

'What does it start with?' box

You will need:

- ◆ A box
- ◆ Several items each beginning with a different sound
- ◆ Corresponding letter cards

This game is similar to the common objects game on the previous page, but the emphasis now is on recognising the sounds the letters make. Ask your child to choose an object from the box, to think what its first sound is (remember it is the sound you are looking for rather than the alphabet name) and then to match the object with the relevant card.



Sand Tray or Finger Paints

Children enjoy writing letters with their fingers in a tray of sand or with finger paints. These ways provide good opportunities to teach correct letter formation.



Sentence Games

This activity is quite useful when your child has been given an early reading book. Quite often parents say, "He's not reading the book, he's remembering the story off by heart." This can happen. Some children become over-dependent on the picture clues and do not look for clues from the words.

Making Sentences

Read the book with your child so s/he is familiar with the story. Then simply use the first sentence from the reading book and copy it out on a strip of paper. Either write it out or if you use a computer to print the cards out use a font such as Sassoon infant (font size 36 at least). Leave a double space in between each word. Now cut up the sentence into the individual words. For example:



Ask your child to make the sentence, 'This is a dog.' using the individual words. At first you will probably need to help. When he/she has made the sentence ask your child to read it to you and encourage him/her to point to each word with a finger.

Retain interest by only spending a few minutes a day on the activity. If your child makes a mistake do not say "That's wrong" immediately, because negative comments discourage. Ask your child to read the sentence and mistakes will often be self-corrected. If not, you can give clues such as, "What sound does **dog** start with?" If your child is still unable to read it, say positive comments such as "What a good try. You got all these right and only this part wrong. Well done." Then show your child the correct order.

You could ask your child to make up their own sentences about a picture in a favourite book and repeat the activity above or even encourage your child to write the words themselves they may need your help sounding out and writing the words. Remember when children learn to write they will spell words phonologically, for e.g. bath / 'baf', park / pork, walk / wulk. Encourage your child to have a go. Don't worry about them having the correct spellings at this early stage. As their knowledge increases they will learn the correct way to spell words.

If you require further information or advice please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.

Woolton Primary School



Learning phonics in Nursery and Reception.



Learning together... Achieving together.

If you can be involved in helping your child we know it can make a big difference to their learning.

Tips for teaching your child the sounds:

- ◆ It is important for a child to learn lower case letters rather than capital letters at first. Most early books and games use lower case letters and your child will learn these first at school. Obviously you should use a capital letter when required, e.g. names, etc.
- ◆ When you talk about letters to your child, remember to use the letter sounds: a b c d e ... rather than the alphabet names of the letters: A B C D E... The reason for this is that sounding out words is practically impossible if you use the alphabet names. eg. cat, would sound like: see-ay-tee.
- ◆ Saying the sounds correctly is really important when you are helping your child to learn the sounds. Just remember not to add an 'uh' to the end of the consonant sounds – so say 'mmm' not *muh*, 'lll' not *luh*, etc. because then later it's easier to blend the sounds together to make words.
- ◆ Linking the sounds to letters. Encourage your child to make a link between the sound and the written letter shape. Start with the sounds in your child's name and then look out for them in signs. The sound *m* in McDonalds is always a good starting point too!
- ◆ Sounds can be represented by more than one letter. E.g. *sh* in ship, *ch* in chat, *th* in thin, *qu* in quick and *ng* in sing. When you're out and about point out examples of these to your child too. You might see them in posters, signs, or leaflets.
- ◆ Lots and lots of books! Carry on sharing and reading lots and lots of stories and information books to and with your child.
- ◆ Praise and hugs! Most importantly, remember that your child will learn much faster with encouragement, praise and hugs.

Sound Games to Play at Home...

◆ Common Objects

Collect several objects that begin with the same sound and make a card with this letter sound on it. Make a second group of objects beginning with a different sound and a card to go with those.

Discuss the sounds of the letters on the two cards with your child and shuffle the objects. Separate the cards on the floor and ask your child to put each object near the sound that it starts with. This activity can help your child to 'hear' the first sound in a word.

◆ Odd-one Out

Say a number of words, all but one of which begin with the same sound. See if your child can pick the odd one out. It can be helpful to have the corresponding objects there for the child to look at.

◆ I-Spy

For young children the usual way of playing 'I spy with my little eye something that begins with' can be too difficult. You can make this easier by providing a clue. 'I spy with my little eye something that barks and begins with d' as their understanding develops you can stop giving the clues. Collect a set of objects all beginning with different sounds, these can be anything from your child's toys to items from around your home, take turns in playing. As your child gets better at finding objects beginning with a certain sound make it more challenging by asking to find an object that ends with... or has the middle sound of...

◆ Alien Game

For this game you will need a toy and a selection of objects. Explain to your child that the toy is finding it difficult to say some words and needs help. Pick up an object, for example, a bus but say bug, emphasising the part of the word the toy is having difficulty with. Ask your child to help by saying the correct word, repeat with different objects (leaf/leek, doll/dot, pen/peg, skipping rope/slipping rope, etc.).

◆ My mother went to market and bought...

Play the game together and try to say as many things beginning with the same letter. 'My mother went to market and bought a sandwich, ...a sock, ...a sausage, a snail, etc.

Sounds Scrapbook

Write a letter at the top of each page of a scrapbook. Concentrating on a few letters at a time collect pictures of objects that begin with those letters. Do not use words where the first sound does not make its normal sound such as in giraffe, ship, cheese, thumb as examples. Stick the pictures on the appropriate pages.

Games For Recognising Letter Shapes...

◆ Fishing for sounds

You will need a few cards with individual letters. Attach a paper clip to each card. Using a small stick with a string and magnet, your child fishes for letter sounds. If your child can say the sound of the letter s/he wins the card, otherwise you win it.

◆ Sequencing the letters in your child's name

Providing the individual letter cards for each letter of your child's first name can be a useful way to teach the sequence of letters. Remember you will need to write a capital for the first letter and lower case for the rest. Show your child how to make the name first, before shuffling the cards for him/her to have a try. For a very long name work with the first few and build up a letter at a time. This game can be adapted for different words, it will be easier for your child to work out CVC words to start with, for e.g. cat, dog, fan, hot, etc.

◆ Mood sounds

Have a few cards with individual letters. Take it in turns to say a sound in a different voice, e.g. happy, sad, frightened, angry, tired, etc. If your child recognises the letter s/he wins the card, otherwise you win it.

◆ Feely bag

For this game you will need a small bag and some wooden or plastic letters. Put some letters in the bag and ask your child to pull a letter out, ask them to tell you the sound the letter makes (e.g. a not A), you can add an extra challenge by asking them to tell you an object that begins with this letter. Another game you can play is to put a letter in the bag and without looking at the letter ask your child to feel it, can they tell you what it is? Remove the letter from the bag and check to see if they are right.