



## Optimized SPIRE Model Lesson with Adjusted Script for Touch-Based AAC

This guide is designed to bridge SPIRE pure form instruction with instruction that relies on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), supporting both print AAC and manipulative integration as well as the use of AAC technology devices. This document focuses on instructing students who require the use of direct selection via pointing and/or gesturing through AAC devices as their primary method of communication.

Before instruction begins, teachers may want to consider methods for [Optimizing Availability for Learning](#). This includes important considerations to reflect upon prior to and during instruction. The National Center on Deaf-Blindness has prepared a resource document that can support a variety of students with varying communication needs.

An important evidence-based strategy that students can use throughout the lessons is the **Nonverbal Reading Approach (NRA)**. In this approach, students are taught to decode words through a sequence of *visual and internal speech* steps rather than oral reading. A teacher might introduce a word by saying it (“man”), then slowly segmenting and stretching the sounds (“mmm–aa–nn”) while pointing to each letter and then showing the whole word again. The student is instructed to **say the sounds “in their head”** and blend them mentally, rather than out loud. Finally, the student demonstrates recognition of the word by selecting the correct word (or a picture of it) from choices, or by typing it on an AAC keyboard, instead of speaking it.

The selected model lesson represents an introductory SPIRE lesson that most students will encounter at the start of instruction. It incorporates strategies and sample language that serve as a proposed alternate script, adaptable for use across future lessons with this student population. **Teachers are kindly reminded to provide only a few examples for each step while adhering to the originally recommended time frames.** The full scripting for the model lesson is provided below.

SPIRE Step	Scripting
<p>Step 1: Phonogram Cards</p>	<p><b>Directions:</b>  Part 1—  Shuffle Phonogram Cards 1-24  Instead of showing the cards, call out each sound on the cards and have student select the letter that spells that sound on their AT device.  Say: I'm going to say a sound. I want you to select the letter that spells that sound on your device.</p> <p>Part 2—  Say: You've been doing such a good job identifying and spelling words, so now, it is time to move on to something new.  Hold up short e phonogram card.  Say: This is the vowel e. It is on a green card because that is the color we use for our vowels. In words, e spells the sound /e/.  Touch the letter on your device that matches the sound /e/.  (Student does) Yes, that is the letter e and the sound it spells is /e/.  Display the Key Concept Picture for e.  Say: If you forget the sound for the vowel e, I want you to think of our key word for this letter. E makes the sound /e/ like in the middle of the word bed. Listen as I say bed slowly.  Stretch out the sounds in the word bed.  Say: Did you hear me say the /e/ sound in the middle of that word? Touch the letter on your device that spells that sound /e/.  Yes, the letter e represents the sound e. Listen as I say the key word and the sound a couple times.  Say: e, /e/, bed, /e/ (2-3 times)</p> <p><b>Materials:</b>  Phonogram Cards  Key Word Picture</p>
<p>Step 2: Phonological Awareness</p>	<p><b>Directions:</b>  Say: Now, we are going to listen to some words to determine if we hear the /e/ sound in them.  Say: Our first word is met. Listen as I say met slowly.  Say met slowly  Say: Do we hear the /e/ sound in met? We do! So then we will point to the thumbs up visual.  Say: Our next word is run. Listen as I say run slowly.  Say run slowly.</p>

	<p>Say: Do we hear the /e/ sound in run? No, we do not hear /e/ in the word run. So, we will point to the thumbs down visual. (Model for students).</p> <p>Say: We are going to do this for each of the following words. Ready?</p> <p>Repeat procedures with remaining examples: let, red, cat, yes, get, sun, bed, hat, left, and best.</p> <p><b>Materials:</b> Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Visual (Use from Sounds Sensible Teacher Guide)</p>
<p>Step 3: Word Building</p>	<p><b>Directions:</b></p> <p>Say: We are now going to now build words with our new vowel sound /e/. Remind me: touch the letter on your device that spells the sound /e/. Yes, e spells the sound /e/.</p> <p>Say: Our first word is met. Listen as I say met slowly. Say met slowly.</p> <p>Say: Let’s use our sound tap strip to separate the sounds in met. Tap a different fingerprint as I say each sound. Model for student as needed.</p> <p>Say: /m/, /e/, /t/</p> <p>Say: There are three sounds in this word. We are going to build the word using our touch device and magnetic tiles. The first sound in met is /m/. Touch the letter that spells that sound on your device. Yes, m spells the sound /m/. Let’s move the letter m down. The second sound in met is /e/. Touch the letter that spells that sound on your device. Yes, e spells the sound /e/. Let’s move the vowel e down next to the m. The last sound in met is /t/. Touch the letter that spells that sound on your device. Yes, t spells the sound /t/. Let’s move the vowel t down next to the e. Now, I want you to touch each tile as I say each sound in the word. Model for students as needed.</p> <p>Say: /m/, /e/, /t/, met.</p> <p>Say: Make sure you glide your finger underneath the word when we blend.</p> <p>Repeat the procedures with a few more examples: let, red, yes. <i>Optional:</i> You can write a list of the words that you built during this step on the board. Say to students “I am going to read a word at random. I want you to point to the word that has the same sounds in the word I read.” Call out the words at random to the students.</p> <p><b>Materials:</b></p>

	<p>Magnetic Boards Sound Tap Strips (from Sounds Sensible Teacher Guide)</p>
Step 4: Decoding and Sentence Reading	<p>Directions: Take a sentence strip and write the first row of words in black marker, spaced out, across a sentence strip. Say: On your device, touch the letter we have been learning that spells the sound /e/. Yes, e spells the sound /e/. Take the green marker and underline the vowels in each of the words. Allow the student time to underline the vowels. Say the letter sound for the student as they underline. Say: Point to the word on this strip that is spelled /m/, /e/, /t/. Yes, that is the word /m/, /e/, /t/, when we blend those sounds together we get the word met. Next find the word, “wet.” Yes, that is the word wet. What is the vowel sound in the word wet? Touch it on your device. Yes, e /e/ is the vowel sound in this word. Repeat with the remaining words in the row.</p>
	<p>Materials: SPIRE Level 1 Workbook Sentence Strips Markers (Black and Green)</p>
Step 5: Prereading	<p>Directions: Write bed on the board. Underline the vowel and point to word. Say: This is the word bed. Listen as I say it again slowly. Repeat the word “bed” slowly. Say: In the word bed, point on your device to the letter that says /e/. Say: In the word bed, point on your device to the letter that says /b/. Say: In the word bed, point on your device to the letter that says /d/. Say: In the word bed, point on your device to the letters that say /ed/. Say: Listen as I saw the word “bed” slowly again. Repeat the word “bed” slowly. Say: If I say bed again but I change the /b/ to /r/, what would the new word be? Spell it on your device. (Give time). Yes, if I said bed but I changed the /b/ to /r/ the word would be red. Red.</p>
	<p>Materials: White Board and Dry Erase Markers</p>
Step 6: Reading	<p>Directions: WORD FIND SHEET Have students open up to the word find sheet in their workbook.</p>

Say: On your device, touch the vowel letter that you see at the center of our word find sheet. (Give time). Yes, the letter at the center of the word find sheet is e. Remember, e makes the sound /e/ in words. Look at all the words on this page. Find words with the vowel e, and high the vowel e. Then read each word in your head and circle it. Let's take some time to do this. After about 5 minutes have students stop. Call out a word from the page and have the students find and point to that word. Students can then check that word off. Continue this practice for all the words on the page until the activity is complete.

### SENTENCES

Write the sentences on the board.

Say: Look at this first sentence. A word is underlined. On your device, select what color card this word would be on: green, yellow, or red. (Give time) Yes, this word is on one of our red cards. That is because we have to stop. There are parts of this word that follow the rules and other parts that do not. This is the word his. Listen as I say "his" again slowly.

Repeat the word "his" slowly.

Say: Which letters in this word follow our rules? Select on your device. (Give time) Yes, the 'h' and the vowel 'i' follow our rules. Which letter in this word is saying something unexpected? Select on your device. (Give time) Yes, the letter s is saying something unexpected. It is making the sound /z/ in the word "his." What letter normally spells the sound /z/? Select on your device. (Give time) Yes, the letter z is the letter we expect to spell the sound /z/, but in the word "his," it is the letter s that is spelling the sound /z/.

Look at the first word in the sentence. Select on your device what vowel you see in this word. (Give time) Yes, the short vowel e is the vowel in this word. Say each sound in your head as I point to the letter.

Point to each letter in the word "Ned."

Say: Good, now I am going to sound it out, out loud, for you. Sound out the word.

Say: I go back to the beginning and blend the sounds together and the word is Ned. Think in your head something else you might notice about this word. (Give time) You might have noticed that this word begins with a capital letter because it is a name and because it is the first word in the sentence.

Repeat this process for the remaining words in the sentence.

Then have a student come to the board to circle all the /e/ words

	<p>in the first sentence. Ask the students to read those words in their head before you read them aloud. Ask the students to read the sentence in their heads. Ask the students a yes or no question about the sentence that they give either gesture thumbs up or thumbs down, or some other way. After they answer, read the sentence aloud for the group. Repeat this procedure with the remaining sentences until the end of the 15 minutes for this step.</p>
	<p>Materials:  Student Workbooks  Highlighters  White board and Dry Erase Markers</p>
<p>Step 7: Sound Dictation</p>	<p>Directions:  Say: In your heads, think of the sound /e/. Listen as I say it again (repeat the sound /e/) What letter makes the /e/ sound? Point to it on your device. (Give time) Yes, e makes the sound /e/. Write the letter on your palm as I name it.  Say the letter as the students write it with their finger on their palm.  Say: Now write the letter e on your paper as I name the letter as you write.  Say the letter as the students write it with their finger on their palm.  Look at the letter you just wrote. What is the name of the letter, point to it on your device. Yes, that is the letter e. Say the sound that the letter e makes in your head. The sound that the letter e makes is /e/. (repeat the sound twice)  Repeat these procedures using the remaining sounds: /e/, /u/, /e/, /i/, /a/</p>
	<p>Materials:  Dictation paper</p>
<p>Step 8: Prespelling</p>	<p>Directions:  Say: Listen as I say the word “bed” slowly.  Repeat the word “bed” slowly.  Say: Listen as we go through each sound. Think of the first sound in the word bed. Select the sound or letter that spells that sound on your device. (/b/ or b). Think of the vowel sound in the word bed. Select the sound or letter that spells that sound on your device (/e/ or e). Think of the last sound you hear in the word bed. Select the sound or letter that spells that sound on your device (/d/ or d). If I say bed again but I change the sound /b/ to /r/, what would the new word be? Spell it or select in on your device.</p>
	<p>Materials:</p>

	None
Step 9: Word Dictation	<p>Directions:</p> <p>Listen again to our word “bed”</p> <p>Repeat “bed” again slowly. Let’s spell bed together. Who can spell the word bed for us on their device? (Give time and call on student) Yes, we will spell bed b, e, d. Let’s spell that word with our finger on our palm. I will say the letters as we write them.</p> <p>Say: Now pick up your pencil and write the word bed on your paper, and I will name the letters as you write them.</p> <p>Say: Look at the word you just wrote and underline the vowel. What is the vowel’s name? Select it on your device. Think of what sound the vowel e makes. The sound the vowel e makes is /e/. Go to the beginning of the word and sound out each letter in your head. Glide your finger underneath as you say the sounds quickly in your head. (Give time) Now, I will sound it out and blend it, watch as I do that.</p> <p>Repeat the procedures with the remaining words, discussing vocabulary as needed: red, set, tent, etc.</p> <p>Optional—you can have pictures of a bed and two other objects and have the students point to the picture that spells the word they just read prior to sounding it out and blending it for them (this could help ensure they are actually sounding it out correctly in their heads). Since we have already said the word in this step, you might choose to not do this at this time. You could use this advice during step 4 or any other time in the program that makes sense.</p>
	<p>Materials:</p> <p>Dictation paper</p>
Step 10: Sentence Dictation	<p>Directions:</p> <p>Say: Listen carefully as I say a sentence, and watch as I make a dash on the board for each word.</p> <p>The red hen is a pet.</p> <p>Make a dash on the board as you say each word.</p> <p>Say: Watch as I point to each dash and say the sentence again.</p> <p>Say the sentence again as you point to each dash.</p> <p>Say: Now you say the sentence in your head as I point to each dash. Say the sentence in your head again, this time making a dash on your paper for each word we say. Look at your dashes again and say the sentence in your head, pointing to each dash as you say a word, I will model with you.</p> <p>Say: Now write the sentence on your paper, one word on each dash. Put your pencil down when you finish, and go back and</p>

	<p>check the sentence. If you find a mistake, do not erase it. Put brackets around the mistake, and write the correct word above it. Give support to students at this time as they work.</p> <p>Say: Now point to your sentence, read the words in your head, as I read the sentence out loud while you point.</p> <p>The red hen is a pet.</p> <p>Repeat the procedure, if time permits, with the remaining sentence: Ned can get wet.</p>
	<p>Materials:</p> <p>Dictation paper</p>