



Foundations for Literacy IV

FFL 4.5

Flip Flops

Part I (e-a x 3+)

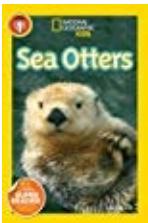


Flip Flop Fish

materials include: Fortune Teller Fish

Present your readers with a Fortune Teller fish. Tell them that these fish can reveal a lot about them. Read the descriptions on the backs of the packaging. Next, invite your students to lay their fish flat on their outstretched palms. Allow them to enjoy the excitement of watching the fish wiggle and squirm and to consider whether they are in love, or one of the other descriptions. We'll use this "flip flopping" experience to demonstrate how the sounds for e-a can flip from the first vowel saying its name, to the second one saying *its* name, to the e just making its short sound—as if the a weren't even there.

Direct your students' attention to the following book titles:



National Geographic, Sea Otters



National Geographic, Bears



National Geographic, Deadliest Animals

Flip Flops with Book Titles

materials include: three books (or book cover images—*Sea Otters*, *Bears*, *Deadliest Animals*) with the three most common sounds for e-a represented

Remind your readers that we know e-a *usually* says /ee/. It's the Two Vowels Together rule. We know that when you have two vowels together, the first one says its name. We see this rule in the *Sea Otters* book cover.

Next, show your students the *Bears* book. Ask them if the word says /beers/, like we'd expect with the Two Vowels Together rule. They'll likely use the picture of the bear to determine that the title is not /beers/ and is, rather, *Bears*. Note that in this book title, the first vowel doesn't say its name, but the **second** one does. This is a flip flop. Draw an arrow, with your finger, from the a to the e (as we did when we learned the Two Vowels Together rule. Then, bounce the rainbow back again, to the second vowel. That's how we'll cue our students to flip the sound.

You can demonstrate the flip flop motion by turning an outstretched palm over, so the palm is facing the opposite direction. Say, "If the first vowel doesn't say its name, just flip it (the vowel sound) to see if the second vowel says **its** name.

Finally, show your students the *Deadliest Animals*. Note, together, that the e doesn't say its name in *deadliest*. Then notice that the a doesn't say its name either. In this word **the e acts like the a isn't even there**. Again, demonstrate the flip flop motion with your hand.

Say, "If the first vowel doesn't say its name, and the second vowel doesn't say its name, flip it again to see if the first vowel makes its short sound, /e/."

We'll direct the kids to "flip and flop" the sounds for e-a, in this order, until they land upon a word they know. The first sound should be /ee/, then, if that doesn't make a word we know, we flip it to /ay/. If that doesn't make a word we know, we flip the sound to /e/ as in *head*.

In the literature, having this flexibility with decoding is called *set for variability*. This instruction equips children to practice being flexible with the pronunciations of words. This is not guessing words. It's allowing slight adjustments in the sounds, using what we know about how words work.

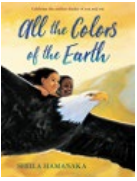
According to Dyson and colleagues (2017), students benefit when they're taught to:

1. Read the word aloud.
2. Think about whether they know the word they said.
3. Think of words that might sound like the word (if they didn't know it).
4. Choose a word from the options they generated that sounded most like the word they read.
5. Decide whether the pronunciation they selected makes sense in the context in which they read it.

Part I (cont.) e-a + r / e-a x 5

There's more to the flipping and flopping for e-a. Let's look at the impact of the letter r when it follows e-a.

You'll share two more book titles with your students.



All the Colors of the Earth by Sheila Hamanaka



In My Heart, by Jo Witek

Your students need to know that there are a couple other things that can happen with e-a when those letters are followed by an r. When we see an e-a-r and the first one doesn't say its name (like it does in *hear*), that r is usually being bossy (like we see in *learn*). Remember Bossy r? It can boss both e **and** a when they're together. Yes, e-a-r can just say /r/.

There is only one other sound for e-a-r but it's rarely seen. E-a-r can say /ar/ (as if the e is not there). The only words with e-a-r saying /ar/ are words where the word *heart* is part of the word. (e.g. *heartbroken*, *heartfelt*, *hearth*)

e-a Flip Flops, Drawing Arrows

materials include: five sounds for e-a word lists, pencils

Students will use their pencils to draw arrows above the e-a to indicate which sound is heard for each of the five words on this practice page. They'll begin with their pencils on the letter a and, using their pencils, make a rainbow. *Jumping to the left, they'll land on the e and make the first vowel say its name.* If **that** doesn't make a word they know, they'll *flip it, bouncing the rainbow back to the a (the second letter) and make the a say its name.* If **that** doesn't make a word they know, *they'll flip back and make a short e sound*—as if the a weren't there. To show a word with a short e sound, the kids will make an elephant trunk/smile above that e. If there's an r following the e-a, it could be a Bossy r. (Not always... *Clear*, for example, has an r, but the e says its name.) If it is a bossy r word, the student will cross out the e-a (because those letters make no sound) and make an arrow pointing down to the Bossy r. Finally, for words with e-a-r saying /ar/, students will cross out the e and make a heart around the a-r.

e-a can say . . .		
ea	_____	/e/
ea	_____	/a/
ea	_____	/ē/
ear	_____	/r/
ear	_____	/ar/

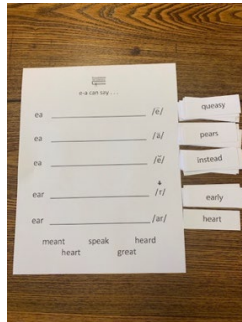
meant speak heard
heart great

Flip Flop with e-a

materials include: e-a Can Say . . . sorting practice pages, pencils

Provide each student with the e-a Can Say sorting practice page. Invite the kids to examine the words at the bottom of the page and decode each one, remembering to flip and flop, remembering the possibilities for e-a and e-a-r, until they hear a word they know.

The students will show what's happening in each word by making arrows above the e-a on the left side of the page. Then, they'll write the words themselves, on the line, making the sounds aloud as they do so. (Remember, **we write the sounds we say.**) The student will confirm that the sounds indicated in the right-hand column match the vowel sounds they hear within the words they wrote. Invite the students to make rainbows, indicating the correct sounds, above each e-a and e-a-r, after they've written each word.



Decoding More Words with e-a

materials include: e-a word cards, e-a *Can Say . . .* sorting practice pages

Invite your students to decode the words on the word cards. To draw more awareness to the spellings that represent the given sounds, have your scholars place the word cards along the right-side edges of their e-a *Can Say . . .* sorting practice pages as shown above.

This extra step is important in helping kids to orthographically map words into their memories. This cognitive process is used to store and retrieve words by connecting their pronunciation, spelling, and meaning automatically and effortlessly. It is important that **students do not do this work independently**. They need instant feedback and corrective coaching to ensure they're employing the code moving toward facility. If space is limited, kids can stack their word cards. If not, it's most beneficial to have the words exposed as much as possible for even incidental viewing of words promotes orthographic mapping.

e-a Flip Flop Board Game

materials include: e-a board games, movers, dice, pencils

Students will place their movers on a word they think they know. When you confirm the accurate decoding of the word, the students will color the space, and that space will no longer be in play. Students may flip and flop their rainbow arrows, made with their fingers or their pencils, above the e-a's to determine which sound for the spelling makes a word they know. Play continues until all words have been correctly decoded and colored. Play may continue across a few days.

e-a Spelling Sort

materials include: e-a word lists for spelling sort, e-a spelling record sheets for spelling words with e-a, pencils

Students will decode the words on the word list, determine the sound made by the e-a, and record the words in their proper places on the spelling sorting sheet. This practice is somewhat self-correcting as there is exactly the right number of words for the spaces provided on the spelling practice page. Note that **read and tear should be recorded in two different places, each, as those spellings can be pronounced two different ways.** (They're homophones. homo=same, phone=sound)

Part II i-e x 2 & e-i x 2

Once your students have gotten the hang of the e-a flip flops, they're ready to extend that learning into other vowel combinations. It's a great thing for kids to learn to grapple a bit with words. As they grow more and more confident with applying what they know to be true about how words work, you will observe tremendous growth in your kids' confidence. They have grace with themselves when they do not know a word on sight. They will know the word on sight, eventually, but your students will not just mumble through unfamiliar or complex words. They will not just ignore them altogether and hope no one notices. Your readers will seek to truly understand what they're reading, and they'll feel equipped to do so. One of the primary differences between sight word readers and phonics-focused readers is that phonics readers are rarely intimidated by unfamiliar words. They jump in with both feet and begin the work of decoding—and they're absolutely equipped for the task.



National Geographic, Deadliest Animals

i-e & e-i Flip Flops

materials include: change the y to i information sheets, the *Deadliest Animals* book (cover)

Share that we learned the e-a in *Deadliest* (on the book cover) represents the short e sound. Note, too, that on first sight we might expect that i in *Deadliest* to say its name (according to the Two Vowels Together rule), but it doesn't. Notice the i-e actually says /ee/. Share the information sheet featuring the word *deadly*. Note that the y says /ee/ in *deadly*. Share, too, that when we add endings, or suffixes, to words that end with a y, we usually change the y to an i and *then* add those endings. (This prevents the y from being read as a consonant sound.) Discuss the examples shown on the information sheet.

Notice that when words end with y, we change the y to an i and then add the endings, **but** the first vowel (i) doesn't always say its name. Sometimes it seems as though the second vowel (e) says *its* name. **You can mention that the sound the y was making in the original word is simply maintained, however when young readers are decoding unfamiliar words, this is often information they cannot yet grasp. They are unable to recognize what the base word is. To decode for meaning, all our students need to understand is . . . "Flip it." If the i-e doesn't say /eye/, try flipping it and say /ee/.**

TIP: Have your students draw a rainbow from the second vowel to the first one as a reminder to make that first vowel say its name first. They will hold their pencil tips above that first vowel to remind them to say that vowel's name, see if that makes a word they know, and if not, they'll "rainbow" their pencils back, hopping back to the second vowel, to see if *that* vowel saying its name makes a word they know. Eventually, they'll do this flipping and flopping with their fingers, making the rainbows above words, and then they won't need any physical reminder about what to do at all.

When they've written the appropriate words on the lines of this practice page, invite your students to make rainbows indicating the correct sounds above each i-e in the words they've

recorded. This will reinforce the concept of “flipping” the sounds as needed to decode words with i-e.

Flip Flop with i-e & e-i

materials include: i-e and e-i Can Say . . . sorting papers, pencils

Provide your students with the i-e & e-i Can Say . . . sorting page. Invite them to examine the letters along the left-hand margin of the page. Share with them that when we see i-e, *usually* the first vowel says its name. Instruct them to draw an arrow from the e to the i to show the first one is saying its name. The students will then find the word at the bottom of the page that has an i-e that says /eye/ (untied) and record it on the appropriate line.

Next, address the fact that i-e can also say /ee/. It's two vowels together where the *second one* says its name. Instruct your scholars to **draw an arrow from the e to the i first to see if that makes a word they know. If not, they will flip it back to the e** to show the second vowel in the pair is saying its name. Next, they'll find the word at the bottom of the page that has an i-e that says /ee/ (field), and they'll record it on the appropriate line.

Invite your students to make rainbows, indicating the sounds they are hearing, above each i-e in the words they've recorded on the lines.

This practice will demonstrate how to approach words with two vowels together if it's clear that the first one does not say its name. Your students will learn to decode words remembering to “flip and flop” the sounds until they arrive at a word they know.

Next, share with your students that when we see e-i, we'd expect that *usually* the first vowel will say its name. Instruct them to draw an arrow from the i to the e to show that “When we have two vowels together, the first one says its name.” They'll make the sound /ee/ and then find the word at the bottom of the page with an e-i that says /ee/ (weird) and record it on the appropriate line. Invite them to make the rainbow, above the word they've written, to further demonstrate that the e-i says /ee/.

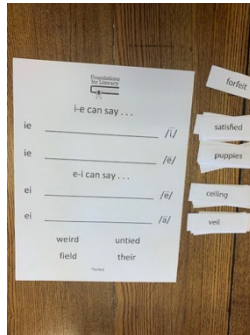
Finally, address the fact that e-i can also say /ay/. It's two vowels together BUT neither the first nor the second vowel says its name. Instead, we must flip it to the e-i saying /ay/. (Note: It almost sounds like each vowel is making its short sound.)

Instruct your students to draw an arrow from the e to the i—try that sound—and then, since it rarely flops back to say /eye/ (only in *height* and *sleight of hand*), they'll continue moving their pencils around to change the first arrow into the letter a. Say: E-i can say /ay/. Your students will find the word at the bottom of the page that has an e-i saying /ay/ (their), and they'll record it on the appropriate line. Invite your students to then make the rainbow above the e-i—and then turn that rainbow into an a, indicating the correct sounds produced when decoding this word.

A helpful tip/motion is to have the students use their pointer fingers to trace the veins in their wrists, from their hands toward their elbows, saying, “E-i can say /ay/ like vein.”

The e-i saying /ay/ is the trickiest one, but your students will get it. Referencing the familiar number word *eight* might be helpful to promote a stronger connection. You'll also want to share with your students that e-i saying /ay/ is often **followed by a g-h that says absolutely nothing (just like with a-u)** just like we see in *eight*.

When finished with this practice page, the students will have shown what's happening in each word by making arrows or a letter a for those i-e and e-i words. This will anchor your students' learning for the upcoming practice.



Decoding Words with e-i & i-e

materials include: i-e & e-i word cards, i-e & e-i Can Say . . . sorting papers

Invite your students to read the words on the i-e and e-i flip flop word cards. To draw more awareness to the spellings that represent the given sounds, have your scholars place each word card they decode along the right-side edges of their i-e & e-i *Can Say . . .* sorting papers indicating the spellings they observe for each sound.

This extra step is important in helping kids to orthographically map words into their memories. This cognitive process is used to store and retrieve words by connecting their pronunciation, spelling, and meaning automatically and effortlessly. It is important that **students do not do this work independently**. They need instant feedback and corrective coaching to ensure they're employing the code moving toward facility. If space is limited, kids can stack their word cards. If not, it's most beneficial to have the words exposed as much as possible for even incidental viewing of words can promote orthographic mapping.

Draw Arrows and Decode Words with e-i & i-e

materials include: Draw the Arrows practice pages (3), pencils

Invite your scholars to find the two vowels together (with flip flops) for the i-e practice. Have the students draw arrows, flipping the rainbow arrow back as needed to make words they know.

Then invite your scholars to find the two vowels together (with flip flips) for the e-i practice. Have them draw arrows, flipping as needed (to change the rainbow arrows into a's) to make more words they know.

Next, do the i-e & e-i mixed practice page.

Remind your students to keep their pencils above the first vowel, see if it makes a word they know, and if not, they'll "rainbow" their pencils—hopping backward, to give the alternate sound from the second vowel a try. Eventually, they'll do this flipping with their fingers making the rainbows above words, and then they won't need any physical reminder about what to do at all.

On the first word, have your students draw an arrow from the second vowel to the first—holding the pencil on top of that first letter—and making that first vowel say its name, because the most common sound **when we see two vowels together is the first one says its name**. They'll see if

that makes a word they know. If it doesn't make a word, they'll "rainbow" their pencils back to the second vowel (to flip the sound) so **that** vowel says its name. If *that* doesn't make a word (if it's an e-i word) they'll try making the sound /ay/.

For each of these practice pages, the students will be decoding the words as they draw arrows to reinforce how to approach these flip-flopping vowel sounds.

Game Board featuring Words with e-i & i-e

materials include: game boards, movers, dice, crayons

Students will place their movers on the star. They'll roll the die and move the indicated number of spaces. They'll decode the words upon which they land, and they will color in the spaces when the words are read correctly. Please allow for plenty of flipping and flopping. Kids need to learn to be flexible with their decoding and to have grace with themselves when using a new phonics lesson. This flexibility equips them to decode more and more complex words.

Note that your students will use the color code according to the game board. Also note that the two most used "rule breakers" are highlighted on the game board (i-e, *friend* and e-i, *height*).

Change the y to an i Introduction Page

materials include: Happy Cherries, Happy Cherries mini poster



Note with your students what happened with the word *cherry* (singular) when it was changed to mean more than one cherry (plural). We're going to be saying, "**We change the y to an i and add the ending—unless the letter before the y is a vowel. Then we just add the ending,**" a lot!

Knowing about Flip Flops will make this process much easier to understand. Do the following practice by completing no more than 1/4 of each practice page each day. Do a bit from each of the three different practice pages every day until they have all been completed. Spaced practice helps to promote recall.

Spelling Practice, Change the y to an i . . .

materials include: Change the y to an i practice pages (3), pencils

Students will practice **changing singular nouns to plurals**, **writing comparatives** (adding -er for the thing that is the most when only two things being compared - e.g., *deadlier*) **and superlatives** (adding -est for the thing that is the most of all when more than two things are being compared - e.g., *deadliest*), **and writing present and past tense verbs**—all with y's that change to i's. We'll be doing a whole lot of flip flopping.

→ The best tip is: **Whatever sound the y made dictates the sound for the i-e combination.**

Begin with the word *tiny* at the top of the practice page. Ask, "If I compared two very small things and I wanted to share one as being **more tiny** than the other, I'd say, 'This one is **tinier** than the other.' If I compared more than two things and I wanted to share one as being the **most tiny** of all

the others, I'd say, "This is the **tiniest** of all." Share with your students that when spelling these words, we change the y to an i and add the endings. As you're assisting your readers as they complete this work, please refer to the initial word as the **base word** and the added endings as **suffixes**. Finish this practice across a few days.

Note: When adding -est to make superlatives, the decoding gets a little tricky because, as in the word *sneakiest*, it doesn't work to just flip flop and add the /st/. We actually say sneak/ee/est. But don't worry. Your students will get it!

Decoding Practice, Change the y to an i Word Cards . . .

materials include: word cards and header

Invite your readers to decode the words on the word cards using the flip flop rule. Please encourage your students to identify the **base words** as they decode the words on the cards. Go so far as to ask how the students believe the base words are spelled—when they're written without the suffixes. You can even inquire about the sound the y in the base word would make.

Now your students can read these sophisticated words! They learn so quickly when we teach them how words work.

Change the y to an I . . . FLIPPED

materials include: information sheet and practice page, pencils

Did you know that when words already end with i-e, and you want to add i-n-g, you change the i-e to a y and then add i-n-g?! Now *that's* weird. It's true, though. With action words (aka- verbs) like *die*, *lie*, and *tie*, you must change the i-e to a y and add the i-n-g like this: dying, lying, and tying. Crazy, huh? Read the information sheet, and practice writing some of the most common words where this rule is in play.

Swedish Fish Sweet Treat



materials include: Swedish Fish

Reinforce the fish "flip flop" theme by inviting your readers to enjoy a different kind of fish. Use your hand to flip and flop and say, "If a vowel doesn't make the expected sound as you are decoding, just **flip it** (to the other vowel sound) and see if *that* makes a word you know.

*Note the "rule breaker" word, *forfeit*. It's a rare word that flip flops to the second vowel making its short sound. Weird.

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 a sentence of your choosing, as many times as needed, as the students record that sentence— using capitals, spaces, and end marks—on their papers. Of course, you'll also coach

them to correctly use the phonics rules 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 want to use no-stakes assessments, so our kids feel comfortable taking risks and trying out the new skills they're learning.

Finally, your scholars will practice decoding the remaining sentences that have lots of flip-flopping vowel sounds.