

MONKEY SOUNDS[®]

**Teaching Short Vowels Sounds
in the Early Years
A RESOURCE PACKAGE**



TEACHERS' MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



The aim of this program is to :

- build young students' understanding of what a vowel sound is
- encourage thinking and talking about vowels
- develop auditory discrimination between the five short vowel sounds
- teach the most common letter correspondences for the five short vowel sounds

Learning to read and spell with vowels can be a challenge for many students right up into secondary years of schooling. Certainly we find that children who are weak in literacy tasks, struggle notably with vowel sounds and their graphemes (letter correspondence). Much research has shown that the more systematic, sequential and explicit we make our teaching in the early years of learning, the more likely children are to succeed in literacy development and the more long lasting is this success (Brady & Moats, 1997). It is unfortunate then, that the greatest awareness of “vowels” displayed by many young students is simply the names of the five vowel letters.

To really understand vowels, students need to look further at the concept of a vowel. This can be a tricky one to explain – even for a teacher. After all, what *is* a vowel sound and what makes it different (and harder to apply to literacy learning) than a consonant sound?

The MONKEY SOUNDS © program introduces children to the concept of vowel sounds in a unique way. It gets them to play with vowels, think about vowels and talk about vowels – first in a general sense and then in relation to the five short vowel sounds. Such instruction is also supported well by research. Effective instruction is “active and engaging” and “emphasizes discovery and understanding” with “frequent opportunities to practise spelling, writing and reading skills in a meaningful context.” (Brady and Moats, 1997.) The **MONKEY SOUNDS** © program, does just that. After learning about vowel sounds, and studying each one in-depth, children are encouraged to put their new knowledge into practice with spelling and reading tasks. Teachers are also encouraged to incorporate the cues which are used within the program into

other literacy experiences that arise in the classroom. This helps with generalization of skills. The cues included in the program are varied and promote the learning of vowel sounds through use of different sensory feedback systems (oral-motor, visual and auditory feedback systems). Each vowel sound is presented in relation to mouthshape, is given a colour, hand cue, object cue and is also linked to a short story. Different students will relate more to different cues depending upon their learning styles, so all cues should be presented by the teacher. Cues can act as a mnemonic (memory aid) when it comes to applying skills learnt, but at the time of learning, the cues assist in developing a greater understanding and a platform for discussion about each sound. Other evidence-based programs have included cues to assist in developing literacy - particularly in developing decoding and encoding skills.

(For example, The Lindamood ® Phoneme Sequencing program, 1985 encourages children to focus on mouthshapes used to make each sound).

After completing the program, and when tackling a short vowel in a word, a student will have a range of strategies to employ. They may think “What is my mouth doing when I make that sound?” or they may think “What hand cue goes with that sound?” or “What word starts with that sound – is it the apple sound?” or “What colour is that sound?” By developing cognitive-sensory functions in association with the five vowels, students are able to tackle vowel activities with more success.

The **MONKEY SOUNDS** © program is fantastic to run with a whole class, but can also be used individually. It can be used to PREVENT difficulties with vowels, or can be used REMEDIALLY. It is suggested that the order of delivery is as laid out in the book, and that the timeframe over which it is delivered is varied depending on the students’ progress.

Most importantly, the knowledge gained through the **MONKEY SOUNDS** © program should be applied whenever possible to everyday literacy tasks. Hand cues should be modeled in spelling or reading by the teacher and used to prompt children when they are struggling with the spelling of short vowels in classroom activities. Kids love **MONKEY SOUNDS** ©

Note: there are both cursive and non-cursive fonts provided in this program. Non-cursive is important to include when teaching to write the vowel letters, whereas cursive fonts may be chosen for writing tasks.

PART ONE

WHAT ARE VOWELS?

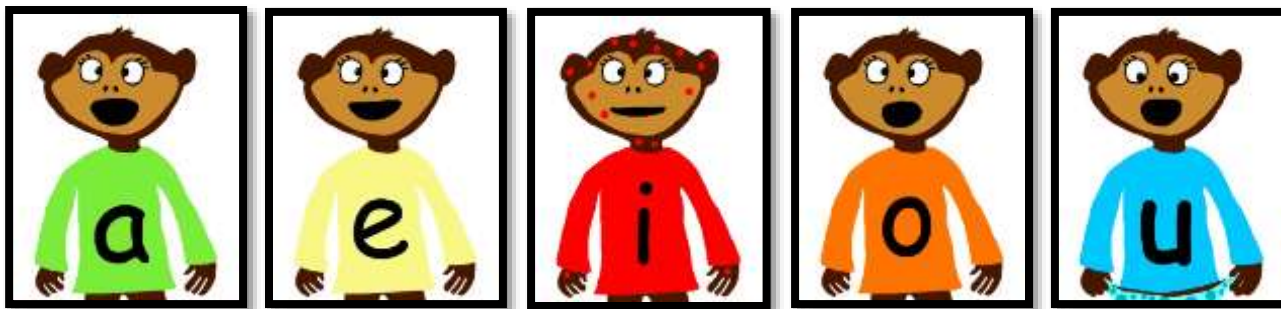
EXPLAIN When you are introducing **MONKEY SOUNDS** ©, it is good to have a monkey character that you can show the children. This helps to grab their interest and it helps the memory of the session stay with them longer. You may be able to find a monkey puppet or soft toy to use – or you could ask the class to bring in any monkeys they might have at home. If you're really stuck, you can print out a colour copy of the monkey face in the GENERAL folder – “Monkey Face” and stick it on some cardboard. When it's time to introduce **MONKEY SOUNDS** ©, I like to sit the class in a circle and bring out the monkey puppet. The explanation goes something like this:

“I've brought a special friend to meet you all today and his name is Monkey. Now monkeys can't talk like we do. They can make a lot of sounds though, but only certain types of sounds. This is because monkeys use their mouths differently to us. They don't move their tongues around when they talk (la la la , tha tha tha) and they don't put their lips together (ba ba ba, mmmmm) or teeth together (ssss) - they only move their lips around. Their lips might make smiley shapes (eee eee eee) or they might make big round shapes (oh oh oh) or little round shapes(oo oo oo)... or they might just open their mouths and make a sound (ah ah ah). We call all these sounds 'Monkey Sounds'. We also call them 'vowel sounds'.

So here's a rule to remember: **TO MAKE MONKEY SOUNDS, ONLY MOVE YOUR LIPS AROUND AND LET THE SOUNDS COME OUT... YOUR TONGUE OR TEETH OR LIPS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO TOUCH!**” (Demonstrate the rule by making some more 'monkey sounds').

“Do you think we use monkey sounds when we talk?...The answer is yes! We use lots of other sounds too, but every word we speak, every word we read and every word we spell contains a monkey sound... or a vowel sound.”

(Throughout the program, make sure you use both terms interchangeably – 'monkey sounds' and 'vowel sounds'. When we come to talking about the five short vowel sounds, I like to call these “the five special monkey sounds”).



ACTIVITY Print out a monkey face in the folder GENERAL - “Monkey Mask”, photocopy and get students to colour in. If they wish to make a mask, they can cut it out and paste it on to a paper plate. Cut out the mouth and eyes and add some hat elastic.



LISTENING TASK

Make some noises and get your students to judge whether or not they are Monkey Sounds. For example, try 1.ooo-ooo 2. m-m-m 3. ah-ah-er 4. e-e-e 5. k-k-k 6. ow –ow –ow 7. b – b –b Get them to explain why or why not the sounds are Monkey Sounds.

Try the activity again with the students closing their eyes. Can they hear the difference without looking at your lips?

REMEMBER: Some students pick up this concept quickly while others remain confused. Make sure that all students are able to pick Monkey Sounds before continuing.



PRODUCTION TASK

Get students to make some ‘monkey sounds’. It might be useful to look in a mirror or to get children in pairs to watch each others’ mouths.

Remember the MONKEY SOUND RULES:

1. Don’t let your teeth, tongue or lips touch each other. You should get all sorts of “oo ee ah” sounds. Make sure you are hearing both long and short sounds. Comment on the mouthshapes (round? smiley?) and the length of the vowel sound (short ? long?) Go around in a circle and get each child to make a ‘monkey sound’.

Another fun activity is to show the children how you can say whole sentences using only ‘monkey sounds’. That is, say a short sentence and then repeat it, just saying the vowels of the sentence. You might say “Eye uh eye-eeee” (for “I love icecream”). Kids love this and next thing you know, they will be talking in ‘monkey sounds’ in the school yard.



**WARNING: THIS ALWAYS ENDS
WITH A NOISY CLASS!**

PART TWO

INTRODUCING FIVE SHORT VOWELS

TEACHERS' NOTES

- Where a letter appears bold in an explanation, read it as the letter **name**. If it appears in *italics and underlined*, read it as the vowel sound.
- The term “vowel” should be used often throughout explanations and activities.
- All of the vowel sounds are represented with several different cues. Each sound is given a colour, a hand-cue, an explanation in regard to mouth-shape and an association with an object and a story.
- USING THE COLOUR: Some students benefit from writing or seeing the letter in a word in the colour allocated to that sound. In time, this should be faded.
- USING THE HAND CUE: When presenting a sound, use the hand cue and encourage students to do so also. Hand cues can then be used to prompt the child when they are struggling to associate a letter with its sound. All hand cues are made with a short sharp movement to highlight the “shortness” of these vowel sounds.
- USING THE OBJECT/STORY: Students can be assisted by saying the sound they are trying to write and then seeing if it can be followed on with the word contained in a story. (eg. “a...a.....apple... yes, that sound is the apple sound so that’s an “**a**” that I need to write...) If the wrong letter is chosen, for example, a child writes “puck” for “pack”, you could ask... “Is that the undies sound in ‘pack?’ Let’s sound it out.... p ... a... a...andies? No, that doesn’t sound right! ”
- When introducing a sound and its letter, always comment that the sound is *usually* written with that particular letter. Vowel sounds vary greatly in their spelling and children can get confused if you don’t make it clear that there are exceptions. Eg. In the word “what” the a sound is made with the letter **a**.
- “MONKEY ALERTS” alert teachers to extra points that should be considered when teaching vowels.

PREPARE

Print out the following pages: In the FIVE VOWELS Folder – “Monkeys and Objects”, “Monkeys and Letters”, “Monkeys A, E, I, O, U”, “Hand Cues” and “Letters”. These will be used in discussions with students and can be hung around the classroom to remind students about the five vowel sounds that we are studying. These are our “special vowel sounds.”

EXPLAIN

Now it’s time to introduce five special monkeys, their names and the sounds they make. Each monkey makes a SPECIAL MONKEY SOUND; that is, a special *vowel sound*.

Introduce each monkey by saying, for example, this first monkey is called MONKEY **A** and the sound he makes is a.

Show pictures from the folder FIVE VOWELS - “Monkey **A**” “Monkey **E**” and so on, but only focus on naming the letter/monkey. As yet, do not refer to the pictures of objects. This comes later! At this point you should ensure that all children can name all five monkeys (by reading the letters on their tops.) You can get children to copy the ‘monkey sound’ that each monkey makes, but don’t expect all children to link the letter and the sound. Using the “Monkey and Letters” picture touch each letter in order and practise saying the names: **a-e-i-o-u**. Do this touching each capital letter, then each monkey shirt, then each lower-case letter. Get each student to do this.

ACTIVITIES

1. Print and photocopy FIVE VOWELS – “Monkey Colour-in” for each student. Get students to colour in the monkeys using the colours depicted in the original pictures. (Later, when they learn more about each monkey they can return to this picture to draw an object under each monkey.)
2. Show the images of the monkeys on a computer by opening the MY MONKEY PICTURES file using picture viewer software. As each monkey is shown, the student should say its name, then click enter to see the next monkey, name it... and so on. The pictures go through the vowels twice – first cursive, then non-cursive.

*By the end of this stage, make sure all students can **name** all the monkeys and **name** all the letters – both lowercase and capital. They should be able to do this in order, but they should also be able to name each letter/monkey if cut up and presented out of order. At this point, you are only expecting the student to say the NAMES and not the SOUNDS.

PART THREE

INTRODUCING EACH MONKEY SOUND

This part of the program works through each vowel sound in-depth. The rate at which you work depends on the students involved and their abilities. The following schedule is suggested from this point on:

Session 1: Introduce Monkey A

Session 2: Revise Monkey A, Introduce Monkey E.

Session 3 : Revise Monkey A and E and compare the two.

Session 4: Revise Monkey A, E and Introduce Monkey I.

Session 5: Revise Monkey A, E ,I and compare Monkeys E and I.

Session 6: Revise Monkey A, E, I and introduce Monkey O.

Session 7: Revise Monkey A, E, I, O and introduce Monkey U.

Session 8: Revise all Monkey Sounds and compare Monkeys O and U.

Session 9: Revise all Monkey Sounds and compare Monkeys A and U.

Session 10: Mixed Monkey Sound activities.

PREPARE For each Monkey, prepare all the materials from the corresponding folder

(eg. MONKEY A). Print out and laminate for durability. Also prepare a set of letter cards from the folder “MAKE A WORD” “Start Sounds” and “End Sounds”.

A a The apple sound.

EXPLAIN:

The letter name is ... a

The sound it (usually) makes is... a

We can call this the “Apple Sound”.

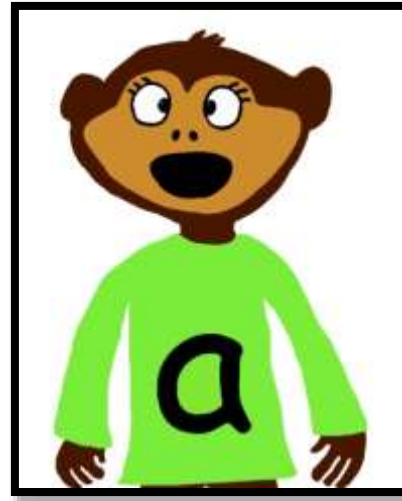
STORY:

Today we are going to learn about a monkey called MONKEY A. (Use a monkey puppet/toy when telling the story or use the Monkey Face printed earlier). This monkey loves eating something that is green and round... (Have a real green apple hidden in a bag.) Can anybody guess what it might be? It’s an a...a... apple! (Pull out the apple.) That’s right, Monkey A loves apples (show the picture “Monkey A” and point to the apple). Unfortunately, Monkey A can’t say the whole word “apple” because he can only say Monkey Sounds! What he *can* say, though, is the first sound in “apple” because a is a MONKEY SOUND!

“A – a – a” says Monkey A when he wants an apple. Can you say the start of the word apple too... a?

Just in case someone doesn’t understand what this monkey is trying to say, he makes a signal with his hand as well. The signal looks like he’s holding an apple. (Show the picture from MONKEY A folder – “Hand Cue”).

(Discuss the hand cue, the colour and the shape of the letter and finish up by getting all students to say a– just one sound alone- while doing the hand-cue).



MONKEY ALERT! The a sound, when in a word, can vary slightly in its length depending on the sounds that follow it. This can cause confusion for some students. Consider, for example, the difference between the vowel sounds in “bag” and “bat”. Again, consider the difference between the vowel sounds in “man” and “mat”. This occurs with all the vowels; the vowel sound is shorter when followed by a voiceless/soft consonant sound (such as /t/, /k/, /p/). As a teacher, play around with the two a sounds and make sure you intermittently model both. This is the reason, I feel it is not entirely accurate to call these vowel sounds “short vowels” since they are longer in some contexts.

A a The apple sound.



CUES:

COLOUR CODE: Green like an apple.

HAND CUE: The hand cue resembles holding an apple. As you say the sound, jerk the hand forward in a short movement.

MOUTH CUE: The sound is made with an open mouth that is a little bit smiley (meaning the lips move to the side a little.)

LETTER LINKS: (LOWER CASE) If you stretch your imagination, you could pretend the round part of the letter is like the apple and the straight part is the tree. The letter looks like an apple growing on a tree (In writing the letter, say: “First draw the apple then draw the tree.” Refer to the letters on the page MONKEY A – “Letters” and discuss how each letter is a different way of writing the letter a.

ACTIVITIES:

DRAW: Have the students to get out their “Monkey Colour-in”. Get students to draw a green apple under a.

READ: Together with students, read some words containing the apple sound at the start and in the middle position of words. (MONKEY A FOLDER – “Words to Read”). Highlight some words where the a letter doesn’t make the a sound. (Eg. What, was). Explain that the letter usually makes the a sound in short words, but not always.

SOUND OUT: “Pull Out the Monkey Sound.” See page 12.

COPY: Write the words from page 12 on the board. Get students to copy the words and underline the a letter in green.

MAKE A WORD : Using “Start Sounds”, “End Sounds” cards, add some letters to the “Make a Word” picture (MONKEY A FOLDER – “Make a Word”). Further instructions for MAKE A WORD are on page 29.

SPELL: Cut up the flashcards from the folder MONKEY A– “Words to Spell”. Get students to write each word and underline the a letter in green. Be careful as there is one “intruder” – one of the words contains a vowel sound that is NOT the Apple Sound. Let the students know this and see if they can pick it and tell them NOT to underline this one in green as it is NOT the apple sound. Note: The teacher may have to let the students know what each picture is meant to represent: cat-rash-bat-bag-can-snake-tap-wag-crab.

PULL OUT THE MONKEY SOUND

“Pulling out the MONKEY SOUND” is simply isolating the vowel sound in short words. Say the following words and demonstrate with the first few how you can segment the words into three sounds. As you do, hold up a finger for each sound. Ask the students which sound was the monkey sound/vowel sound, what sound it was and what letter you would use to write it. Demonstrate writing the word as you say each sound.



TRY THESE:

bag tan back rash pat pan cab map patch
pal ant sack tap shack tan jam cap pan ram
chat sag dag sat
cash tack lamb nag tag fan gap

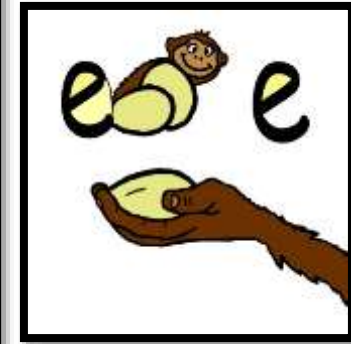
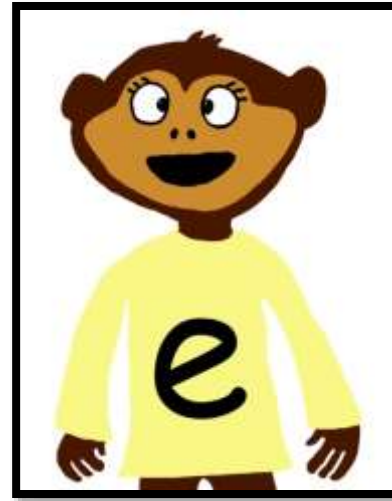
E e The egg sound.

EXPLAIN:

The letter name is ... e

The sound it (usually) makes is... e

We can call this the “Egg Sound”.



STORY:

Today we are going to learn about a monkey called Monkey E. (Again, use a monkey puppet/toy/face when telling the story).

Monkey E loves eating something that is sometimes pale yellow. (Have a real egg hidden in a bag.) Can anybody guess what it might be? It's an e...e.... egg! (Pull out the egg.) That's right, Monkey E loves eggs, (show the picture MONKEY E “Monkey E and Egg”) but he can't say the whole word egg because he can only say MONKEY SOUNDS! What he *can* say is the first sound in “egg” because e is a MONKEY SOUND!

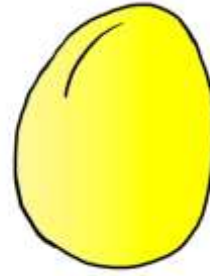
“E-e-e,” says Monkey E when he wants an egg. Can you say the start of the word egg ...e?

Just in case someone doesn't understand what this monkey is trying to say, he makes a signal with his hand as well. (Show MONKEY E - “Hand Cue”). The signal looks like he's holding an egg. “E-e-e” says Monkey E and does the hand signal.



MONKEY ALERT! In this program, we are considering ONLY phonetically regular words in relation to common Australian pronunciation. Some American and English programs will include words like elephant and bell as containing a phonetically regular e sound (the EGG SOUND). In many Australian states, this is not so – these words are produced with more of an APPLE SOUND. If a child writes “b-a-l” for “bell”, they are actually correct as far as this program goes (depending on their pronunciation of that word). They have “pulled out” the MONKEY SOUND, found the APPLE sound and written the corresponding letter. You would correct this by telling the student that they have heard the right sound, but in this case it's written with a different letter.

E e The egg sound.



CUES:

COLOUR CODE: Pale yellow like scrambled eggs.

HAND CUE: The hand cue resembles holding an egg. Your hand is flatter than the apple cue as you have to be more careful not to crush an egg! As you say the sound, jerk the hand forward in a short movement.

MOUTH CUE: It's quite a smiley mouth (meaning the lips are drawn sideways.)

LETTER LINKS: (LOWER CASE) Practise drawing some eggs and drawing an e shape within the shape of the egg. Show the picture on the page MONKEY E – “Letters” and discuss the capital and lower-case letters.

ACTIVITIES:

DRAW: Have students to go back to their “Monkey Colour-in”. Get them to draw a yellow egg under e.

READ: Together with students, read some words containing the egg sound at the start and in the middle position of words. (MONKEY E Folder – “Words to Read”). Highlight some words where the e letter doesn't make the e sound. (Eg. be, the). Explain that the letter usually makes the e sound in short words, but not when it's on the end by itself.

SOUND OUT: “Pull Out the Monkey Sound.” Read aloud the words on page 15 and get students to count out the three sounds of each word on their fingers. There is then a mix of a and e words to do.

COPY: Write the words from page 15 on the board. Get students to copy the words and underline the a letters in green and the e letters in yellow.

MAKE A WORD : Add some letters to the Monkey E- “Make a Word” picture. Further instructions for MAKE A WORD are on page 29.

SPELL: Cut up the flashcards from MONKEY E FOLDER – “Words to Spell”. Either make copies for individual students to practise spelling the words or do activity as a group. Get students to underline the e letter in yellow if it makes the Egg Sound. Be careful because there is one “intruder” – one of the vowel sounds is NOT the Egg Sound. Let the students know this and see if they can pick it. Note: The teacher may have to let the students know what each picture is meant to represent: men-web-dress-neck-leaf-bed-egg-leg-pen

TIME TO COMPARE: See page 16.

PULL OUT THE MONKEY SOUND

“Pulling out the MONKEY SOUND“SOUND” is simply isolating the vowel sound in short words. Say the following words and demonstrate with the first few how you can segment the words into three sounds. As you do, hold up a finger for each sound. Ask the students which sound was the monkey sound/vowel sound, what sound it was and what letter you would use to write it. Demonstrate writing the word as you say each sound. You can try some four sound words also. After doing some e words, present a mix e and a words as seen below.



TRY THESE: pen get deck bet kept let
when send men check led ten mess shed
left set men

NOW TRY:

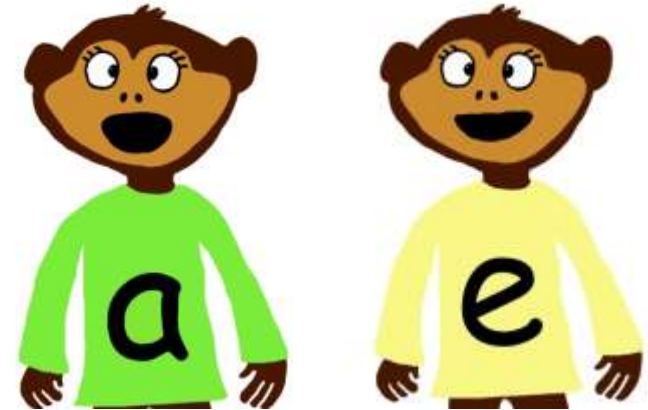
tap hen catch pat ran fed peck pack

TIME TO COMPARE

Because “a” and “e” are often confused, it is recommended you spend time comparing these sounds.

PREPARE:

- Print out and cut up the eggs and apples in the file “Apples and Eggs” (in FOLDER A-E)
- Flashcards from A-E FOLDER – Contrasts. Make a copy for each student to cut up.
- Choose one of the tables from A-E FOLDER – Tables and make a copy for each student.



ACTIVITIES:

- Get students to look in a mirror and say a-e-a-e-a-e. What happens to their mouth? (Answer = their lips should be more smiley with e).
- Practise saying a - e - a - e using the hand signals. Talk about how the e hand cue is more spread and flat, as are the lips when compared to a.
- Lay out the eggs and apples from “Apples and Eggs”. Using your monkey puppet/toy “make” him say either “a” or “e”. Does he want an egg or an apple? If monkey says e, the student should pass him an egg, if he says a, he should be passed an apple. Make the monkey say some other vowel sounds other than a and e. In this case, the student should comment that monkey doesn’t want an egg or an apple. Do this activity with and without the hand cues, so that some of the focus is just on listening.
- Carry out sorting activities using the contrast flashcards from MONKEY E “Contrasts” . (Contrasts are words that differ only in the sounds to be highlighted). You have the option of sorting into a table headed with the apple-egg pictures, the monkey pictures, or plain letters. Vary this, depending on the strength of the student. Contrasts used : pan pen, man men, bag beg, bad bed.

NO FURTHER CONTENT PAGES ARE INCLUDED IN THIS SAMPLE. SEE THE WEBSITE TO PURCHASE THE COMPLETE VERSION

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