

## UURC Word Study Wisdom

1. Think of Word Study as musical scales or athletic drills for reading. Your students need to become automatic at identifying and spelling words, and you can help that happen by being well-prepared, succinct in your verbiage, consistent with your prompts, positive, and enthusiastic.
2. The Word Study Sequence targets your students' instructional levels and provides just the right amount of challenge. That in itself is motivating. And, if you keep your pacing brisk and enthusiastic, most students will respond in kind.
3. This is your students' time to be immersed in high-quality, research-based instruction designed to help him/her 'break the reading/spelling code.' There is an inverse relationship between the amount of time you talk and the amount of time the students read and spell words. Consciously reduce/limit the amount of 'teacher talk' you allow yourself.
4. Your Word Study prompts should be succinct and consistent to let your students know exactly where you want them to be (location) and what you want them to do (behavior).  
Example: **"Your turn. Voices together."**  
Example: **"Watch my pencil. The vowel pattern is..."**
5. Set high expectations for good manners and academic language by modeling both for your students. Ask your students to use both as often as possible.  
Example: **"Justify that, please!"**  
Example: **"Thank you for helping to make our matrix."**
6. As you and your students proceed, utilize your NS Word Study Sequence to determine which anchors and cards to pull from your kits.
7. Tapping is a very important word identification strategy. Again, your modeling, guidance, and enthusiasm can play a large part in helping your students to adopt this reliable method for successfully reading unfamiliar words.

## Definitions

*a, e, i, o, and u are always **vowels** in written English. When 'y' begins a word or syllable, it is a consonant (e.g., yellow, backyard), but positioned at the end of a word, it is a vowel (e.g., 'happy,' 'cry').*

*All other English letters are **consonants**. The acronym CVC refers to a 3 letter word that begins with a consonant, has a vowel in the middle position, and ends with a consonant (e.g., cup, sit, mom).*

*A **phoneme** is the smallest sound in a language that can be spoken. For example /p/, /ch/, /m/, and /ā/ are phonemes used in spoken English. Backslashes surrounding a letter indicate sound, rather than letter name.*

*A **grapheme** or **letter** is a symbol for a phoneme (e.g., 'p,' 'ch,' 'm,' and 'a,' 'ay,' 'ai' are graphemes.*

*An **onset** comes before the vowel in a single syllable. For example, 's' is the onset in 'sad' and 'st' is the onset in 'stop.' Not all syllables have an onset (e.g., 'at,' 'is,' 'own').*

*A **blend** refers to two consonants in sequential position with each consonant retaining its own sound (e.g., **flat**, **bend**). When tapping a blend, each sound receives its own finger tap.*

*A **digraph** refers to two letters in sequential position that combine to make only 1 sound (e.g., **chin**, **hush**, **soil**). A digraph receives only 1 finger tap.*

## Vowel Patterns & Related Vowel Phonemes

### **Core A Patterns:**

a-consonant says /ă/

ex.: hat, map

a-consonant-e says /ā/

ex.: name, lake

a-r says /r/

ex.: jar, farm

a-i says /ā/

ex.: rain, tail

### **Core I Patterns:**

i-consonant says /ĭ/

ex.: pig, lip

i-consonant-e says /ī/

ex.: bike, five

i-r says /ur/

ex.: girl, dirt

i-g-h says /ī/

ex.: night, light

### **Core O Patterns:**

o-consonant says /ŏ/

ex.: mom, pot

o-consonant-e says /ō/

ex.: rope, nose

o-r says /or/

ex.: horn, fork

o-a says /ō/

ex.: soap, road

### **Core E Patterns:**

e-consonant says /ĕ/

ex.: web, bell

e-e says /ē/

ex.: feet, seed

e-r says /ur/

ex.: her, germ

e-a says /ē/

ex.: leaf, heat

### **Core U Patterns:**

u-consonant says /ŭ/

ex.: sun, cup

u-consonant-e says /ū/ or /oo/

ex.: cute, dude

u-r says /ur/

ex.: fur, burn

u-e says /oo/

ex.: glue, true

## Mixed Short Vowel Work (2 dot words): Next Steps<sup>SM</sup> (NS) Whole Class Word Study

*Note: all students must start with this portion of the Next Steps Word Study Sequence—even teen-agers whom you may think don't need it. You will be surprised how much confusion even older students have about short vowel sounds.*

*That said, you may only need to spend 3 or 4 days here--enough time to try the most difficult words with blends and digraphs, and to be sure that students can articulate the vowel patterns and vowel sounds. If the majority of your students are accurate when they play Memory, move the whole class to Vowel Patterns (3 dot words).*

Materials:

- document camera
- pencils for students; pencil for teacher
- a, i, o, and e mixed short vowel anchors & CVC word cards. No blends (e.g., **stop**, **bend**) or digraphs (e.g., **chop**, **sick**) on Day 1.
- student spelling notebook with lined paper, white boards, or paper inside a page protector

*We encourage you to improve your Next Steps Mixed Vowel instruction by viewing videos of these procedures: [www.uurc.org/Educators/Videos](http://www.uurc.org/Educators/Videos).*

Use the following sequence in this order for every lesson:

1. Sort
2. Fast Pencil
3. Memory (small group or D5 activity)
4. Spelling

### Day 1: NS Mixed Vowel Sort

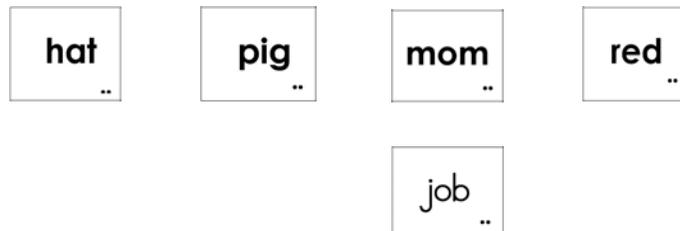
1. Display the following anchors horizontally next to one another.



2. You say, **“Your turn. Voices together”** and point to each anchor with your pencil. Students respond chorally.
3. Touch above the ‘a’ in ‘hat’ with your pencil. Say, **“The letter ‘a’ is a vowel. It says /ă/. What does it say?”** Students answer chorally.
4. Do the same for ‘i,’ ‘o,’ and ‘e.’
5. Show ‘job’ to the class. Ask, **“What vowel do you see in this word?”** Students respond. Ask, **“Does this go under hat, pig, mom or red ?”** (pause) **Everybody?”** Students respond chorally and you place the card.

Do NOT ask (or allow) students to read the new card first. They use the support of the anchor to read down the column.

*Difficulty? Point out that both words contain the vowel ‘o,’ so the new card goes under ‘mom.’*



6. Say, **“Your turn . Voices together.”** Teacher points down that column while students chorally read each word aloud. Continue with other word cards as above.

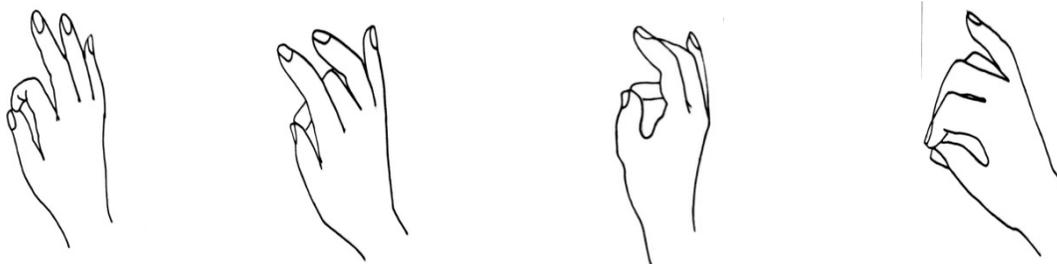
The first time any student has difficulty reading a word, it is time to teach everyone how to tap. Tapping is a very important blending strategy for beginning readers. Read the directions below and practice ahead of time so that you are ready when opportunity strikes!

## Directions for Teaching Tapping:

Introduce tapping without word cards. Hold up your right hand and wiggle your right thumb. Say, **“My thumb is ‘home base.’ All of the fingers want to touch home base.”** Ask the students to do the same.

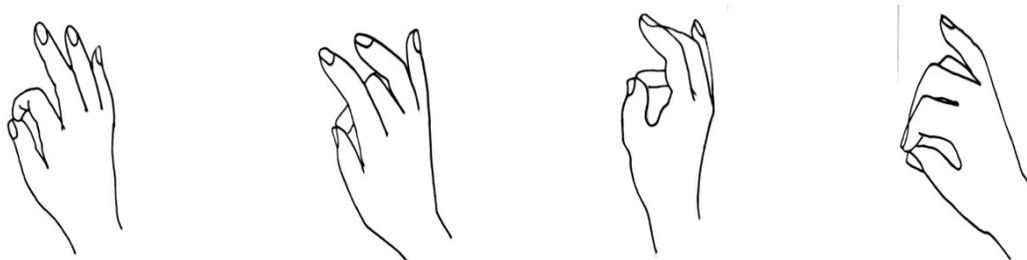
Show your students how you can tap each finger to the thumb individually (left to right, from forefinger to pinky), **saying “Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.”** Then, pinch all 4 fingers to the thumb to finish.

Have your students practice tapping each finger to the thumb individually (left to right, from forefinger to pinky) until they can do this reasonably well. Provide feedback as students practice.



1. tap forefinger
2. then, middle finger
3. ring finger
4. then, all 3 at once

Next, hold your right hand below a CVC word card (e.g., win) and show the students how you can tap each sound in the word, 1 finger at a time, and then say the whole word while joining all the fingers at once to the thumb. Teacher monitors as students practice.



1. /w/
2. /i/
3. /n/
4. win

From now on, when students cannot readily identify a word during Sort, Fast Pencil, Memory, or even when reading text, instruct the students to **‘tap’** as described above.

7. If your students can chorally read down the column easily, build a 4x4 matrix with just CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words—no words with blends or digraphs, yet.



8. Once you have finished the Sort, touch your pencil to the vowel in ‘hat’ and then to the ending consonant ‘hat’ and say, **“Watch my pencil. This vowel pattern is a-consonant.”**

9. Repeat #8 above for the rest of the words in the ‘hat’ column. Say, **“Say it with me: a-consonant... a-consonant...a-consonant.”** Students chorally respond as the teacher points.

10. Go back up to the top of the ‘hat’ column, touch your pencil to the vowel in ‘hat’ and say, **“Watch my pencil. The vowel sound is /ă/.”**

11. Repeat #10 above for the rest of the words in the ‘hat’ column. Say, **“Say it with me: /ă/... /ă/.../ă/.”** Students chorally respond as the teacher points.

12. Repeat as above with the ‘pig,’ ‘mom,’ and ‘red’ columns.

## **Day 2+ NS Mixed Vowel Sort**

Always use the same anchor cards in the order suggested by the NS Sequence. Ask the students to begin the Sort by chorally reading each anchor card as you point, **“Watch my pencil. Voices together.”**

The cards you choose to fill out the Sort (4x4) should reflect the students' instructional level (i.e., 85% success – 15% challenge). Some cards may need to be re-used because the majority of the students had difficulty, or all may be new to reflect the students' previous success.

You should introduce words with blends (e.g., **glad**, **dust**) and digraphs (e.g., **when**, **hush**) as soon as the students are quite successful with CVC words (e.g., **job**) in a 4x4 Sort.

*Difficulty? Suggest tapping!*

Each day as you finish the Sort, for each column ask **“What is the vowel pattern here? What is the vowel sound?”** Students chorally respond as the teacher or a volunteer student points with a pencil.

*Additional Notes:*

- *Gradually invite multiple students to come to the document camera to place the cards.*
- *The student who sorts the card should point as the class chorally reads down the column.*
- *Ensure you are choosing new students each day.*
- *Prep your struggling students ahead of time by giving them a card early so they have time to figure out placement.*

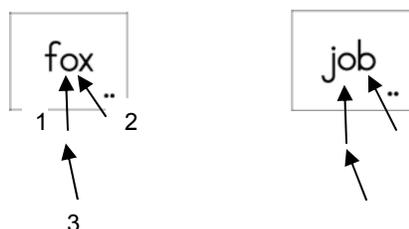
## NS Mixed Vowel Fast Pencil

1. Say, **“When I tap my pencil, everybody please say the word.”**
2. Hover your pencil above a word, then tap your pencil on the word. Students respond chorally.
3. Do this for 6-7 words in random order.
4. Suggest tapping as needed.

## NS Mixed Vowel Memory

- *Model for the whole class how to play the game with one student. You may have to model procedures over multiple days.*
- *Transition to students playing in pairs.*

1. Say, **“Flip all of the cards over (including anchors) and mix them up.”**
2. Arrange the cards back into a matrix.
3. Let the student play first. Say, **“Pick a card and flip it over.”** The student chooses a card, flips it over in its place. Say, **“Read that word please.”** Student responds. Do the same for a second card.
4. If the cards have the same vowel, the player says, **“I have a match!”** and takes those cards out of the matrix. If the 2 cards do not match, the player flips them over and leaves them in the matrix. No re-mixing the cards at this point—it prolongs the game unduly.
5. Whenever a match is made, the opposing player says, **“Justify that, please!”**
6. Model justification for the students by using a pencil to:
  - point to the vowel, then to the ending consonant while saying **“o-consonant...”**
  - then pointing then back to the vowel a final time stating **“...says /ō/.”** Do this for both cards in the match.



7. For all kinds of obvious reasons, do not allow extra turns for matches when students play against each other—only when they play against you. The player with the most matches wins the game.

8. Occasionally, and then with increasing frequency, ask students to read your cards when you flip them over during your turn.

*Note: You should try to lose whenever you play Memory, but do so convincingly! ☺*

## **NS Mixed Vowel Spelling**

1. Choose 5 word cards you used in the Sort. Choose 2 easier words, and 3 words that provide a bit of a challenge.

2. Use the following instructional prompts and procedure:

- say the word
- use the word at the end of a short sentence
- ask **“What word?”** Students chorally repeat the word.

### **Example:**

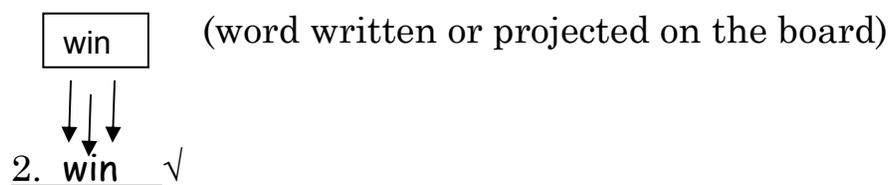
- a. **“The word is win.”**
- b. **I hope I win.**
- c. **What’s the word?”** Students repeat the word.
- d. Say, **“Write win.”**
- e. Ask students to say the letters as they write. (*This is not a spelling test; it is practice. Don’t worry if students hear each other spell.*)
- f. The teacher moves about the room to provide feedback.

3. Continue as above for remaining 4 words.

4. Help students to fix mistakes immediately as they occur. Encourage tapping. For example, if the student writes ‘sick’ for ‘stick’ say, **“The word is stick. Say stick.”** Student responds. Hold up your hand to prompt the student to tap (you do not tap). When the student taps and says, /s/-/t/, stop him/her at that sound, and ask, **“What says /t/?”** Student responds. Say, **“So what do you need to write there?”** Student fixes word.

5. Now, use the procedures below to model how to “Say It. Match It. Check It.”

- a. Write 1 of the 5 words on the board (random, not sequential order). Prompt, **“Say it.”** Students read the word, tapping if needed.
- b. Say, **“Match it.”** Students find and point to the matching word in his/her spelling notebook. Teachers roam to ensure students have identified the correct word.
- c. Prompt, **“Check it.”** Students use a pencil to point to the first letter of the word in the notebook, while saying the letter name aloud **each** time (e.g., w-w), comparing it to the written word on the board. Students finish the word using the same procedure, (e.g., i-i...n-n), and then places a ✓ next to the word.



7. Repeat “Say It. Match It. Check It.” for remaining words.

## **Moving Along in NS Mixed Short Vowel Work**

When a majority of your students can sort, read down the columns, and spell with approximately 85% accuracy, use some new words in the sort, and eventually include some words with blends and digraphs.

When you have used many, but not necessarily all of the available words with your whole class, and the majority of your students are accurate as described above, move to the next Mixed Short Vowel line in the NS Word Study Scope & Sequence, specifically i, e, o, and u.

However, if you are working with struggling students 1:1 or in small groups, use Word Study checks as described below to guide their pacing in ES Word Study.

## NS Word Study Check for Mixed Short Vowel Work

- *Individuals and small groups who struggle will move more slowly through the sequence than your whole class. That is to be expected.*
1. Word Study data must be cold! That means you cannot conduct Word Study instruction just before you conduct a Word Study Check.
  2. Randomize a deck of at least 40 words, sampling all 4 patterns, including words with blends and digraphs. Set your timer for 1 minute.
  3. Hold cards in one hand. Start timer when student reads first card. Student reads off deck. Tapping is ok. Data must come from a cold read (i.e., the student has not read or worked with those cards that day).
  4. Sort words into 2 piles:  
Yes = Automatic  
No = Wrong or >3 Second Hesitation (Say correct word and move on)
  5. Criteria: at least 35 words correct in 1 minute with no more than 3 errors. Meet or exceed? BUMP UP to Vowel Patterns.
  6. Fewer than 35 correct in 1 minute? More than 3 errors? REVIEW Mixed Short Vowel trouble areas.

## Vowel Pattern Work (3 dot words): Next Steps<sup>SM</sup> Whole Class Word Study

Materials:

- document camera
- pencils for students; pencil for teacher
- a, a-e, ar, and ai vowel pattern anchors & word cards. No blends or digraphs on Day 1.
- student spelling notebook with lined paper, white boards, or paper inside a page protector

*We encourage you to improve your Next Steps Vowel Pattern instruction by viewing videos of these procedures: [www.uurc.org/Educators/Videos](http://www.uurc.org/Educators/Videos).*

Use the following sequence in this order for every lesson:

1. Sort
2. Fast Pencil
3. Memory
4. Spelling

### Day 1: NS Vowel Pattern Sort

1. Display 'hat,' 'cake,' 'farm,' and 'rain' anchors horizontally next to one another.



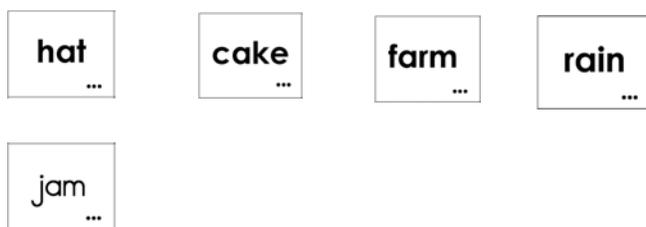
2. You say, **“Your turn. Voices together”** and point to each anchor with your pencil. Students respond chorally.
3. Touch above the /a/ in ‘hat’ with your pencil. Say, **‘a’ is a vowel. In words like this, ‘a’ says /ă/ because it is the only vowel and it is closed off at the end by a consonant.”**
4. Continue, **“But, in this word** (point to the ‘a’ in ‘cake’), **‘a’ says /ā/ because it is followed by a consonant and then a silent ‘e’** (point to those letters).

5. **“And, in this word** (point to the ‘a’ in ‘farm’), **‘a’ says /ar/ because it is followed by ‘r.’ The ‘r’ is bossy and won’t let the ‘a’ make its own sound** point to ‘r’).

6. **“And, in this word** (point to the ‘a’ in ‘rain’), **‘a’ says /ā/ because it is followed by a silent ‘i’** (point to ‘i’).

7. Show ‘jam’ to the class. Ask, **“Does this go under ‘hat,’ ‘cake,’ ‘farm,’ or ‘rain?’”** (pause) **Everybody?** Students respond chorally and you place the card.

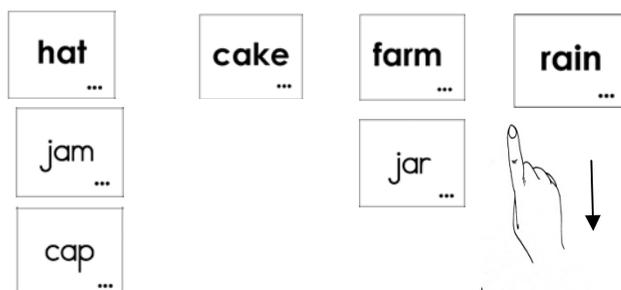
Do NOT ask (or allow) students to read the new card first. They use the support of the anchor to read down the column.



*Difficulty?* Point out that neither ‘hat’ nor ‘jam’ end in silent ‘e,’ have vowels followed by ‘r’ or ‘i,’ so they belong in the same column.

8. Say, **“Your turn. Voices together.”** Teacher points down that column while students chorally read each word aloud. *Gradually invite individual students to sort cards and point while the class chorally reads down the column.*

9. If your students can read down the column easily, build a 4x4 sort with just CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) and CVCe (consonant-vowel-consonant-silent e) words—no words with blends or digraphs, yet.



10. Once you have finished the Sort, touch your pencil above the vowel in 'hat' and then above the ending consonant in 'hat' and say, **“Watch my pencil. The vowel pattern is a-consonant.”** Use your pencil the same way down the column and say, **“Say it with me: a-consonant... a-consonant...a-consonant.”**

12. Go back to the top of the 'hat' column, touch your pencil above the vowel in 'hat' and say, **“Watch my pencil. The vowel sound is /ă/.** Go back to the top of the 'hat column' and use your pencil to touch above the 'a' in hat and say, **“Say it with me: /ă/... /ă/.../ă/.”**

13. Use your pencil the same way for the remaining columns:  
**“Watch my pencil. This vowel pattern is a-consonant-e.**  
**Say it with me: a-consonant-e... a-consonant-e...a-consonant-e.**  
**Watch my pencil. The vowel sound is /ā/.**  
**Say it with me: /ā /... /ā/.../ā/.”**

**“Watch my pencil. This vowel pattern is a-r.**  
**Say it with me: a-r...a-r...a-r.**  
**Watch my pencil. The vowel sound is /ar/.**  
**Say it with me: /ar/... /ar/.../ar/.”**

**“Watch my pencil. This vowel pattern is a-i.**  
**Say it with me: a-i...a-i.**  
**The vowel sound is /ā/.**  
**Say it with me: /ā/... /ā/.../ā/.”**

## Day 2+ NS Vowel Pattern Sort

Always use the same anchor cards. Ask the students to begin the Sort by reading each anchor card as the teacher points.

The cards you choose to fill out the Sort should reflect the students' instructional level (i.e., 85% success – 15% challenge). Some cards may need to be re-used because a majority of the students had difficulty, or all may change daily to reflect students' success.

You should introduce words with blends (e.g., **skate**) and digraphs (e.g., **shake**) as soon as the students are quite successful with CVC words (e.g., **job**) in a 4x4 Sort.

Each day as you finish the Sort, for each column ask, **“What is the vowel pattern here? What is the vowel sound?”** The teacher or volunteer student points as the students chorally respond.

*Difficulty? For CVC words, suggest tapping. But, for words with more complex patterns, ask the students to identify the pattern first. Then ask, **“So what sound is this vowel going to make?”** Students respond. Say, **“Remember that sound. Now tap.”***

*Additional Notes:*

- *Gradually invite multiple students to come to the document camera to place the cards.*
- *The student who sorts the card should point as the class chorally reads down the column.*
- *Ensure you are choosing new students each day.*
- *Prep struggling students ahead of time by giving them a card early so they have time to figure out placement.*

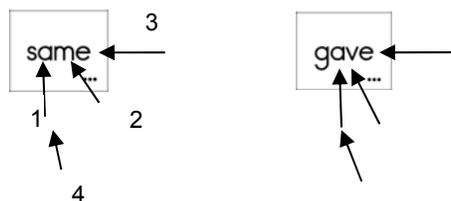
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1. Say, **“When I tap my pencil, everybody please say the word.”**
2. Hover your pencil above a word, then tap your pencil on the word. Students respond chorally.
3. Do this for 6-7 words in random order.
4. Suggest tapping as needed. Remember if a word has a vowel-consonant-e pattern, ask the students to tell you the main vowel sound before tapping.

## NS Vowel Pattern Memory

- *Model for the whole class how to play the game with one student. You may have to model procedures over multiple days.*
- *Transition to students playing in pairs.*

1. Say, **“Flip all of the cards over (including anchors) and mix them up.”**
2. Arrange the cards back into a matrix.
3. Let the student play first. Say, **“Pick a card and flip it over.”** The student chooses a card, flips it over in its place. Say, **“Read that word please.”** Student responds. Do the same for a second card.
4. If the cards have the same vowel, the player says, **“I have a match!”** and takes those cards out of the matrix. If the 2 cards do not match, the player flips them over and leaves them in the matrix. No re-mixing the cards at this point—it prolongs the game unduly.
5. Whenever a match is made, the opposing player says, **“Justify that, please!”**
6. Model justification for students by using a pencil to:
  - point to the vowel, then to the ending consonant, then to ‘e’ while saying **“a-consonant-e...”**
  - then point back to the main vowel a final time stating **“...says /ā/.”** Do this for both cards in the match.



7. For all kinds of obvious reasons, do not allow extra turns for matches when students play against each other—only when they play against you. The player with the most matches wins the game.

8. Occasionally, and then with increasing frequency, ask students to read your cards when you flip them over during your turn.

*Note: You should try to lose whenever you play Memory, but do so convincingly! ☺*

## **NS Vowel Pattern Spelling**

1. Choose 5 word cards you used in the Sort. Choose 2 easier words, and 3 words that provide a bit of a challenge.

2. Use the following instructional prompts and procedure:

- say the word
- use the word at the end of a short sentence
- ask **“What word?”** Students chorally repeat the word.

### **Example:**

- a. **The word is name.**
- b. Use the word at the end of a short sentence. **Jean is my name.**
- c. **What’s the word?”** Students repeat word.
- d. Say, **“Write name.”**
- e. Continue as above for remaining 4 words. (*This is not a spelling test; it is practice. Don’t worry if students hear each other spell.*)
- f. The teacher moves about the room to provide feedback.

3. Continue as above for remaining 4 words.

4. Help students to fix mistakes immediately as they occur. Encourage tapping or using an alternative vowel pattern—whichever is more appropriate. For example, if the student writes ‘rane’ for ‘rain’ say, **“Is there another pattern you can write to give the ‘a’ the long sound?”** Student writes the word using the correct pattern.

5. Now, use the procedures below to model how to “Say It. Match It. Check It.”

- a. Write 1 of the 5 words on the board (random, not sequential order). Prompt, **“Say it.”**

- b. Say, **“Match it.”** Students find and point to the matching word in his/her spelling notebook. Teachers roam to ensure students have identified the correct word.
- c. Prompt, **“Check it.”** Students use a pencil to point to the first letter of the word in the notebook, while saying the letter name aloud **each** time (e.g., n-n), comparing it to the written word on the board. Students finish the word using the same procedure (e.g., a-a...m-m...e-e), and then places a  $\surd$  next to the word.

6. Repeat “Say It. Match It. Check It.” for remaining words.

### **Moving Along in NS Vowel Pattern Work**

When a majority of your students can sort, read down the columns, and spell with approximately 85% accuracy, use some new words in the sort, and eventually include some words with blends and digraphs.

When you have used many, but not necessarily all of the available words with your whole class, and the majority of your students are accurate as described above, move to the next Vowel Pattern in the Word Study Scope & Sequence.

However, if you are working with struggling students 1:1 or in small groups, use Word Study checks as described below to guide their pacing in NS Word Study.

### **NS Word Study Check for Vowel Pattern Work**

- *Individuals and small groups who struggle will move more slowly through the sequence than your whole class. That is to be expected.*

1. Randomize a deck of at least 40 words, sampling all 4 patterns, including words with blends and digraphs. Set your timer for 1 minute.

2. Hold cards in one hand. Start timer when student reads first card. Student reads off deck. Tapping is ok. Data must come from a cold read (i.e., the student has not read or worked with those cards that day).

3. Sort words into 2 piles:

Yes = Automatic

No = Wrong or >3 Second Hesitation (Say correct word and move on)

4. Criteria: at least 35 words correct in 1 minute with no more than 3 errors. Meet or exceed? BUMP UP to Vowel Patterns.

5. Fewer than 35 correct in 1 minute? More than 3 errors? REVIEW Vowel Pattern trouble areas.