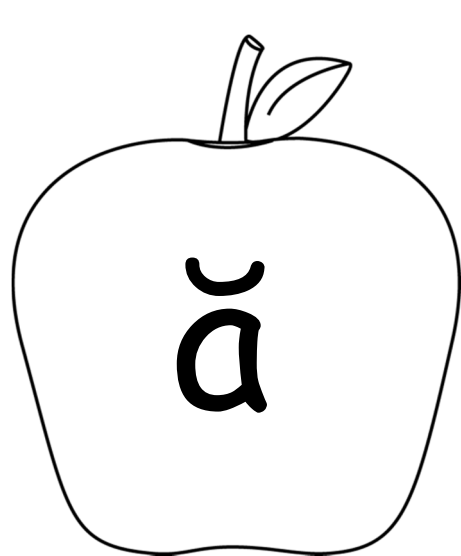
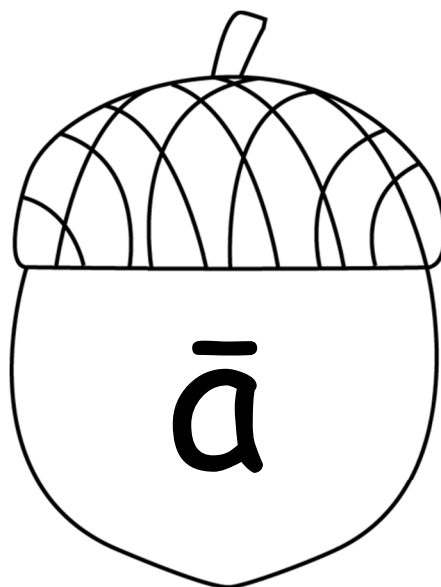


Introduce the 3 main vowel sounds of the letter A to students using this page. See Instructions & Teacher's Notes on pages 10-12 for additional instructions on all pages.



ăpple

apple



ācorn

acorn

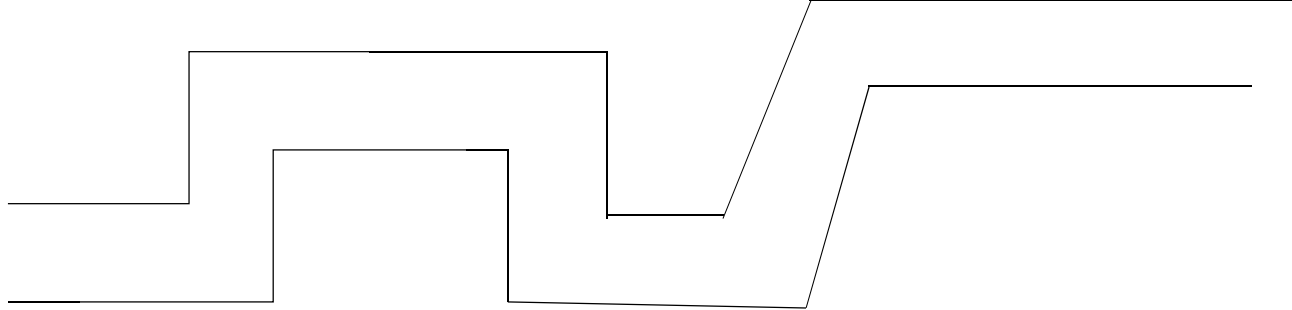


ärm

arm

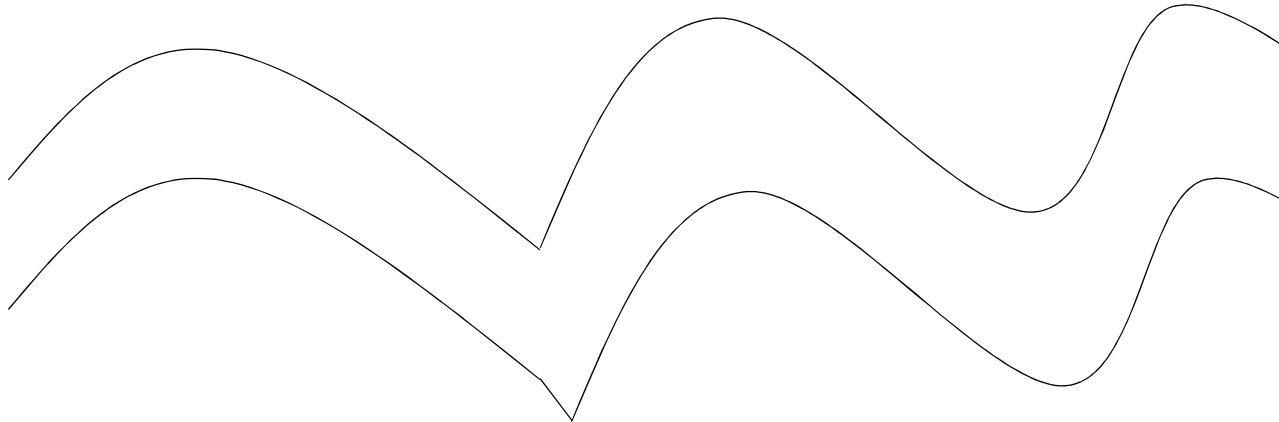
Have the student say the vowel sound out loud while drawing a line from the letter to the picture and then name the picture.

ă



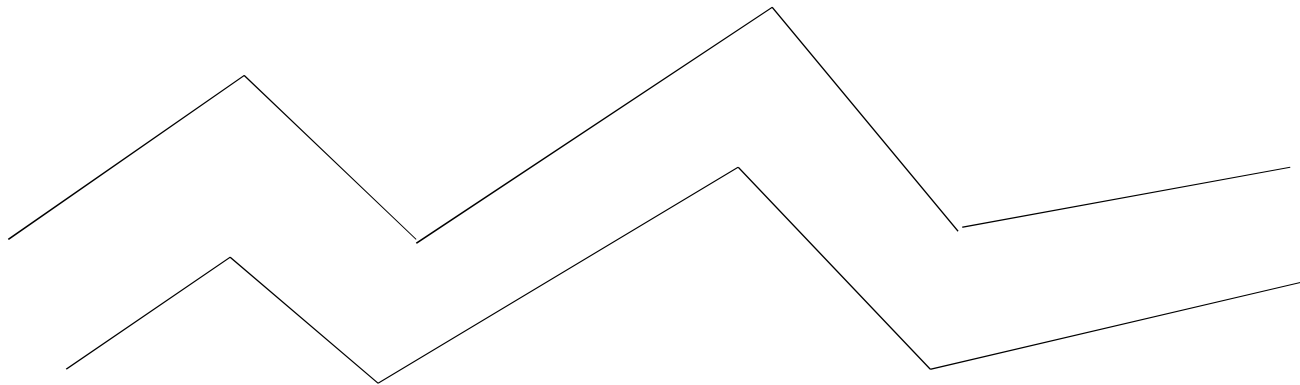
ax

ā



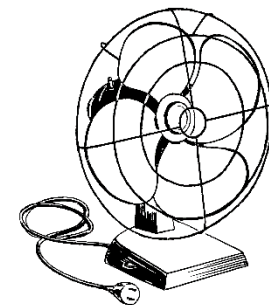
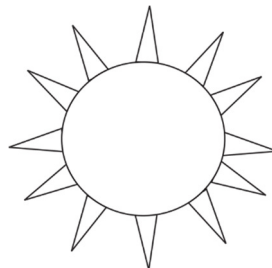
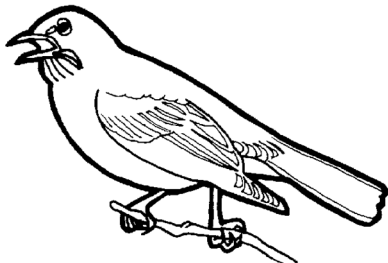
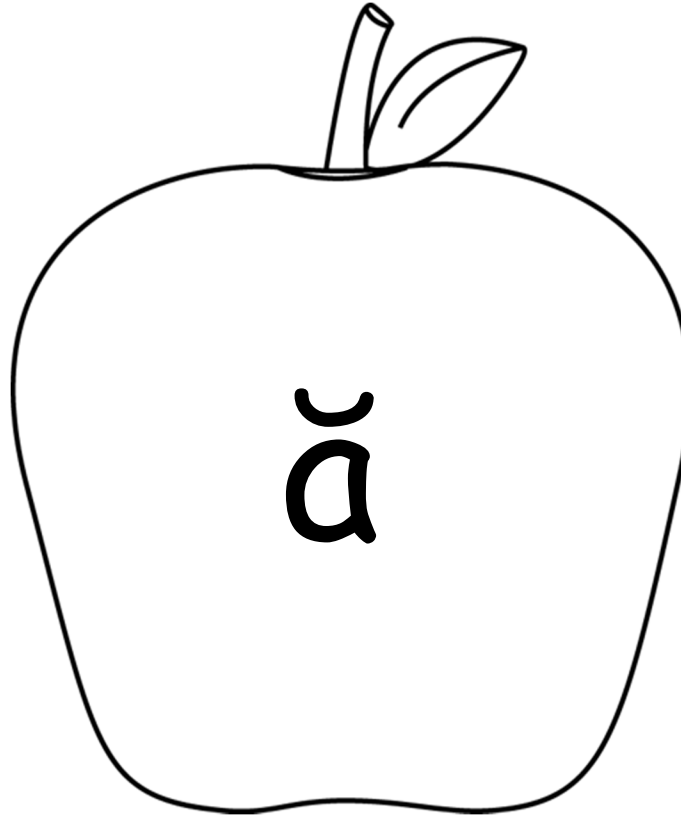
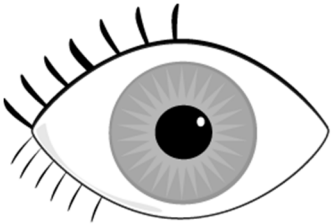
ape

ä

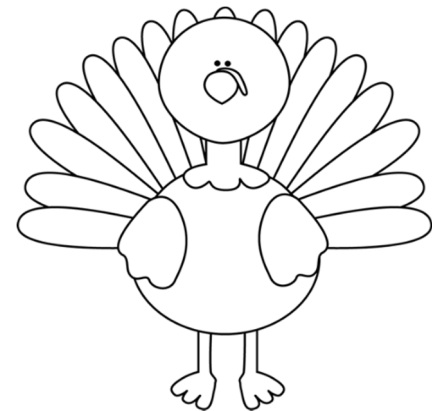
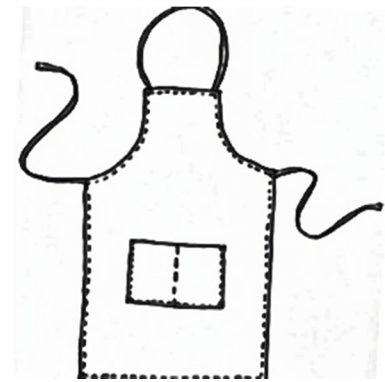
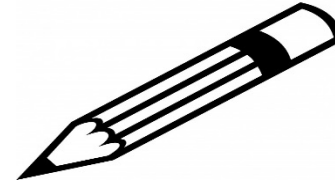
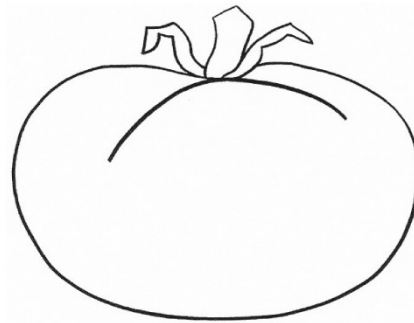
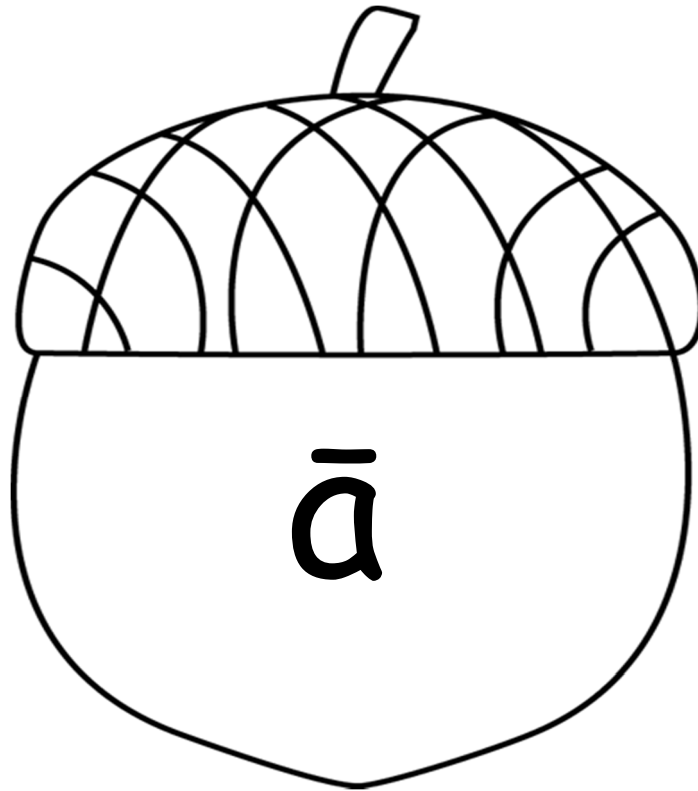
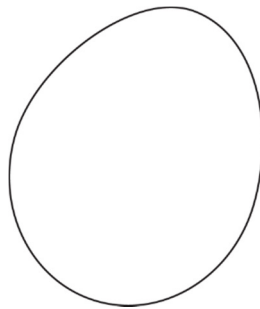
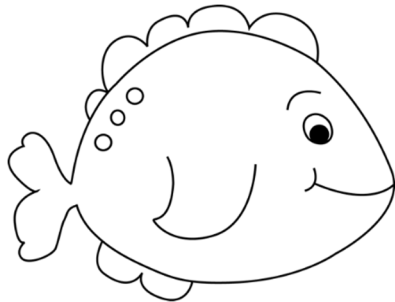
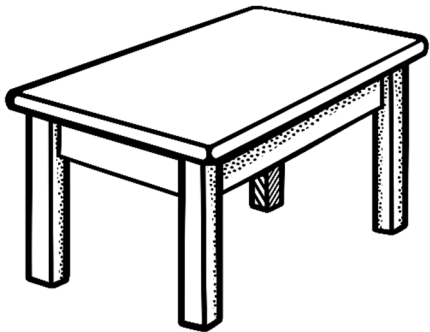


avocado

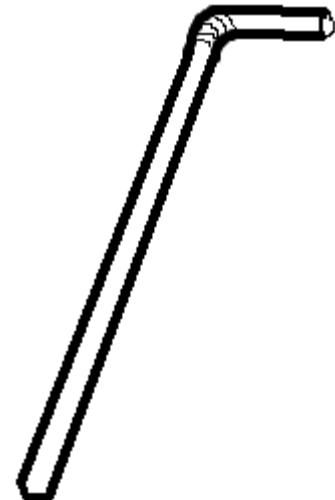
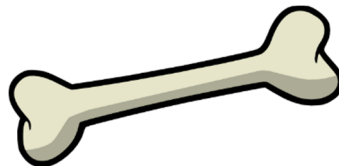
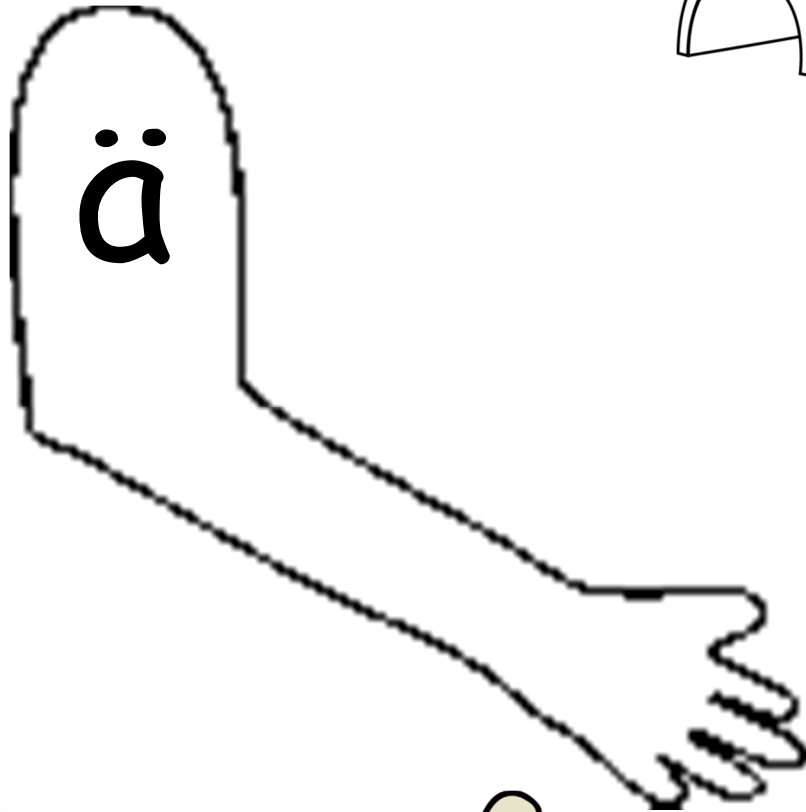
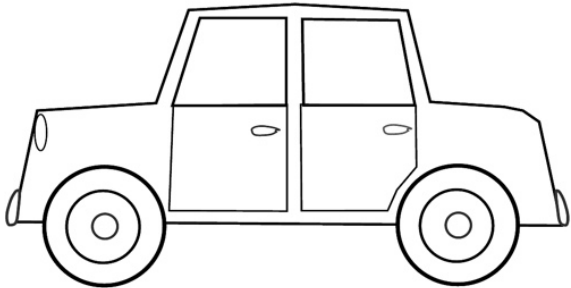
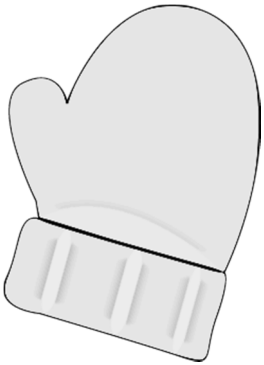
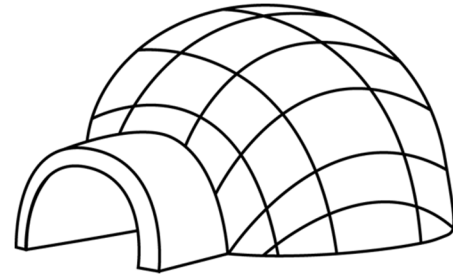
Have the student draw a line from the large apple to the pictures which have the short ă vowel sound in them. Assist them to identify pictures as needed.



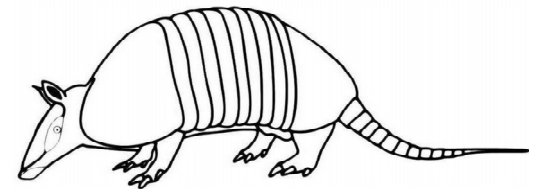
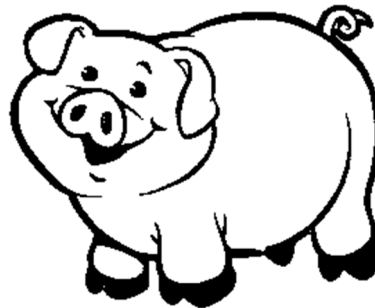
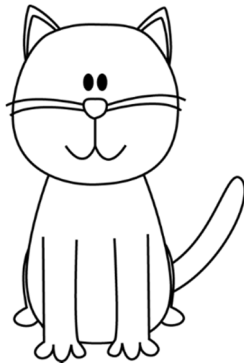
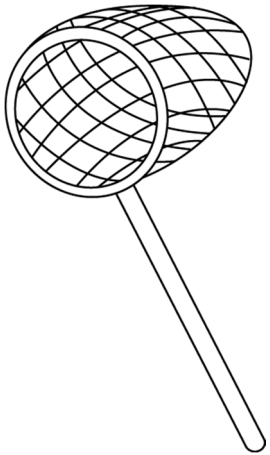
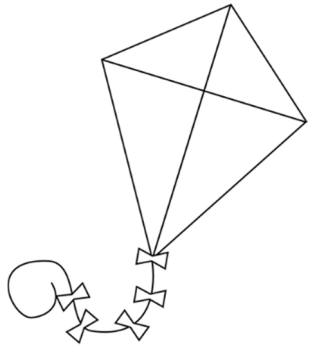
Have the student draw a line from the large acorn to the pictures which have the long ā vowel sound in them. Assist them to identify pictures as needed.



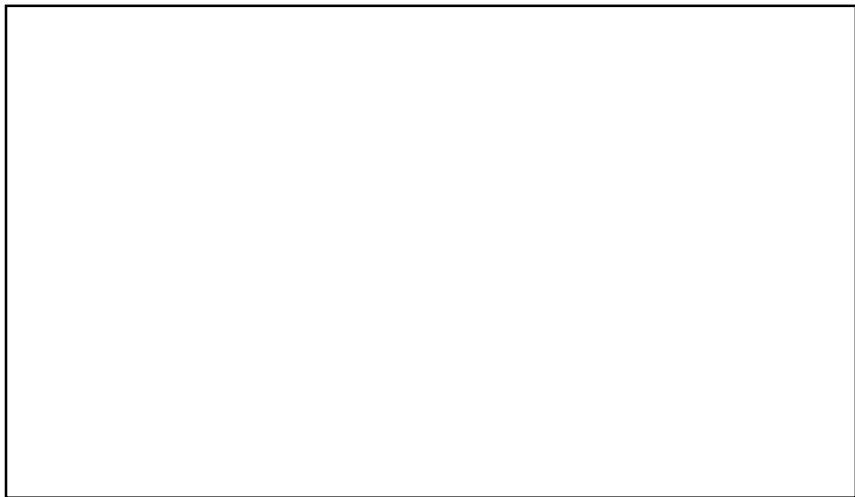
Have the student draw a line from the large acorn to the pictures which have the third vowel ä sound in them. Assist them to identify pictures as needed.



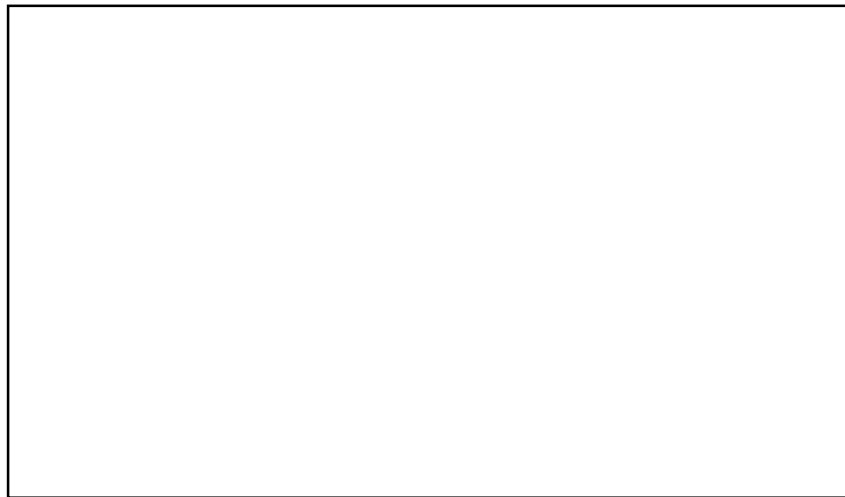
Have the student circle or color the pictures with any one of the three sounds for letter A in it. If desired, they may draw an X on pictures without the vowel A sound. Assist them to identify pictures as needed, do not worry or correct it if they do not mark "armadillo."



Have the student read the word below the rectangle and draw a picture of the word they read inside the rectangle. Praise comprehension and decoding skills; refrain from criticizing artistic ability.



căt



gāte



păn



căr

Have page 1 available as a visual reference for the student. Have the student read each word and draw the appropriate phonetic symbol above the letter A in each word. See Teacher's Notes for additional info and for instructions for a kinesthetic activity.



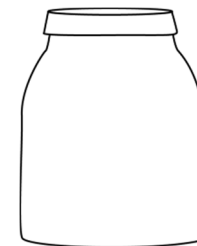
snake



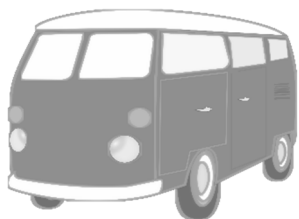
ram



fall



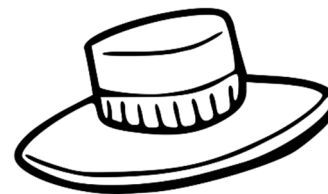
jar



van



cake



hat



rake

Below are two different ways the letter a can be written in lowercase by hand. Assist the student to choose one way and practice writing it three times on each handwriting practice line. Have the student say the three vowel sounds the letter A can make either while they write each one or after they write all three. Have the student use the fourth practice line to practice writing a capital A. See teacher's notes for more detailed instructions.

a a

Instructions and Teaching Notes:

Pages 1-9 of this file are worksheets to be printed off for student use. Pages 10-12 do not need to be printed unless desired, as they contain instructions & notes.

Page 1: Introduce the 3 different vowel sounds to the student, along with the example pictures. "A can say *ă* as in apple; A can say *ā* as in acorn; A can say *ä* (/ah/ or /aw/) as in arm." I got my student's attention by starting in an excited voice saying, "I'm going to tell you something not everyone knows. Something you'll have to listen closely to and pay really close attention to." To drum up excitement in your voice, pretend in your head that you're about to give them a world secret double fudge cookie recipe, or an international spy report, or whatever scenario can convince you to present this material as though it is a matter of HUGE importance with great benefit to the listener. Because it is!

Tell the student, "Many times we do hear the letter A saying the *ă* sound, but that is not the sound it will *always* make. The letter A can actually make 3 (or more*) different sounds! So we need to know all three sounds. We should try the sounds in this order: *ă...ā...ä*."

You can explain *ă* and *ā* occur more frequently than *ä*, but this may not be necessary. Show the words (apple, acorn & arm) printed two different ways below each picture. Point out the different way (font) of printing the lowercase letter A. Explain the phonetic symbols above the letters and let them know the symbols over the letter A do not appear most places words are printed, but they can be helpful to give us a clue which sound the vowel is making.

*If you feel your student will not be overwhelmed or confused by learning about the schwa sound, go ahead and introduce that concept now. Then you can teach that A can actually make 4 different sounds. The schwa (or lazy, as some refer to it) sound of the letter A can be *ü*. We hear this frequently when reading the word "a." Example: "A cat sat on a mat." can be read "*Ā* cat sat on *ā* mat." or "*Ü* cat sat on *ü* mat." Pronunciation may vary geographically. Some students will benefit from knowing about the schwa sound before they encounter it, while others may be overwhelmed and the schwa sound may be reserved for a separate, later lesson.

Page 2: Instruct the student to say the vowel sound out loud (either holding it as singing or repeating it over and over) while they draw a line with their pencil or finger from the printed A to the word beginning with A at the end. At the end of each line, have the student read the word. The pictures aid in word recognition because the point of this exercise is to gain familiarity with the 3 main sounds of the vowel A, not to focus on sounding out words.

Pages 3-5: Have the student draw a line from the large picture in the center to the words which have the same vowel sound in it. Assist the students to identify the pictures, pronouncing the word for the picture slowly, and accenting the sound of the A in the word as necessary to give them a hint. Again, this is about familiarity with the 3 sounds of the letter A and phonetic awareness, not an exercise emphasizing decoding skills.

Page 6: Assist student to identify the pictures. Instruct them to circle or color "any picture that has a sound for A in it, any picture that has the *ă* or *ā* or *ä* sound in it." Repeating the 3 sounds for the letter A frequently while working with students is beneficial to help them retain the three sounds together and in order. Pronounce "armadillo" saying the first sound slow and long "ahhhhhh r *mä* dillo." This gives them an added chance to hear the *ä* at the beginning, but since it is coupled with an "r," do not be concerned if they miss this one and mark it wrong. If they are sensitive to correction, just move on without correcting them on this particular word at this time. They may write an "X" on pictures that do not have the letter A sound in them if they desire.

Page 7: Have the student read the word below the rectangle and draw a picture of the word they read inside the rectangle. Praise comprehension and decoding skills; refrain from criticizing artistic ability. Making a point to compliment one unique trait about each drawing helps make this a more enjoyable experience for the student. (Ex. "I like how pointy you made the cat's ears!") Also, give hints on how to draw items if student seems hesitant or confused. This is to be fun, not tedious. (Ex. "Some gates are just plain rectangles, or some look like fences.")

Page 8: Have page 1 available as a visual reference for the student. Instruct the student to read each word and determine which vowel sound the letter A makes in it. (Ex. Student reads the word correctly. "Does that have the *ă* or *ā* or *ä* sound?") Then have them draw the appropriate phonetic symbol above the letter A in each word. (Ex. "You're right, in that word the A says *ă* as in apple, so draw a little curved line over the A.") If the student hasn't learned about silent "e" yet, simply tell them, "Don't worry about that E, in this word it doesn't make any sound. We will learn more about the letter E and when it does make sounds later." Cover the E with your thumb or a paper if that is helpful.

To use pages 8 as a kinesthetic (hands-on) activity, cut the pictures and words out by cutting on the gray lines. This will give you 8 cards. Have the students place these cards in piles on top of page one, sorting them according to vowel sound. The student should place the ram, hat, and van on top of the large apple picture. The snake, cake, and rake, should go on top of the acorn picture. The pictures for fall and jar should go on the picture of the arm. This can be done before the student has drawn the phonetic symbols on the cards. This could also be done *after* the student has drawn the symbols on the cards, or INSTEAD of having the student draw the phonetic symbols.

After page 8 has been cut into cards, you can write the word without the phonetic symbol on the backside of the card and use it as a flash card. The student can sound out the written word, then flip it over to show the picture which will indicate whether they were correct or not.

Page 9: Remind the student that they learned (refer to page 1 if it is handy) that the letter A is often printed on paper and in books differently than the way we write it by hand. Tell them people can write the letter A two different ways, as well, but the ways look very similar. One way starts a lot like an "O" and adds a little tail (write the first example of the lower case A shown on the left of page 9 for them to see). The second way starts out like a "C" and adds a straight line (write the second example of the lower case A shown on the right of page 9 for them to see). Tell the student to choose ONE way they would like to write their lower case A's. If they want to practice writing each way before deciding, that is a good idea and you may want to lead them through this with more detailed instruction.

For the example on the left, state what you are doing in great detail while writing a large example again: This starts off like an "O", but we don't start our pencil at the very tip top of the "O". We start it here (indicating a position which would be about 2 o'clock if the "O" were a clock face), curve to the left, all the way around and close the "O", but then, we add tail, because this is NOT an "O", this is an "A."

For the example on the right, repeat the large example with the following explanation (or your paraphrase with detail): This one starts up here, curves to left and makes a "C". Then we pick up our pencil and add a straight line to close up this side, because this is NOT a "C", this is an "A."

Have the student write the lowercase A three times on the first line, either saying ă while writing the first time, ā while writing it the second time and ä while writing it the third time, OR writing all three A's and then saying ă ... ā ... ä while pointing to each letter they wrote. It is very beneficial for some students to SAY the sound as they write or touch the letter as opposed to just hearing the teacher say it or thinking it. Repeat this for the second and third sets of practice lines. You may demonstrate with explanation how to write a capital A and have them practice in the same manner on the fourth line.

Many of the graphics found in this file are from [mycutegraphics.com](http://www.mycutegraphics.com) and are used with permission. <http://www.mycutegraphics.com/tos.html> Please check out this wonderful resource where clipart is designed with teachers and students in mind and offered for free when used in accordance with the terms of service linked previously.

The graphics included in this file which are NOT from mycutegraphics.com are either used under the Creative Commons license or were created by me personally. Please do not attempt to remove graphics from this file and distribute them, but please DO share the good resources you find as an educator or parent with others.

This worksheet packet is free to download at whatwordscannotexpress.weebly.com and would work well following the completion of the (Explode the Code) Get Ready for the Code Primers A, B & C. Explode the Code Book 1 does teach short vowel sounds, but some students are confused when taught A says ă and they immediately begin to encounter words in the real world where A does not make the sound they were told it would. These students benefit from learning all possible sounds a letter can make before being asked to sound out any words. This free supplement is meant to assist with the task.