

Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

Phonemic awareness is emphasized as students identify beginning, middle, and ending sounds and develop strong letter-sound associations using real words. Decoding words is simplified by focusing on predictable patterns. Several basic patterns provide the building blocks of the English language. Phonics characters, created by the artists at BJU Press, represent these patterns to make them understandable to young children. This booklet includes the stories that we use to introduce the phonics characters and an explanation of how we use them in decoding words. This information will be helpful as you work with your child.

Thank you for your support and help at home.

Sincerely,

K5 Teacher

Mr. and Mrs. Short

“Oh, my dear, do be careful!” exclaimed Mr. Short as he walked into the kitchen.

Mrs. Short was perched on top of a chair, stretching up to reach into the top cabinet. “I need cocoa so I can make a chocolate pie for our supper,” explained Mrs. Short. “It’s so hard to reach things when you are so short!”

“I know, dear, we both have a hard time reaching things. Let me get the cocoa for you.” Mr. Short helped Mrs. Short down and then climbed up and got the cocoa for her. “Is there anything else I can get for you, dear?” asked Mr. Short.

“I think I have everything now. Thank you for your help. You’re such a good husband. I’m so glad you’re home and we can spend this day together.”

“Well, I have a special project that’s going to keep me busy for a while,” said Mr. Short as he left the kitchen.

Mrs. Short finished making the pie and put it in the oven to bake. By the time Mr. Short came

in for supper, the house was filled with the smell of Mrs. Short’s delicious dessert.

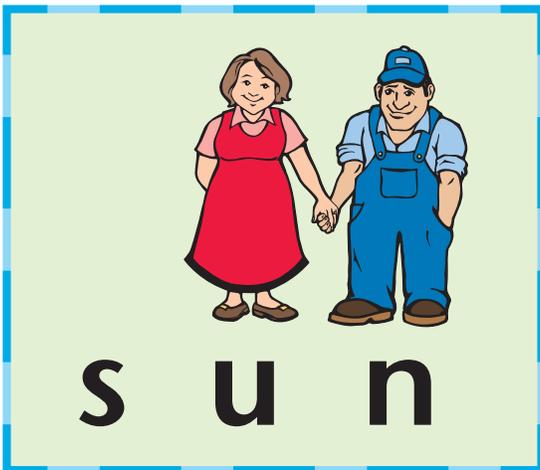
“You spoil me, dear,” exclaimed Mr. Short, enjoying the smell.

Mr. and Mrs. Short enjoyed their meal together and then Mr. Short took Mrs. Short’s hand and said, “I have a surprise for you!”

“You do! What is it?” asked Mrs. Short.

Mr. Short stepped out the door just long enough to get the new stepstool that he had made for his wife.

“A stepstool!” exclaimed Mrs. Short. “What a nice surprise! Now I’ll be able to reach everything I need. Thank you, dear!”



Mrs. Short represents short vowels; she always appears with her husband, Mr. Short. Mr. Short represents the consonant that always follows a short vowel in these syllables.

Uncle Short

Mrs. Short shut the suitcase and called to Mr. Short, "I think I have everything packed now, dear."

Mr. Short picked up the suitcase, and they walked to the car. Mr. Short put the suitcase in the trunk. Since it was getting warm, he took off his jacket and laid it carefully on top of the suitcase. When Mr. Short started to open the door for Mrs. Short, he realized that the car was locked and he had just locked his car keys in the trunk!

"Oh dear, what are we going to do? We have to be at the airport in thirty minutes," exclaimed Mrs. Short.

"I'll just call Uncle Short. He will be glad to come over and help us. He has an extra set of keys."

Mr. Short called his brother, Uncle Short, who worked at the bank. Uncle Short finished with his customer and in just a few minutes drove up and parked behind their car.

"We can sure take care of this," said Uncle Short.

Uncle Short pulled out the extra set of keys that he kept for emergencies and unlocked the trunk. Mr. Short got his keys out of his jacket pocket.

"Thank you, Uncle Short!" exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. Short as they got into the car. "You always come to our rescue."



In a one-vowel syllable with two final consonants, Mrs. Short still represents a short vowel; and again the short vowel always appears with her consonant husband, Mr. Short. Then Uncle Short joins Mr. and Mrs. Short.

Miss Long and Marker *e*

Miss Long opened the blinds in her bedroom. Bright sunlight greeted her. The rainy spell was over!

"The sun is out!" she sang as she walked down the hall. She had planned a nice walk and a quiet time of reading the first day the sun came out again.

As she was finishing her cereal, she heard Marker *e* rubbing the kitchen door with his nose.

"No you don't, Marker *e*, not today. I've planned a nice quiet day and you can't come along," she thought. She wanted to be alone to do some reading. How could she do that with Marker *e* jumping at every bug and every movement in the woods? "If I give him a treat, maybe he'll be satisfied."

She knew it would be hard to get away without him. "I'll just have to leave by the side door," she said to herself.

She opened the kitchen door and said in her cheeriest voice, "Here's a treat, Marker *e*." Marker *e* put the whole treat in his mouth and then settled down by a big tree in the front yard to chew it.

Later, with a small lunch, a book, and a blue blanket packed snugly in her basket, Miss Long glanced out the front window. Marker *e* still seemed to be busily chewing. She headed for the side door. Closing the door very quietly and taking the back way, Miss Long was off. She felt a little guilty and almost stopped to wave "good-bye," but she caught herself.

"No, this is a day to spend all by myself," she thought as she swung her basket and headed toward the edge of town. She headed for a

much-loved spot in the quiet woods. But when she came to the spot, she saw that the wet leaves would soak the blue blanket.

"Oh, bother," she said aloud. "My quiet day is ruined." After standing undecided for a moment, she made up her mind to find a log in the woods and sit down for a while. It certainly wouldn't be the warm, cozy afternoon she had planned, but she decided to make the best of it.

Then bounding into the woods, avoiding the wet trees, and kicking up the wet leaves came Marker *e*. He tugged at Miss Long's blanket and signaled her to follow him. He waved his tail like a signal flag. After getting over her surprise at seeing Marker *e*, she followed the waving tail. Finally she stepped through some trees into a beautiful clearing. Her first thought was, "Oh, what a lovely spot for my reading! It is sunny, dry, and warm." And then she saw the little lake. Perfect! Just perfect! Marker *e* ran up and down along the lake, wagging his tail and looking very pleased with himself.

Miss Long pursed her lips and looked at Marker *e*. "You sly little dog. I didn't trick you at all, did I? You just know me too well, and you found a perfect spot." Miss Long went to Marker *e* and gave him a big hug. "Thank you for coming ahead to find this dry sunny spot and thank you for waving your tail to signal me until I found it too. I'd be very ungrateful if I didn't let you stay now." She spread out the blanket and gave Marker *e* a space to nap, and with that, they both settled down for a very quiet afternoon—of reading and, yes, snoozing too.



Miss Long represents long vowels. A dog, Marker *e*, sometimes tags along with her. He appears in a syllable that has one vowel followed by one consonant and an *e*. Miss Long represents the long vowel sound that is heard before the consonant; Marker *e* represents the *e* that is silent after the consonant.

Miss Long and Miss Silent

Miss Long pulled more leaves into the big pile with her rake. The pile of red, yellow, and orange leaves grew bigger and bigger as she worked. Her friend, Miss Silent, gathered another pile close by.

"All of this work is making me hot!" exclaimed Miss Long, pulling off her sweater and gloves. "I'm going to stop for a sip of lemonade."

Miss Silent just smiled at her friend and kept raking.

"I love having big trees in my yard until it's time to rake up the leaves. I don't think I've ever had so many. I really appreciate your help. We must hurry though. The leaf collectors will be here soon, and I'd like to have the leaves raked and put in the bags before they get here.

Miss Long went into the house and got some large plastic leaf bags. She and Miss Silent started putting the leaves into the bags. After each bag was full, Miss Long carried it to the curb.

"Bang, bang!"

Miss Silent pulled at Miss Long's sleeve but Miss Long kept on working.

"I know. It's the leaf collector truck. It sounds like it is on the next street. If we really hurry, we can get the last of these leaves raked and put by the curb before the truck stops."

Miss Long put the leaves in the bag as Miss Silent held it open.

Miss Silent pulled on Miss Long's sleeve once more.

"I see them," agreed Miss Long. "Help me take these last two bags over before the truck stops."

Miss Long and Miss Silent quickly put the last two bags beside the others and watched as the leaf collector truck stopped and the men loaded the bags.

"Thank you so much," called Miss Long to the workers as she walked back to the front steps.

"Here's my sweater, but where are my gloves?" exclaimed Miss Long.

Miss Silent shyly pointed to the truck as it pulled away from the curb.

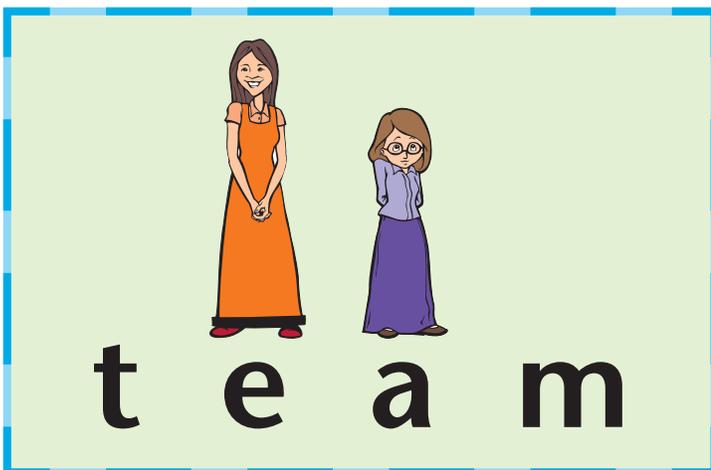
"Did I rake them up with the leaves?" asked Miss Long. "Was that what you were trying to tell me?"

Miss Silent nodded her head.

"I'm sorry I didn't pay attention to what you were trying to say. Sometimes I get too involved in my work. I thought you were trying to tell me the truck was coming."

Just then a big puff of wind shook the trees, sending a flurry of new leaves onto the ground.

"It looks like we'll have another workday soon. Next time I'll pay closer attention to you, Miss Silent."



Miss Long sometimes has another vowel, Miss Silent, with her. When two vowel letters appear together, Miss Long represents the long vowel sound that is heard and Miss Silent represents the vowel that is silent.

Miss Long Alone

Miss Long thought it was really cold in her room when she woke up. Then, when she looked over at her alarm clock, she was dismayed to find it had stopped.

"The power is out," she thought. "No wonder it's so cold."

Miss Long jumped out of bed and quickly put on her warmest robe and slippers. When she looked out the window, she saw white snow everywhere. The bushes were covered, and thick snow hung on each limb of the tree. Snow was swirling from the sky. It looked as if it might snow all day.

"Looks like I won't be going anywhere today!"

Miss Long started humming. She loved to be snowed in. The thought of the long, lazy day stretching ahead made her giggle.

She put some logs in the fireplace and soon had a cozy fire burning. It didn't take long for her small house to be filled with warmth. Miss Long was glad that she had baked a loaf of bread the night before. She cut a couple of pieces and spread them with strawberry jam.

Miss Long settled herself in front of the fireplace to enjoy her breakfast. Later, remembering her little bird friends, she got a cupful of birdseed and tossed it onto the snow-covered porch. Soon several birds were enjoying the treat.

She pretended to skate back to her bedroom and gathered some books and magazines that

she had wanted to read. She pulled a quilt from her bed and settled herself on the sofa so that she could enjoy the fire.

"What luxury," she sighed.

When her eyes got tired from reading, she set her book on the coffee table, pulled the quilt up around her, and took a long nap. She awoke at two o'clock to the hum of the refrigerator.

"The power is on!" she exclaimed. "That means doughnuts!"

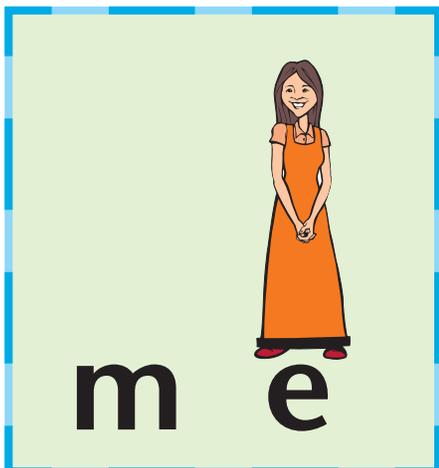
Miss Long always made homemade doughnuts when it snowed. Doughnuts took a lot of time to make and there was always plenty of time to make them on a snowy day.

She busied herself in the kitchen, humming as she worked. Soon she had the doughnuts rising near the fire. After they doubled in size, she heated oil in a large pan and began to cook. The smell of the cooking doughnuts was almost as nice as their taste.

"Ding, dong."

Miss Long knew who was at her door. Mr. and Mrs. Short, Miss Silent, and Marker *e* always joined her for fresh homemade doughnuts when it snowed. She had had a wonderful day all to herself, but now she was ready to enjoy a snack and some time with her best friends.

"Come on in. The doughnuts are hot!"



In yet another long-vowel pattern, which is an open syllable, Miss Long appears alone at the end.

Bossy *r*

Bossy *r* spurred his horse toward the five cows with a loud “whoop.” Bossy *r* liked to be in charge. In fact, that is how he got his name. Some people thought he was bossy.

Bossy *r* yelled, “Get along! Get along!”

The cows moored, but they trotted easily. They were tired from the long trip over the mountain.

Bossy *r* kept whistling and whooping until they came to the corral on the Curly *R* Ranch.

A new young cowboy rushed out of the bunkhouse to help. Bossy *r* told him right away what to do.

“Get the gate open. We have to get these cows inside the corral.”

The young cowboy jumped right to it. “Where did you get these cows?” he asked Bossy *r*.

Bossy *r* closed the gate behind the last cow. “In Vowel Valley. They aren’t branded with any brand, so I drove them home.”

The new cowboy scratched his head. “What do you mean, they aren’t ‘branded’?”

Bossy *r* pointed to his horse’s flank. “No marking. See, my horse has one. A brand lets everyone know that this is my horse.”

The small herd of cows milled around in the far corner of the corral.

The cowboy leaned on the fence with Bossy *r*. “When are we going to brand them?” he asked.

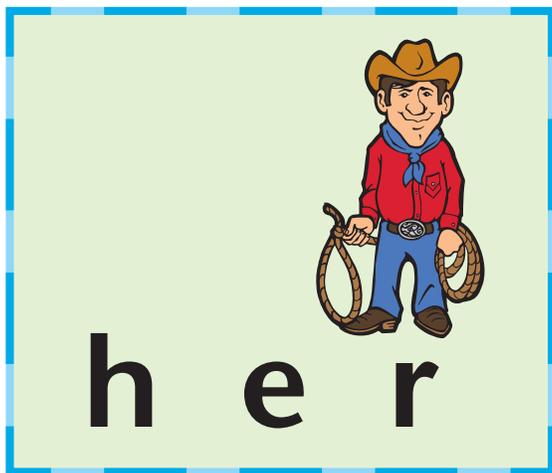
Bossy *r* rubbed his chin. “Hmmm...might as well do it first thing in the morning. Be here and be ready.”

“What should I bring?” the cowboy asked.

“Bring a rope and plenty of strength. It’s quite a chore to brand cattle.”

The young cowboy tipped his hat to Bossy *r*. “Yes, sir. See you in the morning.”

Bossy *r* nodded. He felt his fingers almost itch to get started on the branding. “Those Vowel Valley cattle will soon be Curly *R* cattle... and that, my friends,” he said to the cattle, “is the best brand to be.”



Bossy *r* represents the *r* that sometimes follows a vowel letter; he is called Bossy because *r* usually influences the sound of the vowel that comes before the *r*.