Listen first. Sort second.

A print-and-use phonics pack for parents and educators supporting children who can say familiar words and are ready to listen for the first sound.

Inside this pack

Twelve original sorting activities, two adult guidance pages and two compact worked-answer pages. The A4 and US Letter editions contain the same exercises.

How to use one page

Read each word aloud without stressing the answer. Ask the child to repeat it slowly, listen to the first sound, then draw a line from the word card to the matching basket. Cutting is optional and requires adult supervision.

Helpful prompt

Try: Say moon. What sound starts moon? If the child is unsure, contrast two choices: moon - /m/ or moon - /s/? Praise careful listening, not speed.

Readiness and pacing

Designed for ages 4-6 as a flexible guide, not a test. Use one page in a short session. Stop when attention fades. Speech and language development varies; accept the child's home accent and seek qualified guidance for persistent concerns.

Printing

Print at 100% or Actual Size. Worksheets use black, white and light gray only. A pencil or crayon is enough.

Use sounds, not letter names

Say the sound cleanly and briefly. For example, use /m/ rather than muh and /t/ rather than tuh. Slashes show a spoken sound. They are adult notes, not extra symbols the child must learn today.

Worked example

Adult says: map. Child repeats: map.

Listen to the start: /m/. Draw map to the m basket.

Adult says: sun. Listen to the start: /s/. Draw sun to the s basket.

Continuous sounds	/m/, /s/, /f/, /r/, /n/, /l/, /v/, /z/ and /sh/ can be gently stretched.
Quick sounds	/b/, /t/, /p/, /k/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /j/ and /ch/ should stay short.
Vowels	The final two activities use short vowel sounds at the start of apple, egg and ink.
Digraphs	sh, ch and th use two letters to show one starting sound. Introduce these pages after the single-letter sounds feel comfortable.
Accent note	Pronunciation varies by region. Use your natural speech. If a listed word begins differently in your accent, explain it and choose another familiar word.

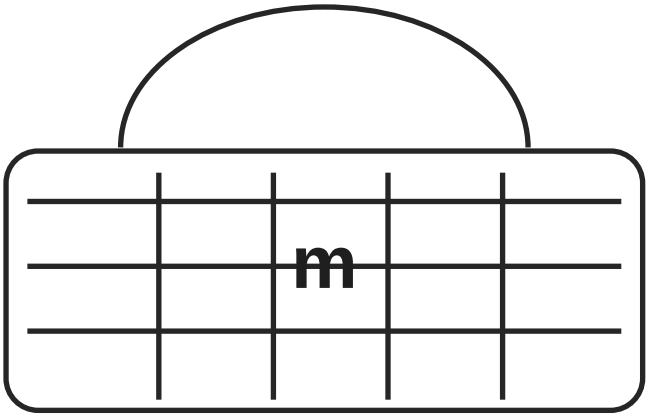
Scope

This pack practises listening for initial sounds. It is not a complete phonics curriculum, reading assessment, speech evaluation or guarantee of progress.

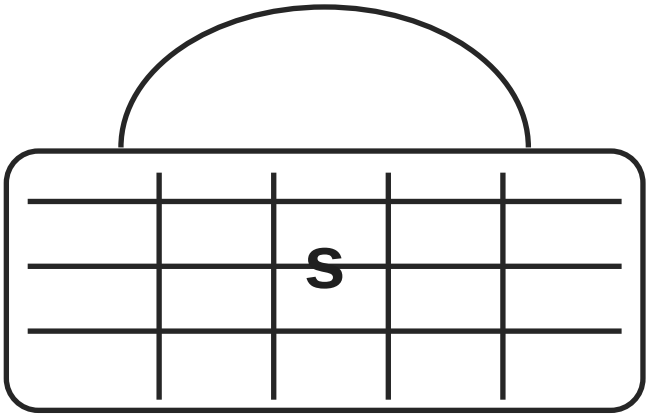
Sound Sorting Baskets

Say each word. Listen to its first sound. Draw a line to the matching basket.

Adult: read the words in a mixed order. Child: repeat, listen and sort.



/m/
first-sound basket



/s/
first-sound basket

Word cards

map say - listen - sort	**sun** say - listen - sort	**moon** say - listen - sort
soup say - listen - sort	**mug** say - listen - sort	**sock** say - listen - sort

Optional harder extension

Say one more /m/ word and one more /s/ word.

Adult answer check

Answers reflect the first sound in the standard pronunciation noted in the guide.

Activity 1: m /m/ and s /s/

m basket: moon, map, mug

s basket: sun, sock, soup

Worked check: map starts /m/; sun starts /s/. Listen to the sound before checking the printed first letter.

Extension responses

Extra words will vary. Accept a familiar word that begins with the requested sound in the child's accent. Examples: milk for /m/ and sand for /s/.