

# Recognising Letters Activities

First Steps to Reading

# Recognising Letters

## RAINBOW LETTERS

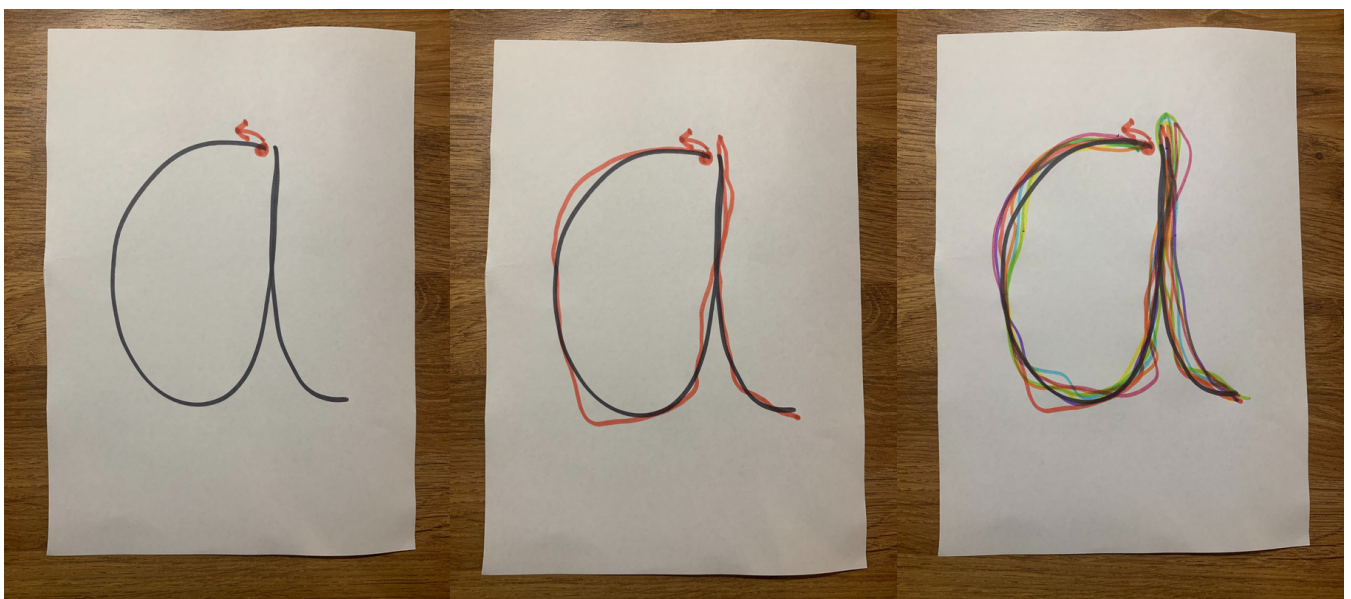
This is another great one for practising the 'shape' of the letters.

Give your child a piece of paper with your focus letter on it, and make sure your child can say the sound that matches it.

Give them a variety of coloured pens and get them to trace over the letter (this can be useful for handwriting practise too, but for this activity, we're just focusing on recognising the shape).

When they've finished with one colour, let them pick another one and go over it again until the letter is full of colours! This helps them solidify the shape through the sense of touch.

You could then do the same letter in a variety of sizes to help your child develop pencil control too!



# Recognising Letters

## LETTERS HIDE AND SEEK

There are lots of ways to do this activity, though it works best when your child has learned a variety of letters.

Write the letters you want to focus on on post-it notes (or scraps of paper) and hide them around the house. If you want to help your child remember the sounds, you could put them somewhere that has a link to the sound - e.g. p - pillow, d - dog toy, s - sock drawer.

Once you've hidden all of the sounds, tell your child that they need to play hide-and-seek. One way of playing is to send them off to find all of the sounds, getting them to bring each one back to you. When they do so, they need to tell you what the sound is before they can go and find the next one. (If they get it wrong, remind them of the sound and then hide it again, or remember it to work on in the future).

Another way to play is to tell them the sound they need to find. This works particularly well if you've hidden the sounds somewhere that relates as your child needs to use critical thinking to work out where to look.



# Recognising Letters

## BODY PART WRITING

This is an active way to get your child memorising the shape and sounds of letters.

Show your child the focus sound and make sure they can pronounce it correctly. Draw the shape of the letter in the air with your finger and get your child to copy it (remember to reverse it if you're facing your child!)

Repeat the drawing with different body parts (elbow, foot, tongue) and encourage your child to do the same. It's a great way to encourage your child to recognise the shape while using different senses!



# Recognising Letters

## WHAT'S THE PASSWORD?

Keeping a few flashcards (4/5) is a great opportunity to practise sounds.

Each day, before you leave the house, show your child the flashcards and run through them quickly. You can tell your child that they need to 'read the password' before you can leave.



Another way of playing this game is to stick the letters on your front door and calling out sounds for your child to hit. If they hit them all correctly, they can open the door.

Either way, this is a great way of speeding up letter recognition and practising sounds, without taking up much of your day.



# Recognising Letters

## SOUND TALLY

This is a great way to help your child spot sounds within the text and can be done with books they read themselves, or books you read to them.

Write your focus sound on a post-it note and stick it somewhere your child can see. Remind them of the sound.

Choose a page of the book you're reading. Encourage your child to skim through the page and find that letter as many times as they can. Each time they find it, they need to say the sound and make a tally mark to count it.

When you reach the end of the page, count up how many you saw. You could do this for each of your focus sounds.

Then, read through the page together. Encourage your child to make a movement every time they see a word with that sound in.





# Recognising Letters

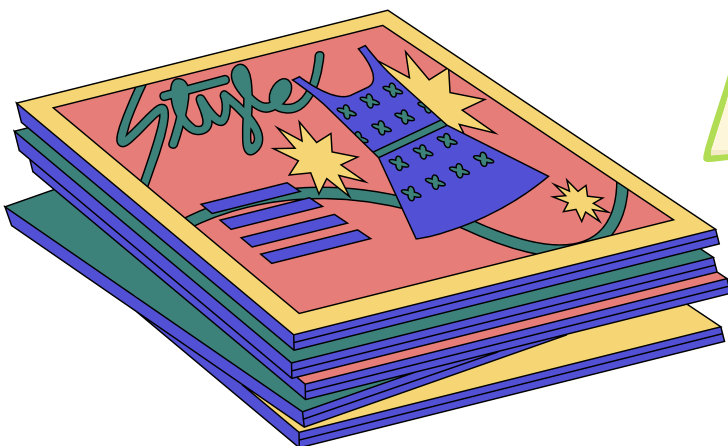
## NEWSPAPER LETTERS

For this activity, you'll need a newspaper or magazine and some scissors (I also use junk mail when I get it!).

Show your child whichever letter you're focusing on. Make sure they know what the sound is and encourage them to say the sound every time they see it.

Then give them the paper and scissors. Set them the challenge of finding as many letters as they can (you could also set a time limit if you want that sense of urgency). This not only develops your child's ability to recognise the letter, but also their ability to skim for information and builds their fine motor skills (the muscles in their hands) too!

If you wanted an additional challenge, you could ask your child to cut out all the words that have that letter in them and encourage them to read the sounds (if they're not at this stage yet, you could do this part as a team).



# Learning Letters

## PHONICS FOOTBALL

This is such a wonderful, active game to keep your child practising their phonics using something they enjoy. If you have an outdoor space where your child can kick a ball around (a garden or a park), set up a goal for them. Around the outside of the goal, put a variety of phonics letters (I like to use chalk for both the goal and the letters).

Give your child a football (or any type of ball, even scrunched up paper would work!) and explain that you're going to call out a sound and they have to kick/throw the ball to hit it. Every time they get it right they score a goal and get a point!

If your child's coordination isn't quite at this point yet, you can do it in reverse, where they kick the ball and then say which sound they hit. It's great for that letter/sound recognition.

If you don't have the space for football, you can do the same with a kitchen cupboard and a pom pom! Put the letters near the floor and get your child to flick the pom pom at the letters you call out!





# Learning Letters

## I-SPY

I-Spy is such a simple game, but a great one for developing phonics skills! Instead of saying the letter name when playing I-Spy, choose one of the sounds your child has already learned (great as a recap!). Make sure your child recognises the letter and can pronounce it properly.

Then say:

"I Spy with my little eye, something beginning with (show the card)"

Show the card to your child and encourage them to find a word that matches it. By not telling them the sound, they have to recall it independently.

You could also extend this activity by saying the word and getting your child to find the matching flashcard. For example:

"I-spy a bush. What letter does that start with?"

Your child would then find the letter from the flashcards. This is really an initial sound activity, and there's so much you can do with this activity, that I've actually included a bonus initial sounds activity in the next section!



# Learning Letters

## LETTER HOPSCOTCH

For this activity, you will need some chalk and somewhere to write. Any pavement will do!

Take the chalk and write your child's focus letters onto the pavement. If you want your child to practise letter formation, they could write them themselves.

When the letters are all there, tell your child that you're going to call out some sounds and they have to jump on the matching letter.

If your child is a bit more advanced, you can adapt this game by calling out words and getting your child to spell them out with their jumping!

This can also be done to support with spelling, where your child has to jump on the right letters in the right order to spell a word accurately!



# Learning Letters

## READ AND THROW

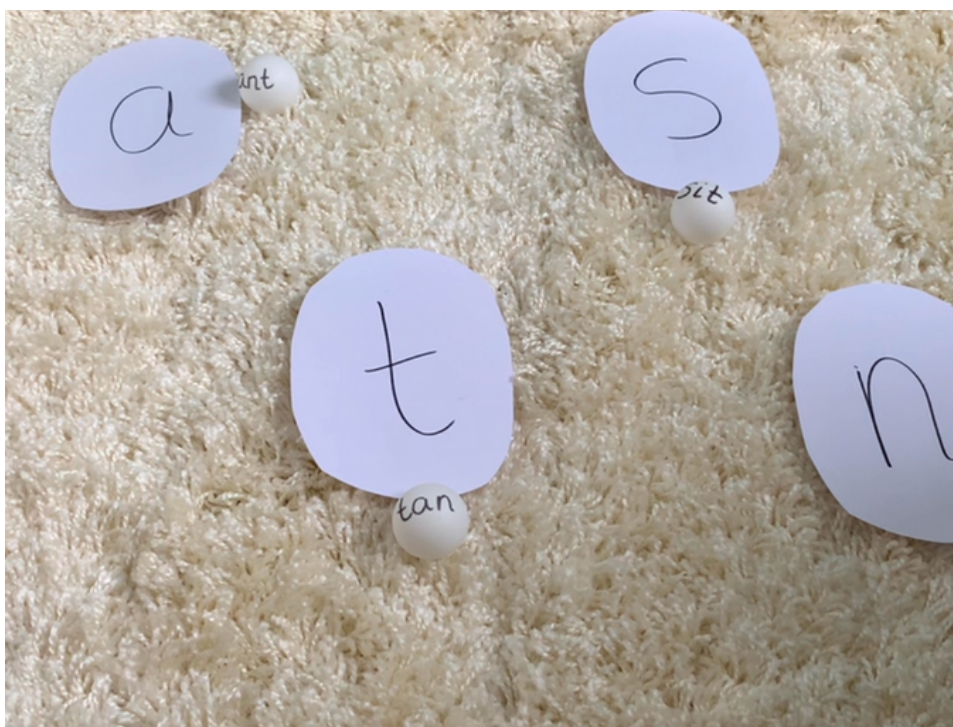
For this activity, you will need some flashcards (either printed, or just written on post-it notes) and something to throw,

There are 2 ways of playing.

1 - call out a sound for your child to throw the ball at. If they hit it, they get a point.

2 - Get your child to throw the ball and say whatever sound they land on.

Another level to this would be for your child to throw the ball a few times at different letters, and then you have to guess what word they've sounded out!



# Learning Letters

## PLAYDOUGH 'FUN

You'll need playdough or plasticine for this one!

Level 1 - Give your child a post-it note with a sound on (it can be a single letter, digraph or trigraph). Your child then has to create that letter out of the playdough.

Level 2 - Call out a sound for your child to make. They have to remember what the letter looks like.

Level 3 - See if your child can make whole words!

Handwriting - your child has to map out the letter as though they were writing it! (in the picture below, they've gone down, then up, then round to make the 'p')

This is great for building fine motor skills for writing too!

