Max can tap and rap and act like an acrobat. Wow! What other fantastic things can that cat do?

Phonics Tales! are read-aloud stories designed to teach children phonics in a fun and focused way. Skills covered include long and short vowels, vowel pairs, bossy-r words, blends, digraphs, and more. Set learners on the road to reading success with every book in this kid-pleasing series!
That Cat Max

by Liza Charlesworth
illustrated by Stephen Lewis
I am a fan of that cat Max. Why?

Phonics Fact

The letter a is a vowel. A vowel can make a short sound. The short-a sound is found in words such as that, cat, and Max. What other short-a words can you find in this story? Look at the pictures, too!
Max can play catch.

I’m having a blast!
Max can cut the grass.
Max can chat with Sandy Blat about her brand-new tan hat.
Max can do crafts. He made that fancy basket.
Max can do math! He adds and subtracts super fast!

**Phonics Fact**
Sometimes the short-a sound comes in the second syllable of a word, such as subtracts.
Max can cook ham and mashed yams in a little black pan.
Max can drive the van to the snack stand. The apple pie there is grand!
Max has talent! He can tap and rap.

Rat-a-tat-tat!

I’m one cool cat and that is that!
Max can also play sax in my dad’s jazz band.
Max can even act like an acrobat!
But the best thing Max can do...
... is nap on my lap. Man, I love that cat Max!
Listen to the riddles. Then match each riddle with the right short-a word from the box.

**Word Box**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fast</th>
<th>grass</th>
<th>cat</th>
<th>tap</th>
<th>jam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nap</td>
<td>acrobat</td>
<td>hat</td>
<td>can</td>
<td>subtract</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. This pet says, “Meow!”

2. It is the opposite of slow.

3. This is a lot like jelly.

4. It is the opposite of can’t.

5. Sleepy babies do this in a crib.

6. You put this on your head to keep warm.

7. It is green and grows in backyards.

8. A person who does gymnastics is called this.

9. It is the opposite of add.

10. A kind of dancing that makes a lot of noise.

Short-a Cheer

Hooray for short a, the best sound around!
Let’s holler short-a words all over town!

There’s **map** and **plant** and **rap** and **cat**.
There’s **pan** and **band** and **stamp** and **hat**.
There’s **man** and **grass** and **jazz** and **tap**.
There’s **act** and **fast** and **snap** and **clap**.
Short a, short a, give a great cheer,

For the **happiest** sound that you ever will hear!

Make a list of other short-a words. Then use them in your cheer.