



Hands-On Learning

Hands-On Alphabet

Primary Concepts®

A Note to the Teacher

Primary Concepts' Hands-On Alphabet Kit contains the following materials:

- Alphabet Objects
- Basket
- Sorting Cups
- Letter Stickers
- Letter Cards
- Alphabet Sequence Strips
- Fill-in-the-Blanks Strips

The centerpiece of the kit is a large bag of miniatures with an array of objects for each letter in the alphabet. Primary Concepts has been collecting miniature objects for use in the classroom since 1984. Teachers have learned to depend on Primary Concepts to provide the most appealing, realistic miniatures for many different content areas, including the alphabet. But keeping supplies of these small miniatures is no easy task. Occasionally a miniature is temporarily out of stock and a substitute is provided.

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Hands-On Alphabet

Children love learning about letters and sounds when they work hands-on with moveable letter cards and engaging life-like miniatures. It is much more fun than completing workbook pages. In addition to their appeal, objects make the meaning of the words clearer and less abstract for young children. Hands-on activities are the most natural way for young children to learn about their world.

The focus of Hands-On Alphabet is basic alphabet knowledge. Children learn to

- match letter shapes and orientations
- name all the letters of the alphabet, both uppercase and lowercase
- put letters in alphabetical order
- isolate beginning sounds in words
- sort objects by initial sounds
- identify letters that represent sounds
- say the sounds that letters represent

Getting Started

Here are some things you need to do before using the Hands-On Alphabet activities.

- Cut up the Letter Cards into two sets of 26 uppercase and 26 lowercase letters.
- Cut the Alphabet Sequence Strips into rows of uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Cut the Fill-in-the-Blanks Strips into rows of uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Put uppercase and lowercase stickers on 26 cups so you have one cup for each letter of the alphabet.
- Place the objects in the basket. As you do so, familiarize yourself with the objects and the words they represent.

Using the Activities

Work with a small group of three to four children at a time. The activities are sequenced such that each activity is dependent on mastery of the previous skill. After you have introduced each activity, let children practice the skill. Assess mastery before you move on to the next activity.

For some students, activities will be a review of skills. For others, the skills will be completely new. You will need to vary the presentation of each activity depending on the group's skill level. For students who have had more experience with letters and sounds, you

can work with all 26 letters and sounds at one time; however, you may want to spend more time reviewing the letters and sounds the group has the most difficulty mastering. For children new to a concept, all 26 letters and sounds will be too many. Instead introduce only two or three letters at a time, slowly replacing mastered letters with new letters.

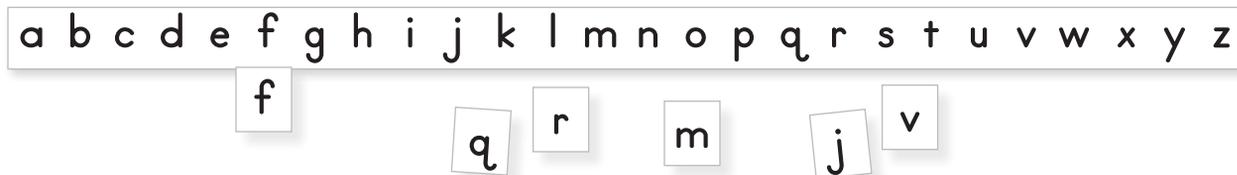
The Alphabet Objects chosen for this kit were carefully selected to help children isolate initial sounds in words. None of the words for the objects begins with a consonant blend or digraph. In addition, each letter is represented by only one sound—the sound each letter most frequently represents. For vowels, this is the short vowel sound (e.g., *a* as in *ants*, *e* as in *elk*, *i* as in *infant*, *o* as in *octopus*, and *u* as in *umbrella*). For consonants *c* and *g*, it is the hard sound (e.g., as in *cap* and *goose*) rather than the soft sound (e.g., as in *city* and *gem*). *Xx* is a special case. For *x*, most objects have the sound at the end of the word because so few words begin with *Xx*.

Hands-On Assessment

Before presenting the activities in this guide, assess the skills children have already mastered. The following Hands-On Assessment activities offer authentic performance assessments for each skill set.

Matching Letters

Put the lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips in order. Set out the lowercase Letter Cards *f*, *j*, *m*, *q*, *r*, and *v*. The Letter Cards can vary in orientation (upside down or sideways). Invite a child to place each card on top of the matching letter on the Alphabet Sequence Strip. Students who are adept at matching letters can skip Activities 1 and 2.



Matching Uppercase and Lowercase Letters

Set out the following Letter Card pairs: *Aa*, *Qq*, *Dd*, *Ee*, *Gg*, *Hh*, and *Rr*. Mix up the cards. Pick one of the cards and ask a child to find its partner. Students who are adept at matching the cards can skip Activity 3.



Naming Letters

Display the Alphabet Sequence Strips. Point to a letter and have a child name it. Note whether the child knows most, all, or very few of the letter names. Students who are adept at naming letters can skip Activity 4.

Naming Alphabetical Order

Display the Fill-in-the-Blanks Strips. Point to a missing letter and ask a child to name it. Note whether the child can name the letters of the alphabet in order. Students who are adept at identifying missing letters in the alphabet can skip Activity 5.

Isolating Initial Sounds in Words

Use the set of Alphabet Objects. Display an object and ask a child to say just the beginning sound in the word. Students who are adept at this skill can skip Activity 6.

Connecting Letters and Sounds

Set out the lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips in alphabetical order and the basket of Alphabet Objects. Have a child take an object from the basket and place the object below the letter it starts with. Students who are adept at this skill can skip Activities 7 and 8.

a b c d e f g



Naming Letter Sounds

Display the lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips. Point to each of the following letters and have the child name the sound it represents: *f, h, i, j, l, r, u, w,* and *y*. Then say a sound and have the child find the letter. Note whether the child knows most, all, or very few of the letter sounds. Students who know all the letter sounds can skip Activities 9 and 10.



Activity 1: Letter Match

For young children, the alphabet can be a maze of lines, some curved and some straight. The first step in becoming familiar with the alphabet is to examine the shapes and to find shapes that are the same.

Objective: to match letter shapes

Materials: two sets of uppercase and lowercase Letter Cards

Hands-On Lesson

Set out two sets of uppercase Letter Cards. Have students look for pairs of cards that look the same. Say the name of the letter, and ask the child to repeat it. Students should be able to match the letters even when they are upside down or sideways. If students pair two letters that are similar but not identical, point out the differences in the letters. For example, you might say, “*M* and *N* are almost the same, but the *M* is made up of four lines and the *N* is made up of only three lines.” If students are having difficulty with this activity, limit the number of matches children need to make.

Repeat the activity with lowercase Letter Cards.

Practice Game

Play a game of Concentration with the Letter Cards. Turn one set of either uppercase or lowercase Letter Cards facedown on a table or desk. Letter orientations should be random. In turn, ask players to pick two cards. If the letters match, they keep the cards. The player with the most cards at the end of the game wins.



Activity 2: Alphabet Lineup

In this activity, children build the alphabet using their letter matching skills.

Objective: to match the letters of the alphabet in order

Materials: uppercase and lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips, one set of uppercase and lowercase Letter Cards

Hands-On Lesson

Put the set of uppercase Alphabet Sequence Strips in order in a long line. Walk the children through the alphabet, saying the letters *A, B, C, D*, and so on or singing the alphabet song as you point to each letter. The traditional alphabet song will help children remember the order of the letters in the alphabet.

Now mix up the uppercase Letter Cards. Have the children pick cards one at a time and place them below the matching letter on the strips. Say the letter name, and have the children repeat it. When all of the letters have been placed, congratulate the children. They have now put the letters in alphabetical order.

On another day, repeat the activity with lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips and a set of lowercase Letter Cards.

Practice Game

Each player gets an Alphabet Sequence Strip. Randomly choose a Letter Card, show the card, and say the letter. The player who has that letter on his or her strip takes the card and places it below the strip. Have all the players say the letter name. The winner is the first player to find matches for all the letters on his or her strip.



Activity 3: Alphabet Partners

Some uppercase and lowercase letters look almost identical except for size. But others aren't much alike at all!

Objective: to match uppercase and lowercase letters

Materials: uppercase and lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips and Letter Cards

Hands-On Lesson

Display the uppercase and lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips side by side so that children can see the matching letters. Talk about how the uppercase and lowercase letters differ. Which pairs of letters are almost the same except for size? Which are completely different?

similar: Cc Jj Kk Mm Oo Pp Ss
Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

different: Aa Bb Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh
Ii Ll Nn Qq Rr Tt

Now set out just the uppercase Alphabet Sequence Strips in alphabetical order. Have the children take turns picking a lowercase alphabet Letter Card, placing it below the matching uppercase letter, and naming the letter.

On another day, repeat the activity starting with the lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips and having the children match the uppercase letters.

Practice Game

Use both uppercase and lowercase Letter Cards for this game of Concentration. You can use all the cards or limit the game to fewer pairs of cards.

Mix up the cards and arrange them facedown in rows. Have children take turns turning over pairs of cards. The goal is to find pairs of matching uppercase and lowercase letters. If the cards match, the player keeps the cards. The winner is the player who has the most cards at the end of the game.



Activity 4: Letter Names

Since many letter names are similar to the sounds the letters represent, automaticity in letter naming is vital to learning letter sounds.

Objective: to recognize and name letters of the alphabet

Materials: uppercase and lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips, two sets of uppercase and lowercase Letter Cards, tokens or counters, bag

Hands-On Lesson

Line up the uppercase Alphabet Sequence Strips in alphabetical order. Point to random letters on the strips and ask the children to name the letter. Then name letters one at a time and ask individual children to point to the letter on the strip.

Repeat the activity with the lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips.

Practice Game

Turn one set of uppercase and lowercase Letter Cards facedown, and mix them up. Have each child pick seven cards and place them in a row faceup. Put the second set of uppercase and lowercase Letter Cards in a bag. Pick a card from the bag and show it to the children. Children should look for that letter in their row of cards. If they can name the letter, they exchange it for a token and take another card. Continue until you have used up all the cards in the bag.

On another day, play the game again, except this time say the letter name instead of showing the Letter Card. Students now need to find the letter by name only.



Activity 5: All in a Row

In this activity, children build the alphabet by filling in the blanks.

Objective: to put letters in alphabetical order

Materials: uppercase and lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips, Fill-in-the Blanks Strips, and Letter Cards

Hands-On Lesson

Set out the uppercase Fill-in-the-Blanks Strips in one long line from *A* to *Z*. Point out the blank spaces between letters. Tell the children that it is their job to find the letters that go in the spaces. Set out the uppercase Letter Cards and have the children take turns finding a letter to place in the alphabet lineup. If students are having difficulty, place the uppercase Alphabet Sequence Strips above the Fill-in-the-Blanks Strips. As they work, ask children to name the letter they are placing in the blank as well as the letters that come before and after it in the alphabet.

Repeat the activity with the lowercase Fill-in-the Blanks Strips and lowercase Letter Cards.

Practice Activity

Randomly pass out the uppercase Letter Cards to the children. Ask the child who has the *A* card to play the card first. Ask the children to name the next letter in the alphabet and play that card next. Continue this way to the end of the alphabet. Remind the children that they can use the alphabet song to help them figure out what letter comes next. Check their work by lining up the uppercase Alphabet Sequence Strips next to the row of Letter Cards the children have created. Are all the letters in the right places?

Repeat this activity with the lowercase letters on another day.



Activity 6: Beginning Sounds

Words are made up of sounds. The beginning sound is the focus of this activity. Being able to isolate that sound is an essential phonemic awareness skill.

Objective: to isolate beginning sounds in words

Materials: Alphabet Objects, basket, Letter Cards (either uppercase or lowercase)

Hands-On Lesson

Place all the objects in the basket. Then pass the basket around and have children pick out one object, name it, and then say the beginning sound they hear in the word. If students have difficulty identifying the object, help them name it using the Alphabet Objects list. If the vocabulary is new to the children, define the word. Say, for example, “An *elk* is a type of large deer.” If the child says a word that differs from what is on the list, let them go ahead and say the beginning sound. But then introduce the word on the list and ask the child to name that beginning sound. For example, you might introduce the word *infant* as another word for *baby*.

Practice Activity

Have each student take seven objects from the basket. Randomly pick a Letter Card and say the beginning letter sound. Ask the children to look through their sets of objects to see if they have an object that starts with that sound. If they do, they give the object to you and then take a new object. Continue this way as time allows.



Activity 7: Letters and Sounds

A child who can name the letters of the alphabet will find it easy to learn some of the alphabet sounds. Other alphabet sounds, especially the short vowel sounds, are tricky.

Objective: to connect letters and the sounds they represent

Materials: Alphabet Objects, uppercase and lowercase Letter Cards

Hands-On Lesson

Introduce letter sounds one at a time. Start with letter sounds that are easy for children to identify. For example, the letter name *Bb* is similar to the sound /b/ as in *bird*, but the letter name *Hh* sounds very little like the sound /h/ as in *hat*. For *Xx*, show the X-ray.

Easier: Bb Dd Ff Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn

Pp Rr Ss Tt Vv Ww Yy Zz

Harder: Cc Gg Hh Qq Xx Aa Ee Ii Oo Uu

Show the children a pair of matching uppercase and lowercase letters, and ask them to name the letter. Introduce an object that starts with that letter. Say the letter name (“b”), the letter sound (/b/), and the word (“bird”). When you say the sound, try to avoid including any vowel sounds: For the sound /m/, for example, say, “m,” not “em.”

Do the same with four or five more letters. Then mix up the objects and challenge the children to put the objects back with the letters that represent the beginning sound in the word.

Next, put that set of letters and objects away, and introduce a new set, one at a time. Continue this way until you have introduced all the letters of the alphabet.

Practice Activity

Set out the 26 objects you used for the activity above. Pass out lowercase Letter Cards to each child. Have the children take turns putting a card next to the object that starts with that letter. The child should say the letter name, the letter sound, and the word. For example, a child might put the letter card *u* next to the umbrella, and say, “The sound of the letter *u* is /u/ as in *umbrella*.”



Activity 8: Sorting Sounds

This activity gives children practice discriminating among beginning sounds and connecting the sounds to the letters that represent them.

Objective: to sort objects by their beginning sounds

Materials: Alphabet Objects, Sorting Cups

Hands-On Activity

Divide the Sorting Cups among the children. Set out the basket of Alphabet Objects. Invite the children to sort the objects into the Sorting Cups by the beginning letter sounds. (Note: You may wish to eliminate *Xx* from this activity, since so few words begin with *x*. In addition, do not put out both the *Cc* and *Kk* Sorting Cups at the same time because the same sound is represented by both of these letters.) If children have difficulty, the problem may be one of articulation or sound discrimination. Have the child listen as you say the word and then ask them to say the word, correctly enunciating the sound.

When the children are finished sorting, ask them to name the letter for each cup and say the words represented by the objects in the cups.

Repeat this activity many times so that children have experience with all the letters of the alphabet.

Note: You might want to keep the objects sorted in cups for use in Activity 9.

Practice Activity

Give children extra practice with the trickiest sound discriminations, using each of the following sets of Sorting Cups. Give children just the objects that go with each set.

Set 1: b d p t

Set 2: m n

Set 3: s z

Set 4: a e i o u



Activity 9: In Other Words

Many words begin with the same sounds. What words can we think of that start with *A*? How about *B*?

Objective: to name words that begin with selected letters

Materials: Sorting Cups filled with Alphabet Objects sorted by beginning sounds, uppercase Letter Cards

Hands-On Activity

Set out the Sorting Cups filled with objects from Activity 8. Choosing one cup at a time, name the letter and the objects in the cup, and then go around the group, having each child name something different that starts with the same sound. For *Mm* for example, the children may think of words such as *marker*, *meat*, or *music*. Allow proper nouns (e.g., *Monday*, *Megan*, or *Mississippi*) as well.

Practice Activity

Play a game in which children pick a Letter Card. Say the following and have the child fill in the blanks with words that begin with that letter sound.

My name is _____.

I live in _____.

And I like to eat _____.

For the letter *A*, for example, the child might say, “My name is Alice. I live in Alabama. And I like to eat apples.”



Activity 10: See It and Say It

In this activity, children practice saying the sounds represented by letters of the alphabet.

Objective: to recognize and name letter sounds

Materials: lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips, two sets of lowercase Letter Cards, tokens or counters, bag

Hands-On Activity

Line up the lowercase Alphabet Sequence Strips in alphabetical order. Point to random letters on the strips and ask the children to name the sound represented by the letter. If they have difficulty, remind them of an object that starts with that letter.

On another day, set up the same activity, but this time say random letter sounds and ask the children to point to the letter on the strip that represents that sound.

Practice Game

Turn a set of lowercase Letter Cards facedown, and mix them up. Have each child pick seven cards and place them in a row faceup. Put the second set of lowercase Letter Cards in a bag. Pick a card from the bag and show it to the children. Children should look for that letter in their row of cards. If they can name the letter sound, they exchange it for a token and take another card. Continue until you have used up all the cards in the bag.

On another day, play the game again, except this time say the letter sound instead of showing the Letter Card. Students now need to find the letter by sound only.



Performance Assessment

Test individual students on the basic goals of the Hands-On Alphabet Kit: to name beginning letters in words and to name the sounds that letters of the alphabet represent.

Assessing Progress

1. Say each of the following words one at a time, articulating the initial sound carefully. Then use the word in a sentence. Ask the child to name the beginning letter in the word. For *back*, for example, the child would say that it begins with the letter *b*.

back	save	wet	feet	gold
toad	yell	night	run	help

2. Point to each of the following letters one at a time. Have the child name the letter and tell the sound it represents. For the first letter, for example, the child would say the letter name *L* and the sound /l/.

L	v	m	D	a
J	P	z	I	k



Help young children recognize the letters of the alphabet, connect uppercase and lowercase letters, and isolate initial sounds in words. Irresistible Alphabet Objects invite them to practice initial sound sorting and letter/sound correspondence over and over again.

To see our complete line of literacy resources, visit us online at www.primaryconcepts.com.

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The following 78 objects are included in
Hands On Alphabet:

- A** animals, apple, alligator
- B** bird, bat, banana
- C** car, camel, cat
- D** dolphin, dog, dice
- E** egg, elephant, emerald
- F** fish, feather, fan
- G** guitar, gum, gorilla
- H** hand, horse, hanger
- I** invitation, insect, igloo
- J** jet, jar, jeep
- K** kite, kangaroo, kaleidoscope
- L** leaf, ladybug, lips
- M** magnet, moose, motorcycle
- N** needle, necklace, nickel
- O** octopus, olive, octagon*
- P** pencil, pig, penguin
- Q** quilt, quarter, question mark
- R** rabbit, rice, ring
- S** saw, seal, soap
- T** top, turkey, turtle
- U** underpants, umbrella, umpire
- V** vase, velvet, valentine
- W** watch, wings, worm
- X** x-ray, box, ax
- Y** yarn, yellow, yo-yo
- Z** zero, zipper, zigzag