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Introduction

Here it is! The research has been done for you! Designed for the busy teacher, this is a practical guide to teaching the alphabetic principle through a multi-sensory, thematic approach. *Getting Ready to Read* incorporates activities and patterns for all areas of the curriculum in one handy guide. This book will help you design plans for beginning readers that incorporate new and time-tested strategies for learning the letters of the alphabet.

Teachers can help students with phonemic awareness and phonics by providing a program rich in language activities. In order to decode—figure out the words—students must develop a knowledge of letters. Students will become familiar with the alphabetic principle while they are listening to stories, doing art activities, trying different foods, learning about science, making crafts, and singing songs connected to the letter or digraph they are working on each day. We recognize that students have different learning styles, or combinations of styles. Think about the ways your students learn. According to Howard Gardner, the different learning styles include the following:

- Verbal/Linguistic Learners
- Logical/Mathematical Learners
- Visual/Spatial Learners
- Bodily/Kinesthetic Learners
- Musical Learners
- Interpersonal Learners
- Intrapersonal Learners
- Naturalist Learners

When learning is fun children learn new material more easily and remember it longer. There's something for everyone in this book. After introducing the first or second letter, students will look forward to the sequence of activities with the security of a familiar routine.

Overview

Reading Component

The goal of this book is to use the suggested books and activities to teach and reinforce the most often used sounds for the twenty-six letters of the alphabet and four digraphs (two letters that make one sound). Students are introduced to the letter with a “Special Picture.” The letter, the letter sound, and the “Special Picture” are reinforced consistently with language arts and other curriculum activities. In order to decode (figure out the words) students must develop knowledge of letters and sounds, the building blocks of words. This is accomplished in several ways: letter recognition, phonemic awareness (oral manipulation of sounds), phonics (the written transcription of sounds using letters), learning sight words, syllabication, rhyming, and recognition of word patterns.

A child is said to be phonemically aware when he or she can identify individual sounds (phonemes) in oral language. There are five levels of phonemic awareness, listed from the easiest to the most difficult.

- rhyming—determining if two or more words rhyme; naming rhyming words
- noting similarities and differences in beginning, middle, and ending sounds
- blending—listening to a series of sounds (phonemes), connecting them, and identifying the word they make /c/ /a/ /t/ = cat
- segmenting words into phonemes, *cat* = /c/ /a/ /t/
- manipulating phonemes to create new words, *cat*—*can*, *bag*—*bat*—*hat*

Overview *(cont.)*

Reading Component *(cont.)*

The importance of reading to children cannot be overestimated. Every new story holds the possibility of new words and strengthens the students' understanding of the way language works.

Reading to children . . .

- aids oral language development
- stimulates curiosity about the world
- develops familiarity with written text (concepts of print)
- increases comprehension
- increases vocabulary
- can serve as a leaping-off point for discussions by asking *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* questions. These discussions aid in the development of higher-order, critical thinking skills.
- familiarizes them with left to right orientation



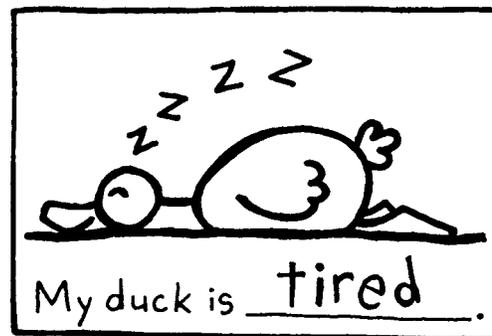
Handwriting Component

Printing practice promotes letter knowledge and increases phonic awareness. Students should be encouraged to write letters, parts of words, and words as soon as they know some of the letters of the alphabet. Teaching letter formation from the beginning, in conjunction with letter identification, reinforces phonics with tactile reinforcement. Consistent practice is very important. There is a direct relationship between writing correctly and reading.

Reinforcement Activities

The activities included for each letter and digraph cover most curriculum areas. The activities are fun and include movement, hands-on involvement, and practice in a variety of skill areas. Incorporating some or all of these activities will allow the new letters and sounds to be focused on throughout the day.

Food and snack suggestions are also given for each letter or digraph. (**Safety alert:** Always check student allergy lists before serving new snacks). Add other items popular with your students.



Overview *(cont.)*

Special Pictures

The objective for teaching the letters using the "Special Pictures" is for the students to: *See* the letter with the object. *Recall* the object. *Remember* the beginning sound. The "Special Pictures" chosen for this book are shown below.



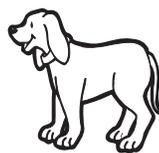
Aa—apple



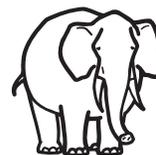
Bb—ball



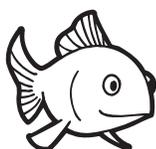
Cc—cat



Dd—dog



Ee—elephant



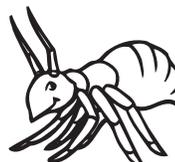
Ff—fish



Gg—girl



Hh—hat



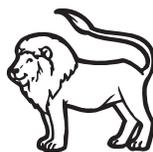
Ii—insect



Jj—jar



Kk—kite



Ll—lion



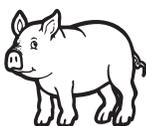
Mm—mouse



Nn—nest



Oo—octopus



Pp—pig



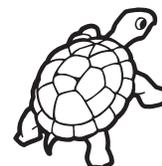
Qq—queen



Rr—rabbit



Ss—sun



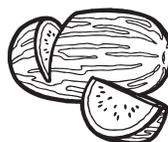
Tt—turtle



Uu—umbrella



Vv—valentine



Ww—watermelon



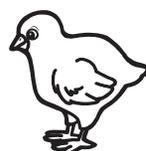
Xx—box



Yy—yarn



Zz—zebra



Ch—chick



Sh—ship



Th—thumb

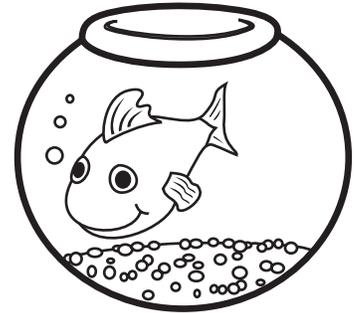


Wh—whale

How to Use This Book

Set the Stage

It is important that each lesson begin with great enthusiasm. Show an object or picture of something connected with the book you are reading. The item should begin with the letter and the correct letter sound. For instance, a fish in a bowl for the letter **Ff**, or a calendar of dog pictures for the letter **Dd**, or a toy elephant for the letter **Ee**. Related books are listed that are appropriate for young children. Read during the school day to reinforce the beginning letter sound and the topics you are discussing. Give this recommended list to the school librarian in advance to borrow, or keep these books in your own collection. (**Suggestion:** Keep all the materials, books, and patterns in a storage box labeled with a letter of the alphabet. Then, as you find or develop these materials, you can file them together for easy access.)

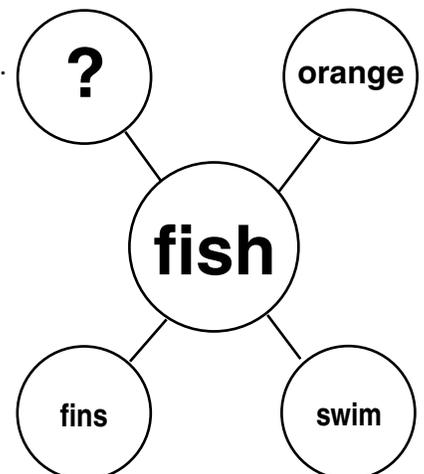


Introduce the Literature

Show the cover of the book you have chosen and read the title. Point out the letter you are teaching. Encourage predictions about what might happen in the book. For some books, it is a good idea to do a picture walk at this time to help implant the language or vocabulary the students will be hearing in the story. Simply go through the book with students, sharing each illustrated page. Read the literature. Allow time for discussion of the book and discuss the predictions made before reading. Reintroduce the letter by putting the letter at the top of a chart and brainstorming a list of words beginning with it. List the words under the letter while asking students to pay attention to the beginning letter. Include any names of students that begin with the letter. Introduce the three special words that will become sight words. These words are highlighted at the top of the introductory page for each letter or digraph. Put the three sight words on cards and arrange them in an alphabetical list on the wall. Encourage students to use the words on the wall when they are writing. (**Management Tip:** If a student says a word that is inconsistent with the sound or letter you are teaching, for instance, “kitten” for the letter **Cc**, agree that the sound is correct, but tell students that the word is not spelled that way. Explain that it starts with another letter beginning with a similar sound. Do not put it on your list.)

Construct Meaning

Ask students to share something they know or have experienced connected with the featured letter or with the book they have just heard. Frequent use of word webs helps children to become accustomed to activating and articulating prior knowledge. Foods and snack possibilities beginning with the letter are listed for you. Tasting and smelling foods and cooking projects add further associations connected to the letter. Teachers should always be aware of food allergies.



Review the Skill Lesson

Discuss the magic picture and special words. Review the list of brainstormed words on a regular basis. Continue to add any other words students may think of to the list.

How to Use this Book (cont.)

Handwriting

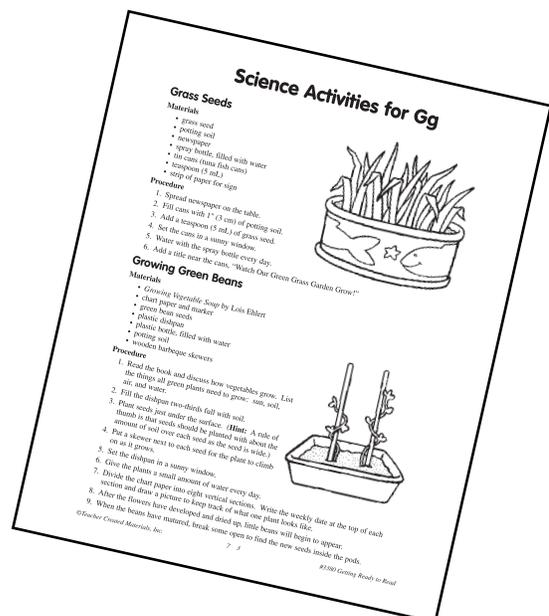
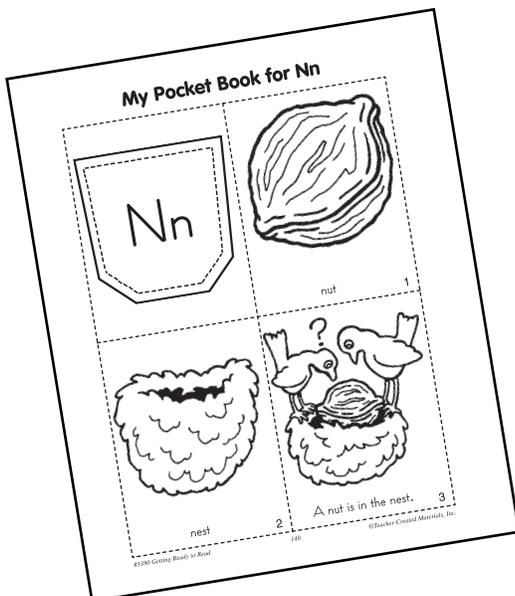
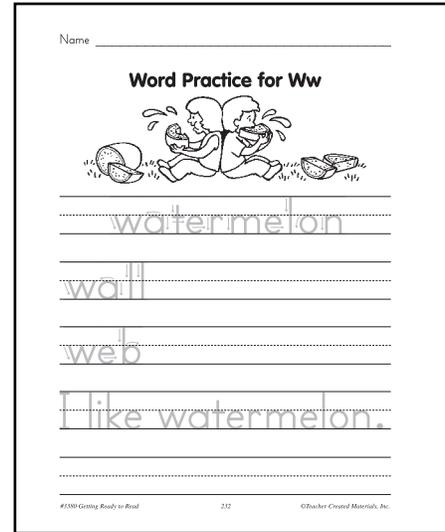
Demonstrate correct letter formation. Practice writing the uppercase and lowercase letters on the worksheets provided. If appropriate, an additional worksheet is provided to practice writing the three special words that begin with the letter you are working on and to write a sentence. Encourage students to use as many words that are phonetically consistent with the sounds you are teaching as possible. (A big bug bit Bob.)

Reinforcement Activities

Reinforce the sound of the letter by using some of the suggested science, art, songs, and other activities throughout the day. Keep mentioning that you are doing the activity because of the beginning sound of the letter. Arts, crafts, and music activities are very important for the growth of literacy skills in young children. They not only include opportunities for active learning, but also appeal to tactile, kinesthetic, and musical learners. Art work and projects on the classroom walls or sent to the child's home will provide opportunities for the child to discuss the picture and the letter. The use of arts and crafts helps children build literacy skills in a fun, hands-on, relaxed environment. In addition, suggestions are given to help plan activities that allow for movement in and outside of the classroom.

Science suggestions are given to appeal to the natural curiosity of young children. The students will learn about the constancy of scientific principles, such as animal habitats, that roots grow down and stems grow up, and that water can freeze or thaw depending on the temperature. All of these "grand" ideas help children feel more secure in a sometimes uncertain world.

In today's busy classroom, teaching science with literacy makes sense. The busy teacher can incorporate the science curriculum right into language arts instruction. Children will recall both science and letter knowledge more easily because they have been taught thematically, and the teacher achieves a balance between teaching skills and nonfiction knowledge.



Language Arts for Ee

Animals That Come from Eggs

Materials

- *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones* by Ruth Heller
- sheets of white construction paper (one per child or group)
- yellow paper
- scissors
- glue
- crayons or markers
- stapler or comb binding



Preparation: Cut large ovals from sheets of white construction paper. Glue a yellow circle in the center of each oval to represent an egg yolk. Trim the left side of the white paper so that it will be ready for binding or stapling. On the cover of the class book, write “Which Animals Come from Eggs?” Write one of these phrases on each page:

“Chickens do”

“Ducks do”

“Toads do”

“Snakes do”

“Peacocks do”

“Flies do”

“Frogs do”

“Robins do”

“Butterflies do”

“Dinosaurs did”

“Geese do”

On the last page, write, “Animals that lay eggs are called oviparous.”

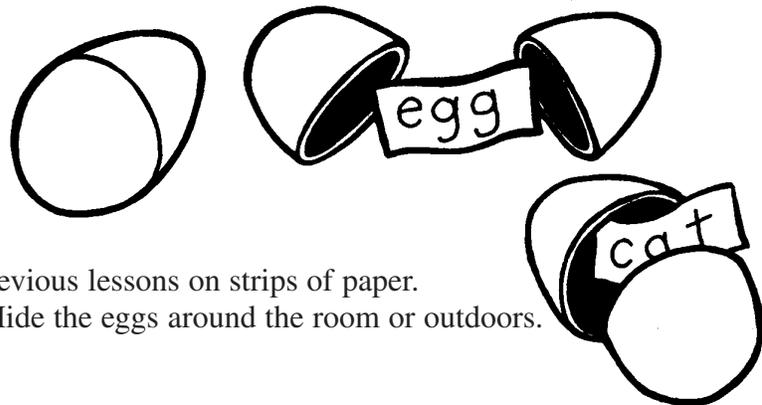
Procedure

1. Read the book, *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones* by Ruth Heller.
2. Ask students to recall the animals that come from eggs.
3. Distribute each page to two or three students to illustrate (in the yolk).
4. When illustrations are completed, staple or use a comb binding to put the book together. Reread the book and put in the classroom library to share.

Egg Hunt

Materials

- plastic eggs
- paper strips
- marker



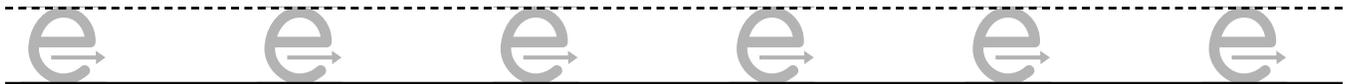
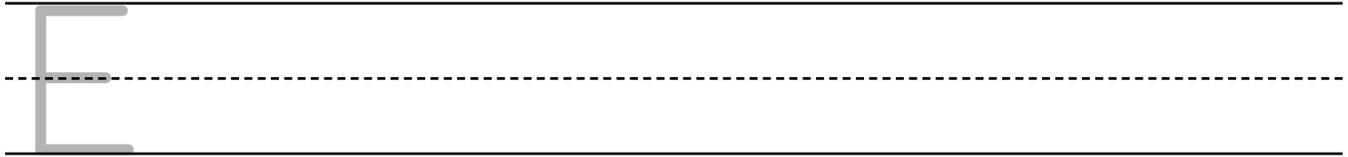
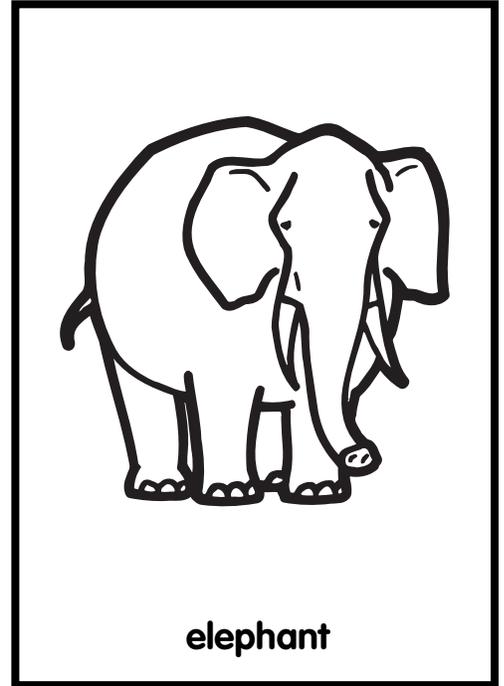
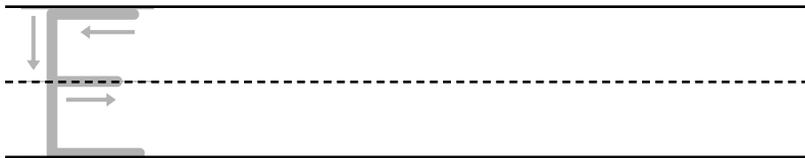
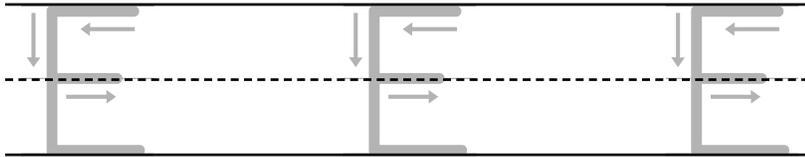
Preparation: Write sight words from previous lessons on strips of paper. Place one strip inside each plastic egg. Hide the eggs around the room or outdoors.

Procedure

1. Let students look for the eggs.
2. When all the eggs are found, gather the students in a circle. Take turns reading the words found in the eggs. Play again, letting a few students hide the eggs for the rest of the class to find.

Name _____

Printing Practice for Ee



Name _____

Word Practice for Ee



elephant

egg

elf

The elf is small.

Science Activities for Ee

Eggs, Eggs, Eggs!

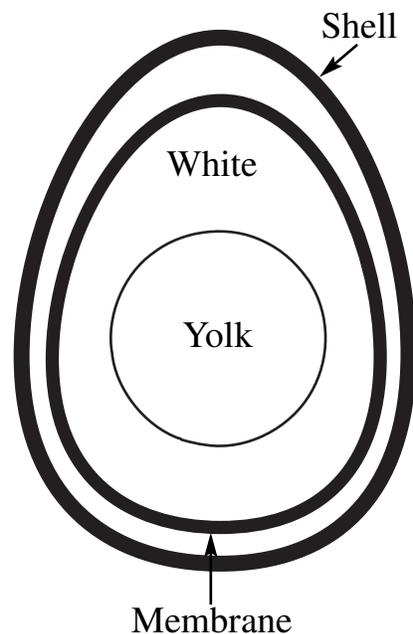
Investigate the contents of an egg, and learn about the parts of an egg.

Materials

- raw eggs (one for every two children)
- shallow cups
- paper towels for cleanup
- chart paper and marker
- newspaper to cover the table and floor

Procedure

1. Demonstrate this activity first; be ready to help the children crack open the eggs. Crack open an egg over a shallow cup. Try to crack the egg in half. (**Suggestion:** Save the eggshells for the eggshell garden activity—see activity below.)
2. Inside the eggshell, find the membrane and gently pull it out. Look at the contents of the egg and identify the yolk and egg white.
3. Make a chart that shows the parts of an egg the students have found. Label the parts of the egg and title the chart, “We Learn About Eggs.”

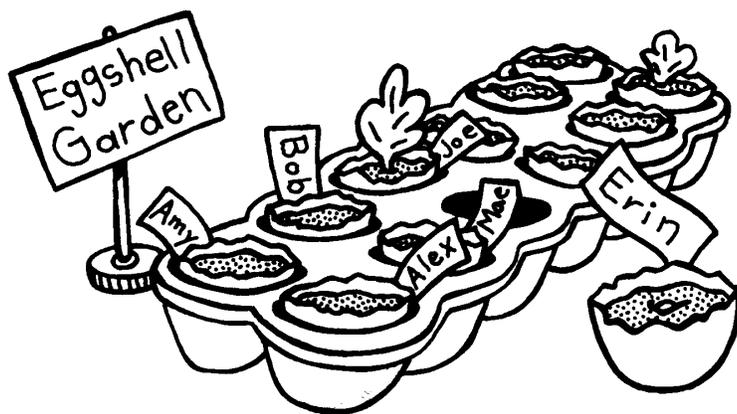


Eggshell Garden

Plant seeds in eggshell halves.

Materials

- egg cartons
- eggshell halves (one per child)
- potting soil
- fast-growing seeds (wheat berry seeds)
- spray bottle, filled with water
- slips of paper (one per child)
- funnel
- scissors



Preparation: Cut the bottom half off the egg cartons. Write each student’s name on a slip of paper.

Procedure

1. Put eggshell halves in egg cartons.
2. Using a funnel, put soil in the eggshell. Gently put seeds just under the top of the soil.
3. Water with a spray bottle. Place the egg carton in a sunny window. Make a title that says, “Eggshell Garden.”