



PHONICS & READING PROGRAM

UNIT 1

Short a CVC Words

Designed for beginning readers and older students
rebuilding foundational reading skills.

EXPLICIT BLENDING

Sound by sound

CONTROLLED TEXT

Taught words only

REVIEW & MASTERY

Practice and check

Clear steps. Meaningful practice. Growing confidence.



How to teach Unit 1

Short a

Unit goal

Students learn to hear, blend, read, and spell short-a CVC words. The same clear routine supports first-time readers and older students who need to fill reading gaps.

A simple lesson routine

- 1 Teach the parts.**
Show a by itself. Then show the final consonant by itself. Say each sound clearly.
- 2 Build the chunk.**
Move the letters together: a + b = ab. Point under each part as the student blends.
- 3 Build the whole word.**
Add the first consonant: c + ab = cab. Say the sounds, blend the word, then read it again smoothly.
- 4 Read and review.**
Practise every real word in the group. Add a sentence only when every word in it has already been taught.

Unit 1 sequence

- Lessons 1–3: ab, ad, ag | al, am, an | ap, at, ax
- Lesson 4: mixed short-a review and word chains
- Lesson 5: and, band, hand, land, sand
- Lesson 6: connected reading and the mastery check

Page 12 spelling words: cat, map, sand, band

High-frequency words

a I the is and to

Practise the lesson word briefly, then find and read it again on the review page.

If a student is stuck

- Return to the separate sounds or chunk.
- Point and model one careful blend.
- Have the student repeat it and reread the word.
- Do not ask the student to guess from a picture or the first letter.

When to continue

Move ahead when the student can:

- blend most words without guessing,
- read the lesson's high-frequency word,
- reread taught words and sentences with growing ease.

Keep sessions short and calm. Repeat a page when needed; accuracy comes before speed.

Use only real words. Briefly explain any word that may be unfamiliar to the student.



Challenge Words

Real words with less-common meanings

These words appear in the complete word-family lists but are uncommon in everyday reading. Teach the familiar words first. Introduce these as optional vocabulary or challenge practice.

bap

a small, soft bread roll; chiefly British

tam

a round woollen cap

dap

a friendly handclasp or greeting gesture

pax

peace or an agreement to stop quarrelling

gam

a group of whales

zax

a hand tool used for trimming roof slates

hap

chance, luck, or something that happens

pap

soft food, especially food for a baby

mam

mother; used in some regions

tat

to make lace by tying small knots in thread



Short a

a = /ă/ short a

1. Put the sounds together.

a + b = ab a + d = ad a + g = ag

2. Add the first sound. Then read the word.

ab	ad	ag
c + ab = cab	b + ad = bad	b + ag = bag
d + ab = dab	d + ad = dad	g + ag = gag
f + ab = fab	f + ad = fad	h + ag = hag
g + ab = gab	h + ad = had	l + ag = lag
j + ab = jab	l + ad = lad	n + ag = nag
l + ab = lab	m + ad = mad	r + ag = rag
n + ab = nab	p + ad = pad	s + ag = sag
t + ab = tab	s + ad = sad	t + ag = tag
		w + ag = wag

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD

a In a sentence, this word usually says /uh/.



Review short a

1. Read every word we have learned.

ab	ad	ag
c + ab = cab	b + ad = bad	b + ag = bag
d + ab = dab	d + ad = dad	g + ag = gag
f + ab = fab	f + ad = fad	h + ag = hag
g + ab = gab	h + ad = had	l + ag = lag
j + ab = jab	l + ad = lad	n + ag = nag
l + ab = lab	m + ad = mad	r + ag = rag
n + ab = nab	p + ad = pad	s + ag = sag
t + ab = tab	s + ad = sad	t + ag = tag
		w + ag = wag

2. Read the short sentences.

At the start: **d = D** **a = A**

End with a period.

1 Dad had a bag.

2 A bag had a tag.

3 A lad had a pad.



Short a

a = /ă/ short a

1. Put the sounds together.

a + l = al a + m = am a + n = an

2. Add the first sound. Then read the word.

al	am	an
g + al = gal p + al = pal	b + am = bam c + am = cam d + am = dam g + am = gam h + am = ham j + am = jam l + am = lam m + am = mam r + am = ram t + am = tam y + am = yam	b + an = ban c + an = can d + an = dan f + an = fan m + an = man n + an = nan p + an = pan r + an = ran t + an = tan v + an = van

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD

I The word I is always a capital letter.



Review short a

1. Read every word we have learned.

al	am	an
g + al = gal	b + am = bam	b + an = ban
p + al = pal	c + am = cam	c + an = can
	d + am = dam	d + an = dan
	g + am = gam	f + an = fan
	h + am = ham	m + an = man
	j + am = jam	n + an = nan
	l + am = lam	p + an = pan
	m + am = mam	r + an = ran
	r + am = ram	t + an = tan
	t + am = tam	v + an = van
	y + am = yam	

2. Read the short sentences.

CAPITALS | **a = A**

End with a period.

1 I am a man.

2 A man ran.

3 A ram ran.



Short a

a = /ă/ short a

1. Put the sounds together.

a + p = ap a + t = at a + x = ax

2. Add the first sound. Then read the word.

ap	at	ax
b + ap = bap	b + at = bat	f + ax = fax
c + ap = cap	c + at = cat	l + ax = lax
d + ap = dap	f + at = fat	m + ax = max
g + ap = gap	h + at = hat	p + ax = pax
h + ap = hap	m + at = mat	s + ax = sax
l + ap = lap	p + at = pat	t + ax = tax
m + ap = map	r + at = rat	v + ax = vax
n + ap = nap	s + at = sat	w + ax = wax
p + ap = pap	t + at = tat	z + ax = zax
r + ap = rap	v + at = vat	
s + ap = sap		
t + ap = tap		
y + ap = yap		
z + ap = zap		

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD

the

Learn this word by heart.



Review short a

1. Read every word we have learned.

ap	at	ax
b + ap = bap	b + at = bat	f + ax = fax
c + ap = cap	c + at = cat	l + ax = lax
d + ap = dap	f + at = fat	m + ax = max
g + ap = gap	h + at = hat	p + ax = pax
h + ap = hap	m + at = mat	s + ax = sax
l + ap = lap	p + at = pat	t + ax = tax
m + ap = map	r + at = rat	v + ax = vax
n + ap = nap	s + at = sat	w + ax = wax
p + ap = pap	t + at = tat	z + ax = zax
r + ap = rap	v + at = vat	
s + ap = sap		
t + ap = tap		
y + ap = yap		
z + ap = zap		

2. Read the short sentences.

CAPITALS | the = The

End with a period.

1 The cat sat.

2 The cat had a nap.

3 I had a map.



Mix short a

Change one sound

1. Read down each chain. Change one sound.

Chain 1	Chain 2	Chain 3
c + at = cat	b + ag = bag	s + at = sat
c + ap = cap	b + at = bat	s + ap = sap
m + ap = map	c + at = cat	l + ap = lap
m + an = man	c + an = can	l + ab = lab
m + ad = mad	m + an = man	l + ad = lad

2. Learn the high-frequency word.

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD

is

The s says /z/.

3. Read the sentences.

1 The cat is fat.

2 The man is sad.



Review short a

1. Read the mixed short-a words.

Set 1	Set 2	Set 3
b + ad = bad	h + ad = had	p + an = pan
b + ag = bag	h + am = ham	r + an = ran
c + an = can	l + ap = lap	r + at = rat
c + ap = cap	m + ad = mad	s + ad = sad
c + at = cat	m + an = man	s + at = sat
d + ad = dad	m + ap = map	t + ag = tag
f + an = fan	n + ap = nap	t + an = tan
f + at = fat	p + ad = pad	v + an = van

2. Read the sentences.

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD is

Read it in every sentence.

1 The man is a fan.

2 The van is tan.

3 A cat is mad.



Short a + nd

Build -and words

1. Learn the high-frequency word.

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD

a + **n** + **d** = **and**

2. Add the first sound. Then read the word.

-and words	
b + and = band	h + and = hand
l + and = land	s + and = sand

3. Read the phrases.

Phrase 1	Phrase 2	Phrase 3
a band and a fan	a hand and a map	land and sand

These are phrases. They do not need a capital or period.



Review short a + nd

1. Build the high-frequency word again.

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD

a + **n** + **d** = **and**

2. Read every -and word.

-and words	
b + and = band	h + and = hand
l + and = land	s + and = sand

3. Read the sentences.

SENTENCE CHECK

Capital at the start. Period at the end.

1 The hand is tan.

2 Sand is tan.

3 The band had a fan.

4 A man and a lad had sand.



Read a short-a passage

Read smoothly

1. Learn the high-frequency word.

HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD

t

+

o

=

to

The o says /oo/.

2. Read the warm-up phrases.

the man and the lad

a map and a bag

to the tan van

3. Read the passage.

The Map

The man had a map.

The man ran to a van.

A lad ran to the van.

The van had a bag.

The man and the lad had the map.



Unit 1 mastery check

Short a

1. Read each whole word.

Set 1	Set 2	Set 3
cab	cat	lab
bad	fax	sad
bag	band	tag
pal	dad	gal
ham	fan	man
can	map	nap
cap	rat	sand

2. Read the high-frequency words.

a

I

the

is

and

to

3. Read the sentences.

1 The cat and the rat sat.

2 The man ran to the van.

3 Sand is tan.

4. Spell four words.

Cover the word list with paper. An adult will say each word. Write one word in each box.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____