

Grade 1 - Unit 4

Key Concepts

R-Controlled Vowels

R-Controlled Exceptions

Wacky W

Special Vowel Sounds

Jobs of Y

Sound of -igh

Digraph Blends

Decoding Skill 1

Decoding Skill 2

Double Consonants

The Schwa

Final Consonant -le

Summary

In this comprehensive unit, students will begin to explore more advanced phonetic concepts to enhance their reading and spelling abilities. They'll navigate through complex vowel sounds, such as R-Controlled Vowels and Special Vowel Sounds, enabling them to tackle increasingly

challenging texts and write more sophisticated words. Understanding exceptions to standard phonetic rules will prevent confusion when encountering words outside the expected patterns. Applying this knowledge when reading, bolsters fluency and facilitates the cognitive flexibility that is necessary when reading. By exploring the versatile roles of the letter y as both a consonant and a vowel, students will also increase their reading flexibility. Mastery of unique spelling patterns like the -igh sound will further refine their accuracy when reading and writing. Practice with digraph blends will support fluency, allowing students to blend words with more parts.

As students learn the Two Decoding Skills, they will review various syllable patterns using the Phonetic Skills we have already learned and be introduced to some new ones, like -le. These skills enhance students' ability to break down words into manageable parts, improving both reading fluency and spelling accuracy. Then, as students are introduced to the schwa sound, they will learn about the natural rhythm and intonation patterns of the English language. Understanding the schwa sound helps students navigate irregularities in vowel sounds, making sense of why some vowels do not follow the expected short or long vowel sounds. Finally, in this unit, students will continue to add suffixes to the skill words they have been learning and learn about prefixes.

Skill Content Knowledge and Vocabulary

R-Controlled Vowels

fork

Skill:

When a vowel is followed by r, it spells a new vowel sound. We call this an r-controlled vowel.

- -ar spells /ar/ like in car.
- -or spells /or/ like in fork.
- -er, -ir, and -ur spell /er/ like in fern.

Marking:

We mark the vowel with an x. Then we arc the vowel and r together. This reminds us that the vowel and r spell a new vowel sound that is neither long nor short.

turn

R-Controlled Exceptions

fire

Skill:

When the letter r follows certain patterns, there can be exceptions to the r-controlled vowels.

- When the letter r follows a vowel in Phonetic Skill 4 words, the e is stronger than the r-controlled vowel, and this makes the first vowel spell its long sound.
- When the letter r follows adjacent vowels in Phonetic Skill 5 words, the adjacent vowels are stronger than the r-controlled vowel, and this makes the first vowel spell its long sound.
- When the letter r plus another consonant comes after an adjacent vowel, the r-controlled vowel is stronger than the adjacent vowel. This makes the second vowel silent, and the first vowel works with the letter r to be an r-controlled vowel.

Marking:

- We do not use any new markings when a silent e or adjacent vowel controls the vowel sound.
- When an r-controlled vowel controls the vowel sound, we arc under the vowels to the letter r. Then we mark the second vowel silent.

pair

heard

Wacky W

want

Skill:

When a vowel comes after the letter w, the vowel sound can change in predictable ways. We call this Wacky W.

Marking:

We mark the new vowel sound over the top of the vowel to remind us of the new sound it spells.

or
warm

Special Vowel Sounds

sauce

Skill:

Special Vowel Sounds look like adjacent vowels, but these do not spell a long vowel sound. The Special Vowel Sounds spell a new sound that is neither long nor short.

- -au and aw spell /au/ like in sauce or paw.
- -ou and ow spell /ou/ like in house or how.
- -ow can also spell /o/ like in snow.
- -oi and oy spell /oi/ like in boil or toy.
- -oo can spell /ü/ like in spoon.
- -oo can also spell /ōo/ like in look.

Marking:

We mark an x between the letters that spell the Special Vowel Sound. Then, we mark an arc joining the two letters together. The x and arc serve as a reminder that not a single vowel spells a sound, but rather a new sound together.

spoon

Jobs of Y

yard

Skill:

The letter y can function as a consonant or a vowel depending on its position in a word. When y acts as a vowel, the sound it spells depends on which Phonetic Skill the word follows, whether the word is a single syllable or multisyllabic, or the letters that precede it.

- Y as a Consonant: When y is the first letter in a syllable, it spells the consonant sound /y/. Examples include gym or barnyard.
- Y as Short i: When y is the only vowel in a Phonetic Skill 1 or 2 word, it spells the short sound /i/. Examples include myth or gymnast.
- Y as Long i: When y is the only vowel we hear in a Phonetic Skill 3 or 4 word, it spells the long sound /i/. Examples include tyke or hyphen.
- Y in Multisyllabic Words: When y is at the end of a multisyllabic word, y usually spells the long /ē/ sound. Examples include sunny or easy.
- NFL Rule: Y can spell the /i/ sound at the end of a multisyllabic word. This happens when the word is a verb, and the consonants n, f, or l come right before the vowel y. We can call this the NFL rule, to remember the consonants that change the sound of y. Examples include deny or reply.

Marking:

- Y as a Consonant: We do not use any new markings with y as a consonant.
- Y as Short i: We mark the y with an x since it acts as a vowel. Then, above the y, we mark a small i with a short mark.
- Y as Long i: We mark the y with an x since it acts as a vowel. Then, above the y, we mark a small i with a long mark.
- Y in Multisyllabic Words: We mark the y with an x since it acts as a vowel. Then, above the y, we would mark a small e with a long vowel mark.
- NFL Rule: We mark the y with an x since it acts as a vowel. Then, above the y, we would mark a small i with a long vowel mark above the i.

Note:

The letter y can also appear in adjacent vowels (ay) and Special Vowel Sounds (oy). In these instances, y spells a sound in conjunction with another letter, and not independently.

Sound of -igh

Skill:

When the letters gh come after the vowel i, the letters gh are silent, and the vowel i spells /i/.

Marking:

We mark a silent line through letter g and letter h. Then we place a long vowel mark above the vowel i.

Digraph Blends

three

Skill:

The commonly occurring three-letter blends are thr and shr.

- -tch spells /ch/ like in catch.
- Less commonly occurring three-letter blends are phl, phr, sph, chl, chr, and sch.

Marking:

We arc all three letters together in a three-letter digraph blend. This is a helpful foundation for when students get to multisyllabic words, where digraph blends usually stay together.

shrunk

Decoding Skill 1

robot

Skill:

Decoding Skill 1 helps us divide words with more than one syllable. It tells us that when there is only one consonant or consonant blend between two vowels, the consonant or consonant blend moves, or runs, with the next syllable. A quick way to remember this skill is: One must run.

Marking:

We use a straight line to divide the syllable between the first vowel and the consonant that comes right after it.

Note:

Once students begin working with multisyllabic words, we no longer use Guardian Consonants to prove syllables.

migrate

Decoding Skill 2

number

Skill:

Decoding Skill 2 helps us divide words with more than one syllable. It tells us that when there are two consonants between two vowels, the consonants split. A quick way to remember this skill is: Two must split.

Marking:

We use a straight line to divide the syllable between the two consonants between vowels.

Note:

Once students begin working with multisyllabic words, we no longer use Guardian Consonants to prove syllables.

dolphin

Double Consonants

funny

Skill:

In a Decoding Skill 2 word, if the consonants splitting are the same letter, one consonant stays with the first syllable to keep the vowel short, but we pronounce the sound in the second syllable.

Marking:

We split the syllable between the two consonants. Then we mark the consonant in the first syllable silent since it only keeps the vowel short, but doesn't make a sound.

happy

The Schwa

away

Skill:

The schwa can take over any vowel sound. It most often sounds like /ʊ/, like in the word about, but can also sound like /ɪ/, like in the word parrot. The schwa is the most common vowel sound in the English language and may vary depending on dialect.

Marking:

We use an upside-down e to mark the schwa. The schwa mark goes above the vowel with a different sound.

carpet

Final Consonant -le

staple

Skill:

Every syllable must have a vowel sound. The syllable -le comes at the end of a multisyllabic word and has a schwa vowel sound. This syllable sounds like /ʊl/.

Marking:

We mark the syllable -le with a schwa between the consonant that comes before the l and the l because that is where the vowel sound is pronounced.

turtle