Short E CVC Word List

31 words with the short e sound /e/ as in bed, grouped into 10 word families.

Every word on this page has the same shape: consonant, short e, consonant. Because each letter says its usual sound, a child who knows the letter sounds can decode all 31 of these words without guessing.

Teaching order: work through one family at a time, and within a family change only the first sound. Start with the largest families below (-eb and -eck) because they give the most practice, then move to the one-word families once the pattern is secure.

-eb (1)
web

-eck (3)
deck neck peck

-ed (4)
bed fed led red

-eg (2)
beg leg

-ell (5)
bell fell sell tell well

-em (1)
hem

-en (5)
den hen men pen ten

-esh (1)
mesh

-ess (2)
less mess

-et (7)
get jet let met net pet set

Teach it in four steps

1. Review the short e sound on its own, until it is secure.
2. Blend the vowel with the ending (-at, -en, -ig...) and say it as one chunk.
3. Add the first sound to build the whole word (c-at = cat).
4. Read the word in a short sentence.

More: cvc-words.com/short-e-cvc-words.html has pictures, audio and a teaching guide for this vowel.