



## Daily and Supporting Learning Targets

- Opening A: I can identify the name and sound for the letters “a” and “t.” (RF.K.3)
  - I can look at each consonant and say its sound.
  - I can identify the short vowel sound for every vowel letter.
- Work Time A: I can feel and count the syllables (beats) in the words of a poem. (RF.K.2)
  - I can count the syllables in a spoken word.
- Work Time B: I can follow along in a shared text (poem). (RF.K.1)
  - I can move my finger under the words as I read them on a page, left to right and top to bottom.

## Ongoing Assessment

- Observe students during Opening A. Determine whether they can identify the name and sound for the letters “a” and “t.”
- Observe students during Work Time A. Determine whether they can identify the number of “beats” (syllables) in a spoken word.
- Observe students during Work Time B. Determine whether they can move left to right and top to bottom while following text with their fingers.

## Agenda

1. **Opening (2 minutes)**
  - A. Letter-Sound Chant: “a” and “t”
2. **Work Time (10–15 minutes)**
  - A. Rhythm and Beats in the Poem: “Alligator and Tern”
  - B. Shared Text: Tracking Print in the Poem: “Alligator and Tern”
3. **Closing and Assessment (2 minutes)**
  - A. Reflecting on Learning
4. **Independent Work Time (40–45 minutes)**

## Teaching Notes

### In advance:

- Gather materials for independent work rotations (see Independent Work Time).

## Vocabulary

### Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

- beat, letter, stanza, vowel, word (L)
- alligator, tern (T)

## Materials

- ☑ Keyword Picture Card: “t” (on the Alphabet anchor chart)
- ☑ Alphabet anchor chart (introduced in Lesson 5)
- ☑ Keyword Picture Card: “a” (on the Alphabet anchor chart)
- ☑ Enlarged poem: “Alligator and Tern” (to display; from Lesson 8)
- ☑ Pointer (optional)
- ☑ First stanza of the poem: “Alligator and Tern” (one copy per student)
- ☑ Hand mirrors (optional)

## Opening

### A. Letter-Sound Chant: “a” and “t”

- (Suggested transition song, sung to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”):  
*“A b c d e f g (pause) h i j k l m n o p (pause) q r s (pause) t u v (pause) w x (pause) y and z. These are the letters we use to read and write. (Pause.) Let’s get to know them by sound and by sight.”*
- Introduce the Letter-Sound Chant instructional practice:
  1. Teacher points to the **Keyword Picture Card: “t”** on the **Alphabet anchor chart** and says: “‘t,’ tern, /t/.”
  2. Teacher invites students to repeat: “‘t,’ tern, /t/.”
  3. Teacher invites students to notice how the sound feels in their mouths (tip of tongue up against the roof of the mouth behind the upper teeth, tongue moving forward and down, and a little air pushing out).
  4. Teacher points to the **Keyword Picture Card: “a”** on the Alphabet anchor chart and says: “There are 26 letters in the alphabet. Every one of them is important because each one shows a sound. We know there are five letters that have extra-special jobs in words, and those letters are called vowels. ‘A’ is one of those five vowel letters.”
  5. Teacher says: “‘a,’ alligator, /a/.”
  6. Teacher invites students to repeat: “‘a,’ alligator, /a/.”
  7. Teacher invites students to notice how the sound feels in their mouths (mouth open, tongue flat in mouth, sound coming from back of throat).

### Meeting Students’ Needs

- Consider inviting students to stand and move in a circle while singing the transition song. Model how they can take a step on each letter. When they sing the lyrics “by sound,” they can cup their hands behind their ears to illustrate careful listening. When singing the lyrics “by sight,” they can make “binoculars” around their eyes with their hands to illustrate careful observing. This helps establish the idea that learning letters involves knowing the shape, name, and sound.

- Consider providing hand mirrors for students to see the position of their mouths as they make each sound.
- When saying "'a,' alligator, /a/," draw out the /a/ sound at the beginning of "alligator" to help students isolate and commit the sound to memory.

## Work Time

### A. Rhythm and Beats in the Poem: "Alligator and Tern"

- (Suggested transition song, sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot"):  
*"Let's all say our poem loud and clear. Listen to the rhythm that we hear. Each word has a beat, it's really neat. Let's get started, sit up in your seat!"*
- Introduce the Rhythm and Beats in the Poem instructional practice:
  1. Teacher says: "There's a wonderful rhythm and beat in this poem. It's almost like we're singing a song. Let's see if we can feel it in our bodies and mouths."
  2. Teacher reads the first two stanzas in the **Enlarged poem: "Alligator and Tern"** once slowly and with expression (slightly exaggerating each syllable and clearly separating each spoken word, as shown below), pointing to each word as he or she reads it (with a finger or a pointer) while students listen:  
*"All-i-ga-tor WENT to the an-i-mal zoo. (Pause.)*  
*He met a ti-ny tern and asked,*  
*'How are YOU?' (Pause.)*  
*'Terr-if-ic,' said the ti-ny tern,*  
*'MORE than o-kay (pause),*  
*'Cause NOW its time to play all day.'"*
  3. Teacher invites the students to recite the poem together in the same way.
  4. Teacher models how to make little drumsticks with two fingers from each hand: tap together the index and middle fingers of the right hand against the same two fingers of the left.
  5. Students practice tapping.
  6. Teacher recites the first line of the poem again, tapping the beats while students listen:  
*"All-i-ga-tor went to the an-i-mal zoo."*
  7. Teacher invites the students to recite the line, tapping the beats just as he or she just did.
  8. Teacher invites students to say the word "all-i-ga-tor" aloud, holding up a finger each time they hear a beat.
  9. Teacher asks:  
*"How many beats do we hear in the word 'all-i-ga-tor'?" (four)*
  10. Teacher writes the numeral "4" above the word "alligator" on the enlarged poem.
  11. Teacher recites the first line again and invites students to say the word "in" aloud, holding up a finger each time they hear a beat.
  12. Teacher asks:  
*"How many beats are in the word 'in'?" (one)*

13. Teacher writes the numeral “1” above the word “in.”
14. Teacher repeats steps 11–13 for the remaining words in the first line: “the” (one beat), “an-i-mal” (three beats), and “zoo” (one beat).
15. Teacher continues the process for the remaining words in the stanza: “he” (one), “met” (one), “a” (one), “ti-ny” (two), “tern” (one), “and” (one), “asked” (one), “how” (one), “are” (one), and “you” (one).

### Meeting Students’ Needs

- Consider substituting the tapping of the fingers with marching in place or gently slapping a knee with one hand for students who need a more gross motor method.

### B. Shared Text: Tracking Print in the Poem “Alligator and Tern”

- Introduce the Shared Text instructional practice:
  1. Teacher models how to “read” the words in the first stanza of the poem “Alligator and Tern,” pointing to and holding the finger under each word according to the number of beats written above it. In other words, when reading the word “all-i-ga-tor,” he or she holds her finger under it for the duration of the four beats.
  2. Teacher continues to model this process with the remaining words in the first stanza, moving left to right and then down and to the left to begin the next line.
  3. Teacher distributes copies of the first stanza of the poem “Alligator and Tern.”
  4. Teacher and students slowly “read” each line, tracking from left to right across the page, and returning to the left to start each new line. Teacher supports students as they hold their finger under each word with more than one beat.
  5. Teacher invites students to read the stanza as described in step 4 once or twice more.

### Meeting Students’ Needs

- Consider using the word “stanza” with students, explaining that each part of a poem is called a stanza. Support their understanding by indicating the separation between each group of words. Each of these groups or parts is called a stanza.
- Consider inviting students to extend their arms toward the enlarged poem and point their fingers to track while you model in step 2. This supports their ability to track when they apply it to their own text in step 4.
- It can be challenging for young students to differentiate the number of beats in a spoken word from the number of printed words on a page. Many students expect that the finger will move on after each beat when pointing to words in a text. In this lesson, writing the number of beats above each word lays the groundwork for understanding the difference between beats (syllables) and words.

## Closing and Assessment

### A. Reflecting on Learning

- Before moving to Independent Work Time, consider asking one or more of the following questions:

*“How many beats are in the word ‘alligator?’” (four)*

*“How can you figure it out?” (hold up one finger each time I hear a beat)*

*“What will you do today during Independent Work Time to allow you and your classmates to be successful?” (Responses will vary. Examples: “use kind language,” “be careful with materials,” “take turns.”)*

### Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who need additional support organizing their ideas: Provide sentence frames. Example:
  - “When I say the word ‘alligator,’ I hear \_\_\_\_.”

## Independent Work Time

*Suggested Plan: This first cycle provides time for students to practice what it means to work independently. A brief introduction is made to materials, and expectations for work habits and social interactions are established.*

*Note: Three suggestions for independent activities are given. Consider using any or all of these. For example, you may want to have all students working on the same activity, or you may want to have two or three activities happening simultaneously for a set time and then rotate students through. By Cycle 2, groups not working with the teacher at a given time should be engaged in purposeful independent rotation work. Refer to the Independent and Small Group Work guidance document (see K–2 Skills Resource Manual) for more details.*

### Book Browsing:

- Students spend time looking at their own individual book(s).

### Word Work:

- Students practice reading the first stanza of the poem, as they did in the lesson.
- Students practice letter formation for lower- and uppercase “a” and “t.”
- Additional Supporting Materials:
  - Copies of the first stanza of the poem “Alligator and Tern” (from the lesson, one per student)
  - “a” and “t” handwriting paper (one per student)
  - Pencils (one per student)

**Responding to Text:**

- If students have not yet completed this task, consider having students build poetry notebooks and tape or glue their copies of the poem “Alligator and Tern” into them and then illustrate the poem.
- Students draw a picture of Alligator and Tern playing working or playing together cooperatively. They can label the alligator with the letter “a” (or “A”) and the tern with “t” (or “T”).
- Additional Supporting Materials:
  - A spiral or composition notebook (one per student)
  - Individual copies of the poem “Alligator and Tern”
  - Tape or glue sticks (to tape or glue the poems into the notebooks)