Dear Family:

Unit 5 introduces your child to the **schwa**. This is defined as a vowel with an unexpected sound. When a word contains a schwa, the vowel most often sounds like a short *u* or a short *i*, but not necessarily equal to it. An example is the word **salad**. The second *a* sounds similar to a short *i*, but not exactly like it. Schwa is marked as follows:

\[
\text{schwa: } \theta
\]

\[
\text{salad: } \theta \text{ä} \text{l a d}
\]

Often, the second syllable of a two-syllable word is **unaccented** (or not emphasized) and contains a vowel that is not easily heard correctly. In these cases the schwa sound is “swallowed up.” If this **unaccented second syllable** ends with the consonant *n*, the vowel sound may be “lost” (as in the word **mitten = /mit n/**) And when the letter *e* is followed by *t* in an unaccented second syllable, the *e* sounds like /i/, as in **velvet**.

Schwa often does not pose a problem for students when reading. I will teach them to try the /û/ sound if a word does not sound right. However, schwa may be troublesome when spelling. I will teach students to listen carefully for a **schwa** and let them know that spelling for this vowel sound can be treated like a sound option. They will learn to identify the **schwa** by indicating which vowel has the unexpected sound. Once we work with schwa, they will realize it is not so bad!

Lastly, I will be working on additional dictionary skills to help students look up words with spelling options.

Sincerely,
Cursive Connectives Practice Review Worksheet

Practice These Connectives! This worksheet provides practice with connecting cursive letters that have been taught in previous Units. These clusters are for practice and may not be real words. Practice each set of connectives several times and be sure to leave a space between each set as shown in the example on line 1.

- dgdg dgdg
- ququ
- qudg
- dog
- quit
- greed
- quad
- legs

Forward Slant, most commonly used by right-handed students.
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- dgdg dgdg
- ququ qudg
- dog quit
- greed quad
- legs

Backward Slant, most commonly used by left-handed students.
Do the “Find the Schwa” Activity

Have your child read the words and underline or “scoop” the syllables. Does the second syllable have a schwa vowel sound? Mark each syllable as closed and be sure to mark the vowel in each syllable as short (˘) or schwa (ə).

- seldom
  - c c
- punish
  - c c
- wagon
- ribbon
- relish
- seven
- topic
- cabin
- lesson
- mitten

nutshell
muffin
salad
gallon
limit
pollen
catfish
falcon
exit
public
**Guess Which One**

Read the sentence(s). Write the correct Sound Alike Word from the box on the lines below.

- **weather**
- **whether**

1. I think that the hot ________________ is amazing!
2. Do you want to come home to escape the wet ________________?
3. I do not know ________________ or not I want to munch that much cake.
4. Does Frank know ________________ he will quit the travel club or not?

**Sentence Creation**

Create one sentence for each Sound Alike Word. The sentence should use the word correctly and demonstrate the meaning of the word.

1. ________________

2. ________________
Do the “Find the Schwa” Activity

Have your child read the words and underline or “scoop” the syllables. Does the second syllable have a schwa vowel sound? Mark each syllable as closed and be sure to mark the vowel in each syllable as short (˘) or schwa (ə).

- jacket
- panic
- edit

- submit
- helmet
- puppet

- velvet
- bucket
- ticket

Do the “Dictionary Skills” Activity

Have your child put the words from the box in alphabetical order on the lines below. Which word will come first in the dictionary? Second?

- pocket
- random
- salad
- confuse
- planet
- travel
- lemon
- packet
- volume
- contact
- absent
- method

1 _______________ 5 _______________ 9 _______________
2 _______________ 6 _______________ 10 _______________
3 _______________ 7 _______________ 11 _______________
4 _______________ 8 _______________ 12 _______________
**Guess Which One**

Read the sentence(s). Write the correct Sound Alike Word from the box on the lines below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>father</th>
<th>farther</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Which man ran ________________?
2. Jake and his ________________ are best friends.
3. The ________________ you travel the more you know.
4. The plane will have to travel ________________ than the ship.
5. Her ________________ has a bike and a helmet.

**Sentence Creation**

Create one sentence for each Sound Alike Word. The sentence should use the word correctly and demonstrate the meaning of the word.

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________