

FOUNDATIONAL READING SERIES



PHONICS & READING PROGRAM

GETTING READY FOR UNIT 1

Letters, sounds, and first words

A gentle beginning before short-a word study

Listen to sounds. Connect sounds to letters.
Blend, build, and begin to read.

LISTEN

Hear each sound

CONNECT

Match sounds and letters

BLEND

Put sounds together

TWO SISTERS LEGACY

twosisterslegacy.com



How to teach this beginning

Teach a little. Practice together. Return to familiar skills often.

Section goal

Help children notice speech sounds, connect them to letters, and begin blending. This section prepares for Unit 1; it does not replace Unit 1.

A simple lesson routine

- 1. Listen.** Play one short sound game.
- 2. Teach.** Model one new letter or skill. Say the sound clearly.
- 3. Try together.** Point, say, move a counter, or build with letters.
- 4. Review.** Mix a new item with familiar items. Finish with a success.

Use the pages flexibly

Start with a short session, about 5-10 minutes, and adjust to the child. A page can take several sessions.

Teach one letter at a time within each group. Do not introduce a full page of unfamiliar letters at once.

Read all directions and adult prompts aloud. The child is not expected to read them.

If a student is stuck

Say the sound or model the task. Try it together, then return to it later.

Use letter cards or counters when writing is difficult. Avoid asking children to guess a word from a picture.

When to begin Unit 1

Begin supported Unit 1 work as the child learns the first sounds and can join in blending.

Teach any unfamiliar consonant before its Unit 1 word list. Full alphabet mastery and independent reading are not entry requirements.

Repeat familiar words in a new order. Accuracy comes before speed.



Your beginning sequence

Use the page numbers below to choose what the child needs.

4 **Notice a starting point**
Find out what is already familiar.

5 **Explore print**
Book, page, word, letter, direction, period.

6-8 **Listen to spoken sounds**
First/last sounds, oral blending, sound counting.

9-13 **Connect letters and sounds**
Small groups of letters used in early word study.

14-15 **Optional alphabet preview**
q, x, and the other vowel names; not a gate to Unit 1.

16-18 **Recognize and form letters**
Match cases, find sounds, make letter shapes.

19-23 **Build and read**
Two sounds, three sounds, sound boxes, word chains.

24-25 **Read and understand**
First sentences and an adult-read story.

26-28 **Check and plan**
Readiness record, review choices, progress log.

29-30 **Reusable support**
Letter cards and adult answer guide.

Keep reading aloud to the child every day. Choose enjoyable stories and simple nonfiction, talk about new words, and invite questions.



What can I do already?

Adult: Try a few tasks without teaching first. This is not a pass-or-fail test.

Child: _____ Date: _____

1. Explore a familiar book

Ask: "Show me the front. Where do I start reading?"

Notice whether the child points to print or to the picture. Then demonstrate.

2. Listen and join in

Say the sounds /m/ /a/ /t/ slowly. Ask the child to put them together.

Then say **sun**. Ask the child to tell you its first sound.

Model afterward if needed. Do not show written words.

3. Look at a few letters

Point to one at a time. Ask for its name or sound. Accept what the child knows.

a m s t p n

4. Record what you noticed.

Already familiar:

Needs a model or help:

My next teaching page:



How print works

Adult: Use this page and a real book. Read the sentence to the child.

1. Find the book and page.

Show the front of a book. Turn one page. Point to the print and explain that it carries the words we read.

2. Watch where reading begins.

START

Sam sat.



Move a finger from left to right under the words as you read.

3. Point to a letter. Point to a word.

S

Sam

S is one letter. Sam is one word made from three letters.

The space separates Sam from sat. The period shows the sentence has ended.

Try it together

Point to the first word, the second word, and the period. Find a capital letter.

This is a print demonstration, not an independent reading test.



Listen for a sound

Adult: Say the words. The child listens and answers aloud; no reading is needed.

1. Which sound comes first?

I do, then we do

Say **moon**. Stretch its first sound: /mmm/. Say: "Moon starts with /m/."

Try **sun** together. Its first sound is /s/.

Adult says: map

Child says the first sound.

Adult says: top

Child says the first sound.

Adult says: fan

Child says the first sound.

Adult says: pan

Child says the first sound.

2. Which sound comes last?

Model: **am** ends with /m/. Say the whole word naturally, then repeat its final sound.

Adult says: sun

Adult says: map

Adult says: sat

Accept the sound, not just the letter name. Answers are on page 30.



Put spoken sounds together

Adult: Say sounds without showing letters. Keep pauses short.

Model oral blending

Say /a/ /m/. Slide two counters together and say **am**.

Then model /m/ /a/ /t/ and say **mat**.

Use the short-a sound in apple. Say consonants cleanly, without adding “uh.”

1. Listen to two sounds.

/a/ /t/

/a/ /n/

2. Listen to three sounds.

/s/ /a/ /t/

/m/ /a/ /p/

/f/ /a/ /n/

Ask: “What word?” If needed, say the sounds closer together and blend with the child. The printed sound prompts are for the adult.



Hear each sound in a word

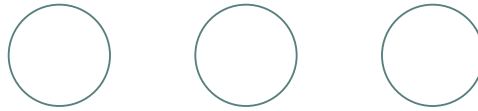
Adult: Say the whole word. The child moves one counter for each sound.

Model segmenting

Say **am**. Stretch it: /a/ /m/. Move two counters.

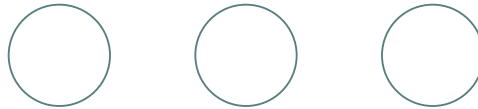
Say **mat**: /m/ /a/ /t/. Move three counters. Count sounds, not letter names.

Adult says: at



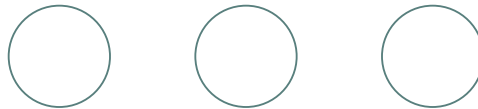
Use only as many circles as you need.

Adult says: sun



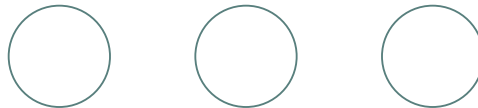
Use only as many circles as you need.

Adult says: map



Use only as many circles as you need.

Adult says: fan



Use only as many circles as you need.

Remember

The child may point, tap, or move counters. Writing is not required.



Letters and sounds: a m s t

Adult: Teach one letter at a time. Read the cue word aloud; it is not a reading word.

A a

Name: a

Listen: apple

Sound: short a

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

M m

Name: em

Listen: moon

Sound: /m/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

S s

Name: ess

Listen: sun

Sound: /s/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

T t

Name: tee

Listen: top

Sound: /t/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

1. Find the letter I name. Then say its sound.

s

a

t

m

Use short a in apple. Stretch /m/ and /s/; keep /t/ brief.



Letters and sounds: p n f r

Adult: Teach one letter at a time. Read the cue word aloud; it is not a reading word.

P p

Name: pee

Listen: pan

Sound: /p/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

N n

Name: en

Listen: net

Sound: /n/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

F f

Name: ef

Listen: fan

Sound: /f/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

R r

Name: ar

Listen: run

Sound: /r/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

1. Find the letter I name. Then say its sound.

f

p

r

n

Model the beginning sound without adding “uh.” Review earlier letters too.



Letters and sounds: b c d g

Adult: Teach one letter at a time. Read the cue word aloud; it is not a reading word.

B b

Name: bee

Listen: bat

Sound: /b/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

C c

Name: see

Listen: cat

Sound: /k/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

D d

Name: dee

Listen: dog

Sound: /d/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

G g

Name: jee

Listen: goat

Sound: /g/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

1. Find the letter I name. Then say its sound.

d

b

g

c

Use c as in cat and g as in goat here. Other sounds come later.



Letters and sounds: h l v w

Adult: Teach one letter at a time. Read the cue word aloud; it is not a reading word.

H h

Name: aitch

Listen: hat

Sound: /h/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

L l

Name: el

Listen: leg

Sound: /l/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

V v

Name: vee

Listen: van

Sound: /v/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

W w

Name: double-u

Listen: web

Sound: /w/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

1. Find the letter I name. Then say its sound.

v

h

w

l

Model the beginning sound without adding “uh.” Review earlier letters too.



Letters and sounds: j k y z

Adult: Teach one letter at a time. Read the cue word aloud; it is not a reading word.

J j

Name: jay

Listen: jam

Sound: /j/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

K k

Name: kay

Listen: kite

Sound: /k/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

Y y

Name: why

Listen: yes

Sound: /y/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

Z z

Name: zed or zee

Listen: zip

Sound: /z/

Say it. Find it. Make its shape.

1. Find the letter I name. Then say its sound.

y

j

z

k

Model the beginning sound without adding “uh.” Review earlier letters too.



Meet q and x

These are useful to recognize, but they are not required for the first blending pages.

Q q

Q q

Letter name: **cue**

In words, q is usually with u.

qu in queen represents /k/ /w/.

X x

X x

Letter name: **ex**

At the end of box, x represents **two**

sounds: /k/ /s/.

1. Match the same letter in both forms.

Q

x

X

q

Adult note

Say queen and box aloud. Do not ask the child to read those words here. Teach x carefully before Unit 1 words such as fax; teach qu in the later consonant-pattern unit.



Meet the vowel letters

Learn their names. Unit 1 will concentrate on the short-a sound.

A a

E e

I i

O o

U u

Say the names together

a e i o u

These letters can stand for different vowel sounds. Knowing a letter name is different from knowing its sound in a word.

Our first vowel sound

Point to a. Say the first sound in **apple**.

That is the short-a sound we use in **am**, **at**, **mat**, and **sat**.

Short e, i, o, and u are taught in Units 2-5. The child does not need those sounds for this section's reading practice.



Match capital and lowercase

Draw a line between the two forms of each letter. Say the sound you know.

A

M

S

T

P

N

t

p

a

n

m

s

Adult: Let the child use the letter pages as a reference. Matching is practice, not a memory race.



Hear a sound. Find a letter.

Adult: Say the prompt. The child circles the letter for the sound.

1. First sound in moon

s

m

t

2. First sound in pan

p

n

m

3. First sound in sun

a

t

s

4. First sound in apple

n

a

p

5. Last sound in map

p

m

s

6. Last sound in sun

s

t

n

Say words naturally, then repeat the target sound if needed. Do not ask the child to guess from the printed prompt.



Make the letter shapes

Point and say the sound. Finger-write in the air, then copy if ready.

a

Try one or two. Leave space between letters.

m

Try one or two. Leave space between letters.

s

Try one or two. Leave space between letters.

t

Try one or two. Leave space between letters.

Adult: Model the letter shape first. Letter cards, pointing, or an adult scribe are valid alternatives. Handwriting skill is not a condition for beginning reading.



Put two sounds together

Use short a. Touch each letter, say its sound, then slide and read the word.

a + m = am

a + t = at

a + n = an

Blend together, then try again

Adult: Model a smooth blend, rather than asking for letter names. In **am**, keep the short-a sound moving into /m/.

Cover the answer word on the right for another try. Read the whole word again after blending.



Put three sounds together

Adult: Model the first row. The child may blend with your help.

1. Touch each letter. Say each sound. Read.

m a t = mat

s a t = sat

m a p = map

t a p = tap

p a n = pan

n a p = nap

Read once more

Cover the answer column if helpful. Move a finger under the letters from left to right. Blend, then say the whole word naturally.

In Unit 1, you will also build a chunk: **a + t = at; m + at = mat.**



Say it. Build it. Read it.

Adult: Say each word without showing its spelling. Use letters or write in the boxes.

Say the word. Move one counter for each sound. Replace each counter with a letter. Blend and read what you made.

1. Adult says: map

--	--	--

2. Adult says: sat

--	--	--

3. Adult says: fan

--	--	--

Letter bank

a	m	s	p	t	n	f
---	---	---	---	---	---	---



Change one sound

Read each word. Notice the one letter that changes.

mat

Build the first word.

sat

Change m to s. Read the new word.

pat

Change s to p. Read the new word.

pan

Change t to n. Read the new word.

man

Change p to m. Read the new word.

map

Change n to p. Read the new word.

Listen as well as look

Adult: Say both words. Ask which sound changed. Keep the other letters in place when using cards.



Read familiar short-a words

Blend if needed. Then read the whole word. Accuracy comes before speed.

Set 1

sat

map

pan

mat

Set 2

fan

nap

tap

man

Set 3

rat

pat

ran

cap

Use a word in talk

Adult: Choose a familiar word. Ask the child to explain it or use it in a spoken sentence. Explain any unfamiliar meaning; for example, **cap** can mean a kind of hat.

Try a different order

Point to words out of order. Stop before the child becomes tired. Return to any difficult letters or sounds.



My first short sentences

Adult: Explain that Sam and Pat are names. Help the child blend them.

1. Practice the words.

Sam

Pat

sat

ran

2. Read. Point to each word.

Sam sat.

Pat sat.

Sam ran.

3. Talk about what you read.

Who ran? Who sat? Point to the words that tell you.

Draw one sentence. Tell an adult which one.



Listen and understand

This story is for the adult to read aloud. The child does not need to decode it.

A Dry Place

Rain began to fall. Mia saw a small bird under a leaf. The leaf bent, and drops splashed onto the bird.

Mia watched from her window. The bird flew beneath the porch roof. Its feathers stayed dry there.

“It found shelter,” Mia said. She stayed inside and watched quietly.

1. Learn a useful word.

Shelter is a place that protects you from something, such as rain. Ask: “Where could we find shelter in the rain?”

2. Talk together.

1. Where was the bird at first?
2. Why did the bird move?
3. What happened first, next, and last?
4. Why might Mia watch quietly from inside?

Accept answers in the child’s own words. Ask “What in the story makes you think that?” Help the child explain, rather than insisting on exact wording.



Notice my progress

Adult: Use after practice. Record independent responses before offering help.

Child: _____ Date: _____

1. Find print

With a familiar book, ask the child to show where reading starts and point to one word.

Record: independently / with help / not yet

2. Say the sounds

Point in this order: **n a t m p s**

Ask for sounds, not letter names.

Sounds known without a model: ____ / 6. Note any to review: _____

3. Blend spoken sounds

Say /a/ /t/, /s/ /a/ /t/, /m/ /a/ /p/, /f/ /a/ /n/. Ask for the whole word.

No letters are shown for this task.

Independent: ____ / 4. With help: ____ / 4.

4. Separate spoken sounds

Say **am, sun, map, fan**, one at a time. Ask for the sounds or one counter per sound.

Independent: ____ / 4. With help: ____ / 4.

5. Try reading

Show **mat sat map pan**.

Independent: ____ / 4. With help: ____ / 4.

This is a starting record, not an entry requirement for Unit 1.

Use the review guidance on page 27. These tasks are an informal teaching check, not a standardized assessment.



Choose the next teaching step

Use the child's responses to plan practice, rather than adding up a pass score.

Print is unfamiliar

Return to page 5. Point to the print as you read a familiar book together.

A letter sound is uncertain

Use pages 9-13. Teach that letter alone, then mix it with two familiar letters. Match the sound to its letter.

Oral blending needs help

Return to page 7. Begin with two sounds, shorten pauses, and blend together. Continue linking sounds to letters; do not wait for perfect oral performance.

Separating sounds is difficult

Use counters on page 8, then letter cards on page 21. Model one counter for each sound. Try a two-sound word first.

The child names letters but cannot blend

Use pages 19-20. Model sounds instead of names. Sweep under the letters and say the whole word.

Words are read accurately with some help

Begin supported Unit 1 practice and keep reviewing the core sounds. Before a new word list, teach every consonant the child does not yet know.

Do not require perfect handwriting, all 26 letter names, or independent sentence reading before starting Unit 1. If progress remains limited despite repeated, explicit teaching, discuss the pattern of errors with the child's teacher or a reading specialist.



My teaching record

Keep brief notes across sessions. Return to earlier items in a different order.

Child: _____ Adult: _____

Mark I = independent, H = helped, N = not yet. Add a date above each column.

Skill / letters	Date: _____	Date: _____	Date: _____
Finds print / reading direction			
First and last spoken sounds			
Blends spoken sounds			
Separates spoken sounds			
a m s t			
p n f r			
b c d g			
h l v w			
j k y z			
Reads two-sound words			
Blends three-sound words			
Understands a sentence			
Talks about a read-aloud			

Next sounds / words to teach:



Letters to move and build

Adult: Cut on the solid lines. Use the cards for blending and sound-box activities.

a	m	s	t
----------	----------	----------	----------

p	n	f	r
----------	----------	----------	----------

c	b	d	g
----------	----------	----------	----------

Print another copy if you want extra letters. Put the cards away between sessions and review a few at a time.



Adult answers and reminders

Answers support teaching. Accept clear oral responses and reasonable explanations.

Pages 4-5

Starting point: mat; /s/ in sun. Print: begin at Sam; two words; S is a capital; the period follows sat.

Page 6: first / last sounds

First: map /m/, top /t/, fan /f/, pan /p/. Last: sun /n/, map /p/, sat /t/.

Pages 7-8: sounds

Blending: at, an; sat, map, fan. Segmenting: at /a/ /t/ (2); sun /s/ /u/ /n/ (3); map /m/ /a/ /p/ (3); fan /f/ /a/ /n/ (3). Use short vowel sounds.

Pages 14-17: letters

Match Q-q and X-x. Vowel names: A, E, I, O, U. Page 16: A-a, M-m, S-s, T-t, P-p, N-n. Page 17: m, p, s, a, p, n.

Pages 19-23: building words

Two sounds: am, at, an. Three sounds: mat, sat, map, tap, pan, nap. Sound boxes: map, sat, fan; one letter in each box. Chain: mat, sat, pat, pan, man, map.

Page 24: sentences

Sam ran. Sam and Pat sat. Accept a drawing that represents one of the three sentences.

Page 25: listening

First: under a leaf. The bird moves to get out of the rain. Order: rain/leaf, flight to the porch, dry shelter. Mia may watch quietly to avoid disturbing the bird; accept a supported inference.

Page 26: progress check

Sounds: /n/, short /a/, /t/, /m/, /p/, /s/. Oral blends: at, sat, map, fan. Sound counts: am 2; sun 3; map 3; fan 3. Reading: mat, sat, map, pan. Use the pattern of responses to choose review; there is no standardized cut score.

Teaching basis: IES, Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade. Use the linked guide for additional adult teaching examples and explanations.

Read the IES foundational reading practice guide