

## UURC Word Study Wisdom

1. Think of Word Study as musical scales or athletic drills for reading. Your student needs 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. Some tutors worry that students will be bored by doing the same activities every day. Most won't and those who say they are bored would issue such a criticism for any activity that included reading. Remember: Our Word Study Sequence targets your student's instructional level and provide 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 student's 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 student reads and spells words. Consciously reduce/limit the amount of 'teacher talk' you allow yourself. Save 'bonding' and 'stories' for before and/or after the lesson.
4. Your Word Study prompts should be succinct and consistent to let your student know exactly where you want him/her to be (location) and what you want him/her to do (behavior).  
Example: **"Start at the top. Point and read, please."**  
Example: **"Watch my pencil. The vowel pattern is...?"**
5. Set high expectations for good manners and academic language by modeling both for your student. Ask your student to use both as often as possible.  
Example: **"Justify that, please!"**  
Example: **"Thank you for making our matrix."**
6. As you and your student proceed, utilize your ES Word Study Sequence to determine which anchors and cards to pull from your kits, as well as when to conduct Word Study Checks to evaluate mastery.

7. You will quickly see that we consider tapping to be a very important word identification strategy. Again, your modeling, guidance, and enthusiasm can play a large part in helping your student to adopt this reliable method for successfully reading unfamiliar words.

8. Don't flog a tired horse! If your student is struggling with a particular concept or word, make 3 attempts (total), tell him/her the word, and try again another day!

## 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) Word Study

*Note: all Next Steps 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 confused even older students are 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 the student can articulate the vowel patterns and vowel sounds. Then, you may conduct a Word Study Check with all 5 vowels and determine if your student is ready to move onto to Vowel Pattern Word (3 dot words).*

Materials:

- pencil for student; pencil for tutor
- 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

Use the following sequence in this order for every lesson:

- Sort
- Fast Pencil
- Memory
- Spelling

### Day 1: NS Mixed Vowel Sort

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



2. Say, **“Point and read these anchors, please.”** Student responds.

*Difficulty? Suggest tapping.*

3. Use your pencil to point to the ‘a’ in ‘hat.’ Say, **“The letter ‘a’ is a vowel. It says /ă/. What does it say?”** Student answers.

4. Do the same for i, o, and e.

5. Place ‘job’ in front of the student. Ask, **“Where does this go?”** Student should place card below ‘mom.’ Do NOT ask (or allow) the student to read the new card first. The student must place the card in the Sort and then 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.’*



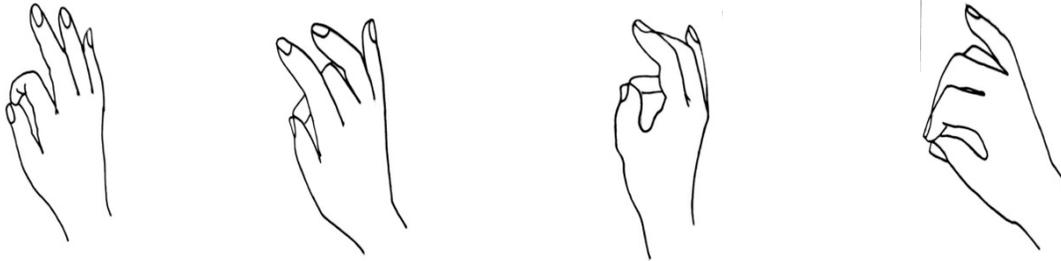
6. Say, **“Point and read, please.”** Student points down that column while reading each word aloud. Continue with other word cards as above.

The first time the student has difficulty reading a word, it is time to teach tapping. 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!

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 student to do the same.

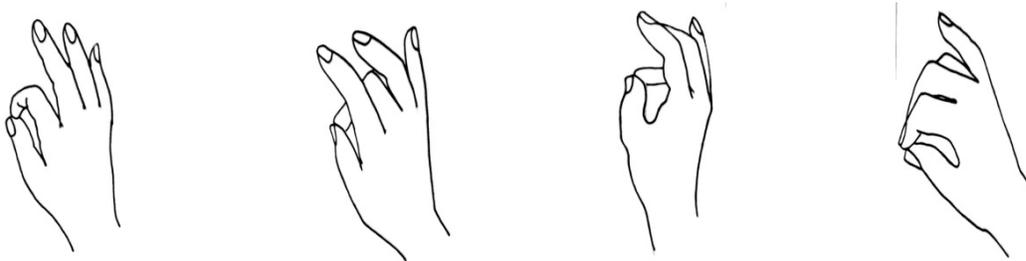
Show your student how you can tap each finger to the thumb individually (left to right, from forefinger to pinky), **saying “Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.”** Then, pinch all 4 fingers to the thumb to finish.

Have your student practice tapping each finger to the thumb individually (left to right, from forefinger to pinky) until s/he can do this reasonably well.



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 student 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.



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

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

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

hat ..	pig ..	mom ..	red ..	
ran ..	win ..	job ..	tell ..	
	hit ..	hop ..		

If your student experiences difficulty, drop back to a 2x2 or 2x3 matrix with just 'hat' and 'pig' anchors. You can build a 4x4 matrix over successive lessons.

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.”**

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/.”**

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 student to begin the Sort by pointing to and reading each anchor card.

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

You should introduce words with blends (e.g., **gl**ad, **du**st) and digraphs (e.g., **wh**en, **hu**sh) as soon as the student is quite successful with CVC words (e.g., job) in a 4x4 Sort.

*Difficulty? Suggest tapping!*

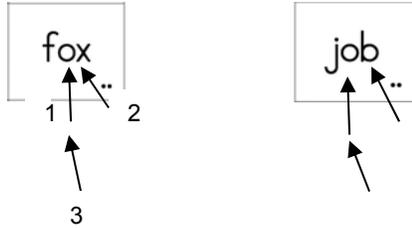
Each day as you finish the Sort, for each column ask **“What is the vowel pattern here? What is the vowel sound?”**

### NS Mixed Vowel Fast Pencil

1. Say, **“Read the words I touch with my pencil.”**
2. Point to 6-7 words in random order.
3. Suggest tapping as needed.

### NS Mixed Vowel Memory

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.”** 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 your student 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 /õ/.”** Do this for both cards in the match.



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

8. A match allows the player to take another turn. The player with the most matches wins the game.

*Note: You should try to lose when you play NS Memory, but do so convincingly! Win a game occasionally to keep things “real!” ☺*

## **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?”** Student repeats word.

**Example: “The word is win. I hope I win. What’s the word?”**  
Student repeats word. Say, **“Write win.”**

3. Continue as above for remaining 3 words.

4. Help student 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.

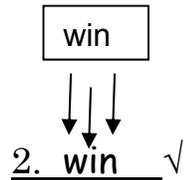
5. Show the tapping motion or say, **“Tap.”** When the student taps /s/-/t/, stop him/her at that sound and ask, **“What says /t/?** Student responds. Ask, **“What do you need to put there?”** Student responds and fixes word.

6. Now, use the procedures below to model for your student how to “Say It. Match It. Check It.”

7. After modeling, hand the student a card (random, not sequential order). Say, **“Say it.”** Student reads word card, tapping if needed.

8. Say, **“Match it.”** Student places card above spelling word in notebook.

9. Say, **“Check it.”** Student uses a pencil to point to the first letter on the card, then the first letter in the notebook, while saying the letter name aloud **each** time (e.g., w,w). Student finishes word using the same procedure (e.g., i,i...n,n), and then places a  $\checkmark$  next to the word.



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

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

When your student can play Memory such that s/he is approximately 85% accurate, move to the next line in the NS Word Study Sequence (i, e, o, and u). You will need to retire 1 anchor, keep 3 anchors, and pull 1 new anchor, as well as related word cards.

When your student is successful with i, o, e, and u, including some words with blends and digraphs, conduct a Word Study Check to determine if s/he is ready to move into the next phase of NS Word Study: Vowel Patterns (3 dot words).

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

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 Mixed Short Vowel trouble areas.

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

Materials:

- pencil for student; pencil for tutor
- a, a-e, ar, and ai vowel pattern anchors & word cards. No blends or digraphs on Day 1.
- student spelling notebook with lined paper

Use the following sequence in this order for every lesson:

- Sort
- Fast Pencil
- Memory
- Spelling

## Day 1: NS Vowel Pattern Sort

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



2. Say, **“Point and read these anchors, please.”** Student responds.

3. Use your pencil to point to the ‘a’ in ‘hat.’ Say, **“a’ is a vowel. It says /ă/ in hat. What does it say?”** Student answers.

4. Point to ‘a’ in ‘hat’ and say, **“In words like this, ‘a’ says /ă/ because it is the *only* vowel and it is *closed off* at the end by a consonant.”**

5. 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).”

6. **“And, in this word** (point to the ‘a’ in ‘farm’), **‘a’ says /r/ because it is followed ‘r’ and the ‘r’ is bossy and won’t let the ‘a’ say its short or long sound** (point to ‘r’).”

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

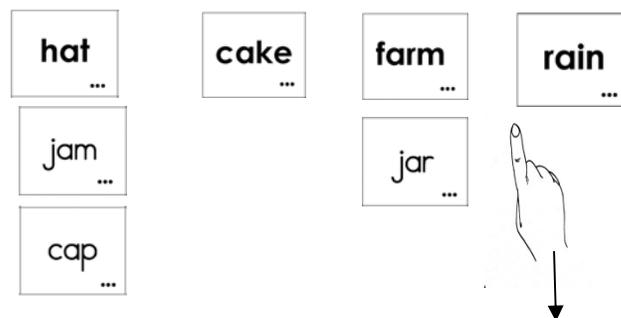
8. Place ‘jam’ in front of the student. Ask, **“Where does this go?”** Student should place ‘jam’ below ‘hat.’ Do NOT ask (or allow) the student to read the new card first. The student must place the card in the Sort and then use the support of the anchor to read down the column.



*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.*

5. Say, **“Point and read, please.”** Student points and reads down that column while reading each word aloud.

6. If your student can read and point 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.



If your student experiences a good deal of difficulty, shorten the Sort to 2x2 or 2x3 and then expand to a full 4x4 matrix over successive lessons.

8. Once you have finished the Sort, touch your pencil to the vowel in 'hat' and then to the ending consonant in '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."**
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/."**
12. Then, touch your pencil to the vowel, consonant, and 'e' in 'cake' and say, **"Watch my pencil. This vowel pattern is a-consonant-e."**
13. Repeat #12 above for the rest of the words in the 'cake' column. Say, **"Say it with me: a-consonant-e... a-consonant-e...a-consonant-e."**
14. Go back up to the top of the 'cake' column, touch your pencil to the 'a' and then the 'e' in 'cake' and say, **"Watch my pencil. The vowel sound is /ā/."**
15. Repeat #14 above for the rest of the words in the 'cake' column. Say, **"Say it with me. /ā /... /ā/.../ā/."**
16. Then, touch your pencil to the 'a,' then the 'r' in 'farm' and say, **"Watch my pencil. This vowel pattern is a-r."**
17. Repeat #16 above for the rest of the words in the 'farm' column. Say, **"Say it with me: a-r...a-r."**
18. Go back up to the top of the 'farm' column, use your pencil to circle the 'ar' in 'farm' and say, **"The vowel sound is /r/. Say it with me: /r/... /r/.../r/."**
19. Finally, touch your pencil to the 'a,' then the 'i' in the 'rain' and say, **"Watch my pencil. This vowel pattern is a-i."**

20. Repeat #19 above for the rest of the words in the ‘rain’ column.  
Say, **“Say it with me: a-i...a-i.”**

21. Go back up to the top of the ‘rain’ column, use your pencil to circle the ‘ai’ in that column and say, **“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 student to begin the Sort by pointing to and reading each anchor card.

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

You should introduce words with blends (e.g., **skate**) and digraphs (e.g., **shake**) as soon as the student is 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?”**

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

*After 3 tries, try again next lesson. Another option is to reduce the size of the Sort.*

## NS Vowel Pattern Fast Pencil

1. Say, **“Let’s play Fast Pencil.”**
2. Point to 6-7 words in random order.

3. Suggest tapping as needed. Remember if a word has a vowel-consonant-e pattern, ask the student to tell you the main vowel sound before s/he begins tapping.

## NS Vowel Pattern Memory

1. Ask the student to flip the cards face down, mix them up, and arrange a matrix.

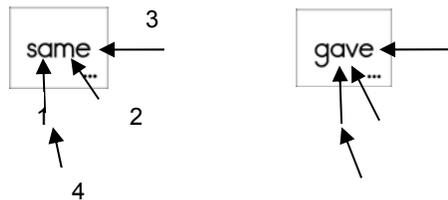
3. You or the student chooses a card, flips it over and reads it aloud, tapping if necessary. Do the same for a second card.

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. Do not re-mix!

5. Whenever a match is made, the opposing player says, **“Justify that, please!”**

6. Model justification for your student 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. Occasionally, and then with increasing frequency, ask the student to read your cards when you flip them over during your turn.

8. A match allows the player to take another turn. The player with the most matches wins the game.

## 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:  
**“The word is name. Jean is my name. What’s the word?”**
3. Student repeats word. Say, **“Write name.”**
4. Continue as above for remaining 4 words.
5. Help student to fix mistakes immediately as they occur. Encourage tapping. For example, if the student writes ‘lak’ for ‘lake’ say, **“The word is lake. Say lake.”** Student responds.
6. Show the tapping motion or say, **“Tap.”** When the student taps /l-/ /ā/, stop him/her at that point and ask, **“What says /ā/?** Student responds. Ask, **“What do you need at the end of the word for the vowel to say its name?”** Student responds and fixes word.
7. Next, the student should “Say It. Match It. Check It.” Hand the student a card (random, not sequential order). Say, **“Say it.”** Student reads word card, tapping if needed.
8. Say, **“Match it.”** Student places card above spelling word in notebook.
9. Say, **“Check it.”** Student uses a pencil to point to the first letter on the card, then the first letter in the notebook, while saying the letter name aloud **each** time (e.g., n,n). Student finishes word using the same procedure (e.g., a,a...m,m...e,e), and then places a √ next to the word.
10. Repeat “Say It. Match It. Check It.” for remaining words.

## Moving Along in NS Vowel Pattern Work

When your student can play Memory such that s/he is approximately 85% accurate, including some words with blends and digraphs, conduct

a Word Study Check to determine if s/he is ready to move to the next Vowel Pattern. (e.g., i, i-e, ir, and igh).

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

1. Randomize a deck of at least 40 words, sampling all 4 vowel 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

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

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