Letter sounds, blending and writing my name

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: Letter Sounds, Blending and Writing My Name (5 lessons, about 2 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). Text-checked by one other agent (Gemini 4 Argon); see Known gaps.

Part of the kindergarten year plan (language and literacy, term 2: "letter sounds and their shapes; blending two or three sounds into a word (c-a-t); writing their name and single letters"). It follows Listening, Rhymes and How Books Work (term 1), where children clapped syllables and heard the first sound of a word.

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

Big idea

Letters stand for sounds. If we know the sound for each letter, we can say the sounds one after another and **blend** them into a word we know (s-a-t, "sat"). We can also go the other way: hear a sound and write the letter for it.

Outcomes

By the end of the unit, most children can:

1. Say the sound for each of six letters: **s, a, t, i, p, n**, when shown the lowercase letter.
2. Point to or pick the right letter when they hear one of these six sounds.
3. Blend three sounds into a short word, first by listening (the teacher says s-a-t) and then from letter cards (sat, pin, tap, tin).
4. Form the six letters (by writing, tracing, or making them with their finger, in sand or with magnetic letters).
5. Recognise their own first name and write or trace it.

Prior knowledge

- The term 1 unit: listening for sounds, rhyme, clapping syllables, and saying the first sound of a word (pen /p/, spoon /s/).
- Holding a crayon or thick pencil (from drawing in arts). Children who cannot yet do this still take part with finger tracing, sand and magnetic letters.

Why these six letters?

Many phonics programmes start with **s, a, t, i, p, n**, because their sounds are easy to say on their own and together they make many short words. This unit uses only words made of these six letters:

sat, pat, tap, nap, pan, pin, tin, tip, sip, sit, pit, at, it, in, an

Teach the **sound** of each letter (the sound it makes in "sat"), not its name ("ess"). Letter names come later, often through the alphabet song.

Saying the sounds

Say each sound as short and pure as you can, with no extra "uh" on the end:

Letter	Say	As in	Not
s	"sss" (hold it, like a snake)	sun	"suh"
a	short "a"	ant, apple	"ay" (the letter name)
t	a short, quiet "t" (just a puff)	tap	"tuh"
i	short "i"	ink, in	"eye" (the letter name)
p	a short, quiet "p" (just a puff)	pan	"puh"
n	"nnn" (hold it, humming through the nose)	net	"nuh"

Accents vary, so the vowel sounds in your area may differ a little from someone else's. Use the way people say these words locally.

Lessons

Short daily practice matters more than long lessons. After lesson 1, start every day with a 3-minute "sound flash" (hold up each letter card learned so far; children say the sound).

Lesson	Title	Time	Core idea
1	s, a, t	20 min	Three letter sounds and their shapes
2	i, p, n	20 min	Three more sounds, and a sound hunt
3	Blend it!	25 min	Blending sounds into words, by ear and then from cards
4	My name	25 min	Recognising and writing my name; forming the six letters
5	Show what I know	25 min	Making and reading words, and a one-to-one check

Materials

- **Letter cards:** large lowercase cards for s, a, t, i, p, n (one set for the teacher). Small sets for pairs (one set of six per pair, plus a second **a** and **i** so that words with the same vowel twice are possible later).
- **Picture cards** for the sound hunt (lesson 2): sun, sock, ant, apple, tap, tent, ink, insect, pan, pig, net, nest (two per sound). Drawings or photos are fine.
- **Name cards:** each child's first name, printed clearly with a capital first letter and the rest lowercase (lesson 4).
- **A tray of sand or salt**, or a shaving-foam patch on a table, for finger writing (lessons 1, 2, 4).
- **Magnetic or foam letters** (at least s, a, t, i, p, n for each pair) and a magnetic board or tray.
- Paper, thick pencils or crayons, and mini whiteboards with pens if available.
- A puppet or soft toy that "talks in sounds" (lesson 3).
- Picture cards for blending: a tap, a pin, a tin can and a child sitting (lessons 3 and 5); word cards **sat**, **pin**, **tap**, **tin** and a record sheet for the check (lesson 5).
- Dotted or pale copies of each child's name for tracing (lesson 4).

Access and inclusion

- **Speaking is optional.** A child can answer by pointing to a card, picking a magnetic letter, signing, or using their usual communication aid. Never make a child say sounds alone in front of the class.
- **Fine motor:** forming a letter in sand, with a finger in the air, by placing magnetic letters or by tracing over dots all count as forming it. Pencil grip is taught gently and is never a reason to mark a child "not yet".
- **Low vision:** large print cards (or high-contrast cards); tactile letters (sandpaper, felt or foam). If a child uses or will use braille, ask the specialist teacher how to link these sounds to braille letters.
- **Deaf or hard-of-hearing children:** keep your face visible when saying sounds; pair each sound with its letter card. If the child signs, follow the specialist teacher's approach (some use fingerspelling or a visual phonics system).
- **Speech differences:** some children cannot yet say some sounds clearly (for example "s"). They can still match sounds to letters by pointing; tell the speech therapist, if there is one, which sounds the class is learning.
- **Multilingual learners:** some children already read or write another language, sometimes with a different script or different sounds for the same letter. Treat this as a strength and keep the English sounds clear.
- **Names:** use first names only. Never ask for surnames, addresses or other family details. Children with long or unusual names are not slower; any name works.
- **Never timed.** Accuracy comes before speed.

Assessment

Lesson 5 includes a short one-to-one check (about 3 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, if non-speaking) for each of the six letter cards.
2. Blends four words from letter cards: **sat, pin, tap, tin** (the child says the sounds, then the word; or picks the matching picture).
3. Writes (or picks a magnetic letter for) three letters when the teacher says their sounds: **/t/, /i/, /s/**.
4. Writes or traces their first name.

Doing it their own way (pointing, signing, magnetic letters, sand) counts as **yes**. "Not yet" is normal for many children at this point; the term 3 unit keeps practising these sounds with more letters.

Sources

- Common Core State Standards, Reading: Foundational Skills, Kindergarten (read via the Internet Archive copy): https://web.archive.org/web/20241220022036/https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/ . RF.K.1.d (recognise and name upper- and lowercase letters), RF.K.2.d (isolate and pronounce the first, middle vowel and final sounds in three-sound words), RF.K.3.a (the most frequent sound for each consonant) and RF.K.3.b (vowel sounds). This unit covers only six letters, so it is a small start on these standards, not full coverage.
- 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.1.a

"Print many upper- and lowercase letters"; L.K.2.c "Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes)"; L.K.2.d "Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships."
- Wikipedia, "Synthetic phonics": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synthetic_phonics . Letter sounds are taught in isolation and then blended all through the word (s-a-t, "sat"); s, a, t, i, p, n make many short words; programmes often teach a few letter sounds a week; letter shapes are practised alongside the sounds; dictation is used often; letter names often come later; accuracy before speed. This unit follows that order.

Known gaps

- **English only.** Other languages need their own letters and words.
- **Pace varies.** Many programmes teach these six sounds in about a week; this unit spreads them over two to allow daily practice. Some classes will need longer, and some children already know them.
- **Capital letters** appear only in names here. Most capitals come later.
- **No decodable books yet**; reading short books is term 3.
- Peer check: Gemini 4 Argon did a bounded text, timing, word-list, pure-sound and access check at f5ca874 (not a classroom or educator review). No errors; three small notes on materials lists and a non-finger option were fixed in fc3ea92, which Gemini 4 Argon also diff-checked the same day (see PEERCHECKS.md).
- This is one possible order. It is not tied to any published phonics programme, and schools that follow one should use its order instead.

Lesson 1: s, a, t

Goal: Children say the sounds for **s**, **a** and **t**, and form each letter with a finger.

Length: about 20 minutes.

Materials

- Large letter cards s, a, t.
- Picture cards: sun, sock, ant, apple, tap, tent.
- Sand or salt tray (or shaving foam on the table); magnetic letters s, a, t.

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Play the first-sound game from term 1: "I spy something that starts with /s/..." (a sock, the sun on a poster). Then: "Today we learn how to **write** some sounds down."

✎ Main activity 1: meet the sounds (6 min)

Hold up **s**. "This letter says **sss**, like a snake." Children hiss with you, holding the sound. Show the sun and sock pictures: "sss-un, sss-ock." Then air-write the letter together: big, with the whole arm, saying "sss" as you write. (Stand with your back to the class, or mirror it, so the letter is not backwards for them.)

Do the same for **a** ("a, a, ant, apple"; a quick tap of the fingers, like an ant walking) and **t** (a short "t", like a ticking clock; tap, tent).

Keep sounds pure: "sss", not "suh"; "t" as a quiet puff, not "tuh".

✎ Main activity 2: sand writing (6 min)

In small groups at the sand tray (or at tables with foam), children copy each letter with one finger while saying its sound. Children who prefer can pick the magnetic letter and trace it with a finger instead.

Letter starting points (say them as you show):

- **s**: start at the top, curve round to the left, back round to the right, and finish curling at the bottom.
- **a**: round like a "c", up, and straight down.
- **t**: down from the top, then a small line across.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (2 min)

- "Which sound can you hold for a long time?" (**s**: "sssss". **t** is too quick to hold.)

- "What sound does 'apple' start with?" (/a/, the letter **a**.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

Hold up each card in a new order: **t**, **s**, **a**. Children say the sound together, or point.

Answers: /t/, /s/, /a/.

Then say a sound, and children point to the card: /a/ → **a**.

Vocabulary

letter, sound, s, a, t

Differentiation

- **Support:** work on **s** and **a** only today; add **t** tomorrow.
- **Stretch:** children find another object in the room that starts with /s/, /a/ or /t/.

⚠ Safety

- Salt and sand stay in the tray; wash hands afterwards. Shaving foam can sting eyes: keep hands away from faces and wash after. Skip foam for children with sensitive skin.

Teacher notes

- It does not matter if children's letters are wobbly at this stage. The link between the sound and the shape is what matters.
- Pointing to the right card counts the same as saying the sound.

Lesson 2: i, p, n

Goal: Children say the sounds for **i**, **p** and **n**, and sort pictures by their first sound.

Length: about 20 minutes.

Materials

- Large letter cards s, a, t, i, p, n.
- Picture cards: sun, sock, ant, apple, tap, tent, ink, insect, pan, pig, net, nest.
- Sand tray or foam; magnetic letters.

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Sound flash: hold up **s**, **a**, **t**; children say each sound.

✎ Main activity 1: meet the sounds (6 min)

As in lesson 1, one at a time:

- **i**: a short "i", as in ink and insect. (Wiggle a finger like a little insect.)
- **p**: a short puff, as in pan and pig. Hold a hand in front of your mouth to feel the puff.
- **n**: "nnn", humming through the nose, as in net and nest.

Air-write each one, saying the sound:

- **i**: straight down, then a dot on top.
- **p**: straight down below the line, back up, and round.
- **n**: straight down, back up, and over like a little hill.

✎ Main activity 2: sound hunt (7 min)

Lay the six letter cards on the floor. Shuffle the twelve picture cards, and hand them out (one each, or pairs share). Each child says the picture's name, listens for the first sound, and puts the picture next to its letter. The class checks together: "Pig. P-p-pig. Yes, **p**!"

A child who is not sure can say the word with a friend or the teacher, slowly. Nobody is wrong for long: if a picture is in the wrong place, say both sounds and move it together.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (2 min)

- "Which two letters can you hold for a long time?" (**s** and **n**. Vowels **a** and **i** can be held a little too; **t** and **p** are quick puffs.)
- "Pig and pan both start with...?" (/p/, the letter **p**.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (2 min)

Hold up **n**, **i**, **p**, then **s**. Children say the sounds or point.

Answers: /n/, /i/, /p/, /s/.

Vocabulary

i, p, n, first sound

Differentiation

- **Support:** fewer pictures (just one per letter); the adult says the word slowly first.
- **Stretch:** children say the **last** sound of a picture too (tap ends in /p/; sun ends in /n/).

⚠ Safety

- As lesson 1 (wash hands after sand, salt or foam).

Teacher notes

- Some children confuse **p** with other round letters that come later; that is normal and can wait.
- If your class's word for a picture differs (for example "faucet" for tap), choose a different picture that starts with the same sound.

Lesson 3: Blend it!

Goal: Children blend three sounds into a word: first by listening, then from letter cards.

Length: about 25 minutes.

Materials

- Large letter cards s, a, t, i, p, n (and a second **a** card, or write on the board).
- The puppet or soft toy.
- Magnetic letters for each pair: s, a, t, i, p, n.
- Picture cards for the closing check: a tap, a pin, a tin can (or draw them).

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Sound flash: all six cards, in a new order each time.

✎ Main activity 1: the puppet talks in sounds (6 min)

"Our puppet only talks in sounds. Can you help it say the word?" The puppet says **s-a-t** with a small gap between sounds. Children say the sounds back, faster and faster, until they hear the word: "s-a-t... sat!"

Repeat by ear only (no cards yet) with: **p-i-n**, **t-a-p**, **n-a-p**, **s-i-t**, **t-i-n**.

Then the other way round: "Puppet wants to know the sounds in 'pan'." Children say **p-a-n**, holding up one finger for each sound (three fingers, three sounds), or tapping or pointing to three counters or blocks, one for each sound.

✎ Main activity 2: blending from cards (8 min)

Put the cards **s**, **a**, **t** in a row. Point under each letter from left to right and say its sound. Then sweep your finger under all three and say the word: "s-a-t, sat."

Do it together with **p-i-n**, **t-a-p** and **n-a-p**.

In pairs, with magnetic letters: the teacher says a word slowly; pairs build it, then point and blend to check. Words: **sat**, **tip**, **pan**, **sit**. Walk round and help.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (4 min)

- "How many sounds are in 'tin'?" (Three: /t/, /i/, /n/.)
- "If I change the first sound of 'sat' to /p/, what word do I get?" (**pat**.)
- "Which way do we read the letters?" (From left to right, as in the term 1 book work.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (4 min)

Show three cards for each word; children blend, then point to the matching picture:

- **t a p** → tap (the tap picture)
- **p i n** → pin
- **t i n** → tin

Answers: tap, pin, tin.

Vocabulary

blend, sounds, word

Differentiation

- **Support:** two-sound words first: **at**, **it**, **in**, **an**. Keep the gap between sounds very short ("sssaaat").
- **Stretch:** children make a word and challenge their partner to read it, using only these letters: sat, pat, tap, nap, pan, pin, tin, tip, sip, sit, pit.

⚠ Safety

- Magnetic letters are small; check they are too big to swallow for any child who still puts things in their mouth, and count them back into the tray.

Teacher notes

- Holding sounds that can be held ("sssaaat") makes blending easier than very separate sounds ("s ... a ... t").
- Many children can blend by ear before they can blend from letters. That is normal.

Lesson 4: My name

Goal: Children recognise their own first name, write or trace it, and form the six letters.

Length: about 25 minutes.

Materials

- Name cards (first names only), with a capital first letter and the rest lowercase.
- A copy of each child's name written in dotted or pale letters for tracing.
- Paper, thick pencils or crayons; sand tray; magnetic letters.
- Mini whiteboards and pens, if available (for the closing check).
- Large letter cards s, a, t, i, p, n.

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Sound flash with the six cards. Then blend two words with the puppet by ear: **n-a-p**, **s-i-p**.

✎ Main activity 1: find my name (6 min)

Lay out the name cards (or a group's cards on each table). Each child finds their own card. "How do you know it's yours?" (The first letter, the shape, how long it is.)

Point out that names start with a **capital letter**, a big letter for the start of a name. Then children look for any of our six letters in their name: "Sam has an **a**! Nia has an **i** and an **a**, and starts with a capital **N**!" Every name counts, even if it has none of the six: "Your name has other letters we will learn soon."

✎ Main activity 2: writing (10 min)

At tables:

1. **My name:** children trace over their dotted name, then try to copy it underneath, looking at the card. Tracing alone is fine for today.
2. **The six letters:** children write a row of each letter they can, saying the sound as they write. Remind them where each letter starts (lessons 1 and 2).

Show a comfortable pencil hold (often a "tripod": thumb and two fingers), but do not insist; chunky crayons, pencil grips, sand, a finger in the air or magnetic letters are all fine.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (3 min)

- "What is special about the first letter of your name?" (It is a capital letter.)

- "Which of our six letters is in the word 'pin'?" (All three: **p**, **i**, **n**.)

✓ Closing check (with answers) (3 min)

The teacher says a sound; children write the letter on a whiteboard or paper, or hold up a magnetic letter: /s/, /p/, /a/.

Answers: **s**, **p**, **a**.

Vocabulary

name, capital letter, trace

Differentiation

- **Support:** trace only the first letter of the name, or make the name with magnetic letters copied from the card.
- **Stretch:** write the name without looking at the card; write the word **sat** from its sounds.

⚠ Safety

- Pencils stay on the table, points down, when walking.

Teacher notes

- Use the spelling the family uses. If you are unsure, ask the child or the family how the name is written; do not shorten or change it.
- Never ask for surnames. Display names only as the school allows.
- A child whose name is written in another script at home can show it too, if they want to.

Lesson 5: Show what I know

Goal: Children use the six sounds to make and read words, and show what they know in a short one-to-one check.

Length: about 25 minutes for the class activities, plus about 3 minutes per child for the check (spread over the week).

Materials

- Large letter cards s, a, t, i, p, n; magnetic letters for each pair.
- The sand tray; name cards; the tracing sheets from lesson 4.
- Word cards for the check: **sat**, **pin**, **tap**, **tin**, and pictures of each (a child sitting, a pin, a tap, a tin can).
- The twelve picture cards from lesson 2 (for the picture-sound sort station).
- A record sheet (yes / with help / not yet for each part).

Steps

✎ Opening (3 min)

Sound flash with all six cards. Children say the sound and air-write each letter.

✎ Main activity 1: word builders (8 min)

In pairs with magnetic letters. The teacher says each word; pairs build it, then point and blend to check: **pan**, **sit**, **tip**, **nap**.

Then a "change one letter" round: pairs swap one letter to make a new real word and read it to the class (for example **pan** → **pin** → **tin**).

✎ Main activity 2: stations (10 min)

While the teacher starts the one-to-one checks, the class moves between three stations (adult helpers if possible):

1. **Sand tray:** write the six letters with a finger.
2. **Name station:** trace or write their name.
3. **Picture-sound sort:** the twelve picture cards from lesson 2 sorted by first sound.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers) (2 min)

- "What do we do to read a new word?" (Say each sound, from left to right, then blend them together.)
- "What letter would you write for the first sound in 'nest'?" (**n**.)

Closing (2 min)

Children show one word they built, or their name, to a partner.

One-to-one check (with answers)

About 3 minutes per child, spread over the week, quietly at a side table. Record **yes**, **with help** or **not yet**:

1. **Sounds:** show the six letter cards in a mixed order. The child says each sound (or, if non-speaking, points to the right card when you say the sound). Answers: s /s/, a /a/, t /t/, i /i/, p /p/, n /n/.
2. **Blending:** show **sat**, **pin**, **tap**, **tin**. The child says the sounds and the word, or points to the matching picture. Answers: sat, pin, tap, tin.
3. **Writing sounds:** say /t/, /i/, /s/. The child writes each letter (or picks the magnetic letter). Answers: **t**, **i**, **s**.
4. **Name:** the child writes or traces their first name.

Their own way (pointing, signing, magnetic letters, sand) counts as **yes**. Never time the check.

Vocabulary

Review: sound, letter, blend, word, name, capital letter.

Differentiation

- **Support:** two-sound words at the builder station (at, it, in, an); check one part a day.
- **Stretch:** read two-word phrases made only of the six letters: "tin pan", "pat it", "sip it".

⚠ Safety

- As lessons 1–4: count magnetic letters back in; wash hands after the sand tray.

Teacher notes

- "Not yet" is normal at this point; record it without fuss. These sounds return every day in term 3.
- Children who already read well can make longer words at the stations with extra magnetic letters.