

Closed syllables

A focused sample lesson for older learners who need practice reading and spelling short-vowel words.

Teaching focus: Notice one vowel followed by one or more consonants; read and spell the short-vowel words selected here.

Before you begin: Check that the learner knows the letter sounds in the practice words and can blend a three-sound word. Use familiar vocabulary and explain unknown words.

01 Explain and model

Write **map**. Identify the vowel **a** and the consonant after it. Explain: “This word has a closed syllable. In this word, a represents its short sound.” Say each sound without adding an extra “uh,” blend, and read **map**. Model again with **sit**.

02 Read together

Use the first row on page 2. Have the learner identify the vowel, say its sound, blend the sounds, and read the word. If an error occurs, point to the relevant spelling, model it, and have the learner reread the whole word. Return to that word later.

03 Practice and spell

Continue with the word list. Read the short phrases after the individual words. Then cover the list and dictate **map, red, sit, hop, sun**. For each word: say it, segment its sounds, write it, and read it back. Compare with the model and correct together.

04 Review and decide

Use page 4 to record the response and the support needed. Revisit confusing vowel sounds or omitted consonants. If these words are already easy, select more demanding material that matches the learner’s needs.

Use this as a teaching sample, not a timed test or placement assessment. The estimated lesson length is 10-15 minutes; adjust the pace and number of words. Reading instruction should also address vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and meaningful text.

Read. Notice. Spell.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 / Read the words. Underline the vowel in each word. Say its short sound, blend, and read the whole word.

map

red

sit

hop

sun

lap

net

rim

dot

mud

tap

pen

fit

log

rug

2 / Read the phrases. Read accurately first. Reread each phrase smoothly.

a red pen

a wet rug

a hot sun

3 / Listen and spell. Cover the word list. Your teacher will say five words. Say the sounds, write each word, and read it back.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

4 / Explain one example. Choose a word from the list. Point to its vowel and the consonant after it. Tell your teacher what you noticed.

Answer key & teaching notes

Use the key to respond to the learner's work. Accuracy and the support required matter more than speed.

Vowels to underline

Short a	map, lap, tap
Short e	red, net, pen
Short i	sit, rim, fit
Short o	hop, dot, log
Short u	sun, mud, rug

Phrase reading: a red pen; a wet rug; a hot sun.

Dictation order: 1. map 2. red 3. sit 4. hop 5. sun.

Example explanation: In map, a is followed by p and represents the short-a sound.

Keep the explanation precise. The selected words illustrate a common closed-syllable pattern. Do not teach that every vowel followed by a consonant must be short: English also has other syllable patterns and exceptions. Pronunciation varies by dialect; consider the learner's speech before labeling a pronunciation an error.

If a learner is unsure: Reduce the set, revisit the relevant letter-sound relationship, model the word, and provide another supported attempt. Do not infer a diagnosis or an instructional level from this brief activity.

Further reading

University of Florida Literacy Institute, Glossary (closed syllable and related terms).
ufl.edu/education/ufl.edu/resources/teaching-resources/glossary/

Institute of Education Sciences (2022), Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9.
ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/29

These sources inform the instructional context. This original Orthos sample is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or validated by either organization.

What did you notice?

Learner initials: _____ Date: _____ Teacher: _____

Record the word as read or spelled and the support provided. Use these notes to plan teaching; this sheet has no score cutoff or diagnostic interpretation.

WORD / TASK	RESPONSE	SUPPORT / CORRECTION

Which vowel sounds or consonants need another look?

What will I model or revisit in the next lesson?

When will I check these words again?

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