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Word Power Assessment: Another Bag Full of Vowel Sounds

Use a bag filled with objects that have names beginning with short and long vowel sounds along with the recording sheets found on pages 121–122 to assess your students’ understanding of this word power skill. As you display objects from the bag one at a time, students may draw a quick picture or sound-spell words to record each item shown in the appropriate space provided. Use objects such as those listed below and others from your classroom to make this fun-filled assessment effective for your students.

SHORT AND LONG VOWEL OBJECTS TO USE:

hat, sock, truck, cup, apple, egg, picture, ring, crayon, pen, note, pine cone, acorn, leaf, toy trumpet, toy flute



STUDENT SNAPSHOT

Jonathan, Grade 2

HELPING A BEGINNING READER WITH VOWEL SOUNDS

Jonathan is a second-grade “haphazard” reader. I call him this because Jonathan relies on guessing rather than strategies for figuring out unknown words. When it was time to assess his understanding of short and long vowel sounds, Jonathan explained, “When I come to vowels, I just skip them.” Although many words can be decoded relying solely on consonants along with context and picture clues, the importance of vowel sounds becomes apparent to students when they are asked to spell words on their own accounting for all the sounds. For Jonathan, this request finally helped him see the need to concentrate on learning the short vowel sounds.

Using the short and long vowel objects listed above and a lap-sized white board, I sat down with Jonathan to classify and spell words with their appropriate vowel sounds.

Mrs. L.: *I have some objects that I would like you to help me organize by vowel sound.*

Jonathan: *I skip vowel sounds in words.*

Mrs. L.: *Sometimes that may work. But it’s important that you learn these sounds in case you ever get stuck on a word. Vowel sounds might be just the help you need to decode or figure out that word. And sometimes the vowel sound is the only difference between two words. Think of the words *cat, cot, and cut*. Without other words around them, you have to rely on the vowel sound to figure out how to read each word!*

Jonathan: *Well, I know the long vowel sounds.*

Mrs. L.: Great! Let's work on some short vowel sounds too, so that you're an expert on all the vowel sounds. On the white board, I have written the vowels two times—once for the long sounds and another time for the short sounds. Choose an object from the bag and we'll decide where you should write the name of that object.

Jonathan: This one's easy. It's a pine cone. It's long *i*. Is this a rainbow word?

Mrs. L.: Actually, it's a Bossy E word. In fact, both words are Bossy E words, *pine* and *cone*—both vowels use Bossy E to say their names.

Jonathan: I heard it that time—*cone* has long *o*. I'll write this word and underline the *o*.

Mrs. L.: Nice printing, Jonathan. Try another object from the bag.

Jonathan: It's a horn.

Mrs. L.: Musicians call this a *trumpet*. Do any vowels say their names?

Jonathan: No, it must have a short vowel sound.

Mrs. L.: Look at the short vowel friends to help you find the right sound for spelling *tr-uuu-mpet*.

Jonathan: Sounds like *Muuudge*. So it's short *u*.

Mrs. L.: Excellent! I think there's another short vowel sound in *trumpet*.

Jonathan: *Pet* has short *e*. I already know how to spell that word. It must be *t-r-u-m-p-e-t*.

Mrs. L.: Great spelling. You can write this word twice.

Jonathan: Once under *u* and once under *e*.

Mrs. L.: Let's try sorting a few more objects. You're becoming an expert on vowel sounds.

Long Vowel Sounds

a	e	i	o	u
crayon	leaf	pine cone	pine cone	flute
acorn			note	

Short Vowel Sounds

a	e	i	o	u
hat	trumpet	picture	sock	trumpet
apple	egg	ring		truck
	pen			cup

Jonathan continued selecting objects and classifying them according to vowel sounds. Spelling the words on the white board reinforced the importance of knowing all the vowel sounds. I knew our time spent together had been successful when Jonathan commented, "I guess I don't need to skip the vowels anymore—I'm pretty good at them!"