

Understanding Phonics

Session 2

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Session 2: Initial Consonants, Consonant Digraphs, Consonant Blends and Short Vowels

Objectives

This 2-hour workshop is intended for teachers who need some background knowledge about phonics. By the end of the workshop, the participants will know more about:

- initial consonants;
- initial consonant digraphs;
- initial consonant blends;
- short vowels; and
- significant initial consonant, consonant digraph, consonant blend and short vowel letter sounds.

Programme

Introduction	5 min
Activity 7 ◆ Initial r	10 min
Activity 8 ◆ Initial c	10 min
Video Segment C & Activity 9 ◆ Initial Consonants, Consonant Digraphs and Consonant Blends	25 min
Activity 10 ◆ Initial Consonants	15 min
Video Segment D & Activity 11 ◆ Short Vowels	25 min
Activity 12 ◆ Short a	10 min

Activity 13 ♦ Short Vowels	15 min
Conclusion	5 min
Total	120 min

Pre-workshop Preparation

- Before the participants arrive, write the objectives and programme for Session 2 on the board or transparencies.
- For this workshop, you will need copies of **Handouts E3-4, A7-13** for each participant.
- **Keys A7-13** which provide suggested answers to the activities are mainly for your reference. You may decide if it is necessary to make copies for the participants.
- After reading the description of the workshop and planning your session, you may also want to make transparencies of **Overheads 4-9** for ease of reference during the workshop.
- Set **Video Tape One** or **VCD One** for **Video Segments C & D**.
- Set the **Audio CD** for '**Round the Ragged Rocks**' for Activity 7, and '**Letter-sound Riddle**' for Activity 8.
- Copies of the '**English Letter Sounds**' card, the '**Phonics in ELT**' leaflet and the '**Useful Groups of Letter Sounds**' word list can be provided for each participant as useful references for Activities 8, 10 and 12.
- Prepare timers if you intend to hold the tongue twister reading competition for Activity 7.
- Prepare large sheets of paper or write-on transparencies as well as markers for the participants for Activities 10, 12 and 13.
- Since the participants may have varying levels of knowledge about the content, their responses in each activity will help you gauge how much explanation is required or if the video segments should be replayed. Walk around to listen to and look at the kinds of things the participants are discussing or writing. Make mental notes and pick up on some of the points the participants have brought up, either immediately after the activity, or at relevant points during the workshop.

Workshop Session 2

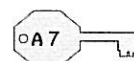
Introduction

- Invite the participants to refer to Handout A6 distributed in Session 1. Introduce the content of this session: initial consonants and short vowels.
- Distribute Handout E3 and ask the participants to evaluate their prior understanding of initial consonants and short vowels. Do not collect the evaluation forms from the participants.



Activity 7

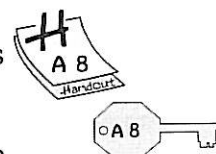
- Tell the participants that they are going to learn a tongue twister and one letter sound.
- Play the recording of the tongue twister 'Round the Ragged Rocks' from the Audio CD. Display Overhead 4 and discuss the meaning of the tongue twister with the participants using the pictorial clues.
- Circle all the words beginning with the letter 'r' in the title of the tongue twister. Ask the participants to read aloud the letter sound 'r' and then the title, paying special attention to the pronunciation of the letter sound 'r'. Refer to Key A7 for suggested answers.
- Distribute Handout A7. Ask the participants to complete Parts A and B in pairs. Invite them to share their answers. Refer to Key A7 for suggested answers. Then ask them to work on Part C.
- Distribute timers for Part D which is a tongue twister reading competition. Give each participant 30 seconds to practise reading the tongue twister as fast and as accurately as they can. Choose a winner in each group and invite him/her to demonstrate how to read the tongue twister clearly and quickly. If time allows, another round of competition may be organized to choose the champion among the winners.



Activity 8

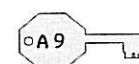
- Tell the participants that they are going to solve a letter-sound riddle and learn 2 letter sounds.

- Display Overhead 5. Read the riddle aloud or play its recording on the Audio CD. Invite the participants to solve the riddle. Elicit the correct answer (canteen) from the participants.
- Distribute Handout A8. Ask the participants to complete Parts A-C. Refer to Key A8 for suggested answers.
- Ask the participants to read aloud the initial letter sound of the words circled in Part C and then put them in two columns according to the initial letter sound in Part D.
- Ask the participants to refer to the 'English Letter Sounds' card and discuss when 'c' is pronounced as 'k' and when it is pronounced as 's'. Check if they understand what 'hard c' and 'soft c' mean. Then ask them to complete Part E in pairs. Refer to Key A8 for suggested answer.



Video Segment C & Activity 9

- Display Overhead 6, which is the poem 'Shell Secrets'. Tell the participants that in the video segment, the teacher uses the poem to teach initial consonants.
- Distribute Handout A9. Tell the participants that the content of the video segment may help them complete Activity 9.
- Play Video Segment C (length: 4 min) once through without any pauses.
- After viewing, invite the participants to work on Parts A and B in groups. When all groups have finished, invite them to share their answers. Refer to Key A9 for suggested answers.
- Distribute copies of the 'Useful Groups of Letter Sounds' word list and explain that it provides more examples of words with the same letter sound.
- Ask the participants to work on Part C in groups by referring to the 'Useful Groups of Letter Sounds' word list and finding more examples for each group of letter sounds.



Activity 10

- Tell the participants that Activity 10 helps them consolidate their knowledge of initial consonant letter sounds.
- Write the letter 't' on the board and ask the participants to suggest words beginning with 't'. Then they discuss and put the words in 3 groups according to their spelling and

pronunciation. Write 3 key words on the board to provide hints: tea (initial consonants with a single letter), this (initial consonant digraphs) and train (initial consonant blends). The terms 'initial consonants with a single letter', 'initial consonant digraphs' and 'initial consonant blends' may be written on the board but remind the participants that they are for teachers' reference only and pupils should not be taught these terms.

- Distribute Handout A10 and ask the participants to do Part A in groups. Explain that they have to complete the 'word steps' by adding a new word beginning with 't' each time. Every word added should make sense to the meaning of the whole expression, e.g. tiger, thin tiger. Words with consonant digraphs and consonant blends beginning with 't' may also be used. Suggest that they may refer to the 'Useful Groups of Letter Sounds' word list. Refer to Key A10 for suggested answers.
- Ask the participants to complete Part B by choosing any letter sound from the list in the shaded oval and creating their group's word steps. Then ask them to read aloud the words in their word steps. Refer to Key A10 for suggested answers.
- Invite the participants to work on Part C by discussing how the words used in Part B should be grouped and presented visually in the classroom or a phonics book. Refer to the leaflet 'Phonics in ELT' and explain that visual representations like the word octopus, word tree and word train are often used to help learners grasp the concept of letter sounds. Refer to Key A10 for suggested answers.
- Give large sheets of paper or transparencies to each group of participants. Ask them to present their word steps on the paper or transparencies and display them around the room.

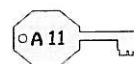


Video Segment D & Activity 11

- Play the 'Kim's Game' with the participants. Display Overhead 7, which is the scene of a sick elephant's bedroom, for 15 seconds and then remove or cover it. Then ask the participants to name the animals in the picture. Write all the names on the board.
- Display Overhead 7 and circle the words 'elephant', 'octopus' and 'duck' on the board. Then underline the first vowel letter sound in the 3 words: elephant, octopus, uck. Check if the participants can read aloud the letter sounds.

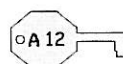


- Ask the participants to suggest names beginning with the same vowel letter sound for the animals. (Possible answers are Edward, Eddie, Oscar, Otto. Names beginning with the letter sound 'u' is not common in English.) Do not disclose the names of the animals. Tell the participants that it is a common strategy to use names or words beginning with short vowel letter sounds to help pupils remember their pronunciation.
- Tell the participants that they are going to watch a video segment on short vowels. Explain that the teacher in the phonics workshop uses the picture of the sick elephant's bedroom to introduce the 5 short vowels. Ask the participants to find out if she uses the names suggested by them.
- Distribute Handout A11. Explain that the content of the video segment may help them complete Activity 11.
- Play Video Segment D (length: 6 min) once through without any pauses.
- After viewing, invite the participants to work on Parts A-D in groups. When all groups have finished, invite them to share their answers. Refer to Key A11 for suggested answers.
- Write the words 'red' and 'head' on the board. Ask the participants to underline the vowel letter sounds in these 2 words. Then they discuss if these 2 words should be put in the same letter sound group and why. Elicit from them that the vowels in these 2 words have the same pronunciation but different spelling. They are 2 different letter sounds and therefore should be grouped separately. Then ask the participants to complete Part E. Refer to Key A11 for suggested answers.



Activity 12

- Display Overhead 8. Discuss the content of the 2 pictures with the participants.
- Distribute Handout A12. Invite the participants to read aloud the rhyme under the picture of the happy cat together.
- Ask the participants to complete the rhyme about the sad cat and then read it aloud together. Refer to Key A12 for suggested answers.
- Ask the participants to use rhyming words containing the short a sound to complete Parts B and C.

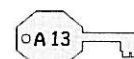


- Ask the participants to work on Part D in groups by writing a rhyme about a person, an animal or an object containing the short a sound (e.g. man, bat, fan). Suggest that they refer to the 'Useful Groups of Letter Sounds' word list.
- Give large sheets of paper or transparencies to each group of participants. Ask them to write their rhymes on the paper or transparencies to display around the room and then read aloud the rhymes.



Activity 13

- Display Overhead 9 and introduce the word pyramid. Ask the participants to read aloud the words from top to bottom.
- Distribute Handout A13. Ask the participants to create a word pyramid using any short vowel letter sound. They write the selected letter sound on the first line. Then working from top to bottom, they write a new word containing the same letter sound plus one more letter on the following line. Remind them to be very careful because adding a letter sometimes changes the letter sound, e.g. red → head. Refer to Key A13 for suggested answers.
- Give large sheets of paper or transparencies to each group of participants. Ask them to draw their word pyramids on the paper or transparencies to display around the room and then read aloud the words. The group of participants who can produce the largest word pyramid and with most accurate letter sounds is the winner of the game.



Conclusion

- Ask the participants to look at the word steps, the rhymes and the word pyramids displayed around the room and reflect on what they have learnt in Session 2. Invite them to name the key terms introduced in this session, e.g. initial consonants, consonant digraphs, consonants blends, short vowels.
- Distribute Handout E4 and ask the participants to evaluate their understanding of initial consonants and short vowels now. Invite them to compare it with the evaluation form filled in at the beginning of Session 2.

