

World of Writing

Module 1





World of Writing

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World of Writing

World of Writing allows children to discover a wide variety of symbols and characters and learn about their meaning and function. They become curious about the different types of writing on posters, in newspapers and in picture books that they see.

Simple ways to reinforce the way writing helps us communicate:

- Write notes and reminders
- Put their names on pictures and drawings
- Get them to look for and write the letters in their own name
- Roleplay involving something being written: when shopping (shopping list), eating (order), writing a letter, "making" stamps
- They dictate a story to you

World of writing

Children are curious about the world of writing. Learning about writing and writing cultures early on, makes it easier for them to learn to write later. They experience different types of language both written and spoken within their families, through meeting people from other cultures and the media.

They know that their name is made up of different letters. Children should always be encouraged to ask questions such as: Who made up letters? Does everybody write in the same way? How many letters are there? Does every big letter have a small letter? Do some names start with the same letter? How does reading and writing work?

Children naturally ask these and many similar questions, and this curiosity puts them on the path towards writing. They should move towards the world of writing without any worries, through their own experiences, with playful learning resources and our support.





World of Writing

1

Letter hunt

Activity outline:

In this activity children go on a letter hunt in or around school, looking for upper and lowercase letters on walls, wall displays, noticeboards, posters and signs.

Warm up:

In this task the children become "junior letter hunters". Each child is given a piece of paper and some colouring pencils and asked to write their name or just the initials of their name using a different colour for each letter. They are also given some newspapers and magazines. Ask the children to "hunt" for their letters in the newspapers or magazines. When they find "their" letters, mark them with the colour assigned to those letters. Now discuss what the children have found.

Main task:

Now that the children can start to see that not all "A's, B's or C's" look the same, split the class into small groups and send them off around the room, the corridor or whole school to see what letters they can find. Every child is given a pencil, paper and something to lean on, for example, a clipboard. In this exercise, it is especially important that the children capture the structure of a letter as accurately as possible. Some children may even go one step further and not only copy letters, but the whole word. An accompanying adult could photograph the individual letters that are found during the letter hunt. This allows children to reflect or make comparisons later on how they copied the letters down.

Follow up:

Talk to the children about the letters they found and the differences they can see between them. Talk about the sizes of the letters, the thickness and the different colours they have observed; also which letters stood out the most and were the easiest to spot, and which were the hardest.

Extension: Make a "Letter scanner".

Use a piece of stiff cardboard (A4 size) and cut out a rectangle with a craft knife leaving a 4cm-thick cardboard frame. Stick a piece of tracing paper to the back of the frame cover the open space.

The children can use the letter scanners by holding them out a few metres away from their found letters and then use a water-based coloured pencil to trace the letter that appears through the tracing paper. They can then copy their letter onto a piece of paper. This helps them recognise the different scale and style of letters. Using water-based pencils means the "scanner screen" can be cleaned with a damp cloth before another letter is "scanned".



Materials required:

- Pencil, paper and a writing support (e.g. a clipboard) for recording their observations

- Camera as available
- Magazines/newspapers/leaflets

For the extension:

- Water-based coloured pencils
- A4 stiff cardboard
- Tracing paper



Observation points:

- Can the children correctly form the characters and symbols and differentiate between them?
- Do the children also add in figures and lowercase letters?
- Are the individual letters recognised in different types of script?
- Are the letters turned upside down or written the wrong way around, or are details missing?
- Is the way in which the child shapes the letters unusual?



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World of Writing



Other people write like this

Activity outline:

The letters that we use today were only invented after more than 5000 years of human history. This activity shows the children that hieroglyphs and graphic symbols were used to stand for specific words and that it was possible to write with them. They learn that the Egyptians' pictorial language could be written in different directions (from left to right and the reverse, and from top to bottom), and that they can write their own names like this.

Warm up:

Provide the children with the hand-out showing Egyptian hieroglyphs (see poster). Discuss the characters and their meanings together. Give each child one of the characters to copy and retrace.

Materials required:

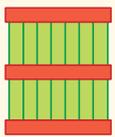
- Paper
- A variety of pencils and crayons
- Hieroglyphic alphabet (poster)



Main task:

Ask the children to find the letters in their own name on the chart and then to write their name in hieroglyphs on a piece of paper. This could be an A4 piece of paper folded in half lengthways to make a name card. Each hieroglyph can now be coloured in by the children.

Examples:



o



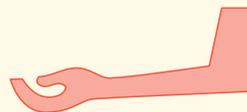
l



i



v



e



r

Follow up:

Talk to the children about the hieroglyphs and how the pictures represent letters.

- Do they know of any other 'languages' where symbols are used in place of letters? Morse code, Braille, Cyrillic and Chinese letters are examples.

Extension:

Try inventing your own hieroglyphs to represent whole words. This is easy with surnames which can easily be portrayed in pictures, for example, King, Walker, Wood, Cook. Animals, flowers, birds and everyday objects in the children's immediate environment also offer possibilities for designing letters and words.

Observation points:

- Can the children find the pictorial expression of the characters and can they apply this to hieroglyphs they develop themselves?
- Do the children come up with the idea of writing to each other with hieroglyphs?
- Do they enjoy drawing, tracing and designing?



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World of Writing



Me and my letters

Activity outline:

This activity encourages the children to have intensive contact with the letters closest to them: those in their name. They can discover the many different forms of “their” letters and collect them in a letter box.

Warm up:

Children work alone or in pairs. Each child writes the letters of their name and then says which is their favourite letter. The letters are then compared with one another. Who has the same ones? Who has more than one of the same letter? Sound out the letters. Ask the children to decorate the letters from their name in different colours ready to make a letter box.

Main task:

Create a letter box. Every child is provided with as many matchboxes as there are letters in their name, Emma, for example, needs four boxes. The boxes can be covered if needed in white paper (if they are not already plain). Then ask the children to cut out their decorated letters (that they have made and stick them onto the box top). The thin edges of the boxes are then stuck together so that the name reads from left to right. Now provide the children with a stack of printed materials such as magazines, newspapers or old Christmas cards. The children need to find the letters from their name in different forms, sizes and colours, cut them out and then sort them into the corresponding boxes.



Materials required:

- A variety of pencils/crayons/pens
- Paper
- Empty matchboxes – available online
- Glue, scissors
- Coloured pens and pencils
- Magazines/newspapers/leaflets

Follow up:

Recognising and reading letters out loud regularly means that they begin to enter long-term memory. The sound of a letter is central to its understanding.

Talk about the letters which the children found.

- Which letters are easiest to recognise?
- Why do they think this is?
- What shapes are they searching for when they look for their letters?

Extension:

Ask the children to copy the shape and form of some of the letters they have found.

Help them to recognise that printed letters come in different shapes and styles.

Observation points:

- Are the correct letters collected?
- Does the child gain assurance about their letters?
- Are some children already able, with support, to write all the letters in the alphabet?
- Are there children who are particularly enthusiastic about letters?



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World of Writing



Discover letters

Activity outline:

This activity allows children to discover letters hidden in graphic images helping them to become increasingly enthusiastic about letters and engage with them. Looking for them in a graphic situation also helps them to discover the characteristic basic elements of capital letters from A to Z and numbers from 0-9.

Warm up:

Provide the children with a range of pictures where letters appear in both an obvious and more difficult way to find. Some examples are: advertisement posters, graffiti, pop art etc. Ask the children to look at the images and see which letters they can discover. The children should write down all the letters they find.

Main task:

Now ask the children to start "hiding" the letters they have found in pictures themselves for the other children to find. For this, provide the pupils with a range of artwork pictures, these could be calendar pictures, art prints from leaflets, postcards and pictures copied from books. They can also use pictures they draw themselves. The size of the pictures is not particularly important. However, the letters drawn in the pictures should not be too small – unless they are going to be "hunted" with a magnifying glass. Encourage the children to try and hide the letters as well as they can by using the shapes and angles of the existing artwork to base their letters on and by using similar colours. See how many letters they can fit into a single picture. Then pass the pictures to another member of the class and see if they can find them all.

Materials required:

- A variety of pencils/crayons/pens
- Examples of artwork featuring letters e.g. advertisement posters, graffiti, pop art, underground map and road signs.
- Paper
- Calendar pictures
- Leaflets
- Postcards



Follow up:

Talk about how easy/difficult it was to find and hide letters in the pictures. What characteristics did they look out for when finding the letters, what elements stood out to them? If children are to develop an awareness of letters, they have to be able to pay sufficient attention to detail, particularly when the template is not laid in front of them the right way up/round and spatial reasoning must be used to recognise the letter.

Discuss how the children 'hid' their letters in the pictures, what did they do to the letters to make them more difficult to find? Turn them on their side, put them upside down? Children should be encouraged to formulate new ideas for their own individual formation of letters. This increases awareness about what aspects in the individual letter are important for its easy identification. This also teaches children how to look carefully.

Extension:

Ask the children to find letters in artwork at home and while out and about. Encouraging them to look for letters in their leisure time keeps their interest in them alive and develops their understanding of their importance.

Observation points:

- Are there letters that are difficult for the child to find?
- Is the letter also recognisable in different sizes?
- Do the children differentiate between similarly shaped letters and can the differences be named?
- Do some children find it difficult to see letters against a patterned background?



5

The alphabet tree



Activity outline:

In this activity the children begin to make an alphabet tree which can be displayed in the classroom. It can act as a basis for other activities and for displaying their letter work now and in the future, to show their progress.

Warm up:

The **Alphabet Tree** by Leo Lionni is a story for children. It tells the story of a group of letter leaf friends that live happily and peacefully in an alphabet tree. But when a storm comes, it sweeps through the leaves and blows some of them off. The letters have to band together to make words and then sentences to make sure they stay safe in the tree and don't blow away. This story is a good way of introducing letters and their own alphabet tree. The group can make the tree which then becomes the central pillar for writing activities. Once a trunk has been made using the template from the poster you can add leaves with traced, designed and written letters gathered around its branches.

Main task:

Make an alphabet tree for your classroom. First create a trunk out of brown paper or card using the template as a guide and then add branches. Finally, give the children the task of making letter leaves to decorate the tree. These can be made as you work together with letters and activities from this pack; the tree grows as the children's experience does. The leaves can be made of any material as long as they also display a letter chosen by the children.

- The shape of the leaves can be: jagged, curvy, wavy, smooth, round, long or oval.
- The leaves can be given a colour base using a wax crayon and then painted with a paintbrush, damp cloth or wet finger for a water colour effect. Letters can be stuck onto these leaves.
- The leaves can display letters drawn, painted or cut out from any variety of colours and materials.

Materials required:

- Pencils, pens, wax crayons and other decorating materials
- "The Alphabet Tree" and "Letter table" templates from the poster
- Scissors (including left-handed scissors)
- Paper clips or blue tack
- Paper and a range of other materials to make leaves



Follow up:

Discuss the letters which the children have chosen to depict. Why have they chosen these letters? Do they have a connection to them? Do they like the shape or structure? Which letters stand out most on the tree?

Extension:

The alphabet tree is an ever-evolving piece of work which can be added to as the children learn and engage more with letters. Just like in **The Alphabet Tree** story, the children can start working with the letter leaves to create simple words and sentences. It is important for the children to see that there are a limited number of letters, and that when combined these make words and these words can be read by everybody.

Observation points:

- Does the alphabet tree become an important point of reference for them and do they want to add other things from the world of writing?
- Are there children who want to make their own alphabet tree?
- Do the children also develop ideas for writing? Do they hang pictures of birds that they have painted or drawn on the tree trunk or do they add a bird house?