



SAGE

A supplementary guide to teaching literacy with phonics



This booklet accompanies a set of audio files. There are two parts. Part A explains how to teach the sounds of letters and groups of letters. Part B has some activities which you can use with your learners. You can play the audio on a phone or tablet, just say the sounds and words yourself, or perhaps do some of each.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

When we teach learners to read, first we teach them the sounds of individual letters. It is very important that we teach only the sound that letter makes. For example, S is 'sss' not 'sah' or 'suh'. A is just the sound of the *a* in *hat*, not 'ay' or 'ah'. This is the foundation of teaching literacy with phonics.



When a letter has more than one sound, we teach the most common sound first. Then we teach the less common sound in later lessons. For example, for C, we teach the 'hard' C of *come* first. We teach the 'soft' C of *nice* later.

We teach groups of letters with one sound such as *sh*, *ch*, *ai*, *ee* and *igh* in the same way: we teach just the sound those letters make, with no other sound added.

Pause for thought

Why do we start by teaching the sounds of letters and groups of letters, not the names?
How does this help children start learning to read and write?

A1: The sounds of single letters

This audio file helps you to say the sounds of the letters in the correct way for teaching literacy with phonics. Listen, and repeat the sounds of the letters in the pauses.

Keep a record of your progress. How difficult is it for you to make the letter sounds in the audio? Use a pencil, so you can change your record as you improve.

	difficult	quite easy	very easy
A a: and, can, that	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B b: but, big, problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C c: car, cut, magic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D d: do, said, bad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E e: get, then, end	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F f: food, for, if	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G g: go, good, big	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H h: here, he, happy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I i: it, isn't, think	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J j: just, juice, jacket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K k: key, king, kind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L l: like, lots, always	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M m: me, animal, same	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N n: no, only, children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O o: on, hot, long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P p: put, up, slept	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Qu qu: quick, queen, quiz	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R r: red, bring, April	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S s: sit, this, must	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T t: to, at, water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U u: but, us, under	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V v: van, live, above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W w: we, will, awake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X x: box, six, exit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y y: yes, you, year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Z z: zoo, crazy, amazing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A2: Sound-talking with single letters

This audio file shows you how to do 'sound talking'. This means saying a word divided into its separate sounds.

In the room, write a word on the board, or show it on a card. Say the individual sounds of the word while you point at the letter or group of letters which makes that sound. Then blend the sounds together to make the word. Then get the learners to do it for themselves. This is one of the main ways to teach literacy with phonics.

You will hear some examples of this method. After each example, stop the audio and repeat it several times.

a- n- d-, and

b- u- t-, but

p- e- n-, pen

i- f-, if

h- a- d-, had

h- e- l- p-, help

j- u- s- t-, just

f- r- o- m-, from

s- t- o- p- s-, stops

Keep a record of your progress. How difficult is it for you to do this type of 'sound talking'? Use a pencil, so you can change it as you improve your skill.

very difficult quite difficult quite easy very easy

A3: Digraphs and trigraphs with consonants

Digraphs are pairs of letters with the same sound, such as *sh*, *ai*, *or* and *ee*. Trigraphs are groups of three letters, such as *tch* and *igh*. When we teach these, we also need to say the sounds the letters make without any extra sounds. For example, *sh* is 'shhh' not 'shuh' or 'sher'. Listen and practise saying the sound of each one in the pauses. We start with the most common digraphs/trigraphs with consonants.

Keep a record of your progress. How difficult is it for you to make the sounds in the audio? Use a pencil, so you can change your record as you improve.

	difficult	quite easy	very easy
sh: shop, shoe, wash	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ch: chicken, child, choose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
tch: match, watch, kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ng: bring, going, wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
th 'soft': thanks, three, path	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
th 'hard': the, theirs, mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Here are two examples of double consonants. There are many more.

ss: class, miss, possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ll: call, yellow, ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A4: Digraphs and trigraphs with vowels

Now listen and practise saying the sounds of the most common digraphs and trigraphs with vowels. How difficult is it for you to make the sounds in the audio? (You may find this a little easier than the digraphs/trigraphs with consonants.)

	difficult	quite easy	very easy
ai: train, wait, paid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ea: eat, mean, teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ee: see, green, meet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
igh: high, night, fight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
oa: soap, boat, road	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
oo 'long': food, school, soon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
oo 'short': book, good, stood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ar: car, arm, part	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ir: bird, girl, thirty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
or: for, pork, corner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ur: turn, hurt, burnt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ear: near, hear, ears	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
air: pair, hairy, stairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ou: out, cloud, about	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ow (1): now, how, town	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ow (2): show, own, grow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
oi: noise, oil, coin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ay: say, may, play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



A5: Sound-talking with single letters, digraphs and trigraphs

Remember how you heard 'sound talking' in A2? Now you will hear some examples of sound talking of words with a mix of single letters, digraphs and trigraphs. After each example, stop the audio and repeat it several times.

sh- o- p-, shop ar- m-, arm c- l- o- ck-, clock g- oo- d-, good
n- ow,- now t- r- ee- s-, trees c- a- tch, catch m- or- n- i- ng, morning

Keep a record of your progress. How difficult is it for you to do this exactly as demonstrated in the audio? Use a pencil, so you can change your record as you improve.

very difficult quite difficult quite easy very easy

A6: Sound-talking with the 'magic e'

The 'magic e' changes the sound of the previous vowel. For example, *bit + e = bite*, *hop + e = hope* etc.

In this audio file, you will hear some examples of sound talking of words with the magic e. After each example, stop the audio and repeat it several times.

g- a*- ve- gave m- i*- ne - mine h- o*- pe- hope t- u*- ne- tune
**'long' form of the vowel*

How difficult do you find this to do? Use a pencil, so you can change it as you improve.

very difficult quite difficult quite easy very easy

A7: Sound-talking with other letter-sound relationships

Of course, there are many other ways that letters make sounds. Here are some more examples of sound-talking with some of these other sounds. After each example, stop the audio and repeat it several times. Again, how difficult is it for you?

t- r- ue-, true s- ch- oo- l-, school h- a- pp- y-, happy
p- l- ea- se-, please p- a- ge-, page
very difficult quite difficult quite easy very easy

A8: Sight words

Some words have very irregular spellings. It is usually best to teach these as whole words, rather than with sound talking. Here are some examples: *the, she, was, who, people, could, enough*. Can you think of more words with tricky spellings like this?

Part B: Games with audio

The second set of audio files have sounds and words for games and activities which you can use with your learners. There are two reasons to do this. Firstly, it is good for your learners to listen to a variety of voices when they match letters with sounds. Secondly, the audio will show you activity formats you can also use with your own voice. There are additional ideas for doing this for each activity.

Setting up the activities

It is very important that the learners understand very clearly what they have to do in the activity. If learners don't understand how to do an activity, it is not just a waste of time in that lesson. It can damage their motivation to learn that subject, and even to come to the hub at all.

It is usually best to give a clear demonstration of an activity first. Even then, some learners may not have understood. During the activity, visit every pair or group as soon as possible, and check they are doing it properly. If they are not, help them to understand how to do it.

Playing the audio

It may be possible to play the audio on a mobile phone or tablet. If the room is quiet and you stand in the middle of it, the phone's maximum volume may be loud enough. Experiment before you try it in a session. Start the phone or tablet playing one of the audio files. Leave it in the middle of the room, and walk around. Can you hear it clearly from all parts of the room?

Tip: If you place a mobile phone or tablet on a wood, plastic or metal box, you may find it is slightly louder.

For best results connect the phone tablet to an external loudspeaker, via a cable or Bluetooth. The bigger the loudspeaker, the better!



B1: Listen and point to the sound: common letters

Materials: Each pair of learners will need paper and one pen or pencil.

Procedure:

1. Write these letters on the board in this formation (4, 4, 4):

a c d e

g i m n

o p s t

2. Say the sound of each letter, and get the learners to say it after you several times.
3. Organise the learners into pairs. Each pair must copy the letters in the same formation as they are on the board.
4. Play the audio. After each letter sound, the pairs must point at the letter they heard. If they need more time or repetition of the sound from you, pause the audio.
5. Repeat the activity as required, either with the audio file again, or by saying the letters in your own voice. If you use your own voice, the order of the letters is not important, but be sure to cover all of them.

B2: Listen and point to the sound: less common letters

As above, but with:

b f h j

k l r u v

w x y z

Additional activities

Learners with lower levels of literacy: Use this format with your own voice, and just five or six letters each time.

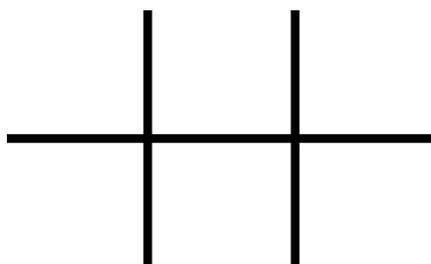
Learners with higher levels of literacy: Use this format with your own voice, and the whole alphabet (except Q, as it is almost never used without U).

B3: Letter sound bingo, game 1

Materials: Each learner will need paper and a pen or pencil.

Procedure:

1. Write the letters of the alphabet on the board. Say the *sound* of each one, and ask the learners to repeat it after you several times. (If necessary, listen to A1 before the lesson to remind yourself of the basic, most common sounds of the letters.)
2. Draw a grid like this on the board. Then invite learners to suggest one letter to go into each square.



3. Say **the sounds** of letters of the alphabet at random. If the letter you say is in the grid, the learners must say 'Yes!' When that happens, cross out the letter.
4. Wipe the letters from the grid. Each learner must then copy the grid onto paper, and choose any six letters to fill it.
5. Play the audio. When a learner hears one of her/his letters, she/he crosses it off. When learners have crossed off all their letters, they shout 'Bingo!' The first learner to do this is the 'winner', but continue until everybody has crossed off all of their six letters.

B4: Letter sound bingo, game 2

B5: Letter sound bingo, game 3

As above, but with the letters in a different order.

Additional activities

Repeat the format with your own voice, and with the letters in a different order each time.



B6: Write and say the word: single letter sounds, activity 1

Materials: each learner will need paper and a pen or pencil.

Procedure:

1. One at a time, write each word on the board. Check that the learners understand the meaning of the word. You could do this by asking a question which will use the word in the answer. For example:

Is this big or small? (It's big.)

Can you stand on one leg? (Yes, I can.)

What's that? (It's a box.)

Also get the learners to practise saying the words a few times. The words are: *big, can, did, leg, sun, not, red, box, him, and.*

2. Wipe the words off the board. Play the audio (or say the letter sounds yourself). The learners must write the word they hear being spelled with sounds of letters. If necessary, pause the audio and repeat the spelling with sounds using your own voice.
3. Each learner joins another to form a pair. Get them to compare their words, and make any changes they wish to.
4. Invite different learners to say the spelling of a word with the sounds of the letters. Write the word on the board as they say it. Any learner with an incorrect version must correct it.

B6 Alternative activity: Point to the word

This version can be used with learners with very low levels of literacy.

1. Do stage 1 as described above. Then the learners form pairs. Each pair must copy all the words in quite large letters onto a piece of paper. OR: If this would be too difficult for them, give them pieces of paper with the words which you made before the lesson.
2. Play the audio (or say the letter sounds). The pairs must point to the word they hear being spelled with sounds.

B7: Write and say the word: single letter sounds, activity 2

As above, but with the following words: *hand, stop, wind (as in weather), lots, clap, sent, lost, drop, went, jump, help, next*

Additional activities

Here are some more words you could use with your own voice for this activity:

3 letters: *pen, dog, had, six, yes, get, man, top, fun, fat, bed, van, cat, bag, end, nut, tap*

4 letters: *must, twin, rest, mend, bits, glad, tent, cost, sand, best, crop, trip, just, frog, spin*

B8: Listen and point to the sound: digraphs/trigraphs, activity 1

Materials: each learner will need paper and a pen or pencil.

Procedure:

1. Write these digraphs on the board in a pattern like this:

th sh ch
ng ck qu

1. Get the learners to practise saying the sound of each digraph. Practise the 'soft' *th* (*three, thanks*) and the 'hard' *th* (*the, with*). It may not be easy, as these sounds can be very close in Zimbabwean English.
2. The learners form pairs. Each pair must copy the digraphs in large letters.
3. Choose around six words which you think may be unfamiliar to some or all of the learners. You could do this by asking a question which will use the word in the answer. For example:
What am I doing? (You are washing your face.)
(Very quietly) How is my voice? (It's very quiet.)
Where can you buy things? (In a shop.)
4. Play the audio (or say the words). The pairs must point at the digraph which is in that word. For example, if they hear *wash*, they point at *sh*. If necessary, pause the audio and repeat the word with your own voice.

The words in the audio are:

shop, this, children, going, wash, thanks, quick*, she, sing, mother
choose, three, shoe, path, other, teacher, quiet, doing, shirt, three
**qu & ck*

Additional activity

You could repeat the activity with these words and your own voice:

with, chair, ship, wrong, birthday, back, queen, the, wish, these,
long, brother, socks, cheap, she, bath, talking, quiz, each, pick.

B9: Listen and point to the sound: digraphs/trigraphs, activity 2

As for B8 above with these digraphs/trigraphs and words.

ai ar or er ow*
ee oo** oa igh

*as in 'now'; **as in 'good'

The words in the audio are:

train, see, look, car, high, for, boat, her, town, green,
good, corner*, night, farm, soap, cow, wait, person, arm, keep.

Additional activity

You could repeat the activity with these words and your own voice:

now, book, coat, part, rain, meet, might, forty, term, park,
seen, goal, stood, light, stars, flower**, paid, agree, afraid, ordinary.

*or & er; **ow & er

B10: Listen and point to the sound: digraphs/trigraphs, activity 3

As for B8 above with these digraphs/trigraphs and words.

ea oo* oi ou** ay
ow*** ur air ear

*as in 'moon'; **as in 'out'; ***as in 'show'

The words in the audio are:

day, eat, school, turn, near, hair, shout, noise, show, food,
play, burn, easy, cloud, grow, coin, away, soon, ears, about.

Additional activity

You could repeat the activity with these words and your own voice:

say, meat, hear, moon, voice, out, church, hurt, own, pair,
join, teacher, stairs, play, Thursday*, purple, loud, know, maybe, cool.

*ur & ay



B11: Write and say the word: magic e

Materials: each learner will need paper and a pen/pencil.

Procedure (very similar to B6):

1. One at a time, write each word on the board. Check the learners understand the meaning, perhaps by asking a question which will use the word in the answer. For example: *What food do you like? (I like....) / What do we do with a bicycle? (We ride it.)* Words in the list: *like, made, home, ride, game, tune, hope, plane.*
2. Wipe the words off the board. Play the audio (or say the sounds in the words). The learners write the word they hear being spelled with sounds of letters. If necessary, pause the audio and repeat in your own voice.
3. Each learner joins another to form a pair. Get them to compare their words, and make any changes they wish to.
4. Invite different learners to say the spelling of a word with the sounds of the letters. Write the word on the board. Any learner with an incorrect version must correct it.

B11 Alternative activity: point to the word

1. Do stage 1 as described above. Then the learners form pairs. Each pair must copy all the words in quite large letters onto a piece of paper. OR: If this would too difficult for them, give them pieces of paper with the words which you made before the lesson.
2. Play the audio (or say the sounds). The pairs point to the word they hear being spelled with sounds. This activity can be used with learners with very low levels of literacy.

Additional activity

Repeat with these words and your voice: *bite, cake, rope, safe, cute, time, plate, stone.*

B12: Write and say the word with digraphs/trigraphs, activity 1

As above, but with the following words: *shop, green, farm, good, then, town, bird, say, hair, three, sing, wait.*

B13: Write and say the word with digraphs/trigraphs, activity 2

As above, but with the following words: *eat, hear, point, food, boat, train, grow, turn, night, wish, cheap, morning.*

Additional activities for B12 & B13

Repeat the activity with these words and your voice:

SET 1: *meet, car, first, this, play, book, now, stairs, bring, wish, paint, thirteen*

SET 2: *moon, burn, show, meat, high, oil, clock, soap, near, boring, right, children*

B14: Tricky spellings bingo, game 1

This game focuses on word with 'tricky spellings'. These are words which do not follow common spelling rules, so learners need to learn each one individually.

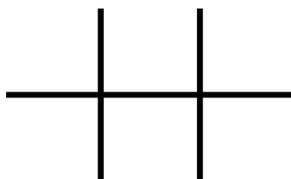
Materials: each learner will need paper and a pen or pencil.

Procedure:

1. One at a time, write each word on the board. Get the learners to say the word several times. When you think it is necessary, check that the learners understand the meaning. You could do this by asking a question which will use the word in the answer. For example: *Where am I putting my pen?* (You are putting your pen **into** your bag.) Words in the list:

the, no, said, he, was, they, go, she, his, are,
my, what, to, there, some, so, were, little, one, do,
when, very, come, into, their, could, house, by, I'm, here.

2. Draw a grid like this on the board. Then invite learners to suggest one word



3. Say one of the words from the list at random. If the word you say is in the grid, the learners must say 'Yes!' When that happens, cross out the word.
4. Wipe the word from the grid. Each learner must then copy it onto paper, and choose any six words from the board to fill it.
5. Play the audio (or use your own voice). When a learner hears one of her/his words, she/he crosses it off. When learners have crossed off all their words, they shout 'Bingo!' The first learner to do this is the 'winner', but continue until everybody has crossed off all six of their words.

B15: Tricky spellings bingo, game 2

As above, but with these words:

water, school, called, new, door, saw, where, don't, want, thought,
who, through, we're, wanted, two, great, why, key, window, any,
can't, eyes, friend, gone, doesn't, because, again, clothes, let's, use.

Additional activities

Repeat the game with your own voice, and words in a different order each time. Each time they play, the learners must choose a different set of six words from the board.

B16: Listen and write: short sentences 1

In this activity, learners combine skills they have learnt in the previous activities, and start to write complete sentences.

Materials: each learner will need paper and a pen or pencil.

Procedure:

1. Play the first sentence (or use your own voice) and then pause the audio. The learners must copy the sentence they hear. Repeat the sentence with your own voice if necessary.
2. Go around and check that everybody has understood what they have to do. This is very important. Some learners may have made a lot of mistakes. Don't worry about this at this stage. It is part of their learning process. Do not correct any of their sentences yet.
3. Repeat with the rest of the sentences.
4. Organise the learners into pairs or small groups. Each pair/group must compare their sentences, and make any corrections they notice need to be made.
5. Write each sentence on the board, and get the learners to say it together. Then any learner with an incorrect written version must correct it.

The sentences are:

This is fun.	We are happy.	I like it.	That is my bag.
We live here.	My school is big.	I can ride a bike.	You are right.

B17: Listen and write: short sentences 2

As above, but with the following sentences. These sentences all feature words with an apostrophe (').

I'm ten.	This isn't my book.	Let's go.
I don't live here.	She can't swim.	It's very hot today.
We weren't here yesterday.	He doesn't like tea.	

B18: Listen and write: short questions

As above, but with the following questions. Before you begin, write a short question on the board, for example: *How are you?* Ask the learners to say what the question mark is called, and what it shows. (It shows that the sentence is a question.)

Is this my pen?	Are you sad?	Is it Monday today?
Are we all here?	Who are you?	Where is my bag?
What time is it?	Do you live here?	

Additional activities

Repeat the format with more short sentences which are suitable for the level of your learners.

