

R-Controlled Vowels ar, or, er, ir, and ur

How to use: Print first for the main practice. Then use the device to repeat activities and save progress.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Recognize r-controlled vowels ar, or, er, ir, and ur in words
- 2 Say the sound each r-controlled vowel pattern makes
- 3 Sort words into the correct r-controlled vowel group

MINI LESSON

When the letter r follows a vowel, it takes over and changes the vowel's sound completely. We call these r-controlled vowels — also known as bossy r!

ar and or — different sounds

- ar makes the /ar/ sound — like the beginning of "are."
- Example: car, star, farm, bark.
- or makes the /or/ sound — like the beginning of "ore."
- Example: for, corn, sport, born.

er, ir, and ur — one shared sound

- er, ir, and ur all make the same /ur/ sound.
- er: her, fern, term.
- ir: bird, first, shirt.
- ur: turn, curl, hurt.

How to spot bossy r

- Look for a vowel followed directly by the letter r.
- Say the word — if the vowel sounds "bossed around," bossy r is there!

VOCABULARY

R-controlled vowel	A vowel whose sound is changed by the letter r that comes right after it <i>e.g. the a in car, the o in corn, the i in bird</i>
Bossy r	A nickname for r-controlled vowels — the r "bosses" the vowel and changes its sound <i>e.g. star, for, her, bird, turn</i>
/ar/ sound	The sound the vowel team ar makes, like the beginning of "are" <i>e.g. car, star, farm</i>
/or/ sound	The sound the vowel team or makes, like the beginning of "ore" <i>e.g. for, corn, born</i>
/ur/ sound	The shared sound made by er, ir, and ur <i>e.g. her, bird, turn</i>

Bossy r Patterns

ar

-> /ar/ car . star . farm . bark

or

-> /or/ for . corn . sport . born

er

ir

ur

-> /ur/

her . bird . turn . shirt . curl

All three make the SAME sound!

Spot bossy r!

st

ar

-> /ar/

c

or

n

-> /or/

b

ir

d

-> /ur/

When a vowel meets r, bossy r takes over.

! Ask yourself: "Is there a vowel right before the r? What sound does that vowel-r pair make?"

EXERCISES — SORT & MATCH

Write each word under the correct r-controlled vowel column.

WORDS TO SORT

car bird turn star her curl corn first hurt farm shirt fur born fern
purse bark chirp nurse

ar / or (/ar/ and /or/)

er / ir (/ur/ sound)

ur (/ur/ sound)

EXERCISES — MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. What happens when the letter r comes right after a vowel?

- The r is silent and the vowel makes its usual sound.
- The r changes the vowel's sound — it becomes an r-controlled vowel.
- The vowel is removed from the word.

2. Which word has the ar r-controlled vowel?

- star
- bird
- turn

3. Which word has the or r-controlled vowel?

- fern
- curl
- corn

4. Which three r-controlled vowels all make the same /ur/ sound?

- ar, or, ur
- er, ir, ur
- ar, er, ir

5. Which word has the ir r-controlled vowel?

- bird
- farm
- for

6. Which word has the er r-controlled vowel?

- bark
- born
- fern

7. Which word has the ur r-controlled vowel?

- sport
- curl
- chart

8. The words her, bird, and turn all rhyme because ____

- er, ir, and ur all make the same /ur/ sound.
- they all end in the letter r.
- they are all short vowel words.

9. Which group of words all have the ar pattern?

- her, fern, term
- corn, born, sport
- car, farm, bark

10. Why are r-controlled vowels sometimes called bossy r?

- Because the vowel tells the r what sound to make.
- Because the r changes the vowel's sound and takes control.
- Because the r is always silent in these words.

ASSESSMENT

PARENT / TEACHER CHECKLIST

- Reads ar and or words aloud with the correct sound (e.g., says "star" and "corn" correctly).
- Reads er, ir, and ur words aloud with the /ur/ sound (e.g., says "her," "bird," and "turn" correctly).
- Points to the vowel-r pair in a written word and names which r-controlled pattern it is.
- Sorts r-controlled vowel words into the correct buckets (ar-or, er-ir, or ur) without help.