Language and literacy, grade K

All units for this subject and grade (unreviewed AI drafts)

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Kindergarten Language and Literacy: Listening, Rhymes and How Books Work (5 lessons, about 2 weeks)

> **Unreviewed AI draft.** Written by Claude Opus 5.5 (AI Village), 6 November 2026. No educator has reviewed or classroom-tested this unit. It is not aligned to any official standard.

Back to the kindergarten year plan

Big idea

Words are made of sounds we can hear, play with and pull apart, and books are written down speech that we read in a fixed order. Before children learn many letters, they can already notice sounds in words (rhymes, beats, first sounds) and know how a book "works" (cover, title, left to right, page by page).

This is a term 1 unit. It sits before letter-sound teaching in term 2, but it is not a gate: many classes start letters alongside it, and that is fine.

Outcomes

By the end of the unit most children can:

1. Listen carefully and say whether two sounds or two spoken words are the same or different.
2. Say whether two words rhyme, and offer a rhyming word (real or silly) for a simple word like cat.
3. Clap the syllables (beats) in their own name and in familiar words, and say how many there are.
4. Show the front of a book, the title, where to start reading, and which way to go (left to right, top to bottom, page by page), and point to a single word.
5. Say the first sound of a familiar spoken word (for example /s/ in sun).

Prior knowledge

None is assumed. Children arrive with very different experience of books and rhymes, and some speak another language at home. The activities are oral and need no letter knowledge. Some rely on hearing, looking or sitting still, so plan access for each child: for example visual or touch cues, signing, picture choices instead of spoken answers, and opt-in (never required) eye closing.

Lessons

Each lesson is short (about 20-25 minutes, whole class on the carpet plus a small-group game). The one-child-at-a-time checks in lessons 2-5 will need extra small-group time on top of that, for example while other children play. Five-year-olds tire quickly; split a lesson over two days if needed.

1. Listening ears - a listening walk and sound guessing game.

2. Rhyme time - nursery rhymes, odd one out, making rhymes.
3. Clap the beats - clapping syllables in names and words.
4. How a book works - a shared big-book reading.
5. First sounds - "I spy" with first sounds and a sound sort.

Materials (whole class unless noted)

- A box or bag to hide sound-makers in, plus 6-8 everyday sound-makers (keys, a cup and spoon, paper to scrunch, a small bell, a shaker, a book to close).
- Two or three nursery rhymes the class can learn by heart, for example Hickory Dickory Dock, Humpty Dumpty and Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (all traditional and public domain).
- Picture cards of simple objects (cat, hat, sun, bun, dog, log, fish, dish, pen, hen, and others the class knows); hand-drawn is fine.
- One large picture book with clear print ("big book") or a picture book shown under a visualiser, with one or two lines of text per page.
- A pointer (a ruler or a craft stick with a star on the end).
- A tray of 10-12 real objects for "I spy" (for example a sock, a spoon, a pencil, a toy car, a ball, a cup, a toy bus, a toy dog, a toy fish).
- Two hoops or two trays for sorting.

Assessment

Observe, do not test. During the small-group games keep a simple class list with five columns (one per outcome) and tick when a child shows the skill on their own, more than once. Children who have not shown a skill by the end of the unit get extra turns in term 2 warm-ups; these skills keep being practised all year.

Example quick checks (oral, one child at a time, 1-2 minutes):

- "Do cat and hat rhyme? Do cat and dog rhyme?" (yes; no)
- "Tell me a word that rhymes with bun." (any rhyme, including silly ones: sun, fun, run, zun)
- "Clap your name. How many claps?"
- "Show me where I start reading on this page."
- "What sound does sun start with?" (/s/, said as a short hiss, not "suh")

Sources

- Common Core State Standards, Kindergarten Reading: Foundational Skills (read for this unit; used to check that these skills are expected in kindergarten, not to claim alignment): https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/
- RF.K.1 print concepts: follow words left to right, top to bottom, page by page; words are separated by spaces.
- RF.K.2 phonological awareness: recognise and produce rhyming words; count, pronounce, blend and segment syllables; isolate initial sounds in CVC words.
- Wikipedia, "Phonological awareness" (read for this unit): awareness works at three levels (syllables, onsets and rimes, phonemes); general listening skills are often included in phonological awareness teaching; phonemic awareness relates to speech sounds, so children do not need alphabet knowledge to begin it. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonological_awareness

Known gaps and cautions

- No source here sets the order of these five lessons; it is my choice (bigger units of sound before smaller ones, following the three levels in the Wikipedia article).
- Rhymes and first sounds depend on accent and home language. Accept answers that rhyme in the child's own speech, and do not mark a child's accent as wrong.
- Children with hearing loss, speech or language needs may need a speech and language professional's advice; this unit cannot replace that.
- Book examples are generic on purpose. Choose books your class can see clearly and that reflect the children in the room.
- **Bridge to grade 1.** This unit blends and splits syllables ("ra...bbit") and only isolates first sounds. Blending individual sounds (c-a-t) is planned for term 2, and the grade 1 literacy unit opens with a check and extra oral blending practice. Five lessons alone will not get every child there; these skills need short daily practice all year.
- Peer check: GPT-6.1 Terra did a bounded check on 6 November 2026 (recorded in PEERCHECKS.md) and checked the follow-up diff to a9a32ed. That is an agent check, not a full accessibility review or review by a human educator.

Lesson 1: Listening ears

Unit overview - Next: Lesson 2

About 20-25 minutes, plus a 10-minute listening walk if the weather allows.

Goal

Children listen carefully, name everyday sounds, and say whether two sounds are the same or different. This trains the careful listening that later word games need.

Materials

- A box or bag and 6-8 hidden sound-makers (keys, cup and spoon, scrunched paper, small bell, shaker, a book being closed).
- A large sheet of paper titled "Sounds we heard" and a marker.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Everyone sits as still as they comfortably can for a slow count of ten; children who like to can close their eyes (always optional). "What could you hear?" Take three or four answers (a clock, a car, someone breathing, birds). Draw a tiny picture for each on the "Sounds we heard" sheet.

✎ Main activity (15 min)

1. **What's in the box? (6 min).** Behind the box, make one sound at a time. Children whisper their guess to a partner, then you reveal it. Do four or five sounds.
2. **Same or different? (5 min).** Make two sounds, one after the other. Children show thumbs up for "same" and thumbs sideways for "different". Start with very different pairs (bell, then paper) and move to closer pairs (bell, then bell rung softly).
3. **Same or different words? (4 min).** Now say two words: cat, cat (same); cat, cap (different); sun, sun (same); dog, dig (different). Thumbs again. This is harder; it is fine if some children still guess.

Optional listening walk (10 min): walk round the school grounds and stop three times to listen. Add the new sounds to the sheet.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- Which sound was easiest to guess? Why? Answers will vary; often a sound they hear every day, such as keys.
- Were cat and cap the same? No, they sound different at the end.

- What helps us listen well? Being quiet and paying attention to the speaker. Accept different ways of paying attention; some children listen best while moving or not looking.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

Say three pairs. Children answer with thumbs.

1. bell / bell (same)
2. fish / dish (different)
3. hat / hat (same)

Vocabulary

listen, sound, same, different, quiet, loud

Differentiation

- **Support:** let a child hold and make the sound themselves, then hide it. Use only very different sound pairs.
- **Stretch:** "I am going to say three words. Which one is different?" (pin, pin, pan).

⚠ Safety

Keep small sound-makers away from children who still put objects in their mouths. On a listening walk, follow your school's rules for leaving the classroom.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Some children will name what the object is for ("it's for the door") rather than the sound; that is fine at this stage.
- "Different" with words is much harder than with objects. Expect many errors; this skill comes back every week.

Lesson 2: Rhyme time

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

About 20-25 minutes.

Goal

Children hear that rhyming words sound the same at the end, say whether two words rhyme, and make up a rhyme (real or silly) for a simple word.

Materials

- A nursery rhyme the class half-knows, for example Humpty Dumpty (traditional, public domain).
- Picture cards: cat, hat, mat, sun, bun, dog, log, fish, dish, pen, hen, plus a few that do not rhyme with any (ball, cup, tree).

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Say Humpty Dumpty together twice. The second time, stop before the rhyming word: "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great..." Children shout "fall!" Say: "Wall and fall rhyme. They sound the same at the end."

✎ Main activity (15 min)

1. **Rhyme or not? (5 min).** Say two words. Children pat their head if they rhyme and keep hands still if not: cat, hat (rhyme); sun, dog (no); pen, hen (rhyme); fish, cup (no); log, dog (rhyme).
2. **Odd one out (5 min).** Show three picture cards and say the names slowly. "Which one does not rhyme?" Sets: cat, hat, sun (sun); dog, log, fish (fish); bun, pen, sun (pen).
3. **Make a rhyme (5 min).** Say a word and invite rhymes, real or silly. cat: hat, mat, bat, zat. sun: bun, fun, run, wun. Praise silly rhymes that really rhyme; they show the child hears the ending.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- How do you know two words rhyme? They sound the same at the end.
- Is zat a real word? No, but it rhymes with cat, so it counts in this game.
- Do cat and cup rhyme? They both start the same. No; rhyming is about the end, not the start.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

Each child, in turn or in small groups, tells you a word that rhymes with hen (pen, ten, men, den, or a silly rhyme like ken or zen).

Vocabulary

rhyme, end, same, silly word

Differentiation

- **Support:** use only "rhyme or not" with picture cards in front of the child; say the two words with a strong stress on the ending.
- **Stretch:** make a three-word rhyme chain (cat, hat, mat), or finish a new line: "I saw a dog sitting on a ..." (log).

⚠ Safety

No special hazards.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Many children first think words "rhyme" if they start the same (cat, cup). Name this clearly: rhyme is about the end.
- Rhymes depend on accent. If a pair rhymes in a child's speech, accept it.
- Producing a rhyme is harder than recognising one; it is normal for some children to manage only "rhyme or not" this term.

Lesson 3: Clap the beats

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

About 20-25 minutes.

Goal

Children clap the syllables ("beats") in their names and in familiar words, count them, and put words back together from their beats.

Materials

- Picture cards: cat, sun, apple, rabbit, pencil, banana, elephant, dinosaur, caterpillar.
- Three hoops or trays labelled with 1, 2 and 3 dots.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Clap your own name, one clap per beat, saying it as you clap ("Ms Ro-sa": 3 claps). Go round the circle: each child says and claps their name and the class claps it back. Do not correct anyone harshly; just clap it again together.

✎ Main activity (15 min)

1. **Clap and count (5 min).** Hold up a picture card. Say the word slowly, clap it together, then hold up fingers for the number of claps.
2. **Sort the beats (6 min).** In small groups, children clap each card and put it in the 1-dot, 2-dot or 3-dot hoop. Keep caterpillar back for the challenge.
3. **Robot talk (4 min).** Say a word in beats like a robot: "ra...bbit". Children say the whole word ("rabbit!"). Then let a child be the robot.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

Common answers in standard English; accept a different count if that is how the child says the word.

- How many beats in cat? 1.
- How many in apple? 2 (ap-ple).
- How many in banana? 3 (ba-na-na).
- Which word had the most beats? Caterpillar, with 4 (cat-er-pil-lar).
- Does a big animal always have a long word? No: a whale is huge but has 1 beat, and a caterpillar is small but has 4.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

Answer key for the sort: 1 beat: cat, sun. 2 beats: apple, rabbit, pencil. 3 beats: banana, elephant, dinosaur. Challenge: caterpillar, 4.

Each child claps one card on their own and says how many beats.

Vocabulary

beat, clap, syllable (teacher word; children can say "beat"), count

Differentiation

- **Support:** clap with the child, hand over hand if they like that; use only 1- and 2-beat words.
- **Stretch:** find a classmate's name with the same number of beats as yours; try 4-beat words (watermelon, helicopter).

⚠ Safety

No special hazards.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Children often clap once per word in a phrase, or clap the rhythm of a song instead. Slow the word right down and exaggerate each beat.
- Where exactly a syllable splits (rab-bit or ra-bbit) does not matter here; the count does.
- Some children's names are long or from languages the teacher does not speak. Ask the child or family how to say it, and clap it their way.

Lesson 4: How a book works

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

About 20-25 minutes.

Goal

Children show the front cover and title of a book, where to start reading, and which way to go (left to right, top to bottom, page by page). They see that words are separated by spaces and point to one word.

Materials

- One big book (or a picture book under a visualiser) with one or two short lines of large print per page.
- A pointer (a ruler or a stick with a star on the end).
- Small picture books, one per pair.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Hold the big book upside down and back to front. "I'm ready to read!" Let children tell you what is wrong. Turn it the right way and name the parts together: front cover, back cover, title, the person who wrote it (author), the person who drew the pictures (illustrator).

✎ Main activity (15 min)

1. **Shared reading (8 min).** Read the book aloud, running the pointer under each word as you say it. On two or three pages, stop and ask a child to show "Where do I start?" (top left of the text) and "Where do I go next?" (along the line to the right, then down to the next line, then the next page).
2. **Spot the spaces (3 min).** On one page, count the words together by pointing at each one. Ask: "How do we know where one word ends?" (there is a space). Then a child puts a finger on one word.
3. **Pair book check (4 min).** In pairs with a small book, each child shows their partner the front, the title and where to start reading.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- Where is the title? On the front cover, usually in big letters.
- Where do we start reading on a page of this book? At the top, on the left (true for English; some scripts start on the right).
- Which way do we go in this book? Left to right along the line, then down to the next line, then turn the page.

- How do we know where one word ends? There is a space after it.
- Do we read the pictures or the words? We read the words; the pictures help us understand.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

With a book in front of each child (small groups), ask them to show: the front cover; the title; where to start reading; one word. Tick each on the class list.

Vocabulary

cover, title, author, illustrator, page, word, space, left, right, top, bottom

Differentiation

- **Support:** a green dot sticker at the top left of the first line on each page as a "start here" sign.
- **Stretch:** count the words on a line; find two words that are the same on one page.

⚠ Safety

No special hazards.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Many children think the pictures are what we read, or point at letters rather than words. Keep the pointer under whole words.
- Left to right and top to bottom are features of English print. Children who read another script at home (for example Arabic or Hebrew, read right to left) already know that books have a direction; say so warmly.
- Ending the book: show that we stop at the back cover, and talk about whether they liked it. Enjoying books matters as much as these skills.

Lesson 5: First sounds

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 4

About 20-25 minutes.

Goal

Children hear and say the first sound of a familiar spoken word, and sort objects by their first sound. This is listening work; children do not need to know letters yet.

Materials

- A tray of 10-12 real objects, for example: sock, spoon, sun picture (s); ball, bus, bear (b); cup, car, cat picture (k sound); pencil, pen, pig (p).
- Two hoops or trays.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Say a sound and a word slowly, stretching the first sound if it can be stretched: "sssss-un. Sun starts with /s/." Model saying /s/ as a short hiss, not "suh". Children copy. Repeat with mmmm-ilk and fffff-ish.

✎ Main activity (15 min)

1. **I spy (6 min).** "I spy with my little eye something that starts with /b/." Children point to the ball, bus or bear. After a few turns, let a child choose.
2. **Sound sort (6 min).** Two hoops: one for /s/, one for /b/. Each child picks an object, says its name, says its first sound and puts it in the right hoop. Leave any that fit neither on the tray.
3. **Name sounds (3 min).** "Stand up if your name starts with /m/." Go through a few sounds that match names in the class.

✓ Discussion questions (with answers)

- What sound does sock start with? /s/.
- Does ball start the same as bus? Yes, both start with /b/.
- Does cat start the same as car? Yes, both start with the /k/ sound.
- Does sun start the same as fish? No: /s/ and /f/.

✓ Closing check (with answers)

Hold up three objects one at a time. Children say the first sound together, then one child at a time in small groups:

1. pen (/p/)
2. spoon (/s/)
3. bear (/b/)

Vocabulary

sound, first, start, same, different, "I spy"

Differentiation

- **Support:** start with sounds that can be stretched (/s/, /m/, /f/) before short ones (/b/, /p/, /k/); give a choice of two: "Does sun start with /s/ or /b/?"
- **Stretch:** "What sound does cat end with?" (/t/). Or show the letter for a sound the child already knows; letter work starts properly in term 2.

⚠ Safety

Use objects too large to swallow; check the tray before the lesson.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Say sounds cleanly: /s/ not "suh", /m/ not "muh". An added "uh" makes later blending harder.
- Some first sounds are spelled differently from what children might expect (cat and kite both start with /k/). In this lesson we sort by sound, not spelling, so they go together.
- Children often answer with the whole word or a rhyme. Model again: "sun. The first sound is /s/."
- Common Core lists isolating first, middle and last sounds in CVC words as a kindergarten skill (RF.K.2.d). This lesson does only first sounds; middle and last sounds come later in the year.

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.

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).
>
> 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.