

Lesson Plan for Vowel Teams 'ai' and 'ay'

Phonics Pattern for Focus: Vowel Teams and Diphthongs

OPEN WITH A LISTENING GAME: Warm up with a phonemic awareness activity to get students hearing sounds.

Teacher says a word. Students segment and tap its sounds, listening for the /ā/ sound. Then students say if the /ā/ sound is at the beginning, middle, or end of the word.

main (/m/, /ā/, /n/; middle)	stay (/s/ /t/ /ā/; end)
aim (/ā/, /m/; beginning)	braid (/b/, /r/, /ā/, /d/; middle)
pray (/p/, /r/, /ā/; end)	hay (/h/, /ā/; end)

WARM UP WITH THE FLASH CARD DECK: Have students practice the sounds they know.

- Use flash cards for vowels and any previously introduced vowel teams or diphthongs. You can also include flash cards that will be used in the lesson, as well as any others students may need for additional practice.
- Show the flash card for each letter, choosing the card with or without the keyword picture as needed.
 - For flash cards with keyword pictures: Say the letter, keyword (picture), and sound. For example, "t, top, /t/."
 - For flash cards with letters only: Say the sound. For example, "/t/."

Important note: Listen for sound production and correct as needed.

Sounds to Review:

i-e	a-e	o-e		
a	e	i	o	u

Materials Needed:

- set of letter flash cards without pictures
- vowel teams 'ai' and 'ay' flash cards with pictures
- vowel teams 'ai' and 'ay' flash cards without pictures
- vowel teams 'ai' and 'ay' word list
- split dictation with 'ai' and 'ay'
- Vowel Team 'ay': Student Read Sheet with Words, Phrases, and Sentences
- Vowel Team 'ai': Student Read Sheet with Words, Phrases, and Sentences
- pencil and paper for dictation

Lesson Plan for Vowel Teams 'ai' and 'ay'

INTRODUCE THE VOWEL TEAM 'ai' AND 'ay':

- Say, "What ways have we learned to spell the long 'a' sound, /ā/? [open syllable 'a', 'a' in a magic 'e' syllable] Yes! Today we are going to learn two more ways to represent the long 'a' sound."
- Take out and show students the vowel team 'ay' flash card with the keyword picture (hay).
- Point to the picture of the *hay* on the card. Say, "This is a picture of *hay*. I hear /h/, /ā/. In this word, the /ā/ sound is spelled 'ay'. 'ay' is a vowel team. The letters 'a' and 'y' team up and make the long 'a' sound. When you see 'ay' together in a word, you say /ā/. Something that is important to know about the vowel team 'ay' is that it will never be at the beginning or in the middle of a one-syllable word. 'ay' comes at the end of a word."
- Say, "Listen to what we'll say when we see this card: *'a', 'y', hay, /ā/, at the end of a word.'*"
- Say and have students repeat, *'a', 'y', hay, /ā/, at the end of a word.'*
- Say, "*Hay is grass that has been cut and dried. Some animals eat hay.*"
- Say, "Now let's look at another vowel team that makes the long 'a' sound."
- Show students the vowel team 'ai' flash card with the keyword picture (train).
- Point to the picture of the train on the card. Say, "This is a picture of a *train*. I hear /t/, /r/, /ā/, /n/. In this word, the /ā/ sound is spelled 'ai'. 'ai' is a vowel team. The letters 'a' and 'i' team up and make the long 'a' sound. When you see 'ai' together in a word, you say /ā/. Something that is important to know about the vowel team 'ai' is that it will never be at the end of a word. 'ai' comes at the beginning or in the middle of a word."
- Say, "Listen to what we'll say when we see this card: *'a', 'i', train, /ā/, at the beginning or middle of a word.'*"
- Say and have students repeat, *'a', 'i', train, /ā/, at the beginning or middle of a word.'*
- Say, "Today, we will read and spell words that have the vowel teams 'ai' and 'ay'."

PLAY WITH WORDS: Provide many opportunities for students to hear and decide how to spell the long 'a', /ā/, sound in words.

1. On the board write the following:

___d st___n st_____ pl_____n tr_____

2. Begin with the first word. Say, "When we see the line we are going to make the long 'a' sound. Then we are going to decide if it will be 'ay' or 'ai'. Remember that 'ay' comes at the end of a one-syllable word and 'ai' can come at the beginning or in the middle of an word. Let's look at the first word. /ā/, /d/, *aid*. To *aid* means to help. Which vowel team will we use in the word *aid*?" [ai] "Why?" [because the long 'a' sound is at the beginning of the word] Fill in the 'ai' and have the students read the word *aid*.
3. Continue this process with the rest of the words using these steps.
- Say the sounds, making the long 'a' sound for the blank line.
 - Discuss where the long 'a' sound is in the word
 - Have the students decide which vowel team and explain why.



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4. After all words are filled in, have the students read back all of the words: *aid, stain, stay, plain, train*.

DICTATION: Have students listen to the sound and practice spelling the phoneme. We have outlined two days of dictation instruction for you to try. The first day students will work on deciding between when to use 'ai' and 'ay' in words. The next lesson follows our typical dictation routine building from upon sounds, words, phrases, and sentences.

Dictation Day 1

Dictating Words: Give each student a copy of the Split Dictation with 'ai' and 'ay' paper which has example words and can be found at the end of this lesson plan packet.

1. Say the word and have students repeat it.
2. Tap each sound and have students identify where they hear the long 'a', /ā/, sound (beginning, middle or end).
3. Once the position of the long 'a', /ā/, sound has been identified, students point to 'ay' or 'ai'.
4. Students write the word in the correct column.
5. Students read the word to themselves.
6. Check together.
7. Read back the word together and correct as needed.
8. After all words have been dictated, students read back all of the words that they wrote.

Dictation Day 2

Dictating Sounds:

1. Model saying **"/ā/ at the end of a word"** and write the letters 'a', 'y' as you say it.
2. Students say /ā/ and write the letters 'a', 'y' on their dictation paper.
3. Model saying **"/ā/ at the beginning or middle of a word"** and write 'a', 'i' as you say it.
4. Students say /ā/ and write the letters 'a', 'i' on their dictation paper.
5. Have students do this for each line in the sound section.
6. Read back the sound together.
7. Correct as needed.

Sounds to Dictate:

ay	ai	ay	ai
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Lesson Plan for Vowel Teams 'ai' and 'ay'

Dictating Words:

1. Say, "Today when you hear the long 'a' sound in a word, you are going to use 'ay' or 'ai' to spell the long 'a' sound."
2. Say the word and have students repeat it.
3. Tap each sound and have students identify where they hear the long 'a', /ā/, sound (beginning, middle or end).
4. Students write the word.
5. Students read the word to themselves.
6. Check together.
7. Read back the word together and correct as needed.
8. After all words have been dictated, students read back all of the words that they wrote.

Words to Dictate:

claim	spray	sway	pain	wait	clay
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Dictating Phrases and Sentences:

1. Say the phrase or sentence.
2. Students repeat the phrase or sentence.
3. Say the phrase or sentence again and hold up a finger for each word you say.
4. Students write the phrase or sentence. (You can repeat the entire phrase or sentence once or twice more with fluency.)
5. Check together.
6. Read back the phrase or sentence together.
7. Correct as needed.

Phrases to Dictate:

will spray	can sway
did not wait	will use the clay

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Sentences to Dictate:

Who will claim this bag?	When I fell, I was in a lot of pain.
The branches sway in the wind.	Did you spray the plants in the garden?

BUILDING VOCABULARY: Select word(s) to focus on meaning and use.

- Discuss the multiple meanings for the following word(s). You can do this at any time throughout the lesson when words with multiple meanings come up.

claim	sway
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PRACTICE READING TO BUILD FLUENCY: Have students practice reading words with the new skill alone and in context.

Reading Dictation to Build Fluency:

- Tell students to track with their finger from left to right as they read back what they wrote during the dictation part of the lesson.

READING WORDS AND CONNECTED TEXT TO BUILD FLUENCY: Use the Reading Universe read sheets for this portion of the lesson.

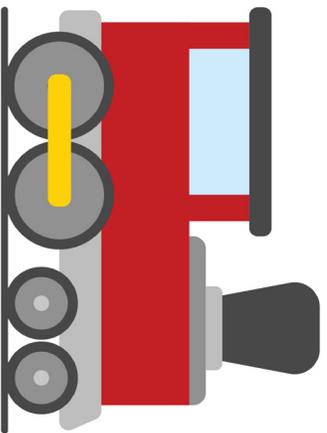
Words:

- Show students words using letters that have already been explicitly taught. Students should have a copy in front of them, but also display the words on a screen or under a document camera.
- Go across the page, tapping out the sounds in words, and then blending the sounds together to read the words. You can then reread and just have students try to read the word without tapping all the sounds.
- Students can then reread with a partner.

Phrases and Sentences:

- Display phrases or sentences for students and give them a copy. (Phrases and sentences should only contain words with patterns that have been taught and sight words that have been explicitly taught.)
- Say, "We will read each of these phrases/sentences three times. The first time is to be sure we read the words correctly. The second time is to be sure we read them at a good speed: not too slow and not too fast. The third time, let's be sure the way we read it matches what the words are trying to say."

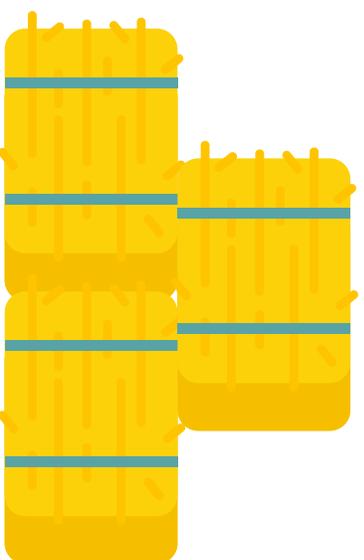
ai



ai, train, /ā/

ReadingUniverse.org

ay



ay, hay, /ā/

ReadingUniverse.org



ai

ReadingUniverse.org

ay

ReadingUniverse.org



Vowel Teams 'ai' and 'ay' List of Words, Phrases, and Sentences for Lesson Planning

Our word lists can help you plan for teaching the vowel teams 'ai' and 'ay'. Use them in your reading, spelling, and fluency-building lessons and activities. Remember that each interaction with words is an opportunity to build vocabulary. Consider pointing out words with multiple meanings to your students.

WORDS WITH THE VOWEL TEAMS 'ai' AND 'ay'

Words with 'ai'								
aid	laid	maid	paid	raid	bail	fail	hail	jail
mail	nail	pail	rail	sail	tail	wail	aim	gain
main	pain	rain	chain	braid	taint	frail	claim	plain
brain	drain	grain	train	stain	sprain	strain	bait	wait
maintain	faith	faint						

Words with 'ay'								
bay	day	gay	hay	lay	may	pay	ray	say
way	clay	play	slay	fray	pray	tray	stay	sway
spray								

If you have already taught syllable division, you can use the 'ay' words below.								
runway	midday	subway	halfway	freeway	leeway	driveway	highway	downplay
delay	decay	pathway	dismay	holiday	birthday			



Vowel Teams 'ai' and 'ay' List of Words, Phrases, and Sentences for Lesson Planning

Phrases with 'ai' and 'ay'

in the hay	play all day	tray of snacks	will stay	did spray	on the tray
black and gray	did sway	sprayed the hose	on the train	rain all day	big black snail
tray of paint	in my brain	braid it	long hair	in the pail	not in pain
got a stain	will faint	a long training	snails by the pond	praying for it	sprayed the paint
will explain	long hallway	remain here	sprained it	will complain	raining and hailing
is frail	did exclaim	mailing it now			

Sentences with 'ai' and 'ay'

I will ride the train to Main Street.	I will play in the hay.
Will it rain all day?	Jack went on the train.
I got a tray of paint.	I saw a big black snail on the path.
I complained to mom that I did not feel well.	Can you explain the math homework to me?
It was raining and hailing when we went outside.	Jack was spraying the kids with the hose.
There were six snails on the path by the pond.	The food remained on the tray.
This was a long day of training.	I sprained my leg when I fell off the deck.
When the bell rang, we ran down the long hallway.	We walked up the long driveway.
I am mailing you a gift.	The branches sway in the wind.

Split Dictation with Vowel Teams 'ai' and 'ay'

In this activity, the teacher dictates words that have the long 'a' sound, /ā/, and students decide whether the words are spelled with 'ai' and 'ay'.

Materials:

- copies of 'ai' and 'ay' split dictation sheet
- pencil

Directions:

1. Tell students that you are going to dictate words that end in the long 'a' sound, /ā/. Explain that they will need to decide when to use 'ai' and 'ay' and then write the word in the correct column on their dictation paper.
2. Say the word and have students repeat it.
3. Tap each sound in the word.
4. Talk through the process of determining whether to use 'ai' and 'ay' at the end of the word with your students:
 - What vowel sound do you hear in the word?
 - Where is the long 'a' sound?
 - If it is at the beginning or in the middle, we use 'ai'.
 - If it is at the end, we use 'ay'.
5. Students write the word in the correct column.
6. Check together.
7. Read back the words together and correct as needed.
8. You can scaffold and lessen your explanations on how to determine which spelling to use as students display understanding.

Words for Split Dictation: When dictating the words below, switch between columns so that students have to vary the spelling they choose as correct. You can also choose words from the [Vowel Teams 'ay' and 'ai': List of Words, Phrases, and Sentences for Lesson Planning](#).

ai	ay
hail	bay
plain	clay
gain	may
braid	stay
wait	spray

Name _____ Date _____

Split Dictation with Vowel Teams 'ai' and 'ay'

Write the word in the correct column.

'ai'	'ay'

Vowel Team 'ay': Student Read Sheet with Words, Phrases, and Sentences

For this activity, students will practice reading words, phrases, and sentences with the vowel team 'ay'. Students will decode words, build accuracy and fluency, and strengthen their vocabulary.

Materials:

- vowel team 'ay' read sheet for each student
- pencil for each student

Directions:

This activity can be used with a whole class or in a small group.

The initial reading of this page should focus on decoding the words accurately. Subsequent readings should focus on fluency.

STEPS FOR READING WORDS IN ISOLATION:

1. Have each student highlight the vowel team 'ay' in the single words at the top. As they highlight, they say the long 'a', /ā/, sound.
2. Start with the first row and guide students to tap out or segment the sounds in the words.
3. Tell students that they will see the words repeated on the following lines. Say, **"If you see the word and can read it, say the whole word without making each sound in the word."** (The repeated words aid students in moving from decoding every sound in the words to reading the whole word without segmenting.)
4. Have students continue reading the words in isolation.
5. If you feel that they would benefit from rereading all rows of the words in isolation before moving on to the phrases, have them do so.
6. Next, tell students that the phrases and sentences contain the words above that they have already decoded and have practiced reading.



STEPS FOR READING PHRASES AND SENTENCES:

Option A

1. Read one phrase at a time with students and make sure that they can accurately decode each word in the phrase.
2. After a phrase has been decoded, have the students reread the phrase, this time trying to read the whole phrase without segmenting the sounds in each word.
3. For the third reading, choose an emotion (happy, sad, angry, surprised, etc.) and have the students read the phrases that way.
4. Continue until all phrases have been read.
5. Follow this procedure with each sentence on the activity page.

Vowel Team 'ay': Student Read Sheet with Words, Phrases, and Sentences

Option B

1. For the first reading, read each phrase and have students follow along (track) as you read.
2. For the second reading, read each phrase together with the students.
3. For the next reading, have the students read together without you.
4. Tell students, "If you get stuck or are moving too fast or slow, I will turn my voice back on."
5. Repeat the process with the sentences.
6. For the final reading, which can be done during the lesson or at a later time, students can partner-read or whisper-read the whole page independently.

For Vocabulary Building: You can help build students' vocabulary by addressing words on the activity page that have multiple meanings or words that students may not know.

- For example, you can discuss the meaning of the word *display*. You can say, "**Display means to show something or put something where people can see it.**"
- Have students repeat the definition and discuss with a partner something that they might *display*.

Teacher Tip: Store each student's read sheets in a folder or binder so they can use them for additional practice, if needed.

Name _____ Date _____

Vowel Team 'ay' Review

Read the words.

way	pay	say	play
may	stay	gray	pray
spray	tray	haystack	display
daytime	pathway	birthday	hayride
driveway	stingray	subway	sway

Read the phrases.

will pray	can display	on the hayride
in the driveway	may spray it	in the daytime
gray stingray	can't pay	on his birthday

Name _____ Date _____

Vowel Team 'ay' Review

Read the sentences.

On Monday, I will take the subway to my uncle's work.

I made my payment at the bank.

Jack was running in the hallway when he fell and cut his leg.

Jay has a birthday in May.

I parked the car in the driveway.

The jet will stay in the long line on the runway.

The branches sway in the wind.

We all jumped in the tall haystack on the farm.

Vowel Team 'ai': Student Read Sheet with Words, Phrases, and Sentences

For this activity, students will practice reading words, phrases, and sentences with the vowel team 'ai'. Students will decode words, build accuracy and fluency, and strengthen their vocabulary.

Materials:

- vowel team 'ai' read sheet for each student
- pencil for each student

Directions:

This activity can be used with a whole class or in a small group.

The initial reading of this page should focus on decoding the words accurately. Subsequent readings should focus on fluency.

STEPS FOR READING WORDS IN ISOLATION:

1. Have each student highlight the vowel team 'ai' in the single words at the top. As they highlight, they say the long 'a', /ā/, sound.
2. Start with the first row and guide students to tap out or segment the sounds in the words.
3. Tell students that they will see the words repeated on the following lines. Say, **"If you see the word and can read it, say the whole word without making each sound in the word."** (The repeated words aid students in moving from decoding every sound in the words to reading the whole word without segmenting.)
4. Have students continue reading the words in isolation.
5. If you feel that they would benefit from rereading all rows of the words in isolation before moving on to the phrases, have them do so.
6. Next, tell students that the phrases and sentences contain the words above that they have already decoded and have practiced reading.



STEPS FOR READING PHRASES AND SENTENCES:

Option A

1. Read one phrase at a time with students and make sure that they can accurately decode each word in the phrase.
2. After a phrase has been decoded, have the students reread the phrase, this time trying to read the whole phrase without segmenting the sounds in each word.
3. For the third reading, choose an emotion (happy, sad, angry, surprised, etc.) and have the students read the phrases that way.
4. Continue until all phrases have been read.
5. Follow this procedure with each sentence on the activity page.

Vowel Team 'ai': Student Read Sheet with Words, Phrases, and Sentences

Option B

1. For the first reading, read each phrase and have students follow along (track) as you read.
2. For the second reading, read each phrase together with the students.
3. For the next reading, have the students read together without you.
4. Tell students, "If you get stuck or are moving too fast or slow, I will turn my voice back on."
5. Repeat the process with the sentences.
6. For the final reading, which can be done during the lesson or at a later time, students can partner-read or whisper-read the whole page independently.

For Vocabulary Building: You can help build students' vocabulary by addressing words on the activity page that have multiple meanings or words that students may not know.

- For example, you can discuss the multiple meanings of the word *train*. You can say, "**Train means to teach something, it can also be a series of connected things, like a railroad train, or a train of thought.**"
- Students can turn and talk about a sport that they would need to *train* for.

Teacher Tip: Store each student's read sheets in a folder or binder so they can use them for additional practice, if needed.

Name _____ Date _____

Vowel Team 'ai' Review

Read the words.

aim	quail	aid	fail
pain	braid	chain	rain
train	mail	tail	paid
trail	snail	brain	stain
hail	maid	claim	drain

Read the phrases.

in his brain	rain and hail	a huge stain
see a quail	got the mail	did not fail
in the drain	in your brain	wag the tail

Name _____ Date _____

Vowel Team 'ai' Review

Read the sentences.

I was in pain after I stepped on the nail.

I do not want to fail the math quiz.

I have to go to training for my new job.

It does not always thunder when it rains.

The dog wags his tail when he is happy.

The brass chain is strong.

Mom's ring fell down the drain!

Dad got a check in the mail.