



The mule is making  
a costume!



The mule is dressed like a duke.

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# Let's Get Ready to Read!

Dear Parents and Educators,

Building a strong foundation in short-vowel sounds is a critical step in learning how to read. This guide will help you fully utilize the engaging and comical book *The Mule Named Dude* by Sandy Baker and Torrey Maloof. It will provide you with instructional suggestions, fun activities, and multiple ways to assess learning.

The book *The Mule Named Dude* is designed to appeal to the nonreader and beginning reader alike. The colorful illustrations will engage readers and spark lively discussions about the text. The text itself is simple, repetitive, and often predictable to further heighten readability.

The included activities in this guide will provide nonreaders and beginning readers with opportunities to practice and strengthen their phonics and word-recognition skills as well as their reading-comprehension skills. As they read through the book and work through the activity sheets, they will begin to build a stable foundation on which to begin their journeys toward reading fluently.

## Materials Needed

- *The Mule Named Dude* book
- beads
- craft sticks
- glue
- index cards
- markers
- scissors
- toothpicks
- white scratch paper

## Helpful Advice

- Remain positive and encouraging.
- Model fluent reading by reading the book out loud.
- Point to each word as you say it.
- Stop often to talk about the book.
- Ask and answer questions about the book.
- Use the correct vocabulary for the parts of the book (*title, author, word, sentence, illustration, period, etc.*).
- If the child becomes bored or frustrated at any point, take a break!

## Quick Tips!

- Set aside a specific time each day to work on reading.
- Complete only a few activity sheets at a time.
- Review the directions on each activity sheet with the child.
- Go over the activity sheet answers together.

## Good to Know!

Learning long vowel team words (the spelling and the sound they make) will help children understand how to decode long vowel words on their own. Learning new sight words (words recognized on sight) and high-frequency words (words that occur most frequently in print) help children improve fluency. Challenge words are vocabulary words that are a little more challenging to read for beginning readers. All three sets of these words should be reviewed prior to reading the book.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Color It!

**Directions:** Help Dude choose new costumes to make. Read the word on each costume. If the word has the **long u** sound, color it.

## Cool Costumes, Dude!

