

Short vowel a – The Apple

“The vowels are Super Stars, because if you didn’t have vowels, you couldn’t make any words. The vowels know this and make their sounds louder and longer than everyone! This is our first Super-Star vowel. (Show picture.) What kind of fruit does this look like? Yes, an apple. Let’s hold a big apple in our hands (Pretend to do this). If you were going to eat an apple, would you take tiny bites like this? (Make tiny nibbling sounds.) Or a **huge** bite? (Agree to huge.) Let’s open our mouths wide to take a huge bite while we start to say ‘apple.’ Ready? ‘aaaaa’ — STOP! That’s it! That’s the sound the apple makes! The mouth on the apple is open wide, too. ‘aaaaa!’”

Hand cue: Pretend to be holding an apple, getting ready to bite it with a wide open mouth.

Short vowel o – Cute Baby

(2 versions)

“Here’s another Super Star vowel. (Show picture.) This is a very cute letter sound. **[Boston accent]** See this cute, little baby? When people see that cute, little, round baby face they say, ‘o... (aw...), isn’t she cute?’ (Tip head to the side when saying this.) That’s what we’ll say when we see this cute, little baby. See how the baby’s mouth is round? Make your mouth round when you say ‘o.’”

Hand cue: Tilt your head to the side and touch your chin or cheek in a gentle fashion.



[standard dialect]”Look at this cute, little baby! Her mother is getting ready to feed her with a spoon. Her mother holds the spoon like this (pretend to hold spoon) and says, ‘Open up wide and say ‘o (ah).’ When you see that round baby face, open your mouth and say ‘o.’”

Hand cue: Pretend to be holding a spoon of food in front of a baby.



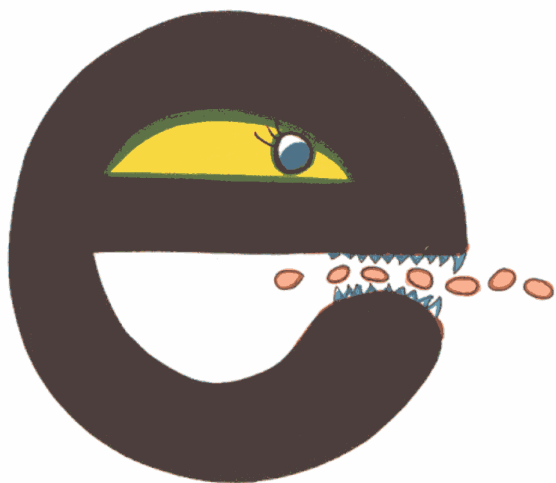
Short vowel u – The Toddler

(Show picture.) “This is a little toddler who’s two years-old. Later on, she will get into a lot of trouble, but right now she’s in her playpen, or crib, and wants to get up. Where are her hands going? Up! Let’s put our hands up like that. Look at the shape it makes out of our arms and body – the letter **u**! (Use hand to air-draw a letter **u** from student’s hand, down across shoulders, and up the other arm). Right now the baby’s saying that she wants to get ‘u-u-u.’ (Leave the ‘**p**’ off of the word ‘**up**’ or students may include it as part of the letter sound.) Let’s put up our arms again and say ‘u-u-u.’ Later on, the toddler is going to get into trouble, but right now she just says ‘u.’”
Hand cue: Reach both arms up high, opening and closing your hands.



Short vowel i – Basketball Player

(Show picture.) “Doesn’t the dot on this letter look like a basketball? This is a very famous basketball player who believes that when he puts a smile on his face, he can get the ball into the basket. He’s in the middle of a big game. The score is tied, 40 to 40, and if he gets this basket in, his team will win the game. The crowd is going wild! They want him to get it in. They all stand up, they have huge smiles on their faces, like this (put a huge smile on your face), and they all do the same cheer! They say, ‘Get it i-i-in!’ (During the cheer, use hand motion over head, thrusting index finger downward with each ‘i.’) That’s his sound. ‘i’ Let’s all try that cheer together with big smiles on!”
Hand cue: Put hand over head with index finger pointing down, and thrust downward each time you say the “i” sound in the cheer “Get it i-i-in!”



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Short vowel e – Ed

(Show picture.) “This is another important vowel. His name is Ed, and he is a video game character who likes to go along, eating up all the candy eggs while he makes this sound, ‘e-e-e.’ (The following story elongates the sound of *e* to make it easier to perceive.) When Ed’s mother calls him for dinner, she wags her finger (Demonstrate a ‘come here’ movement with your forefinger.) and (in a sing-song voice, dragging out the short ‘e’ sound) calls his name, ‘E—.’ Before she finishes saying his name, Ed is there, on her finger! When you make the ‘e’ sound, only one finger should fit in your mouth. When you say ‘i,’ no finger should fit, and when you say ‘a,’ your whole hand can fit! (joking)”

Hand cue: Move your hand along in front of you while opening and closing your thumb together with your other four fingers, like the mouth of a video character who is gobbling up eggs. You could also put both hands up to your mouth as if getting ready to call out to Ed.



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s – Quiet, Small Air Sound

“What happens with our mouths when we make this sound? ‘sssss’ Yes, we look like we’re smiling. Is any air coming out? See if there’s a lot of air gushing out, or just a small stream of air coming out. It is small air coming out. Let’s pretend to pull a small snake of air out of our mouths when we make that sound. (Use thumb and pointer to pretend to pull out a small snake of air.) Let’s check to see if our voices are on or off when we make this sound. Off. This is our quiet, small air sound. (Show picture.) Let’s smile at this small snake so he knows we’re not afraid of him. This skinny snake makes the small air sound. ‘sssss’ This snake has a noisy partner. Can you guess what sound that would be?”

Hand cue: Pretend to be pulling a thin snake of air out of your smiling mouth with your index finger and thumb.



ou - The Baby and the Toddler

“Do you remember the toddler? Well, sometimes the toddler gets in trouble, like a lot of other two-year-olds! Whenever a vowel gets in front of the toddler, she becomes a little troublemaker. (Show picture.) Do you see the troublemaker in this picture? Who’s in front of her? Right, and when the baby *o* gets in front of the *u*, the *u* pulls the baby’s hair! It hurts the baby and she yells out, ‘Ow! *O* – *U* (Oh, you!)’ Try that – pull your own hair and say ‘ou!’”

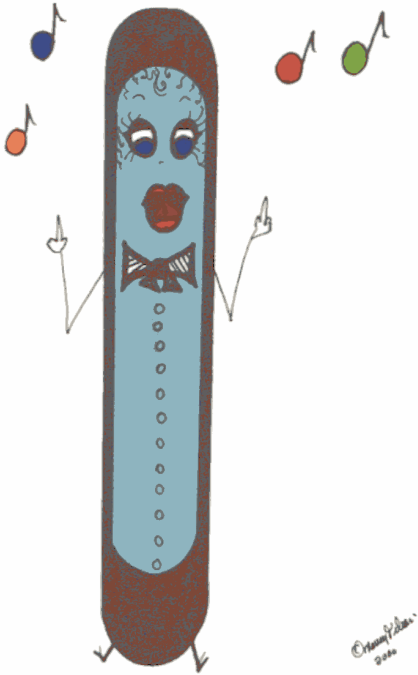
Hand cue: Pull a few strands of your own hair and make a face as if it hurts.



oi –The Baby and the Basketball Player

(Show picture.) “Here’s another card where we have 2 vowels that only make one sound. When the baby gets in front of the basketball player, the baby looks up at him and asks, ‘Can I play on your basketball team?’ The basketball player looks at the baby before him and asks, ‘Well, are you a boy?’ The baby puts her hand on her hip and says (with an attitude!), ‘Oi, I’m no boy!’ That’s the sound we have when the baby gets in front of one of the sports players, like the basketball player. ‘oi’”

Hand cue: Put your hand on your hip and show an attitude.



l – Tongue Up in Front Sound

“What am I doing when I make this sound? ‘lllll.’ (Prolong the *l* sound.) Right, my tongue goes up in the front of my mouth. (Show picture.) This is a famous singer who walks up to the front of the stage, puts her tongue up in the front of her mouth, and warms up her lovely voice, ‘l-l-l-l.’ (Point and wave index fingers up in front as a music conductor would.) This is the tongue up in front sound. This sound has a partner sound.”

Hand cue: Hold both arms up to the side, and with extended index fingers, move hands back and forth as if conducting a choir of singers.



r – Tongue Up in Back Sound

“When you made the *l* sound, your tongue was up in the front. Now I want you to take your tongue and, this time, try to raise it way up in the back of your mouth! What sound does it make now? Yes, it makes the sound ‘r.’ Do you want to meet a little dog? (Show picture.) Look at this rough little dog that has fur all ruffled up on his back. Although this hairy dog looks a bit scary, he’s not really growling a lot right now. He just sticks out his lips a little, lifts his tongue up in the back, and makes a short ‘r’ sound. Try making

that short sound again with me. Later on we’ll see what makes him really growl...”

Hand cue: Put hands up in front, fingers bent, and make a scary face.



er – Ed and the Growling Dog

“We know that the dog usually just makes a short sound ‘r,’ but now I’m going to tell you what makes him GROWL! Whenever he comes after a vowel he gets mean!

(Show picture.) Who’s the dog coming after in this picture? Ed! That’s right. He doesn’t like video games and he gets annoyed with Ed. The dog gets angry and growls at Ed. ‘Errrr!’ Ed gets so scared he doesn’t even make his sound at all! All we hear is that growling sound. ‘errrr’”

Hand cue: Turn your head to the left side and make a mean, growling face.



ir – The Basketball Player and the Growling Dog

(Show picture.) “Who’s before the dog now? Right! The dog is coming after the basketball player and he’s growling at him, too. He’s annoyed because he doesn’t like basketball. He says, ‘Irrrr!’ The basketball player is so scared that he doesn’t make a sound! All we hear is that growling sound. ‘irrrr’”

Hand cue: Turn your head to the left side and make a mean, growling face, as with er.



ur – The Toddler and the Growling Dog

(Show picture.) “Oh, oh! Here’s that dog coming after a vowel again! Who is he after this time? The toddler! The dog gets annoyed with that toddler who keeps trying to get up, and he growls at her, saying, ‘Urrrr!’ The toddler is so scared, she doesn’t make any sound, either! We just hear ‘urrrr.’ This means that when the toddler, the basketball player, or Ed come in front of the dog, he just growls and says, ‘Errrr!’ Did you notice that all three of those cards make the same sound? All we hear is **r** growling!”
Hand cue: Turn your head to the left side and make a mean, growling face, as with er.