ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Letter sounds

Difficulty level: Easy

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you sound out new words when you read and spell them when you write, by matching each letter to the sound it makes. Reading starts with sounds, and once you can hear the sound each letter makes, you can sound out words you have never seen before. That is how a new reader tackles an unfamiliar word in a book, and how a young writer spells a word by breaking it into its sounds first.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q What sound does the letter s make in 'sun'?

SOLUTION

Look at the letter s.

Say its sound, not its name: sss, like a snake.

So s in 'sun' says sss, and the word starts sss-un.

EXAMPLE 2

Q What sound does the letter b make in 'ball'?

SOLUTION

Look at the letter b.

Say its sound: buh, a short puff of sound.

So b in 'ball' says buh, and the word starts buh-all.

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Practice questions

1 **What sound does 'm' make in 'moon'?**

- A mmm
- B puh
- C fff
- D duh

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2 **What is the last sound in 'pig'?**

- A puh
- B guh
- C iii
- D mmm

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3 Which letter makes the sound 'fff'?

A m

B f

C d

D n

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4 Which word starts with the sound 'duh'?

A top

B dog

C fish

D net

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5 What sounds make up the word 'top'?

A tuh-o-puh

B puh-o-tuh

C tuh-a-puh

D tuh-o-buh

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6 Which word does NOT start with the 'nnn' sound?

A net

B nose

C nap

D lip

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7

The word 'red' starts with which letter?

A r

B d

C h

D w

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8

Which word has the same first sound as 'lip'?

A moon

B lamp

C fish

D net

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9

How many sounds are in 'dog'?

A 2

B 3

C 4

D 5

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10

'h_t' spells 'hat'. What sound does the missing letter make?

A a

B e

C o

D u

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ANSWER KEY

1. mmm

2. guh

3. f

4. dog

5. tuh-o-puh

6. lip

7. r

8. lamp

9. 3

10. a

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