



How the Alphabet Works

In this unit, the activities in this section serve as an introduction to the alphabetic principle. These introductory lessons ensure that your students will have the basic understanding required before working through the alphabet, letter by letter, and attaching sounds to each letter. Starting with *s*, students will attach sounds to a few chosen letters and listen for and identify those sounds in the initial and final positions of words. They will compare one word to another. They will learn to identify words by looking for the letters that represent their initial and final sounds.

In later lessons, the students will be introduced to the convention that each vowel has a short sound in addition to its long sound. The use of short vowels allows more straightforward exploration of the alphabetic principle, as it makes available many words that do not involve silent letters or other special spelling conventions.

The Sound of *s*

Introducing *Ss*

- Introduce the letter *s*. Point to the *Ss Alphabet Sound Card* and name the letter. Turn over the *Ss* card so the students can see the picture of the sausages. Point to the picture and say, “The sound of the letter *s* is /s/. The word *sausages* starts with the /s/ sound.”
- Hold up the *Ss Alphabet Sound Card* and say /s/ /s/ /s/ /s/ /s/. Tell the students that there is a short story that will help them remember the /s/ sound for the letter *s*:
Sue buys sausages on Saturday.
Sam cooks sausages on Sunday.
The sausages sizzle /s/ /s/ /s/ /s/ /s/ when hot.
Sam eats sausages, but Sue does not.
- Ask the students if they can hear the many /s/ sounds in the story. Recite the story several times, emphasizing the initial /s/ sound, then ask students to join in when they can.



Name Some /s/ Words

- Brainstorm to create a list of words that begin with the /s/ sound. Write the words on the board or a chart. Let the students participate as much as they can. Make sure you include in your list students' names that begin with *s*.



Lesson Models Videocassette Use the *Lesson Models Videocassette* to preview the lesson “The Sound of *S*.”



Routine Card

Refer to **Routine 1** for the **Introducing Sounds and Letters** procedure.



Teacher Tip **SOUND OF S**

Use the *Alphabet Sound Card Stories Audiocassette/CD* for practice with the /s/ sound.

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ELL TIP

PRONUNCIATION Some English-language learners may have trouble pronouncing an initial /s/ sound followed by a consonant. They may add an /e/ sound before the /s/ sound, so *stop* may sound like *estop*. Make students aware of words starting with the /s/ sound without an initial vowel. Ask them to first make the sound *ssss* in isolation and to then add the rest of the word. Words you may use include *small, smart, spot, scale, schedule, skin, slave, stay, and spider*.