

Letters Make Words

An Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan

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School/University/Affiliation: Christenberry Elementary School

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Grade Level: Preschool Education, Kindergarten, 1, 2

Subject(s):

- Language Arts/Alphabet

Duration: Two 45-minute sessions

Description: The use of magnets, metal cookie trays, and writing journals can help your children make the connections to words that they need to be successful readers.

Goals:

1. For students to be able to identify all 52 letter symbols.
2. For students to use letter symbols to build words, phrases, and sentences.

Objectives:

1. Each student will be able to identify the 52 letter symbols.
2. Each student will be able to spell simple sight words.
3. Students will correctly sequence words/phrases into sentences.
4. Each student will write 5-10 sentences into a journal.

Materials:

- set of letter magnets (52) for each child
- metal cookie tray for each child
- pencil and writing journal per child
- [Letter Identification Test](#)

Letter Identification Test in .pdf format; requires free Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Click the icon to obtain the free Reader.

Procedure:

Give each child a cookie tray with mixed magnet letters. (If a student can't handle all 52 letters at one time, then start out with 10 letters at a time.) Have students practice finding the letters in various ways until all 52 can be identified. Various ways a child can identify a letter include the following: find the letter on the tray, find the letter on a big book page, find the letter on a wall, and find the letter on a newspaper page. The teacher can be as inventive as she/he wants, as long as the letter is found in different locations other than the tray. Always go back to the tray to help students make a link to what they know, and use the tray to link the letters to simple words and even phrases later in the year.

Once students are familiar with the letters (or a group of letters), then they can build words on the tray using sound analysis. (Example: If the letters c, t, and a are on the tray, you can build c-a-t "cat")

With the entire alphabet, the child can form phrases with the 'built' words. (Example: c-a-t 'cat' + t-h-e 'the' = the cat). Have the child build a whole sentence using 2-3 phrases. (Example: The cat/ can jump/ on mom.) Students can transfer these whole sentences into their writing journals.

Assessment: Observe and monitor students as they are using the trays. Check and edit incorrect tray built words/or letter responses. The teacher can use the Letter Identification Test to assess students' progress. [**Author's Note:** The ID test that I used was borrowed from Marie Clay. The children simply track through the rows of letters while the teacher records their responses.]

Special Comments: Most average children in first grade will need two sessions to practice the letters. The teacher can then isolate the missed letters on the ID test and practice only those letters on a "private tray." For kindergarten or preschool, the teacher might want to introduce one letter at a time on the tray and add letters as the child masters each one. I have tried this for my really low students. They have their own private tray to use, and they keep adding letters until they can pass the ID test.

Useful References:

A great reference book for teachers is Marie Clay's Reading Recovery: A Guidebook for Teachers in Training available from Pioneer Valley Educational Press, Inc. P.O. Box 9375 North

Amherst, MA 01059 Phone 413/548-3906 , Fax 413/548-4914
<http://www.pvep.com/proresources.php>

I like to use any ABC book or favorite story book with the children for finding letters in print. A couple of my favorites are listed below:

The Furry Alphabet Book by Jerry Pallotta
Mrs. Wishy-Washy by Joy Cowley