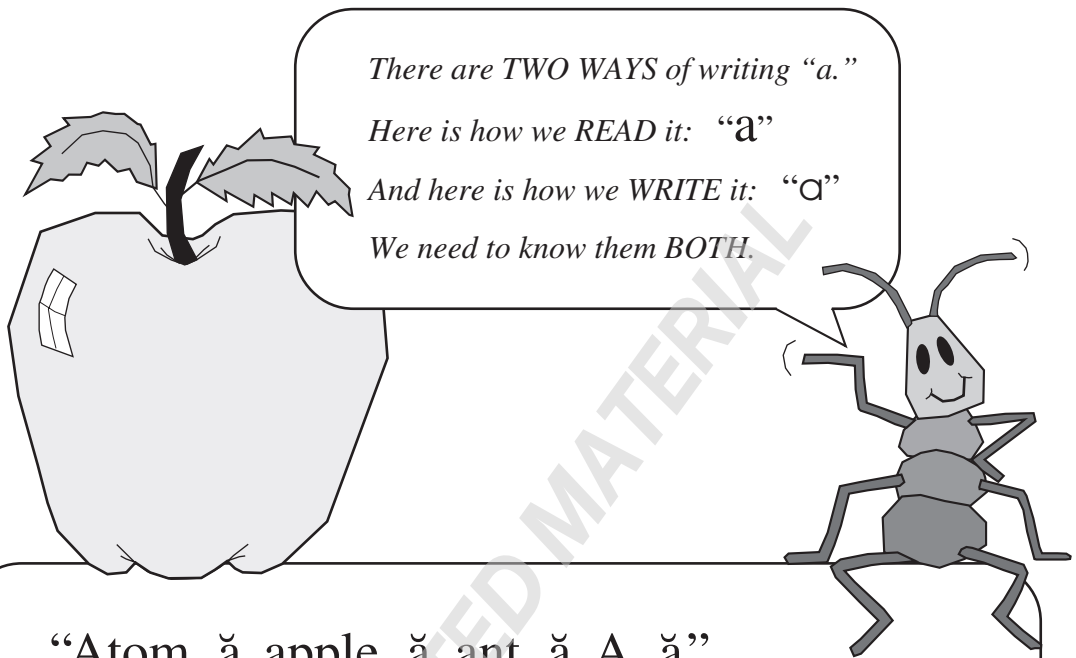
# Aă Ad




"Atom, ă, apple, ă, ant, ă, A, ă."

The little mark you see above each of these letters is called a DIACRITICAL mark. This is the diacritical mark for a short-vowel sound. There are different marks for different sounds.

These marks tell you exactly how to pronounce letters and syllables. They are the *key* that shows you how to sound out a word when you look it up in the dictionary.

Knowing this code is *very handy!*

a ɑ

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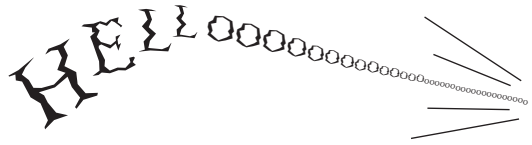
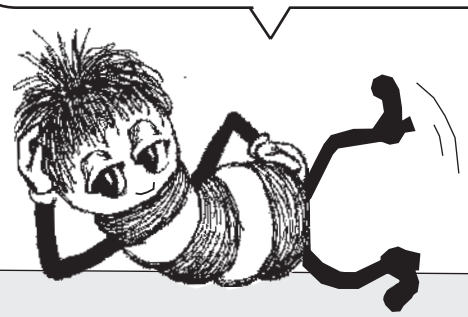
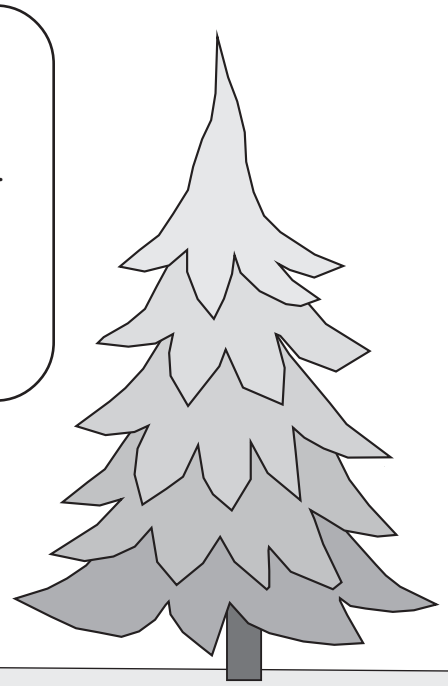
# Eĕ




*...Hello!*
*If it's TOO HARD for you to hear these sounds clearly from dictation, try saying the sound out loud yourself, after hearing it. It may be helpful. Do this for as long as you need to.*

*Play the Short-Vowel Shuffle (page 4) with the "a" and "e" cards, and keep adding more letter cards as you learn them. It's a lot of FUN!*





"Echo, ĕ, exercise, ĕ, evergreen, ĕ, edge, ĕ, E, ĕ."

Educators such as Maria Montessori have long known that when we use *all* of our senses to learn something, it easier to learn and remember. That is why we *see, hear, say, feel*, and *write* each letter that we are learning. This is called a MULTISENSORY method of learning, and it makes things so much easier. It's really amazing, when you stop to think about it!

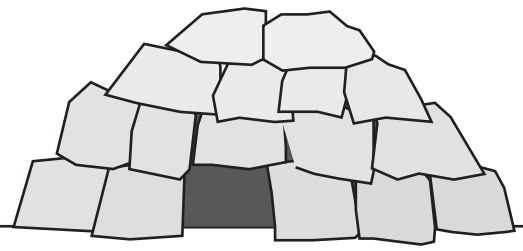
a e ɑ

# Iĭ

*It's REALLY DIFFICULT to tell these sounds apart at first.*
*Here's a NEAT TRICK that many people find very helpful (as well as fun!):*

*Let's suppose that you are having trouble being able to tell "i" from "e."*
*Try saying the "e" pictures using the "i" sound: "icho, ixercise, ivergreen, idge."*
*Now say the "i" pictures with the "e" sound: "etch, egloo." See what I mean?*

*This little ~~ixercise~~ exercise is helpful because when you listen to both the WRONG and RIGHT way of saying these sounds within a word, it is MUCH EASIER to hear the difference between them!*



"Itch, ĭ, igloo, ĭ, I, ĭ"

The *highest mountain*
in the *whole world*
is still climbed
by taking only
one small step at a time, and keeping on going…

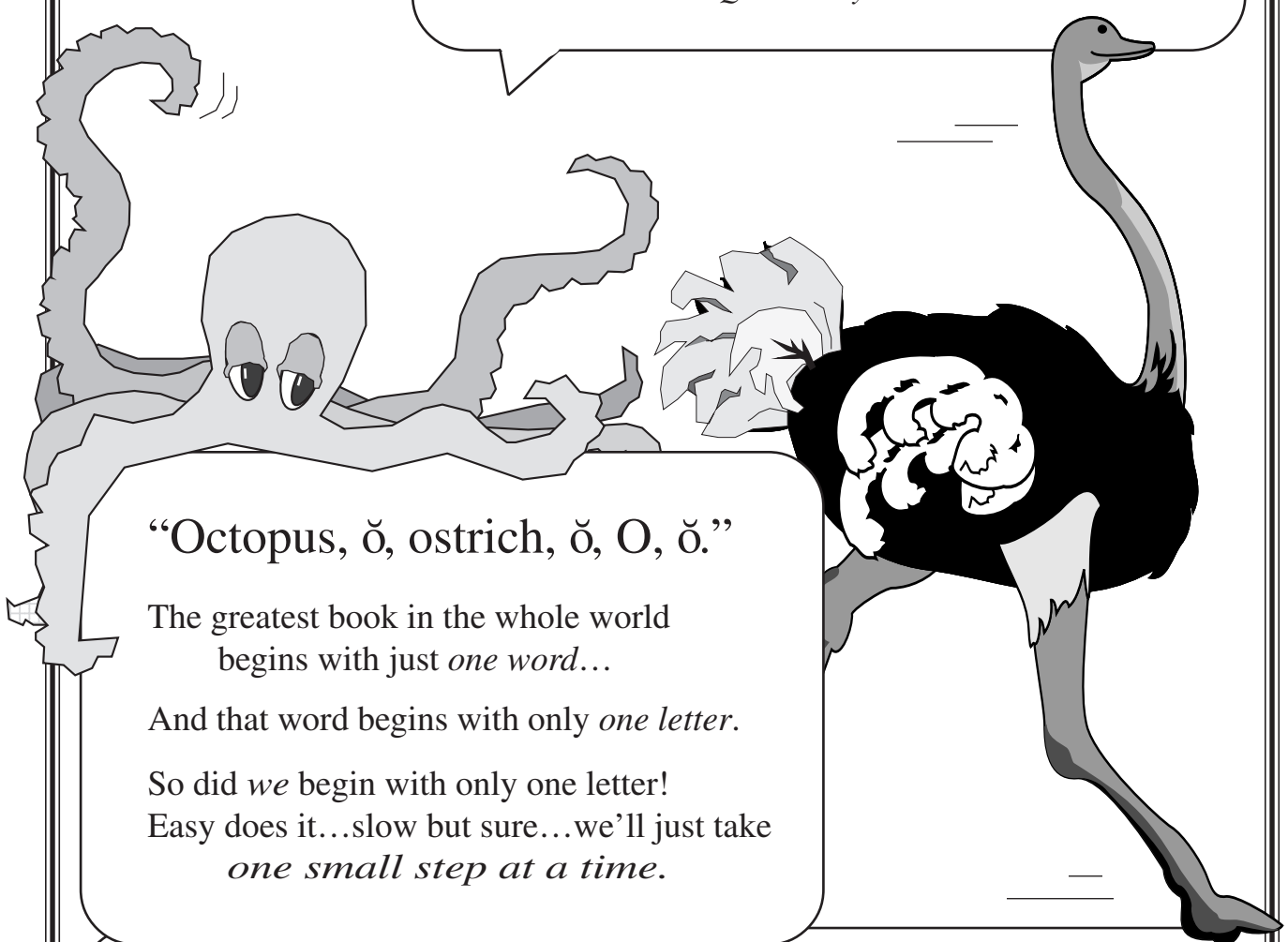
Just as *we* are learning how to *read* by taking only one small step at a time, and keeping on going!

a e i a

# Oŏ

*It's MUCH easier to look at these short-vowel sounds JUST for a MINUTE, several times a day, than it is to have LONG study periods. After all, did YOU have to STUDY HARD to learn YOUR OWN NAME? Of course not! You learned it EASILY because you heard someone SAY it to you, off and on, each day since your birth.*

*Continue playing the Short-Vowel Shuffle. For added practice, put these letter-cards where you will see them a lot. Take a look at them every so often, and say them out loud. You will be SURPRISED at how QUICKLY you will learn them!*



"Octopus, ŏ, ostrich, ŏ, O, ŏ."

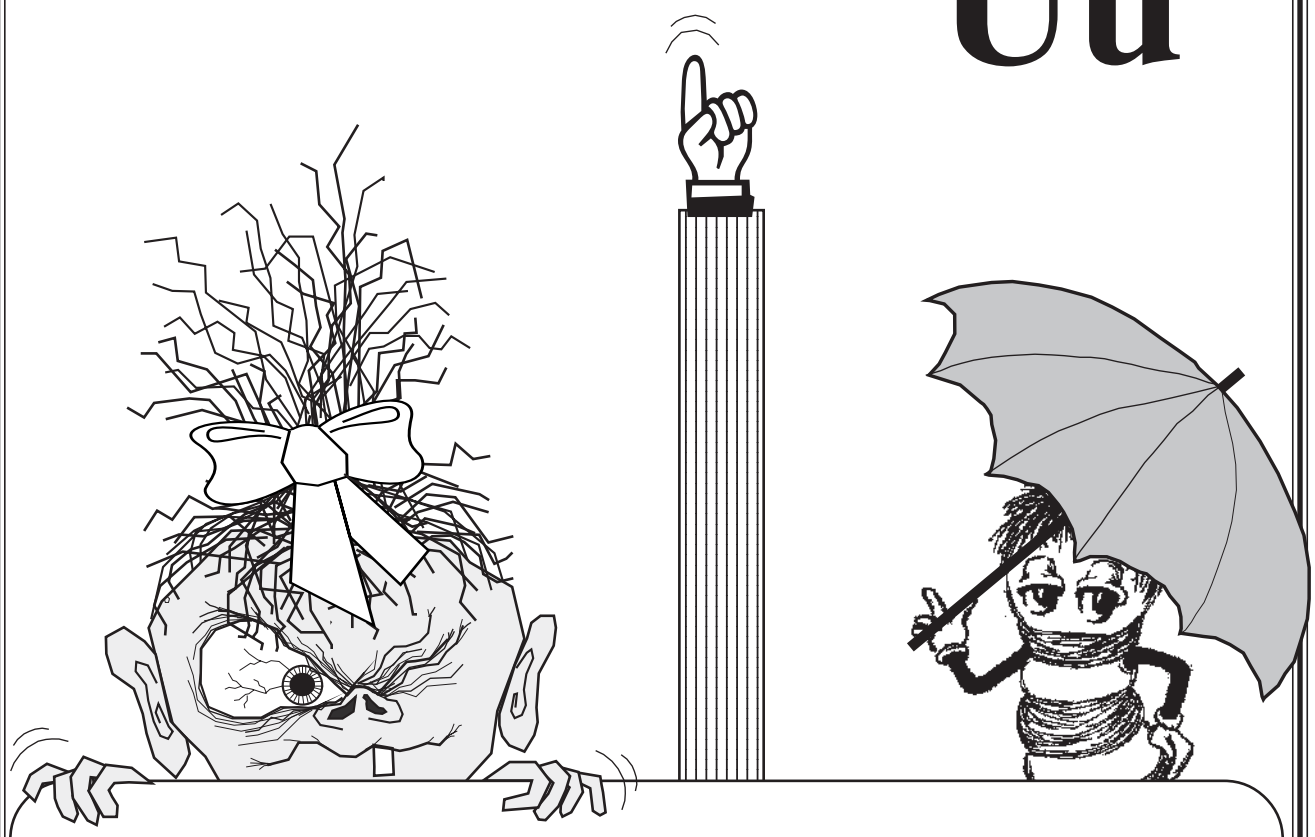
The greatest book in the whole world
begins with just *one word*…

And that word begins with only *one letter*.

So did *we* begin with only one letter!
Easy does it…slow but sure…we'll just take
*one small step at a time*.

a e i o a

# Uŭ



"Ugly, ŭ, up, ŭ, umbrella, ŭ, U, ŭ."

And that ends the vowels! On the next page is your first review. Remember one thing when reviewing: *Don't ever guess!* A wrong answer leaves an imprint on your brain, which then takes *more* time and energy to *unlearn.*

Always look back at the letter pictures until you know these sounds well enough not to. It makes things easier—and in the long run, you will learn *faster!*

a e i o u

## BLENDIT! (Short-Vowel Review)

Review this page once a day, until this knowledge is second nature and automatic. When READING, name both the letter and its short sound. When WRITING. listen to the sound of the letter and then write down its name. Either read and write these letters directly from the page, or play one of the following vowel discrimination games for variety and fun: *Bingo*, numbers 3 and 4 on page 3, and numbers 1 and 2 on page 250.

*Blendit!* (similar to *Bingo*): Make three copies of this page. Use one copy for a board, and cut the other two copies into letter squares. Place the squares in a pile upside down in the middle of the table. Pick a card, read the sound out loud, and place it over the correct letter on the board. The first one to fill in all the letters in a row wins. Or, play until *both* players win—it's less pressure. (Also—*heh heh*—it's added practice. *Sneaky!)*

TEACHING TIPS: Pantomime a word for any sound your learner may have forgotten: bite an apple ("a"), lift an arm up and down ("e" exercise), scratch ("i" itch), wave arms around ("o" octopus), or point upwards ("u" up).

Look back at the letter pictures as often as necessary, but do not proceed until you know these sounds as well as you know your own name.

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

# TWO-LETTER BLENDS (EYEROBICS)

Now we shall learn some CONSONANTS and combine them with vowels to make two-letter blends. A consonant is any letter that is not a vowel.

Being able to blend letters together smoothly is a *very important skill!* It will train your eye muscles to track (move) together effortlessly from left to right across the page, so that you will be able to read words and books easily, without having to struggle. Blending practice is good exercise—it is aerobics for the eyes. In fact, let's call it *eye-robics* because that's what it is—aerobics for the eyes!

Eyerobics begins with seventeen pages of two-letter blends, gradually building up to long words made of many syllables. A syllable is the smallest part a word can be broken into which also contains a vowel—usually two or three-letter blends. We build bricks to make *houses*, and syllables to make *words.*

Blending exercises must be practiced in order to become automatic, just like any other skill such as riding a bicycle. For some students this will take longer than with others.

1—If blending is difficult:
Practice the blending game on page 18. This *Train Game* is extremely helpful to anyone needing help in learning this skill! There is also a master *Train Game* in the appendix on pages 253 and 254 that is blank, for those of you who wish to continue this exercise with other letters as well.

2—If blending is easy:
Skip *The Train Game* and continue the blending exercises until the end of this section of *Phonics Pathways.*

3—If blending is especially easy and effortless:
If blending is super-easy for you, *and* if you already know all the consonant sounds, you may skip the rest of the two-letter blend exercises and move on to the review on page 36. You can either read the blends as they are, or play *StarSearch* to review them for variety. It's good practice, and fun to play!

*Did you know that sometimes very intelligent people can have real difficulty when learning how to blend letters together smoothly when reading?*

*Blending skills have nothing to do with intelligence any more than wearing glasses does!*

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Name each picture on the page, and listen for its beginning sound. Each picture begins with the sound of the consonant introduced on that page. (The names of these pictures also contain many sounds you have not had yet, but you *only* are to listen for the *beginning sound* of each one.)

2. Now *blend* the consonant sound with the vowel sound. Begin at the top of the ladder, and read the short "a." Then read the two sounds individually as you move across the page: "s—a." Now blend the two sounds together. Take a *DEEP BREATH* and *STRETCH* the sounds out as you read them, smoothly blending the sound of one vowel into the other:

   *"SSSSaaaaaaaaaa"*

3. Link this blend with a real word, such as "sa" as in "sat, Sam, sad," etc. Continue in this manner with the rest of the vowels, moving down the page.

4. Read the blends in the review window at the bottom. Keep your *Short-Vowel Stick* handy (page 3) as a quick reference to short-vowel sounds.

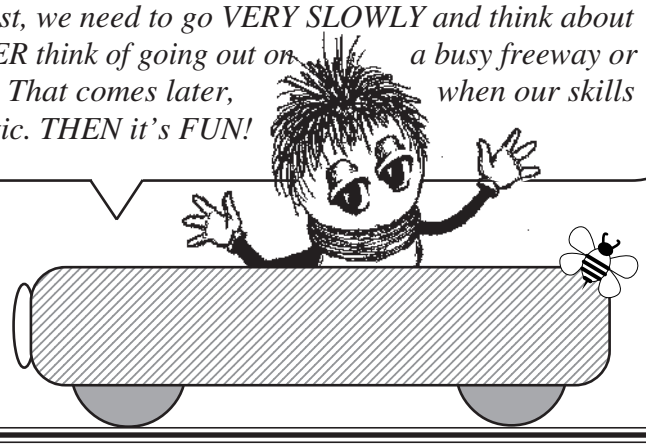
5. Write these sounds from dictation. (Remember, if you find it difficult to identify these sounds from dictation alone, say them to yourself first.)

6. Repeat these instructions with the rest of the consonants in this section,

7. If blending is too much of a challenge for you in the beginning, practice *The Train Game* on page 18. It's a hands-on activity that's *sure* to help!

Spend about ten minutes a day with this section. You might complete several pages in one day, or you might spend several days on one page. It is how much *time* you spend that counts, not how many *pages* that you do!

*We review each step a LOT because we need to know this material at a deep level until it's automatic in recall, just as we know our own name. It's like learning how to ride a bicycle, or drive a car: At first, we need to go VERY SLOWLY and think about every step involved. We would NEVER think of going out on a busy freeway or down a steep hill our first time out. That comes later, when our skills are practiced enough to be automatic. THEN it's FUN!*



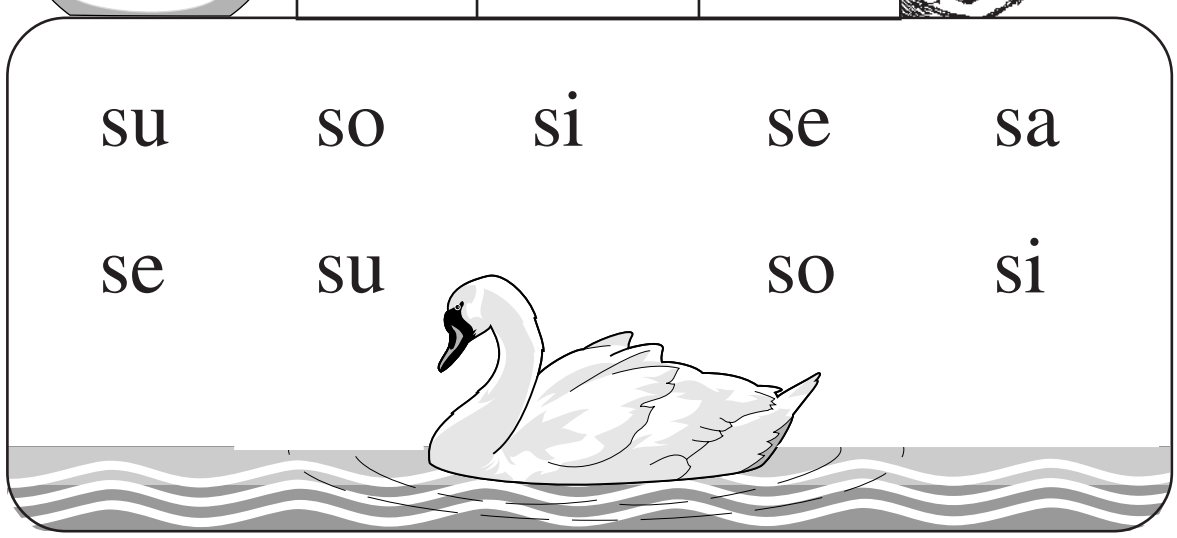
# Ss

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a | s-a | sa |
| e | s-e | se |
| i | s-i | si |
| o | s-o | so |
| u | s-u | su |

*These exercises are excellent practice! But if this page is too DIFFICULT for you, play The Train Game on the next page first. Keep playing it until blending becomes easier for you. (On the other hand, if these pages seem too EASY for you, and if you already know the consonant sounds, you may proceed directly to the review on page 36.)*

su so si se sa

se su so si



*Star, snowman, swan*

*The Train Game* game provides intensive kinesthetic eye-tracking practice, helping to prevent or correct reversals. Copy and laminate this page, and cut the letters apart:

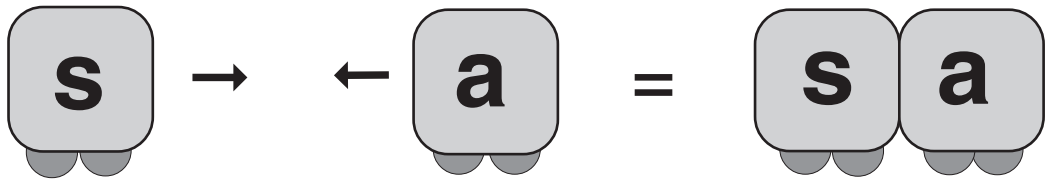
1– Place the "s" and "a" cars on the table, with the "s" car on your left and the "a" car on your right, about one or two feet apart.

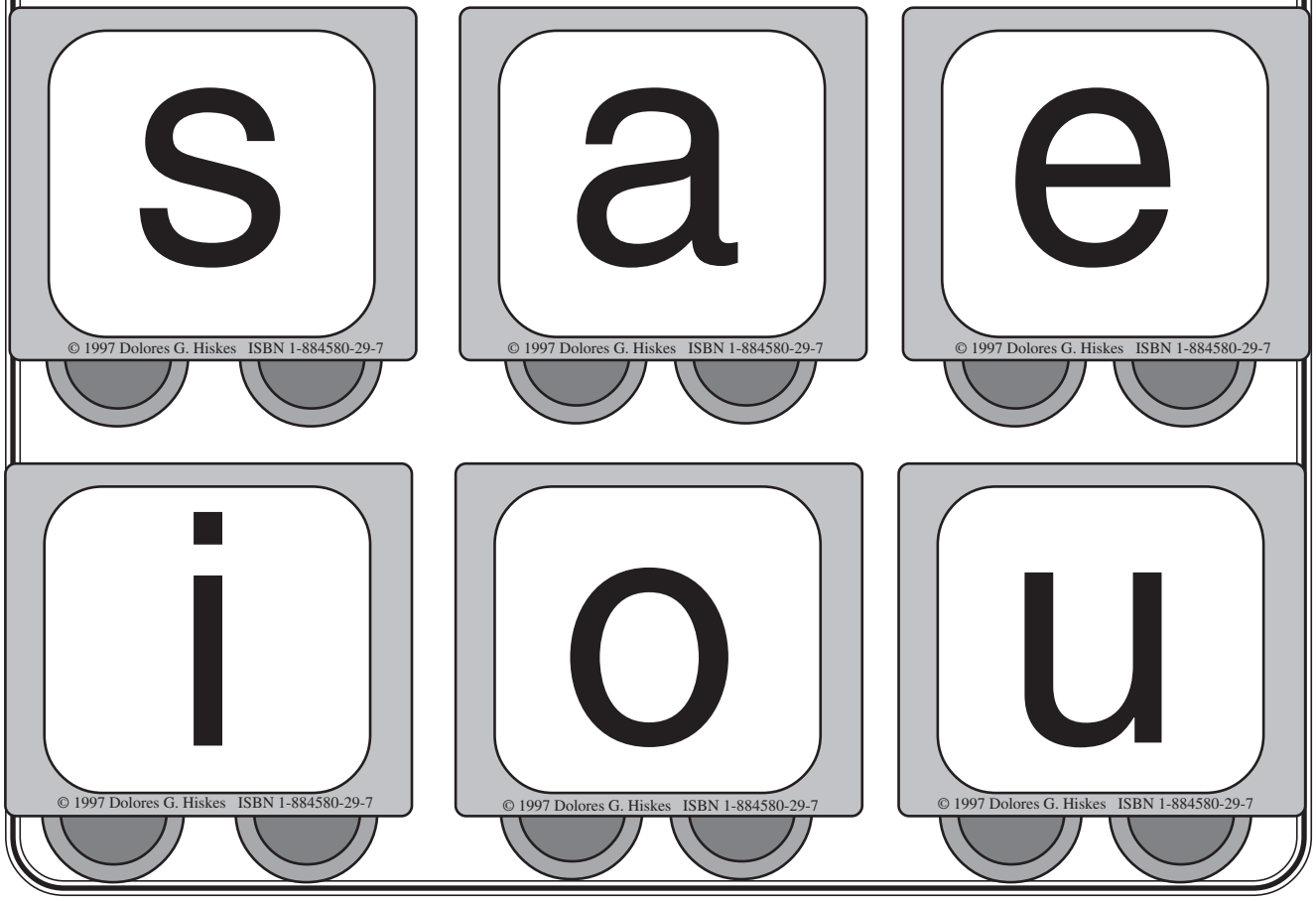
2– "Chug" the "s" car slightly toward the center with your left hand. Look at it while you slide it, and say its sound at the same time.

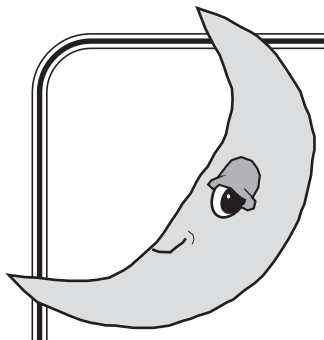
3– Now focus your attention on the "a" car. Look at it and chug it slightly toward the center, saying its short sound while you are watching it.

4– Keep going in this fashion, until the cars meet. When the cars "hitch" together, the sounds should hitch together also, in one smooth blend. Be sure that you always *look* at each letter or blend while you *say* it.

(There is a master *Train Game* on pages 253-254 to use with other letters if desired.)

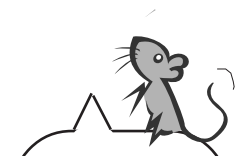


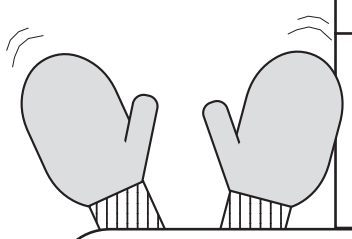


# Mm

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a | m-a | ma |
| e | m-e | me |
| i | m-i | mi |
| o | m-o | mo |
| u | m-u | mu |



*SHOOT for the MOON! EVEN if you MISS, you'll land among the STARS!*

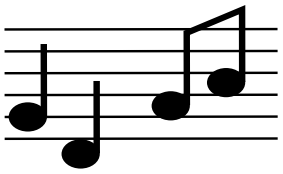


mu mo mi me ma

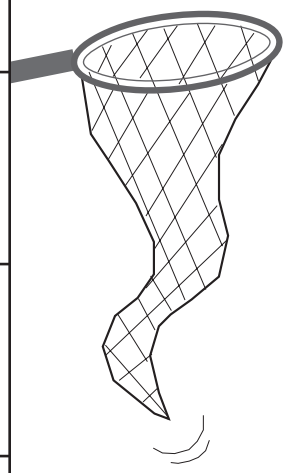
se sa su si

*Moon, mouse, mittens*

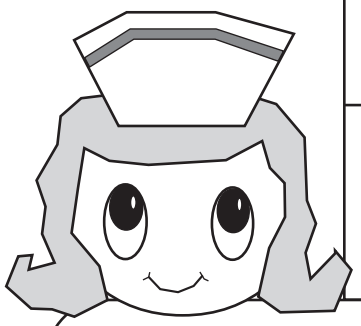
# Nn



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a | n-a | na |
| e | n-e | ne |
| i | n-i | ni |
| o | n-o | no |
| u | n-u | nu |



*When in DOUBT, do the FRIENDLIEST thing!*



nu no ni ne na

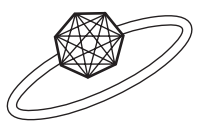
su mi sa se

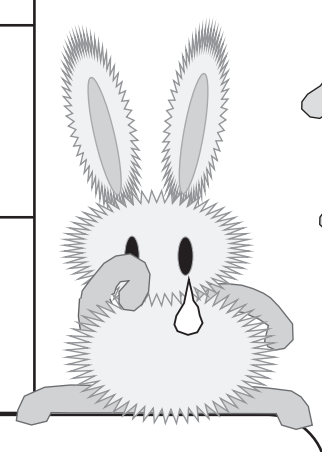
*Notes, net, nurse*

# Rr

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a | r-a | ra |
| e | r-e | re |
| i | r-i | ri |
| o | r-o | ro |
| u | r-u | ru |

*EVERYONE has a RAINY CORNER in his life!*





ru ro ri re ra

na se mu ni

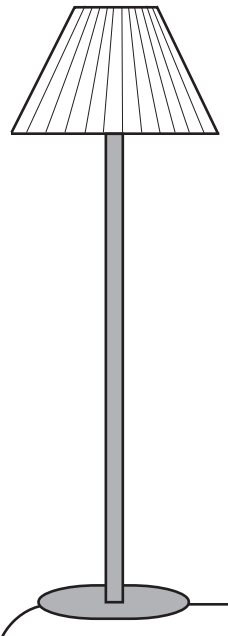
ra ra-n ran

*Rain, ring, rabbit*

# Ll

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a | l-a | la |
| e | l-e | le |
| i | l-i | li |
| o | l-o | lo |
| u | l-u | lu |

*Just take ONE LITTLE STEP at a TIME… and then ANOTHER, and then ANOTHER, and ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER, and another, and…*



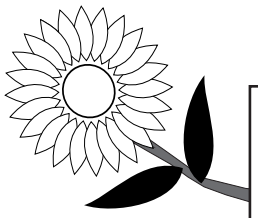
lu lo li le la

ni mu ra se

Le Le-s Les

*Lips, lamp, legs*

# Ff

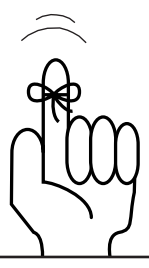


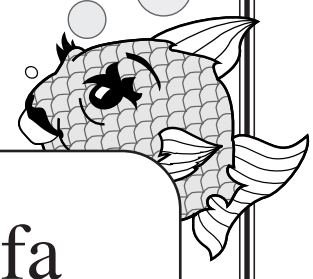
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a | f-a | fa |
| e | f-e | fe |
| i | f-i | fi |
| o | f-o | fo |
| u | f-u | fu |

*Remember—*
*when reading these*
*blends also think of*
*some words*
*that*
*BEGIN with*
*these sounds:*

*"fu" as in "fun,"*
*"fo" as in "fox,"*
*"fi" as in "fish," etc.*

*(How many*
*different words*
*can*
*YOU*
*think of?)*





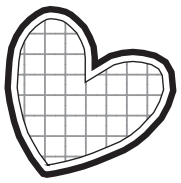
fu fo fi fe fa

ru se lo ni

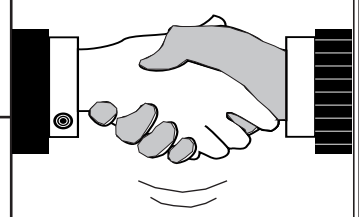
fu fu-n fun

*Flower, finger, fish*

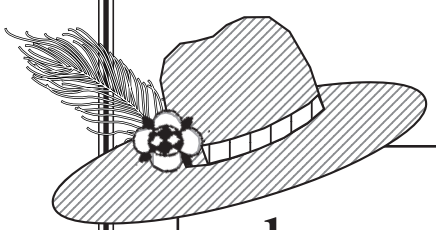
# Hh



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a | h-a | ha |
| e | h-e | he |
| i | h-i | hi |
| o | h-o | ho |
| u | h-u | hu |



*We*
*A L L*
*have*
*UNEXPLORED*
*TERRITORY…*
*it's*
*under*
*our*
*HAT!*



hu ho hi he ha

ra fe si mu

hi hi-m him

*Heart, handshake, hat*