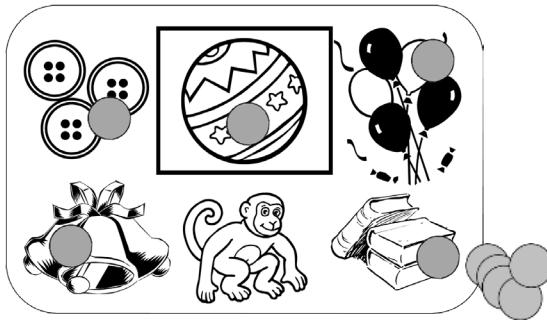


How a Child Teaches Himself the Alphabet

Beginning Sound Isolation

The ability to identify the first sound in a spoken word is the foundation for understanding and learning the alphabet. Isolating the beginning sounds of spoken words will guide the child in learning the sounds of the letters A-Z.

The teacher must first teach beginning sound isolation with activities that *model* this isolation skill for the child.

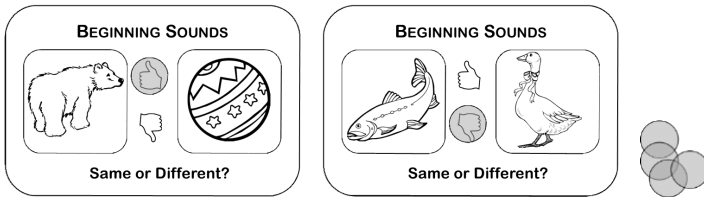


Beginning Sound Bingo Card

Beginning Sound Bingo is one of several games the teacher plays with a student in order to model the

“slicing off” of the beginning sound of a word. She’ll ask, “Where is /m/..MONKEY?” “Who has /b/.. BALL?”

When a student demonstrates the ability to isolate beginning sounds on his own, we provide activities that allow him to practice this skill with a game like the one below.

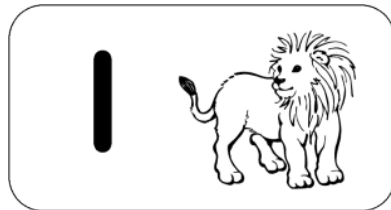


Beginning Sounds: Same or Different?

With practice, beginning sound isolation becomes quick and automatic. The student will use this isolation skill to apply the alphabetic principle and learn the alphabet.

Applying the Alphabetic Principle to Letters

The door to alphabet knowledge is unlocked with beginning sound isolation. When a young child can isolate the beginning sounds of spoken words, he can map those sounds to printed letters and begin the process of teaching himself the letters A-Z.



The Alphabetic Principle at the Letter Level.

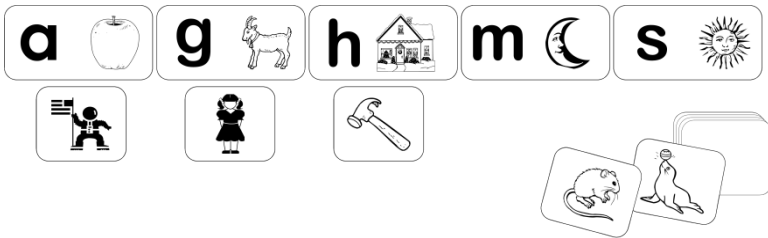
This card is an example of the alphabetic principle at the letter level. When the student isolates the beginning sound of LION on this alphabet card, he can map that sound onto the printed letter and read its sound.

The student can now easily identify the sound of any letter that is next to a picture. This is why we teach the alphabetic principle *before* we teach the alphabet.

We teach the alphabetic principle first, then we provide self-guided activities that teach the alphabet.

Games & Activities for Learning the Alphabet

The teacher's role is to organize the self-guided alphabet games and activities, so each student has many opportunities to match sounds to printed letters. Fun, hands-on games stimulate interest and lead to strong letter recognition.



The picture of the MOUSE above is giving the student his marching orders.

Thomas, my beginning sound is /m/. Find the letter that says /m/.

The student uses beginning sound isolation to determine which printed letter matches that beginning sound.

The student is not required to read a letter, just to recognize it when prompted by a sound.

Using the alphabet cards as reference if needed, Thomas will easily recognize and choose the correct letter. This does not require strong letter identification. We are not asking Thomas to *read* the letter “m”, just to recognize it when prompted by a sound. This is also a kind of multiple-choice quiz.

Successful recognition of the correct letter makes a very powerful imprint on the child’s brain and subconscious mind. He is *seeing* the letter, *saying* the sound of the letter (even if silently) and *hearing* the sound of the letter. Once he learns the game, Thomas can do this matching activity independent of the teacher.

Our goal with beginning learners is to lead them to the application of the alphabetic principle and the recognition of letters by sounds.

The goal for the struggling reader is to strengthen his conscious understanding of the alphabetic principle and to provide easy-to-master alphabet activities organized in a clearly defined sequence that he can move through quickly.

Matching speech sounds to printed letters allows the struggling reader to grasp at a deeper level our alphabetic code and to learn the phonics that he knows only partially but without sufficient automaticity—phonics he may have memorized but which he doesn’t fully understand.

Beginning sound isolation forms the foundation of understanding, learning and mastering the alphabet. The goal is automatic letter recognition, which is best achieved by purposeful and fun practice, not by memorization.

For more information about the methods and materials described in this book or to schedule an in-person or virtual Early Reading Mastery presentation contact:



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