

# Language

**A Manual for Early Childhood (Ages 3 to 6+)**

**Instructor's Album**

PREVIEW



PREVIEW

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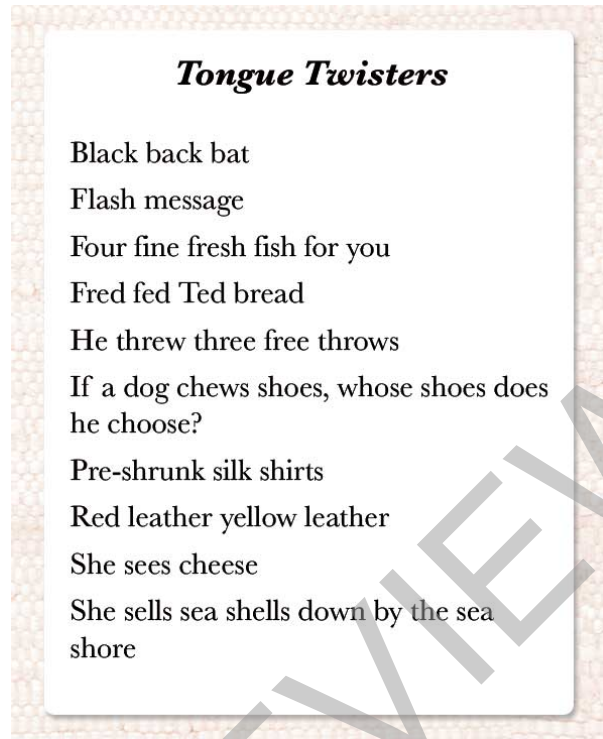
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## Tongue Twisters



*A card with common tongue twisters can be displayed in the room*

## Tongue Twisters

<b>Age</b> 2.5 and up	<b>Prerequisite Lessons</b> None
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To train phonemic awareness</li> <li>• To develop self confidence</li> <li>• To encourage a gentle and friendly attitude towards error</li> <li>• To prepare them for future work in language and topical studies</li> </ul>	

**Materials:**

- A collection of tongue twisters printed on card stock (one tongue twister/card)

**Exemplar list of tongue twisters**

- Black back bat
- Flash message
- Four fine fresh fish for you
- Fred fed Ted bread
- He threw three free throws
- If a dog chews shoes, whose shoes does he choose?
- Pre-shrunk silk shirts
- Red leather yellow leather
- She sees cheese
- She sells sea shells down by the sea shore
- Snap crackle pop

**Presentation:**

1. Invite some children to come and hear a tongue twister. Sit together around a rug.
2. Describe the work. Say, “I have a tongue twister for you! Red leather, yellow leather.” Repeat the tongue twister several times until you make a mistake. Smile and laugh.
3. Say, “Now you try!” Encourage the children to try to say it and have fun with the inevitable mistakes.
4. Say, “That was the red leather, yellow leather tongue twister. You can say it again to yourself or to your friends anytime you like.”

**Notes:**

Aim for a new tongue twister every week. To remind you to offer a new lesson every week, you can display a tongue twister (on a postcard-sized piece of cardstock) on a little easel in the spoken language area. Later, when children are writing, they can use these cards for transcription activities.

These are also great transition time activities (e.g., when lining up, waiting, etc.); no rug is required!

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## Sandpaper Letters



*Presentation: Pink and blue*



*Exercise #1: One pink, one blue, and one green*

## Sandpaper Letters

<b>Age</b> 2 ½ years to 4 years	<b>Prerequisite Lessons</b> Level 1 of the sound game; Touch boards
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To link (by means of muscular, auditory, and visual memory) the sounds in words to graphic symbols which represent these sounds (letter-sound correspondence)</li> <li>• To directly prepare the child for reading and writing</li> </ul>	

### **Materials:**

- Lowercase letters of the alphabet cut out of fine sandpaper and mounted on thick cardboard or wood; 21 Consonants mounted on red/pink cards; 5 Vowels mounted on blue cards (a, e, i, o, u); 15 Key phonetic sounds not covered by the alphabet (double letters) mounted on green cards; for American English, these include: ai, ar, au, ch, ee, er, ie, ng, oa, oo, or, ou, oy, qu, sh, th, ue (these vary by dialect/region)

### **Presentation: Pink & blue**

1. Invite the child to a lesson with the sandpaper letters. Go together to the shelf. Say, “These are the sandpaper letters and this is the sensitizing brush. We always start by getting our fingers ready. First, let’s wash them.” Go together to wash your hands at the sink.
2. Back at the shelf, sensitize your fingers with the sensitizing brush (rub it vigorously on the fingers of your dominant hand; have the child do the same).
3. Carefully demonstrate how to move the letters in the pink/blue box in order to find the one you need. Begin with the first letter of the child’s name and then choose two others of great contrast.
4. Demonstrate how to pick up each letter by making space in front of it in the box and then slowly lifting it. You don’t want the sand to scratch the other letters. These must be treated delicately. Put the letter back down so that the child can pick it up and take it to your work area. Place the letter face down on the right side of the work area.
5. Repeat for all letters, a total of two pinks and one blue.
6. Sit down next to the child’s dominant side (the writing side).
7. “Which one should we start with?” Ask the child to point to a letter. Turn it over and move it right in front of the child.
8. Trace the letter 3 to 5 times with your index and middle finger (together as one unit) and say its sound each time.

9. Say 2 or 3 words that begin with or prominently feature that sound (in any position in the word, not just beginning sounds). Encourage the child to join in.
10. Trace the letter again and say its sound.
11. Invite the child to trace and say the sound. Encourage repetition and take another turn yourself to show your enthusiasm for the trace.
12. Put the letter face down on the left side of the work area.
13. Repeat for the remaining two letters.
14. Turn all letters face up and conduct a 3-period lesson. Keep it lively by varying the action in the second-period (e.g., point to the, trace the, move the, pick up the...).
15. Say, "That was fun! You can use these letters anytime you like. We'll do more next time until you know all of the sounds!"
16. Model how to carefully, precisely, and delicately return the letters, one at a time, to their box. Be sure to have a place on the shelf next to the box where the child can place the letter while they use both hands to make a space for it. Then use one hand to maintain the space in the box while the other hand lifts and delicately returns the letter to the box.

**Exercise #1 (all following exercises): Pink, blue, & green**

1. Same as Presentation but use one or two pink letters, one blue letter, and one green double letter. Continue in this fashion for all future sandpaper letter lessons. (The pink and blue only lesson is exclusively for the first presentation. All others should have pink, blue, and green.)

**Exercise #2: Knock knock**

1. Invite two or three children to play a knock knock game with you. Ask them to get a rug for your work.
2. Begin as in Exercise #1. Then, have each child bring three sandpaper letters (one-at-a-time) to the rug. You should bring three letters of your choosing as well.
3. Place the letters face down in front of each of you. Say, "I'll have a turn and then you can have a turn."
4. Pick one of your letters and knock twice on the back. Say, "Knock, Knock." Tell the children to say, "Who's there?"
5. Turn your letter over, trace it and simultaneously say its sound. Then say 2 or 3 words that feature that sound. Encourage the other children to say words too.
6. Turn your letter over and give the next child a turn.
7. Repeat until everyone has had a few turns. Fade and observe.
8. Say, "That was fun. You can play knock knock anytime you like. Are you going to get new letters and play again now?"



**Exercise #3: Trace the table/air**

1. Begin as in Exercise #1 but after tracing the letter, move it face up to the left and repeat the trace of the letter's shape on the table and/or in the air. When finished, put the letter face down to the left as in the Presentation.

**Exercise #4: Sorting**

1. Invite the child to the lesson, ask them to prepare the work rug, then go together to wash your hands and sensitize your fingers. Bring the whole box of sandpaper letters to your rug.
2. At the rug, say, "Choose your favorite one."
3. Take out that letter and trace it. Talk about the letter's shape. Say, "Let's see if we can find another letter that has this same curve." Move the letter to the top left of the rug.
4. Look through the box carefully and find another. Trace the new letter and the first letter and notice the similarities.
5. Continue looking for other letters that share the same feature.

**Exercise #5: Connections**

1. Invite the child to the lesson, ask them to prepare the work rug, then go together to wash your hands and sensitize your fingers. Bring one pink and one blue letter that create a phonetic word (like /a-t/ or /o-f/ or /i-n/, etc.) to your work rug.
2. Place the letters face up on the table. Trace the first letter, trace the second letter, say the first letter's sound, and say the second letter's sound.
3. Give the child a turn and encourage the child to repeat so that they connect the sounds. Don't do it for them, but let them discover the connections.

**Exercise #6: Blindfolded trace**

1. Invite the child to the lesson, ask them to prepare the work rug, then go together to wash your hands and sensitize your fingers. Ask the child to choose 3 or 4 letters and a blindfold.
2. Place the letters face down on the rug and put on the blindfold.
3. Choose one letter, turn it over, trace it, and see if you can guess its sound.
4. Take off the blindfold to see if you were right!
5. Invite the child to do the rest.

**Exercise #7: Link to the environment**

1. Invite a few children to work together. Ask them to prepare the work rug then go together to wash your hands and sensitize your fingers. Go together with them to the sandpaper letters and say, "Let's each choose one to bring to our rug." Be sure to free them to choose pink, blue, or green.
2. At the rug, trace your letter and say, "I brought the rrrrrr. What did you bring?" Give everyone a turn to trace their letter and say its sound.

3. Say, “I’m going to see if I can find something in the room that has the rrrrr sound in it.” Walk nearby and find something like an eraser and bring it back to the rug.
4. Trace your letter and say, “errrrraserrrr. I wonder if I can find more things! You can try too.”
5. Guide everyone to collect as many items as they like and place them with their letter.
6. When everyone is finished, review what you have collected and then guide the children to put each of the items carefully back in its location.

### **Remedial Lesson #1: Sand tray**

1. Same as Exercise #1 but for the struggling child, have them trace the sandpaper letter and then draw its shape in a sand tray (you can also use shaving cream, putty, a paint bag, etc.).

### **Remedial Lesson #2: Small group**

1. Invite a few children to the lesson, ask them to prepare the work rug, then go together to wash your hands and sensitize your fingers. All students must have received presentations on all of the letter sounds. Go together to the rug and bring all sandpaper letters (in their boxes) to the rug.
2. Have the least capable child choose a letter. Then, in order of least to most capable, have the other children choose a letter. Then, ask each child to take a turn tracing and saying their letter’s sound.

### **Remedial Lesson #3: Cued distance displays**

1. Use small wooden easels to display some letters in contextually related areas around the room. For example, display the ‘t’ in front of the sculpture of a turtle; display the ‘f’ next to flower arranging.
2. Play bring me games, helping the child associate the sound with its nearby cue. Say something like, “The ‘r’ is near the rrrrrugs.” Keep the letters in these locations for 1-2 weeks or until the child has mastered them. Then, locate a new batch of letters similarly around the room.

### **Remedial Lesson #4: Mystery bag with letters**

1. Prepare a special mystery bag so it contains several sturdy (*not* thin plastic) cut-out movable alphabet letters of distinct shape.
2. Show children all the letters first, name their sounds, and place them in the bag.
3. Guide the child to reach in and guess which letter they have before taking it out to verify.

### **Control of Error:**

- The sensation of sandpaper under the fingers controls error. (If the child’s fingers slip off the sandpaper, the child immediately receives a different feeling from the surface.)

**Accommodations:**

- For the 5-year-old child who is just beginning to learn letter sounds, require daily practice with the letters (just like brushing your teeth) and encourage small group games (like knock knock). Use the remedial lessons if needed.

**Notes:**

The script/font used should match the dominant one used in the handwriting of the culture. In the case of American English, people handwrite in both print and cursive. There is not a clear dominant script at present. If the culture cannot clearly guide your choice, cursive is the preferred font because it most closely matches the flow of gestures; it is treated differently in the brain than manuscript because the letters are connected. Each word becomes a single unit when it is written in cursive. It is much easier to write because there is no constant need to pick up the pencil and then re-orient it. If you inherit print/manuscript letters, make it your top priority to move to cursive.

Your sandpaper letters must match the font and color of your movable alphabets. They should never include lines or dots on the front or stickers on the back. The child learns the entire visual field as the letter's sound. The lines and dots are a distraction that interfere with the isolation of the stimulus.

Start with the first letter of the child's name if possible. When they make a mistake, do not say "no, that's a ...". Instead, just bring the child to the correct letter and repeat its sound and have him trace it. Go back to the first-period as often as needed.

Model tracing lightly and use whichever hand you are most comfortable with. If you are a leftie, sit on the child's left side so your arm does not bump/obscure the work. Let them know they can use the hand they prefer (it's okay if they swap, hand dominance will come on its own time table). Watch them closely when they trace. Step in to re-present often so that they don't develop bad habits. Say, "There is a special direction that everyone tries to follow when we trace this letter. It goes like this."

When you begin handwriting words for the children to read, you must write them in the same font as the sandpaper letters and movable alphabet. Printed reading slips can always be in print. The child will almost always fluidly and effortlessly be able to read print even if they receive all the initial preparation in cursive.

Never use worksheets for tracing or copying letters unless you are an interventionist doing remedial work with an older child. Tracing the letters on the table, the air, sand tray, etc. requires the child to rely on muscle memory to create the letter and that is the key. Worksheets rely on drawing/visual matching; it is a completely different skill and uses different brain areas.



*Shelf setup option 1: The letters may be stored in boxes (as shown above); room is left in the middle for the students to rest their letter while they make room for it before replacing it in the box*



*Shelf setup option 2: The letters may be displayed individually on molding mounted on the wall or the back of a book shelf*

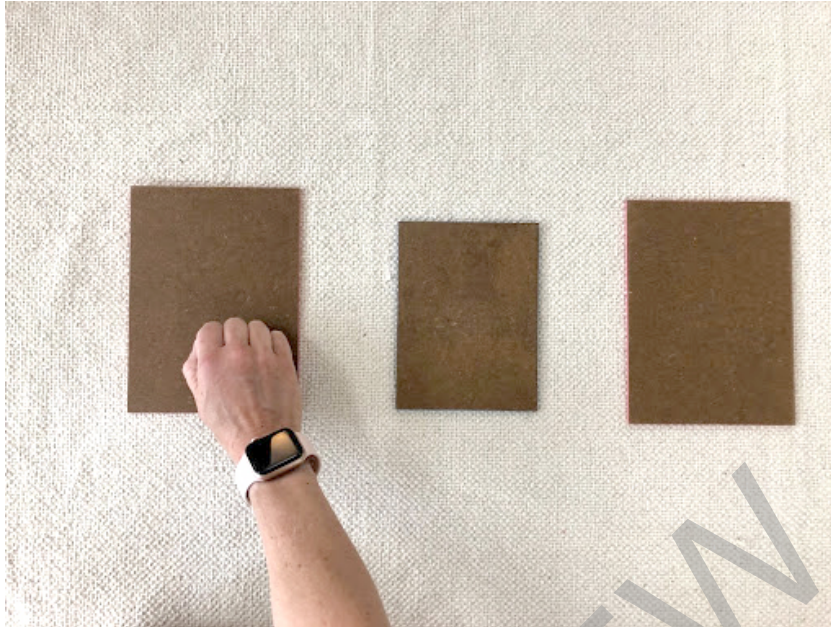


*Finger and hand position for tracing*



*Link to the environment*

*Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)*



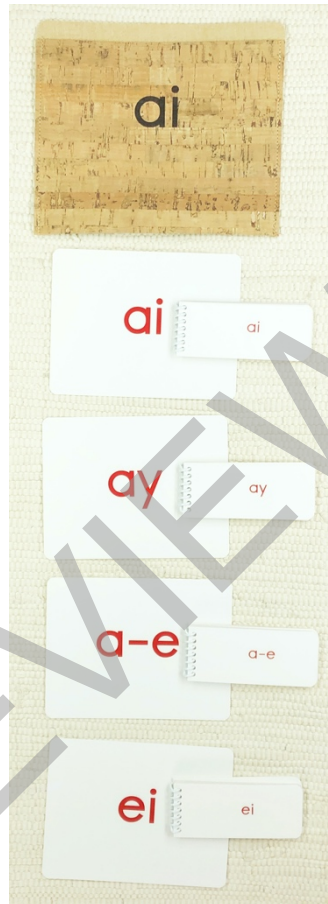
*Knock knock game*  
*Photos by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)*

PREVIEW

# Phonogram Folders



*er layout*



*ai layout*

PREVIEW



## Phonogram Folders

<b>Age</b> 2.5 and up	<b>Prerequisite Lessons</b> Phonogram lists
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To familiarize the child with the various ways the sounds are written in the English language</li> <li>• To help the child become aware that some sounds have more than one spelling</li> <li>• To assist the child in reading</li> </ul>	

### **Materials:**

- A series of folders, each of which represents one of the key sounds of the English language that can be written in more than one way. Each folder is labeled on the outside front cover with the appropriate letters (e.g., “ai”). Inside each folder are cards (approx. 6” x 4”) which show one of the various ways of how the particular sound in question may be written (e.g., ai, ay, a-e, ei). Each card has a little booklet containing words with that particular spelling placed on the page and written in two colors (the phonogram being isolated in the second color)

### **Presentation: Reading one folder**

1. Invite one or two children to work with you. Have the children prepare a work rug walk with you to choose one phonogram folder. The first presentation should include a folder with a silent ‘e’ variation inside (the ai, ee, ie, oa, and ue folders all include silent e).
2. At your work area, point to the key sound on the folder and say, “What sound is this?” Then say, “Did you know that there are many ways to spell this sound? Let me show you.”
3. Take each card out of the folder (leave the booklets inside for now). Repeat the sound as you lay each card on the mat in a column below the folder. Say, “Even though these are spelled differently, these all make the same sound. In case you forget which sound they make, there is a secret on the back that shows you.” Playfully show them the key on the back of each card. Guide the child to lay out all the cards in a column below the folder.
4. Pick up the silent e card and place it in front of you. Take a slip of paper and write the letter “t” on it (or another logical letter depending on the phonogram you are working with). Place it on the card, over the dash (between the a and the e). Put your hand over the e and read the word (at) with the child. Remove your hand and say, “When the silent e is here, it doesn’t say anything at all, but it tells the vowel in front of it to say its name instead of its sound.” Read the word (ate) with the child. Now write the letter “m” on a slip of paper and place it in front of the a on the card. Again, cover the silent e and guide the child to read the word (mat). Remove your hand and read the new word together (mate). Continue for other examples if

needed until the child understands the new rule. (*Note: Once the child understands the rule, you will probably not need to repeat this silent e presentation for other folders.*)

5. Take out one booklet from the folder and say, “These booklets show you many words that have the “ai” sound in them. If you ever forget what sound it makes, you can peek at the back of the booklet.” Show them playfully how to peek.
6. “Let’s place each booklet on top of its matching card.” When all booklets are placed, read one together. If they come across any words they do not know, use the word in a lively sentence to give a fun and illustrative example of its meaning.
7. When they are finished say, “You can keep reading all of these booklets.” Fade and observe while they read.
8. When they are finished reading say, “Let’s clean this up. Cards first.” Show them how to stack the cards carefully and return them to the folder. “Now the booklets.” Carefully place each booklet (one at a time) within the folder, on top of the cards, bound edge out. Emphasize the elegance of this procedure and be consistent to preserve the life of the booklets, cards, and folders.
9. Bring the folder back to the shelf together and say, “You can work with the phonogram folders anytime you like. Next time you can choose any folder at all!”

### ***Exercise #1: Reading the booklets from many folders***

1. Repeat as above but invite the child to choose two or three folders at the same time. Lay the folders out from left-to-right on the top of your work area. Then, remove the cards from one folder and lay them in a column beneath their respective folder. Place each booklet on top of its respective card. Continue for each folder. Then, read! Encourage the child to ask another child if they find a word they don’t know. Model using a sentence to provide an example of its meaning.

### ***Exercise #2: Sound dictionary***

1. When the child is stuck on how to pronounce a sound, encourage them to use the sound dictionary. “Let’s see if we can find those letters in the sound dictionary.” Then, show them the key that reminds them of the key sound.

### ***Exercise 3: Sorting the cards from two folders***

1. Invite the children to choose two folders and bring them to your work area. Lay the folders out at the top of the work area from left-to-right.
2. Say, “Today we will just take out the cards and not the booklets.” Guide them to place the cards together in one stack.
3. Say, “We’ll need to randomize these; let’s thoroughly mix them up.” Model a careful but fun way of randomizing the cards from both folders into one pile.
4. When the cards are randomized into one stack say, “Let’s see if we can remember where these belong!” Guide the children to sort the cards into columns beneath their respective folders.

5. Have the children check their work when finished by using the key on the back of the cards and/or the reference key at the front of the Phonogram Dictionary.
6. Encourage the children to continue the sorting activity for all of the folders (that day or on other days) by continuing to take two folders at a time.

***Exercise #4: Sorting the cards from more folders***

1. Once the child has experience sorting the cards from two folders, invite them to try three folders at a time.
2. Proceed in this fashion until the child is able to sort all of the cards from all of the folders at one time without much help from the control of error on the back.

***Exercise #5: The test***

1. Invite one or two children to work with you and have them gather a work rug and all of the phonogram folders.
2. Take out all the cards from all of the folders and randomize them into one stack. Place the stack face up in front of the child on the rug.
3. Lay the folders across the top of the rug (you may need two rugs for this very big work!).
4. Say, "Let's see if you can sort through all of these cards and place them where they belong on the mat." Give them an example.
5. When they're finished, admire their work! Say, "That's a lot of work you've completed! Now you can check it to see how well you did. Try checking your work with the sound dictionary." Give them an example of how to do it by referencing the index guide at the front of the dictionary.
6. When the work is finished say, "Let's clean this up. Let's start on the left side and put each folder together one at a time." Help them do it well.
7. Free them to repeat.

***Exercise #6: The test challenge***

1. Invite one or two children to work with you and have them gather a work rug, a phonogram moveable alphabet or pencil and paper (as is appropriate for that child), and all of the phonogram folders.
2. Using either a movable alphabet or pencil and paper (depending on the child), guide the child to write down all of the key sounds (from memory) and their spelling variations. They can check the index guide at the front of the phonogram dictionary to verify their work. Their alphabet/paper should look something like the following.

<b><u>ai</u></b>	<b><u>au</u></b>	<b><u>e</u></b>	<b><u>ee</u></b>	<b><u>er</u></b>	<b><u>f</u></b>	<b><u>ie</u></b>	<b><u>j</u></b>	<b><u>oa</u></b>	<b><u>or</u></b>	<b><u>ou</u></b>	<b><u>oy</u></b>	<b><u>s</u></b>	<b><u>ue</u></b>
ai	au	e	ee	er	f	ie	j	oa	or	ou	oy	s	ue
a-e	aw	ea	e-e	ir	ph	i-e	ge	o-e	ore	ow	oi	ce	ew
ay		ea	ur		igh	gi	oe					ci	oo
ei		ie			y		ow						u-e
		y											

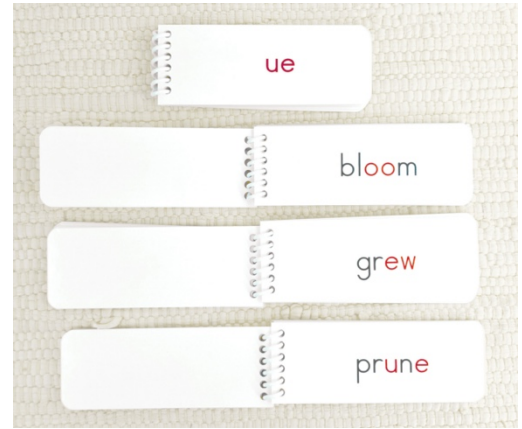
### **Exercise #7: Dictation**

1. Invite two children to layout the cards and booklets from one folder of the children's choosing.
2. Tell them that for dictation, one person will read the words in a booklet and the other person will write them. Have them decide who will read and who will write.
3. Then, guide them to choose either a movable alphabet or pencil and paper (depending on the children).
4. Say, "Let's see if you can write down each word in the booklet. Kyle, you read a word from the booklet and Kayla, you write it down."
5. When they're done, say, "Let's see if it's right!" Check with the book to verify. Encourage a light heart when errors are inevitably found. Have fun with them!
6. For a single child, guide him/her to read a word and then turn the book face down so they can write it from memory.

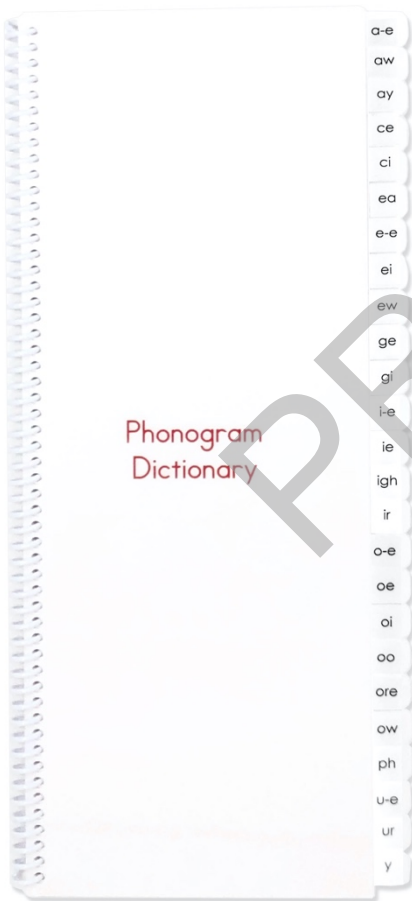
**Notes:** The phonogram dictionary was designed by AMI teacher trainer Muriel Dwyer to be indexed by sound (see photos). This requires the students to see the sound groupings each time they scan down the index tabs looking for the sound they seek. Many other Montessorians prefer to have the dictionary indexed alphabetically (see photos). You must observe your students and choose the indexing method that makes the most sense for them.



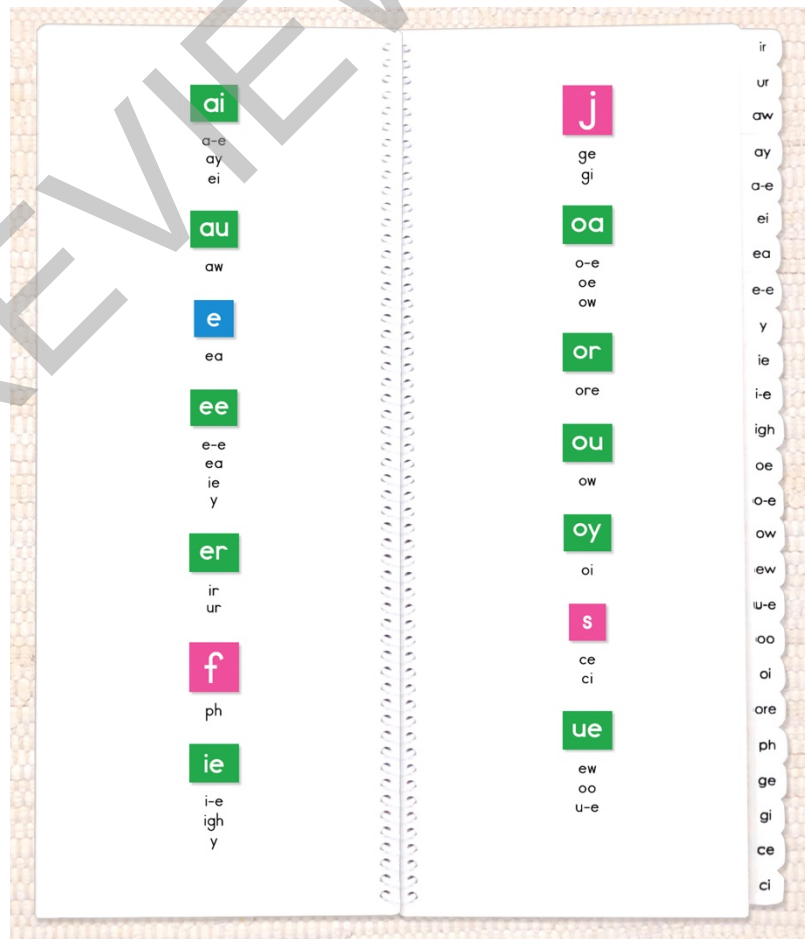
Key on the back of cards and booklets



Inside the booklets



Phonogram dictionary; the index tabs are organized alphabetically



Reference guide inside the phonogram dictionary; the index tabs are organized by sound (Muriel Dwyer's preference)