

Games to Teach Letters and Sounds

· 1

Sit at the table, or on the floor facing each other. Make sure there is plenty of space between you and your child.

· Step 2

Set one set of cards to the side. Shuffle the other set and spread them out on the table in front of your child. The letters should be facing him/her. Make sure he/she can reach all the cards easily.

· Step 3

Take your set of cards in your hand. Hold up the "A" card. Say the name of the letter and the sound it makes. Have your child find the "A" card. They should then hold up the card and repeat the letter and sound. Set those cards aside. Continue through all the letters.

Here are a few ideas for developing sound-symbols recognition in your classroom. They can easily be adapted for home use:

1. Start with their names. Take a picture of each student in class via the digital or regular camera. Place their picture above the letter of the alphabet their name begins with. They will have an anchor sound they can relate to. When possible connect a new sound to the name of a parent or some close relative.

2. Letter each child's name on a flash card and/or chart (large enough for students to see from their seats). Place their names in alphabetical order in a pocket chart. Each day have a short activity with their names; e.g., find all the names that begin with a How many last names begin with... How many names have ... in their name? Use a colored marking pen for the first letter of their name. Talk about their names and children will begin to say, "Oh, m is in my name." "Yes, but it is not at the beginning..."

3. With the Morning Message use colored marking pens for all the words beginning with m; circle them, outline, underline, etc.

4. Make a large alphabet chart; for each letter [place a picture](#) that begins with that sound. Each day have the children recite in unison: "Aa apple, Bb bicycle, Cc cat, Dd dog etc." The children say each letter twice - once for the capital and once of the small letter and then the picture. This will give them an anchor sound and word for future study.

5. Read and sing [Chica Chica Boom Boom](#) by Bill Martin, Leo Lionni's [Alphabet Tree](#), [A, My Name Is Alice](#), Jane Bayer, [The Guinea Pig ABC](#) by Date Duke, [Faint Frogs Feeling Feverish](#) by Lilian Obligado, [Q is for Duck](#) by Mary and Michael Fosom Elting.

6. Introduce individual sounds with poems and stories, e.g., for the sound of m tell the story of the Mitten Story. [Caps for Sale](#) is another good story for m. As you tell the story have the characters enter a large mitten. Sing songs such as "I

[Love Mud](#)," "[Mary Wore a Red Dress](#)," and "[The Muffin Man](#)" and act it out. Recite the poem: "[I Like Mice](#)." Hold a mouse as you sing it. Recite "Two Little Apples [see below];" the last line give the sound of m. [Jan Brett](#) has a site which you can copy her animals.

7. Introduce a new sound with a nursery rhyme. For m "[Mary Had a Little Lamb](#)," "Little Miss Muffet" [[picture](#)], and "Mary, Mary Quite Contrary [[picture](#)]." Enlarge a nursery rhyme or poem and have the children circle all the words beginning with m.

8. Have the children form m words with magnetic letters: my, me, make, made. As you stretch out the word have them push the corresponding letter up on their magnetic board as they hear it. If they can't hear individual sounds make a sound board and tokens. As you show a picture and pronounce it, they have to put down as many tokens as they hear sounds. As you pronounce the word, they push the token ahead.

9. Create alphabet big books; read many [ABC books](#). Make m pictures out of clay.

10. Have the children learn to write the letter as you teach the sound. Have them trace the letter on their desk, arm, back of their neighbor, on a piece of screen, with a marking pen on a white board.

11. When writing a whole-class, interactive story give a student a colored marking pen to either write the first letter of words beginning with m or write the entire word on the chart.

12. At the writing table have the students draw a picture or illustrate a story. Have them then write the letter that each object in the picture begins with either on top the objects or next to them.

13. Cut apart a big purchased chart, use clip art, or draw you own pictures for the next activity. Match pictures to the letters. You may want to give help in pairing by making the sets into puzzles. For extra help you may give them matching colored background.

14. Graph and sort matching letters. After the children know five letters, put the letters in large bold print at the top of a workable, individual chart. Have 25 corresponding pictures - 5 pictures for each sound. The children have to place the pictures under the corresponding letters.

15. Sing a well known song and change the words, e.g., to the tune of "If Your Happy and You Know It Clap Your Hand." If you have a m word share it now. (2 x) If you have a m word and you think it should be heard, If you have a m word, share it now..." Use it in conjunction with the word wall.

16. Recite tongue twisters: Minny murtles miptoe in mall mulips. Tiny turtles tiptoe in tall tulips.

17. Read I Unpacked My Grandmother's Trunk by Susan Ramsy Hoguet. Then play the game "Going to Grandma's House." You have to pack the suitcase with objects beginning with m.

18. Associate food with the letters. For the letter m make a large open m and fill it with marshmallows. At snack time they can have clean ones to eat. (For p they can use popcorn. Use other non edible material also; peas for p, sand for s, buttons for b.

19. Display a set of 4 or 5 [pictures](#) beginning with m and one not beginning with an m. Have them spy the picture that does not belong. Then orally give words and ask which doesn't belong. After they hear the initial consonant have them listen for the ending consonants and then finally ask them to listen for the middle consonant. Don't teach the letters in alphabetical order but study the easy ones first - s, m, t, etc. They do not have to know the alphabet before they start to read.

Scott Foresman published a book called [Phonics Anytime!](#) by Fitzsimmons, Briggs, and Sycamore. For every letter they have a rhyme and an activity for the students. Suggestions are given to the teacher for other activities such as Tongue Twisters and other oral activities, games, writing activities and different phonetic manipulative activities.

For every letter of the alphabet there are umpteen stories, poems, songs, nursery rhymes, and games to play and stories to be written. Learning should be fun; not a boring drill.

Contributed by Mary DeFalco, Language Arts Specialist

"Two Little Apples"

Two little apples, hanging in a tree

Two little apples, smiling at me

I shook that tree as hard as I could

And DOWN came the apples

Mmm, Mmm good

ABC Links

Group Activities for Letter Sound Recognition

As a Pre-K teacher, students had several fun activities to complete on a daily basis to help develop [pre-reading skills](#). Once your class has mastered letter recognition, then you can move on and [work](#) on teaching basic [phonics](#) skills. We had a fun song that we would sing every morning and it taught letter sounds. We would add a letter every day or so and would eventually get through the entire alphabet. This did focus on the short-vowel sounds, but those are often harder to grasp than the long-vowel sound. By including easy actions, you are reinforcing the sound.

We also made a word wall and added to it daily. Using note cards, we went through the alphabet and added words beginning with each letter. Because the students helped to come up with the words, we were reinforcing the sound each time they chose a new word. By leaving the word wall up all year round, it was a constant visual reminder of what they had learned.

Using the letter cards you made for the letter recognition circle activity, you can also put them out to help learn letter sounds. Place them in a circle, start the music, and when you stop the music, each student can name the letter sound and even give you one word that begins with that letter.

Working with rhyming words and [word families](#) is a perfect activity for reinforcing letter sounds. You can either make your own set of words with note cards or purchase a set at a local teacher [store](#). By introducing the patterns in rhyming

words, you can quickly expand a child's list of sight words. For example, show students the - *at* family:

- rat
- mat
- cat
- hat
- sat
- bat
- pat

Demonstrate how you sound out a word, and isolate the - *at* ending. Then, explain how changing just the first letter forms a new word. Once we reviewed this, I would then pass out the cards on subsequent days and ask for certain words. The students had to read their card and know when to bring it up. Using a pocket chart, the students would bring their card up and place it in the chart. They loved this extremely simple activity. Continue to add other word families, and you will continue to expand their list of recognizable site words.

Individual Activities for Sound Recognition

Once students have learned their letter sounds, you can begin to test that knowledge. My students each had their own notebooks, and we would combine their beginning sound practice with writing. We may ask them to write two or three - *at* words, and draw a picture of each. Using "nonsense" words is another great tool to test beginning letter sounds. Write a list of nonsense - *at* words in their notebook such as:

- zat
- jat
- lat
- wat

Ask the student to read the words to you. When students truly know their letter sounds, they can sound out these nonsense words. This is the perfect test to see if they can apply what they have learned. If you only give recognizable sight words, you may only be testing their memorization skills.

Reading Readiness

Reading readiness is one of the most exciting things to teach as a preschool teacher. Helping your student's progress from pre-reading to beginning reader is an amazing opportunity to help them get a strong start as they prepare for [Kindergarten!](#)

Read more: <http://www.brighthub.com/education/early-childhood/articles/34636.aspx#ixzz0TsZjIHQs>