

Five Busy Bees

by Joy Hay

Early Level 9

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Phonemic Awareness

1. Manipulating sounds to make new words

What word would we make if we dropped the first sound in each of these words?

<i>away</i>	<i>way</i>
<i>stop</i>	<i>top</i>
<i>here</i>	<i>ear</i>
<i>rose</i>	<i>owes</i>
<i>land</i>	<i>and</i>
<i>my</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>four</i>	<i>or</i>

What word would we make if we dropped the last sound in each of these words?

<i>and</i>	<i>an</i>
<i>maze</i>	<i>may</i>
<i>lost</i>	<i>loss</i>
<i>fizzy</i>	<i>fizz</i>
<i>might</i>	<i>my</i>
<i>rose</i>	<i>row</i>

Extension

What words would we make if we swapped the vowel sound in the middle of each of these words?

The long 'a' sound in *maze* for a long 'o' – *mows*

The short 'a' sound *zap* for a short 'i' – *zip*

The long 'ee' in *bees* for a long 'i' – *buys*

The long 'ee' in *streak* for a long 'o' – *stroke*

The long 'i' in *might* for a long 'ee' – *meet*

The long 'i' in *like* for a short 'oo' – *look*

The short 'o' in *stop* for a long 'ee' – *steep*

The long 'o' in *toes* for a short 'i' – *ties*

The short 'u' in *just* for a short 'e' – *jest*

The short 'u' in *come* for a long 'a' – *came*

Phonics

NOTE

The ability to discriminate between long and short vowel sounds is necessary for understanding and applying many simple and reliable spelling rules. Discrimination between long and short vowel sounds is firstly an auditory skill. Students can then learn to look for vowel spelling patterns that indicate long and short vowel sounds.

Auditory discrimination:

Short vowel sounds

These are called short sounds because each sound lasts only a short time when pronounced on its own – they are made with a burst of sound from the back of the throat – ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’, ‘oo’. These sounds can be made with hardly any movement of the lips and mouth.

Short vowel sounds occur at the start of and inside words but the only short vowel sound heard on the end of a word is the short ‘u’ when it is in an unstressed syllable - the schwa vowel sound. This may be written with an **a** -*sofa*, *camera*, *umbrella* etc – or an **r** digraph pattern (in English dialects where the **r** is not pronounced) *teacher*, *actor*, *centre*, *collar* etc.

Long vowel sounds

Long vowel sounds are generally made with more than one movement of the mouth. They are sounds that can be prolonged or drawn out – ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’, ‘oo’. Long vowel sounds (with the exception of ‘oo’) sound like the names of the vowel letters.

The long ‘u’ (as in *usual*) and the long ‘oo’ (as in *spoon*) are different sounds but are often taught together because the sounds that precede or follow the vowel sound, determine whether it sounds like ‘you’ or ‘oo’.

Recognition of spelling patterns

The following information explains some of the rules for spelling short and long vowel sounds. Young students do not need to know all this information but it is helpful for teachers to know about it.

The purpose of *Five Busy Bees* is to help students distinguish between long and short vowel sounds when they hear them, and to begin to look for patterns that might suggest long or short vowel pronunciation as they read. They will have met short and long vowel spelling patterns in previous books that focus on particular vowel sounds, but this book provides an opportunity to look for patterns associated with spelling short and long vowel sounds in general.

Short vowel sounds

1. The most common spelling pattern for the short ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’ sounds, is a single vowel letter. If students see a single vowel letter inside a syllable or a single vowel letter followed by a doubled consonant it is usually pronounced as a short vowel – *cat*, *bed*, *him*, *cot*, *hut*; *cat/nip*, *pen/cil*, *pin/up*, *hot/rod*, *cup/cake*, *cattle*, *better*, *hopping*, *thinnest*, *bussed* etc. These are closed syllables.

2. Some short vowels are written in other ways

For example:

The short ‘e’ is commonly written **ea** when it is followed by **d** (*head*), **th** (*breath*), **lth** (*wealth*), **su** (*treasure*). The short ‘e’ sound is also written in other ways in a few common words (*said*, *friend*, *any*, *guess*).

The short ‘i’ sound can be written with a **y** (*gym*) and a few common words use other patterns (*build*, *busy*, *pretty*, *women*). Many unstressed vowel sounds (the schwa vowels) sound like a short ‘i’ inside syllables (*chocolate*, *butterfly*, *button*, *open*, *manage*).

The short ‘oo’ sound is commonly written **oo** (*look*), **u** (*put*) and **ould** in the words *would*, *could* *should*.

Long vowel sounds

The spelling of long vowel sounds changes according to where they come in a syllable.

1. A single vowel letter at the start of a word, pronounced as a syllable by itself will most commonly be pronounced as a long vowel sound (*a/pron, e/ven, i/tem, o/pen, u/su/al*). A single **a** can be pronounced as syllable by itself, but can also be a schwa vowel sound (*a/bout, a/gain*).
2. A single vowel at the end of a syllable in a word, is likely to be pronounced as a long vowel sound (*pa/per, fe/ver, fi/nal, ho/tel, bu/gle*). This is called an open syllable.
3. Two-vowels-together patterns are most likely to be pronounced as long vowel sounds. (*train, cake, green, these, like, pie, hope, soap, flute, spoon, cute, argue*), but each letter can have its own sound (*ra/di/o, vid/e/o, li/on*).
4. Vowels plus a **w** might be pronounced as a long vowel (*sew, window, chew, view*)
5. Vowels plus **g** or **gh** might be pronounced as a long vowel (*sigh, sign, though, eight, straight*)

1. Revising the short and long vowel sounds

Use the *Singing the Sounds of English* CD (UCA Music) to listen to the short and long vowel songs to ensure students know how to pronounce these sounds. You can also hold up pictures of things that begin with short and long vowel sounds - apple/apron, egg/eagle, insect/iron, orange/ogre, umbrella/uniform – and ask students to say whether they begin with a short or long vowel sound.

2. Brainstorming words that contain the short and long vowel sounds

Write words that students generate in paired lists on the board:

Short 'a'	Long 'a'	Short 'e'	Long 'e'	Short 'o'	Long 'o'	Short 'i'	Long 'i'
apple	cake	every	each	off	over	ink	idea
Short 'u'	Long 'u'	Short 'oo'	Long 'oo'				
up	use	book	spoon				

3. Finding the words that contain short and long vowel sounds in *Five Busy Bees*

Read each verse of *Five Busy Bees* (or ask students to read each verse) and ask students to decide which vowel sounds are the focus of each verse.

For example: Read Pages 2 and 3 aloud and ask students which short and long vowel sounds they think are the focus of those pages.

Five busy bees go flying one day.

They zap close by and they zap far away.

One busy bee discovers a maze.

"If I get lost I'll be here for days!"

Read through the rest of the book like this.

Please note these colour-coding errors in the 2010 edition

Page 6: The **u** in *busy* should be coded red

Page 7: The **i** in *I* should be coded blue, the **i** in *fizzy* should be coded red

Page 8: The **a** in *away* should not be coded red, it should be black

Page 11: The **o** in *to* should be coded blue, the **e** in *the* should be coded red

4. Find the spelling patterns for the short and long vowel sounds in *Five Busy Bees*

Ask students to identify the words that contain the short and long vowel sounds in each double-page verse. As students identify these words, write them on the board with the words students have already suggested previously. Ask students to help you colour-code the spelling patterns for the short and long vowel sounds in the words on the board.

Write a list of the spelling patterns beside each long and short vowel combination.

5. Search for common patterns in the long and short vowel lists.**For example:**

Short 'a' words: <i>zap, and</i>	(a)
Long 'a' words: <i>day, they, away, maze, days</i>	(ay, ey, a_e)
Short 'e' words: <i>rest, let, fresh</i>	(e)
Long 'e' words: <i>busy, bees, streak, trees, me, breeze</i>	(e, y, ea, ee, ee_e))
Short 'i' words: <i>zip, busy, drink, fizzy, this, it, dizzy</i>	(i, u)
Long 'i' words: <i>I, flying, by, like, might</i>	(y, i_e, igh)
Short 'o' words: <i>stop, on</i>	(o)
Long 'o' words: <i>go, close, rose, going, toes</i>	(o, o_e, oe)
Short 'u' words: <i>a, away, comes, the, just, buzz</i>	(a, o, u)
Long 'oo' words: <i>zooms, to, zoo, new</i>	(oo, o, ew)

What did you find?

The short vowels are usually written with a single vowel letter.

The long vowels are written in many different ways.

Extension:

Identify the common patterns you have found for the long vowel spelling patterns:

- a vowel by itself
- two vowels together
- a vowel (or two vowels) plus final e
- a vowel plus w
- a y
- a vowel plus y
- a vowel plus gh

Vocabulary Development**1. Word meanings****Verbs**

Find the verbs (doing words) on each page of *Five Busy Bees* that describe how the bees moved. On every page they were flying but how did they fly?

P.2 zap

P.4 streak

P.6 zip

P.8 stop
P.10 zoom

What other words can you think of that could describe fast and slow movements?

Fast: rush, race, speed, tear, gallop etc.

Slow: crawl, dawdle, creep, wander etc.

Fluency

2. Phonics focus words

Make up the phonics focus words into cards. Colour-code the spelling patterns for the short vowel sounds red, and the spelling patterns for the long vowel sounds blue. Keep these words in a container with blank cards available so that students can write other one-syllable words they find that have short or long vowel sounds in them onto these cards. The same word could be written on the other side of the card without colour coding. Students could use these cards as an independent sorting activity, initially sorting by colours and reading each word as they sort them, and then sorting them by their vowel sound (short or long) using the non colour-coded side.

Phonics Focus Words

day	zap	and
maze	bees	away
bee	streak	rest
trees	breeze	me
let	fresh	busy
zip	flying	by
drink	fizzy	I
like	dizzy	it
this	stop	go

close

rose

toes

away

going

to

comes

zooms

buzz

zoo

new

the

u_e	i_e	a_e
o	u	e
u	i	a
oo	ee	ea
y	ay	ey
ee_e	oe	igh
ew		