SAMPLE LESSON

Phonics PLUS™

Designed Specifically for the 3 Tiers of RTI
Grades K–3

Level A: Lesson 20 (Short a)
Ar-A-Rat

I know a rat on Ararat,
He isn’t thin, he isn’t fat
Never been chased by any cat
Not that rat on Ararat.

He’s sitting high on a mountain breeze,
Never tasted any cheese,
Never chewed up any old hat,
Not that rat on Ararat.

—Grace Nichols

Has the rat been chased by a cat?

Have you ever seen a mountain? What was it like?

Objectives
To recognize medial short a sounds
To enjoy a rhyme by a Caribbean author

DIRECT INSTRUCTION

Teacher Note: Ararat is a mountain in eastern Turkey on the borders of Iran and Armenia. The mountain is 16,945 feet high and is covered with volcanic rock. The poem itself comes from the collection A Caribbean Dozen.

● Write the key word ant and the Star Words at and on the board. Have children pronounce these words, emphasizing the initial short a in the words.

● Write the title “Ar-A-Rat” on the board and circle the as. Have children repeat the word and note the vowel sound of the medial as as the same sound heard in ant, at, and and.

● Say a list of words, some of which have the short a sound and some of which do not: cat, bat, can, rip, bank, man, rob, pan, and so on. Have children give the thumbs-up sign if they hear the short a sound and the thumbs-down sign if they don’t.

● Have the children find page 42 in their books. Directions: Follow along while I read this poem. Then read the poem with me.

● Model tracking lines of print on the Literature Chart as you read the poem for the first time. Read the poem to the class again while the children track the lines of print in their own books. Then read the poem again, inviting children to join in and read with you, tracking the lines of print as you read together.

● Read the question about the rat, and have children write Yes or No on the line. Then read the discussion question and talk about it with the class. Explain where the mountain of Ararat is.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Literature Connection
Share books that feature words with the short a sound, such as The Cat in the Hat and Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss, Alex and the Cat by Helen V. Griffith, and Axle Annie by Robin Pulver.

Reteach and Practice, p. 18
Learning Differences, p. 51
English Language Learners, p. 23

CENTERS

Reading
Prepare a 3 x 4 grid in a box top, as from a shoebox. Paste a picture (rubber stamp, sticker, or cut from a magazine) in each square. At least half of the
Words with Short a

Objective
To recognize the short a sound

DIRECT INSTRUCTION

- Write the words rat, hat, and cat on the board. Underline the short a and have children read the words with special emphasis on the short a sound.
- Read a list of words, some of which contain the short a sound and some of which do not: back, book, dad, pen, Sam, sit, camp, ran, run, band, sing, sang, mask, and so on. Have children give the thumbs-up sign if the word contains a short a and the thumbs-down sign if not.
- Help the children find page 43 in their books. Directions: Say each picture's name. Write the letter a under each picture that has the short a sound.
- Help children identify the pictures (cab, lamp, hat, book, map, hand, cat, house, rat, man, leaf, van). Model the first row for the class and have children complete the activity independently.
- To practice phonemic awareness, have children name the objects pictured and say a word that rhymes with each one. Write their suggestions on the board and read their list of words as a class.

Writing
Provide children with copies of a simple crossword frame, made by drawing three horizontal and three vertical squares that intersect in the center. Write an a in the center square. Invite children to complete the puzzle by writing CVC words with short a, one down, and one across.

Language
Challenge children to play “Pick an Apple.” Draw a simple cardboard apple tree. Write short a words on apple-shaped cards and attach each card to the tree. Have partners take turns “picking an apple” and reading the word silently. Have each partner make up a clue about the word. For example, You wipe your feet on this. (mat) The other child must guess the word, then take a turn.
Ar-A-Rat

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### Words with Short a

1. ![Car]
2. ![Lamp]
3. ![Hat]

4. ![Book]
5. ![Map]
6. ![Hand]

7. ![Cat]
8. ![House]
9. ![Rat]

10. ![Man]
11. ![Leaf]
12. ![Van]

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**20b** Write a under the pictures whose names have the short a sound.
UNIT 1

Lesson 20
Words with Short a
Student Edition pages 42-43
BLM 18

Objective
To reteach and reinforce recognition of the short sound of a in the initial and medial positions in words

RETEACH AND REINFORCE
Have the children find their key word cards for the letter a, and recall with them the key word ant. Review that the initial sound of ant is the same sound as Star Words and, an, and at. Emphasize the short a sound as you say these words. Play I Hear with My Little Ear to brainstorm other words that begin with the short a sound. Say, "I hear a-a-apple. Am I right? I hear peach. Am I right? What do you hear?"

Reinforce that the short a sound can also be heard in the middle of many words. Recall the rat on Ararat (Lesson 20a from the student books) who "isn't thin, he isn't fat." Reread the poem and write the short a words on the board (rat, Ararat, fat, cat, hat), along with the key word van. Have the children read the list of words, stressing the short a sound in each word.

Say and write the words clap hands, stressing the short a sounds. Ask the children to listen carefully as you say some words, and to clap their hands once when they hear the short a sound (bag, class, pat, sit, flag, run, tap, sad, yak, pig, etc.).

PRACTICE
Make a list of words that have the short a sound at the beginning or middle. Give the children two cards each, one printed with the letter B (stands for beginning) the other with the letter M (stands for middle). Have the children hold the B cards in their left hands and the M cards in their right hands. As you call out words, have them hold up the B card if the word begins with the target letter and the M card if the sound is in the middle of the word.

Help the children see that when a word has a short a sound (like cat), all words that rhyme with that word will have the short a sound. Have the children think of all the rhymes they can for cat and then an.

Read "I Can't," Said the Ant, by Polly Cameron and "What Is That?" Said the Cat, by Grace Maccarone, to practice the short a sound.

APPLY
Distribute BLM 18 and identify the pictures: ant, cat, apple, astronaut, duck, hand, arrow, map, glass, carrot, hammer.

Directions:
Say the names of the pictures. Under each picture is a small ant and a small cat. Circle the ant if you hear the short a sound at the beginning of the word. Circle the cat if you hear the short a sound in the middle of the word. Do not circle either one if the picture does not show a word with the short a sound.
Circle the ant if you hear the short a sound at the beginning of the word. Circle the cat if you hear the short a sound in the middle of the word. Do not circle either one if the picture does not show a word with the short a sound.

1. apple
2. astronaut
3. duck
4. glove
5. arrow
6. map
7. glass
8. carrot
9. hammer
Lesson 20a
Ar-A-Rat
Student Edition page 42
No BLMs

**Teacher Note:** At Lesson 20, the sequence of this Differentiated Instruction Guide realigns with the core lessons to complete a sequence that is appropriate for children with learning differences.

Short a can only appear at the beginning or middle of words and is most common in the middle. Focus on one-syllable words. Avoid words with schwa.

**Objectives**
- To recognize and produce the short a sound
- To create a personal word book for each child

**Prepare**

Read aloud *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss. After reading, ask the children what they noticed about the story (rhyming, sounds, etc.).

*Say:* Let's list the vowels we hear in words (a, e, i, o, u, y). Which one of these vowels do you hear the most in the book *The Cat in the Hat*? (Short a.)

*Make* the a sound card (be sure to use a different color from the consonant cards).

*Then*, model skywriting the letter multiple times. Ask the children to skywrite a while monitoring their progress.

**Teach**

Ask the children to flip to the a sound card.

*Say:* If you hear the a sound, as in apple, hold up the a card. (Dictate: rat, bib, tag, if, ad, cab, rib, nag, gas, sit, tap, at.)

Give the children a composition book or small notebook to record and list words. Ask for suggestions from the children and create a name for it (e.g. Word Dictionary, My Word Book, Words I Know). Explain that this book will be their very own book that they can use to write the new words they learn.

**Apply**

Ask the children to turn to the first page in their word book. Model the page on large chart paper. First, write short a on the top of the paper. Prompt the children to do the same in their books. Fold the paper vertically into thirds. At the top of the first column, write B, for beginning. At the top of the second column, write M, for middle. At the top of the third column, write E, for end. Explain that if the short a is in the beginning of the word (am), write the word in the first column. If the short a is in the middle of the word (map), write the word in the second column. Explain that short a never comes at the end of the word (draw a line through the column).
Then, refer back to The Cat in the Hat. As a group, go back through the book and search for words that contain short a. Record short a words in the book, placing them in the beginning or middle column (hat, cat, man). Then discuss other words to add to the list.

Help the children find page 42 in their books. Read aloud “Ar-A-Rat.” Give each child a pencil. Draw attention to all the words with the short a sound (Ararat, fat, cat). Reread and ask the children to read along. Discuss the questions at the bottom of the page. Have the children write their yes or no answers to the first question.

**Lesson 20b**  
**Words with Short a**

**Student Edition page 43**  
**No BLMs**

**Objectives**
- To review and reinforce the short a sound
- To distinguish between short a and short o
- To reread and review “Ar-A-Rat”

**Teacher Note:** It is sometimes difficult for children to differentiate between short vowel sounds, especially between short i and short e. If this is the case, begin asking the children to differentiate between short vowel sounds that have more obvious distinctions (e.g. short a and short o).

**Prepare**
- Review all the short vowel sounds. Reread “Ar-A-Rat,” underlining the short a words. Review the sound of short a by reading through the children’s word books.
- Using a mirror, model making the short a sound. Ask the children what they notice about your mouth. (It is open.) Compare short a with short o; say hat, then hot. Call attention to the way the bottom jaw drops when making the short o in hot. If children cannot see the difference, ask them to place one hand under their jaw when saying both vowels, then both words in front of a mirror. Ask again if they can see or feel a difference. Keep practicing until the children are able to differentiate between the sounds.

**Teach**
- Ask the children to flip to their a card on their ring.

**Say:** If you hear the /a/ sound, as in apple, hold up the a card. Dictate: back, log, bat, mop, man, hat, top, lamp, clap, got, van.

**Apply**
- Help the children find and complete page 43 in their books.
Lesson 20a
Ar-A-Rat
Student Edition page 42

Assessment Quick Check
Can the children recognize short a sound in the middle of words?

Objective
To recognize medial short a

Teaching Points
After completing the activity, give the children additional practice in fluency by recording the poem on an audiotape, leaving long pauses at the end of each line. Have the children listen to the tape individually and then read/repeat each line at the pause.

Picture Glossary Words
hat

Lesson 20b
Words with Short a
Student Edition page 43

Assessment Quick Check
Can the children read words with the short a sound?

Objective
To recognize the short a sound

Teaching Points
The children may not know the names of the items pictured on the activity sheet and therefore may have trouble completing the activity independently. Ask them to name the items they recognize and check for accuracy. For unknown objects, ask the children if they know the name of the object in their native language. Then, provide the name in English (prolonging the short a sound) and ask the children to repeat with you.

Once the children can remember the names of new objects, ask them to complete “Words with Short a” activity individually or in pairs.

Pair English language learners with native English speakers to complete the phonemic awareness component of the activity, producing words that rhyme with the names of the objects shown in the pictures.

Picture Glossary Words
(no new words)
happy
hat
haystack
head
hill
hit