

Short Vowel Sounds

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The five short vowel sounds, with a picture word and three words for each. Say the sound, not the letter's name.

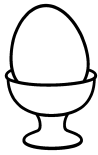
a A



/a/
as in apple

cat map bag

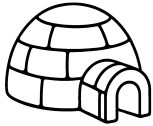
e E



/e/
as in egg

bed hen net

i I



/i/
as in igloo

pig lid six

o O



/o/
as in octopus

hot pot mop

u U



/u/
as in umbrella

bug sun cup



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How to Say the Five Sounds

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What your mouth does for each one. Say them in front of your child so they can see it, then let them watch themselves in a mirror.

a

/a/ as in apple

Mouth wide open, tongue low and flat. The most open of the five.

e

/e/ as in egg

Mouth a little open, lips relaxed, tongue in the middle.

i

/i/ as in igloo

Mouth barely open, in a small smile. Almost the same as e.

o

/o/ as in octopus

Mouth open and round, jaw dropped.

u

/u/ as in umbrella

Mouth relaxed and just open. The shortest, laziest of the five.

One rule for all five

A short vowel is **one quick sound**. Stretch it and it turns into a different sound: hold the a in cat and you drift towards the a in car. Say it short, say it once.



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Short or Long?

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A long vowel says its own name. Add a silent e to the end and the short vowel goes long.

cap → cape

them → theme

Almost the only one. e_e is rare.

kit → kite

hop → hope

cub → cube

Which comes first

Short vowels come first, and most children read short-vowel words for months before silent e turns up. If your child is still working on the words on page 1, this page is for later.



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e or i?

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These two get swapped more than the other three, because the mouth barely moves between them. Read each pair across, one after the other.

e as in egg

i as in igloo

pen

pin

bet

bit

ten

tin

set

sit

beg

big

led

lid

Why reading them together is the fix

Practising e on Monday and i on Friday leaves your child guessing between two sounds they have never heard side by side. Say both words in a pair, then ask which one you said second. **The contrast is the lesson**, not the repetition.



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Which Vowel Do You Hear?

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Say a word out loud. Your child listens for the middle sound and writes the word in that column. Use it again tomorrow with new words.



apple

e

egg

i

igloo



octopus



umbrella

[illegible]

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How to Use This Chart

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Five minutes, most days, beats an hour on Sunday.

1. **You:** point to a letter and say its SOUND, not its name. Not “ay”, but /a/, the sound at the start of apple.
2. **You:** say the whole row the same way every time: a, apple, /a/. The keyword is what your child will reach for months from now.
3. **Your child:** says the sound back, then reads the three words beside it.
4. **Both:** three words a day, not thirty. Stop while your child is still getting them right.
5. **Both:** when e and i get swapped, turn to the e or i page and read the pairs across, one after the other.

The one mistake to avoid

Do not say the letter’s name. A child who learns “A says ay” cannot read cat, because there is no ay in it. Name the letter when you write it; say the sound when you read it.

What comes next

Once all five sounds are solid, the next step is reading whole words with them: three-letter words like cat, pig and sun, then words that end in two letters making one sound, like sh and th. Page 3 shows what happens when a silent e arrives.



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