





## The Sound and Gesture of A

It is not coincidental that the alphabet begins with the sound AH. The Greek letter was *Alpha*, with *ah* as both the beginning and ending sound. It is the sound of openness, of oneness. The baby says *Mama, Papa*. When we see or taste something good, we say *Ah*. Reaching with both arms as if to embrace something far away is the perfect gesture for *Ah*. Try it. Of course the letter A sings a variety of parts in the alphabet choir. With chest and throat relaxed one can experience the full range from Ah to Aw by progressively closing the throat and mouth area and moving the sound forward. In some ways it is hard to believe, for example, that the AY and AH sounds share the same letter of the alphabet.

Note: It is recommended that A be introduced in concert with the other vowels after three or four weeks of work with consonants. Vowels and consonants have quite different qualities. As singers know vowels can be drawn out whereas consonants, for the most part, cannot be. A stream flowing around a rock is one way to visualize this. Vowels are often termed 'singing sounds.'

## Story Suggestions for A

### ***The Star***

*Anna sits on the sofa, gazing out the window into the darkness. Her brother, Adam is sprawled on the carpet playing a game. All at once, Anna jumps up and runs to the door, calling, "Adam, Adam, come." Together they run out into the back yard and look up. The sky is awash with stars. One in particular is dazzlingly, radiant. Anna reaches up towards it. She feels as though her heart is reaching out to the star, and that the star is filling her heart at the same time. She whispers, "Ah radiant star far, far away, I have in my heart a warm place where you stay." As time goes on she begins to feel closer and closer to all of Nature, stones, water, plants and animals. She writes poems about each of them. Her song grows and grows the more she sees and feels of Nature's endless array. Days later a melody comes to her.*

*"Ah, radiant star, far, far away, I have in my heart a warm place where you stay."*

(See *Singing LMNOP* for melody, or make up one of your own.)

## Reciting A

It can be deeply touching to behold the reverence with which some children speak these words and express the gesture of the sound, AH.

Lines 1-2 Recite while slowly bringing arms from a position crossed on chest to one that opens gradually to a 45 degree angle, as shown in illustration in the book. Time this so the continuous motion is completed at the same time as the two lines are finished being spoken.

Lines 3-4 Continue in the same tone of voice, returning arms to the starting position, again moving gradually.

Line 5 Gesture upward with one hand.

Line 6 Use a round, sweeping gesture suggesting a lake.

Line 7 Make a soft fist, first on *apple* then on *apricot*.

Line 8 Slide the pies into the oven with hands flat, side by side.

Line 9 Sweep one hand to one side.

Line 10 Sweep the other hand to the other side.

Lines 11-12 Bring hands inward progressively in a gesture of gathering until you end with arms crossed on the chest as you'd begun.

### Activities for A

The vowel A makes a wide range of sounds as seen, for example, in the words *air*, *water*, *lakes* in the poem. Find what in nature has the A sound. There is a benefit in bringing auditory awareness before visual. One way to encourage this is to do the following:

- Vowel Exercise:

AH

Go three steps up the scale and then back down. Do Re Mi Re Do. Now sing:

Ah  
Ah                      Ah  
Ah                      Ah

Look up and point and say, "I see a... stah ah ah ah ar (again singing the notes up and down).

Next say: "It's very fah ah ah ah ar." You point and put your lips together as if to enunciate F, but let the children take the lead as if they've guessed the answer. Maybe they have. Be sure to form the consonant clearly so they can read your lips, as it were.

Now you can continue with the game of GUESSIT. Sing the sound again and say:

I love you with all my...heart (gesture)

This part of my hand is called the... palm.

Be peaceful. Be... calm. (Again, lead them in making the Cuh sound as a cue)

I love my mother and my ...father.

Ā - long A

Don't go; please... stay.

Bring your umbrella; it's going to... rain.

We get letters in the... mail

If you like to run, let's have a... race.

Your nose and eyes are on your... face.

We have lemons. Let's make lemon...-ade.

It's very big and swims in the sea. It's a... whale.

Bears sleep in a... cave.

I won't spend my money. I'll... save.

ă - short A

When we work we use our ... hands.

When I'm feeling blue, I'm feeling... sad.

If you don't know you can... ask.

A baby cow is called a... calf.

It's not a whole one; it's just a... half.

Be sure to comb your... hair.

To go up you climb the... stairs.

AW

We mow the ... lawn.

That big bird is a... hawk.

Careful, don't trip and... fall.

That ant is very... small.

This is called your... jaw.

To speak is to... talk.

That tree is very... tall.

That's not just bad, it's... awful.

Try putting any or every consonant before A. You can continue this with all the vowels. We shall have plenty of practice with vowels in that every syllable contains at least one.

Like Anna, look more closely at nature. Make observations. Children can dictate thoughts and images for the adult to write down. Little verses can be written.

Continue theme of "nature's array" by exploring fruits, vegetables and animals that begin with A, though one shouldn't feel constrained to include only words that start with that letter.

Fruits-apples, apricots, avocados...Vegetables- asparagus, artichokes... Animals-aardvarks, anteaters, ants, apes...

## The Game of WHICHISIT

Is it:

Questions or Answers

Apes or Monkeys

Amazing or Wonderful

Morning or Afternoon

Europe or Asia

Edward or Andrew

Ants or Bees

Smoke or Ashes

Alabama or Mississippi

Awful or Terrible

Alaska or Arizona

All or None

Child or Adult

Pears or Apples

Ancient or Old

Ask or Answer

June or April

Amanda or Esther

*WHICHISIT* can also be played with internal vowels, not to mention be combined with *THE NAME GAME*. Thus is it:

Brianna or Lili

Miguel or Jacob

Kimberly or Sara

David or Eli

Nathan or Roberto

Rachel or Hannah

Establishing this as *The Name Game* from the outset creates expectation for the other letters, and encourages active listening.

- Tongue Twister:

"What ails Alex?" asks Alice.

- Names With A

Arnold, Alex, Ahmed, Allen, Angel, Art, Aden, Anthony, Antonio, Asher,

Amara, Aminah, Ann, Alicia, Amber, Amy, Anouk, Ashley, Aviva, Abbey, Astrid

It is possible to speak of names from various languages which are similar, such as Andrew, Andre, Andreas, and Andres; but also John, Sean, Johann, Ivan...

- Drawing A

The key with A, as with all vowels, is to experience the gesture and the feeling of the sound. Review the gesture of openness made while reciting Lines 1-4. It isn't necessary to draw the entire picture, just the opening up of the arms. The letter A, upside down, takes this form. This can be derived from the pentagram, or five-pointed star.

Note: One way to characterize the vowels is simply to draw the letter with "ripples" going out from it. These may be dark becoming lighter, or vice-versa. It is important that we feel our way into the vowels. Choose the color that fits that particular sound.



### The Sound and Gesture of B

It is not by coincidence that *B* is the second letter of the alphabet. B follows *A* (ah), the sound of openness and unformed form. The Greek letter Beta was derived from the Hebrew letter 'Beth', which as a word means 'house', denoting 'that which contains'. The list of English words which embody this quality is astonishing. Four are pointed out in the poem, "bowl, bag, basket and bin", but the list is long: *box, barrel, bucket, bunch, bubble, body, bundle, balloon, ball, bottle, blimp, basin, bathtub, bed, bulb, bell, belly, bulge, boat, book, bud, building, boundary, and embrace*, to name only some. It is interesting to note how, in general, letters/sounds often show an archetypal quality in certain words more than in others. This is surely the case with B.

### Story Suggestions for B

#### ***Big Belly the Bear:***

*Big Belly awoke. The brawny brown bear sniffed the air. It was thick with the smell of berries. Big Belly lumbered down to his favorite bushes by the bay. Not a single berry was left on any bush. Instead, before him lay bowls of berries, bags of berries, baskets of berries, and even bins full of berries.*

*He gorged himself on berries until, finally, he lumbered away, leaving the beach strewn with berries, and overturned bowls, bags, baskets and bins. Meanwhile, a group of boys who had been swimming in the bay, returned. Earlier that day they had boated out to Barnaby Island to pick berries. They had done a great job, except for one thing, something they had forgotten.*

- Others Stories & Ideas

*Bearskin* (Grimm)

*How the Bear Lost Its Tail* (Norwegian)

Bees, (bumble bees are even better), butterflies, buds, blossoms and branches lend themselves well to creating simple nature stories. Perhaps begin like this: "Bees are buzzing, busy about the branches brimming with buds and blossoms..."

Any story with a boat, with its sails billowing in the breeze

Story of berry picking (blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries)

## Reciting B

Line 1 Make a gesture to accompany *bowl, bag, basket* and *bin*.

Line 4 Emphasize each word in "brawny, brown bear" to bring out a lumbering quality.

Line 5 Make a gesture for the top curve of B on *Big*, and for the bottom curve on *Belly*.

Line 6 Gesture as if following the flight of a bee on "beholds a bee buzzing"

## Activities for B

Of course the class can, very briefly, act out the story of Big Belly. (The gesture of the big belly is the key to the form of B.)

A discussion of what the boys had forgotten (sharing) may come up.

Blowing bubbles, being bubbles (floating)

Being butterflies

Being boats with billowing sails, sheets could be used for this, or not

Blowing up a balloon

Ask which of the 4 containers (bowl, bag basket or bin) has two parts. They needn't be called syllables right away.

- Blends

Bl- interestingly, is the first "letter blend" in the alphabet. They might have been blackberry or blueberry bushes.

Br- "Brawny, brown bear" makes a good point of departure for discussing the br blend. Show how the two sounds are pressed together with no breathing room in between in *brawny* and *brown*, but not in *bear*. One could show the difference between *bloom* and *balloon*. Or say, "Blow up a balloon in below zero weather."

Contrast 'bread' and 'bed'. Exaggerate the closeness of the consonants and lengthen the vowels. Stretch out the *r* before finishing the word *bread*.

Speaking of bread and bed, what can you put on both of them? Answer. A spread.

- Tongue Twister:

This is one of the best verses I know of for familiarizing children with the vowels, as it contains all of them within a context that is more or less constant, i.e., b \_ t t e r.

### ***Betty Botter***

*Betty Botter bought a bit of butter,*

*But this butter made her batter bitter,*

*So Betty Botter bought some better butter,*

*And it made her batter better.*

Variation: Try adding finger signs for the vowels:

*A= forefinger and middle finger on RH as inverted V, with forefinger crossing from LH*

*E= 3 middle fingers on RH pointing to left*

*I= forefinger on RH*

*O= thumb and forefinger on RH making ring*

*U= thumb and forefinger on RH*

(These signs can be used in other contexts as well.)

Recite it without the consonants. You can do this with many verses. It sounds silly at first, but it raises auditory awareness.

Ask which words, longer than two letters, don't start with B.

Write out *Betty Botter* on the board or on a large sheet of paper. Underline the vowels in different colors. Point to a word at random and have children run up and identify that word. This exercise calls forth attentiveness to the printed word in such a way that even non-readers can *read*.

- Names With B

Brendan, Bob, Benjamin, Brian, Beau, Boris, Blaise, Bjorn, Bu, Bradley, Bernie

Barbara, Beatrice, Belinda, Bach Yen, Basanti, Bonita, Bushra, Brittany, Bao, Botan,

- Drawing B

Be sure to emphasize the straight trunk of the tree and then the curves of the bear whose back leans against the tree. Try to get the bear's nose and ears right; it will look more satisfying. Make the nose light enough at first so that you can adjust if the proportions are not right.



### The Sound and Gesture of C

C makes two sounds, the kuh of K and the ss of S. Of the two, one is soft as in *peace* or *ceiling*, while the other is strong as in *cut*, *crack* and *clang*. In English, C takes the role of K at the beginning of words, except where followed by "i".

### Story Suggestions for C

#### ***The Crystal Cave***

*The craggy crest of the mountain loomed over the valley below. Carlos and Cesar had hiked this trail many times before, but now something was different. A large heap of rocks and earth lay across the trail, and they had to stop. "Hey, look, I bet there was a landslide here not long ago," said Carlos.*

*"What's that up there?" exclaimed Cesar, pointing. "Something is shining with bright colors from that cave up on the cliff. It's like a rainbow!"*

*"Let's go explore it," shouted Carlos excitedly, already scrambling up the mountainside. They clambered up the cliff as fast as they could, staying clear of the loose rock as much as possible. When they reached the cave they couldn't believe their eyes. Crystals of all colors covered the floor of the cave.*

*"It's incredible! I can't believe it!" cried Carlos.*

*"Neither will our friends," shouted Cesar.*

- Other things which suggest C:

C's semicircular form suggests many other story possibilities:

"A cute (calico) cat curled cozily in the corner" might provide the subject for a story that you might even have lying around the house. Children could easily make up a story about a cat.

*Dick Whittington and His Cat* (English)

*The Pink* (Grimm) "Pink" is the English name for a carnation.

*The Cat Who Came Indoors* (Zimbabwe)

*The Cloud Princess* (Swaziland)

What kind of nature story could be created out of a clam, a crab, a cloud, a cove and a crescent moon, or any of these combined?

Crown	Croissant	Crescent moon	
Cuckoo	clock	Cantaloupe slice	
Cup	cupcake	Cake cut in half	
Cucumber	Coconut	Cloud	
Cove	Crab	Clam	Curve of any kind

### Reciting C

Line 2 Draw a circle in the air, then point to the center.

Line 3 Point upwards for *ceiling*, downwards for *cellar*.

Line 4 Find a gesture for *city*, and then one for *cement*.

Lines 5-7 For the *cuh* gesture, a sculpting movement seems to fit well, fingers cupped, ending with finger tips pressed together to make a crest.

### Activities for C

Make a circle of children. Find the center. Break it in half into two semi-circles, the C-shape, or crescent.

Let the Cs run free, insofar as they can keep the shape intact.

Have the children be "calico cats curled cozily in the corner" (cute and cuddly?).

Bake croissants.

Note when the moon is a crescent. Draw a circle lightly. Then shade in a crescent with an orange or a deeper yellow such as gold. This may provide an informal introduction to astronomy. You can enhance this lesson with this poem by Christina Rossetti:

O' Lady Moon,

Your horns point toward the east;

Shine, be increased.

O' Lady Moon

Your horns point toward the west;

Wane, be at rest.

Notice the moon in all its phases.

Put icing on a round cake half way around the rim.

Cut a cantaloupe into crescent-shaped slices.

Think of things which start with Suh and Kuh.

Suh- (begin with reference to the verse for C) circle, center, ceiling, cellar, city, cement; also celery, cider, etc.

Kuh- cave, crystal, cliff, crest, cover, can, cup, candle, calendar, clam, cradle, crocus

- Blends

The cl and cr blends are seen in the second part of the verse, as well as in the story. You can say that the *r* crashes into the *C* onomatopoeically. The *l* *clashes* with the *C*. *C* is not a gentle blender, crashing, crumbling, crunching, cracking, creaking.

Cl- clam, claw, clay, cleaner, climber, clipper, clock, closet, club, clump, cluster

Cr- crane, cranberry, creek, cream, crib, cricket, crocodile, crow, crumb, crunchy, crust

CH is a special blend. CHURCH exhibits the CH at either end.

*Crows and Cranes* (a game)

A minimum of 8 players is needed. There is a middle line across the field, as well as a back line on either side. Half the group is crows, half cranes. Line up in two opposing lines across a middle line, one group being crows and the other cranes. Teacher calls either's name, drawing out the cr sound to make it suspenseful. Teacher can also say names like crocodiles, cream puffs, or whatever. The group called crosses the middle line and tries to catch the other team before they can reach the back line. When caught, children join the chasing team. Game is over when all are on one team.

(Adaptation for fewer children, even a single one) Name one goal *crows* and other *cranes*, then have child run to correct one.

Reinforce the vowel sounds such as in claw/clay; crane/, while teaching the consonant blends.

- Tongue Twister:

Crisp crust crackles.

- Names With C

Suh- Cesar, Cyrus

Celeste, Cecelia, Cindy,

Kuh - Calvin, Carl, Cruz, Colin, Connor, Craig, Clark, Christopher, Clint,

Crystal, Cathy, Carmen, Claire, Carol, Connie, Cong, Cuc, Claudia, Carly

Ch- Chad, Chao, Charles, Chico, Chung, Chetan

Chandra, Chan, Chao, Chava, Chun, Charu, China,

- Drawing C

When coloring the crystal cave, begin with a C form to assure it is the focal point. Then you may bring in the surrounding mountains. It doesn't matter at which point the children add the many-colored crystals. It will vary. This will be a source of pride when they really make them shine. A little angularity makes the crystals look more satisfactory. To do this draw a right triangle; divide it approximately in two; connect the 3 ends to make another quasi right angle; draw parallel lines to make the column.



## The Sound and Gesture of D

*D is a strong sound, related to T. It is made by striking the lower teeth with the tongue. D has a somewhat dark, dangerous, foreboding quality. Think of digging deep down into the ground, a descending gesture.*

## Story Suggestions for D

### ***Daring D***

*"D will save us from the dragon," said the little, dark-haired boy, waving a stick sword.*

*"Yes, Daring D will save us," echoed his older brother, laughing to himself at the way his brother tried to say, 'Demetrius'. All the children were pretending to be Demetrius, the brave, young knight who had come from afar to conquer the dragon. They pretended they, too, were going down into the dungeon where the dragon guarded his horde of gold. As they did this they recited, "Daring D goes under the ground, where the deadly dragon dwells; to defend the kingdom sore distressed, and all danger lay to rest."*

*But the thought of actually meeting the dragon, was more than they could even imagine. All day they heard its deafening roar, while a thick, sulfurous cloud hovered over the kingdom. To make matters worse the dragon was no longer satisfied with the cattle and sheep the villagers were bringing to it. Now it demanded the sacrifice of maidens. And, at last, the lot fell to the princess herself.*

*Demetrius knew what he had to do. But first he went down on bended knee, folded his hands, bowed his head and prayed. "No one shall die but the dragon, on my word," he vowed. Then he took up his sword and shield, opened the door to the dungeon, and descended into the dark. The dragon thundered and roared. The sound was deafening, but Demetrius was ready. Stepping boldly downward, he took a chunk of meat and deftly tossed it into the dragon's mouth. Greedily the dragon gulped it down. Demetrius did not delay. While the dragon was devouring the meat, he leaped at it and pierced its throat with his sword. The dragon dropped down dead. Demetrius gazed a moment at the dead dragon. Then turned and climbed the stairs; he opened the door, and there in the dazzling light of day stood the princess.*

*the enD*

### ***The Dragon and the Goddess*** (Japanese) (a not so deadly dragon)

*A terrible dragon once menaced the coasts of Japan. It would leap out of the sea and threaten children playing on the beach. Beltana, goddess of happiness, saw what was happening and felt pity, not only for the people, but also for the dragon. "Maybe he acts this way because he lives alone under the ocean and has never been shown kindness," she thought. Beltana floated down to the ocean surface and called for the dragon. Immediately the water bubbled and there arose a desolate island which was the dragon's lair. The goddess waved her arm, and flowers, trees and streams sprang forth. The dragon was overcome by the sight of so much beauty. Beltana drew near*

*to it and smiled. The dragon's heart melted, and from that time forth the dragon didn't bother the children; it played with them.*

- Other stories:

*Saint George and the Dragon* (English)

*The Devil and the Three Golden Hairs* (Grimm) The Devil is a humorous character. His tail can make the curve of the D. (This is a great play for parents to act out for the children.) (See Appendix, Plays.)

*The Ugly Duckling* (Anderson)

*The Donkey* (Grimm)

*The Bremen Town Musicians* (Grimm) another donkey

Dolls

Dolphins

Door to a hovel

Dome

Dinosaurs, especially the Dimetrodon recalls the dragon

### Reciting D

Lines 1-2 Bend your knees and dip slowly with each accented beat.

Line 3 Make a strong gesture for *defend*, such as holding up a sword or shield.

Line 4 Make a horizontal gesture with one hand.

Line 5 Gesture as if opening the door.

Line 6 Reach toward the light.

Line 7 End with greeting a friend, perhaps shaking hands or embracing a neighbor.

### Activities for D

Be a dragon. Careful, this could easily fall apart. Let one at a time, or a few together, try this. Then, if they can keep it together, try larger groups. Let colored construction paper be scales. A red cloth can serve as a tongue. And so on. If it works, it's great. It depends in part on the makeup of your group.

Dig in the ground. Dig down with a spade. Double dig. Dig and delve. 'Delve' carries the connotation of breaking up and sifting.

Get dirty, dingy, muddy. Especially do this if you already are. Point it out. Or, better yet, ask them to describe what it was like when they were muddy.

Drag something. Feel the resistance.

Observe water dripping, rather than running. Dribbling. Drops.

Droop. Give in to gravity. Be a flower that droops.

Be drab.

Not to be one-sided, we can:

Taste something delicious, or be delighted. Note, however, that the root here is *light*.

Consider D at the end of enD. "Do you hear it?" It is important to pronounce final consonants. Be aware of the letters, not just at the beginning of words, but also in the middle and at the end. This awareness promotes good spelling, which requires attention to the sequence of sounds in a word.

Note the words in the story, *Daring D*, that end with D. This is a particularly good opportunity, as well, to show the 'ed' ending, the past tense. Without analyzing, you could simply point them out, or have the children respond to the question, "What are some of the things Daring D did when he went down into the dungeon?" This is an example of cultivating the soil for future learning opportunities.

- Blends

D only blends with r. It "drags" it, you might say. Other words:

Dragon, drawer    Dream, dress    Drill, dribble    Drop, drown    Drum, drug    Dry

- Speech Exercise:

***Dolly Tolly***

*Tell me truly the tale of the town*

*How Dolly Tolly tumbled down*

*With a flour sack full of fine white flour*

*Dusting the doorstep, spilling a shower*

*Of fine white dust that dimmed the sun*

*And covered the moon with crust.*

(Also may be used with T & L)

- Names With D

Dakota, Daniel, Dante, Darius, David, Deepak, Deion, Dawud, Denzel, Derek, Devi, Donna, Dulce, Deborah, Duha, Dai, Deirdre, Danielle, Daphne, Diana, Dao

- Drawing D

Dragons come in many shapes and sizes. This dragon has its tail sticking up, but it may be another way. Lightly draw the form of a D. From this the dragon can be filled out. The haunches and the red tongue are details that add excitement. The scene could take place outside as well as in a cellar.



## The Sound and Gesture of E

The E might be seen as having a vertical, linear quality, a sound which reflects our uprightness as human beings. E embodies self-determination and resolve to find our highest aim.

### Story Suggestions for E

There follow three stories about eagles. I wrote the first as a companion to the E verse.

#### ***Eagle of Light***

*Each morning Eyota climbed the steep hill to greet the sun. Each night she dreamed deep dreams. Her heart was heavy for her people. Her people were weak. Many had died from hunger and disease. There had been fighting for many years. All the tribes were suffering. A hero was needed, it was said. "How can I be a hero," Eyota wondered as she climbed the hill. "What can I do? I am a girl."*

*The sun's first rays greeted her as she reached the top. "It is a bird," she thought.*

*"It must be an eagle, if it is a bird."*

*As she stood there in the gentle morning breeze the sun climbed higher. Eyota felt herself reaching to meet it. Gently she called out:*

*"Eagle of light  
I seek in the heights  
Toward your beam now I reach  
As you stream from the East."*

*As she spoke she felt herself being lifted upwards into its gleaming form. She felt wide awake, but somehow as though she were dreaming. She was riding on the eagle's back. Ahead, in the eagle's beak, there was something she couldn't quite recognize. It was a long spear, with rainbow-colored feathers streaming from its shaft. She was flying through the rainbow, for a long time, for a short time, she did not know. As the sun was going down, the eagle set her down on the hill.*

*Eyota was cold. She hurried back to the village. Her father and mother had been worried, but they saw that she was alright. "You are changed," her father said. That night, she dreamed a deep, deep dream. She dreamed that the people had made peace under the sign of the rainbow-feathered spear. Weapons must not be turned against other people. She told her father, the chief, her dream. He fashioned a rainbow spear and carried it to the neighboring peoples. With each he smoked the pipe of peace.*

#### ***The Great Kotei and the Golden Eagle*** (Japanese)

*Long, long ago there was a great emperor named Kotei, who ruled with wisdom and fairness, so that his people lived happily and in peace. Now an old, old man he was walking in the park, leaning*

*on his cane, when, suddenly, an eagle, shining like the sun, circled slowly downward and landed at his feet.*

*"Heavenly messenger," he said softly, "have you come to tell me that my life has reached its end?"*

*The eagle nodded its mighty head. His family wept and hugged his knees as Kotei bid them farewell. Then he climbed on the eagle's back, and the great bird spread its wings and flew high into the sky, into the sun.*

(This could be used a healing story in light of the loss of a loved one.)

### ***The Three Gifts the Eagle Gave the Tsar (Russian)***

*A great hunter, the Tsar was about to shoot an eagle when the bird called out, "Stop, stop, don't kill me. You won't regret it if you spare my life. Keep me with you for three years and you will be glad of it." The tsar was astonished to hear this and felt pity. Sparing the eagle's life, he took it home. One by one the eagle devoured every lamb and calf belonging to the tsar. Even so the tsar kept to his word and cared for the eagle.*

*When the three years were over the eagle bade the tsar climb on his back and carried him out high over the ocean. The tsar was terrified of falling off, but the eagle flew on, until at length, he returned the tsar safely to land. "I have taught you to keep promises, to be generous, and to fear death," said the eagle, "so now you no longer need me." With this, the eagle flew off. The tsar, because of the lessons he'd learned from the eagle, ruled wisely and well for many, many years.*

### Reciting E

Lines 1-6 These lines echo the story of *Eagle of Light* above. Recite in a slow, measured fashion, emphasizing the words with Long E. The gesture shown in the picture reflects the mood of reaching, seeking.

Lines 7-8 Touch bent elbow.

Lines 9-10 Touch knees and feet.

Line 11 Point to eyes.

Line 12 Point to head.

Lines 13-14 Need I say?

### Activities for E

Bear in mind the use of Long Ē and short ě in the poem, and refer to it when appropriate.

Exceptions to the rule such as *heights* and *eyes* may be instructive, but shouldn't conflict with the main focus on Long E and short e.

- Singing Vowels

### EE (Long E)

As with the vowel A, sing three steps up the scale and two back down (Do Re Me Re Do).

		EE		
		EE	EE	
	EE			EE
Apples grow on a ... tree	ee ee ee ee.		After two comes... <u>three</u> .	
I scraped my... <u>knee</u> .	(point)		It costs nothing. It's... <u>free</u> .	
Flowers grow from... <u>seeds</u> .			In the garden I pull the... <u>weeds</u> .	
The shepherd guards the... <u>sheep</u> .			Honey is... <u>sweet</u> .	

At this point it is not yet necessary to distinguish ee from ea as the focus here is on listening. Still it might be good to group the phrases in this way. Thus:

Ships sail on the... <u>sea</u> .	Drink a cup of... <u>tea</u> .
Don't be sloppy, be... <u>neat</u>	(The local favorite) is a baseball... <u>team</u> .
I like ice... <u>cream</u> .	May I have some... <u>please</u> .

***Each, Peach, Pear, Plum*** (Allan Ahlberg, Viking) is a captivating extended rhyme, a humorous review of nursery rhymes, as it were, which will appeal to children older than nursery rhyme age. The verse's strong rhythm is captivating and can be recited while bouncing a ball back and forth in time with a partner. This is very calming and strengthening. It is also an exercise in the Long E sound. Once it has been learned by heart, it can be written out by children as one of their first extended writing lessons.

### ě - (Short e)

A good image for the short ě sound of 'eh' is sleeping in a very short bed. Ask how that would feel. Then write 'bed' on the board so they can see how the e is sandwiched between the two tall letters. You could even make a little drawing of a bed with headboard and footboard and a very short mattress that e lies on.

As you can see, many of the pairs below go from present to past tense. Without discussing tenses per se, you might say, "I love to sleep. Last night I slept 10 hours". Or, "She is a good leader. She led 20 people on a long journey." Say them once and then have the child repeat

it, or some variation. The activity has a poem-like quality and could even be learned as such. You needn't do all, however.

Try these pairs:

Sleep Slept	Steep Step
Bleed Bled	Lead Led
Creep Crept	Leave Left
Feed Fed	Deep Depth
Feel Fell	Wheel Well
Here Her	Hear Heard
Sheep Shepherd	Please Pleasure
Meet Met	Beet Bet

To write out even a few of these pairs can prove instructive.

The following groups of words have Long E:

Foods - peaches, beans, meat, leeks, sweet potatoes, beets, peas, wheat

Animals - creatures, eagle, deer, beetle, bee

- Names With E

Enrique, Evan, Eli, Eric, Ernesto, Ethan, Elijah, Elliot, Eduardo, Everett

Elena, Elizabeth, Erika, Esperanza, Emelie, Enid, Erin, Eva, Estella, Ebony, Eyota

- Drawing

Very lightly sketch a cursive capital E (reverse 3), the basic shape of the eagle, in yellow or in pink. Then, using short strokes, add yellow feathers, followed by orange and gold ones. Overlapping adds depth and richness, and is the same with the sun. Leave a bit of lightness around both the eagle and the sun. Bring the blue sky in, darker on the periphery, progressively lightening the blue. Then bring in the mountains, the grass and the figure.