



Teacher Resource

Ages
3-6

101 Alphabet Activities



- Includes 101 Ideas for Teaching the Alphabet
- Spans Multiple Curriculum Areas
- Activities Individually Numbered and Titled
- Supports Kindergarten Standards





101

Alphabet

ACTIVITIES



Ages 3–6

By
Lisa Schwimmer Marier

Illustrations by
Gary Mohrman

Published by Totline® Publications
an imprint of

 **School Specialty**
Publishing

Author: Lisa Schwimmer Marier



Published by Totline® Publications
An imprint of School Specialty Publishing
Copyright © 2004 School Specialty Publishing

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Send all inquiries to:
School Specialty Publishing
3195 Wilson Drive NW
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49534

All Rights Reserved • Printed in the United States of America

101 Alphabet Activities—Ages 3–6
ISBN: 1-57029-485-2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 MAL 09 08 07 06 05 04



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Early Childhood Standards			
Correlation	4	Rhyme Time	31
Introduction	6	Questions, Questions!	32
Social and Emotional		First and Last Sounds	32
Development	7	Math	33
What's in a Name?	7	Alphabet Tree	33
I Am Me!	8	How Many?	34
Pictures and Portraits	9	Secret Letters	35
What's My Address?	10	Zip Zip Zippy	35
Family Alphabet Album	11	Sorting by Letter	36
Days of the Week	12	Nickels, Nickels, Nickels	36
Months of the Year	13	Yards of Yarn	37
Classroom Community		Science	38
Center	14	<i>It's Me</i> Cutouts	38
Nature Scavenger Hunt	15	Weather Words	39
Trains!	16	Water Works	39
Stop! and Other Signs	17	Oyster Shells	40
Let's Vote!	18	Letter Cookies	41
Class Picture Alphabet	19	Sand Letters	41
King Me!	19	Seasons	42
Mark It With an <i>X</i> !	20	Alphabet Soup	43
Vegetable Dip	20	How Does Your Garden	
Language and Literacy	21	Grow?	44
Alphabet Center	21	What Do Rocks Weigh?	45
Alphabet Matching Squares	22	What's for Dinner?	46
I Can See	23	Hold the Elevator	47
Alphabet Match	23	Alphabet Zoo	48
Which Word Doesn't Belong?	24	Music and Movement	49
Alphabet Bingo	25	Paint Walks and Silly Walks	49
Book of <i>L</i> 's	26	Body Letter Shapes	50
Letters from Home	26	Letter Clap Along	61
Where Are We?	27	Show Me <i>C</i> Words!	51
All About the Alphabet	28	Word Circle	52
Stencils	29	Jump, Jump, Jump Rope	53
Letter Tracing	29	Let's Go Fly a Kite	54
Let's Write a Letter	30	Alphabet Dance	55
Six Snakes!	30	Giggle Party	56
Riddle Me This!	31	Dance!	57
		The Big NOISE!	58
		Visual Arts	58
		Colors of the Alphabet	58
		Funny Faces	59
		What Is Yellow?	59
		Monster Masks	60
		Whose House Is This?	61
		Xtra-Special <i>X</i> 's	61
		Word Flowers	62
		Green Growing Gardens	63
		Silly Snakes	64
		Clay Letters	64
		Up, Up, and Away	65
		Fancy Letters	65
		Nature Letters	66
		Letter Collages	67
		Buzzing Bees	67
		Doggie <i>D</i> 's	68
		The <i>E</i> 's Have It!	68
		Letter Name Stamps	69
		Hello! Hats	69
		Painting <i>P</i> Party!	70
		Dramatic Play	71
		Acting Emotions	71
		Zoom!	72
		Who Am I?	72
		Teeth	73
		What Am I?	73
		Ants, Ants, Ants!	74
		Bus Stop	74
		What's in the Kitchen?	75
		Motor Skills	76
		Match Freeze	76
		Alphabet Toss	77
		A Bowl of Jelly	77
		Monkey Shines	78
		Under the Umbrella	78
		<i>O</i> Toss	79
		Quack, Quack, Duck Hunt	79
		Run!	80



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early Childhood Standards Correlation	Activity
1. Social and Emotional Development	
a. Seeks to be independent and recognizes own unique abilities. Shows perseverance and resiliency.	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12,13, 15, 17, 20, 26, 29, 38, 41, 50, 53, 55, 65, 69, 85, 89, 90, 101
b. Shows respect for self, others, and property.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 38, 44, 46, 49, 50, 60, 65, 67, 73, 82, 84, 85, 89, 101
c. Demonstrates proper care of their body.	42, 52, 89
d. Demonstrates an increasing awareness of and ability to control his or her emotions in age-appropriate ways.	3, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,17, 23, 44, 86
e. Is aware of own needs and is sensitive to those of others. Wants to be understood and understand others.	2, 3, 5,9, 12, 13, 14,15, 17, 23, 29, 42, 43, 44, 85, 86
f. Demonstrates a desire to learn and explore. Shows interest in the world and people in his or her environment.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,12, 13, 15,16, 17, 23, 25, 29, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 50, 53, 65, 73, 80, 88, 90, 92
g. Is interested in interacting with others and participates in activities and discussions. Expresses needs and wants appropriately.	ALL ACTIVITIES
2. Language and Literacy	
a. Uses language to tell stories and share information while maintaining a topic. Can retell stories and events.	2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 17, 23, 25, 29, 30, 31, 33, 43, 53, 62, 68, 70, 74, 88, 89, 92, 93
b. Develops oral language skills. Speaks understandably using most rules of grammar.	2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 17, 21, 23, 25, 29, 30, 31, 33, 31, 32, 68, 70, 74, 88, 89, 92
c. Demonstrates appropriate language.	2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 17, 21, 23, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 43, 68, 70, 74, 88, 89, 92
d. Uses a variety of vocabulary words to share concepts, experiences, and feelings.	2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 17, 21, 23, 25, 29, 30, 31, 33, 43, 68, 70, 74, 88, 89, 92, 98
e. Develops oral language by listening actively. Uses prior knowledge to make predictions and construct meaning.	2, 7, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 37, 89, 92, 93
f. Demonstrates an enjoyment of and understanding of the importance of reading. Understands concept of print.	2, 7, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24 25, 27, 28, 29, 37, 93
g. Becomes familiar with and identifies letters and letter names.	ALL ACTIVITIES
h. Begins to use print concepts to write text.	2, 7, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 28, 27, 29, 37, 39, 46, 47, 77, 83, 85
i. Begins to develop phonemic awareness.	1, 3, 7, 9, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37,39, 46, 48, 52, 57, 59, 74, 77, 80, 83, 89, 95, 100
3. Math	
a. Develops an understanding of numerals in the environment, including matching, counting, patterning, and grouping. Understands what numbers represent.	40, 98
b. Begins to understand simple shape concepts and can recognize and identify shapes in the environment.	36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 61,

STANDARDS CORRELATION

Early Childhood Standards Correlation	Activity
c. Is able to make comparisons and understands the concept of measurement.	21, 39, 41
d. Understands patterns and their relationships. Is able to use this information to construct meaning about the world and make predictions.	25, 27, 28, 34, 37, 38
4. Science	
a. Communicates observations and explorations. Shares information in a variety of ways.	7, 25, 40, 41, 42, 43,44, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 61, 76, 78, 91
b. Demonstrates and develops a sense of curiosity about the world through observation and participation in activities of exploration and discovery.	8, 25, 41, 42, 43, 44,45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 73, 74,75, 76, 78, 80, 89, 91
c. Makes connections and comparisons, and notices patterns and processes in the environment.	42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48,49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 76
5. Music and Movement	
a. Participates in a variety of musical activities. Creates music through experimentation and improvisation with a variety of musical instruments.	55, 57, 62, 64, 65
b. Participates in dance and creative movement.	55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 62, 64, 65, 96
c. Explores own voice as musical instrument. Understands body is needed to use instruments and participate in musical creation.	56, 57, 58, 59
d. Uses movement to understand new concepts.	10, 11, 16, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 74, 80, 90, 92, 96, 97, 98
6. Visual Arts	
a. Recognizes forms.	9, 27, 42, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85
b. Can put shapes and lines together to create a design.	67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85
c. Uses a variety of art media and develops art skills through experimentation and exploration using a variety of materials and processes.	2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 26, 27, 37, 42, 45, 47, 52, 55, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85
7. Dramatic Play	
a. Develops positive sense of self through participation in dramatic play activities. Explores emotions, relationships, and imagination. Acts out a variety of roles.	7, 8, 10, 52, 54, 55, 58, 60, 62, 69, 84, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93 97
8. Motor Skills	
a. Develops age-appropriate gross motor skills. Demonstrates a sense of balance and progression of locomotion skills.	11, 55, 56, 60, 61, 64,65, 87, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101
b. Develops age-appropriate perceptual motor skills. Demonstrates knowledge of parts of the body, direction of movement, and understanding of directional vocabulary.	11, 42, 55, 56, 59, 60, 64, 65, 87, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101
c. Uses age-appropriate gross manipulative skills. Develops skills in catching and throwing.	95, 98, 99
d. Develops fine-motor skills and eye-hand coordination.	15, 26, 28, 57, 59, 68, 75, 83, 85, 95
e. Listens well and follows rules.	11, 26, 28, 57, 59, 62, 94, 96, 97, 98



INTRODUCTION

101 Alphabet Activities is divided into eight chapters, each one reflecting an early childhood curriculum area. You will find activities to foster the children's social and emotional development, language and literacy skills, and understanding of math concepts. You will also find science activities that strengthen the children's observation and reasoning skills, music and movement activities that get everyone involved, and group art activities that inspire creativity and cooperation. There are also activities for group dramatic play and activities to help children develop their fine and large motor skills.

Young children love to learn about the alphabet—and you will find endless opportunities for extending and reinforcing these concepts throughout the day. The ideas in *101 Alphabet Activities* are only the beginning.

CHAPTER 1

Social and Emotional Development



1 WHAT'S IN A NAME?

≡ Materials

None

≡ Activity

Children enjoy being acknowledged by others. Play this fun game to boost children's self-esteem as well as help them practice learning the beginning letters of their names. Start by saying "What name begins with . . .?" If a child's name begins with that letter, he or she can raise a hand. Write the child's name on the board or on chart paper and all the children can identify the first letter and say that child's name. Play this game until you have said each child's name.

© For younger children: Start by saying "I see Leah, I see Leah. Leah begins with the letter L." Write the child's name on the board or on chart paper as you say each name.



2 I AM ME!

Materials

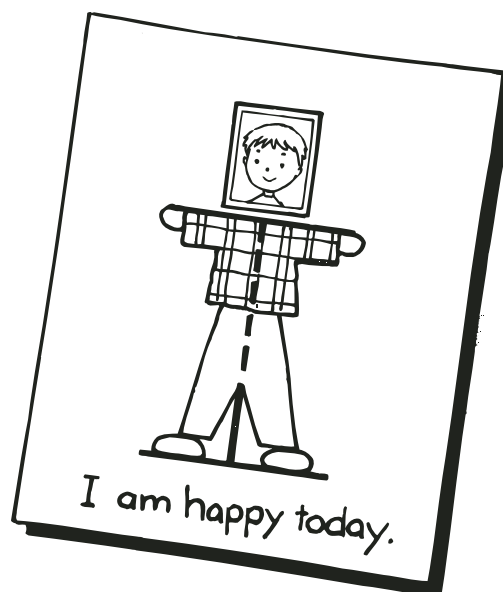
Construction paper
Old magazines
Children's scissors
Crayons or markers
Glue

Activity

Send a letter home, asking parents or caregivers to provide a photograph of their child (portrait or head shot) that they can use for an art project. Then help children make figures of themselves using the uppercase or lowercase letter *I*. They can glue their pictures at the top of the *I* and create arms, legs, clothing, and so on. Encourage children to cut pictures from magazines that help describe them, such as things they like or places they are interested in. These can be glued to their projects, collage style.

Ask each child to finish sentences about her- or himself, such as "I am . . .," "I like . . .," "I don't like . . .," and so on. Write children's sentences across the bottom of their pictures. As they work, encourage children to share other things about themselves, beginning with the word "I."

Extension: This is an excellent activity to engage reluctant children. Invite children to talk about themselves, using their pictures to help them. Ask children to also name their favorite animals, favorite song, or favorite movie. Children can tell a story about themselves or their families. If appropriate for your group, encourage children to ask each other questions.



3 PICTURES AND PORTRAITS

Materials

Family pictures from home
 Instant camera
 Drawing paper
 Crayons and markers

Activity

Send a letter home, asking parents and caregivers to send family pictures to school with their children. Make sure they write children's names on the backs of the pictures they send to school. Talk to children about family pictures, emphasizing that the words *picture* and *portrait* begin with the letter *p*. Create a bulletin board entitled "Pictures and Portraits." Post children's family pictures on the wall. Then, if possible, take pictures of each of the children with an instant camera. Let them watch as their images appear on the photos. Post the pictures on the bulletin board along with their family pictures. Or, children can draw portraits of themselves to add to the bulletin board.

Variation: Using the photos or drawn portraits, invite children to create individual collages about themselves. Glue each photo or picture on a large sheet of construction paper or posterboard. Invite children to cut out pictures from magazines and glue them to the posterboard to create a portrait collage.



4 WHAT'S MY ADDRESS?

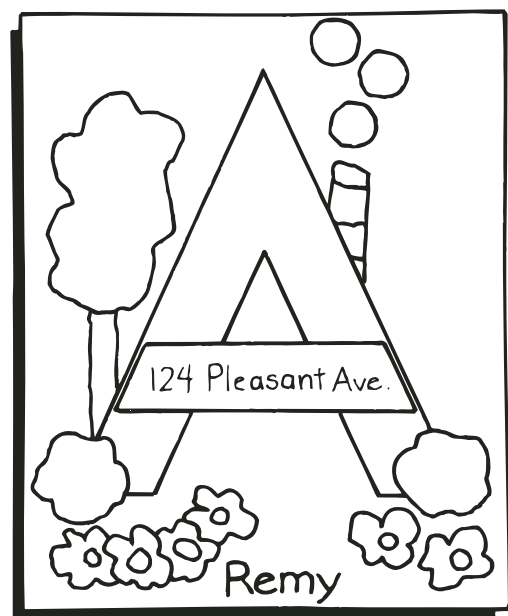
Materials

Cardboard
 Construction paper, various colors
 Scissors
 Markers and crayons
 Glue

Activity

This is a fun, creative way for children to begin to learn their addresses. Cut out large A "houses" from cardboard or construction paper, making the connector in the A large enough to write in. Glue the A houses onto sheets of paper. Then cut strips of paper to fit the A connector. Write each child's address on a strip. Help children learn the numbers and street names of their addresses. After they have practiced reciting their addresses, glue the address strips on the A "houses." Children can add chimneys, bushes, trees, and flowers, if they wish, to their A "houses." Post on a wall or bulletin board. Write each child's name under his or her A "house."

Extension: Practice addresses by challenging children to write letters home to their families. Encourage them to include information about what they are learning in school. Provide envelopes and stamps and help children mail their letters. They will enjoy watching their family's reaction to the mail they receive!



5 FAMILY ALPHABET ALBUM

Materials

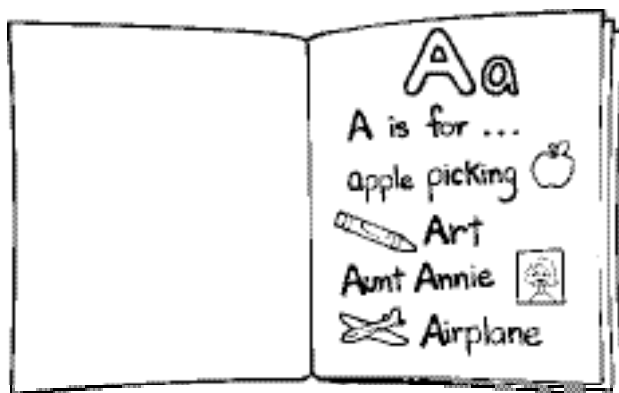
Construction paper or other strong paper
 Markers or crayons
 Three-hole folders
 Three-hole punch

Activity

Making Family Alphabet Albums is a great way for children to begin learning the alphabet while engaging families in working together. Begin by sending a letter home outlining your plan for this fun activity. Use a three-hole punch to punch holes in construction paper. At the top of each page, write the upper- and lowercase letter you are working with that week. Place a letter page in a three-hole folder for each child to take home. Ask family members to help their child come up with ideas for his or her letter page. Children can think of things, people, pets, and events from their own lives that begin with each letter of the alphabet. For example, for the letter *a*, one child may think *a* is for apple picking (something they do as a family), Aunt Annie, and art (something the child enjoys). Encourage children and their families to use photos, drawings, or other pictures to identify each item and glue these to their letter pages. Parents or older siblings can help by writing the names of things by the pictures.

Continue to add letter pages to each child's folder throughout the year. Encourage children and their families to add to their letter pages whenever they can, making a wonderful family alphabet album they can share.

🌀 **For older children:** Challenge older children to find words that begin with each letter. They may include these by asking family members to help them write the new words on the album pages with them.



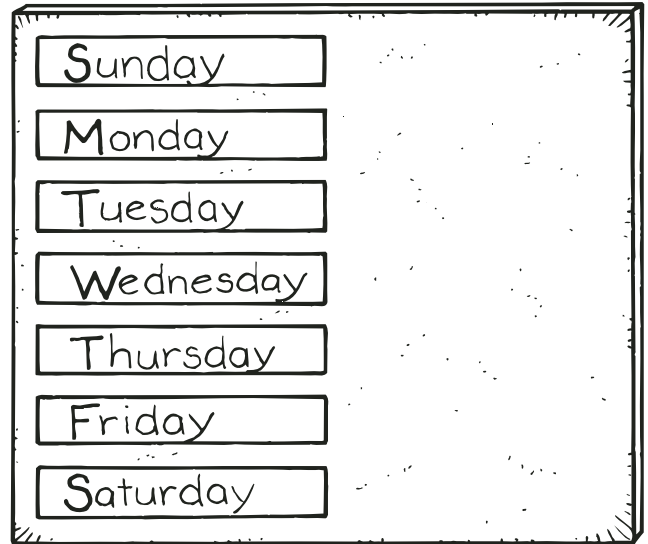
6 DAYS OF THE WEEK

Materials

Flannelboard
 Square flannel pieces
 Construction paper
 Scissors
 Markers
 Glue

Activity

Discussion of the days of the week is a great way to help children recognize letters while learning the order of days. Write each day of the week on construction paper. Be sure to highlight the beginning letter of each word. Cut out each word and glue a small square of flannel to the back. Place the words in order on a flannelboard. Talk about the days of the week with children, emphasizing each day and pointing out the beginning letter. As part of your discussion, ask children what they do on certain days of the week, always pointing to the appropriate word to help them make connections. Place the flannelboard materials in the Alphabet Center (activity #17) for later use.



- ☉ **For older children:** Place the words out of order on the flannelboard. Ask children to help you put the days of the week in order.
- ☉ **Note:** You may want to keep the focus of this activity to letter recognition for younger children. The blended sound of the *Th* in *Thursday* could be confusing for some children learning letter sounds.

7 MONTHS OF THE YEAR

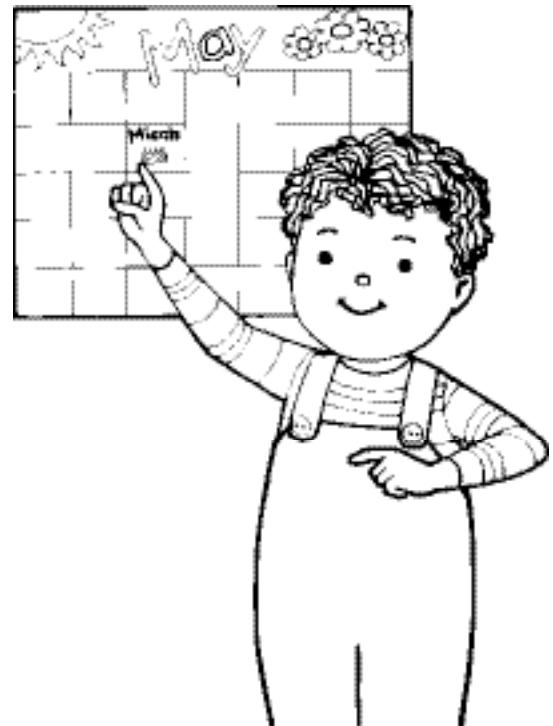
Materials

Construction paper
Ruler
Markers

Activity

This activity is a great opportunity to talk about seasonal changes during the year, as well as special occasions celebrated within your classroom. Create a large calendar and invite children to learn the names of each month, emphasizing the beginning letters and their sounds. Talk about what is the same and what is different about each month. When does spring begin? In what month does autumn arrive? Encourage children to share what month is their birthday month. Write children's birthdays on the calendar. Display the calendar in your classroom throughout the year. Emphasize beginning letters and sounds at the beginning of each month.

For older children: Provide a calendar sheet for each child at the beginning of the month. Help children write the name of the month and the days. Children can write or draw in special days of the month and decorate their calendars as they wish. Encourage children to share their calendars with their families, inviting family members to add special days, as well.



8 CLASSROOM COMMUNITY CENTER

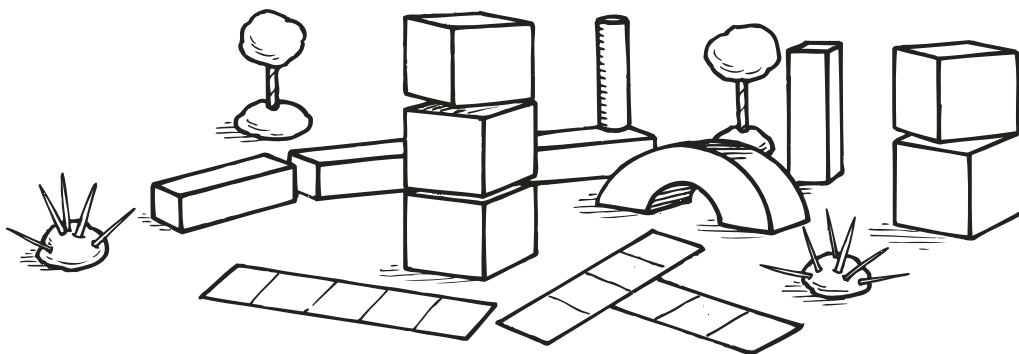
Materials

Blocks
 Empty boxes
 Cardboard
 Various art materials to make buildings, trees, and so on

Activity

Talk about what children know about their community. Explain to children that the neighborhoods where they live are communities and their school is a community, too. Emphasize that the word *community* begins with the letter *c*. Take children on a walk to observe things in their school or neighborhood community. Then set up a Community Center in your classroom where children can use blocks, boxes, straws, toothpicks, clay, cardboard, crayons, and other materials to create their own communities.

- ☉ **For younger children:** Provide crayons or paint to draw or paint houses, schools, or other things in their community.
- ☉ **For older children:** Talk about some of the buildings and areas in a community, such as a town hall, schools, shops, parks, playgrounds, and homes. Challenge children to create a community by choosing a building or area to re-create using the materials available. Help them set up a “community” within the center. Allow time for children to continue this activity throughout your study. Emphasize the beginning letters and sounds whenever possible.



9 NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT


Materials

Posterboard or prepared bulletin board
Markers
Glue
Tape

Activity

Plan ahead by sending a letter home informing parents that children will be working on initial consonants. Then take children on a nature walk. As children hunt for familiar objects in nature, ask them to name some of the things they see, such as squirrels, trees, grass, butterflies, or dogs. Talk about what they see and ask children what letters the words begin with. Then invite children to find things in nature they can collect, such as leaves, grass, acorns, sticks, and pebbles. When you return to the classroom, help children create a group nature collage with the objects collected. Glue their nature items onto a large sheet of posterboard or on a prepared bulletin board. When the collage is complete, write the names of the items around the collage.

Send a letter home inviting parents and families to take nature walks with their children, as well, and talk about the beginning letters of the objects in nature.

 **Variation:** Children can sort the objects they collect by letter. Challenge children to name each item and its beginning letter. Children can group their nature objects by letter sound.



10 TRAINS!

Materials

None

Activity

Ask children if they have seen any trains. What kind of trains? Long, short, passenger trains? Freight trains? Talk about how many trains carry both passengers and freight. Ask children how many of them have been on a train. What were their *train* trips like? Where did they go? Who was on the train with them? Emphasize that the word *train* begins with the letter *t*. Then invite children to make their own train. Children line up behind you or another adult leader, placing their hands on the shoulders of the person in front. Move around the room like a train, making train noises. Stop and disconnect cars, reconnect somewhere else, stop and pick up passengers, stop and load freight or mail, and so on.

- ☉ **Variation:** Children can create their own trains. Cut rectangles from construction paper and give each child one or two. Children can draw pictures of things in the train car that begin with the letter *t*. Connect the train car rectangles and display as a train in your classroom.
- ☉ **Note:** You may want to keep the focus of this activity to letter recognition for younger children. The blended sound of the *tr* in *train* could be confusing for some children.



11 STOP! AND OTHER SIGNS

Material

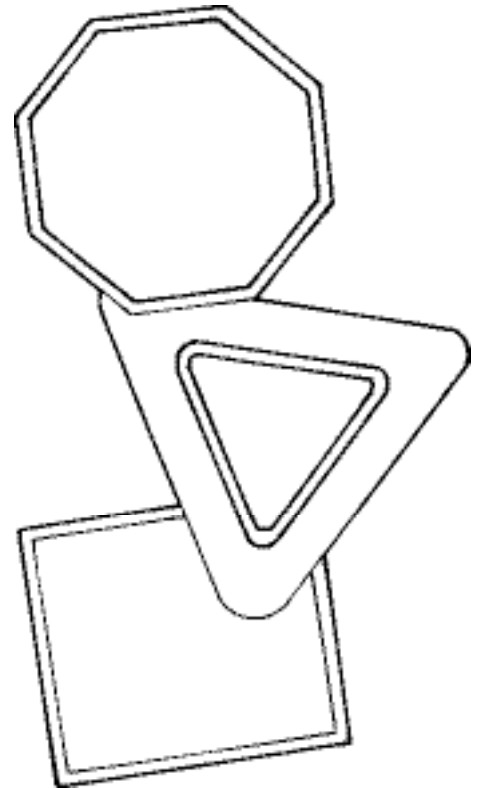
Pictures of various signs
 Construction paper
 Crayons and markers
 Children's scissors

Activity

Talk about signs that children see all around them. Point out any signs in your classroom. What kinds of signs can they think of? Emphasize that the words *stop*, *slow*, and *speed* all begin with the letter *s* and they are all types of signs. Show various pictures of signs and talk about what they mean. Make paper and art materials available for children to use to make signs, either signs you have discussed or their own signs. Children can tape the signs to their desks or chairs or bring them home to share with their families.

Then play "Red Light, Green Light" with children. One child is the leader and the other children stand on the other side of the room. The leader says "green light" and the others can advance toward him or her. When the leader says "red light," they must stop. The first person to tag the leader then becomes the leader for the next game.

🌀 **Extension:** Invite children to make traffic signs for a fun game. Create a "track," placing the signs along a walkway. Children must follow directions on the signs as they either walk, run, skip, tumble, or crawl along the track.



12 LET'S VOTE!

Materials

None

Activity

Ask children what they think the word *vote* means. What letter does it begin with? Explain that to vote means to make a choice. Give examples, such as voting for President of the United States, voting for certain laws, or voting for what to have for lunch! Then give children opportunities to vote, such as voting for what they will do that day, the color of the day, the best movie characters, and so on. Tally children's votes on the board. If possible, have a voting board throughout the year, voting for things as they learn.

🌀 **For older children:** Give older children a chance to vote on classroom rules. Provide rules that must be followed and write them on the board. They can choose which rules are more important and which are less. Then challenge children to vote on the order of importance.




13 CLASS PICTURE ALPHABET

Materials

Photographs and/or pictures cut from magazines
Scissors
Markers

Activity

This is a great way to help children understand the concept of making group decisions. Collect large pictures or photographs, making sure you have at least two for each letter of the alphabet. Explain to children that you will make decisions together to create a class picture alphabet. Show the pictures for each letter of the alphabet to the children. Challenge them to choose which picture they would like for that particular letter. Children can vote for their choice by raising their hands as you show each set of pictures. Discuss each letter and its sound as you create your class alphabet. Then post the chosen pictures on a bulletin board in alphabetical order, along with the appropriate lowercase beginning letter. Review the class picture alphabet throughout your study of each letter.

 **For young children:** Show children pictures and talk about the first letter sounds as you create the bulletin board.


14 KING ME!

Materials

Decks of playing cards

Activity

This is a fun way to involve parent volunteers and teach children some new games they can play with their families. Divide your class into small groups or pairs. Give each pair or group a deck of cards. Invite children to play the card game "War." Divide the deck into equal amounts of cards for each child in the group or pair. Each child then lays down his or her first card. Whoever has the highest card wins. The winner then takes the faceup cards and adds them to the bottom of his or her card pile. If a child gets a king, he or she can shout out, "king!" Continue the game as long as children are interested.

 **For younger children:** Invite them to sort through decks of cards as a group or in pairs. When a child finds a king, he or she can shout, "king!"

15 MARK IT WITH AN X!

Materials

Chalk or crayons and markers
Butcher paper

Activity

Invite children to play tic-tac-toe! This is a great way to introduce the letter *x* and allow the children to practice writing. Pair the children with others and help them make tic-tac-toe outlines. Use chalk outside or draw the outlines on large sheets of butcher paper with crayons or markers. One child plays with *x*'s and one plays with *o*'s, taking turns filling in the boxes. The first child with *x*'s or *o*'s across, down, or diagonally is the winner. Children can continue drawing outlines and playing the game. Place the tic-tac-toe materials in the Alphabet Center (activity #17) for children to use later.

16 VEGETABLE DIP

Materials

Various vegetables, such as carrots, celery, cauliflower, green beans, broccoli, cucumbers, radishes, mushrooms
Ranch dressing
Small plastic containers
Small and large paper plates
Knives (for adult use only)
Plastic knives and spoons

Activity

For a tactile experience, invite children, along with parent volunteers, to help cut up vegetables for a fun "v for vegetable" snack. Children can wash the vegetables and use plastic knives to help cut the softer vegetables. Stress the letter *v* as you work. Then divide the class into small groups. Give each group a large plate of cut vegetables and a container filled with ranch dressing. Parent volunteers can serve the dressing to each child. Invite children to dip their vegetables in the dressing for a yummy, healthful snack. As you enjoy your vegetables, challenge children to think of ways they can make *v*'s with their fingers, arms, and legs. After the snack, invite them to work with a partner to make *v*'s on the floor with their whole bodies.

CHAPTER 2

Language and Literacy

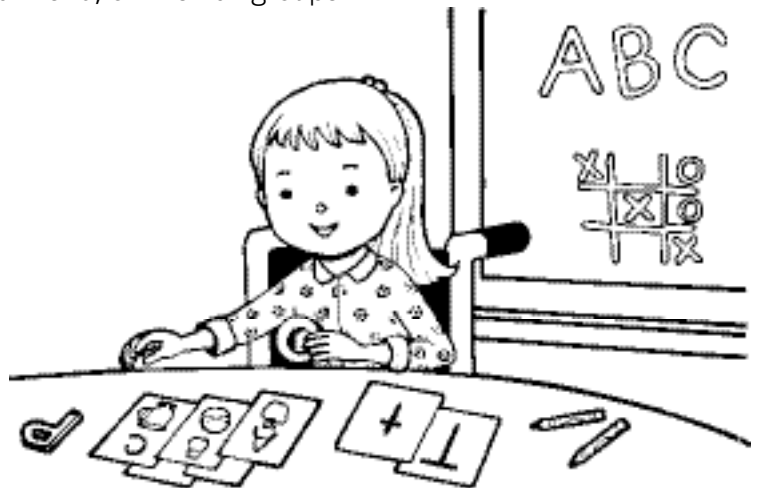
17 ALPHABET CENTER

Materials

- Chalkboard
- Chalk
- Dry-erase board and markers
- Paper
- Crayons and markers
- Letter magnets
- Alphabet puzzles
- Alphabet and letter books

Activity

Create an Alphabet Center in your classroom. Wall off a space in the room or provide a small area for children to practice the alphabet independently. Place the listed materials in the Alphabet Center, along with chairs and tables for children to use as they practice. You may also include many of the materials from the activities in this book, such as alphabet cards (#21), Alphabet Matching Squares (#18), and tic-tac-toe (#15). Encourage children to use the Alphabet Center as often as they like during independent time. Children can work by themselves, with a friend, or in small groups.



18 ALPHABET MATCHING SQUARES

Materials

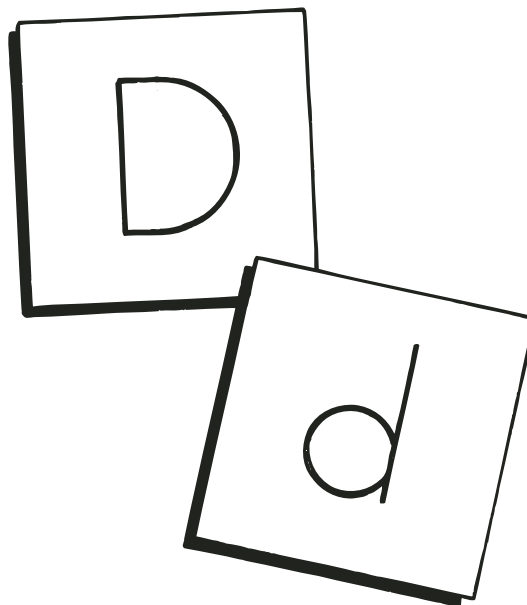
Light-colored construction paper
Markers
Clear packing tape

Activity

This activity creates a number of possibilities for children to practice the alphabet. Make two sets of large squares for each letter. Write uppercase letters on one side and lowercase letters on the other. If possible, laminate each letter. Or you can encase each letter in clear packing tape. Children can match the uppercase letters with the lowercase letters or use both sets of cards and match uppercase letters or lowercase letters to each other. Place the matching squares in the Alphabet Center (activity #17) for children to use independently later.

Note: You can use these squares throughout your study:

- Hold them up as you talk about letters
- For children to place items next to for that letter
- Older children can match letters or match uppercase to lowercase letters
- Younger children can match lowercase to lowercase using both sets of letters



19 I CAN SEE . . .

Materials

Objects that begin with specific letters

Activity

Encourage letter recognition as you help children see everyday items in their surroundings. Start by displaying the letter you are learning, for example, the letter *s*. Set out objects that begin with the letter *s* in the classroom. Explain to children that they are looking for objects in the classroom (or outdoors) that begin with the letter *s*, saying, "I can see something that starts with the letter *s*." Children look around the room for objects that begin with that letter, such as *seat*, *sweater*, *soap*, *sun*, and so on. Extend the activity by inviting each child to be the leader.

20 ALPHABET MATCH

Materials

Posterboard or other stiff paper

Old magazines

Scissors

Markers

Activity

Alphabet matching helps children become more familiar with letters and letter sounds. This is also a great game children can take home and play with their families. Cut 6 to 10 card-sized squares for each child. Cut pictures from magazines to make picture cards. Make a combination of lowercase letter cards and picture cards with beginning sounds that match. Children will match lowercase letters to each other or match lowercase letters to pictures of things that begin with that letter. For example, children can match two *c*'s or they can match a lowercase *c* to a picture card of a cat, cat, car, can, cot, cow, or other *c* word. Show children how to lay all their cards facedown. They can then turn over two cards, trying to match two of the cards. If there is a match, the player can take those cards off the table. If there is no match, the player flips the cards facedown and tries again. Emphasize the letters or the beginning letter of the words as the children play. If appropriate, help them say the words, as well.

Add a new pair of matching cards to each child's deck, extending their learning throughout the session.

21 WHICH WORD DOESN'T BELONG?

Materials

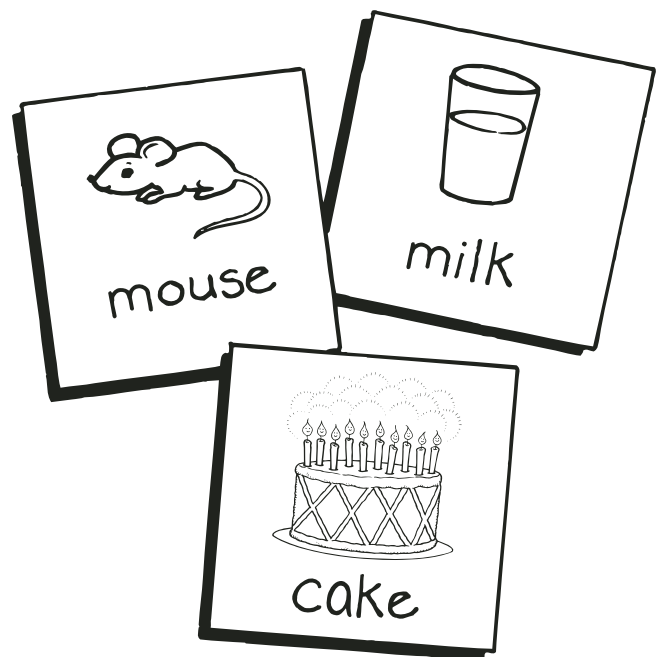
Magazines
 8" x 10" sheets of cardboard or other stiff paper
 Scissors
 Markers
 Glue

Activity

Cut pictures from magazines of things that begin with specific letters. Glue the pictures individually to cardboard and write the words under the pictures. Explain to children that you will show them three words along with pictures. For example, show them pictures of a mouse, a glass of milk, and a cake. Tell them that two words begin with the same letter, and one does not. One word begins with a different letter. As you show the cards, ask children to say the words with you, identifying the beginning letter of each word. Then challenge them to indicate which word of the three does not begin with the same letter.

These picture-word cards can be used for other activities, as well, such as matching games, letter recognition, or picture-letter identification. Place in the Alphabet Center (#17) for children to use independently.

For younger children: Show children two pictures. Say the words, emphasizing the beginning letters. Then ask children, as an example, "Which word begins with the letter *t*?"



22 ALPHABET BINGO

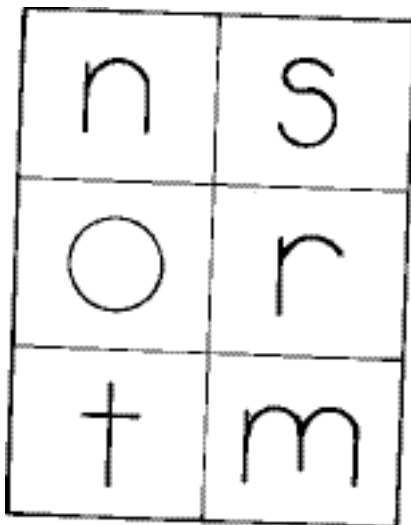
Materials

- Large blank index cards
- Felt-tip pen
- Ruler
- Various items to use as card markers

Activity

This activity helps children become more comfortable with identifying letters. Create cards with 4 to 12 large squares, depending on the abilities of the children. Write various lowercase letters (in no order) in the squares, making bingo cards. Provide small markers for children to use, such as buttons. Call out each letter, one at a time, giving children a chance to find that letter on their cards. If a child has that letter on his or her card, he or she places a marker on that letter. Place the bingo materials in the Alphabet Center (activity #17) for children to experiment with later.

- ☉ For younger children: Have them fill each letter space on the card and then call "bingo!"
- ☉ For older children: If they get a line of letters either across, down, or diagonally, they can call "bingo!"



23 BOOK OF L'S

Materials

Drawing paper
Markers or crayons
Stapler

Activity

This is an excellent way to introduce or refamiliarize children with the library. Take a trip to the school or community library. Ask children, "What do you do when you go to the library?" "How many of you have checked a book out of the library?" "Can anyone tell me how to check out a book?" If possible, check out books to read with your class. In the classroom, invite children to create a class book of /s. Ask children to think of words that begin with the letter / and write children's ideas on the board. Write each / word on a sheet of paper. Give one to each child and invite each of them to decorate the page. Staple the pages together to create a book of /s. Display in the classroom or in the Alphabet Center (activity #17).

 **For older children:** Older children can make individual books of /s.

24 LETTERS FROM HOME

Materials

Construction paper
Markers
Clear packing tape
Alphabet Matching Squares (activity #18)

Activity

Make a set of large squares for each letter. Write uppercase letters on one side and lowercase letters on the other. If possible, laminate each letter or encase each letter in clear packing tape. (Use the Alphabet Matching Squares from activity #18, if possible.) Each week, assign one or two children to bring home a laminated letter of the alphabet to their families. Then families can help children find things around the house that begin with that letter. For example, a plate, pin, poster, and pot for the letter *p*. Each child can bring to school all the things he or she and family members found together that begin with that particular letter. Set aside time for each child to share their items from home.

25 WHERE ARE WE?

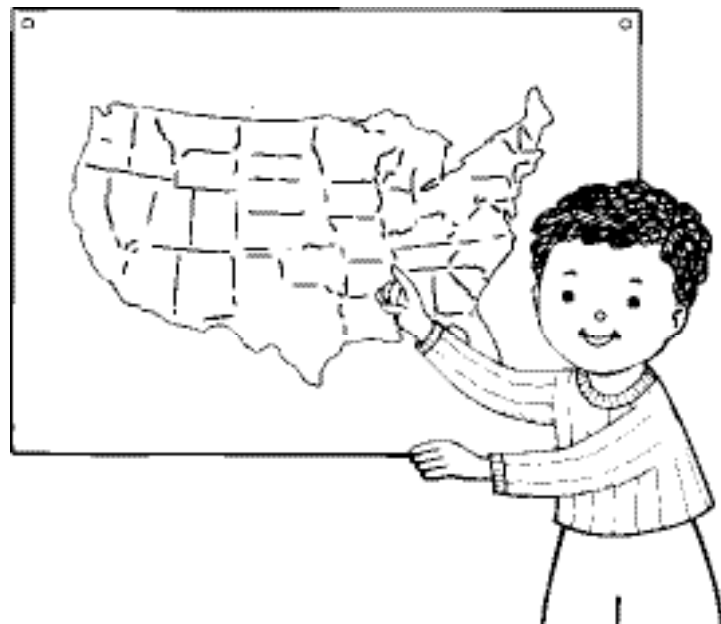
Materials

Large maps
Small stickers

Activity

Post a large North American or world map on a wall. Talk about the word *map* and ask children to name the beginning letter and sound of the word *map*. Then help children find the place on the map where they live. Ask children what other places they have traveled to or lived. Help them find those places on the map, as well. Mark with small stickers the places where you and the children live, have lived, or have traveled. Keep a running tab on where children have been by marking places throughout the year.

For older children: Invite children to think of a place they would like to go. It can be in your state, country, or another country in the world. Write children's responses on the board. Then choose one of the places to talk about with the children. Ask them what they already know about this place. Share what you know about it, as well, and then find the place on the map and mark it. Continue this activity by choosing other places to discuss and mark on the map throughout your study.



26 ALL ABOUT THE ALPHABET

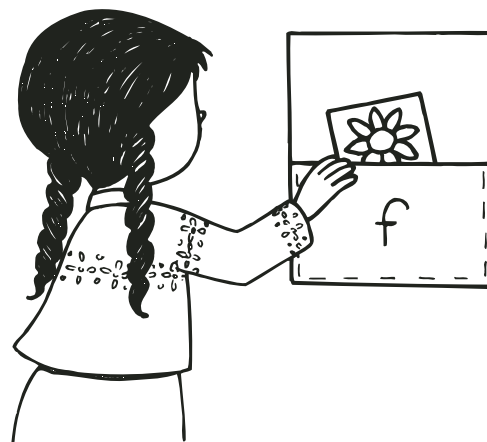
Materials

Construction paper
Drawing paper
Markers
Stapler
Children's scissors

Activity

Create ongoing letter recognition throughout the season! With the help of parent volunteers, make an alphabet pocket for each letter of the alphabet. Cut sheets of construction paper in half, stapling to the bottom of larger sheets to create pockets. Write a lowercase letter of the alphabet on the outside of each pocket and post the alphabet pockets on a bulletin board. Provide old magazines and drawing paper and encourage children to cut out or draw pictures of things that begin with the specific letter you are studying. Children can place pictures and drawings in the pockets. Encourage children to add to the folders throughout your study of the alphabet.

Alternative: Send a note home to parents and families asking for their help in creating an All About My Alphabet book for their child. Staple construction paper together on one long side. Then cut additional sheets of paper in half and staple to the bottom of each letter page to use as pockets. Write a lowercase letter of the alphabet on each pocket. Then children can cut out or draw pictures of personal things, such as siblings, parents, their house, and more to add to their alphabet books.



27 STENCILS

Materials

Large letter stencils
Crayons
Drawing paper

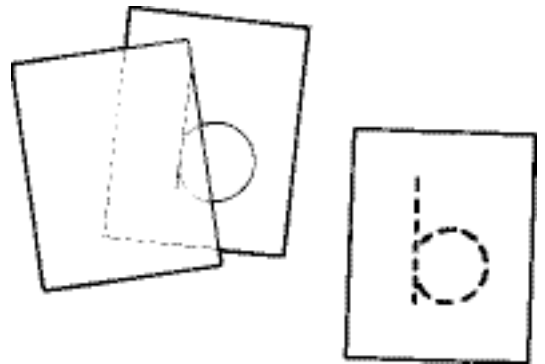
Activity

Give children letter stencils with which to experiment. They can outline the letters using the stencils as guides, color them in, spell their names using the stencils, and so on. Allow children to use them independently in the Alphabet Center (activity #17), as well.

28 LETTER TRACING

Materials

Drawing paper
Tracing paper (or paper with letters drawn in dotted lines)
Markers
Pencils or pens



Activity

This is a great way for children to practice writing skills. Make letter sheets for each letter, making the letters large enough for children to trace. Or you may use the Alphabet Matching Squares from activity #18. If you have access to tracing paper, give each child a sheet of tracing paper to place over the letters. Show children how to trace each letter. Or, draw letters in dotted lines on pages and children can use the dotted letters as guides.

- ☉ **For older children:** Make name sheets so that children can practice tracing their names. Place letter tracing papers in the Alphabet Center (activity #17) for children to use later.
- ☉ **For younger children:** Make an outline of the letters of each child's name and invite the child to color in the letters.

29 LET'S WRITE A LETTER

Materials

Writing paper Pens and pencils Stamps
Crayons and markers Envelopes

Activity

Ask children if they have ever received a letter in the mail. Who sent it? Where was it from? Have they ever written and sent a letter to anyone? Who? Invite children to write letters to themselves or someone in their home. Emphasize that the word, *letter*, begins with the letter *l*. Give each child a sheet of writing paper. With the aid of parent volunteers, help each child write a letter. Children can draw pictures or combine writing letters and pictures for their letters. Provide envelopes and stamps and help children address their letters and stamp them. If possible, walk as a group to a mailbox or the post office to mail your letters. Place the paper, pens and pencils, and envelopes in the Alphabet Center (activity #17) for children to “write letters” independently.

⊙ **Note:** This activity can be combined with activity #4— “What’s My Address?”—to help children memorize and practice their addresses.

⊙ **Extension:** Invite parent volunteers to help small groups of children role-play how a letter gets from one place to another. For example, one child pretends to write and send a letter. Another child role-plays a mail carrier taking the letter to the post office. Other children can be post office workers or people receiving the letters. Invite those watching to guess what happens next.

30 SIX SNAKES!

Materials

None

Activity

This is an excellent way to help children identify letter sounds in familiar words. Invite children to practice letter sounds using alliterative sentences. Begin by writing on the board: Six snakes sit and snack. Underline or highlight each beginning letter that is the same. Repeat the sentence with the children, emphasizing the common letters. Do the same with other alliterative sentences, such as: Two turtles tickle a toad. Can cats count? As a challenge, invite children to come up with their own alliterative sentences or phrases.

⊙ **For younger children:** Use only two alliterative phrases at a time, such as happy hippo or pretty pony.

31 RIDDLE ME THIS!

Materials

None

Activity

Children use higher-order thinking skills to figure out these fun riddles. Explain that you are thinking of something that begins with a certain letter. Be specific about the category to narrow the children's guesses. For example:

"I'm thinking of an animal that starts with the letter *h*. What is it?" (hippo)

"I'm thinking of a color that begins with the letter *r*. What is it?" (red)

"I'm thinking of a bird that begins with the letter *c*. What is it?" (cardinal)

Children can then come up with their own riddles and see if you and the rest of the class can guess. Challenge children to play this game with their families, as well.

- ⊙ **Note:** Be sure to emphasize the first letter sound of each word as children try to guess what word you are thinking of.
- ⊙ **For younger children:** Show children a picture of the word you are thinking of. Then emphasize the beginning letter. The pictures will help them identify the words and beginning letters.

32 RHYME TIME

Materials

None

Activity

Repetition is important in this more advanced activity. Repeat the sounds of the words often so that children begin to understand how the sounds are related. Write a word on the board, emphasizing the beginning letter and its sound. For example, write the word *hat*. Challenge children to think of a word that rhymes with that word. Write the new rhyming words under the first word, highlighting the first letter. Provide lots of examples, such as *cat*, *fat*, *mat*, *bat*, *pat*, and so on. Talk about the new beginning letter and its sound.

33 QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS!

Materials

Paper
Crayons or markers

Activity

Emphasize that the word *question* begins with the letter *q*. Talk about the sound *q* makes. Ask children if they can think of words that begin with the letter *q*. Start by naming some *q* words and writing them on the board, such as *queen* and *quarter*. Then ask children what other words begin with *q*. They may say *quart*, *quiz*, *quack*, *quick*, *quiet*, and so on. Write their responses on the board. Help children by giving hints in a question, such as “I’m thinking of a woman who wears a crown. (queen),” “I’m thinking of a coin (quarter),” “I’m thinking of a kind of blanket (quilt),” and so on. After you ask the questions, children can ask more questions to figure out what the *q* word is! As an extension to this activity, have a “question of the day” every day. Whoever answers the “question of the day” gets to help you think of a question for the next day.

☉ For younger children: Provide paper and crayons and invite younger children to draw curly-*q* *q*'s!

34 FIRST AND LAST SOUNDS

Materials

Cards from activity #21, “Which Word Doesn’t Belong?” (optional)

Activity

This activity works well with older or more experienced children. Write a word on the board and then say the word together. Or use the word cards from activity #21, “Which Word Doesn’t Belong?” Ask “What’s the first sound in this word?” Then say the word again, emphasizing the last letter in the word. Ask children, “What’s the last sound in this word?” For example:

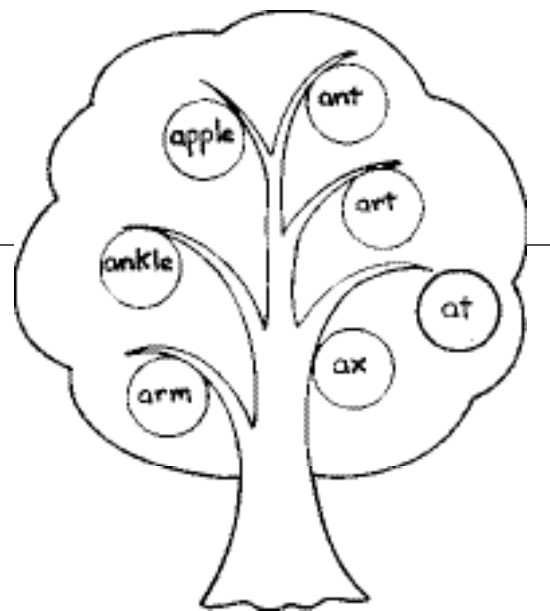
What is the first sound in the word ball?
The first sound is *b*.
What is the last sound in the word ball?
The last sound is *l*.

☉ For younger children: Identify only first sounds and include pictures of the words, as well.

CHAPTER 3

Math

35 ALPHABET TREE



Materials

Brown paper
Markers
Paints
Construction paper
Scissors
Tape or glue

Activity

Use this wonderful Alphabet Tree to reinforce each new letter, give children an opportunity to practice counting, and encourage children to work as a group. Draw a tree on brown paper, including branches to hang your “fruit.” Create small fruit shapes, such as apples, peaches, or oranges from construction paper. Write words beginning with a specific letter on each fruit shape, such as words that begin with *a*—*apple*, *ant*, *ankle*, *art*, *arm*, *at*, *ax*, and so on. Attach the fruit shapes to the alphabet tree. Emphasize the beginning letter and sound of each word. Integrate math into this activity by first asking children to count the fruit shapes on the tree. Then make one fruit shape for each letter of the alphabet. This way, children learn that there are 26 letters of the alphabet!

For older children: Talk about the beginning sound of each word on the fruit shapes.

36 HOW MANY?

Materials

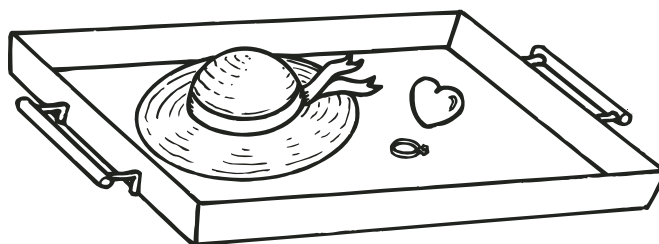
Small objects, some beginning with the same letter
Tray or other flat surface

Activity

This is an excellent sensory-motor activity where children can touch, handle, and identify objects as they count. Place a number of objects on a tray or other flat surface. Begin with three or four objects on the tray. Allow children to handle the objects and ask children what these items are. As an example, place a hat, heart, and ring on the tray. Allow them to touch and identify each item. Then say each word with children and ask them which words begin with the letter *h*. Then children can count all the objects that begin with the letter *h*. Add more objects as you go along, if appropriate for your group.

☉ **Extension:** To extend learning, invite children to count other *h* words in the room. Children can count hats, hands, hearts, heads, and so on. Keep a tally on the board.

☉ Use this activity with other letters, as well.



37 SECRET LETTERS

Materials

White construction or drawing paper
 White crayons
 Tempera paint (thinned with water)
 Paintbrushes



Activity

On each sheet of paper, write one letter a number of times with a white crayon. Make one sheet for each child, using a different letter for each. Then provide a tempera paint wash and paintbrushes and show them how to wash the paint over the entire page. They will soon see the letters emerge! Then ask children to count how many letters are on their pages. Write the number on each child's page.

For older children: Write secret messages for children to read, such as "Good job!" "Hi, there!" and so on.

38 ZIP ZIP ZIPPY

Materials

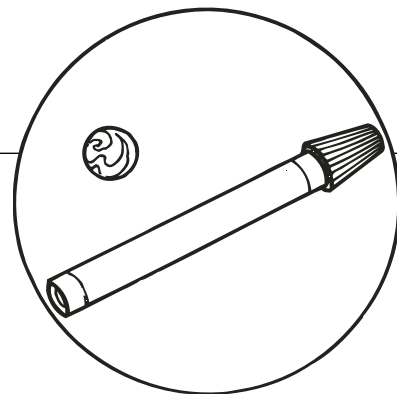
None

Activity

Talk about the sound that the letter z makes. What else makes a zzzz sound? Tell children that z is for *zipper*! Ask children to think of all the things that have zippers, such as pants, shirts, jackets, purses, gym bags, pencil cases, and so on. Write children's responses on the board. Then divide the class into pairs and challenge them to count all the zippers they can find in the room.

Extension: Challenge children to count all the zippers at home. With the help of family members, have them write down all the zippers they find. On a sheet of paper, family members can create two columns, one for the item name, and one for the amount of zippers. For example, pants—23 zippers, purses—12 zippers, and so on.

39 SORTING BY LETTER



Materials

Small objects with the same beginning letter
Cards with pictures of objects

Activity

This is an excellent opportunity for both younger and older children to sort, match, and recognize beginning letters of ordinary objects. Provide a number of small objects or object cards for children to sort. For example, for younger children, provide an apple and an ace for the letter *a*; provide a marble and marker for the letter *m*. Children identify each object and its beginning letter. Then they sort the objects that begin with the same letter into separate piles—all the objects that begin with *a* in one pile, all the objects that begin with *m* in another pile. Place the sorting materials in the Alphabet Center (activity #17) for children to use later.

☉ **For older children:** Older children can sort three or more objects beginning with the same letter. As an extension to this activity, have children place objects in sequence, such as apple, block, cat, dog, and so on.

40 NICKELS, NICKELS, NICKELS

Materials

Nickels

Activity

Show children a nickel. Explain that the word *nickel* begins with the letter *n*. Provide a number of nickels for children to look at and play with. Ask children, "Can you flip a nickel?" Show them how. Ask, "Do the nickels roll? What else can you do with nickels?" Then invite children to count nickels. Give each child a handful of nickels. Ask each child to tell you how many nickels she or he has.

☉ **For older children:** Explain that a nickel is five cents. Older children can count the nickels by fives. Then ask children how many cents they have.

41 YARDS OF YARN

Materials

Yardstick

Yarn

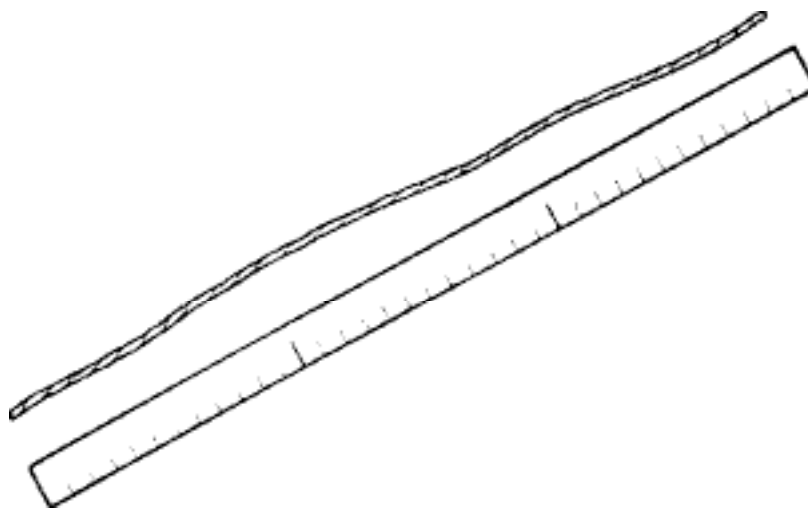
Activity

Talk about the different meanings of the word *yard*. Emphasize that the word *yard* begins with the letter *y*. Show children a yardstick. Using yarn, measure a yard of yarn. Talk about the sound of the first letters in the words *yard* and *yarn*.

☉ **For older children:** Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a ball of yarn. Each group can use the yarn to measure distances—the length of the classroom, width of the classroom, from the classroom to the bathroom, from the school to a tree, and so on. Help children cut the yarn after they measure and then measure the length of yarn with the yardstick.

☉ **Extension:** Measure children with the yardstick and chart their heights on a graph.

☉ **Extension:** Explain to children that the word *yarn* can also mean a story. Invite children to create a “yarn” with you. Begin by sitting in a circle on the floor. Holding a ball of yarn in your hands, begin a story. For example, “There once was a young girl walking to school. She saw her friend, Sally, and said . . .”. Then, holding the end of the yarn in your hand, pass the ball of yarn to the child on your left. He or she can add to the story. For example, she or he could say, “Hi, Sally, want to play at my house?” Sally said yes, and they . . .,” and so on. Each time, the ball of yarn is passed to create a yarn connection to each story teller.



CHAPTER 4

Science

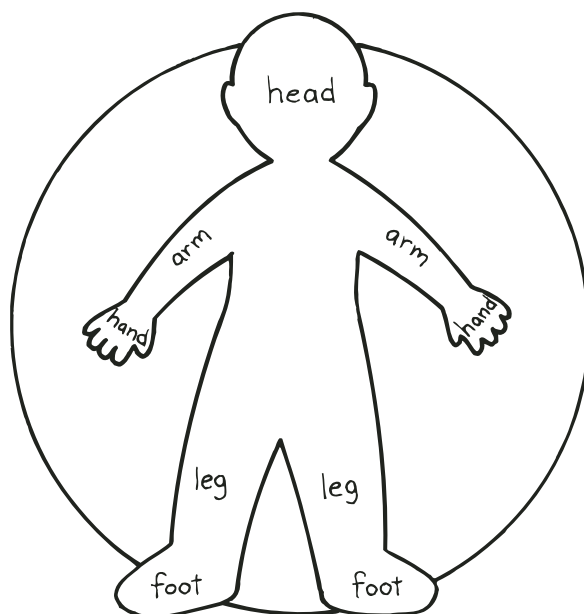
42 *IT'S ME* CUTOUTS

Materials

- Brown paper
- Scissors
- Paint or markers

Activity

What a great way to learn about parts of the body! With the help of parent volunteers, trace each child's body on brown paper. Cut out the body outlines and ask children to help you identify the parts of the body. Write the name of each body part on children's cutouts, emphasizing the first letter and its sound. Children can color each beginning letter. Then encourage each child to add other colors and decorations to make their cutouts look like themselves!



43 WEATHER WORDS

Materials

Cloud cutouts, cut from white construction paper
 Drawing paper
 Markers and crayons
 Scissors

Activity

Talk about the weather with children. Ask them to think of weather words and write what they suggest on the board. They may say rain, snow, clouds, wind, cold, hot, warm, chilly, hail, sky, sunny, cloudy, and so on. Then write on large cloud cutouts the words children come up with, emphasizing the first letters and their sounds. Place on a wall or bulletin board. Encourage children to draw pictures of rainy days, cloudy days, and other weather pictures to add to the board, as well.


44 WATER WORKS

Materials

Water table
 Water
 Buckets, cups, bowls, and other containers
 Plastic dolls and animal figures
 Plastic cars
 Wash cloths

Activity

Set up a water works in your classroom or outside. Use a water table for children to experiment with water, pouring it into and out of various containers, floating things in it, washing plastic dolls or cars, and so on. Provide buckets, cups, bowls, spoons, and other instruments for children to play with. Talk about the sound of the letter *w* in the word *water*.

 **For older children:** As they play, ask children what are some other words they can think of that begin with *w*.

45 OYSTER SHELLS

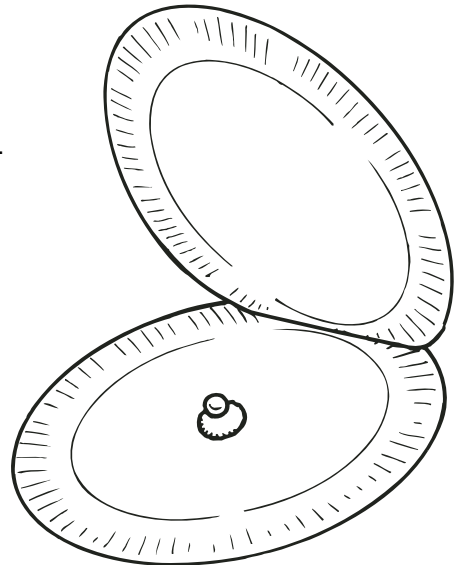
Materials

Small paper plates
Cotton
White plastic beads or pearls
Crayons and markers
Stapler

Activity

Ask children what lives in the water, opens and closes, and sometimes makes pearls? An oyster! Write the word *oyster* on the board and emphasize the beginning letter and sound. Explain that oysters are small animals that live in the water. They have two connected shells. They usually live attached to rocks or other hard surfaces, such as shells of other animals. Sometimes, a grain of sand or grit gets between the two shells of the oyster. When this happens, certain types of oysters create shell material that begins to surround the grain of sand or grit to stop the irritation. This way, a pearl is formed. Invite children to make oyster shells. Look at photos or pictures of oysters. Give each child two small paper plates. Help them staple one inch from the edge of the two plates as shown, so they form a shell shape. Children can decorate their oyster shells and then each glue a bit of cotton on the bottom of one shell. Then place a plastic pearl inside on the cotton.

Note: You may want to keep the focus of this activity to letter recognition for many children. The *oy* letter combination and the sound it makes could be confusing. Emphasize other *o* words as well, such as *off*, *on*, and *old*. For this activity, tell younger children that the circular shape of the paper plates and of oysters is like that of the letter *o*.



46 LETTER COOKIES

Materials

Premade cookie dough or plain sugar cookies
 Small tubes of icing
 Cooking spray
 Plastic knives

Activity

This is a great way to involve parent volunteers. Invite children to help you slice premade cookie dough into thin circles. Bake according to package directions. (If baking is not a possibility, use plain sugar cookies.) Once the cookies are baked and cooled, provide small tubes of icing and help children draw the first letters of their names on the cookies. Enjoy the letter cookies together!

47 SAND LETTERS

Materials

Sand table, large box, or tray
 Clean sand
 Construction paper
 Glue

Activity

Tactile learners will particularly benefit from this fun letter play. Provide a sand table or create one using a large box or tray. Fill the table or box with clean sand. Then invite children to draw lowercase letters in the sand, practicing their letters and saying the letter sounds as they play.

To add to this activity, invite parent volunteers to help. Create letters using glue and sand! Help children write letters on sheets of construction paper with glue. Encourage them to smooth the glue out with their fingers. Then help them sprinkle sand over the glue letters. Children can bring their sand letters home to share with their families.

 **For older children:** Help older children write their names in glue and make sandy names!


48 SEASONS

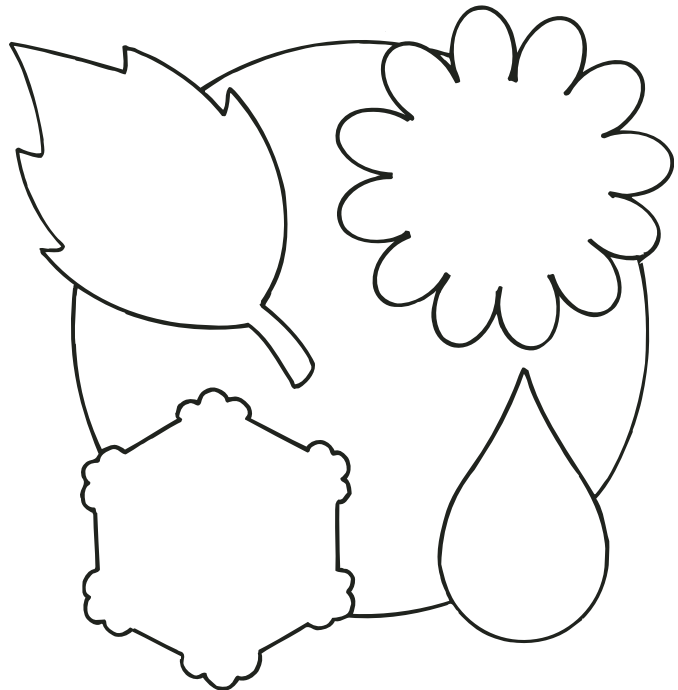
Materials

Construction paper
Various art materials
Scissors
Markers
Glue

Activity

Create seasonal symbols according to the time of year. Make leaf shapes for autumn, snowflakes for winter, raindrops for spring, and flowers for summer. Emphasize the beginning letters of the season symbol shapes. Talk about what kinds of changes happen in that season, writing the words on the board as you discuss the seasons. Children then can color or decorate the season symbols. Additionally, write some of the seasonal words on the symbols, identifying the beginning letters.

 **For older children:** Emphasize applicable words and their beginning letters and sounds. For example, in autumn, the air gets cold and leaves turn red, yellow, and brown.



49 ALPHABET SOUP

Materials

One large soup pot

Eight cups chicken, beef, or vegetable broth

Various vegetables, such as carrots, green beans, cabbage, peas, potatoes, mushrooms, onions, tomatoes

¼ to ½ lb. alphabet noodles

One bay leaf

Two teaspoons each of oregano, thyme, and basil (or to taste)


Salt and pepper to taste

Knife for chopping (for adult use only)

Plastic knives (optional)

Activity

This is an excellent group activity and a great way to involve parent volunteers. About a week ahead, send a letter home asking families to provide some of the ingredients for the soup. Place the soup stock in a large pot. Simmer the stock as you chop the vegetables. If appropriate, have the children help chop the softer vegetables using plastic knives. Then each child can help add the vegetables he or she brought to share. Cook the alphabet noodles according to package directions. Drain the noodles and add to the soup. Season the soup with herbs, salt, and pepper. Provide bowls, spoons, and napkins, and ask students to set the table for the meal. As children and parents eat their soup, talk about the alphabet letters in the soup!

 **Note:** You can also do this activity using canned alphabet soup. If you don't have access to a kitchen, portable stove, or microwave oven, serve children alphabet cereal with milk for a healthy, fun snack!



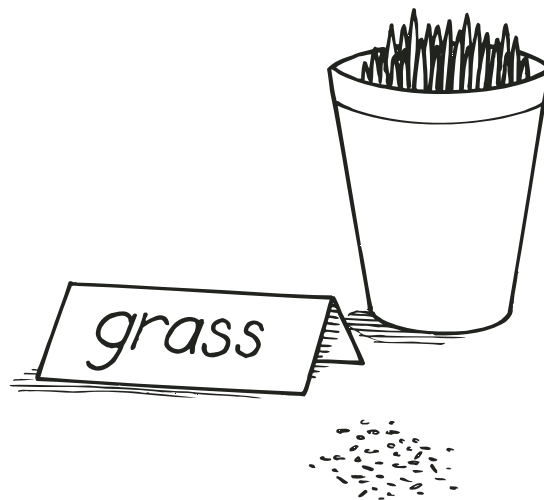
50 HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Materials

Small cups or egg cartons
Potting soil
Water
Flower and/or vegetable seeds
Small blank index cards
Markers

Activity

This is a great exploratory science activity to include the help of parent volunteers. Talk with children about how things grow. Discuss what growing things need, such as water, air, and light. Then fill small cups or egg cartons with potting soil. Show children the seeds and explain what kinds of seeds they are. Use fairly quick growing seeds, such as daisy, grass, bean, lettuce, pea, or pansy seeds. Fold the index cards in half and write the seed names on cards, highlighting the first letter of each word. Then help children plant seeds in the cups or egg cartons. Place the word cards by the appropriate seed cups. Help children care for their seeds and plants, showing them how to water them and allowing for enough light. As they care for their plants, continue to discuss the seed names, emphasizing the beginning letters.



51 WHAT DO ROCKS WEIGH?

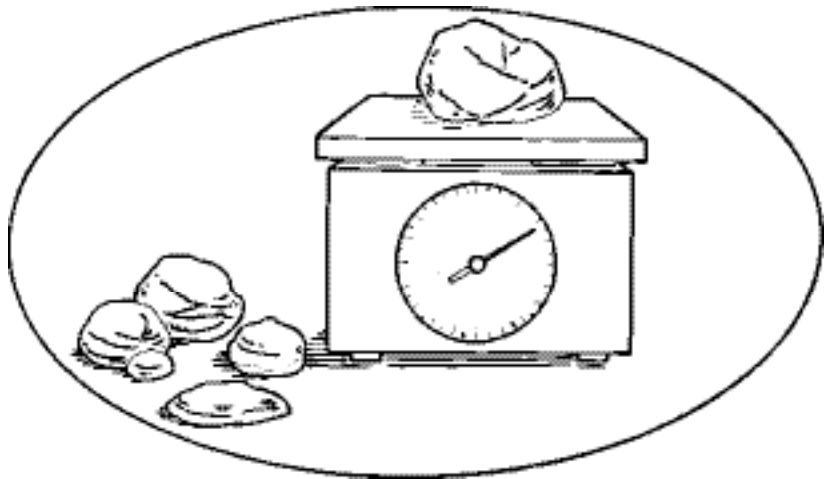
Materials

Small scale

Activity

Emphasize that the word *rock* begins with the letter *r*. Obtain a small food scale or other small scale. Then invite children to look for small, interesting rocks at home or a school and bring them to class. Weigh the rocks, noting the different weights of large and small rocks, light and dense, and so on.

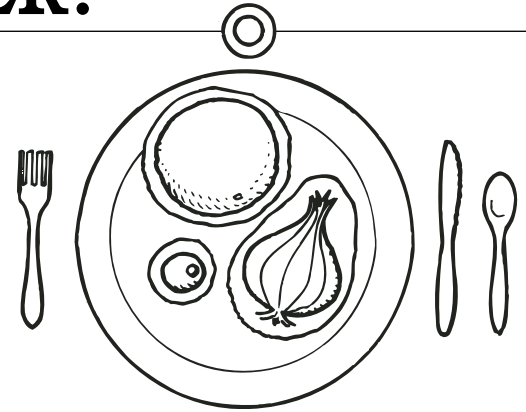
- For older children: Make a graph, pinpointing the different weights of each child's rock along a graph line.
- Extension: Invite children to make their own "pet" rocks. Provide art materials, such as markers, glue, tempera paints, felt, pipe cleaners, googly eyes, and so on. Children can paint their rocks and make them into different creatures. Encourage them to take their "pet" rocks home to share with their families.



52 WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

Materials

Old magazines or pictures of various foods or meals
 Scissors
 Paper plates
 Children's scissors
 Glue



Activity

Create a "What's for Dinner?" bulletin board. You may want to display "table settings" for each of the foods the children suggest. Each day, present one letter of the alphabet. Then ask children to think of a food or meal that begins with that letter. Challenge children to vote on which food with that letter will be on your bulletin board. Cut pictures from magazines or use available photos of these foods and post them on the "dinner" board, along with the beginning letters. Then invite children to make their own "what's for dinner?" plates. Encourage them to create healthy "dinners," including a variety of foods. Some food ideas:

a—apple, asparagus, apricot, almond

n—nachos, nectarine, noodles

b—banana, bread, beans, broccoli, beets

o—orange, olive, onion

c—crab, cake, carrots, cookies, crackers

p—pork chop, potato, peas, pretzel

d—Danish, dates, dumplings, doughnuts

q—quail, quince, quiche

e—eggs, eggplant, enchilada, eggrolls

r—radish, rice, raspberries, raisins

f—fish, figs, flapjacks, French fries

s—salad, spaghetti, spinach, soup,

g—grapes, grapefruit, greens, gumbo

t—tomato, tortilla, toast, turkey, taco, tofu

h—hot dog, honeydew, hamburger

u—upside-down cake

i—ice cream, iced tea

v—vegetables, veal, vanilla

j—jam, jelly, Jell-O™, juice

w—walnuts, watermelon, waffles

k—ketchup, kiwi, kidney beans

x—x-marks-the-spot cookies

l—lettuce, lemon, lemonade, lima beans

y—yams, yucca, yogurt

m—mushroom, mango, meatloaf, mint

z—zucchini

53 HOLD THE ELEVATOR

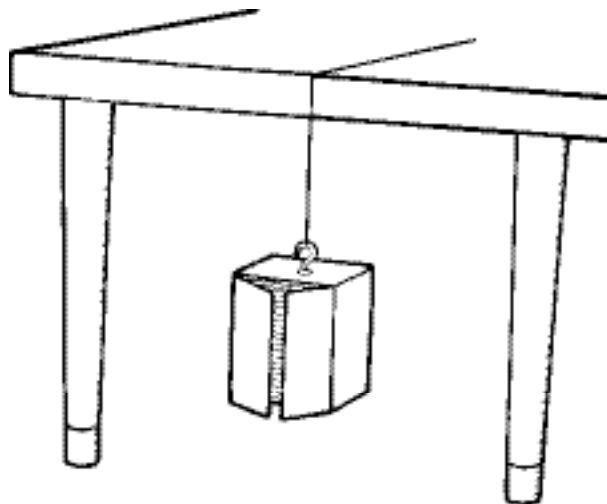
Materials

Small boxes with flaps
Crayons or markers
Scissors
Small plant hooks
Strong string

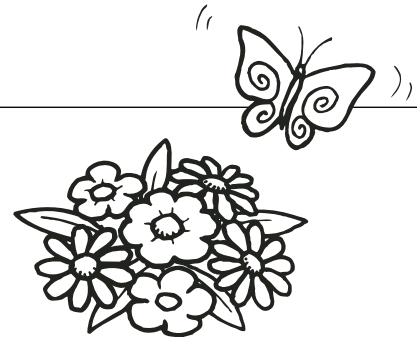
Activity

Invite parent volunteers to join you in this activity. Ask children what the beginning letter is in the word *elevator*. Ask children, "Who has been on an elevator? What was it like? How did it feel going up and down?" Then help children create elevators. Give each pair or small group a small box or carton with flaps attached. Help them cut off the smaller flaps on the open end, leaving two large flaps on the box for the elevator doors. Then, have a parent volunteer screw a small plant hook in the top of each box (as illustrated). Make sure that the hook has a washer or other element that keeps the hook from coming out. Then tie strong string to the hook on the elevator. Children can hang their elevators from the edge of a table, holding the other end of the string. Starting with the elevator on the floor, have students slowly lift the elevator off the floor, stopping at "floors" along the way. Children can have dolls or other small figures get in the elevator, and then lift the elevator to bring them to the next "floor."

☉ **For younger children:** Invite younger children to pretend with elevators: push the button, wait for the elevator, step on, watch for their floor, stop for other passengers, and so on. Emphasize that the word *elevator* begins with the letter *e*.



54 ALPHABET ZOO



Materials

Old magazines or pictures of various animals
Scissors

Activity

Make a bulletin board or prepare a wall to be your Alphabet Zoo. You may want to create “habitats” for each animal, if possible. Each day, present one letter of the alphabet. Then ask children to think of animals that begin with that letter. Challenge children to vote on which animal with that letter will be in your alphabet zoo. Cut pictures from magazines or use available photos of these animals and post them in the “zoo,” along with the beginning letters. Then invite children to act out the animal—how the animal lives, eats, plays, and sounds. Some ideas:

a—armadillo, alligator, antelope

n—newt

b—bear, butterfly, buffalo

o—owl, orangutan, octopus

c—cat, crab, cheetah

p—parrot, pig, peacock, porcupine

d—dog, dragon, dove, dinosaur

q—queen bee, quail

e—elephant, eel

r—rhinoceros, rat, raccoon

f—fish, fox, flamingo

s—snake, seal, sea horse, shark

g—goat, gorilla, giraffe

t—turtle, tiger

h—horse, hippo, hummingbird

u—urchin

i—iguana, ibis

v—vulture

j—jaguar, jay

w—walrus, whale, wolf

k—koala, kangaroo

x—xtinct (talk about extinct animals)

l—lion, lobster, leopard

y—yak

m—moose, mouse, monkey, mole

z—zebra

CHAPTER 5

Music and Movement

55 PAINT WALKS AND SILLY WALKS

Materials

Mural or butcher paper
Tempera paints
Large plastic tubs
Soap and water
Music

Activity

Ask adult volunteers to help you with this activity. Place a large sheet of mural or butcher paper on the floor. Place different colors of thin paint at the start. Have children take off their shoes and socks and carefully place their feet in the paint. Then have children, one at a time, walk across the paper. At the end of the paper, provide warm soapy water and towels. Help children rinse off their feet, dry them, and put their shoes and socks back on. When the “paint walk” is dry, hang on a wall of the classroom.

⦿ **Variation:** You can also do this with water on the sidewalk. Then children can watch their “walkway” disappear.

⦿ **For younger children:** Ask children where they walk (at home, to school, at the store, in the park). Emphasize that the word *walk* begins with the letter *w*. Then invite children to make up silly walks. Have children stand in line. You can start this activity by doing a silly walk of your own. Then the children can follow you, making up their own silly walks. Put on music and walk at the pace of each song. Play a variety of fast and slow songs.



56 BODY LETTER SHAPES

Materials

Music (optional)

Activity

Invite children to make letter shapes with their bodies! First, write letters on the board and discuss with children how the letters are shaped. Then encourage children to be creative with their bodies, creating letter shapes as they move. Children can move their bodies to music as they create letter shapes.

For example:

Make an A raising arms above your head with hands together and feet apart.

Make a C by standing with arms up, curving over into a C.

Make a Y by standing with legs together, arms up, spread in a large V.

 **Extension:** Invite children to join with a partner to create the shapes with both of their bodies.



57 LETTER CLAP ALONG

Materials

None

Activity

Use creative movement and music to help children understand new concepts. Sing familiar songs and ask children to clap when they hear words that begin with the particular letter you have chosen. Sing the songs a few times together, emphasizing the letters and clapping. For example, ask children to clap when they hear words that begin with the letter *s* in the song “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” or words that begin with the letter *b* in “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep”:

Twinkle, twinkle, little STAR
 How I wonder what you are.
 Up above the world SO high.
 Like a diamond in the SKY
 Twinkle Twinkle, little STAR
 How I wonder what you are.

BAA, BAA, BLACK sheep,
 Have you any wool?
 Yes, sir, yes, sir, three BAGS full.
 One for my master, one for my dame,
 One for the little BOY who lives down the lane.

58 SHOW ME C WORDS!

Materials

None

Activity

Invite children to move like things that begin with the letter *c*. First ask children what words they can think of that begin with the letter *c*. They may say things, such as *cat*, *cow*, *cloud*, *crow*, or *car*. Then invite children to move like cats, then cars, then clouds, and so on.

59 WORD CIRCLE

Materials

None

Activity

Invite children to sit with you in a circle. Have them first clap their hands twice, then clap their knees twice, repeating the clapping rhythm as they play. As they clap, choose a letter and say, "I'm thinking of a word that begins with the letter *p*." The child on your left must think of a word that begins with that letter, as everyone continues the clapping rhythm. Then go around the circle, each child thinking of a word that begins with that letter. Begin the game again, with another child saying, "I'm thinking of a word that begins with the letter *r*," and so on.

☉ **For younger children:** Have them clap only their hands or only their knees. Begin the game by stating a word that begins with the letter, such as "I'm thinking of a word that begins with the letter *p*. I'm thinking of the word *popcorn*."

☉ **For older children:** Invite children to play a more sophisticated version of this game called "I'm going on a trip . . ." This is an excellent activity to include parent volunteers. Begin with the letter *a* by saying, "I'm going on a trip and I'm bringing an acorn." The next person continues by repeating what the first person said and adding a *b* word, saying, "I'm going on a trip and I'm bringing an acorn and a bullfrog." The game continues around the circle. Play the game again with the rest of the alphabet!




60 JUMP, JUMP, JUMP ROPE

Materials

Large and small jump ropes

Activity

Ask children what is something that they like to do, that makes them go high in the air, and begins with the letter *j*? *Jump!* Emphasize that the word *jump* begins with the letter *j*. Then invite children to jump up and down, jump on one foot, and do jumping jacks! Challenge children to think of animals that jump, like monkeys and kangaroos. Can they pretend they are these animals jumping?

 **For older children:** Provide a large jump rope and small jump ropes. Children can jump individually or take turns with a large jump rope, alternating who is jumping and who is working the jump rope.

Extension: Teach children classic jump rope rhymes:

One, two, tie your shoe
 Three, four, shut the door,
 Five, six, pick up sticks,
 Seven eight, stay up late,
 Nine, ten, a big fat hen.

OR

"A" my name is Anna,
 I come from Alabama,
 and I sell apples.

"B" my name is Billy,
 I come from Boston,
 and I sell books.

"C" my name is Carrie,
 I come from Canada,
 and I sell corn.

(and so on.)



61 LET'S GO FLY A KITE

Materials

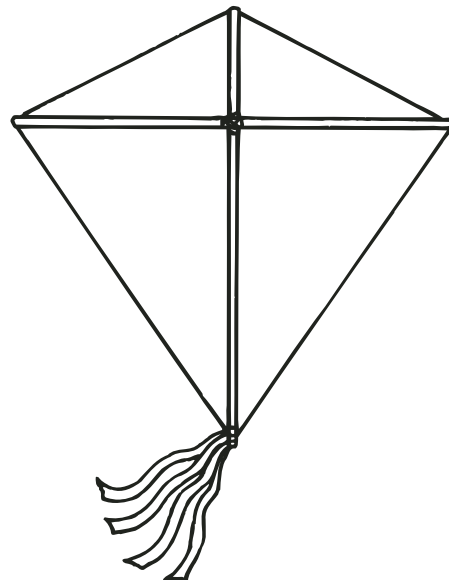
Simple kites or large, white kitchen plastic bag
 Two 18" wooden dowels
 Length of colorful plastic strips or streamers
 Fishing line or strong string
 Ball of string for flying
 Duct tape or other strong tape

Activity

This is an excellent opportunity for parent volunteers to help. Invite children to bring kites from home and bring some yourself. Ask children to tell you what they know about kites. Emphasize the beginning letter and sound of the letter *k* in the word *kite*. Choose a windy day to help children learn how to fly kites!

If you would like to make your own kites, ask parent volunteers to help. Place the two dowels in a cross, leaving 4½ inches on the top. Using fishing line or string, wind the string around the crux of the crossed dowels a number of times each way to secure the cross shape. Then attach the plastic bag to the ends of the dowels using strong tape. You may also attach a length of colorful plastic on the end of the kite. Tie a ball of string around the connection point of the dowels.

🌀 **For younger children:** Invite children to draw pictures of colorful kites as they practice the *k* sound.



62 ALPHABET DANCE

Materials

Music

Activity

Put on some dancing music for children to move to in their alphabet dances. Give children direction as they dance. For example:

"Let's dance like bears. How does a bear dance? Can you tell me what letter the word *bear* begins with? What sound does the letter *b* make? Let's make *b* sounds as we dance."

You can invite the children to dance like animals, flowers, butterflies, trees, and so on. Always emphasize the beginning letters and sounds of the words.

Extension: Use a variety of music as you dance. Encourage children to dance differently to the different styles of music. As they dance, children can think of what kind of feeling comes from their dance and the music. For example, if using a slow, rhythmic song, children may say they feel relaxed, quiet, or like they are floating. If you are playing high energy music, they may say they feel excited, energetic, fast, and so on.



63 GIGGLE PARTY

Materials

None

Activity

Ask children what letter they think the word *giggle* begins with. Write the word on the board. Point out that there are three *g*'s in the word *giggle*. Then have each child lie on the floor with their head on the belly of another child. Join children in this game, being the first one in line. Then begin the giggle game by saying "Ha!" The next child says, "ha, ha!," the next child says, "Ha, ha, ha!," and so on. Pretty soon, everyone will be giggling because as each person says "ha," his or her belly will jiggle the other person's head. Then you have a giggle party!

☉ **For older children:** Invite children to talk about what makes them giggle. What TV shows do they think are funny? What movies? What's the funniest thing they ever did? What's the funniest thing they ever saw someone else do? Then invite children to draw a picture about something that makes them giggle. Ask parent volunteers to help children write a few words on the bottom of their pictures to help explain their drawings. Display in the classroom.



64 DANCE!

Materials

None

Activity

Ask children if they like to dance. When do they dance? With whom? Who has a special dance they would like to share? Emphasize that the word *dance* begins with the letter *d*. Then put on music and invite children to dance!

For older children: Find a particular dance to teach them as a group, such as the Hokey Pokey, Macarena, or the Electric Slide.

65 THE BIG NOISE!

Materials

Various musical instruments

Activity

Emphasize that the word *noise* begins with the letter *n*. Then invite children to play a fun, noisy game. You will tell children what kind of a noise they can make: loud, soft, musical, stamping feet, clapping hands, and so on. Provide musical instruments for the children to use, such as recorders, kazoos, bells, wooden blocks to click together, cymbals, bongos, or drums. Then explain to children that they have to follow directions very carefully. When you say, "Make noise!" they can make all the noise they want for that particular noise. When you say, "Stop!" (or you may want to hold up a stop sign or other sign), they must be quiet. For example, you can say: "Let's make a loud noise with our voices. When I say 'make noise,' you can make all the noise you want with your voice. When I say 'stop!' you must stop making noise. Ready. 'Make noise!'" Children can sing, talk, shout, whistle, and so on until you say "stop."

Note: Be sure to make a time limit for noise making!

CHAPTER 6

Visual Arts

66 COLORS OF THE ALPHABET

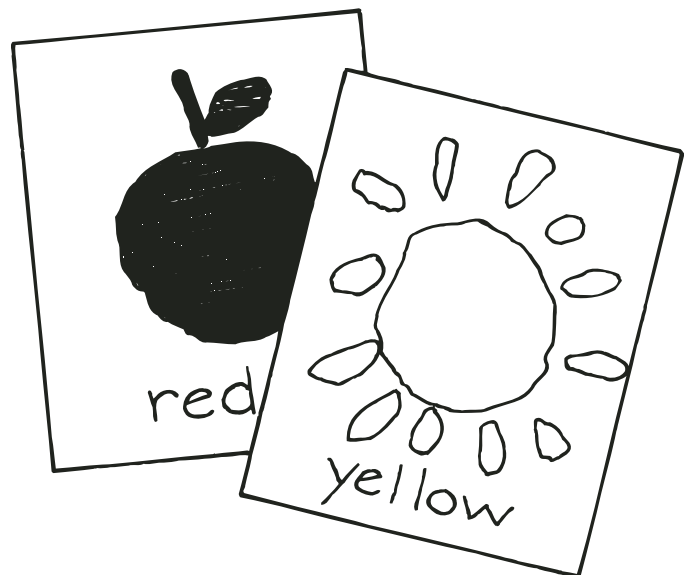
Materials

White drawing paper
Tempera paint
Paintbrushes
Stapler

Activity

Provide paper and paint for children and invite them to paint different colors on different sheets of paper. For example, children can paint the entire page red, paint different red designs, or paint red objects. After the paint is dry, help children label each color with its name, emphasizing the beginning letter and its sound.

Continue this activity with other colors, emphasizing the first letter of each color. After they dry, staple each child's paintings together to make individual color books they can share with their families.



67 FUNNY FACES

Materials

Construction paper
 Scissors
 Tempera paints
 Paintbrushes
 Crayons or markers
 Various art materials, such as seeds, sequins, cotton balls, yarn, and so on
 Glue

Activity

Cut ovals from construction paper. Give each child an oval and invite children to color, paint, and glue materials to make funny faces. As they work, talk about how the words *funny* and *face* begin with the letter *f*. Ask children what other words they can think of that begin with the letter *f*, such as *flag*, *finger*, *fan*, and so on. Encourage children to take their funny faces home to share with their families.


68 WHAT IS YELLOW?

Materials

Drawing paper
 Crayons or makers
 Old magazines
 Children's scissors
 Glue

Activity

Ask children "What color is the sun?" When they answer "yellow," emphasize that the word *yellow* begins with the letter *y*. Then have children think of other things that are yellow, such as bananas, egg yolks, crayons, daisies, balloons, popcorn, birds, or butter. Write children's responses on the board. Then give each child a sheet of paper and invite children to draw large yellow *y*'s. Then they can draw or cut out pictures of other things that are yellow and add them to their pictures.

 For older children: As they create, what other words can they think of that begin with *y*?

69 MONSTER MASKS

Materials

Posterboard ovals
Tongue depressors or craft sticks
Children's scissors
Glue
Crayons and markers
Tempera paints
Paintbrushes
Various other art materials, such as yarn, fabric scrapes, and so on

Activity

What is big and scary and starts with the letter *m*? *MONSTER!* Invite children to make the scariest or funniest monster masks they can. Before beginning this project, cut ovals out of stiff paper or posterboard. Cut holes for the eyes on each oval. Provide crayons, paint, construction paper, yarn, fabric, children's scissors, glue, and other materials you have on hand for children to use to decorate their monster masks. When they are finished creating, attach a large tongue depressor with glue to the bottom of each mask. Invite children to scare each other or make each other laugh with their masks.



70 WHOSE HOUSE IS THIS?

Materials

Pictures of different types of houses and homes
 Pictures of animal and insect houses
 Drawing paper
 Crayons and markers

Activity

Talk about different types of houses. Emphasize that the word *house* begins with the letter *h*. Show photographs of different kinds of houses, such as trailers, cabins, sod houses, bamboo houses, and so on. Then ask children if they know what kinds of houses animals and insects live in. Show photographs of these houses, such as birdhouses, nests, barns, spiderwebs, or beehives. Then invite children to draw houses for different creatures or characters from books or movies. Children can draw Charlotte in a spider's web from *Charlotte's Web* or a pig in a barn from *Babe*. Challenge children to make up characters and draw a house that that character would live in. Would it be different colors? How many doors would it have? How many windows? Make a bulletin board entitled "Whose House Is This?" Post the photographs as well as children's pictures on the board.

71 XTRA-SPECIAL X'S

Materials

Cardboard or stiff paper
 Scissors
 Crayons and markers
 Tempera paint
 Paintbrushes
 Various other art materials

Activity

Cut large X's out of cardboard or other stiff paper. Give each child an X and invite the children to decorate their X's to make Xtra-Special X's! Provide crayons, paints, glue, glitter, fabric pieces, magazines to cut pictures from, spangles, confetti, and other materials children can use to create their Xtra-Special X's. Then post on a bulletin board or wall entitled "We're Xtra-Special!"

72 WORD FLOWERS

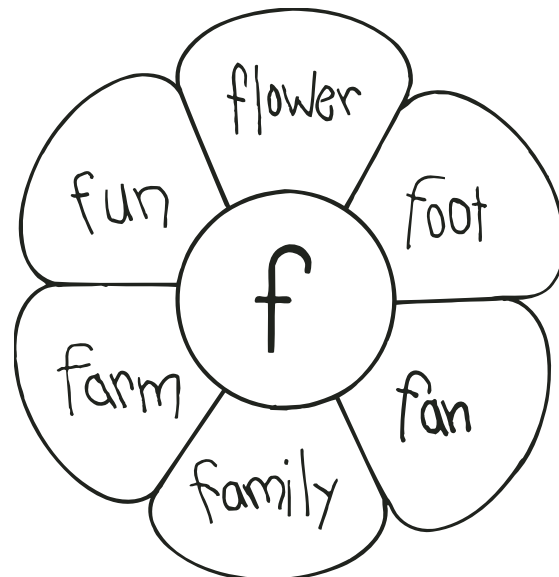
Materials

Construction paper
Scissors
Glue
Markers or crayons

Activity

You can do this fun, creative activity with any letter. Create a flower for each child with four to eight petals from construction paper. Challenge children to think of words that begin with the letter chosen for this activity. For example, using the letter *f*, children may think of words such as *flower*, *fun*, *family*, *foot*, *farm*, or *fan*. Help them write the word or draw a picture of the word on one of the flower petals. Continue with the rest of the petals. Invite children to take their word flowers home to share with their families.

 **For older children:** Help them cut and glue to make their own flowers.



73 GREEN GROWING GARDENS

Materials

Green construction paper

Drawing paper

Scissors

Crayons

Glue

Dry plant materials, such as flower petals, leaves, grass, and seeds

Activity

Talk with children about how things grow. Discuss what growing things need, such as water, air, and light. Emphasize that the words *grow*, *green*, and *garden* begin with the letter *g*. Cut out large *g*'s from construction paper. Glue to drawing paper leaving sufficient room around the letters for children to decorate. Give one to each child. Provide crayons and glue, as well as flower petals, grass, vegetable tops, seeds, and other dry plant materials. Using their *g*'s as planters or vases, children can create different plants or flowers growing out of their *g*'s. As they make their *g* planters, ask children what other words they can think of that begin with *g*.



74 SILLY SNAKES

Materials

Drawing paper
Crayons or markers
Various art materials, such as glitter, seeds, fabric scraps, and so on
Children's scissors
Glue

Activity

This is an excellent way to introduce the s sound to children as they create these silly snakes. Ask children what they know about snakes. What kinds of experiences have they had with snakes? Ask if any of them have a snake as a pet. Ask children, "What does a snake say? Ssssssssss." Challenge children to pretend they are snakes on the floor. How do snakes move? Then give each child a sheet of drawing paper and make available various art materials. Invite children to draw snakes, decorating their snakes creatively with different colors, glitter, seeds, and other materials.

For younger children: Draw snake figures on sheets of drawing paper for them to color and decorate.

75 CLAY LETTERS

Materials

Play dough or clay
Rolling pins
Plastic utensils
Tempera paint
Paintbrushes

Activity

Invite children to mold letters from clay. Provide play dough or clay, using material that will harden. Make the materials available to children and encourage them to make letter shapes from the clay. When the clay is dry, children can paint their letters.

For older children: Older children can also create objects that begin with specific letters, such as an octopus for *o*, a dog for *d*, a bicycle for *b*, and so on.



76 UP, UP, AND AWAY

Materials

Drawing paper
Crayons or markers

Activity

Write the word *up* on the board or on chart paper. Ask children what letter the word begins with. Talk about things that are up or go up, such as airplanes, kites, birds, rockets, and so on. Give each child a sheet of paper and ask children to draw pictures of things that go up. You may want to create a bulletin board entitled "Up, Up, and Away!" and post the children's pictures.

🌀 **For older children:** Talk about the concept of things going up, like temperature, prices, and grades.

77 FANCY LETTERS

Materials

Drawing paper
Markers
Crayons, paint
Sequins, buttons, fabric scraps and other art materials
Glue

Activity

Write each child's name on a sheet of paper, making the first letter very large. Provide art materials and encourage children to decorate the first letter of their names. Post in the classroom or invite children to take home their fancy letters to share with their families.

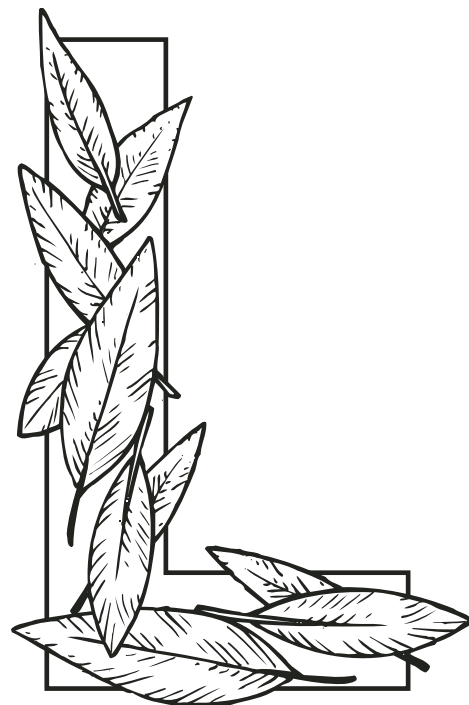
78 NATURE LETTERS

Materials

Various objects from nature, such as leaves, twigs, pinecones, feathers, seeds, flowers
Construction paper
Scissors
Glue
Tape

Activity

Gather objects in nature for children to use. If appropriate, take a nature walk and have the children gather the materials themselves. Talk about the objects the children have found and where they came from. Then emphasize the beginning letter of each word—*L/l* in *leaf*, *P/p* in *pinecone*, and so on. Cut the beginning letters out of construction paper, making them large enough to decorate. Provide glue, tape, and other art materials, then invite children to decorate the letters with materials that begin with that letter.



79 LETTER COLLAGES

Materials

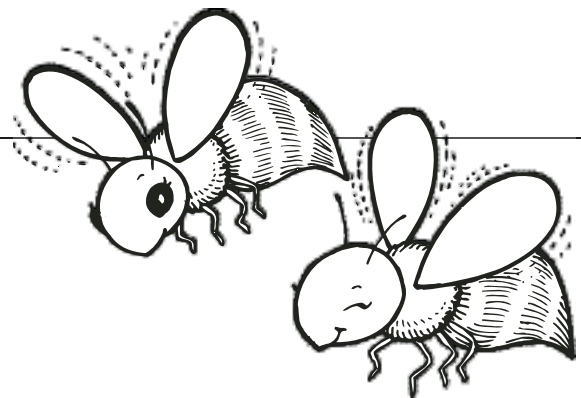
Old magazines
Children's scissors
Construction paper
Glue

Activity

Ask the help of parent volunteers for this activity. Help children cut out large letters from magazines. Children can glue their letters to construction paper to make letter collages. Encourage children to identify the letters they are cutting out and gluing to their collages. If appropriate, help children spell their names and glue to the collages, as well.

Variations: Children can make letter collages using only one letter of the alphabet. Or they can make letter collages using pictures of various objects and animals that begin with a specific letter.

80 BUZZING BEES



Materials

Construction paper
Scissors
Crayons and markers

Activity

Talk about bees. What do children know about bees? Do they know the beginning letter and sound of the word *bee*? Cut bee shapes from construction paper. Invite children to color their bees with crayons or markers. As they color, invite them to make bee buzzing noises. They can act out bees buzzing around their hive, as well.

81 DOGGIE D'S

Materials

Large construction paper *d*'s
 Old magazines
 Children's scissors
 Markers and crayons
 Glue

Activity

Invite children to cut out pictures of dogs from magazines. They can then glue their dog pictures to their letter *d*'s. Invite children to use markers or crayons to draw pictures of dogs, as well, or to add to their *d*'s. As they create their Doggie *d*'s, talk about other words that begin with *d*.

82 THE *E*'S HAVE IT!

Materials

Drawing paper
 Markers or crayons

Activity

Show children how to write lowercase *e*'s. Then invite children to draw pictures of themselves using *e*'s for their eyes. Talk about how the word *eye* begins with the letter *e*. As they draw, ask children what other words they can think of that begin with the letter *e*, such as *elephant*, *elevator*, *egg*, and so on. Display the self-portraits on a bulletin board entitled "The *e*'s Have It!"




83 LETTER NAME STAMPS

Materials

Apples or potatoes
 Knife (for adult use only)
 Construction or drawing paper
 Tempera paints
 Ink pads (optional)
 Crayons or markers

Activity

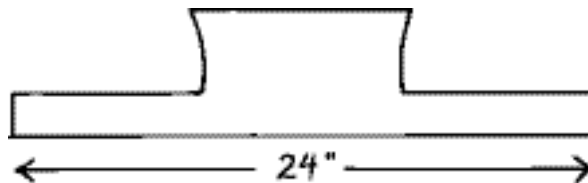
Make apple or potato stamps! Cut an apple or potato in half and carve out the first letter of each child's name. Provide tempera paints or ink pads and invite children to dip the stamps in the paint or ink and stamp the first letter of their names on sheets of paper.

 **For older children:** Children can stamp the first letters of their names on the paper and then use crayons or markers to practice writing their names.

84 HELLO! HATS

Materials

Construction paper
 Scissors
 Glue
 Various art materials, such as sequins, ribbon, buttons, cloth, and so on



Activity

Invite children to create Hello! hats. Make hat shapes for each child using the pattern here. Then give each child a hat and encourage children to decorate the hats as they wish. Provide various art materials and let them explore! When they have finished and the glue has dried, invite children to wear their hats and greet each other with happy "hellos!"

85 PAINTING P PARTY!

Materials

Mural paper
Newspaper
Tempera paints
Paintbrushes, various sizes
Paint smocks or aprons

Activity

Place a large sheet of mural paper on the floor over newspaper. Provide paints and smocks and invite children to paint letter *p*'s on the mural. Then invite children to paint, paint, paint! Emphasize the letter and sound of the letter *p* as children paint.

For older children: Older children can paint things that begin with the letter *p*: puppies, peanuts, peas, piano, princess, prince, picnic, parachute, pencil, piglet, porcupine, penny, and so on.



CHAPTER 7

Dramatic Play

86 ACTING EMOTIONS

≡ Materials

None

≡ Activity

This is a great way for children to explore emotions. Ask children to think of different feelings and emotions. Children may suggest happy, sad, tired, mad, or excited. Write children's ideas on the board. Then ask one child to come up and act out one of the emotions. The child can make a sad face, happy face, pretend to laugh, and so on. Challenge the other children to guess what emotion the child is acting out. After children say the word, stress the beginning letter and sound and ask them to say the word with you. Continue by asking other children to come up and act out another emotion.



87 ZOOM!

Materials

None

Activity

Write the word *zoom* on the board or on chart paper. Read the word aloud and then ask children what letter the word begins with. What things do they know of that zoom? They may say cars, trucks, planes, boats, or bicycles, among others. Then invite children to zoom around the room or outside, saying "Zoom!" as they move. Encourage children to pretend they are cars, planes, rockets, and so on.



88 WHO AM I?

Materials

Slips of paper

Pen

Hat

Activity

Invite children to act out people and jobs in their community. Write the job titles of people in the community on small pieces of paper, such as mail carrier, firefighter, police officer, chef, truck driver, doctor, sales clerk, and other jobs. For each child's turn, he or she can choose a slip of paper from a hat. Help each child read the slip and then the child can act out that character. For example, he or she might choose "firefighter" and act out putting out a fire. Children can begin by saying "Who am I?" and use words or just pantomime that person while the other children guess who he or she is. The child who guesses correctly is the next child to act out a job. Emphasize the letter and word *I* as they play.

89 TEETH

Materials

Small mirrors
Camera
Drawing paper
Crayons or markers

Activity

Write the word *teeth* on the board, emphasizing that the word *teeth* begins with the letter *t*. Talk about children's teeth and ask them how they take care of their teeth. Invite children to pantomime brushing and flossing their teeth. Can they make the *t* sound with their teeth? Provide mirrors and encourage children to take turns looking at and comparing their teeth. Then make a bulletin board called "Our Teeth." If possible, take photos of children with big toothy smiles and post on the board. Or children can draw pictures of themselves showing their teeth.

 **For older children:** Challenge children to help each other count their teeth.


90 WHAT AM I?

Materials

Slips of paper
Pen or marker
Small box

Activity

Dramatic play helps children develop a positive self-image and explore their imaginations. On slips of paper, write the names of animals or objects the children can act out, such as a dog, horse, car, truck, and so on. Place the slips in a box. Ask each child to come up and, with his or her eyes closed, choose a slip from the box. Help each child read the slip and then act out the animal or object without the use of words. The rest of the class tries to guess what the child is. Once the children have guessed, ask them to identify the beginning letter of that animal or object.

 **For older children:** Ask children what other animals or objects begin with each letter.

91 ANTS, ANTS, ANTS!

Materials

None

Activity

Ask children what letter the word *ant* begins with. Emphasize that the word *ant* begins with the letter *a*. Ask children what they know about ants. Talk with children about how ants work together to build their houses. Then invite children to role-play how ants live. Divide the class into small groups. Help children pretend they are ants in their anthills, working together to build, carrying materials back and forth, and so on.

92 BUS STOP

Materials

None

Activity

Ask children how many of them have been on a bus. What kind of bus (school, public)? What were their bus trips like? Where did they go? Who else was on the bus? Emphasize that the word *bus* begins with the letter *b*. Then set chairs up in two rows next to each other. Place a lone chair at the head for the bus driver. Invite children to pretend to stand at the bus stop waiting for the bus, get on and off the bus, ride the bus, talk to others on the bus, and other bus activities. Have children take turns being the bus driver, opening the doors, driving, and so on.

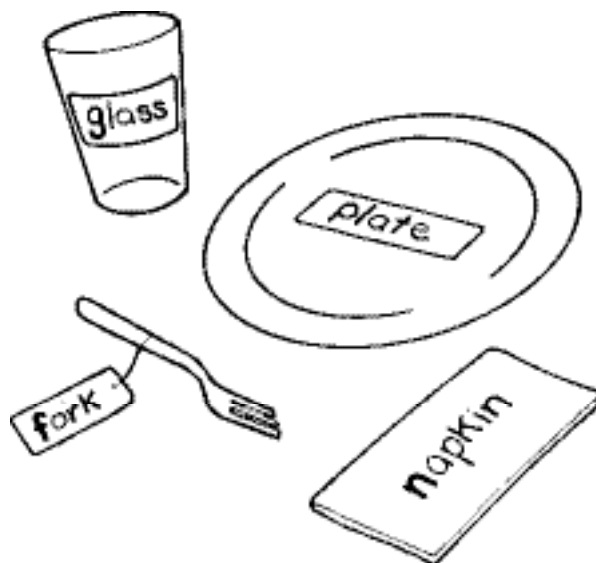
93 WHAT'S IN THE KITCHEN?

Materials

Slips of paper
Markers
Plastic plates
Napkins
Old pots and pans
Various kitchen utensils
Plastic glasses

Activity

Create a kitchen center in your classroom. Supply various kitchen utensils, plates, pots and pans, and other kitchen hardware with which children can experiment. Write the names of the kitchen items on slips of paper and attach to the items. Be sure to emphasize the beginning letter of each word by making the first letter in bold print. Then invite children to use the materials in the center to act out kitchen scenarios in small groups. Children can pretend to prepare a meal, serve breakfast, wash dishes, and so on. Point out the words on the kitchen items and talk about the items and how they are used.



CHAPTER 8

Motor Skills

94 MATCH FREEZE

≡ Materials

None

≡ Activity

This is an excellent way to work physical activity into your day. Make two squares of paper for each letter of the alphabet (or you can use the Alphabet Matching Squares from activity #18). Give each child a letter square and hide the matching square. Tell children that they must find their letter match. But first, they must follow directions. Ask children to first do five jumping jacks. When they are finished, they may begin looking for their matches. Periodically, as children search, say "Freeze!" Children must stop where they are and listen for directions. Have children run in place, jump on one foot, spin around three times, and perform other active movements. Play until all children have found their matches.



95 ALPHABET TOSS

Materials

Large balls

Activity

Choose a letter to begin the game, such as the letter *b*. Stand in a circle and toss a ball to a child, saying a word that begins with the letter *b*, such as the word *bat*. That child then throws the ball to another child and says another word that begins with letter *b*, such as the word *baseball*. Continue around the circle. As each child catches the ball, he or she says a word that begins with the chosen letter. As an alternative, this activity can be done in pairs or in small groups.

To challenge children even more, ask them to name, in order, a word for each letter of the alphabet.

☉ **For younger children:** Invite pairs of children to roll or toss the balls back and forth, emphasizing the *b* sounds in the words *ball* and *bounce*.

96 A BOWL OF JELLY

Materials

None

Activity

Invite children to move like things that begin with the letter *j*. First ask children what words they can think of that begin with the letter *j*. They may say words such as *jelly*, *jack-in-the-box*, *jumping jacks*, or *jaguar*. Then invite children to move like the letter *j*!

97 MONKEY SHINES

Materials

None

Activity

M is for *monkey*! Invite children to act like monkeys—jump on chairs, hop around, swing, make monkey sounds, and so on. If possible, place mats on the floor for children to bounce on. Then ask children if they can think of other animals that begin with the letter *m* (mouse, moose, mole). Children can act out these animals, as well.

98 UNDER THE UMBRELLA

Materials

Large umbrella
Parachute or large sheet

Activity

Parent volunteers can help with this activity. Bring a large umbrella to school and invite children to bring umbrellas from home, as well. Show children how you put up the umbrella and how you stand under the umbrella. Show children how you can hold the umbrella upside down. Stress the sound of the letter *u* as they experiment with the umbrellas. Talk about how an upside-down umbrella looks like the letter *u*. Then ask children and parent volunteers to take hold of the edges of a parachute or large sheet. Together, toss the parachute or sheet up in the air, keeping hold of the edge. Encourage children to run under the “umbrella” and back out again. Continue play by calling out the names of children to run under the “umbrella.”

99 o TOSS

Materials

Sheet of cardboard or heavy posterboard
 Scissors
 Small beanbags or soft balls

Activity

Cut a hole in a large, sturdy piece of cardboard or posterboard, large enough to throw a beanbag or ball through. Lean the board against a table or wall. Provide beanbags or soft balls for children to throw through the hole. Children can say words that begin with *o* as they toss the beanbags through the hole. Children may say *o* words such as *orange*, *oatmeal*, *otter*, *open*, *over* (talk about concept of *over*), *outside*, *olive*, or *octopus*.

100 QUACK, QUACK, DUCK HUNT

Materials

None

Activity

Ask children what sound a duck makes. Ask what letter the word *quack* begins with. Then play "Quack, Quack, Duck Hunt." One person is the hunter, and the other children are the ducks. The ducks waddle behind the hunter as he or she pretends to look for the ducks. Then the hunter shouts, "Duck!" and all the ducks run, shouting "quack, quack," to get away from the hunter. The hunter tags one of the ducks, and then that duck becomes the new hunter.

101 RUN!

Materials

Mural paper or reusable stickers
Large pillow
Picture of a rattlesnake or stuffed snake
Stuffed rabbit
Confetti

Activity

Set up an obstacle course of *r* words. This activity is best enjoyed outside with parent volunteers helping to lead the obstacle course. Create a road using tape, chalk, or mural paper. Then place obstacles in the running area: a rock (pillow), rattlesnake (stuffed snake or picture of a snake), rabbit (stuffed rabbit), and rain (confetti thrown on them as they run). Then invite children to run on the *r* obstacle course, one at a time, avoiding the *r* obstacles. After they run the course, serve raisins for a snack, stressing the *r* in the word *raisins*. As they eat, ask children what other words they can think of that begin with the letter *r*.



This Book



State Standards
TeachingStateStandards.com

→Select your state →subject →grade

See a page-by-page summary of each product that meets *your* state Standards.

About This Book

As children see concepts reflected in the world around them, they become enthusiastic and engaged learners. In this book you will find activities to foster children's social and emotional development, build language and literacy skills, and develop an understanding of math concepts. You will also find science activities that strengthen children's observation and reasoning skills, music and movement activities that get everyone involved, and group art activities that inspire creativity and cooperation. An Early Childhood Standards Correlation Chart is included to help you quickly identify activities that focus on a specific skill.

Visit our Web site at
www.SchoolSpecialtyPublishing.com



WPH99027

ISBN 1-57029-485-2



0 40474 80485 8