

SPELLING IS FUN!

Grade Level or Special Area: First Grade

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Length of Unit: Yearlong spelling practice lessons (six lessons, 10-20 minutes each)

I. ABSTRACT

Students will engage in daily spelling practice activities that provide the repetition needed to master spelling words and patterns. The activities are intended for use in conjunction with the teacher's standard spelling program. The daily spelling practice will provide fun ways to reinforce the spelling words being taught.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. Understand that our written language has basic spelling patterns and rules that we can use to help us spell words correctly.

B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*

1. First Grade Language Arts: Reading and Writing: Spelling, Grammar, and Usage (page 24)
 - a. Spell words correctly from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.

C. Skill Objectives

1. Spell words correctly from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far. (*Core Knowledge Sequence: Grade One: Language Arts: Spelling, Grammar, and Usage*)
2. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent). (*Core Knowledge Sequence: Grade One: Language Arts: Spelling, Grammar, and Usage*)
3. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently. (*Core Knowledge Sequence: Grade One: Language Arts: Spelling, Grammar, and Usage*)

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. For Teachers

1. Core Knowledge Foundation, *Core Knowledge Sequence*
2. Hirsch, Jr. E.D., *Core Knowledge Teacher Handbook Grade One*
3. Hirsch, Jr. E.D., *What Your First Grader Needs to Know*

B. For Students

1. Language Arts: Reading and Writing: Phonemic Awareness (*Core Knowledge Sequence, Kindergarten, p. 7*)
2. Language Arts: Reading and Writing: Decoding and Encoding (*Core Knowledge Sequence, Kindergarten, p. 7*)
3. Language Arts: Reading and Writing: Writing and Spelling (*Core Knowledge Sequence, Kindergarten, p. 8*)

IV. RESOURCES

- A. No specific books are needed for this unit. The teacher should use the standard spelling program and materials currently being taught at his or her school, and use these lessons as ways of practicing the words daily in class.

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Giant Words (10 minutes)

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand that our written language has basic spelling patterns and spelling rules that we can use to help us spell words correctly.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.

B. Materials

1. Large letters written on 8 ½ x 11 paper, enough to spell out the spelling words being used (you can make two or three alphabet sets and laminate them for re-use)

C. Key Vocabulary

None

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Pass out one of the letter cards to every student. Be sure that you have passed out enough cards to be able to spell the words. For example, if one of the spelling words is “feet,” make sure that you have passed out two of the letter “e.”
2. Explain to the students that you will say a spelling word, and the students who have the letters to spell that word should go to the front of the room and stand in order, so that the class can read the word being spelled with the letter cards. Repeat this process for all of the spelling words.
3. **Variation:** After the students have become familiar with how this activity works, you can speed up the pace by having the students work as teams. In this case, each team (two or three teams works well) will need its own set of cards. After you say the word, the teams should work within their groups to find the letters needed, get to the front of the room (or their assigned spot), and put the letters in order to spell the word. The first team to have the word spelled correctly wins! Do this procedure for all of the words on the spelling list, and whichever team gets the most words is the winning team for the day. **Note to teacher:** Be sure to mix up the teams each time this game is played, to allow different children to learn from each other.
4. **Questioning:** When a word is misspelled, use it as an opportunity to teach or review. For example, if the spelling word *rain* is spelled *r-a-n-e*, point out to the students that it is a good try for that word since they know that a final “e” can make the other vowel say its long sound. Remind them that the spelling words

for the week will focus on the long “a” sound being spelled with “ai” (or whatever spelling rules apply to the words being covered). It is important to discuss the misspellings with the class so they can learn from them, and so the students know that it is okay to make a mistake.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. The lessons in this unit are intended for use as daily spelling practice activities. The assessment will be the weekly spelling test, based on the words provided in the spelling program being used. Since the words being used will vary from school to school, no spelling assessments are included in this unit.
2. **Note to teacher:** While one goal for teaching spelling is that the students will ultimately remember how to spell the words correctly, it is important to not have the students just memorizing the words for the weekly test and then forgetting them. Instead, students usually benefit more if the words are taught using spelling rules and spelling patterns, with time to practice regularly in a variety of ways. Periodic review of past spelling words is necessary for long-term retention.

Lesson Two: Missing Letters (10 minutes)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand that our written language has basic spelling patterns and spelling rules that we can use to help us spell words correctly.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.

B. *Materials*

1. One copy of the weekly spelling words for each student, with letters left out for them to fill in (see Appendix A, page 1)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

None

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. **Note to teacher:** Before doing this lesson, type a list of the weekly spelling words using a large font and leaving out letters in the words. See Appendix A for an example.
2. Pass out one paper to each student. Tell the students that the words on the paper are their spelling words, but some letters are missing. Have them think about the spelling words and fill in the missing letters.
3. **Modifications:** To make this spelling activity easier, you can put the spelling words in a word box, spelled with all of the letters, on the same page (see Appendix A, page 2). Then the students can see the word written out and use that to fill in the missing letters. This can be a good way to start until the class

gets familiar with the procedure, as well as a good way to help those students who struggle with spelling.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. The lessons in this unit are intended for use as daily spelling practice activities. The assessment will be the weekly spelling test, based on the words provided in the spelling program being used. Since the words being used will vary from school to school, no spelling assessments are included in this unit.
2. **Note to teacher:** While one goal for teaching spelling is that the students will ultimately remember how to spell the words correctly, it is important to not have the students just memorizing the words for the weekly test and then forgetting them. Instead, students usually benefit more if the words are taught using spelling rules and spelling patterns, with time to practice regularly in a variety of ways. Periodic review of past spelling words is necessary for long-term retention.

Lesson Three: Spelling Word Pictures (15-20 minutes)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand that our written language has basic spelling patterns and spelling rules that we can use to help us spell words correctly.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.

B. *Materials*

1. One copy of a simple picture for every student (see Appendix B)
2. One plain white piece of copy paper for every student, stapled to the top of the Appendix B picture page
3. One copy of the weekly spelling words for every student

C. *Key Vocabulary*

None

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. **Note to teacher:** Before doing this activity, prepare the materials by selecting a simple picture drawn with thick black lines. See Appendix B for sample pictures. The pictures used can be simple shapes, designs, or content-related pictures (a favorite for the students)! Make a copy of the selected picture for each student, and then staple the white piece of copy paper to the top of the picture, so that the picture shows through. Also, prepare a list of the weekly words for each student to have at his or her desk during the activity.
2. Pass out the materials to the students. Tell them that they get to practice writing their words very small (first graders love the challenge!). Explain to them that they should write their words following the black lines that can be seen through the top paper (remember, these papers have been prepared in advance, so they

will easily see what you mean). Doing a demonstration of this in front of the class is a great way to help them understand how it is done. If they write their words over and over on the lines that they can see coming through from underneath, they will end up with an outline of the original picture made completely out of spelling words! It is a fun for the students and it doesn't seem as tedious to them as simply writing the words ten times each.

3. **Modifications:** Select pictures based on the how detailed you think your students can be with handwriting and how small you think they can write. Since all students' skills are different, you might want to have more detailed, intricate pictures available for the students who need to be challenged and basic pictures with wider lines for students who have difficulty with penmanship.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. The lessons in this unit are intended for use as daily spelling practice activities. The assessment will be the weekly spelling test, based on the words provided in the spelling program being used. Since the words being used will vary from school to school, no spelling assessments are included in this unit.
2. **Note to teacher:** While one goal for teaching spelling is that the students will ultimately remember how to spell the words correctly, it is important to not have the students just memorizing the words for the weekly test and then forgetting them. Instead, students usually benefit more if the words are taught using spelling rules and spelling patterns, with time to practice regularly in a variety of ways. Periodic review of past spelling words is necessary for long-term retention.

Lesson Four: Build-a-Word Race (15-20 minutes)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand that our written language has basic spelling patterns and spelling rules that we can use to help us spell words correctly.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.

B. *Materials*

1. One set of alphabet cards (Appendix D, pages 1-3) for each small group of students (four-five students per group, so the amount of sets you make will depend on how many students are in the class)
2. Zip-lock bags for the alphabet card sets

C. *Key Vocabulary*

None

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. **Note to teacher:** Prepare the cards in advance by copying each set on to a different color of cardstock paper, laminating and cutting them out, and putting each set in a zip-lock bag.
2. Divide the class into small groups of four or five students each. Have each group find a spot to work where they can spread out their letters. Tables work well, or moving desks a little so they have floor space.
3. Give each group one bag of cutout letters. Have them take out the letters and spread them out so that the letters are face up and easy to find.
4. Tell the students that you will say a spelling word and they will try to be the first group to spell the word correctly with their letters. Give them a word or motion to use to signal when they are done, to avoid having them all shouting out, “Done!” The first team to spell the word correctly gets a point.
5. Do this procedure through the whole spelling list, including review words if there is time. The team with the most points wins!
6. **Variation:** If you would rather have your students work individually, you can prepare a set of cards for each student. They can work on the words at their own desks, and it is less competitive than the team approach.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. The lessons in this unit are intended for use as daily spelling practice activities. The assessment will be the weekly spelling test, based on the words provided in the spelling program being used. Since the words being used will vary from school to school, no spelling assessments are included in this unit.
2. **Note to teacher:** While one goal for teaching spelling is that the students will ultimately remember how to spell the words correctly, it is important to not have the students just memorizing the words for the weekly test and then forgetting them. Instead, students usually benefit more if the words are taught using spelling rules and spelling patterns, with time to practice regularly in a variety of ways. Periodic review of past spelling words is necessary for long-term retention.

Lesson Five: Fun Ways to Write Words... (10-20 minutes)

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand that our written language has basic spelling patterns and spelling rules that we can use to help us spell words correctly.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - d. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.

B. *Materials*

1. **Note:** The purpose of this lesson is to list various ways that the students can write their spelling words during daily practice, using something other than pencil and

paper; each item listed in the Procedures/Activities section will list the idea and the materials needed

C. *Key Vocabulary*
None

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. **Chalkboards** – Materials include one small chalkboard, one piece of chalk, and one tissue (to be used as an eraser) for each student. Have the students write their words on the small chalkboards using the chalk, and erase when they are done. If small chalkboards are not available, they can be made in any size by covering pieces of tag board with black contact paper.
2. **Alphabet stamps** – Materials include alphabet rubber stamp sets (fairly inexpensive at craft stores), washable stamp pads, and paper. Have the students use rubber stamp sets to stamp their spelling words on paper.
3. **Overhead projector words** – Materials include one overhead projector, one transparency of lined paper for each student, and one overhead marker for each student. Let the students write their words on the transparency paper, using the overhead markers. Then, they can take turns showing their work to their classmates using the overhead projector.
4. **Adding machine paper** – Materials include one long strip of adding machine paper for each student, and optional yarn or straws. Have the students write their words on adding machine paper. Just a simple change of paper size and shape makes the students much more enthusiastic about writing the words! When they are done writing, they can roll up the paper and tie it closed with yarn. Or, it can be made into a scroll by cutting one straw in half and taping half of the straw to each end of the adding machine paper. Using a scroll makes studying spelling words at home much more fun!
5. **Dry-erase boards** – Materials include one small dry erase board for each student, one low-odor dry-erase marker for each student, and one tissue (to be used as an eraser) for each student. If small dry erase boards are not available, they can easily be made by inserting a piece or two of cardstock into a smooth page protector. They work just as well! Have the children write their words on the dry-erase boards and erase them with a tissue.
6. **Graph paper** – Materials include one piece of graph paper for each student. Give the students a piece of graph paper and have them write their words with one letter in each box. There are many different sizes of graph paper available, and the teacher should choose the size based on the handwriting skills of the students. It can be a fun challenge for the students to start the year using the graph paper with the large boxes and start using smaller boxes as their handwriting becomes neater.
7. **Colorful pens** – Materials include a variety of colored pens (gel pens are especially fun) and colored paper. Let the students choose a colored pen and their favorite color of light-colored copy paper, and use those for copying spelling words.
8. **Magazine words** – Materials include old magazines, glue sticks and paper. Give the students old magazines and have them cut out the letters in their spelling words. They can glue the letters on to a piece of paper to form the words.
9. **Flashcards** – Materials include enough index cards for each child to have one for each spelling word, and markers. Have the students write their spelling words (using large print) on index cards with markers. Then they will each have their own set of flashcards. These flashcards can be used in class to practice with partners or taken home and used to practice with parents, in the car, etc.

- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. The lessons in this unit are intended for use as daily spelling practice activities. The assessment will be the weekly spelling test, based on the words provided in the spelling program being used. Since the words being used will vary from school to school, no spelling assessments are included in this unit.
 2. **Note to teacher:** While one goal for teaching spelling is that the students will ultimately remember how to spell the words correctly, it is important to not have the students just memorizing the words for the weekly test and then forgetting them. Instead, students usually benefit more if the words are taught using spelling rules and spelling patterns, with time to practice regularly in a variety of ways. Periodic review of past spelling words is necessary for long-term retention.

Lesson Six: Word Markings (10-15 minutes)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand that our written language has basic spelling patterns and spelling rules that we can use to help us spell words correctly.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Spell words from oral dictation composed of the phonemes studied so far.
 - b. Correctly spell three- and four-letter short vowel words (for example, cat, pig, tent).
 - c. Use knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to spell independently.
- B. *Materials*
1. One copy of the weekly spelling words for each student, with instructions to circle/cross out letters based on the spelling patterns for the week (see Appendix E for example)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- None
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Pass out the spelling worksheet to the students. Help them read the directions and make sure they understand what to do. Have them work independently on the worksheets.
 2. A wide variety of worksheets can be created that will support the learning of the weekly spelling pattern, based on what that pattern is. Other ideas include underlining consonant blends, using highlighters to highlight two-letter vowel sounds (for example, “ai” saying /a/, “ee” saying /e/, “ow” saying /o/), circling digraphs (“th”, “sh”, “ph”, etc.), and putting the words in columns based on their spelling patterns. See Appendix F for an example of using columns to sort words.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. The lessons in this unit are intended for use as daily spelling practice activities. The assessment will be the weekly spelling test, based on the words provided in

the spelling program being used. Since the words being used will vary from school to school, no spelling assessments are included in this unit.

3. **Note to teacher:** While one goal for teaching spelling is that the students will ultimately remember how to spell the words correctly, it is important to not have the students just memorizing the words for the weekly test and then forgetting them. Instead, students usually benefit more if the words are taught using spelling rules and spelling patterns, with time to practice regularly in a variety of ways. Periodic review of past spelling words is necessary for long-term retention.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

None

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A: Missing Letters (Lesson Two)
- B. Appendix B: Spelling Word Pictures (Lesson Three)
- C. Appendix C: Sample Completed Spelling Picture (Lesson Three)
- D. Appendix D: Alphabet Cards (Lesson Four)
- E. Appendix E: Spelling Word Markings (Lesson Five)
- F. Appendix F: Word Sort (Lesson Six)

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A. Core Knowledge Foundation. *Core Knowledge Sequence*. Charlottesville, VA: Core Knowledge Foundation, 1999. 1-890517-20-8.
- B. Hirsch, E.D. *Core Knowledge Teacher Handbook Grade One*. Charlottesville, VA: Core Knowledge Foundation, 2004. 1-890517-70-4.
- C. Hirsch, E.D. *What Your First Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Doubleday, 1997. 0-385-48119-5.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Spelling Practice: Missing Letters #1

Fill in the letters that are missing from this week's spelling words.

1. pl_n

2. fla_

3. ha_d

4. san_

5. b_nd

6. se_d

7. men_

8. _pin

9. fl_p

10. sli_

Name: _____

Date: _____

Spelling Practice: Missing Letters #2

Fill in the letters that are missing from this week's spelling words. Use the words in the word box to help you.

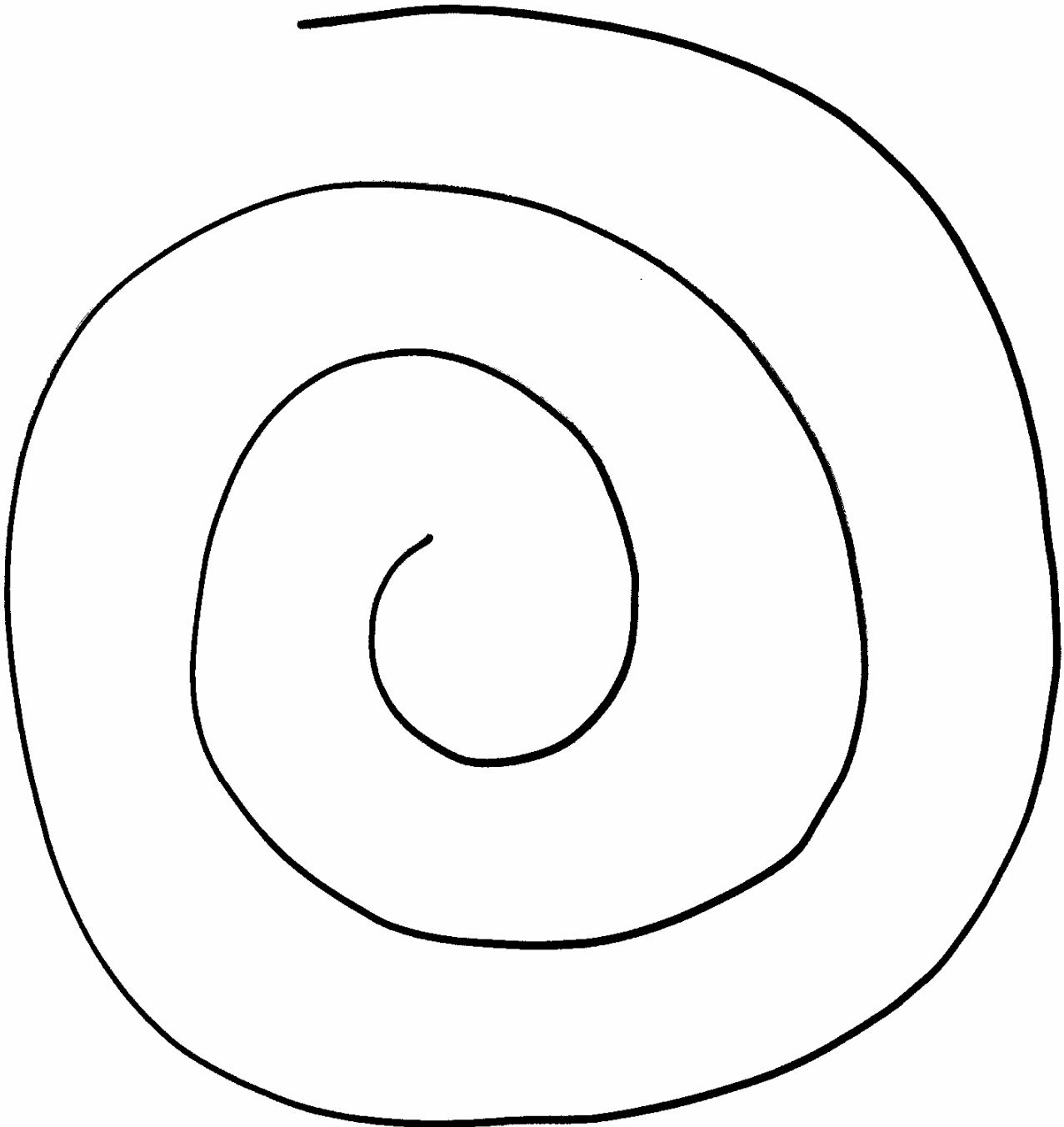
mend	spin	flip	flat	band
sand	plan	slip	send	hand

1. pl_n
2. fla_
3. ha_d
4. san_
5. b_nd
6. se_d
7. men_
8. _pin
9. fl_p
10. sli_

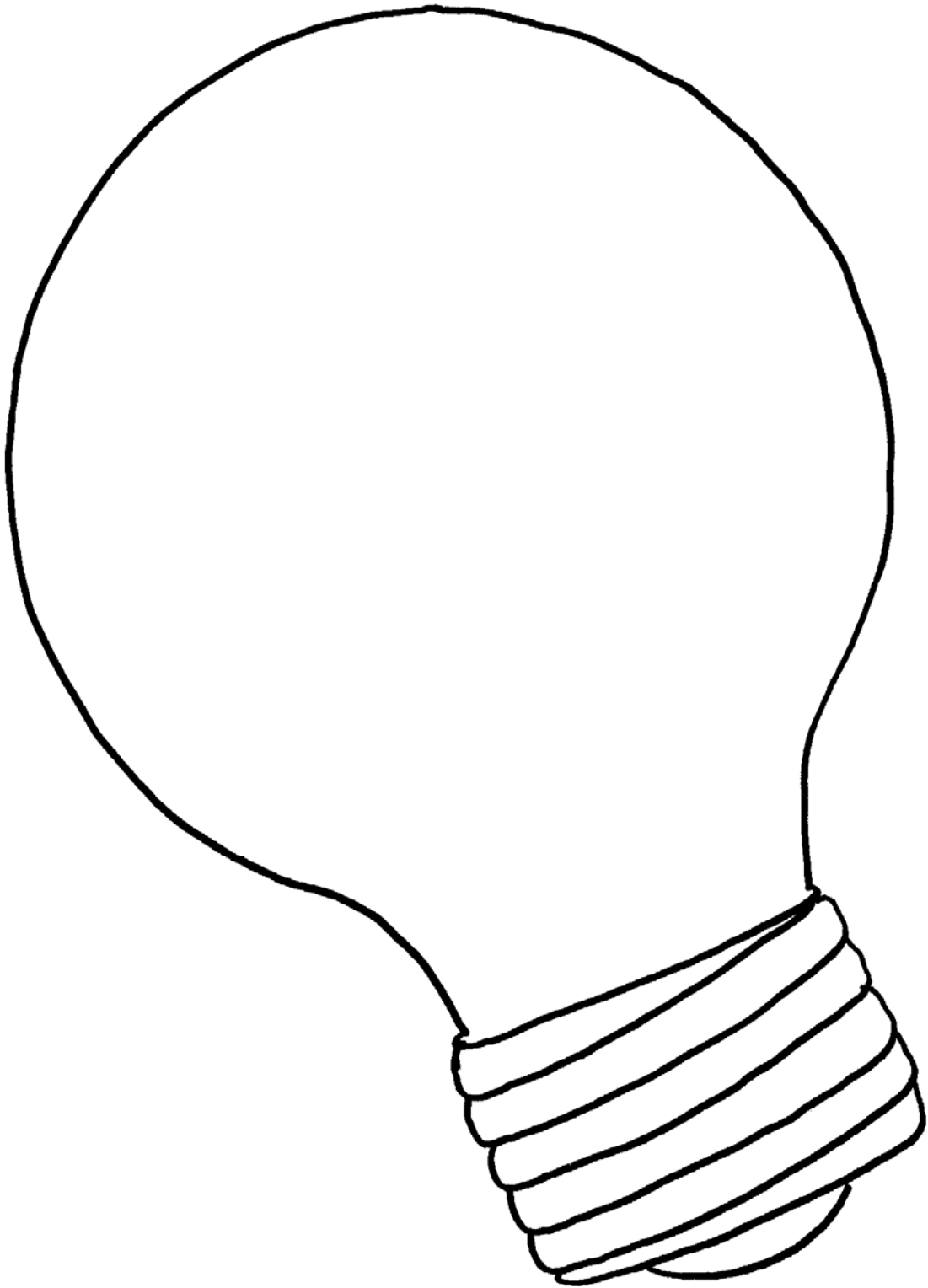
Appendix B, page 1

Sample Pictures for Spelling Word Pictures

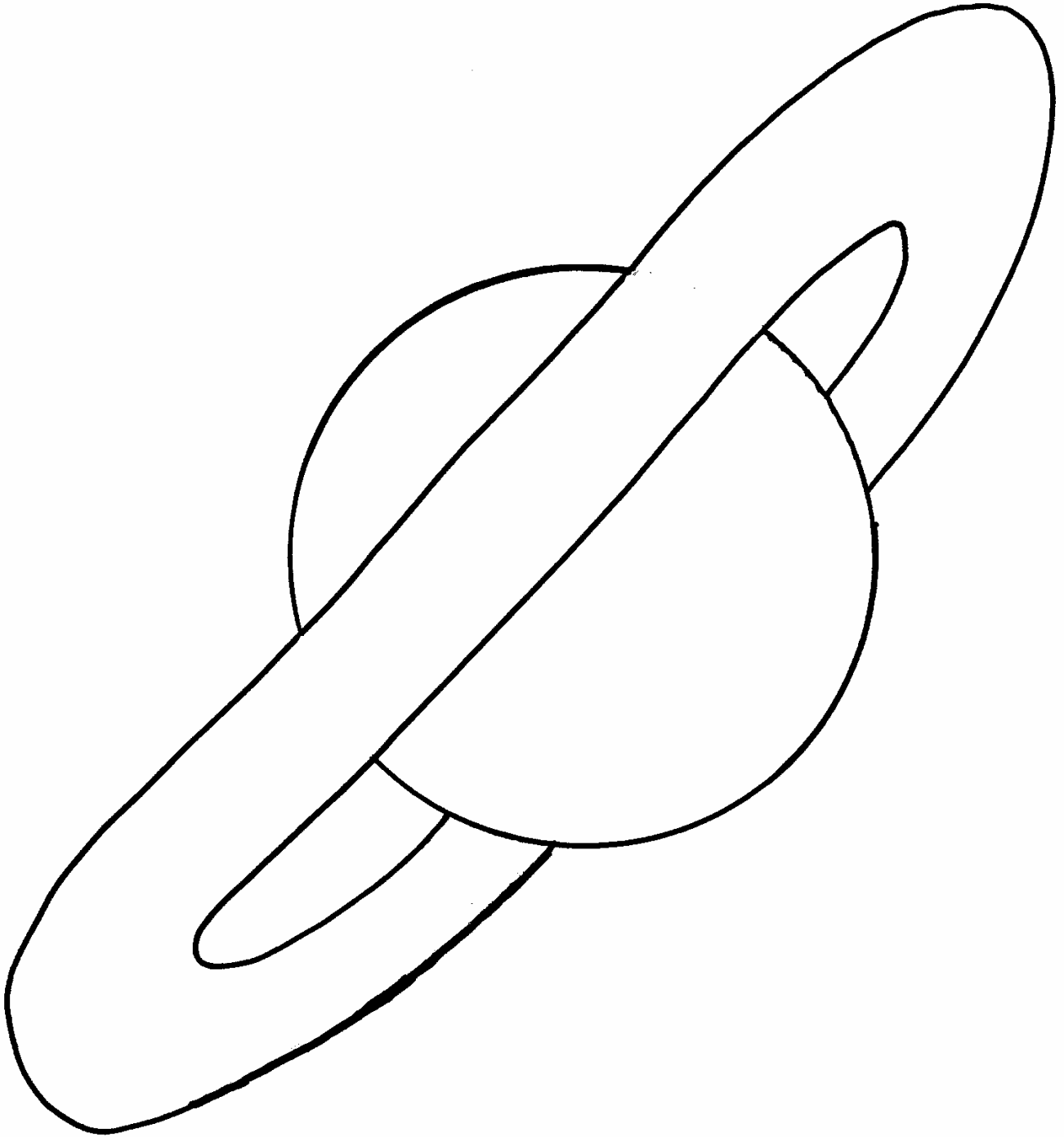
(this simple design is a good one to use for getting started)



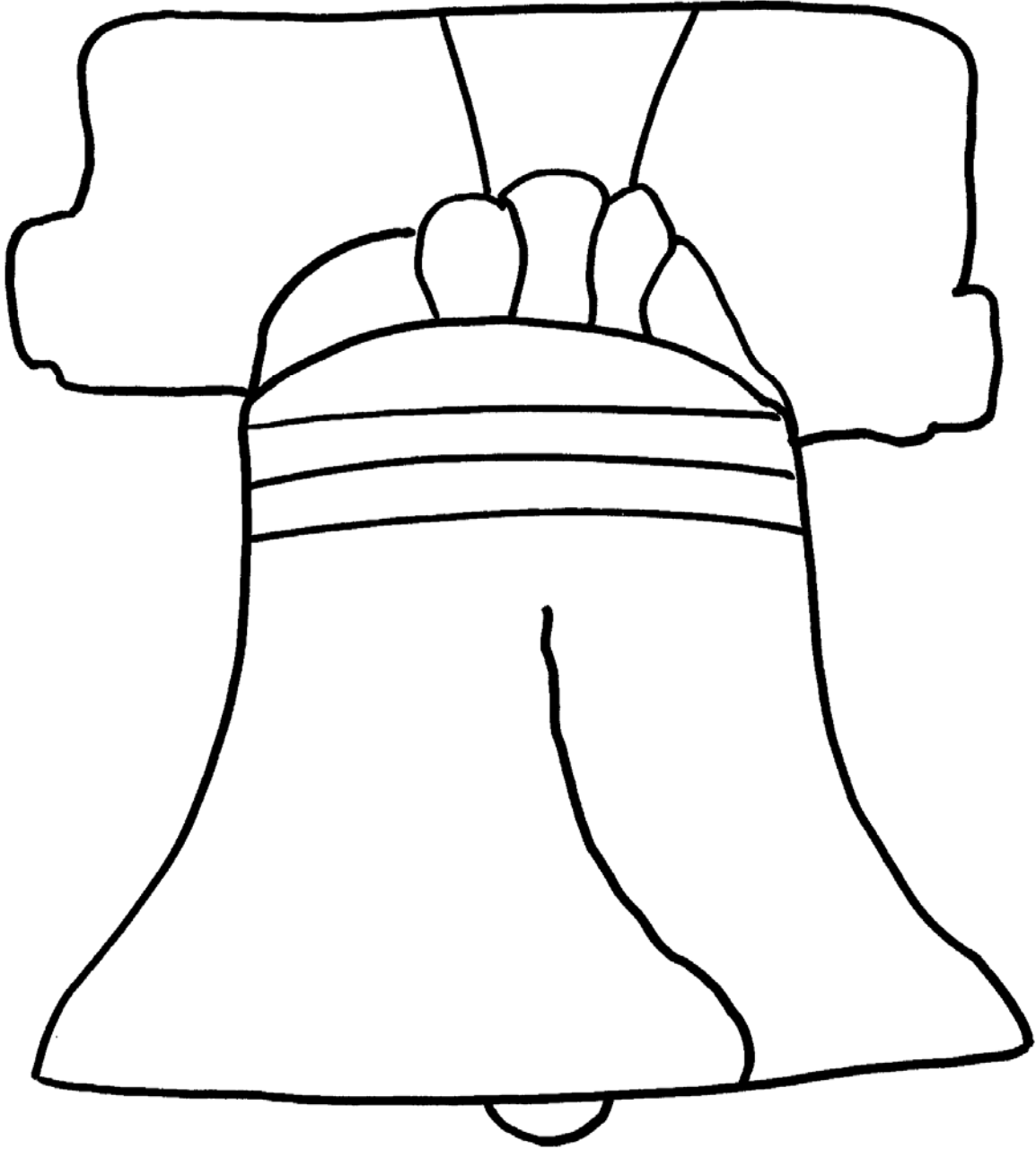
Appendix B, page 2
(can be used during Electricity unit)



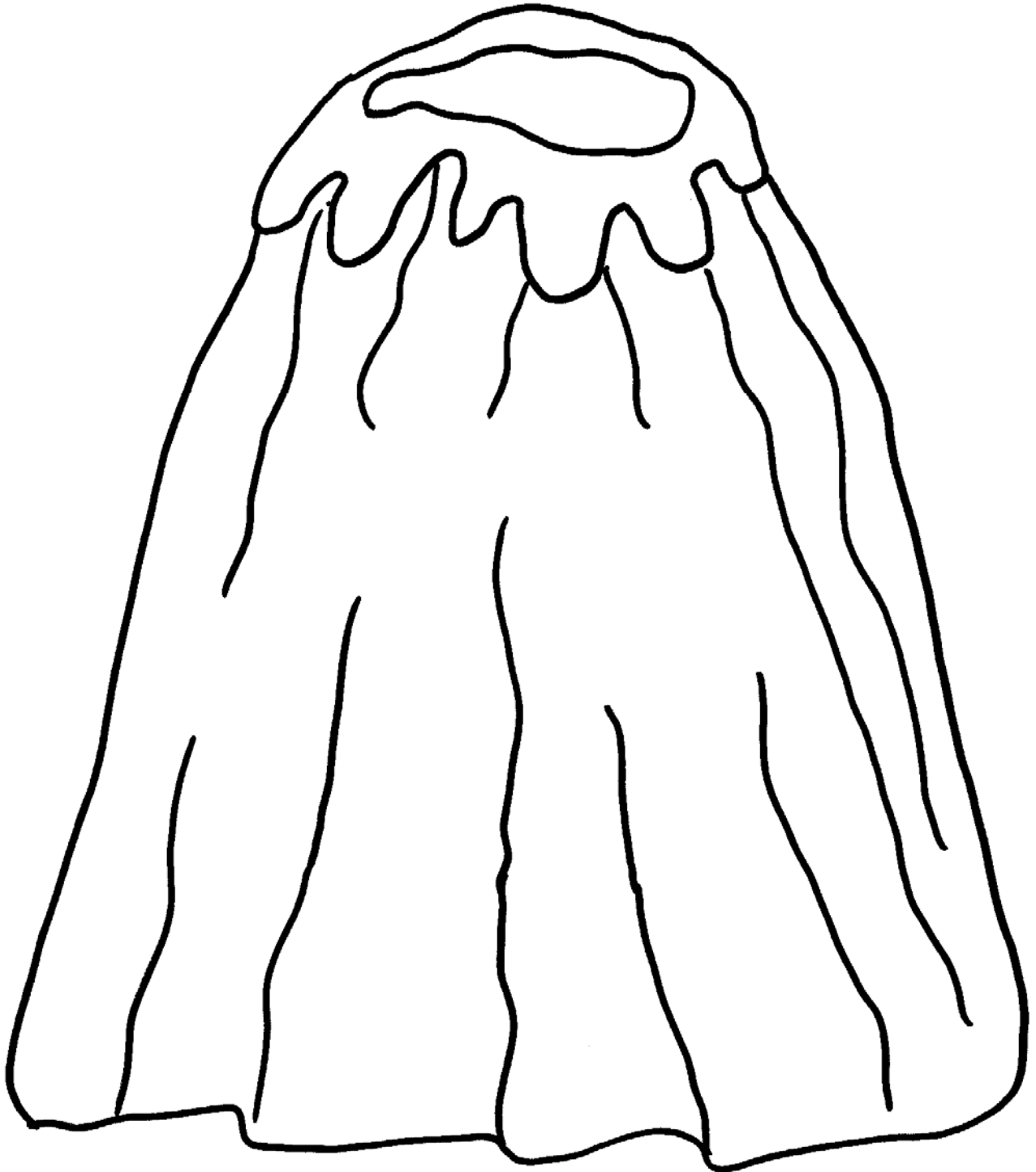
Appendix B, page 3
(can be used during Solar System unit)



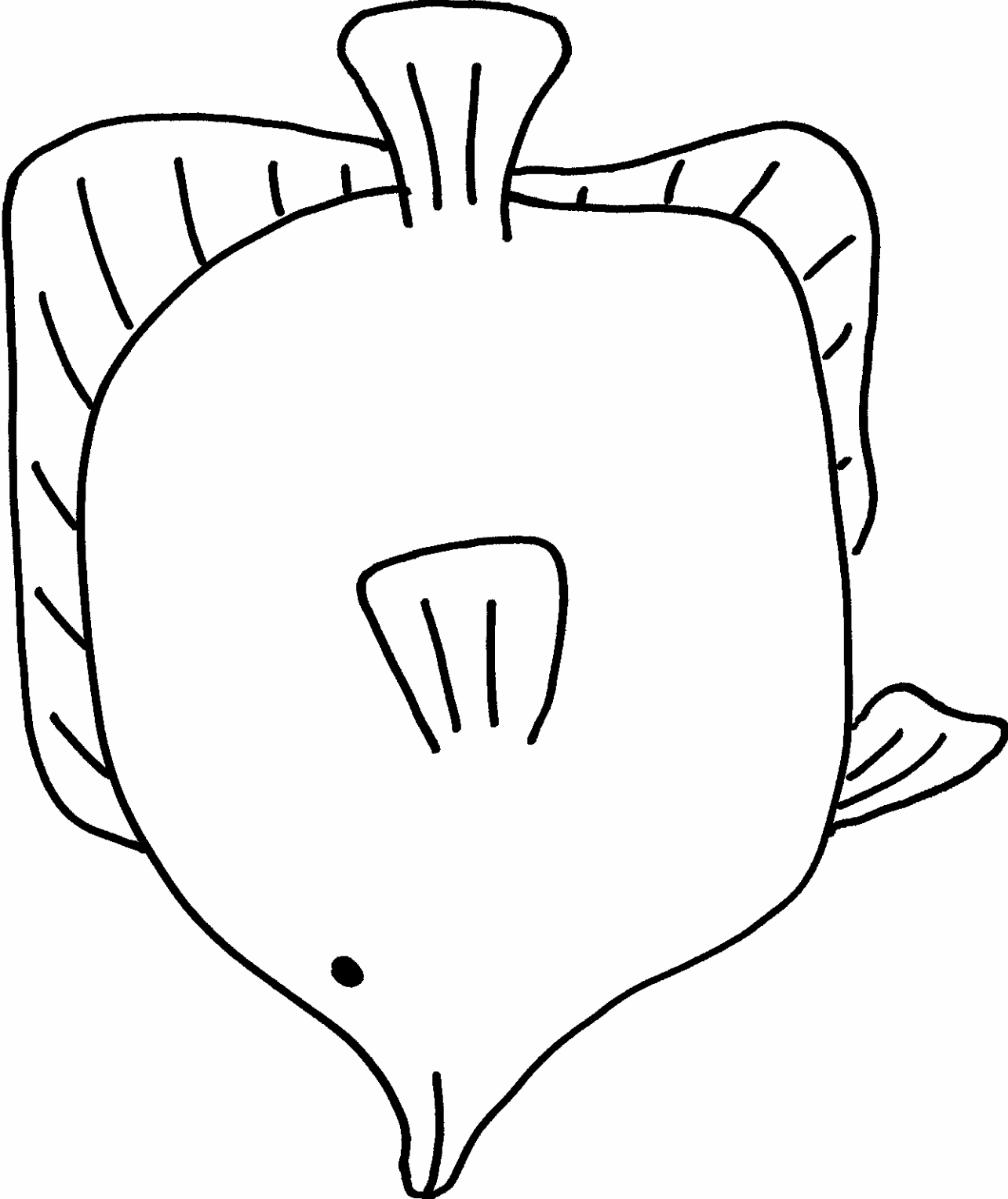
Appendix B, page 4
(can be used during American Revolution unit)



Appendix B, page 5
(can be used during Inside the Earth unit)



Appendix B, page 6
(can be used during Ocean unit)



Appendix D, page 1
Alphabet Cards

a	a	a	b
b	c	c	d
d	e	e	e
f	f	g	g
h	h	i	i

Appendix D, page 2

i	j	j	k
k	l	l	m
m	n	n	o
o	o	p	p
q	q	r	r

Appendix D, page 3

s	s	t	t
u	u	u	v
v	w	w	x
y	y	z	z

Appendix E
Spelling Word Markings (sample)

Using the spelling words below, circle all of the vowels.

bake

take

sale

late

made

like

hike

pile

time

fine

Using the spelling words below, cross out all of the silent letters.

bake

take

sale

late

made

like

hike

pile

time

fine

Appendix F, page 1
Sample Word Sort Paper

Put your spelling words in columns, based on the spelling patterns that they have.

This week's words are:

flow	robe	boat	float	blow
home	snow	pole	grow	foam

/o/ spelled "oa"	/o/ spelled "ow"	/o/ spelled "o_e"

Word Sort Template

(Teachers: Use this template to fill in your own weekly spelling words and the column headings of your choice.)

Put your spelling words in columns, based on the spelling patterns that they have.

This week's words are:

