

# LETTER TV

## III

### READING RULES



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**Agency for Instructional Technology**

Box A

Bloomington, Indiana 47402-0120  
1-800-457-4509 • 812-333-4278 (Fax)  
[www.ait.net](http://www.ait.net)



## INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of *Letter TV III* is the most complex and controversial of the series so far: the teaching of phonemic awareness through the sounds of vowels. This undertaking is especially difficult because very few generalizations about vowels hold true universally. Many of them occur in less than 75 percent of the words in the English language. In other words, for every “rule” we introduce, many exceptions can easily be found.

Therefore, it’s not enough to teach students that some vowels and vowel combinations make a certain sound. The learning, or memorization, of a list of rules doesn’t translate into fluent reading. However, the presentation of these most common generalizations within a fun and entertaining setting will help students to begin to construct meaning about spelling patterns, approach word decoding from a core knowledge base, and recognize words that don’t follow the patterns when they see them. Within the individual lesson plans, teachers are encouraged to discuss these generalizations with the students and are often given lists of phonograms (sometimes called rimes or word families), in which the generalizations hold true.

This guide also shows you how to link the introduction of vowel combinations and sounds to a variety of other curriculum areas and activities. Its suggestions span a range of subjects and skill levels, so not every idea will apply to your situation. Choose what works best for your students. And, of course, have fun!

## LETTER TV III’S APPROACH

In real life, learning doesn’t happen in segmented time slots, such as reading, science, and math. Instead, every experience integrates many different kinds of information. That’s what *Letter TV III* does.

- It combines phonemic awareness with an approach that presents phonic generalizations in the context of words and words in the ways they are used in real life: to tell stories, convey information, share feelings, make people laugh, and more.
- It uses a narrative framework to enhance comprehension, recall, and retention. By associating each vowel combination with a character, a

story, and a song, the show activates multiple intelligences and serves a variety of learning styles.

- It uses humor and silliness to engage students and spark their sense of wonder and play.
- It exposes students to many versions of typeface and font, much as they would encounter them in the real world. Background signs carefully highlight the featured vowel combination using color, size, and font.
- It is based on familiar TV genres (such as news, sports, and game shows), giving students an opportunity to learn to distinguish between program types. It takes advantage of program constructions that are already familiar to children so that they are free to concentrate on content rather than being distracted by having to make sense of the format. And children are drawn to animation.
- It encourages language development by combining simple and familiar words with more sophisticated or specialized vocabulary.
- It is designed with state standards in mind. To find correlations between program content and your state's standards, go to [http://www.lettertv.net/pages/curriculum\\_standards.htm](http://www.lettertv.net/pages/curriculum_standards.htm)

## USING TV TO TEACH

To use television or video as an effective teaching tool, we need to help students develop viewing habits that include participation and full attention (things we generally don't do when we watch just for entertainment). Here's how to promote "active" viewing:

- **Pause.** Each program is designed with natural pause points between sections or when reporters ask questions. Use these moments to stop the tape and let children answer the question, predict action, discuss how they would solve a problem, or invent their own ending.
- **Interact.** Encourage students to "talk back" to the set, sing along, and ask questions. Run the opening graphic with the sound turned down and let your students be the chorus. You say, "Today's featured letter pair is . . ." and let them shout the answer as it comes on the screen.
- **Rewind.** You can rerun episodes to review, check comprehension, or emphasize an alternate learning goal. For example, you could focus on the featured letter pair the first time through and a mathematics concept during the second or third viewing.
- **Use segments.** For example, if you only want to sing the song or review the rhymes in a poem, you need not view the entire program.

## GENERAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

In addition to suggestions contained in the episode descriptions, the following will extend the learning of any episode.

- To help students master vowel combinations and their sounds, let children make vowel combinations in a variety of ways, such as sculpting clay, drawing in a tray of sand, spraying whipped cream, or by posing their bodies. This variety allows children to use different intelligences and learning styles, thus maximizing learning.
- Because phonics generalizations about vowels and vowel combinations don't apply to every word, it is better to teach these sounds within the context of "word families," or phonograms. As it turns out, vowel sounds hold true with more reliability within these individual phonograms, so activities focusing on them make more sense in instruction. Using the list of phonograms provided in the guide for each episode, try making "chains" of words by adding or exchanging single consonants, blends, or digraphs to each to make new words. See who can make the longest chain, or the longest word in the chain (e.g., eak\_beak\_neak\_bleak\_squeak, etc.). Allow students to create "nonsense" words as well as real words. This will provide your students with extra practice in manipulating the sounds of this vowel combination in the context of words.
- Encourage students to practice observation skills by assigning them to look for particular things during an episode (for example, ask them to list all the foods they see). Rewind the tape and play the episode again to check their lists for accuracy. In addition, nearly every episode includes things in the background that contains with the featured vowel combination but are not named in the dialogue. See if your students can spot these items.
- Use *Letter TV III* to practice listening skills by asking students to listen for particular items (for example, ask, "How many different animals were mentioned?").
- Use *Letter TV III* to practice sequencing by having students retell each episode's story. Use the *Letter TV III* felt board patterns found at [www.lettertv.net](http://www.lettertv.net) to facilitate storytelling.

As you use the series, you'll probably discover lots of your own ideas. Share them with us (and other teachers) via our Web site: [www.lettertv.net](http://www.lettertv.net).

Here is what you'll find in the description of each episode of *Letter TV III*.

- **Featured Vowel Combination**
- **Story Summary:** This section gives a brief review of the episode's narrative.
- **Reading in Context:** By modeling real-life examples of reading, *Letter TV III* not only helps students learn how to read; it also shows children why they might want to read. This section lists the examples of reading shown, such as checking a book for information, reading news copy, or following directions on a map. It also notes examples of words appearing on screen in real-life contexts, such as nametags, street signs, or menu items. In addition to the things specifically listed in this section, nearly every show uses graphic titles for program segments and features. You'll also notice the letters "LTV" on the reporters' microphones, and you'll see



lots of print in the background, making the set of *Letter TV III* a print-rich environment.

- **Reading Rules:** In each show, the featured vowel combination and its generalization is introduced in the “Reading Rules” segment, hosted by one of the LTV characters in an original role: Coach Peri, Referee May, Cheerleader Mark, Co-Co the Field Trip Monitor, or Comma the Breaking News Commentator. To expose students to a variety of reading strategies, episodes vary the way words and letters are presented.

You can reinforce program content and help students connect what they see on the screen to what they do in class by posting “Reading Rules” on your bulletin board. You’ll find the rule displayed in the chalkboard graphic in each chapter of this teacher’s guide. Post appropriate words that feature the phonograms from that episode nearby.

- **Letter Music Song:** Music is a great way to aid memory, so each program contains an original, easy-to-learn song that emphasizes the featured vowel combination. This section provides the lyrics. You’ll also notice that the songs are written in a variety of music styles.
- **Story Genre:** The episodes of *Letter TV III* have been written in many different genres, from nonfiction to fairy tales and fables—there’s even an episode that consists of nothing but “commercials”! This section of the guide will describe the genre and provide you with one or two suggestions on how you can reinforce the students’ understanding of the genre.
- **Word Study:** A new feature not found in *Letter TV* or *Letter TV II*, this section provides you with a list of words or phonograms (sometimes called rimes or word families) that you can use for further instruction of the vowel combinations featured in the episode.
- **Additional Language Arts Opportunities:** This section suggests language arts topics (beyond letter recognition) supported by elements of the episode. These topics are especially useful for teachers using differentiated learning. They provide ideas for tasks that might be assigned to students who are more advanced.
- **Cross-Curricular Connections:** In addition to introducing vowel combinations, the stories on *Letter TV III* are carefully designed to reinforce lessons from other subject areas commonly included in elementary-level state curriculum frameworks and standards. This section summarizes opportunities in the following areas: art, health, life skills, mathematics, media literacy, music, social skills, social studies, and science. Following up on topics featured in this section can help students connect what they see to their own experiences as well as to class work beyond reading time.

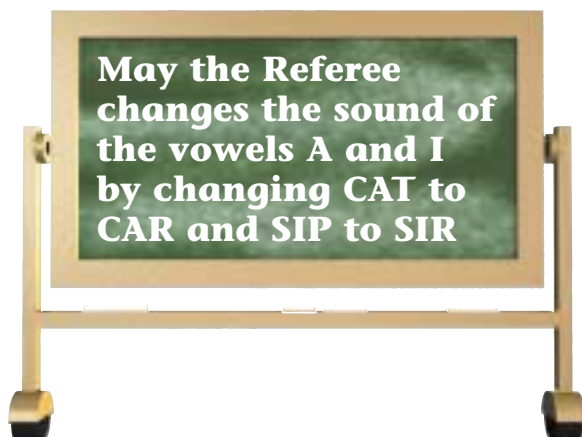


## STORY SUMMARY

Back in the western town of Stomb Stone, Sheriff Peri and Deputy Comma help Miss Co-Co when Bad Bat steals the bossy R's from her words. They discover that the thief is really Bad Bart, who has been taking all the bossy R's in town, looking for the one missing from his name.

### Reading in Context

Comma reads from the Stomb Stone Book of Laws; Peri has "sheriff" on his badge; a sign on the cart reads "healthy snacks"; and both Peri and Comma write in the dirt to demonstrate the changes in several words with the addition of an R.



## LETTER MUSIC SONG

*R's can be bossy.*

*Bossy R's can be*

*Always found after a vowel*

*In the words you read.*

*They change the sound of the vowel.*

*They change the sound of the word.*

*Because Bossy R's like to be heard.*

*R's can be bossy.*

*Bossy R's can be*

*Always found after a vowel*

*In the words you read.*

*They change the sound of the vowel.*

*They change the sound of the word.*

*Because Bossy R's like to be heard.*

## STORY GENRES

This story is a western. Discuss with your students the special features of western stories: the “good guys” (sheriff and his deputy) wear white hats, while the “bad guys” (Bad Bart) wear black hats, the story setting (the western part of the United States in the late 1800s), the costumes, buildings, and so on.

## WORD STUDY: PHONOGRAMS

<b>-ar-</b>	<b>-er-</b>	<b>-ir-</b>	<b>-or-</b>	<b>-ur-</b>
_ar	_erge	_ir	_ord	_ur
_ard	_erk	_ird	_ore	_ure
_are	_erm	_ire	_ork	_url
_ark	_ern	_irk	_orm	_urn
_arp	_erve	_irt	_orn	_urse
_art		_irth	_ort	_urt

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**R-controlled vowels**—The letter *R* is only “bossy” when it directly follows a vowel. In the words “learn” and “heard,” the *R* controls the sound of two vowels in a vowel digraph.

**Vocabulary**—What is a ninja? What does Bad Bart have in his hands when he demonstrates a ninja, and what is it used for?

**Story Settings**—How would this story have changed if it was set in outer space instead of the old west? Would the characters ride horses and wear cowboy hats? How would their speech change? What if it was set on a tropical island? What bossy *R* words would you use in a story set in outer space or on an island?



**Humor**—The setting of this story was originally seen in an episode of *Letter TV II* that focused on the consonant blend *ST*. Did your students get the “inside joke,” when Deputy Comma notices that Bad Bart looks just like someone else? In the *ST* episode, Mark Question played the part of Bad Bart’s cousin, Stinky, who started a stampede of steers.

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Social Studies

**Symbols**—Point out the name of the ranch in this story and how it is similar to names of real ranches (such as the Lazy D, Circle Z, Flying E, etc.). Why do ranchers usually use a single letter in the names of ranches? Notice how the letter *R* is surrounded by a circle in the sign above the Bossy *R* ranch gate—this symbol will be used to represent the ranch’s ownership on signs, brands, and other places.

**Other symbols**—Peri explains what his badge means: the star is the symbol for his powers in upholding the law.

**Time**—By looking at the transportation and clothing shown in this story, can students determine whether this story takes place in the past, present, or future? What clues did they use? Did your students notice the rocket in the background? Does it belong in this story?

### Social Skills

**Forgiveness and Cooperation**—Peri, Co-Co, and Comma forgive Bad Bart when he apologizes and even pitch in to help him return the *R*'s.

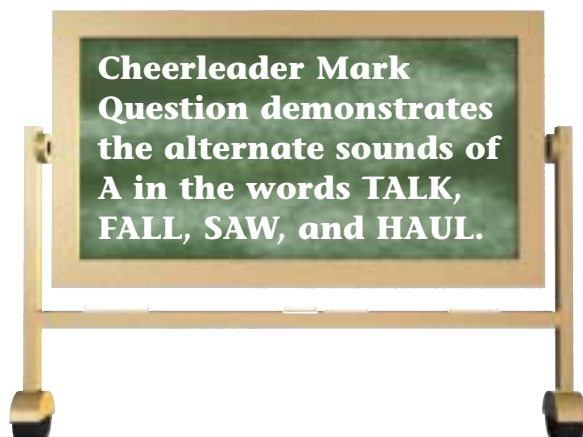


## STORY SUMMARY

Peri Od hosts this special episode of *Letter TV*, which consists of nothing but television advertisements. The advertisements all contain words with the alternate sound of *a*, found in words like *salt*, *mall*, and *paw*. Watch for the antics of the big, bad wolf as he appears throughout these advertisements.

### Reading in Context

Veterinarian May Point reads from a clipboard, and there are many signs and labels to read from.



## LETTER MUSIC SONG

*Aw, look at the little A,  
He's just a little A.*

*Now hold on a minute!  
I may be just an A,  
But I can sound like a whole  
lot more.*

*Put me before an L  
A double-L,  
A double-u or a U  
And I can make the aw  
sound!*

*(crowd) Aw, yeah! All Right!*

## STORY GENRES

Television advertisements are like mini dramas or documentaries. Discuss the special features of advertisements with your class: they are very short (often just 15, 30, or 60 seconds long), and they are usually written as persuasive arguments. In other words, the characters in the advertisements attempt to persuade viewers to buy their goods or services.

## WORD STUDY: PHONOGRAMS

Here are some example words to assist you in teaching the vowel combinations *\_all* and *\_aw*).

<b>-al-</b>	<b>-all-</b>	<b>-au-</b>	<b>-aw-</b>
also	ball	haul	jaw
already	fall	launch	law
although	tall	haunt	draw
malt	stall	August	squaw
halt	small	autumn	lawn
salt	squall	automobile	awful

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Exceptions to the Rule**—Like most phonics rules involving vowels, there are exceptions. For example, listen to the sound of *a* in the following words that don't follow the rule: *aunt*, *laugh*, *stale*, *alibi*, *allow*.

**Proper Nouns**—Paul the Penguin, August, Austin, Letter Talk, One Little Pig Construction, Mr. B.B. Wolf, May Point, Cooking with Mark Question, Salt for All

**Persuasive Arguments**—How does Mark Question persuade viewers to watch his cooking show? How does the First Little Pig persuade viewers to use his construction company to build their homes? What other persuasive arguments can you find?

**Character Analysis**—Reread the story of the “Three Little Pigs.” In this episode, why do you think the big, bad wolf laughs when he says, “I love the tall wall of straw One Little Pig Construction Company built at the mall”?



**Vocabulary**—How is an *advertisement* different from a *commercial*? How are *ingredients* different from *materials*? Is salt an ingredient or a material? What about straw?

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Social Studies

**Careers**—veterinarian, construction worker, chef, salesman, talk-show host

### Science

**Animal body parts**—paw, jaw, claw



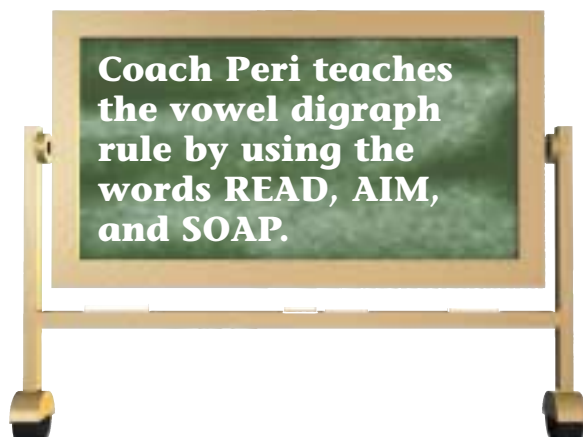


## STORY SUMMARY

During *Letter TV* Story Time, May Point tells the story “The Boat, Goat, and Train,” while Mark tries to understand the vowel digraph rule, “When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking.” In the story, the goat couldn’t win any races against the faster boat and train, until he got an idea to have a leaf-eating contest.

### Reading in Context

May reads aloud from her storybook, and a page from the book is shown.



## LETTER MUSIC SONG

*When two vowels go walkin’  
The first one does the talkin’,  
While the other one’s got nuthin’ to say.*

*Like if you see two vowels  
Side-by-side in a word,  
The first vowel’s the one to be heard.*

*When two vowels go walkin’  
The first one does the talkin’,  
While the other one’s got nuthin’ to say.*

## STORY GENRE

This story is written in the style of traditional folktales, stories that were passed down from parent to child to both entertain and teach moral lessons. Some folktales point out the lesson, or moral, at the end. Others require the audience to discover the lesson for itself.

See if your students can tell what lesson both the goat and Mark Question learned in this episode.

## WORD STUDY: PHONOGRAMS

\*\*Remember that many vowel digraphs are exceptions to the generalization and do not make the long sound of the first vowel. Try to avoid the exceptions when working with phonograms. (See more phonograms in the guide for “Two Vowels #2.”)

<b>-ai-</b>	<b>-ea-</b>	<b>-ie-</b>	<b>-oa-</b>	<b>-ue-</b>
_aid	_ea	_ie	_oach	_ue
_ail	_each	_ied	_oad	
_ain	_eak	_ies	_oak	

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Rhyme**—boat, coat, float, goat, oat

**Exceptions to the Rule**—Like most phonics rules involving vowels, there are exceptions. Many words with the *ea* digraph make a short *e* sound: *bread, breath, threat*. Can you think of other exceptions?

**Comparative Literature**—

Read a version of the American folktale “John Henry” to students. How is this story similar to the goat’s situation? Did John win his race against the machine?

**Mnemonics**—What other memory aids like “when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking” do your students use? Discuss some others that they may already know and use, such as:

- *i* before *e* except after *c* (spelling aid)
- Every **g**ood **b**oy **d**oes **f**ine, and **F-A-C-E** (notes on the musical scale)
- **M**y **v**ery **e**ducated **m**other **j**ust **s**erved **u**s **n**ine **p**izzas. (planets)



## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Social Studies

**Transportation**—Discuss different ways to get around, on land and on water. How many different types of locomotion can you think of?

### Social Skills

**Self-confidence**—The goat feels he isn't good at anything, until he learns to focus on his own strengths.

**Perseverance**—The goat (and Mark Question) learns not to give up when a task is difficult but to keep trying.

### Science

**Floating and Sinking**—Why is it that a boat floats, but a train sinks?

**Fuel**—What is fuel? Do living things need “fuel”? What type of fuels are used by the three racers?

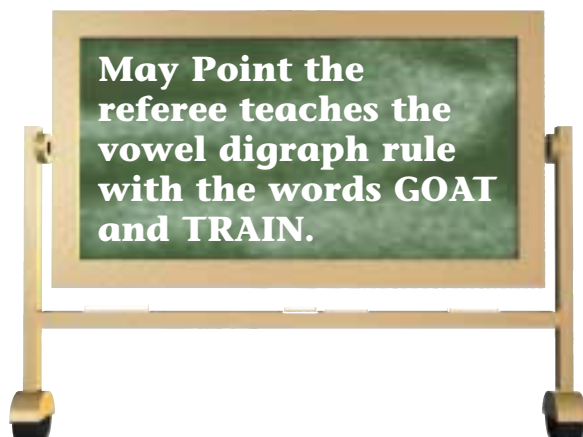


## STORY SUMMARY

This is the story of a town that was divided. Half of the people were wheat eaters, and the other half ate only oats. The two sides wouldn't have anything to do with each other until one day when wheat-eater Comma got caught in the rain. His wheat got wet, turning to paste. He was stuck on a rock until two oat eaters came by and helped him.

### Reading in Context

Comma holds up a “help me” sign when he is stuck in the paste, and there are other signs throughout the town. Words are written on the food packages, the box the wheat-eaters carry, and the boat.



### LETTER MUSIC SONG

*When two vowels go walkin'  
The first one does the talkin'.  
When two vowels go walkin'  
The first one ya always hear.*

*Like “leaf”—ya hear the ee  
sound,*

*And “boat”—that’s the oh  
sound,*

*And “train”—that’s the ay  
sound;*

*The first vowel’s the best and  
it stands out from the rest.*

*When two vowels go walkin'  
The first one does the talkin'.  
When two vowels go walkin'  
The first one ya always hear.*

## STORY GENRES

This is a story poem. It tells a story through rhyme. Have the students think of other story poems they know. Why are they fun to hear? Why might this kind of story be harder to write than a regular story?

## WORD STUDY: PHONOGRAMS

\*\*Remember that many vowel digraphs are exceptions to the generalization, and do not make the long sound of the first vowel. Try to avoid the exceptions when working with phonograms. (See more phonograms in the guide for “Two Vowels #1.”)

<b>-ai-</b>	<b>-ea-</b>	<b>-ee-</b>	<b>-oa-</b>	<b>-oe-</b>
_aint	_eal	_eech	_oal	_oe
_aise	_eam	_eep	_oan	
_ait	_eat	_eet	_oat	

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Exceptions to the Rule**—Like most phonics rules involving vowels, there are exceptions. Two vowels adjacent in a word don’t always make the long sound of the first vowel: *weigh*, *rough*, *field*, *build*, *guess*. What other exceptions can you think of?

**Poetry**—This poem is written with a rhyme pattern of A-B-C-B. In other words, the second and fourth lines of each stanza rhyme, and the first and third do not.

**Abbreviations**—What does U.S.S. stand for in the name of the oat-eaters’ boat? (United States Ship)



## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Social Studies

**War**—Fights and even wars have been started because two groups of people couldn’t agree on a simple thing. What might the oat-eaters have done

differently that could have resulted in a fight? What would you have done if you were an oat-eater and came across a wheat-eater in trouble?

### Science

**Paste**—Mixing wheat and water to create paste.

**Rainbows**—A rainbow appears behind Comma after the rain ends. What makes a rainbow? What are the colors of a rainbow?

### Social Skills

**Tolerance**—Do you think you would like to live in a world where everyone ate exactly the same thing, wore the same kind of clothes, listened to the same music, played the same games? Why is it important to let others make their own choices? What do you think the phrase “Live and let live” means?



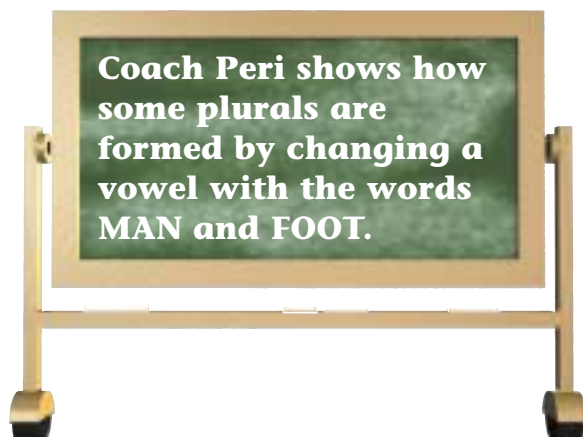


## STORY SUMMARY

In this *Letter TV Nature Adventure*, Comma Commentator and Mark Question are off to visit a plural farm. Mark has a lot of trouble pronouncing the plurals of some of the animals he sees on the farm, as Comma teaches him that not all plurals end in an *s* sound.

### Reading in Context

Mark shows Comma a postcard he received from friends, Comma and Mark pass a billboard advertising the plural farm, and a feedbag and a lunch bucket are shown with writing on them.



## LETTER MUSIC SONG

*I saw one mouse*

*Inside his house.*

*I saw five mice*

*Slidin' on ice.*

*It's a little irregular,*

*Ya know, it's kinda strange.*

*Some plural words just need  
an "s,"*

*And then some of 'em really  
change.*

*Here comes one goose*

*She's drinkin' some juice.*

*There are six geese*

*Havin' a feast.*

## STORY GENRES

This is a nonfiction story about animals on a farm. Discuss some of the special features of a nonfiction story. For example, a nonfiction story is full of facts, and it is written to help the audience learn something.

## WORD STUDY: MASS NOUNS

Many words aren't considered singular or plural, but rather both (or neither). These nouns are usually considered not countable in the usual way.

juice	water	corn	salt	bread
butter	air	milk	rice	grass
sand	gold	money	love	garbage

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Plurals**—Discuss the words in the episode that have regular plurals, such as horse—horses.

**Making Inferences**—Why did Mark Question lock his car door when Comma told him they were going to a farm?

**Drawing Conclusions**—The story never tells what animals are in the barn. Students must use story clues and prior knowledge to determine that the creatures are slugs: the mice are eating slug food—the word “slug” is printed on the feed sack, the animals have antennae, Mark is thrilled when he discovers what they are (in earlier episodes, Mark has shown his love of slugs), etc.



## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Social Studies

**Stereotyping**—Mark and Comma change into costumes that Mark thinks are silly. Comma tells him to play along because this is “television.” In what other jobs are there uniforms or outfits? Do you think all farmers dress like Comma and Mark? If not, why do you think Comma and Mark wore these outfits?

**Farms Around the World**—Many farms specialize in a certain product, such as catfish farms, Christmas tree farms, worm farms, etc. Make a list of these specialty farms. Where can they be found?

### Science

**Farms**—What kinds of animals live on a farm? How is the farm that Mark and Comma visited different from the usual kind? (It's has a barn full of slugs instead of horses.)

**Domestic and Wild Animals**—What are the differences, and why are both often found on farms? List some domestic and some wild animals found on farms.

### Music

**Tempo**—The *Letter TV* song in this episode provides you with a good example of tempo. Notice the change between the different stanzas in the song.



## STORY SUMMARY

This is a “Letter News” special feature about two boys who found something interesting. One boy has discovered red soil shaped like the letter *O*, and the other boy has discovered a blue seed shaped like the letter *U*. May Point hopes the stories become more exciting when the two get together, but when the red soil and blue seed only produce a tiny purple sprout, she’s disappointed. Stay tuned to the second part of this episode to see if anything interesting comes of this combination!

### Reading in Context

Billboards welcome you to the town of Troy and the town south of Troy, and Comma is handed two papers with breaking news headlines.

## STORY GENRES

This story is a news-feature story. Discuss with your class the special characteristics of feature stories in magazines, newspa-

### LETTER MUSIC SONG

*Red O and yellow Y,  
They got together so they could try  
Spellin’ boy.*

*Spellin’ toy.*

*You know it gave them  
Such joy.*

*Diphthong, diphthong, diphthong  
This is a diphthong—yeah.*

Co-Co the Field Trip  
Monitor demonstrates  
diphthongs in the  
words JOIN, COW,  
OWL, OUT, and LOUD.

pers, and television: they're usually about subjects that people might find interesting, but aren't really urgent news; they feature real people doing something interesting or curious, or having something interesting or curious happen to them. The reporters working on the stories can take longer to explore the story because they aren't racing with competitors to get it to the public first.

## WORD STUDY: PHONOGRAMS

<b>-oi-</b>	<b>-oy-</b>	<b>-ou-</b>	<b>-ow-</b>
_oil	_oy	_ouch	_ow
_oin		_ounce	_owl
_oist		_ound	_own
		_ouse	
		_out	

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Exceptions to the Rule**—Like most phonics rules involving vowels, there are exceptions. For example, the letters *ow* can be a diphthong, like in the word *cow*, but it can also be considered a digraph, with the *w* acting like a vowel and causing the *o* to make a long sound: *flow*, *own*, *blow*, *crow*, and so on.

**Literature**—Did you see the Trojan Horse in this episode? Read the story of the Trojan Horse from Homer's *The Odyssey*. Why do you think a Trojan Horse showed up in this *Letter TV* story?



## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Science

**Growing Seeds**—May Point thought the purple sprout grew too slowly for the news story. How long does it usually take for a bean sprout to grow four or five inches? What does a seed need to grow into a plant?

## Art

**Color Mixing**—Red soil plus blue seed make a purple plant. What would have happened if the seed had been yellow?

## Social Skills

**Rock, Paper, Scissors**—Mark and Peri play this game to decide which of them would get to report on what happened when the boy with the soil and the boy with the seed got together. What are other ways to make decisions when there are two choices? (flip a coin, draw straws, pick a number between one and ten, etc.)

**Respect**—Peri and Mark both think their stories are interesting, but May doesn't seem to agree. Different people like different things.

**Cooperation**—Each boy has something that is worthless alone, but by working together they can create something special.





## STORY SUMMARY

This follow-up to the special news feature about the soil shaped like an *O* and the seed shaped like a *U* finds intrepid explorer Co-Co Lynn as she discovers the legendary diphthong plant. This giant stalk has grown from the little purple sprout seen in Mark Question's report, and every leaf contains a word with a diphthong. Norton tries to discourage Co-Co from climbing the plant, but she is fearless until she hears a loud howling sound from the top of the stalk.

### Reading in Context

All the leaves on the plant contain words with diphthongs.



### LETTER MUSIC SONG

*Mix it up. Mix it up.*

*Put two vowels together to make a whole new sound.*

*Like, O and U*

*(Round and sound)*

*Like, O and Y*

*(Boy and joy)*

*Like O and I*

*(Coin and join)*

*We're gonna take a short pause for the cause!*

## STORY GENRES

This is a humorous story similar to an episode of the 1934 movie serial *The Perils of Pauline*. Discuss the unique characteristics of the old movie serials: They feature a leading character that always gets in trouble because she goes into situations that call for caution, the character is always full of enthusiasm, every episode ends with a cliffhanger that is solved at the beginning of the next installment, and so on. This story also plays on the classic fairy tale “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Like both Jack and Pauline, Co-Co is too curious to be cautious, and only becomes nervous when faced with something she can’t explain.

## WORD STUDY: MULTI-SYLLABLE WORDS

### 2 Syllables

vowel	oyster
power	royal
allow	annoy
mountain	poison
council	avoid

### 3 Syllables

embroider	enjoyment
disappoint	towering
boundary	disloyal
corduroy	joyously
employer	moisturize

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Comparative Literature**—Why does Co-Co guess she might find a goose that lays golden eggs at the top of the diphthong plant? What story does this come from? How else is this *Letter TV* story similar? How is it different?

**Exceptions to the Rule**—Like most phonics rules involving vowels, there are exceptions. For example, when the letters *ou* are followed by the letters *gh*, they’re not pronounced as the diphthong found in words like *found*, but instead make up a phoneme that is completely irregular and follows no set rule. Take a look at the different sounds of *ough* in these words: *cough*, *through*, *thought*, *though*.



## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Science

**Fowl**—What is a fowl? What birds fit that category?

**Natural versus Man-Made**—Sort the words from the diphthong plant into categories (Things from Nature or Man-Made Objects): *cow, owl, mouse, mouth, boil, boy, coin, toy, oyster, tower, couch, crown, fowl, plow*.

**Edible versus Inedible**—Mark wants to eat oysters but isn't interested in eating a mouse. Why are some things good to eat and not others?

**Safety**—If Co-Co was really going to climb something that high, should she have worn a helmet? What about a safety rope?

### Math

**Money**—What might the coin have been? Could it have been a penny? What is the smallest coin of that color? What is the largest? What does the symbol on the coin stand for?

### Music

**Instruments**—What instruments are being played by the gang in the *Letter TV* song?



## STORY SUMMARY

In this first part of a two-part story, Captain Peri is telling two of his sailors (Comma and Co-Co) the story of the Red Knight, who went off to see the sea. The sailors share this story to while away the time as they sail to Hare Isle (or is that Hair Isle?) in search of treasure. This episode is full of homophones, and Co-Co gets the giggles when she pairs them into funny combinations. (“No sail-sales in the knight-night story!”)

### Reading in Context

The Red Knight reads signs while looking for a sail on sale, Captain Peri has “See Captain” printed on his hat, and Co-Co looks at a book titled *The Red Knight*.

### LETTER MUSIC SONG

*There are words that sound the same*

*But mean different things.*

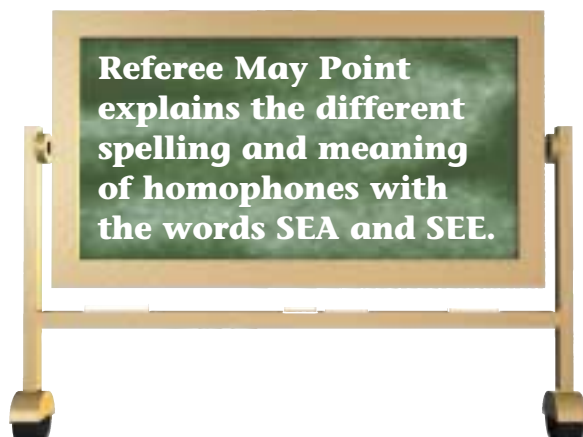
*C'mon everybody join in and let's sing about*

*Homonyms, homonyms.*

*Words that sound the same but mean different things.*

*Homonyms, homonyms.*

*Words that sound the same but mean different things.*



## STORY GENRES

This is a sea-adventure story. Explore the characteristics of a sea adventure, such as the stereotypes of sailors and some of their figures of speech. Discuss the symbolic use of treasure hunts, red bandanas, parrots, eye-patches, etc., in this type of story. List several sea-adventure stories and characters the students might be familiar with, like *Treasure*

*Island*, Long John Silver, and Popeye the Sailor. Does the Red Knight fit into this story genre?

## WORD STUDY: PHONOGRAMS

Homophones often include one word in the pair that has an irregular spelling. It's sometimes difficult to create large word families that use the same vowel sound for the same phonogram. Use this list of homophones to discuss some of these differences in spelling.

<b>Long vowel</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Bossy R</b>	<b>Diphthong</b>
toad / towed	do / due	bear / bare	bough / bow
blew / blue	yoke / yolk	hoarse / horse	paws / pause
ate / eight	wood / would		foul / fowl
so / sew	some / sum		

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Homonyms, Homophones, and Homographs**—The “Letter Song” in this episode contains the term *homonyms*, not *homophones*. Homophones are one type of homonym, so the song is correct, but there is another type of homonym not taught in this episode: the homograph. Homographs are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and sometimes are pronounced differently, like in this sentence: “I *read* that book but I want to *read* it again.”



**Riddles**—It's fun to create riddles using homophones. (Why did the termite chew on a tent post? Because he wanted to eat a “stake” dinner.) Have students create their own riddles from the homophones in the episode.

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Social Studies

**Bartering**—The Red Knight trades his horse for the supplies he needs for his journey. Explore the bartering system with the class. Have any students traded a toy for something they wanted?

**Transportation**—The Red Knight has his ship towed down a creek, to a river, and finally to the sea. How do these waterways connect? What might have been used to tow the ship? How many kinds of water vehicles can you think of?

### Science

**Shooting Stars**—A shooting star goes across the sky at the end of the episode. What is a shooting star, really?

### Art

**Illustrating**—Make an enjoyable and educational art activity by having students illustrate homophones. Students draw a picture of one homophone on the left side of a large sheet of construction paper (e.g., a *pair* of socks) and its “partner” word on the other side (e.g., a *pear*). Don’t write the words on the paper—children will have fun guessing the homophones from the illustrations.



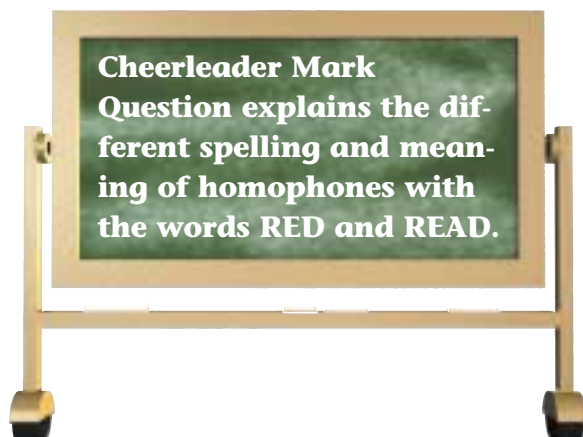


## STORY SUMMARY

In this second part of a two-part story, Captain Peri and his crew (Comma and Co-Co) finish the story of the Red Knight, who nearly drowned before a mermaid saved him. Finally Captain Peri and his crew arrive at Hare Isle, which is actually “Hair” Isle, since visitors there come away with a big head of hair. This episode is full of homophones, and Co-Co still gets the giggles when she pairs them into funny combinations. (“Bear Isle is bare—poor bare Bear Isle!”)

### Reading in Context

Co-Co holds a book, Captain Peri eats some beets from a jar labeled “Greece,” and his hat is labeled “See” Captain.



### LETTER MUSIC SONG

*They sound the same,  
But the words mean different things.*

*Homonyms, homonyms.*

*Like knight and night, sale and sail, sea and see.*

*Sometimes they're even spelled the same.*

*Homonyms, homonyms.*

## STORY GENRES

This is a sea-adventure story. Explore the characteristics of a sea adventure, such as the stereotypes of sailors and some of their figures of speech. List several sea-adventure stories and characters the students might be familiar with, like *The Little Mermaid*, *Moby Dick*, and *Sinbad the Sailor*. How are they alike, and how are they different?

## WORD STUDY: MULTI-SYLLABLE WORDS

Homophones are a fun tool for working on words with more than one syllable. Use some of the following two-, three-, and four-syllable words to expand students' vocabularies.

### 2 Syllable

allowed/aloud patients/patience

burro/burrow

cellar/seller

medal/meddle weather/whether

### 3 Syllable

all ready/already

principle/principal

cereal/serial

overdo/overdue

### 4 Syllable

all together/altogether

stationary/stationery

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Homographs**—Homographs are slightly different than homophones. They are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and sometimes are pronounced differently, like in this sentence: “A camel won’t *desert* you in the *desert*.”

Have students write sentences like this one using homographs in both ways. Suggested words: *bass* (low male voice and fish), *bow* (a type of tie and to bend in greeting), *close* (shut or nearby), *do* (perform or musical note), *object* (thing or to protest), *present* (gift or not absent), *tear* (pull apart or drop of liquid from eye), or *wind* (turn or moving air). Have students read the sentences aloud.



**Proofreading**—During morning seatwork, provide students with sentences to correct that use homophones in place of the correct spelling, and have them correct the mistakes: My dog is wagging his *tale*, Beat the egg *yoke* for *too* minutes.

**Fact and Fantasy**—Which parts of this episode could really happen, and which are make-believe, or fantasy?

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Science

**Floating and Sinking**—The Red Knight’s ship was taking on water. What keeps a vessel floating? What has to change in order for the same vessel to begin to sink? Will two vessels that are different sizes sink with the same amount of water in them? How can you find out?

### Social Studies

**Outline Maps**—There is an outline map of Greece on the beet-jar label. Can students recognize an unlabeled map of their country, state, county?

**Greece**—*Grease* and *Greece* are homophones. Find Greece on a map. Can you really get beets from Greece? What products does Greece export?

### Art

**Combining parts**—A mermaid is part woman and part fish. Greek mythology contains many monsters and other creatures that are combinations of animals with people or parts of two different animals, such as the Minator, Pegasus, Centaur, and Griffin. Have students make new animals by combining two existing animals, or animals with people, and name their new creature.



## STORY SUMMARY

In this episode of Scary Theater, Dr. Markenstein is working on a formula to force the letter Y to make a different sound. He's very discouraged when his potion doesn't work, until townsper-son Peri shows him that you can change the sound of Y by putting it at the end of a word with more than one syllable.

### Reading in Context

All the potion bottles are labeled, Peri holds words at the end, and Ys are added to words with more than one syllable.



### LETTER MUSIC SONG

*I'm a Y,  
I'm a Y,  
But I can also sound like a long e.*

*Really?  
Absolutely!*

*Just put me at the end of a word  
With more than one syllable,  
And I can sound like a long e.*

*A jumpy, bumpy, happy, snappy,  
long e!*

## STORY GENRES

This is a horror story written in the style of Mary Shelley's classic *Frankenstein*, published in 1818. Discuss the characteristics of classic horror stories: a creepy house, sometimes with a laboratory filled with strange-looking machines, a scientist and his assistant, a stormy night, frightened townspeople, etc.

## WORD STUDY: MULTI-SYLLABLE WORDS

### 2 Syllable

city            guilty  
ready         sandy  
stormy        hairy

### 3 Syllable

history        watery  
library        factory  
busily         mystery

### 4 Syllable

regularly  
necessary  
activity

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Alternate Sounds of Y**—The letter *Y* can make a consonant sound, a long *i* sound, and a long *e* sound, depending on its position in a word (*yellow, fry, crazy*).

**Exceptions to the Rule**—Like most phonics rules involving vowels, there are exceptions: *reply, July, magnify, butterfly*. What other exceptions can you think of?

**Comparative Literature**—Compare the classic type of monster movie with the newer type of horror movies popular today. How are they alike? (e.g., They are both designed to scare the audience, they try to build up tension and then shock you with something unexpected, etc.) How are they different? (e.g., The old stories were usually black and white, they didn't show a lot of blood or people being killed, they relied on special effects and creepy settings to build the mood, etc.)

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Science

**Scientific Method**—Dr. Frankenstein tests a theory with an experiment. What are the steps of the scientific method? Did Frankenstein follow these steps?

**Weather**—It was a foggy night when the townspeople came to find out what Dr. Frankenstein was up to. What is fog?

### Physical Education

**Volleyball**—Dr. Frankenstein makes a volleyball court for his slugs. How do you play volleyball? Why would it be difficult for slugs to play this game?



## Social Skills

**Fear of the Unknown**—Many scary movies (both old and new) feature scientists and laboratories, because science involves learning about new things. Why are new things sometimes scary?



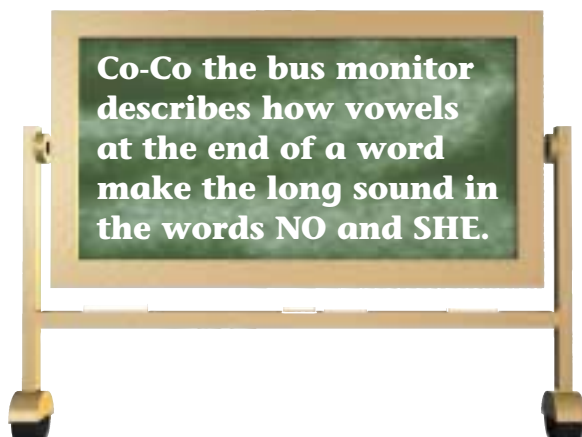


## STORY SUMMARY

In *Letter TV Story Time* Peri Od reads his story, “The So-So Genie.” Mark Question discovers a lamp containing a genie (played by Comma Commentator), but the so-so genie can only grant two wishes, not three. Mark wishes he could fly, but is only able to hop really high. The genie is depressed about his so-so abilities until Mark uses his second wish to help him.

### Reading in Context

As Peri Od reads his book, he shows both the cover with its title and author and later the last page with the final lines of the story printed there.



## LETTER MUSIC SONG

*All by myself at the end of a word,  
I'm soundin' long,  
So-so, so-so long.*

*All by myself at the end of a word,  
I'm soundin' long,  
So-so, so-so long.*

*They put me over here,  
And that's why I'm singin' you  
this song.*

## STORY GENRES

This is a folktale written in the style of the book *Arabian Nights*. Discuss the characteristics of this type of tale: the use of magic, Arabian costuming such as turbans, the main character learns an important lesson, etc. Read some of the most popular of the *Arabian Nights* stories with your class, such as “Aladdin’s Lamp” and “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.”

## WORD STUDY: MULTI-SYLLABLE WORDS

This rule applies to multi-syllable words as well. When there is only one vowel in a syllable, and it falls at the end of the syllable, that vowel is usually long.

### 2 Syllable

hydrant      mobile  
human        major  
label         hero

### 3 Syllable

cucumber    motivate  
bicycle      triangle  
favorite     totally

### 4 Syllable

dependable  
motorcycle  
locomotion

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Pronouns**—Four pronouns follow this rule: *me, he, she, we*.

**The Letter Y**—At the end of a one-syllable word the letter *Y* usually takes on the long *i* sound: *my, fly, why, try, spy*.

**Exceptions to the Rule**—Like most phonics rules involving vowels, there are exceptions: *do, to, who*. What other exceptions can you think of?



**Creative Writing**—Write a new ending to the story of the so-so genie. What if Mark didn't use his second wish to help the genie? What wish might he make, and how would it turn out when the so-so genie tried to grant it?

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Science

**Hopping**—Did you know that the elephant is the only animal that can't hop? Create a science trivia book about hopping or jumping. Find out which animal hops the highest, which hops the farthest, and which hops the fastest. What world records have humans set that involve hopping?

### Social Studies

**Architecture**—Notice the sandcastle that is inspired by classic Arabian architecture. Compare this architecture with other styles (like the Chinese architecture in "Silent E", Greek columns, the Empire State Building, and so on.)

## Social Skills

**Generosity**—Mark used his last wish for the genie instead of himself. If you had two wishes you wanted to spend on someone else, what would you wish for?

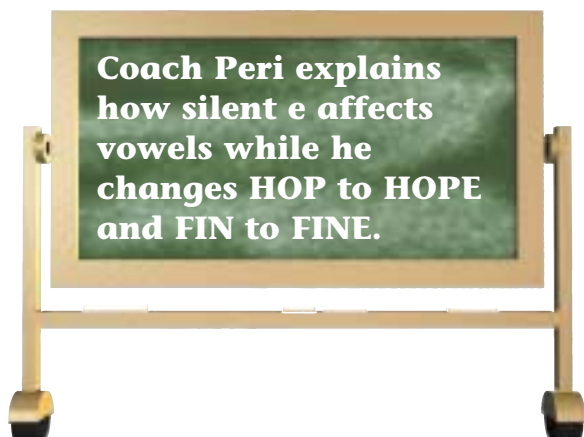


## STORY SUMMARY

Letter TV Story Time presents “The Emperor’s Silent e,” in which Co-Co, who forgot Emperor Comma’s birthday, gives him a magnetic letter e she grabs from a refrigerator. She tells him this is a special silent e, and you can only hear it if you are smart. The vain Emperor pretends he can hear the sound of the silent e until a child explains that no one can hear a silent letter.

### Reading in Context

Co-Co demonstrates how a silent e changes the vowel sound in words by moving magnetic letters on a refrigerator, and a banner reads, “Happy Birthday to Me.”



## LETTER MUSIC SONG

*You can't hear the e, but it changes the sound of the vowel.*

*(Changes the sound)*

*Like tap to tape, hop to hope,*

*Kit to kite, bit to bite,*

*Fin to fine, cut to cute,*

*The e makes the vowel go long.*

*You can't hear the e, but it changes the sound of the vowel.*

*Then you get a brand-new word.*

## STORY GENRES

This is an example of an oriental folktale. As in all folktales that were passed down by storytellers through the years until printing was invented, this story is designed both to entertain and to teach a lesson. In this story, Comma explains what he learned. Ask your students if they learned any kind of lesson by watching this episode.

## PHONOGRAMS

<b>a_e</b>	<b>i_e</b>	<b>o_e</b>	<b>u_e</b>
_ake	_ice	_obe	_ube
_ale	_ide	_oke	_uke
_ame	_ike	_ole	_ume
_ane	_ile	_one	_une
_ase	_ime	_ope	_ute
_ate	_ive	_ote	

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Exceptions to the Rule**—Like most phonics rules involving vowels, there are exceptions: *move, have, one, gone, love, lose*. What other exceptions can you think of?

**Comparative Literature**—Comparisons can be drawn between the characters and events in “The Emperor’s New Clothes” and “The Emperor’s Silent e.” In what ways are the stories alike? How are they different?

**Character Study**—Mark Question played the jester in this story. A jester’s job is to entertain the ruler (in this story, the emperor). What types of things did the jester do that were funny? What other funny things might a jester do? A jester might also play pranks on the ruler. What prank did Mark play on Emperor Comma? Did the emperor ever realize that Mark played this prank?



## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Art

**Surrealism**—Jester Mark Question’s juggling act takes on the look of a Magritte painting (*The Son of Man*) as his head is accidentally replaced by a green apple.

## Social Studies

**Oriental Art and Architecture**—The architectural style of the emperor’s palace and the costumes of the characters are reminiscent of Japan and China.

**Government**—What is an emperor? Do we have emperors in this country? What do we call the leader of our country?

## Social Skills

**Self-Confidence**—Comma learns to trust his own intelligence and to be confident enough to speak up when something seems wrong.

**Respect**—The girl who corrects the emperor seems younger than he is, but she is correct nonetheless. It is important to remember that good suggestions may not always come from the oldest or the “smartest” person in a group.





## STORY SUMMARY

In *Letter TV* Story Time May Point reads the story, “The Bat with Two Baits,” by Pal Pail. A greedy bat with a pail of bait sees her reflection in a shiny pan and thinks it’s another bat. Believing she can force the other bat to give up its bait, she first tries beating her wings very hard. When that doesn’t work and she flies into the pan in a rage, she drops her own bait, proving the moral that we should appreciate what we have instead of trying to take something that isn’t ours.

### Reading in Context

As May Point reads the book, she shows both the cover with its title and author and later the last page with the final lines of the story printed there. The bait pail is labeled (students get to see the label reversed when the bat meets her reflection), and there are signs in the store window.

## STORY GENRES

This is a fable reminiscent of Aesop’s. Discuss the characteristics of a fable. They are usually very short stories in which a character demonstrates a negative character trait such as selfishness or vanity. This negative trait causes the character to make a foolish decision or do something unwise. The consequences teach him or her a lesson. Fables almost always end with a moral that the audience is expected to learn from.



## LETTER MUSIC SONG

*A vowel beside a vowel*

*Makes a sound that's long:*

*R-A-I-N, rain.*

*But that vowel all-alone*

*Makes the short sound known:*

*H-O-P, hop.*

*But a vowel all alone*

*Makes the short sound known:*

*R-A-N, ran.*

*Now a vowel by itself*

*At the end of a word makes a long sound*

*Have you heard: me?*

*Put a vowel with a consonant*

*And add a silent e*

*This will make a long sound:*

*H-O-P-E, hope*

*Put that vowel in the middle*

*Of a word all-alone*

*And once again the short sound's known:*

*M-E-T, met.*

*You bet!*

## WORD STUDY: PHONOGRAMS

The following short/long phonogram pairs can be used to construct more examples of short- and long-vowel combinations.

<b>short</b>	<b>long</b>	<b>short</b>	<b>long</b>
_ad	_ade	_an	_ain
_at	_ate	_ed	_ead
_it	_ite	_id	_ide
_od	_ode	_ost	_oast
_ut	_ute	_uck	_uke

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

**Idioms**—The reflection bat wouldn't drop the pail of bait, and this really "got her goat."

**Comparative Literature**—Read Aesop's Fable "The Dog and the Shadow" to the class. How are the two stories alike? How are they different?

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Social Skills

**Morals**—May Point thinks the moral of the story is, “We should appreciate what we have instead of trying to take something that isn’t ours.” Todd the Turtle thinks the moral is, “It is better to share than be greedy,” and the Duck thinks the moral is, “The duck with the shiny pan always gets the bait.” Which moral do you think is the best? Can you think of a better moral for this story?

### Science

**Reflection**—The label on the pail of bait appears backwards in the reflection from the shiny pan. Have students write their names on a piece of paper, flip it over and trace the lines they made on the front. By looking in the mirror, the writing on the back of the page should be readable.



**Food**—Is there a food that a bat, turtle, and duck would all like to eat? What is bait used for?

### Math

**Symmetry**—What might you draw that would look the same when viewed in a mirror? What uppercase letters wouldn’t change in a reflection? Can you think of a word you could write in uppercase letters that wouldn’t reverse in a mirror? Try the word *MOM*, for example.

### Social Studies and Music

**Russia**—What toys are singing the song in the *Letter TV* Music Break? What country creates beautiful nutcrackers?

