

## STRATEGY LESSON: USING PHONETIC RESPELLINGS

### Background Information

In many texts, especially those that are informational, technical terms and other words that might be unfamiliar to readers are phonetically respelled. This is an extremely valuable tool for developing students' ability to read multisyllabic words. It also builds vocabulary. Students have a much better chance of learning and remembering a new word if they say it. Explain phonetic respellings and demonstrate their use. Have students look back at the use of a phonetic respelling in this sentence from the article in the Short-*i* Lesson: "Ants use their antennae (an-TEN-ee) to sniff out food." Phonetic respellings are used throughout this text for words that contain patterns that students have not yet been introduced to, for proper names, and for words that are foreign or so irregular that they are beyond essential decoding skills.

Symbols used in phonetic respellings vary. For instance, dictionaries typically use the long mark (-) to indicate a long vowel: /ā/ as in *say*, /ē/ as in *see*, /ī/ as in *tie*, /ō/ as in *no*, and /ū/ as in *use*. Periodicals and trade books often use a common spelling to indicate a pronunciation: /ay/ for long *a*, /ee/ for long *e*, /eye/ for long *i*, /oh/ for long *o*, and /yoo/ for long *u*. This text uses common spellings. See Table 1.3 for a listing of the phonetic respellings of vowels used in this text. Most consonants use their typical spellings.

Table 1.3  
Phonetic Respellings of Vowels

Vowels	
Short	
ah	hat
eh	red
ih	hit
o	mop
uh	hut
Long	

ay	say
ee or ea	see, sea
igh or eye	tie
oh	no
yOO or yew	you
R-Vowels	
ar	far
air	fair
eer	deer
or	north
er	her
Other Vowels	
oo	took
OO	moon
ow	how
oy	boy
aw	paw
Schwa	
uh	alone (Short <i>u</i> and schwa have the same approximate pronunciations.)

## Objectives

Students will learn to translate phonetic respellings.

Students will use phonetic respellings to help them pronounce words.

## Introduction

Introduce and explain phonetic respellings. Emphasize the value of phonetic respellings in learning how to pronounce words. Model how you use phonetic respellings.

Display texts that have phonetic respellings. Guide students as they use phonetic

respellings to read challenging words as in the following brief passages:

- The arapaima (ar-uh-PEA-muh) is one of the largest freshwater fish in the world. An arapaima can weigh 400 pounds or more and be more than ten feet long. An arapaima can breathe air and can live out of water for 24 hours.
- Lyrebirds (LIGH-er-berdz) are great mimics. They can imitate almost any sound.
- Two-foot long and weighing up to five pounds, the gila (HEE-luh) monster is the largest lizard in the United States. Gila monsters make their home in the desert.
- The long-beak echidna (ih-KID-nuh) uses its long beak to find earthworms. The short-beak echidna uses its sticky tongue to eat ants and termites.
- Ibises (EYE-bus-iz) have long bills. Ibises use their long bills to catch fish.

### **Guided Practice**

To add interest to exercises in which students apply their skills in using phonetic respellings, have them respond to challenging questions such as the following. To make the exercise more interactive, students might attempt to pronounce each challenging word before checking the respelling to see how close they have come. Explain to students that some words may be pronounced in more than one way. For instance, the popular seed food *quinoa* might be pronounced as KEEN-wah or kee-NO-uh. In the following exercise both *capybara* and *aphid* have two pronunciations.

What is the loudest insect?

The cicada (sih-KAY-dah) is the loudest insect of all. If a cicada sang just outside your ear, it would be as loud as a jet engine and would damage your hearing.

What is the biggest rodent?

Capybaras (kap-uh-BEAR-uhz or kap-uh-BAR-uhz) are giant rodents. Capybaras can weigh more than 150 pounds.

If all the animals were lined up in alphabetical order, which animal would be first in line?

The aardvark (ARD-vark) would be first in line. *Aardvark* is a Dutch word that means, “earth pig.” The aardvark is a large mammal with a long snout that eats ants and termites.

Which insect do farmers like?

Ladybugs are a valued insect. Ladybugs mostly eat aphids (AY-fidz or AH-fidz). Aphids are tiny bugs that harm plants. In its lifetime a ladybug might eat 5,000 aphids. Needless to say, farmers like ladybugs.

What is the largest animal migration?

Each year more than a million wildebeests (WIL-duh-beests) migrate more than a thousand miles to find water and grass. Wildebeests are also known as *gnus* (newz).

### **Application**

A number of periodicals and informational books for young people use phonetic respellings. All the books in the National Geographic Kids series provide definitions of challenging words and contain glossaries, but only some of the books provide phonetic respellings. Other publishers that provide phonetic respellings are Creative Digital, Robbie Readers (Mitchell Lane), Bearport, Child's World, and ABDO (Big Buddy Book). Blue Door includes phonetic respellings in their end-of-book glossaries.

### **Assessment and Review**

Note students' ability to complete guided and independent practice activities. Note, in particular, students' ability to apply the strategy. Observe whether they attempt to use phonetic respellings and are able to do so successfully. Provide review lessons.