



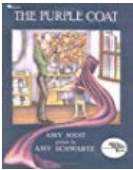
Foundations for Literacy III

FFL 3.3

Two Vowels Together

ai,
ea, ee
ie
oa, oe
ue, ui
(ay, ey)

“When you have two vowels together, the first one says its name.”



Read: *The Purple Coat*, by Amy Hest (Review bossy r in the word *purple*.)

Note that the word coat has an o and an a and that neither vowel makes its short vowel sound. Say, “When you have two vowels together, the first one says its name.” That’s *usually* true.

Hold up two fingers (pointer and middle finger, like you’re showing the number two) and say, **“When you have two vowels...”** Put those two fingers together as you say the word **“...together...”**. Then say, **“...the first one...”** and put your middle finger down showing only the pointer finger, like you’re indicating the number one. Finally, point that finger to your mouth and say, **“...says its name.”**

Repeat this rule three more times having the students match your motions and words. Gradually withdraw your voice so you can hear the students stating this new phonics rule (of thumb).

Note: **We will not say, “When two vowels go walking the first one does the talking.”** We must be more explicit. Vowels “talk” much of the time. We want our kids to know what the vowel will say. We’ll acknowledge that there are a few exceptions, and we’ll explicitly teach them, too, in an upcoming lesson called *Flip Flops* in FFL 4.5.

Two Vowels Together, Make Your Own Game Board

materials include: game board construction paper, dot dabbers, two vowels together (vv) word cards, mixed (both sets needed), game board rule reminders, dice, movers, two-vowel finders (3” pieces of pipe cleaner bent to make rainbows), two-vowel tents

Make game boards using plain pieces of white construction paper and dot dabbers. With the dabbers, the students will make dots all along the perimeter of the paper. (Use that word, perimeter, please.) Students will glue the papers that say, “*When you have two vowels together, the first one says its name*” to the middles of their game boards. Allow the game boards to dry while completing the next activity.

Decoding words from *The Purple Coat*

materials include: (ultra sophisticated) two vowel finders (3" of pipe cleaner bent to make rainbows), two vowels together words from *The Purple Coat*

Say something like, "Someone went through this book, *The Purple Coat*, and they gathered all the words with two vowels together where the first one says its name. Let's make some high tech, ultra sophisticated 'two-vowel finders' (which are simply rainbow shapes made with 3" sections of pipe cleaners) so we can use them to help us accurately decode lots of really sophisticated words."

While allowing time for students' game boards to dry, your scholars will begin decoding words from *The Purple Coat* that have two side-by-side vowels. First, they'll spot the two vowels that are side-by-side within the word, holding their Two Vowel Finders above those vowels with each end of the pipe cleaner touching a vowel. Then they'll decode the words remembering that the first vowel will say its name and the second one will say nothing (just like a magic e).

The students will use their two-vowel finders to decode the following words:

trains, red-painted, hears, street, reaches, leans, toes, wheels, eats, complains, nearly, wait, leaves, meet, speaker, sneaky, coat, tailor, screech, ears, blue, knees, heel, greetings, green, waiting, neat, rainbow, oak, means, meet, said, air, pleat, easy, cream, needs, tailor, year, heel, waist, clears, leans, sleeves, sneaky, feel

The students are to place their two-vowel finders over the two vowels that are together in the words and then—when decoding each word—make that first vowel say its name. The second vowel, like a magic e, will say nothing at all.

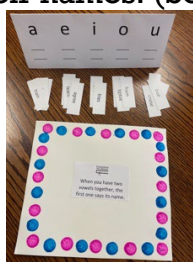
(The main exception to this rule is when the two vowels are split between syllables as we see in the word *lion*. Note that, in this example, the i is an open vowel. It says its name. The o is a closed vowel. It makes its short sound. We'll teach more about this later in this lesson.)

Two Vowels Together Using Student-Made Game Boards

materials include: game boards, movers, dice, both sets of word cards (mixed), vowel tents (for sorting), Two Vowel Finders (if desired), pencils

When the students have had sufficient practice with words from the book and their self-made game boards are dry, introduce the Two Vowels Together game. Students may continue using their two-vowel finders as needed, though they may need to make the "rainbow" a lot narrower for these smaller words.

To play this game, students must **earn the right to roll their dice** by accurately decoding the small word cards and placing those word cards (vertically this time) in stacks under the vowel tents, indicating which vowels are saying their names. (See image.)



When a great number of words have been accurately decoded and there are plenty of words under each vowel (Both sets of word cards are needed, or you won't have each vowel combination represented.) the students will stop playing the game and you'll guide your students, so they'll examine all the words in the first column where the vowel **a** says its name. The students will determine, with your help, that in all these words, the **i** makes the **a** say its name. The students will, on a line under the letter **a** on the vowel tent, write the letters **a-i**. This will serve as a reminder that when two vowels are together with the **a** is saying its name, it's usually an **i** that makes the **a** say its name. This will be a huge help when it comes to spelling words where there is no magic **e** making the vowel make its long sound. It's a rule that kids may "flip" to when striving to spell a long vowel sound accurately.

As we make our way through this work, addressing the double vowel spellings that can make each vowel say its name with the "two vowels together" rule, our students will be benefitting from the process known as orthographic mapping. Orthographic mapping requires advanced phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, and long-term phonological memory—all of which these FFL lessons serve to strengthen. Together, these discrete skills help students to produce long-term memory of the words in which they've engaged in decoding. This practice is very different from sight word memorization and yields far superior results. The benefits of this sound/symbol (phoneme/grapheme) instruction are multiplied because students taught in this manner are equipped to decode **and** encode unfamiliar words with facility and accuracy.

Students will continue looking at each stack of word cards, under each vowel, determining which vowels make the first vowel say its name and recording the combinations on their vowel tents until all vowels have been addressed (**a**, **a-i**; **e**, **e-a** & **e-e**; **i**, **i-e**; **o**, **o-a** & **o-e**; **u**, **u-e** & **u-i**).

Two Vowels Together Spelling

materials include: vowel tents, pencils, two vowels together spelling papers, sharpened pencils

Support your scholars as they transfer the correct vowel combinations from the sorting tents to their spelling papers (**a**, **a-i**; **e**, **e-a** & **e-e**; **i**, **i-e**; **o**, **o-a** & **o-e**; **u**, **u-e** & **u-i**). Have the students spell a minimum of 5-7 words from the Two Vowels Together practice you've done using their vowel tents to guide them. Continually remind them of the rule you're leaning together. Do the motion with your hands and state the rule again and again. ***"When you have two vowels together, the first one says its name."***

When students choose the spellings they *think* would be correct for the words you say, guide them to making the right decision by reminding them of what we know about how words work. For example, the vowel pairs **a-i**, **o-a**, and **u-i** are most always used in the middles of words; they're rarely used at the ends of words.

Two Vowels Together Treat &/or Using Environmental Print

materials include: Oatmeal Crème Pies box or image

Share with your students that they'll see lots of words around them where there are two vowels together and the first one says its name. Show them a box of Little Debbie Oatmeal Crème Pies and draw arrows showing how the vowels in those words work. Note with your students, too, that the *actual* way to spell cream is with two vowels together and the first one says its name. 😊 Note that the company likely needed to change the spelling for branding purposes, so they used a magic **e** to make the vowel say its name.

Spotting Two Vowels Together

materials include: word lists with two vowels together, pencils

Direct your readers to find, in each word listed, the two side-by-side vowels. Ask the students to use a pencil to draw an arrow from the second vowel in the pair to the first vowel that's saying its name. Refer to the work we did making arrows with Magic e's telling vowels to say their names. Then the students are to decode the words, producing the correct vowel sounds, as they apply the phonics rule we're practicing.

NOTE- *Acknowledge that there are times when vowels make different sounds even when there are two vowels are together. We'll cover these in upcoming "Flip Flop" lessons. Don't worry. We'll make it make sense, but we want you to be prepared when your students discover a word that has two vowels together, but the first one doesn't say its name.*

e-a x 3 sounds (& when it doesn't make a sound at all)

An e-a can sound like long e (heat), short e (head), or a long a (great). An e-a can even be bossed by an r (heard).

i-e and e-i sounds

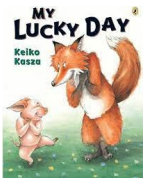
An i-e can sound like long i (pie) or long e (piece), and e-i can sound like long e (weird) or long a (eight).

Two Vowels Together Game Board

materials include: game board featuring words with two vowels together and the first one says its name, movers, dice, crayons

Invite your students to play the Two Vowels Together board game. They will place their movers on any space, roll the die, and move the indicated number of spaces. The students will decode the words upon which they land. When you have ensured a word has been decoded accurately, you will color in that space, and that word will not be in play for the remainder of the game. This practice will provide decoding practice, and it will also promote orthographic mapping which reinforces accurate spelling.

Two Vowels Together when Y acts like a vowel, a-y



Read: *My Lucky Day*, by Keiko Kasza

Note with your students that the a-y in *Day* says /ay/. The y, here, is acting like a vowel, so it's two vowels together and the first vowel is saying its name, /ay/.

Two Vowels Together when Y acts like a vowel, a-y Game Board

materials include: game board, movers, dice, crayons

Remind students that when we see the letters a and y together, the two vowels together rule is at work. Sometimes y *acts like* a vowel, though it doesn't have a vowel sound of its own. We'll explore, in an upcoming lesson, the rule that says when a y acts like a vowel it usually sounds like an i or an e however, since there is no sound for the second vowel with the two vowels together

rule, the y's don't make any sound, here, at all.

Students will play the board game, moving their movers the number of spaces indicated when they roll their dice. They'll decode the words, with you coaching them as needed, to accurately read each word. When you provide confirmation, the word may be colored in and won't be landed upon for the remainder of the game. Continue play until the students are equipped to accurately decode words with a-y saying /ay/.

Two Vowels Together when Y acts like a vowel, a-y Spelling

materials include: spelling papers, pencils

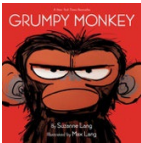
Invite students to spell at least 5-7 words from the game board. Remind them that when we hear the long a sound at the ends of words, it's often spelled with an a-y. This spelling piece is important so our students will be more inclined to spell words accurately or "as we'll see them in books." When they've had plentiful opportunities to practice spelling, leaning into the sounds they hear, they're more inclined to recognize when spellings *look right* or *don't look right*, and they can flip to another way to spell the sounds.

Two Vowels Together when Y acts like a vowel, a-y Treat

materials include: PAYDAY information page, PAYDAY mini candy bars (or bits of a large one)



Two Vowels Together when Y acts like a vowel, e-y



Read *Grumpy Monkey*, by Suzanne Lang

With e-y, the two vowels together rule, again, is at play. The e makes a long e sound (like in *money*, *donkey*, *chimney*, *monkey*, etc.) However, *sometimes* e-y can make the long a sound. It's not so tricky though, because when we make the short e sound and the consonant y sound, we actually hear the long a sound (like in *they*, *obey*, *hey*, *survey*). We'll teach our students to start with the e-y saying /ee/ as in *monkey*. If that doesn't make a word we know, we'll *flip it* (the sound) to say /ay/ as in *they*.

Two Vowels Together when Y acts like a vowel, e-y Game Board

materials include: game board, movers, dice, crayons

Remind students that when we see the letters e and y together, the two vowels together rule is at work. Again, sometimes y *acts like* a vowel, though it doesn't have a vowel sound of its own. We'll soon explore the rule that says *when a y acts like a vowel it usually sounds like an i or an e* however, since there is no sound for the second vowel with the two vowels together rule, the y's in these words don't make any sound at all.

Students will play the board game, moving their movers the number of spaces indicated when they roll their dice. They'll accurately decode the words with you coaching them as needed. When you provide confirmation that the word is accurately decoded, the word will be colored in

and won't be landed upon for the remainder of the game. Continue play until the students are equipped to accurately decode words with e-y saying /ee/ as in *monkey* and e-y saying /ay/ as in *they*.

Two Vowels Together when Y acts like a vowel, e-y Spelling

materials include: spelling papers, pencils

Invite students to spell 5-7 words from the game board. Remind them that when we hear the long e sound at the ends of words, it's often spelled with an e-y and when we hear the long a sound at the ends of words, it, too, can be spelled with an e-y.

As students lean into the sounds they're hearing, they'll decide in which column they should write the words you dictate. If it says /ee/ it'll go in the first column. If it says /ay/ it'll go in the second column. This close investigation, making the sounds aloud as we record the letters, promotes accurate spelling and the coming to know words "on sight." Our students will be more inclined to recognize when spellings *look right* or *don't look right*, and they can flip to another spelling "rule" as needed.

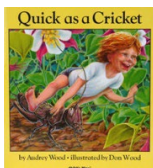
Two Vowels Together when Y acts like a vowel, e-y Treat

materials include: Bit O' Honey information page, Bit O' Honey candies



Words with u can be tricky!

In this lesson we're going to share with our students that, when decoding words with *two vowels together where the first one says its name*, we need to watch out for the letter u that is **not** acting like a vowel. We know, from our handwriting lessons, that a q is never used without a u following it, so **q-u is addressed as a single unit. Nothing can make that u say its name.**



Read: Quick as a Cricket by Audrey Wood

Note with your students that the u-i in *quick* does not say /you/ or /oo/. The u is simply helping the q to make its sounds /kw/. In words with q-u, an i cannot make the u say its name.

Note, too, that like the q-u pair, **b-u**, **c-u**, and **g-u** can also work together so the u is not in play—the u is acting like a "blocker letter." The second vowel has no impact on the first. We'll talk more about this in the upcoming lesson. For now, we want our kids to recognize that sometimes a u does not say its name—even if another vowel follows it as in: b-u (*build*), c-u (*biscuit-u blocks soft c sound*) and g-u (*guide-u blocks soft g sound*).

(not included in the FFL resources)

Note with your students that the book, *Quick as a Cricket*, is filled with similes. Share that similes are figures of speech where two things are compared using the words *like* or *as*. Share, too, that writers use similes in their writing to better convey meaning. Do come back to this book to encourage your students to write some sentences using similes.

Then . . .



Read: *You're Toast*, by Nancy Loewen (Notice the two vowels together in *toast*.)

Share with your students that *You're Toast* teaches about metaphors (and refers to similes). Metaphors compare two things *without* using the words *like* or *as*. Again, writers use metaphors in their writing to better convey meaning. Invite your students to write some sentences using metaphors.

Tricky U Board Game

materials include: Tricky U explanation page, Tricky U game board, movers, dice, crayons

Students will play the board game, moving their movers the number of spaces indicated when they roll their dice. They'll decode the words with you coaching them, as needed, to read with accuracy. When you provide confirmation that the word was correctly decoded, the word will be colored in and won't be landed upon for the remainder of the game. Continue play until the students are equipped to accurately decode **words with u not saying its name, even when it's followed by another vowel.**

Split the Vowels

Share with your scholars that if they try the Two Vowels Together Rule and it doesn't work to make a word they know, they may need to **split the vowels**.

When we “split the vowels”, we make the first one say its name—as an open vowel—and then make the short vowel sound for the second vowel. The second vowel is not silent as in most “two vowels together” words.



Read: *Lions* by Laura Marsh

As you read the text, note the word *prey*. It's two vowels together, an e-y, that says /ay/. Note with your students, too, the homophone *pray*. In that word there's an a-y saying /ay/.

When you finish reading the book, go back to the title. Share that the word *lion* has two vowels together, but the title of the book isn't /line/. So, what's happening here?

In this word, and in some others, we need to *split the vowels*. Demonstrate with your students how

to draw a line between two side-by-side vowels. Share that the first one is an open vowel—it says its name, and the second vowel will usually make its short sound.

If the Two Vowels Together Rule Doesn't Work, Split the Vowels

materials include: Split the Vowels Explanation and practice page, pencils

Invite your students to draw a line between the two side-by-side vowels with their pencils as they decode the words on this practice page. Teach them to make the first vowel say its name, for it's an open vowel, and teach them to make the second vowel make its short sound. This strategy works nearly every time.

Though it may feel as though the phonics rules are crazy and a bit unreliable, kids can and do learn to navigate these words with skill and confidence. They simply need someone to explicitly teach them what to do and to provide opportunities for practice. Thank you for being that someone!

Irregular Word: said

materials include: information page, *said* practice page, pencils

Share the information page about *said* with your scholars. We'd expect this word to say /sayd/. Because we see two vowels together, we'd expect the first vowel to say its name.

Acknowledge the unexpected, irregular spelling. Invite your students to read the sentences on the practice page. Ask them to insert the word *said* as directed. As they record the word, each time they should make the sounds we hear in the word *said*. They should say /s/ and write an s. Then they'll say /e/ and write a-i. Finally, they'll say /d/ and write a d.

It can be a powerful reminder to say /ay/ a time or two as you are reading the word *said*. Then make the correction. You can say, "The word *said* looks like it'd say /sayd/. If I were writing the sounds I say to spell this word, I'd expect to write it like this: s-e-d, but that doesn't look right to me. We need to remember the irregular spelling: /s/- s, /e/- ai, /d/- d.

Dictated Sentence and Decoding Sentence Practice Page

materials include: dictated sentence practice pages, pencils

Students will be challenged to write one sentence from the dictated sentence page for this lesson. You will read one sentence of your choosing, as many times as needed, as the students record that sentence—using capitals, spaces, and end marks. Of course, you'll also coach them to correctly use the phonics rule you've been teaching this week (and in previous weeks).

TIP: With the dictated sentence page in front of your students, on their tables or at their desks, have them flip the paper upside down and fold on the dotted line so the handwriting lines show at the bottoms of their papers. When done this way, it'll be easy for your students to flip that fold back up and check their sentence writing with the one on the page. Their sentences will be right side up when they unfold them to check their work.

This self-checking promotes skilled reading and writing. And remember, this work is not to be graded. This is our practice. We are using no-stakes assessments, so our kids feel comfortable taking risks and trying out the skills they're learning.

Finally, your scholars will practice decoding words, featuring this new learning, as they decode the remaining sentences.