan (language and literacy, term 3: "reading short decodable books; a few common words by sight; writing a short sentence with help"). It follows Letter Sounds, Blending and Writing My Name (term 2), where children learned the sounds **s, a, t, i, p, n**, blended three-sound words and wrote their first name.

This unit is written for **English**. Other languages need their own letter order, word lists and books.

Big idea

When we know enough letter sounds, we can read a whole little book by ourselves. A few very common words have a **tricky part** we cannot sound out yet, so we learn those by looking carefully. And we can turn something we say into a sentence we write.

Outcomes

By the end of the unit, most children can:

1. Say the sound for eight more letters: **m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u**, as well as the six from term 2.
2. Blend three-sound words that use these fourteen letters (cup, dog, ten, mud).
3. Read four tricky words: **I, the, is, my**, and say which part is tricky.
4. Read a short decodable book, Pip and the Mud, pointing to each word from left to right.
5. Write (or build) a short sentence with help, starting with a capital letter, leaving spaces between words and ending with a full stop.

Prior knowledge

- The term 2 unit: the sounds s, a, t, i, p, n; blending sat, pin, tap, tin; writing their first name.
- The term 1 unit: following a book from left to right and page by page.
- Children who have not yet secured all six term 2 sounds still take part; the opening of every lesson reviews them.

Letters and words in this unit

Lessons 1 and 2 add eight letter sounds, about four a week:

- Lesson 1: **m, o, d**
- Lesson 2: **g, c, k, e, u**

c and **k** make the same sound, /k/. In this unit **c** comes before a, o and u (cat, cot, cup) and **k** comes before i and e (kit, kid). Children only need to know that both letters can make /k/.

Decodable words used in this unit (only from the fourteen letters s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u):

mat, map, man, mad, sad, dad, dim, dip, mop, top, pot, dot, not, on, nod, and, am, got, dog, dig, pig, cat, cot, cup, cap, can, kit, kid, pet, ten, net, men, peg, get, gets, up, mud, sun, nut, pup, cut, tug, dug, pen, Dot, Pip

Words from term 2 also come back: **a, in, sit, sat, pat, tap, nap, pin, tan**.

None ends in /l/, /r/ or /x/. Teach the **sound** of each letter, not its name, as in term 2: "mmm", not "em"; "d" as a short quiet sound, not "duh".

Tricky words

These four common words appear in the book and the sentences. Each has a part children cannot sound out with the letters they know, but most of the word still follows the sounds:

Word	What works	Tricky part
I	It is one letter.	It says its name, "eye", and it is always a capital letter.
the	We know all three letters.	**t** and **h** together make one new sound, and **e** says "uh" here.
is	**i** says /i/.	**s** says /z/ here, not /s/.
my	**m** says /m/.	**y** says "eye" here.

Three of these (the, is, my) are in the Common Core kindergarten list of examples; "I" is needed for the sentence frame. Teach them a few at a time, sounding out the regular part first and then noticing the tricky part, rather than as whole shapes to memorise.

Lessons

1. New sounds: m, o, d (25 min)
2. New sounds: g, c, k, e, u (25 min)
3. Tricky words and captions (20 min)
4. Reading our book: Pip and the Mud (25 min)
5. My first sentence, and show what I know (25 min)

Leave a few days between lessons for daily practice: a 5-minute sound flash, blending three words and reading a page of the book again.

Materials

- Large letter cards for all fourteen letters, with a second copy of the vowels **a, i, o, e, u**.
- Magnetic letters for each pair (the same fourteen letters).
- Word cards for the decodable words in each lesson.
- Four tricky-word cards (**I, the, is, my**) on coloured card, so they stand out from the other words.
- Caption strips for lesson 3.
- Copies of Pip and the Mud (one per pair, from the text in lesson 4; children add the pictures), and one large copy for the class.

- Picture cards for lessons 2 and 5 (listed in each lesson).
- Sentence strips with the frame "I can ___." and eight picture word cards for lesson 5.
- Paper, thick pencils or crayons, and mini whiteboards with pens if available.
- A record sheet for the one-to-one check.

Access

- **Speaking is optional.** A child can show they know a sound or word by pointing, choosing a card, signing or using their communication device. That counts as success.
- **Fine motor:** children who find writing hard can build words and sentences with magnetic letters or word cards, or trace over an adult's pale writing.
- **Low vision:** use large, high-contrast cards and a big-print book; braille learners follow their own braille reading programme alongside, with the same words where possible.
- **Deaf or hard of hearing children:** sit close, face the child when saying sounds, and use any visual cues or signed supports the child already uses.
- **Speech differences:** accept a child's own way of saying a sound if they clearly mean the right letter.
- **Children learning English** may not know words such as "cot", "peg" or "tug". Show a picture or act each word out before reading it.
- Never time children's reading, and never make a child read aloud to the whole class unless they want to.

Assessment

Lesson 5 includes a short one-to-one check (about 4 minutes per child; spread it over the week). Record each part as **yes**, **with help** or **not yet**:

1. Says the sound (or points to the letter) for each of the eight new letter cards: m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u.
2. Blends four words from cards: **cup, dog, ten, mud** (says the sounds and the word, or picks the matching picture).
3. Reads the four tricky words in any order: **the, is, I, my**.
4. Reads the sentence "The dog is in the mud." while pointing to each word.
5. Writes or builds "I can sit." after hearing it, with help if needed (a capital I, spaces and a full stop count as part of this).

Doing it their own way (pointing, signing, magnetic letters, word cards) counts as **yes**. Many children will still be "with help" on parts 4 and 5; grade 1 keeps building these.

Sources

- Common Core State Standards, Reading: Foundational Skills, Kindergarten (Internet Archive copy): https://web.archive.org/web/20241220022036/https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/ . RF.K.1.a (follow words from left to right, top to bottom and page by page), RF.K.1.c (words are separated by spaces), RF.K.3.a and RF.K.3.b (consonant and vowel sounds), RF.K.3.c ("Read common high-frequency words by sight (e.g., the, of, to, you, she, my, is, are, do, does)") and RF.K.4 ("Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding"). This unit covers only part of these.
- Common Core State Standards, Language, Kindergarten (Internet Archive copy): https://web.archive.org/web/2024/https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/K/ . L.K.2.a

("Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I"), L.K.2.b ("Recognize and name end punctuation") and L.K.2.d (spell simple words phonetically).
- Common Core State Standards, Writing, Kindergarten (Internet Archive copy): https://web.archive.org/web/2024/https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/K/ . W.K.3: children use "a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing" to tell about an event. The sentence in lesson 5 is a small start on this.
- Wikipedia, "Decodable text": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decodable_text . Decodable texts use words made from the letter sounds already taught (its example is "Pat the fat rat"); critics say such texts can be stilted.
- Wikipedia, "Sight word": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sight_word . Common words with unusual spellings are often taught by sight; the article also reports criticism of teaching whole words as shapes and says some educators teach them through explicit phonics instead.
- Wikipedia, "Synthetic phonics": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synthetic_phonics . Three to six letter sounds a week; blending all through the word; "tricky" words (with letter sounds not yet taught or unusual) introduced slowly, with phonics still working in part of the word.

Known gaps

- **English only.** Other languages need their own letters, words and books.
- **One small book.** Pip and the Mud is an original CC0 text written for this unit. Children need many more decodable books; schools usually use a published series that matches their phonics order.
- **Stilted text.** With only fourteen letters and four tricky words, the story is short and a little odd ("Mud is not on Pip"). That is normal for early decodable books.
- **Letters still missing:** h, b, f, l, r, j, v, w, x, y, z, qu and all digraphs (sh, ch, th as a taught sound). Grade 1 continues.
- **Pace varies.** Some classes will need much longer for eight new sounds; some children read already.
- Gemini 4 Argon text-checked this unit on 9 November 2026 (word lists, timings, materials and access); the three small notes were fixed in c1a8d03 and 837bab3, which Gemini 4 Argon also diff-checked the same day (see PEERCHECKS.md). A peer check by another AI is not a review by a teacher.
- This is one possible order. It is not tied to any published phonics programme, and schools that follow one should use its order and tricky words instead.

Lesson 1: New sounds: m, o, d

Goal: Children learn the sounds for **m**, **o** and **d**, and blend words using them with the term 2 letters.

Length: about 25 minutes.

Materials

- Large letter cards s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d.
- Magnetic letters for each pair: s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d.
- The sand tray (or foam on tables).
- Word cards: **mat, map, mop, dot, top, pot, mad, dip, sad** (**sad** is for the closing check).
- Picture cards for the closing check: a mop, a dot, a sad face (or draw them).

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Sound flash with the six term 2 cards: s, a, t, i, p, n, in a new order each time. Children say each sound.

✎ Main activity 1: three new sounds (7 min)

Show **m**. "This letter says /m/, like the start of 'moon'. Hum it: mmm." Children say it, then write it in the air and in the sand: "Down, up and over, up and over." Children who prefer not to touch sand or foam can use a stick, a paintbrush or a dry-erase pen, as in term 2.

Show **o**. "This says /o/, like the start of 'octopus'." Children say it, then form it: "Round, all the way, and join."

Show **d**. "This says /d/, like the start of 'dog'. Keep it short and quiet: d." Form it: "Round like an **o**, then up tall and down."

Say each sound short and pure, as in term 2 ("mmm", not "muh").

✎ Main activity 2: blend with the new sounds (8 min)

Put **m a t** on the board. Point under each letter and say its sound, then sweep your finger under all three: "m-a-t, mat." Do the same with **m o p**, **d o t** and **m a d**.

In pairs, with magnetic letters: the teacher says a word slowly; pairs build it, then point and blend to check. Words: **map**, **top**, **pot**, **dip**.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "What sound does the middle letter of 'dot' make?" (/o/.)

- "Change the first sound of 'mop' to /t/. What word is it now?" (**top**.)
- "Which new letter has a round part and a tall line?" (**d**.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (4 min)

Show three word cards. Children blend each one and point to the matching picture:

- **m o p** → mop
- **d o t** → dot
- **s a d** → the sad face

Then show **m**, **o**, **d** in a new order and children say each sound.

Answers: mop, dot, sad; /m/, /o/, /d/.

Vocabulary

sound, letter, blend

Differentiation

- **Support:** practise one new sound at a time, with two-sound words first: **am**, **on**.
- **Stretch:** read the two-word phrases **a mop**, **dad sat**, **not on**, **pat and dip**.

⚠ Safety

Check the sand or foam for anything sharp before the lesson, and wash hands afterwards. Magnetic letters are small; keep them away from children who still put things in their mouths, or use large foam letters instead.

Teacher notes

- Some children confuse **d** with **b**. **b** is not taught in this unit, so do not introduce it now; just watch which way children form **d**.
- If a child's accent says /o/ differently, accept their own vowel.

Lesson 2: New sounds: g, c, k, e, u

Goal: Children learn the sounds for **g**, **c**, **k**, **e** and **u**, and blend words using all fourteen letters.

Length: about 25 minutes.

Materials

- Large letter cards for all fourteen letters: s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u.
- Magnetic letters for each pair (all fourteen).
- Word cards: **dog, cat, kit, pet, cup, mud, sun, ten**.
- Picture cards for the closing check: a cup, a dog, a pet (for example a hamster or a goldfish), and the sun.

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Sound flash with all nine cards from lesson 1: s, a, t, i, p, n, m, o, d.

✎ Main activity 1: five new sounds (9 min)

Teach each sound in the same way as lesson 1: show the card, say the sound and a word that starts with it, say it together, then write it in the air.

- **g**: /g/, as in "goat". Short, from the throat.
- **c**: /k/, as in "cat".
- **k**: /k/, as in "kite". "**c** and **k** are two letters for the same sound."
- **e**: /e/, as in "egg".
- **u**: /u/, as in "up".

✎ Main activity 2: blend and build (7 min)

Blend together from cards: **d o g**, **c u p**, **k i t**, **p e t**.

In pairs, with magnetic letters: the teacher says a word; pairs build it and blend to check. Words: **sun**, **ten**, **mud**, **cat**.

Change one letter: build **pin**, then change it to **pen**, then **ten**, then **tan**. "Which letter changed?"

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "Which two letters both make the sound /k/?" (**c** and **k**.)
- "What sound is in the middle of 'mud'?" (/u/.)

- "How many sounds are in 'dog'?" (Three: /d/, /o/, /g/.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Show each word card. Children blend it and point to the matching picture:

- **c u p** → the cup
- **d o g** → the dog
- **p e t** → the pet
- **s u n** → the sun

Answers: cup, dog, pet, sun.

Vocabulary

sound, same sound, change

Differentiation

- **Support:** focus on **e** and **u**, which are easy to mix up; say "egg" and "up" with an action (crack an egg, point up).
- **Stretch:** read **a cat on a cot**, **ten men**, **get up**, **cut the nut** (the tricky word "the" comes in lesson 3; read it for them for now).

Teacher notes

- In this unit **c** comes before a, o and u, and **k** before i and e. Children do not need the rule yet; they just need to know both make /k/.
- Five sounds in one lesson is a lot. Spread them over two or three short sessions if your class needs it, and keep practising daily before lesson 3.
- Picture of a pet: choose an animal your class knows. Children learning English may need to hear "pet" explained ("an animal that lives with a family").

Lesson 3: Tricky words and captions

Goal: Children read four tricky words (**I, the, is, my**) and use them to read short captions.

Length: about 20 minutes.

Materials

- The four tricky-word cards on coloured card: **I, the, is, my**.
- Large letter cards for the fourteen letters (for the opening).
- Caption strips: **I can dig.** / **The cat is on the mat.** / **My pup is in the mud.**
- Paper and crayons.

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Sound flash with the eight new letters from lessons 1 and 2: m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u.

✎ Main activity 1: meet the tricky words (7 min)

Show one tricky word at a time. Sound out the part that works, then point to the tricky part:

- **is**: "**i** says /i/. Then **s**... but here it says /z/. Iz. Is." Children say it.
- **my**: "**m** says /m/. The **y** is tricky; here it says 'eye'. My."
- **the**: "We know these letters, but together **t** and **h** make a new sound, and **e** says 'uh'. The."
- **I**: "This word is just one letter, a capital I. It says 'eye'. It means me."

Mix the cards and hold them up quickly. Children say each word. Repeat a few times; the tricky words get easier each time.

✎ Main activity 2: read captions (5 min)

Show each caption strip. Read it together, pointing under each word from left to right. Children sound out the decodable words and say the tricky words.

Ask children to spot the capital letter at the start and the full stop at the end. "The full stop tells us the sentence has finished."

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (2 min)

- "Which part of 'is' is tricky?" (The **s** says /z/.)
- "Why is the first letter of 'The cat is on the mat.' a capital?" (It is the start of a sentence.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Hold up each tricky-word card in a new order. Children say the word (or point to the right card, if non-speaking). Then read the caption **My pup is in the mud.** together, pointing to each word.

Answers: I, the, is, my; "My pup is in the mud."

Vocabulary

tricky word, sentence, capital letter, full stop

Differentiation

- **Support:** learn two tricky words this week (**I** and **the**) and two next week.
- **Stretch:** children draw a picture for one caption and copy the caption underneath.

Teacher notes

- Avoid asking children to memorise tricky words as shapes. Always sound out the part that works first.
- "Is" and "my" are on the Common Core kindergarten list of examples; "I" is needed for the lesson 5 sentence frame.

Lesson 4: Reading our book: Pip and the Mud

Goal: Children read a short decodable book, pointing to each word, and talk about what happens.

Length: about 25 minutes.

Materials

- The large class copy of Pip and the Mud (see the text below).
- One small copy per pair, with the text printed and space for pictures.
- The four tricky-word cards.
- Crayons.

The book (CC0, written for this unit)

Print one page per line. Every word uses only the fourteen taught letters, except the tricky words **I, the, is, my**.

1. I am Dot.
2. Pip is my pup.
3. Pip can dig. Dig, dig, dig!
4. Pip is in the mud.
5. Mud on Pip! Mud on the mat!
6. Dot is sad.
7. Dot gets the cup. Dip, dip. Pat, pat.
8. Mud is not on Pip. Dot is not sad.

Title: **Pip and the Mud**.

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Quick look at the tricky-word cards: **I, the, is, my**.

✎ Main activity 1: read it together (8 min)

Show the large copy. Read the title together, pointing to each word: "Pip... and... the... Mud."

Read each page together. Point under each word from left to right, and show the spaces between words. Children sound out new words: "p-u-p, pup", "g-e-t-s, gets".

Before page 5, check that children know what a **mat** is (a small rug by a door).

✎ Main activity 2: read in pairs (7 min)

Pairs share a small copy. They take turns reading a page each, pointing to every word. The partner listens and helps if asked. Walk round and listen to a few pairs.

Children who are not yet reading on their own follow the pointing while a partner or adult reads.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (4 min)

- "Who is Pip?" (Dot's pup.)
- "Why is Dot sad?" (There is mud on Pip and on the mat.)
- "How does Dot fix it?" (She gets a cup and dips and pats Pip.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Each child draws a picture for one page of their copy. Then point to the words on one page and ask children to read them.

Answers: depend on the page chosen; for example, page 6, "Dot is sad."

Vocabulary

book, title, page, word, space

Differentiation

- **Support:** read pages 1, 2 and 6 only, with an adult pointing.
- **Stretch:** after reading, children write a new last page using taught letters and tricky words (for example, "Pip can nap.").

Teacher notes

- The text is short and a little stilted because it uses only fourteen letters. Talk about the story anyway: children should read for meaning, not just for sounds.
- If children read the book easily, give them more decodable books that match these letters from your school's collection.
- Dot is "she" in the discussion answers; the book itself does not say.

Lesson 5: My first sentence, and show what I know

Goal: Children write (or build) a short sentence with help, and take part in the one-to-one check.

Length: about 25 minutes, plus the one-to-one check spread over the week.

Materials

- Sentence strips with the frame **I can ___.** (one per child).
- Eight picture word cards: **dig, sit, nap, tap, pat, tug, dip, mop** (each with a small picture and the word).
- Magnetic letters and word cards (**I**, **can**, and the eight words) for children who build instead of write.
- Paper, thick pencils or crayons, and mini whiteboards with pens if available. A few lolly sticks to use as spacers, and blocks for counting words.
- For the check: the eight new letter cards (m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u); word cards **cup, dog, ten, mud** with pictures; the four tricky-word cards; a strip saying **The dog is in the mud.**; a record sheet (yes / with help / not yet for each part).

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Read Pip and the Mud together once, from the large copy.

✎ Main activity 1: make a sentence together (7 min)

"I'm going to write a sentence: **I can dig.**" Say it, then count the words on your fingers (three words). Children can instead tap three blocks or touch three lines on the board.

Draw three lines on the board. Write each word on a line, talking as you go:

- "**I** is a tricky word, and always a capital letter."
- "**can**: c-a-n." Children say the sounds with you.
- "**dig**: d-i-g."
- "A full stop at the end."

Point out the **finger spaces** between the words. Children who find a finger awkward can use a lolly-stick spacer or leave a gap the width of a crayon.

✎ Main activity 2: my sentence (10 min)

Each child chooses a picture card and makes their own sentence: **I can ___.** They:

1. Say the sentence out loud (or sign it, or point to the cards).
2. Count the words.

3. Write it on the sentence strip, sounding out the last word, or build it with word cards or magnetic letters.
4. Draw a picture of themselves doing it.

Adults help with sounding out. A child may also tell an adult the sentence, watch the adult write it, and trace or copy it. Any of these counts as writing with help.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "Where does a capital letter go in a sentence?" (At the start, and **I** is always a capital.)
- "What goes at the end?" (A full stop.)
- "Why do we leave spaces?" (So we can see where each word starts and ends.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (2 min)

Three volunteers read their sentence to the class (only if they want to).

Answers: any "I can ___." sentence with a word from the cards.

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

Use the record sheet. Mark each part **yes**, **with help** or **not yet**:

1. Shows the eight new letter cards one at a time: **m, o, d, g, c, k, e, u**. The child says the sound or points to the right card when you say it.
2. Shows **cup, dog, ten, mud**. The child blends each word, or picks the matching picture.
3. Shows the tricky words **the, is, I, my** in any order. The child reads them.
4. Shows **The dog is in the mud.** The child reads it, pointing to each word.
5. Says "I can sit." The child writes it, or builds it with word cards or magnetic letters. A capital I, spaces and a full stop are part of this.

Doing it their own way counts as **yes**.

Vocabulary

sentence, capital letter, full stop, finger space

Differentiation

- **Support:** the child builds the sentence with three word cards, then reads it.
- **Stretch:** write a second sentence, for example **My pup can dig.** or **I am Dot.** using their own first name if the letters allow.

Teacher notes

- Accept phonetic spelling: "dg" for "dig" shows the child heard two of the three sounds.

- Do not ask children to write about their own home or family; "I can ___" keeps it about actions.