

Joyful Literacy

AND

Parent Power

You can teach your child at home.

Their First and Always Teachers



EARLY LEARNING
WOMB to GRADE 3

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Chapter 2: Part 2

Alphabet Games: Twenty Joyful Games for Practicing Letters

Every child is different in the way they approach their world. It's not about whether any one individual is better or worse, faster or slower, distracted or focused. Their differences arise from valid reasons and circumstances, most, quite beyond the child's control. They are born of different parents; come from different cultures; are raised in extended families or by single moms; attended day care or had a live-in nanny; were raised in literacy rich environments or may never have held a book. Regardless, they all need and deserve to become literate!

We now know that over 85% of children are perfectly capable of learning to read. (The other 10-to-15% of the population may have medical issues that could cause a slower developmental learning rate.)

That makes game-like learning experiences very important. We call them doses, and this is where PRACTICE enters the picture. Few children learn a new skill the first time it is taught. You may need to re-teach the same skill several times in a week for the child to understand and apply that skill. This is where the games and the practice become critically important; the skills must be embedded in memory and this only happens with practice. Some children will master the skill after three doses (games); some children might need twenty. Our job is to be patient, encouraging, playful and supportive.

They **can** and **will** learn the skill. If, after multiple efforts they appear frustrated, switch to a different game or skill and revisit the first one later with a different strategy or game. Keep the practice environment happy, exciting, upbeat and the session brief. Fifteen minutes is a long time for young children learning multiple new skills.

In the next chapter we offer you a variety of tried-and-true games. Have fun with your children and make literacy the heart of your family fun and learning!



Shaving Cream Writing Bags

Purpose

The **sensory writing bags** are a great alternative to giving children pen and paper while they practice printing their letters. Cookie sheets are ideal for learning letters with shaving cream. It becomes an engaging, playful and multi-sensory experience for your child - and the clean up is not a huge chore!

Resources Required

- A large Ziploc bag or a cookie sheet, shaving cream, food colouring, and Q-tips.

Instructions

- Use about 2 cups of shaving cream for these 30cm x 20cm bags, just enough to have it completely cover the inside surface. Then add about 2 tablespoons of food colouring to the bag before removing the air and sealing the Ziploc bag completely. Ask your child to start carefully massaging the bag so that the colouring mixes with the shaving cream. You can use more than one colour and have your child experiment with mixing colours - a little science lesson added to the literacy fun!
- Pile shaving cream in the middle of the tray and have your child spread it out evenly. Printing letters with their fingers in the shaving cream will add another rich layer of sensory delight to the activity.

Variations

- Use dirt or sand in the tray and use a stick to make the letters.
- <https://youtu.be/NM-KbR6lCDE> A video for more shaving cream writing ideas.

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Race Time Dinosaur Game

Purpose

Teach letter identification and letter sounds.

Resources Required

- Print the editable board game board from the site given below, or draw your own on paper, or use the game online with your children.
- Dice.
- <https://www.bingobongokids.com/product/abc-to-xyz-upper-case-alphabetenglish-race-time-game-1/>
- <https://funlearningforkids.com/editable-dinosaur-theme-board-game/>



Instructions

- Students will roll a dice, move it that many spaces, land on a word and identify the beginning letter and its sound. This game can also be played online with dinosaur icons.

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Kitchen Cabinet Hunt

Purpose

Practice with the sounds and the names of the alphabet letters while demonstrating to children that words are always all around them.



Resources Required

- Letters of the alphabet (on flash cards, magnetic, cardboard), and your kitchen cabinet grocery items,
- Cereal boxes are great for this since the lettering is usually large and colourful.

Instructions

- Spread the alphabet letters out on the kitchen table or counter. Ask your child to choose a letter, say the name of the letter and then say the sound the letter makes (usually at the beginning of a word). Have them find words on any of the containers in the cupboard that start with the identified letters.
- Go to the cupboard together and find something that starts with that letter such as *b* for *box* of cereal or *banana* or *bag* of rice. Have them partner the letter and the object on the table.
- After you have partnered as many as you can, have them go through the different items to practice sounds and names.

Variations

You can change this activity by turning it into an I Spy game in any room in the house or in the yard. For example, “I spy with my little eye something whose sound begins with . . .” Reverse the activity by starting with that object in the room and asking your child to find the alphabet letter that starts its name.



Bubbly Literacy

Purpose

Practice rapid naming of alphabet letters. Speed with recognizing letters and sounds quickly plays a role in memory and fluency.



Resources Required

- Bubbles: a good recipe for making large, strong bubbles at home can be found at: <https://www.homesciencetools.com/article/how-to-make-super-bubbles-science-project/>
- Cards with alphabet letters or any collection of letters

Instructions

- Write letters on cards or cut out letters or sets of letters. Have your child pick a card or letter and identify the letter by sound and by name.

- You blow bubbles as your child races to pop as many as possible while naming either the letter or the letter sound every time a bubble is popped. Lots of bubbles? Lots of practice!
- You can also say a letter and have them busily popping the bubbles while telling you the letter sound.

A good rule of thumb is to use the letters that your child has already mastered, plus a few new ones. For example, for a child who knows only a few letters of the alphabet you will want to start slowly. The key here is to build their confidence steadily; that way, they may be more willing to take risks with new learning challenges. Add more letters as your child masters the alphabet.



The Great Cookie Alphabet Mystery

The Bureau of Delicious Investigations

The family's cookies have gone missing!! A crime has been committed, and we have hired the top detectives in town to help solve the mystery. We need help and keen observational skills to study the clues and find the top suspect.

Imagine the feeling of losing the chewiest, most chocolatey cookies you could dream of. Please accept our challenge and bring justice to this kitchen catastrophe! You can start by making cookies with the children and then staging a theft with great dramatics. Together you and your child will solve the GREAT MYSTERY!

Purpose

Practice identifying beginning letter sounds while also fine tuning observational skills.

Resources Required

- Yummy fresh cookies,
- A collection of ‘stuffies’ each with its own loot bag,
- Lots of objects that start with a variety of letters,
- An imaginary magnifying glass.



Instructions

- Parent “detectives” gather a series of clues, and then bring in some prime suspects. Here, parents set up some ‘stuffies’ who are the suspects, each with their own bag of loot. The detectives then set them all up on the sofa. Inside each bag, the parent has secretly put several objects and has kept track of the beginning letters of each item. Make sure one bag (the guilty party) has objects that begin with letters you are not going to use.
- Read the clues one at a time, such as “it begins with b (banana, bib, ball, bell). The child goes through bags pulling out objects that begin with the letter b.
- Use the clues to eliminate objects and suspects until it is clear that the suspect who took the cookies is the only one left.

CASE CLOSED! Happy ending? Have a ‘stuffie’ party when the suspect whispers to you where the cookies are? Your choice!

Variations

Have your child lay objects on paper and print the beginning letter of the items beside them in big felt pen letters. Find the letters in books. Make up more words that start with that beginning letter.



Parachuting for Literacy

Purpose

Practice letter knowledge while playing with a homemade parachute.

Resources Required

- Plastic bag and string or ribbon,
- Scissors,
- Light weight parachute rider such as a Lego person or plastic toy.



Instructions

- Parent Cut a square out of a plastic bag. Put a hole in each corner of the square and tie a piece of string or ribbon through each hole. Tie the other ends of the strings or ribbon to your parachute rider. Ready for some parachuting!

- Place target items on the ground using pieces of paper or draw chalked circles. Toss your parachute from a bit of height, perhaps off a deck, down a hill, or from a chair.
- Remember - safety first when choosing a launch point! If your parachute lands on a letter, identify the name or sound of the letter.
- An extra challenge? Have the child check the surroundings to find and name an object that begins with the same letter.



Soaking Literacy

Purpose

Practice letter knowledge while breaking rules by deliberately getting messy or wet!



Resources Required

- Water-gun or clean spray bottle,
- Water,
- Paper, pencil, or felt pen,
- Tape or string.

Instructions

- Print chosen letters on cards or pieces of paper. Tape or string up the papers in an outdoor area. On separate cards or small pieces of paper, print the same letters and put them in a pile. With your child's spray

device fully loaded with water, you are now ready for some wet, messy fun!

- Have your child flip a card, identify the letter and letter sound and then race to find the matching paper hanging somewhere. When they find one, they blast it with squirts of water and think and say other words that start with the same letter. Then they return, flip another card and carry on with the delight of this squirting game!
- Make it a timed game: they have to see how much faster they can finish the course.
- Make it an obstacle race where they also get some physical exercise having to crawl under and over various hurdles.



Beginning Sound Hunt Using the Child's Name

Purpose

Connecting objects with their beginning sounds and building your child's understanding of the connections with the letters in their names.

Resources Required

- Camera
- Pencil and paper
- Colouring supplies



Instructions

- Have your child think of the beginning letter of their name. Talk about that letter. What sound does it make? Have them look for items in and around the home that begin with the same letter. e.g. Haylee, hairbrush, headband, house, hand, hat,
- Give your child a camera to take pictures or paper to draw the items they found. They can then label their items with their special letter.
- Encourage more practice by having your child share their connections with a family member later in the week.
- Adapt this to use as a birthday party game activity with friends.



Scavenger Hunts

Purpose

To recognize that alphabet letters are all around us.



Resources Required

- Link to free alphabet chart:
<https://kindercraze.com/alphabetchart-freebie-and-sale>

Instructions

- Write, or have your child write letters on pieces of paper. Place them all over the house, even outside.
- Give your child a list of letters that they are searching for; when they find a letter on the list, have them say the letter, the sound, and a word that begins with that letter.
- Check it off or print it on a recording sheet. There could be prizes for, say the first 5 words, then the next 5 words. Checking boxes is good, but simple, tangible rewards are even better!

Variations

Ninja crawl: Place the cards low to the ground - taped to the underside of chairs, beds, or tables so that the kids have to ninja crawl and roll around to find them. Use a flashlight or lantern when it is a bit darker to hunt for and find the letters and words. The letters and words could carry a theme such as Hallowe'en or Christmas words. Speed round: See how fast you can find the letters and words using a timer. Try to beat your own time.



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Balloon Pop

Purpose

Put some fun and excitement into learning letters



Resources Required

- Water balloons
- Chalk

Instructions

- Find an area outside where you can write with chalk. Write the letters that your child is working on inside a circle.
- Blow up and fill the water balloons and use the filling time to build excitement and anticipation. Gather the water balloons in a pail and get ready for a lot of fun!
- When you yell out a letter: 1. Your child first has to say a word that starts with the letter. 2. They have to draw the letter in chalk. 3. They have to indicate the letter by throwing a water balloon at it.
- Finally, while attempting to pop the balloon, they must call out the letter. If the balloon doesn't break, they have to throw it repeatedly until they are successful. Sounds like a great excuse for permission to throw a lot of water balloons!

Variations

To up the excitement, pin the letters on your own clothing and make yourself the living target! Just a small sacrifice of a little dignity all for the cause of learning, right?

End with a letter water fight just for good measure. Make up your own rules!



Alphabet Toy Hunt

Purpose

To use your child's everyday toys to turn them into a busy alphabet hunt

Resources Required

- Any set of toys such as Lego, blocks, plastic dinosaur sets, plastic doll collections,
- Erasable felt pens,
- Scotch tape,
- Cut up pieces of blank paper.

Instructions

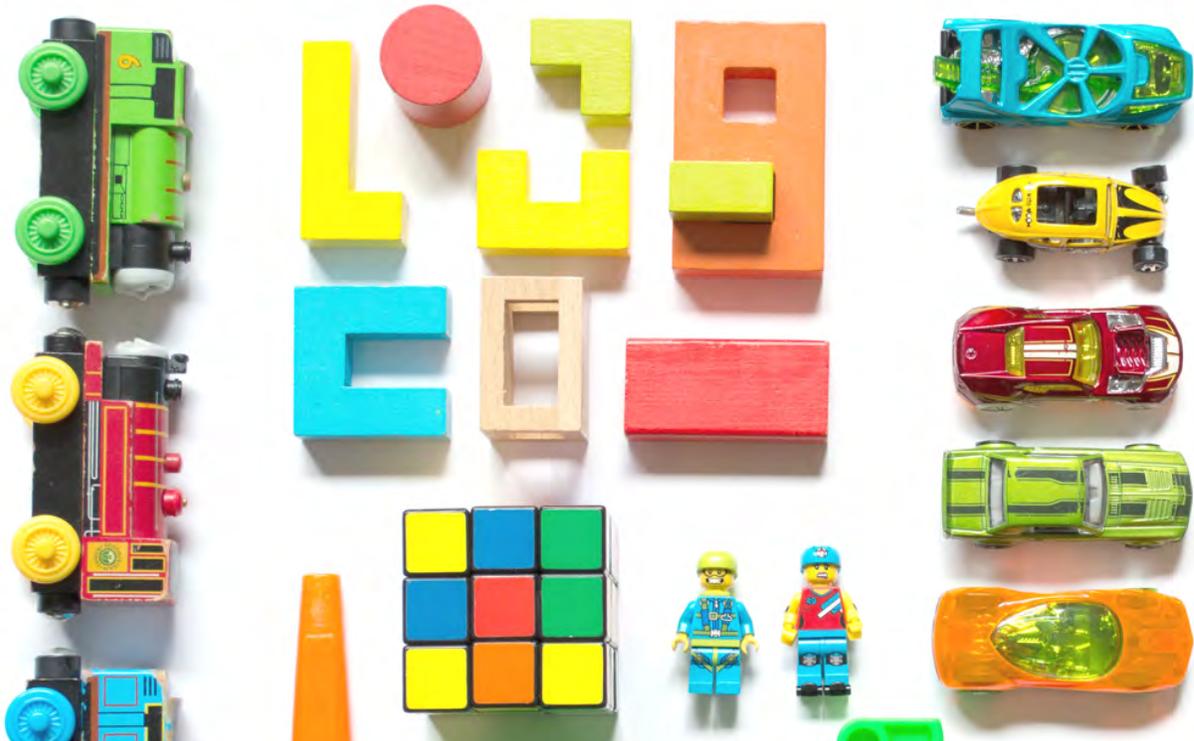
- Without your child's knowing, gather a set of their favourite toys. Either write alphabet letters on the toys with wipe-off pens, or tape alphabet

letters to them. As a surprise, have the activity on hand when they are ready for alphabet practice.

- Hide the toys under and behind things.
- Have your child find the toys one by one while magically discovering the letters. They then have to say the letter, say its sound, draw it, find it in books, in the room or in their name. You can wait and do all the naming later or one by one. Marking their chart successfully and perhaps a small reward would reinforce success.

Variations

Find or make a wee shoulder bag for each of their stuffies and cut up tiny letters to leave in the bag. They can practice the letters as they play with their stuffies. Bury letters in bowls of rice or in a tray of sand to be found as they dig for them saying the names and sounds of the letters as each letter is discovered. Pin letters on their clothes for the entire day with an expectation that they will know them all by suppertime.





Windows and Letters Everywhere!

Purpose

To draw attention to alphabet practice in unique ways that will motivate children

Resources Required

- Any washable felt pens,
- Water-based paints,
- Windows anywhere in the house or garage,
- An alphabet model or sample to copy.

Instructions

- Work with your child to study the shape of an alphabet letter.
- Encourage them to take care copying it and printing it on the window; use different colours and sizes.
- Move from window to window, filling the windows with letters.
- Block the window frames off with tape first to avoid getting the colour on them.

Variations

Leave the letters on the windows for a week so your child can practice and show off with other family members. Later in the week, circle the letters with a black pen as they master them (as described on the checklist in Chapter One, Part Three). Be sure to check off all their successes and celebrate!



Glitzy Bottle Shake

Purpose

To create ways to make letter hunts more exciting

Resources Required

- Empty water bottles
- Beads or hard paper bits with letters on them
- A jar of glitzy powder mixed with rice or dry sand
- Newspaper and felt pens

Instructions

- Mix the glitz, sand, rice, beads or pieces of hard paper and fill the bottle with the mixture. Be sure the lid is screwed on tight.
- Cover the table with newspaper.
- This can be a quiet activity while you are busy at other tasks. Show your child how to (independently) shake the bottle then stand it up to see which letters can be identified through the glitz. The job is to write the letter down with big felt pens on the newspaper – making the letters a couple of inches tall.
- Then their job is to circle all the same letters they can find in the newspaper text.
- Come back to check and listen as they name the letter and say its sound. Then it's time for their reward!

Variations

Provide them with another set of alphabet letters – magnetic, or on cards, or wooden (Scrabble tiles), or cutouts. On a separate table they match and line up all the letters they were able to identify in the glitz bottle. Once they have reviewed those with you, have them repeat the same exercise with the letters remaining on the table.



Monster Word Challenge

Purpose

To help children understand that there are intriguing words made up of interesting letters. To teach and practice how to match large numbers of letters. To teach them that they are capable of reading really BIG, exciting words.

Resources Required

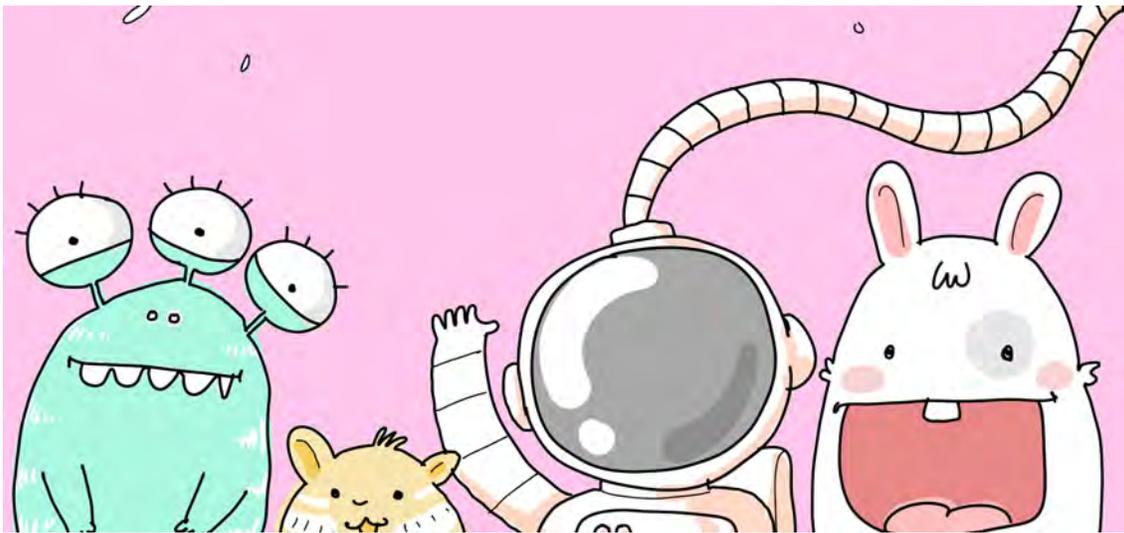
- Sets of letters with enough letters to spell big words
- A white board
- Pens and paper
- Sticky notes
- A book of amazing, wondrous words (find a dinosaur book or a book of fairy tales that has big words). Examples: tyrannosaurus or brontosaurus or unicorn or princess – or whatever captures their imaginations. Look for a personal and highly motivated connection to the word.

Instructions

- Read the book with great enthusiasm and interest. Use the sticky notes to mark words that your child is most excited about and finds most interesting. Remember you are looking for BIG words.
- Your next job is to print those words on newspaper spread out on the table. Your child's job is to match the beginning letters using the alphabet set, putting the match for each letter directly below each of the printed letters.
- When finished, they read all the words, practicing using the initial letters (t - tyrannosaurus) to help them recognize the word.
- Return to the book to find the original word. Have them show other family members the big words they can now recognize.

Variations

If your child enjoys the activity, help them make a fold-over book where they print the words on each page accompanied by a drawing of the word's image. Now they are constructing a book of favourite words they can read over and over.





Literacy Blast

Purpose

To practice letter knowledge and letter sounds with two or three friends or family members.

Resources Required

- Beanbags or small lightweight ball-pit balls,
- Styrofoam balls, or even crumpled paper balls,
- Felt pens,
- A bucket or large container,
- Some things to use as barriers (tables, chairs, boxes).



Instructions

- Choose some throwing objects (beanbags, plastic balls, paper).
- Print letters on those objects (based on the targeted skill). If you do not want it to be permanent, use masking tape on the object and print the letter on the tape.
- Players collect their projectiles and set up a barrier that they hide behind. Between all the barriers is a bucket or large container with one person chosen to sit in the middle of the barriers.
- When the signal is given, players poke their heads up and attempt to throw their projectiles into the bucket. As they throw, they must yell out

the letter. They must avoid being seen by the person in the middle - by ducking their heads behind the barrier after throwing.

- If they get caught, you could have them sit out for 10 seconds, or quickly read off a list of letters they have at their barrier before returning to throwing.

Variations

For added fun, wear ice-cream buckets on your heads as helmets.



Tower Tumble

Purpose

To experience an energetic alphabetic practice session

Resources Required

- Felt pens,
- Masking tape or painters tape,
- Blocks.



Instructions

- Each player stands behind a table, desk, or similar flat surface. Space out players as needed.

- Each player is equipped with one throwing ball, a die, and a handful of building blocks. Print letters on masking tape or directly on the blocks. The blocks can be differentiated (one student might have one set of basic letters on their blocks while another player might be working on more complex letters).
- A signal, players begin rolling their dice. If they roll a one, two, or three, they stack the corresponding number of blocks into a tower, reading each letter as they build their tower. If another one, two, or three is rolled, they continue to build on the existing tower. If they roll a 4, 5, or 6, they can start a new tower. If any tower falls over, the child who owns the tower (or the family member) has to name all the opponent's letters.
- The game is played for as long as you like. Change the rules with mutual agreement.

Variations

This game could be played with partners in teams of two. A small reward for the highest tower.





The Bag with the Spy Hole

Purpose

To encourage children to experiment orally with sound and letters using objects

Resources Required

- A brown paper bag or envelope with a small spy eye-hole,
- Choice of two or three letters for practice represented by physical alphabet letters kept outside of the bag (magnetic or cutouts or Scrabble tiles),
- Two or three items that start with each letter (total about nine items in the bag).

Instructions

- Present the bag to your child. Lay out the two or three letters that represent the items in the bag. Tell your child that there are surprise items in the bag that begin with these letters. Have them practice the different sounds the letters make. Also ask your child to generate words that start with that letter (after all they might be in the bag). Just for fun have them speculate whether the object might be in the bag (would the item be too big or too squishy etc.).
- After a few guesses they get to feel the bag and guess again.
- Then they get to look in the I Spy hole to get any hints. You can give them clues too. Eventually you want them to say the sound, name the letter and guess the object. Then they get to keep it! Some ideas for

contents of the bag: b for ball, box, banana, book; c for candy, car, can, cookie; s for spoon, soap, straw, stick.

Variations

The children themselves could look around the house for small appropriate items to put in the bag for the other players: for example, 'm' for a toy monkey, a spoon for 's', or 'p' for a pencil.





Golf Tees and Styrofoam

Purpose

To practice alphabet letter recognition playing SNAP using golf tees and Styrofoam

Resources Required

- Random pieces of Styrofoam retrieved from packing boxes,
- Small, safe play hammer,
- Cards with letters of the alphabet on them or letters in a bag to be drawn out of the bag,
- Felt pens.

Instructions

- On the sides of the Styrofoam, draw alphabet letters in a long straight row near the top – perhaps placing lower case on one side and upper case on the other side.
- Place the letter cards face down. Person One flips the cards one by one. Person Two calls out the name of the letter, the sound it makes and a few words that start with the sound.
- Once Person Two has succeeded (offering help is a good idea) she gets to pound a tee into the Styrofoam above the letter.
- Have lots of fun!

Variations

An old Cribbage board with coloured pegs could be used to keep score rather than the Styrofoam.



Kitchen Cupboard Sorting Trays

Purpose

To encourage children to first identify an object, secondly the beginning sound of its name, then match all three together by categorizing them in the same container. This activity is asking children to engage in reverse thinking so it will be a bit more difficult but important.

Resources Required

- Collection of containers from the kitchen cupboard,
- Box of random objects collected from junk drawers or old jewellery boxes or toy or sewing boxes,
- Pictures from old magazines,
- Set of letters.

Instructions

- Give your child empty trays that are not labelled.
- Bring out a big box of random items. Go through many of the items naming the objects together. (Note: Some items may be called different things. A ball of wool could be called a ball or wool or yarn.)

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Any Pre-schooler Can Do This

Resources Required

- Paper,
- Play Doh or plasticine, or any goeey home-made stuff.

Instructions

- Print the letters of the week on pieces of paper.
- Give the children the Play Doh or other goeey stuff that they can manipulate.
- Have them make the shape of the letter with the goop right on top of the pattern you have made.
- Once finished, have them trace the letter shapes, say the name of the letter, and make the sound of the letter.
- Then practice thinking up words that start with the letter sound.



Variations

Children can use your patterns to do other activities: finger paint on top of the pattern; put glue on the patterns and add glitz or sprinkles; lay buttons or other small objects onto the letter patterns; ask them for ideas!

Chapter 4: Part 2

Sight Word Games: Twenty Joyful Games for Practicing Sight Words



Making Many Words From One

Purpose

To show children the magic of big words and how they can be reconstructed as multiple smaller words that we find everywhere in our reading

Resources Required

- Recipe cards or large sheets of paper,
- Extra alphabet letters,
- Lists of sight words,
- Felt pens,
- Scissors,
- Sticky notes.



Instructions

- Have children name or find interesting big words in books or from their imagination – words like tyrannosaurus rex. Encourage them to use words that have multiple vowels.

- Print their chosen words on recipe cards or large pieces of paper.
- Children cut the word(s) up into letters.
- Children then select letters from their initial big word to create new, shorter words such as *of*, *are*, *say*. If they run out of letters, they can continue cutting up new big words, or if they are missing a cut-up letter, they can substitute it with a magnetic letter instead.
- Always have children find the new words in a book and use them in a sentence.

Variations

Provide a list of sight words. Have the children check off the sight words they can make after finding them on the list to show that they know them. Have them glue the letters for each word onto recipe cards and then organize the cards to make real sentences. If they are missing a word, coach them to write the missing word on a sticky note to make the sentence complete. Keep a collection of their sentences in a folder or box for re-reading in the following days.



2

Green Eggs and Ham

Purpose

To practice rapid identification of sight words

Resources Required

- Ten flash cards with words your child needs to practice,
- An egg flipper,
- A dinner plate,
- A paper cut into the shape of eggs and ham,
- The Dr. Seuss book *Green Eggs and Ham* or listen to a reading together. See the free video of *Green Eggs and Ham* on YouTube.



Instructions

- Read the story to the children to motivate them.
- Draw and cut out the shape of irregular fried eggs. Use a different type of paper (yellow if possible) to put in the centre to represent the yolk.
- Print the practice sight words on the yolk of the egg. On some yolks print a plus-1 or minus-1 under the word.
- Turn the eggs yolk-side down on the table or carpet. Each player gets an egg flipper and a dinner plate.
- Players take turns flipping eggs. For each egg they flip, they call out the word as quickly as possible; they then have to spell it, say a word that rhymes with it as well as use it in a sentence. If they can accomplish this, they get to pile the egg on their dinner plate. If not,

they have to turn it back over and try a different word. Teach them the word if they don't know it; have them trace it, spell it, draw it on the table, then put it back to try later.

- If the egg has a plus-1 on it they get to try another word. If the egg has a minus-1 on it they have to put one word back from their dinner plate.

Variations

This game idea can be used with so many different materials: Write words on ping pong balls, windows, clear plates, clothes pins, or toilet tubes. The main thing that interests children is the use of and manipulation of unusual objects. Make up your own games and rules together.



Snakes & Ladders and other Board Games

Purpose

To practice rapid identification of sight words

Resources Required

- Check out your local thrift shops to shop for old favourite board games. Most board games can be recycled into games that practice words. You may need paper, sticky notes, scissors, tape to attach words to the game, a pair of dice.

Instructions: Example

- Consider the game *Snakes and Ladders* which many of us played as children.
- Have your child print the chosen sight words on small pieces of paper. Tape the sight words to the bottom of the ladders and the top of the snakes.
- Participants roll the dice and move their markers as numbers appear on the dice. Each time they land on a sight word they must say it, spell it, use it in a sentence and give a rhyming word. If they land on a snake, they slide to the bottom; if they land at the bottom of the ladder, they roll the dice and climb the number of rungs indicated.

Variations

Collect old Scrabble letters to make sight words. Visit dollar stores to collect small figures like dinosaurs, cowboys, animals etc. that can be used to create games. Spread newspapers out on the floor and draw your own game boards with dark felt pens. Make up the rules together. Children have to identify sight words to make their way through the games.





Linking Word Families with Sight Words

Purpose

To raise awareness that creating word families is an important way to speed up reading processes and fluency. Word families are a collection of words that end the same way as in *up, is, it, in* and *an*. These smaller words are contained in many larger words such as *grin, his* and *fit*; practicing these word families will increase rapid recognition.

Resources Required

- Sticky notes, a blank wall or window, a fridge door,
- The Dr. Seuss *Hop on Pop* book, or free video on YouTube,
- List of word families: -ab -at -ink -ore -unk -ack -ay -ip -ot -y -ag -ell -ight -out -ail -est -ill -ow (how, chow) -ain -ew -im -ow (bow, throw) -am -ed -in -op -an -eed -ine -uck -ank -ick -ob -ug -ap -ing -ock -um

Instructions

- Read the Dr. Seuss book together.
- Keep it on display for a week or two to make this an extended practice activity.
- Choose the five small, two-letter words listed in *Purpose*.
- As a warm-up activity, play a rhyming competition game. Call out the first word and then have each player take a turn calling out a word that rhymes.
- Next, write the two-letter words in red on sticky notes and line them up in a horizontal row across the wall. Practice adding letters to the front of the words to provide examples such as *in--win, is--his, it--kit*.

- Now the game begins. Call out a letter that would work in front of one of these words. (Don't confuse them by giving them letters that don't make a real word.) Your child takes a new sticky note, writes the expanded word on the sticky note and puts it in the correct word family. You will end up with five vertical columns of word families such as in, bin, sin, skin, grin, within, Quinn, pin, shin, thin etc.
- Every day over the course of the week, use a timer to have your child read each column as fast as possible. Plan a reward for the end of the week for increasing the speed of the reading and be sure they perform for other members of the family.

Variations

Put the word families (as they are created) on shower curtain rings and hang them somewhere visible like on the fridge. Make it a game that they have to read ten words before they get dessert or play a computer game or something that is a treat for them.



5

Who Am I?

Purpose

To help children focus on and memorize the correct spelling of sight words



Resources Required

- Ten sight word cards,
- A set of the same cards for each player,
- A detective costume or props such as a magnifying glass.

Instructions

- The detective lays all his cards on the table, so they are visible.
- The mystery maker has the same cards in her hands.
- The mystery maker says, “Which word am I?” and gives two clues like “I have four letters in me and one is an ‘l’ or says, “I rhyme with fish”.
- The child searches through the face-up cards and guesses which word it might be. If he is right he gets to take the other player’s card and add it to his own set.
- In each turn, the child must spell the word, use it in a sentence and identify words that rhyme with it.

Variations

Use a few pages of a familiar book where you provide the clues and your child must find the word, spell it and use it in a sentence. Play the same game using the assessment sight word lists (in Part Three of this

chapter); provide some clues and have your child guess which word it might be from the assessment list. This is a great way to check off the words they have learned.

6

Cityscapes and Parking Lot Practice

Purpose

To engage in imaginative play by linking favourite toys with sight word learning by building an imaginary sight-word city

Resources Required

- Masking tape or painting tape,
- A large floor space (covered with paper if you choose),
- Felt pens,
- Paper,
- Scissors.



Instructions

- Either tape a large piece of paper to the floor as the base for your city (6 x 6 feet would be a good size), or mark off the parameters of the city on the floor with tape.
- Working together, mark off streets, parking lots, city blocks and buildings. Use your child's favourite toys to fill the city: blocks for buildings, Lego for other structures, toothpicks for fences or signs,

plastic animals or people that live in the city, and lots of cars and trucks.

- Ask your child to print 20 sight words they are practicing on thin strips of paper. (These strips will become the stalls in the parking lots. Put them in place all through the city.) Name the streets in your city after family members or friends and put signs on them.
- Now your task is to take journeys through the city in your toy cars. You can give each other instructions like, “Drive down Jimmy Street, turn right at the corner and park on _____.” (name the sight word).
- When she names the sight word she takes the word from the parking stall and sees how many she can collect on her travels.

Variations

Instead of a city, make it a fairytale land, or a dinosaur mountain jungle, or a flower garden or whatever scene would appeal to your child. Instead of making parking stalls, the words could be put on plastic dinosaurs or on the backsides of flowers or on street signs. The goal is to practice, practice, practice!



Sight Words Make Magic Sentences

Purpose

To excite children about the magic of making sentences from sight words

Resources Required

- Cheap envelopes or small re-useable baggies,
- Scissors,
- Felt pens,
- A selection of sight words.

Instructions

- Choose the sight words most likely to make complete sentences and make them as long as you can. If you are missing a word that you want to use but is too difficult for the child to read and is not a sight word, draw a picture instead, e.g., squirrel, motorcycle.
- Samples: I like mom and dad. The cat is so little. I can jump up high. I see the big car.
- Print the sentences on strips of paper.
- For each strip, cut up the words and place them in an envelope (one envelope for each strip). If children are more advanced with word work, put two or three sentences in each envelope to make it more challenging.
- The child's task is to empty the words from the envelopes onto the table and make them into sentences, read them fluently and then spell each word.

Variations

Tape the sentences on the fridge and have them read the sentences daily, speeding up each time. Tape sight words to blocks to make sentences. Have them cut words out of magazines and glue them together on newspaper to make sentences.





Go Fishing

Purpose

To have fun with sight words and earn a treat

Resources Required

- A bag of goldfish cookies,
- Paper cut into fish shapes, (Make it an art project first by having the children draw, cut out, and colour them.),
- Sticks with string tied on the end make a fishing rod. (If you have magnet strips, put a piece on the end of the string and on the back of each fish. If not, use paper clips on the end of the string.)

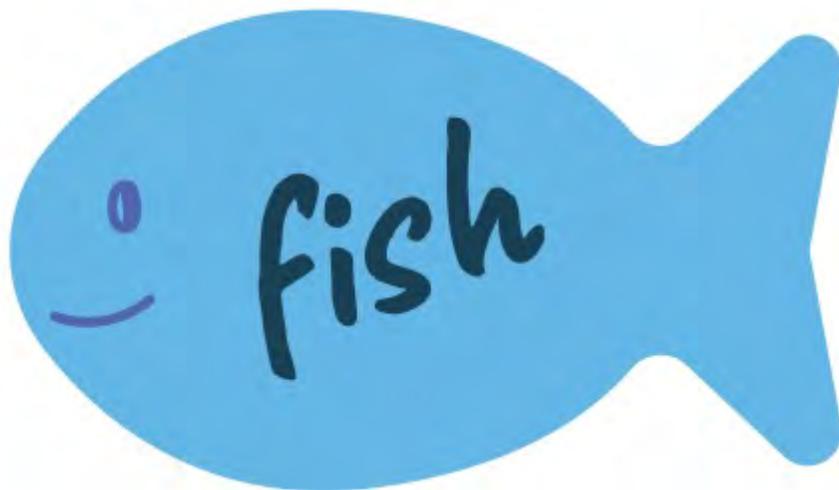
Instructions

- Print the sight words on the fish.
- If you are using a magnet, glue a small strip on each fish and tie a magnet on to the end of the string. If you do not have magnets, put one paper clip on the fish and another on the end of the string.
- Create a “fake lake” in a box or behind a draped table to add a bit of mystery to it.
- Children hold the fishing rod and dangle the string into the “lake”. If magnets are used, the string will automatically pick up the fish. If you use paper clips, you will need to sit behind the lake and clip the fish onto the paper clip on the string.
- Children read the word they catch, use it in a sentence, spell it and find it in a book or on their word lists.

- Finally, challenge them to make sentences by putting some words together.
- When they line up their “catch” at the end of the game, they get a cookie fish for each paper fish they caught.

Variations

Put words into a sand box or a rice box or in a glitter filled bottle. Children have to dig around or shake the bottle to find words that will make sentences.





The Scavenger Hunt

Purpose

Make a hunt for sight words into a healthy outdoor activity



Resources Required

- Sight words printed on bright coloured paper. (If the paper is not bright, it might be too difficult to find outdoors.)

Instructions

- Print the sight words and cut them up.
- Wait for a sunny day!
- While your child is busy elsewhere, hide the words outside, in a park or on a playground. Keep notes about where you hid them as you may need to offer clues.
- Position yourself in the centre of the space as you call out encouragement and clues.
- When your child finds the sight word, he or she runs to you, says the word, spells it, and uses it in a sentence.
- A high five, a treat, or a cheer will be welcome for every word identified.

Variations

On a rainy day this game can be played in a living room. You can provide clues by calling out I Spy.



Sleazy Slime Words

Purpose

To celebrate learning sight words by letting children use slime to practice the sight words

Resources Required

Recipe for slime and a garbage bag for kids to wear over their clothes:

- Mix together equal amounts of white school glue and water.
- Add some food colouring or glitter if desired.
- Stir in 1/4 cup (60 milliliters) of liquid laundry detergent with a fork.
- Knead the slime with your hands for one to two minutes.
- Play with the slime, and then store it in an airtight container.

Instructions

- Prepare the slime in advance to let it set. Include your child in the preparation, just to build anticipation.
- Use this activity to practice words that your child has been struggling with because motivation and excitement about slime will help them with good feelings and therefore their memory.
- The task is to make these tough words out of slime with an emphasis on tracing and feeling the shape of the words through touch, which enhances learning. Once the words are formed, the child will print them using the slime word as a model.
- Take lots of pictures! It will be fun!

Variations

There are many different recipes available on the internet. Print the words on large pieces of paper first so that the children can shape their words on top of the letters; this additional activity supports good letter formation.



Sight Words Memory Match

Purpose

To use shapes of sight words as a memory prompt in a competitive game

Resources Required

- Up to 20 sight words

Instructions

- Turn all the cards face down without looking at them.
- Each player gets a turn at overturning two cards.
- Players use memory strategies to remember where they saw the shape of the word.
- When they turn over each word, they spell it out loud, trace the shape of the word in the air, and then replace the cards face down.



- Players continue to turn two cards over at a time trying to find matches. When two words match, the player may add them to their winning pile.
- The person with the largest pile in the end wins.

Variations

Shapes are one of the ways we recognize words at a glance. Have children draw the words they are studying on an 8x11.5 piece of paper; cut the word out following the shape of the letters. Spend a few days focusing the children on tracing the shapes of their words while spelling each letter. This kinesthetic approach will help with memory and recollection of the words.



Carpet Poking Frenzy

Purpose

To use kinesthetic memory to connect the shape of words with physical activity

Resources Required

- Sight words printed in block letters on 8.5 x 11 paper, a thick carpet piece, tape, punch pins, or a thick blunt nail (which might be safer for young children)

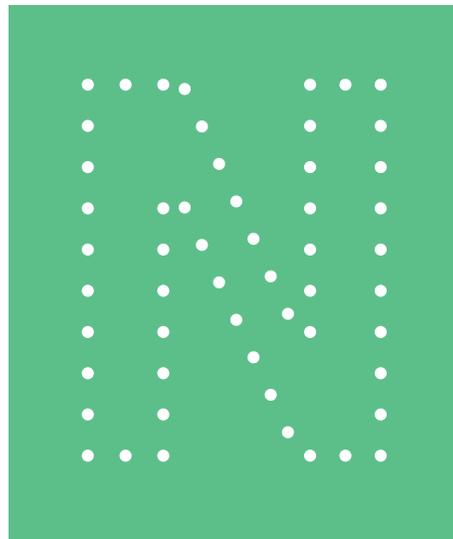
Instructions

- Draw block letters that are about an inch thick.
- Discuss with the children the safety issues related to the nail or pin push.
- The children lay the paper on the carpet and repeatedly and quickly punch around the edge of each letter making holes to outline the letter shape.
- As they punch the edge of the letters, they call out the letter over and over until they have punched all the letters in the word.
- When they finish tracing the word, they call out its name ten times. Encourage noise and excitement to add to the fun and embed the learning in memory.

Next, they tape the word to a window, reversing it so that the holes face toward the child. Now they can see the shape of the word in the light through the holes. Ask them to trace the shape of the holes while they call out the spelling of each letter and finally the word itself. Kids love this activity!

Variations

In a reverse activity, blindfold your child. Place the hole-punched paper rough side up in front of the child. Ask them to trace the shape of the punched letters and try to determine the identity of the word.





Fly Swat Those Sight Words!

Purpose

To learn sight words with energy and purpose

Resources Required

- Sight words printed on cards,
- A handful of plastic bugs or, if not available, draw bugs with your child and glue them on or draw them directly on the flash cards. The bugs are the targets as well as the words.

Instructions

- Lay out the cards with the target bugs.
- Take turns swatting the bugs. Each player has to call out the word, spell it and use it in a sentence. Once successful, the player keeps the sight word until all words are gone.
- Get ready! Get set! Go! Kids love permission to swat a fly.

Variations

Ongoing practice is really important. On a large piece of paper draw a really big bug. Print all the sight words from this game on the big bug. Display it for a week on an available wall. Every time your child passes by, have them practice reading, spelling, and creating sentences with the sight words. Involve other members of the family so your child can show off and be reinforced.

14

Glue and Sight Word Rubbings

Purpose

To use a kinesthetic approach to learning sight word shapes

Resources Required

- Glue,
- 8.5x11 paper,
- Felt pens,
- Crayons.



Instructions

- Print the sight words on paper.
- Use a narrow-mouthed glue bottle to trace the glue along the lines of the letters. Let the glue form a ribbon along the line so that it dries in a raised way. Let it dry until the next day.
- Once the glue is dried, lay fresh paper on top of the glued word. Peel the crayons and rub them on their sides over the top of the glued letters to create rubbings. Use different colours to achieve different effects, perhaps using different colours for consonants and vowels.

Variations

Put a lot of effort into making the rubbings artistic. Different colours and multiple words on each paper would add to the display. The words can be further decorated with glitter or some other medium. The rubbings

could be cut out and glued onto a collage of words and displayed in your home. Remember - practice, practice, practice – be proud and have fun!



Musical Sight Words

Purpose

To use music to raise interest in learning sight words

Resources Required

- Music turned off and on,
- Sight word cards,
- Table with no chairs.



Instructions

- Spread the cards around the edges of the table.
- Have the children walk around the table to the sound of music.
- When the music stops, each player grabs a card, takes a turn reading it, spelling it and using it in a sentence.
- If they can't accomplish the preceding tasks, have them write the word and spell it three times as well as use it in several sentences.
- Once they finish practicing the game continues.

Variations

Put a lot of effort into making the rubbings artistic. Different colours and multiple words on each paper add to the display. The words can be further decorated with glitter or some other medium. The rubbings could be cut out and glued onto a collage of words and displayed in your home. Remember - practice, practice, practice - be proud and have fun!



Stamp Your Words

Purpose

To practice sight words by correctly stamping the words on paper or in Play Doh.

Resources Required

- Alphabet stamps,
- Paper or Play Doh,
- List of sight words.

Instructions

- Have children refer to the list of sight words.
- They will select the right stamps to print the selected words on the paper or the Play Doh.
- They name the stamp letter as they use it to confirm spelling skills.
- Assess the children as they work and provide extra practice as necessary using some of the other game strategies.

Variations

Ask the children to practice writing sentences using the words; or, write the sentence for them if they have trouble doing that, but ask them to fill in the blank for the sight word.



Pool Noodle Tower Spelling

Purpose

To use pool noodles with alphabet letters on them to spell sight words



Resources Required

- Three pool noodles of different colours,
- A serrated knife,
- Felt pens.

Instructions

- Use a serrated knife to cut the noodles into pieces that are about two inches tall.
- Using a permanent marker, print an alphabet letter on each piece of noodle. Repeat it around the noodle so it can be seen from all sides.

Try printing the vowels in a different colour and increase the number of letters that are used frequently.

- Children build word towers from their word lists (first letter at the top) by creating several words, spelling them and then using them in sentences.
- Finally, they knock them down and rebuild new words.

Variations

Use a variety of building materials on which you can print alphabet letters: Lego, blocks, cups, cars and trucks, and follow the same procedures.



BOOM!!!

Purpose

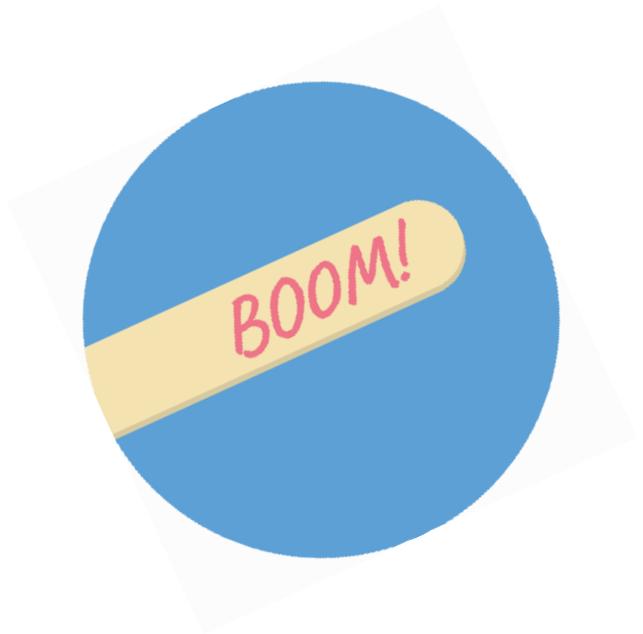
To practice reading words with increasing speed and fluency

Resources Required

- Popsicle sticks with one sight word written on each one,
- A round container that will hold them all.

Instructions

- Print one sight word at the bottom of each popsicle stick.



- Print BOOM! at the bottom in red on three or four other sticks.
- Each player takes turns pulling out a stick and reading the word, spelling it and using it in a sentence. If they read it successfully, they can keep it. If not, they ask another player to help them but have to return the stick.
- If a player pulls out a stick that says “BOOM!” ALL their popsicle sticks have to be put back.
- The game continues until all the sticks are gone.

Variations

If players are working with only a small number of beginning words, you can print the same word on several sticks for increased practice. Note the words the child doesn't get. You might pull those sticks for a special teaching and practice game on another day.



Sight Word Balloon Game

Purpose

To increase speed of sight word recognition

Resources Required

- Balloons,
- Black permanent felt pens.



Instructions

- Inflate five to ten balloons – as many as you can handle.
- Write the sight words of the day on the balloons.
- Players stand close to each other – in a circle if there are more than two players.
- Toss the first balloon in the air calling out the word on the balloon. As each player tries to keep it off the ground by hitting it again, the player repeats the word.
- After several hits, the next task is to spell it and the third task is to use it in a sentence as it is hit again.
- Take a rest.
- Go through the same process using the second word and the remaining balloons.
- When a balloon hits the ground, move on to the next balloon.
- When all the balloons are on the ground, children pop the balloons once they can name them all, spell them and use them in a sentence. Get involved in the popping and make it a race to see who can pop the most.

Variations

Tie the balloons onto a clothesline or onto a string you run across the room. Instead of throwing the balloons up in the air, players whack the balloons as they name them, spell them and use them in a sentence.





Putting on the Blitz: A Celebration at the End of the week or Month

Purpose

To celebrate the children having learned a large number of sight words. Such a celebration day can also be used to assess mastery of the words.

Resources Required

- Four or five of the favourite games that have been played to date

Instructions

- Set up centres around the house, each one in a slightly different space for amusement: the bathtub, under the kitchen table, behind the couch, out in the yard or any place that increases excitement.
- Let the children take part in choosing their favourite games.
- Set up different words in each game centre so children can see how much they have learned. (Only use words you have already taught and practiced). After using the activities at each centre, use the checklists in Part Three. Ask your child to participate in the assessment while you or other family members clap, cheer, reward, and celebrate the child's progress.
- Make a list of the words they did not master as a focus for the next week. Our experience is that most children can learn as many as ten words per week.

Variations

If your child has learned up to 40 or more sight words, you could spend a week on this review and re-assessment. Be sure to celebrate with the whole family!



Name _____ Date _____

Instant Words

Look  and listen .



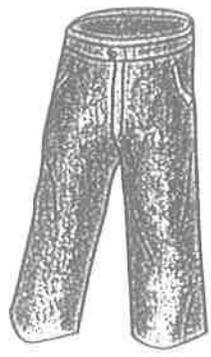
as shirt

with pants

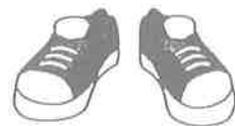


his dress

they shoes



I hat



Phrases *Read these phrases to yourself as you listen to them being read aloud.*

Look , listen , and read .

on a train	I am	with them
has on	the one	one of his shoes
a dress	in the hat	as they
pants and a shirt	they have	got on the train

Could you read every word? If not, repeat reading and listening until you can. Then, try reading the phrases on your own without listening.

Lesson 4 (cont.)

Name _____ Date _____

Story Read the story to yourself as you listen to it being read aloud. Repeat reading and listening until you know every word.

Look , listen , and read .

A man and a woman are on a train.
The man has on pants and a shirt.
The woman has on a dress.
I am the one in the hat.
They have a baby with them.
The baby lost one of his shoes as they got on the train.



About the Story Finish each sentence with a group of words from the story.

Look , listen , and write .

1. What does the man have on? _____

2. What does the woman have on? _____

3. What do I have on? _____

4. What did the baby lose? _____

5. Where did the baby lose it? _____

Name: _____

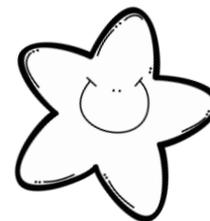
Sight Word RAN Board #11 – Recording Sheet

carry	small	own	show	pot	far	draw	clean	bear
chicken	grow	together	shall	laugh	cow	horse	duck	fish
bear	clean	chicken	draw	far	pot	show	own	small
carry	fish	duck	horse	cow	laugh	shall	together	grow
fish	duck	horse	cow	laugh	shall	together	grow	chicken
bear	clean	draw	far	pot	show	own	small	carry

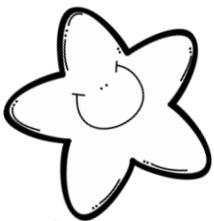
Attempt:	1 st read	2 nd read	3 rd read
Date:			
Total Words Named Correctly:			
Duration of Time Used:			

Notes:

Sight Word RAN Board #1



the	to	and	I	you	cat	dog	a	it
in	said	for	up	look	boy	girl	the	to
and	I	you	cat	dog	a	it	in	said
for	up	look	boy	girl	the	to	and	I
you	cat	dog	a	it	in	said	for	up
look	boy	girl	the	to	and	I	you	cat



Darci Dheensaw's Favourite Web Sites for Games and Activities

Dolch Sight Word Games and Word Work Activities	Websites
Winter Mouse Game Boards 3 game boards are included with Dolch Pre-primer to Grade 2 cards	www.teacherspayteachers.com/store/Teach-K-to-2-by-Kim-Barry
Winter Holiday Sight Words Game Boards • Game boards included- Winter, Gingerbread Houses, Penguins and spinners	www.teacherspayteachers.com/store/Linda-Post-The-Teachers-Post
Dolch Sight Word Crossword Puzzles Pre-primer, Primer, Grade 1, Grade 2 and nouns	www.teacherspayteachers.com/store/A-W-Creations
Wild West Bingo Sets1-3 and 3 Board games Dolch 2 nd grade sight word bingo games and board games	www.MrsPerkins.com
Circus Fun Bingo Sets1-3 and 3 Board games • Dolch 1 st grade sight word bingo games and board games	www.MrsPerkins.com
Zap! Sight Word and Word Work game- Grade 2	www.teacherspayteachers.com/store/Naturally-Curious-Kinders
Zap! A Sight Word Game Pre-primer	www.teacherspayteachers.com/store/Extra-Special-Teaching
Write the room Primer sight word cards and recording sheet	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Write-the-Room-Primer-Dolch-Sight-Words-12477597
Snowman Editable Board Game Sight words/Alphabet	www.FunLearningForKids.com
Sight Word Dice Games Pre-primer (other dolch word games available)	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/FREE-Sight-Word-Dice-Games-Pre-Primer-Freebie-4040521 By Molly's Masterpieces
Four in a Row- Sight Word Game	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Sight-Word-Game-High-Frequency-Dolch-Sight-Word-Game-Heaps-of-Fun-130830

Throw It! Sight Word Bean Bag Toss	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/THROW-IT-Sight-Word-Bean-Bag-toss-2112404
Interactive Sight Words Pre-Primer	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/interactive-Sight-Words-Word-Work-Pre-Primer-1725035
Literacy Stews- Cooking Up Letters, Sounds, Sight Words and Names	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Products/Literacy-Stews-Cooking-Up-Letters-Sounds-Sight-Words-Names-389542
Sight Word Work Grade 2	www.teacherspayteachers.com/FreeDownload/Sight-Word-Work-FREEBIE-1843214
Sight Word Comprehension Sentences-Preprimer	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Build-a-Sentence-Sight-Word-Sentence-Scrambles-FREEBIE-2645796
Very First Sight Word Sentences These sentences are designed to be introduced at school, and then sent home for repeated practice.	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Kindergarten-Sight-Word-Sentences-and-Games-for-Guided-Reading-Levels-A-and-B-1048713
Sight Word Weekly Work Sight Word Homework	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/The-Teaching-Bug
Dolch Primer Sight Word Sentences Sampler Freebie	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Dolch-Primer-Sight-Word-Sentences-Sampler-FREEBIE-4427207
Dolch Preprimer Sentences Freebie Sampler	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Kinder-Sight-Word-Sentences-Freebie-Sampler-4376841
Sight Word Sentences Using sight words in context	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Dolch-Sight-Word-Sentence-FREEBIE-3486112
Preprimer Sight word cards with Sentence Helpers	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Miss-Crafty-Teacher
Pre-Primer Sight Word Flash Cards with picture cues	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Pre-Primer-Dolch-Sight-Word-Flash-Cards-with-picture-cues-444475
Dolch Sight Words Pre-K/Pre-Primer Words with traceable sentences	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/PreK-Primer-Dolch-words-Traceable-words-and-sentences-4011555

Sight Word Sentence Strips! Safari Set	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Safari-Dolch-Sight-Word-Sentence-Strips-1955930
Sight Word Notebook Writing Prompts- Pre-primer	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Free-Sample-Sight-Word-Notebook-Writing-Prompts-Pre-Primer-3640111
Sight Words Centers- Word Work Centers	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Sight-Words-Centers-Sight-Word-Practice-Word-Work-Centers-3385823
Sight Word Books Pre-Primer	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/FREE-Sight-Word-Book-AND-2351480
Sight Word Fluency Sentences	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Sight-Word-Fluency-Sentence-Cards-Pre-primer-THE-BUNDLE-2038733
Sight Word Fluency Passages	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Sight-Word-Fluency-Passages-For-Reading-Intervention-427677
2 nd Grade Word Work Activities 2 free weeks	https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/2nd-Grade-Word-Work-Activities-weekly-FREE-SAMPLE-2563701
CVC Word - Family Roll and Race Game	www.mominspiredlife.com/product/cvc-word-family-roll-race-game/
Short I - CVC Word Work – Write the Room, Word Family Sort, Short i story	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Short/-I-CVC-Word-Work-393610
Short A Word Work Games: Play it! Shake Up, I have who has...	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Word-Work-Short-a-242996
Short Vowels Word Work Bingo games and paragraph with comprehension questions	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Short-Vowels-Word-Work-Free-Sample-1583009
Word Work- Scrabble Game	www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Freebie-Word-Work-Activities-241610
Snowman Phonics Board Games Beginning sounds, middle sounds and ending sounds	funlearningforkids.com/snowman-theme-phonics-board-games/