

LESSON PLAN GUIDE

PictureBook English Reading Series — Phonics

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Category	Phonics	Title	Phonics Book 7 – Puzzle USB: Short Vowel U
Ages	4-7	Theme	Short /u/ Sound in CVC Words

INTRODUCTION OF THE BOOK

In this book, children practise the short /u/ sound in CVC words through eight fun jigsaw puzzles. Each puzzle piece has a letter on it, and children fit the pieces together to make a word that matches the picture silhouette.

Children are encouraged to connect the short /u/ sound to Umbrella House from previous books. If children have trouble remembering 'Umbrella House', try this fun rhyme: 'Cinderella — but Umbrella!' It always gets a smile and makes the memory stick! If children wonder why 'u' makes the /u/ sound, explain gently that 'u' has many sounds in English — for now, this book focuses on the short /u/ sound in umbrella.

TARGET WORDS — SHORT /U/ CVC WORDS

bus	jug	nut	mud	bug	cup	tub	sun
/us/	/ug/	/ut/	/ud/	/ug/	/up/	/ub/	/un/

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Children will be able to:

- Recognise and produce the short /u/ sound
- Identify and name the consonant sounds in each CVC word
- Blend consonant + short vowel + consonant to form complete words
- Match spoken words to picture silhouettes
- Complete a Ladder Game matching quiz using short /u/ CVC words

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Guess what is in each silhouette

Before solving each puzzle, ask your child to look at the silhouette picture and guess what it might be. The eight silhouettes in this book are: bus, jug, nut, mud, bug, cup, tub, and sun. Encourage your child to say each word naturally before trying to spell it.

2. Solve the jigsaw puzzles

Under each silhouette, there are three puzzle pieces — each with a letter on it. Encourage your child to fit the pieces together to complete the word. Once the puzzle is solved, ask them to say

each letter in order, then read the whole word aloud. Celebrate every completed puzzle with lots of praise!

3. Check the consonant sounds

Each CVC word contains two consonants. Ask your child to identify the phonics sound for each one. For example: in 'bus', the consonants are b (b sound) and s (s sound). In 'cup', the consonants are c (k sound) and p (p sound). This step reinforces the consonant sounds from Phonics Books 1 and 2.

4. Blend from the end — vowel + final consonant first

Help your child blend each word by starting with the short vowel and final consonant together, then adding the beginning consonant. For example: say '/ug/' first, then add 'b' to make 'bug'. Practise all eight combinations: /us/, /ug/, /ut/, /ud/, /ug/, /up/, /ub/, /un/. This end-first blending strategy helps children hear the short /u/ sound clearly before building the full word.

5. Complete the Ladder Game quiz

At the end of the book, children complete a Ladder Game matching activity. Starting at the line next to each picture, children follow the path — going up or down when the line splits — until they reach the matching word. An answer sheet is provided for easy checking. Encourage your child to complete this independently as a confident review of all eight words.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Congratulations — your child has now learned all five short vowel sounds: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/! Celebrate this milestone with a Five Vowel Review game. Say a CVC word aloud and ask your child which short vowel sound is in the middle. For example: 'cat' (/a/), 'hen' (/e/), 'bin' (/i/), 'dog' (/o/), 'bus' (/u/). Start slowly and gradually increase the pace. This is an important milestone — children who can confidently identify all five short vowels are well prepared for the next stage of phonics reading.

Try the fun online learning activities for this book on our website!

[Click here to try the online learning activities](#)

TEACHER'S NOTES AND TIPS

Book 7 completes the five short vowel sounds — a major milestone in the phonics journey! Before moving on to Book 8, it is strongly recommended to do a full review of all five short vowels using CVC words from Books 3 to 7. A simple sorting activity — five columns, one for each vowel, and a set of CVC word cards to sort — works brilliantly as a consolidation exercise. The 'Cinderella, but Umbrella!' memory rhyme is a genuine teaching gem — feel free to use it with your whole class. Note that 'jug' and 'bug' share the /ug/ ending — a great opportunity to reinforce the concept of rhyming word families.