Short U CVC Word List

47 words with the short u sound /u/ as in sun, grouped into 12 word families.

Every word on this page has the same shape: consonant, short u, consonant. Because each letter says its usual sound, a child who knows the letter sounds can decode all 47 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 (-ub and -uck) because they give the most practice, then move to the one-word families once the pattern is secure.

-ub (4)

pub rub sub tub

-uck (6)

buck duck luck puck suck tuck

-ud (1)

mud

-uff (5)

buff cuff huff muff puff

-ug (8)

bug dug hug jug lug mug rug tug

-ull (3)

bull full pull

-um (4)

gum hum mum sum

-un (6)

bun fun gun nun run sun

-up (2)

cup pup

-us (1)

bus

-ush (2)

bush push

-ut (5)

but cut gut hut nut

Teach it in four steps

1. Review the short u 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-u-cvc-words.html has pictures, audio and a teaching guide for this vowel.