



Daily and Supporting Learning Targets

- Opening A: I can identify a keyword for the vowel “u.” I can act out the events from the Letter Story: “u.”
 - I can identify the short vowel sound for every vowel letter.
- Work Time A and B: I can identify the name and sound for the letters “q” and “x.” (RF.K.3)
 - I can identify the name of each upper- and lowercase letter.
 - I can identify the name of each lowercase letter.
 - I can look at each consonant and say its sound.
 - I can identify the short vowel sound for every vowel letter.

Ongoing Assessment

- Observe students during Work Time. Determine whether they can say the sounds for each letter correctly. Refer to the Articulatory Gestures chart as needed.
- Record students’ progress on the Snapshot Assessment.

Agenda

1. **Opening (5 minutes)**
 - A. Read-aloud: Letter Story: “u”
2. **Work Time (10–15 minutes)**
 - A. Getting to Know Letters (Part 1): “u,” “q,” and “x”
 - B. Letter-Sound Chant: “u,” “q,” and “x”
3. **Closing and Assessment (2 minutes)**
 - A. Reflecting on Learning
4. **Differentiated Small Group Instruction and Rotations (40–45 minutes)**

Teaching Notes

In advance:

- Prepare:
 - Letter Story: “u” (wrapped in colorful paper or placed in a decorative container; wrapping and container are optional)
 - Snapshot Assessment (optional; one per student)
- Glue the Keyword Picture Card: “u” on colorful paper (see Cycle 1). This will distinguish vowels from consonants as they are learned.
- Gather materials for differentiated small group instruction (see Differentiated Small Groups: Work with Teacher).

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

- high-frequency word, keyword (L)

Materials

- ✓ Letter Story: “u” (wrapped in colorful paper or placed in a decorative container; wrapping and container are optional)
- ✓ Keyword Picture Cards: “q,” “u,” and “x” (one of each for teacher to display)
- ✓ Letter Formation Guidance document (see K–2 Skills Resource Manual)
- ✓ Articulatory Gestures chart (to post)
- ✓ Snapshot Assessment (optional; one per student)

Opening

A. Read-aloud: Letter Story: “u”

- (Suggested transition song, sung to the tune of “I’m a Little Teapot”):
“Now let’s read a story, word by word. Get yourselves ready to repeat what you heard. When we hear the vowel sound, we will say: This is the sound the vowel made today!”
- Invite students to sit in a circle.
- Begin a read-aloud of the Letter Story: “u”:
 1. Teacher displays the wrapped **Letter Story: “u.”**
 2. Teacher says, with expression: “I have here, in my hands, a story to tell. Lis-ten carefully ... lis-ten well.”
 3. Teacher unwraps the story.
 4. Teacher reads the story aloud expressively and without interruption, using movements to accompany what is happening in the story.
 5. Teacher invites the students to stand and silently act out the story in place with him or her while he or she reads it aloud again.
 6. After the second read, teacher asks:
“What did the children discover?” (umbrella)
 7. Teacher invites the students to turn to an elbow partner and asks:
“What can you tell each other about what you heard in the story?”
 8. Teacher invites one or two students to share with the group.
 9. Teacher says: “Let’s keep our eyes out for this /u/-/u/-/u/-mbrella today.”

Meeting Students' Needs

- To heighten the anticipation and drama around the presentation of the Letter Story: "u," consider wrapping it in colorful paper or placing it in a decorative container and revealing it slowly.
- Consider having students lie down on their stomachs with their heads oriented toward the center of the circle while reading the story aloud the first time through. This, together with the unwrapping of the story and the language in step 2, develops a storytelling ritual for the vowel Letter Stories.

Work Time

A. Getting to Know Letters (Part 1): "q," "x," and "u"

- (Suggested transition song, sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot"):
"Now we'll learn the letters, short and tall. Get your bodies ready to write them all. When we learn the letters, we will shout. We know their names, we figured it out!"
- Begin the Getting to Know Letters (Part 1) instructional practice:
 1. Teacher introduces three new letters: "q," "x," and "u."
 2. Teacher holds up **Keyword Picture Card: "q,"** showing only the picture (quail).
 3. Student volunteer(s) name the object/animal. ("quail")
 4. Students tell an elbow partner or whisper into their hand the sound they hear at the beginning of the word. (/kw/)
 5. Teacher and students say the sound together: /kw/.
 6. Students say the name of the letter. ("q")
 7. Teacher models skywriting the letter as he or she says the keyword ("quail"), describing proper letter formation (see **Letter Formation Guidance**): "q."
 8. Students skywrite the letter as they say the keyword ("quail"): "q."
 9. Teacher invites student volunteers to share other words that begin with the /kw/ sound.
 10. Teacher repeats steps 2–9 with the letter "x" and its keyword, inviting students to share words that end with "x."
 11. Teacher holds up the next Keyword Picture Card: "u" (umbrella), showing only the picture, and asks:
"Who knows the name of this object?" ("umbrella")
 12. Teacher says: "That's right! There's that umbrella we read about! I thought it might show up again! This is the letter 'u,' and it is a vowel, just like 'a' and 'i'! Vowels have super-important jobs in words. Every word must have at least one vowel in it."
 13. Teacher displays the Keyword Picture Cards and shows how the vowels are all on colored paper to remind students that they are all vowels.
 14. Teacher repeats steps 4–9 with "u" and its sound, /u/.
 15. Teacher says: "Now we've met 'q,' 'x,' and 'u.' In the next lesson, we'll get to know them even better—we'll learn how to write them!"

Meeting Students' Needs

- Have students use their arm in skywriting rather than just their hand or finger. The large movement engages the physical connection to both the letter formation and phoneme.
- Remind students that the /kw/ sound stops with the exhale of breath and does not include the "uh" that many students add to the sound.
- Consider inviting students to share what they notice about how their mouths move when making the /u/ sound.
- If students struggle to think of new words beginning with the /kw/ sound, offer clues. Example: Put your finger to your lips and say, "Shhh ... be very ..." (quiet).
- The /ks/ sound at the end of a syllable can be made by the letter "x" (example: "box") or the letters "-cks" (example: "ducks"). As a result, asking students to provide words with the sound /ks/ at the end results in words that aren't spelled with the letter "x." Consider pronouncing words like "box," "fix," "fox," and asking students to identify the sound at the end of the words.
- If students need help thinking of new words beginning with the /u/ sound, offer clues (example: place an object "under" another).
- If students offer a word that begins with a different sound, remind them to notice the way /u/ or /kw/ feels in their mouth when they say each keyword. Ask them to repeat the word and notice if the beginning sound of the word feels the same in their mouths.
- Encourage students to offer classmates' names as an option for beginning sounds.

B. Letter-Sound Chant: "u," "q," and "x"

- (Suggested transition song, sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot"):
***"Now let's say the alphabet, letter by letter. Here is the letter, here is the sound.
 When we chant together, we sound great. Listen up to the sounds we make!"***
- Begin the Letter-Sound Chant instructional practice:
 1. Teacher models the Letter-Sound Chant for "u": "u, umbrella, /u/," and repeats.
 2. Teacher asks students to join in the Letter-Sound Chant for "u": "u, umbrella, /u/," and repeats.
 3. Repeat steps 1–2 with "q" and "x."
 4. Teacher says: "Great job! When we learn new letters, we also learn a keyword to help us unlock the sound. Knowing the sounds for letters helps us become better readers."

Meeting Students' Needs

- Refer to the Articulatory Gestures chart (see supporting materials) as needed to support students in producing sounds for each letter.

Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning

- Emphasize that successful learners think about what they've learned and why it's important. Consider using a metaphor, such as a baseball player learning to keep his or her eye on the ball to know exactly when to hit it.
- Ask:

“When we see the letter ‘u,’ how can we remember the sound it makes?” (Think of our keyword, “umbrella,” and listen for the first sound or the sound that “u” makes at the beginning.)

“How will that help us with reading or writing?” (Responses will vary.)

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who need additional support organizing their ideas: Provide sentence frames. Example:
 - “When I said the word ‘umbrella,’ I ____.”

Differentiated Small Groups: Work with Teacher

Suggested Plan: Teacher works with the Pre-Alphabetic and Early Partial Alphabetic groups. Teacher may meet briefly with the Late Partial and Early Full Alphabetic groups to get them started on independent work.

Note: 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.

Pre-Alphabetic:

- Practice activity: Teacher guides students in sorting pictures sharing initial sounds with keywords (“u” and “q”) and final sounds with a keyword (“x”). Pictures include:
 - “up,” “umbrella,” “under,” “umpire,” “queen,” “quarter,” “quilt,” “question,” “fox,” “box,” “six,” “mix.”
 - Teacher cuts apart Sound Sort Pictures.
 - Teacher guides students in sorting pictures by initial sound (/u/ and /kw/) and final sound (/ks/).
 - Students place pictures onto Sound Sort sheet (3 column).
 - If time allows, consider providing each student with their own copies of the Sound Sort Pictures and Sound Sort sheets, and having them do the activity again independently.
- Consider also reading the Letter Stories: “q” and “x,” found in the Learning Letters Book. After reading each story, practice skywriting the letter.

- Additional Supporting Materials:
 - Sound Sort Pictures (one for teacher use)
 - Sound Sort sheet (one for teacher use)
 - Scissors (one for teacher use)
 - Glue sticks (one per student)

Early Partial Alphabetic:

- Practice activity: Students sort pictures sharing initial sounds with keywords (“u” and “q”) and the final sounds with a keyword (“x”). Pictures include:
 - “up,” “umbrella,” “under,” “umpire,” “queen,” “quarter,” “quilt,” “question,” “fox,” “box,” “six,” “mix.”
 - Teacher reviews the name of the objects represented by each picture.
 - Students cut apart Sound Sort Pictures.
 - Students sort and paste pictures onto Sound Sort sheet (3 column).
- Consider also reading the Letter Stories: “q” and “x,” found in the Learning Letters Book. After reading each story, practice skywriting the letter.
- Additional Supporting Materials:
 - Sound Sort Pictures (one per student)
 - Sound Sort sheet (one per student)
 - Scissors and glue sticks (one of each per student)

Late Partial and Early Full Alphabetic:

- Practice activity: Students sort pictures sharing initial sounds with keywords (“u” and “q”) and the final sounds with a keyword (“x”). Pictures include:
 - “up,” “umbrella,” “under,” “umpire,” “queen,” “quarter,” “quilt,” “question,” “fox,” “box,” “six,” “mix.”
- Students cut apart Sound Sort Pictures.
- Students sort and paste pictures onto Sound Sort sheet (3 column).
- Additional Supporting Materials:
 - Sound Sort Pictures (one per student)
 - Sound Sort sheet (one per student)
 - Scissors and glue sticks (one of each per student)