One Syllable Words with Vowel Sound "err" (merry)

   The /err/ sound requires more curriculum decisions than any other sound except possibly the /or/ sound. Essentially, if **Mar**y, **merr**y and **marr**y are homonyms in your area then it is feasible, even advisable, to teach an /err/ sound to clean up a few issues. There are nine spellings of /err/ in the OnTrack Reading curriculum, but four of them are easily incorporated in the /ae/ lesson where words like *chair, bear, their*, and *share* can be explained as containing /ae/ sounds followed by the consonant /r/ sound Students generally have no trouble with such words once they know the /ae/ spellings.

   However, the other five spellings, "ar" (Mary), "er" (very), "arr" (marry), "err" (merry) and ere (where) introduce various issues, especially if all of these words sound like they have identical vowel sounds in the local dialect. In most other cases, both "ar" and "er" are treated as digraphs, so it makes sense to continue that practice here. In the case of "ere" only "where" and "there" (plus derivatives like "somewhere") and the archaic "ere" are encountered, and any other means of breaking apart "ere" into two sounds would just introduce new spellings of sounds, so it makes sense to include the "ere" spelling here. And "arr" and "err" are almost always pronounced the same in every word they appear with the exception of words like "charred" so again it works to include them in an /err/ lesson.

   The "ar" spelling of /err/ represents the fourth occurrence of the digraph "ar" in the curriculum and the digraph "er" represents the second occurrence. The others do not occur elsewhere because the "arr" spelling is not covered as a spelling of the /ar/ sound earlier. To make matters even more complicated, the list here is short because most occurrences of the /err/ sound spelled with these five spellings are multisyllable words. With that said, here is the one-syllable word list for the /err/ sound.

-ere-	-err-	-ar-	-arr-
there	err	scarce	**-er-**
where			
			(Both only occur as /err/ sounds in multisyllable words)