

FIVE SPECIAL FRIENDS

Do this lesson as soon as your child knows the sounds of the letters. Repeat Activity 1 often—over days or weeks—until he is comfortable saying the vowel sounds. When he is ready, introduce Activity 2 and repeat it over many days until he can blend two letters easily. Activity 3 blends three letters. At this point many children suddenly understand that the blended sounds represent real things. For example, the letters c-a-t mean cat!

What You Need:

Letter Booklets (page 20) or separate slips of paper with letters written on them

Activity 1:

Demonstrate, then invite your child to follow these steps:

1. Set the five blue Letter Booklets (*a, e, i, o, u*) in a vertical line, as shown on the next page. These are the Five Special Friends.
2. Point to the letters and say their sounds, one-by-one, starting with *a*. (A Word About Letter Sounds, page 24). Repeat this several times.

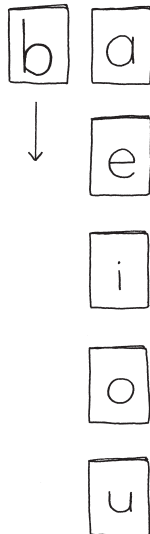
Another day, challenge your child to say the vowel sounds in order with his eyes closed.

☆ **Activity 2:**

1. Ask your child to set out the vowels in a vertical line.
2. Invite him to get a consonant and place it in front of the *a*. Let's say he chooses the letter *b*. Blend the *b* and the *a* sounds and say *ba* (*baaa*). Now move the *b* booklet down to rest in front of the *e*. Say *be* (as in the word *bed*). Continue moving the *b* down until you reach *u*. You will have said *ba, be, bi, bo, bu*. Have him try the exercise himself.
3. Tell him put the *b* away, then have him choose a new consonant and repeat action 2.

☆ **Activity 3:**

1. Ask your child to set out the vowels in a vertical line, as before.
2. Have him choose one consonant, for example *b*, and place it to the left of the vowel, as he did in Activity 2.
3. Introduce a third letter, such as *t*. Place it to the right of the vowel. With your child, move both consonants down the vowels and say the blended sounds: *bat, bet, bit, bot, but*. Blend the sounds as if you were reading the words. Choose other consonants and repeat.

Activity 1**Activity 2****Activity 3**