

I like to īte, īte īpples and banīnīs.

I like to ōte, ōte ōpples and banōnōs.

I like to ūte, ūte ūpples and banūnūs.

(Note: This song has been written in such a way that the teacher has a guide to pronunciation; it should therefore not be distributed to the students. This is an oral exercise only!)

This activity can either be used as a follow-up to the above spelling lesson, or on its own. It would be best to bring both an apple and a banana to class for greater motivation and visual stimulation.

1. Write the vowels in large letters on the blackboard.
2. Elicit from the students the name of the letters, and drill pronunciation of each vowel.
3. Hold up both the pieces of fruit and elicit the names, drilling a couple of times. Ask the students questions such as, "Do you like to eat apples?" "Do you like to eat bananas?" You can also give your own preference to the students, saying "I like to eat apples, do you like to eat apples?" This provides the students with lots of practice using the target language before moving into the chant.
4. Go over the pronunciation of the long vowels with the students again.
5. Now, hold up the apple to the A and drill the sound of 'apple.' Do the same with banana. The students will probably be quite confused at first. Continue down the list of vowels until you have practiced drilling all of the sounds with the fruit. Now you can begin working on the chant.

6. Start by modeling a chant for the students only using

Āpple, Āpple, Āpple and banān?

The students should repeat a number of times before continuing on to

next long vowel sound.

7. The students will be quite giggly and think this is a whole bunch of fun. It is now a good time for you to model the entire chant for them. Model it a couple of times before you have the students do it.

8. Now, let the students have a go at it, but begin by backchaining. Backchaining is a method by which you begin with the final word and build on until the entire sentence is spoken:

Bananas

And bananas

Apples and bananas

Eat apples and bananas

Eat eat apples and bananas

To eat eat apples and bananas

Like to eat eat apples and bananas

I like to eat eat apples and bananas

You model this backchain and have the students repeat each line

after you. Once they have successfully chanted the entire sentence a

couple of times, you can now begin with the change in vowel sounds.

Repeat the entire backchaining process to ease students pronunciation.

Once they have the hang of it, your students will chant with ease and

lots of laughter! As an added bonus, you could bring in enough apples and bananas into the classroom to have a healthy snack!

*** The song, I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas, was written by Raffi who is a popular children's song artist. Copies of the cassette will be made available in the Qattan Centre Library.

Artist: Raffi

Cassette: One Light One Sun

Label: 1985 Troubador Records Ltd.

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The Long and Short of English Vowels

The greatest challenge facing English language learners is the issue of spelling. Frequently my students complain that English “makes no sense” because it is virtually impossible to formulate a set of rules which can be relied upon to produce accurate spelling. This is true. English spelling is inconsistent, and the pronunciation of a word rarely reflects its written form. So, what can we do to help our students overcome their frustration?

The following activities can be used as a first step in turning your students into ‘master spellers.’ But first, a word of caution is in order: the only rule in English is that there are no rules!

Vowels

There are five main vowels in the English language:

A E I O U

Each vowel has two sounds: long and short. This activity will focus primarily on long vowel sounds.

Long vowels are denoted as follows:

Ā Ē Ī Ō Ū

Short vowels are denoted as follows:

Ǻ ǣ ǐ ǒ ǔ

Here is a trick to help your students:

When the vowel is long, the sound the vowel makes is the same as the name of the letter. For example, the first vowels in the following words are long:

1. A says ‘A’ as in cape.
2. E says ‘E’ as in these.
3. I says ‘I’ as in site.

4. O says ‘O’ as in slope.

5. U says ‘U’ as in cute.

What does each word have in common? A silent ‘e’ as the last letter! Therefore, it is the ‘e’ which makes the preceding vowel sound long.

Look:

1. cǣp + e = cāpe

2. thǣs + e = thēse

3. sǐt + e = sīte

4. slǒp + e = slōpe

5. cŭt + e = cūte

This can be very useful for your students, as long as you make sure to tell them that this is a general rule. Not all words with silent ‘e’ as the final letter follow this pattern. For example, both ‘some’ and ‘have’ sound as short vowels even though there is a silent ‘e’ at the end!

Students have the most difficulty with short vowels because each vowel has many different sounds. Spelling rules therefore, are virtually impossible to create. You can, however, help your students to correctly pronounce the long vowel sounds. The following activity, which is probably best used with students from kindergarten to grade 3, focuses on pronunciation of long vowels:

I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas

I like to eat, eat apples and bananas.

I like to āte, āte āpples and banān?s.

I like to ēat, ēat, ēpples and banēnēs.