

The short vowel blends

Before starting page 20 of *Reading with Phonics*, give the following chalkboard introduction to the blends. Write s and the vowels on the board in this manner:

u
o
i
e
a

Ask the children to give the sound of each letter. Then, ask which letters are vowels and which is a consonant. Say, "I know most of you like the playground slide. Today I want to show you a new way to slide, and you can do it with your voice, using consonants and vowels. We slide from the consonant to join the vowel sound. We'll start this sliding game using the /s/ sound. (Point to s on the board.)

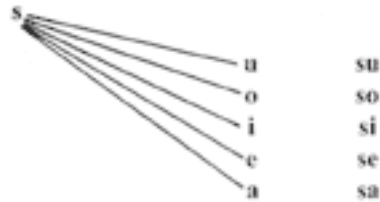
"Listen carefully so that you can learn how to slide with /s/ to each of the vowels, using one breath." (Note: The breath stream must not be interrupted between the saying of /s/ and /ā/, /ē/, /ī/, /ō/, /ū/, or the result will not be a blending of the two sounds.) "Now, say /s/ as I draw a line from /s/ to /ā/ and say /ā/ when the chalk line touches the vowel." Continue to slide from /s/ to /ē/, to /ī/, /ō/, and /ū/. The chalkboard will look like this:



Have the class slide from /s/ to each of the vowels. Next, call on individual children, asking:

- "Who can slide from /s/ to /ā/?"
- "Who can slide from /s/ to /ē/?"
- "Who can slide from /s/ to /ī/?"
- "Who can slide from /s/ to /ō/?"
- "Who can slide from /s/ to /ū/?"

Ask the class again to slide from /s/ to each vowel, and, as they do so, write the blends to the right of each vowel.



Auditory and visual discrimination

Explain that *sā*, *sē*, *sī*, *sō*, and *sū* are called the /s/ helpers because they help to make words. Ask the class to listen for and identify the vowel as you say one of the helpers, for example, /sō/. The child called on should say, "I heard /ō/," and go to the board and locate the blend (by sliding a finger or pointer under the blend) and say, "This is /sō/." Continue with other blends in this manner.

Writing helpers

Write the vowels on the board, separating them in this manner:

a		e		i		o		u
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Say, "Children, I am going to say /s/ helpers. Listen for the vowel so that you'll know under which vowel the helper is to be written. (Give /sī/.) Yes, the vowel sound is /i/, and the helper belongs in the /i/ column." Write *sī* in the *i* column.

a		e		i		o		u
				sī				

Dictate more blends in random vowel order. Call on individual children to identify the vowel sounds and to write the blends in the proper columns.

Writing words

When these helpers are mastered, the adding of final consonants to form words is the next step in word building.

The child must be taught that there is *one*, and only *one*, place to attack a word, and that is at the initial blend. Always draw a child's attention first to the beginning of a one-syllable word, not to the middle or end. Just as a line is read from left to right, so, too, a word is sounded from left to right. In so doing, a smooth, natural pronunciation and fluency in reading is developed. ✓

Write the vowels on the board in this manner:

a		e		i		o		u
---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---

Dictate blends and words in the following manner: **sū—sun, sē—set, sâ—sad, etc.** (Or, you may dictate the words with a slight pause between the blend and the final consonants: **sū:n.**) The child listens for the vowel in the word and then writes the word in the proper column:

a		e		i		o		u
sad		set						sun

In subsequent dictation of blends and words, children should be encouraged to write without the help of vowel headings as soon as they are able.

Language activity

Word meanings. Say the following orally. The response may be oral, written, or both:

"What /s/ helper word do you think of when I say:

1. how to use a soda straw? (**sip**)
2. unhappy? (**sad**)
3. shines in the sky during the day? (**sun**)
4. to cry very hard? (**sob**)
5. a boy's name? (**Sam**)
6. resting in a chair? (**sit**)
7. what the sun does at the end of the day?" (**set**)

Page 20—The s blends and words

Word study

Point out that the ladder on the left on page 20 in their books has blends and the ladder on the right has words. Have them start at the blue