

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

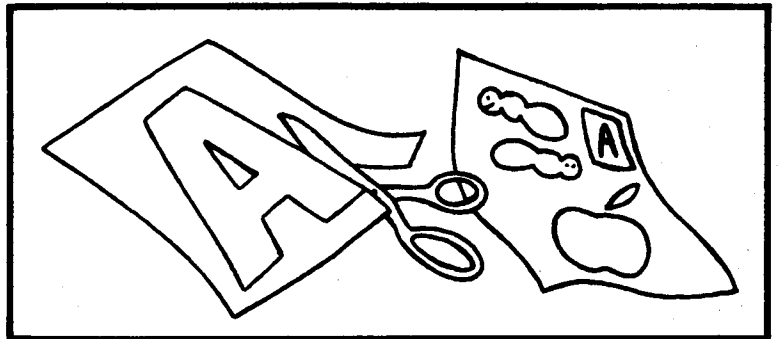
This book offers three sets of patterns: capital letters and the pieces to use for an art activity using the capital letters, lower case letters, and a set of cards depicting a word and object for each letter. The teacher's guide offers activities for building the following skills:

1. letter recognition / sound association
2. differentiating letters and sounds
3. sequential order
4. putting sounds together / beginning phonics

ART PROJECTS WITH THE CAPITAL LETTERS

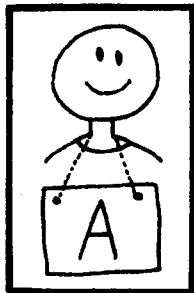
SKILL: letter recognition / sound association

1. Reproduce the capital letter on construction paper. Reproduce the pattern parts to go with that letter on bond paper. Let the children color the pattern pieces and cut out both the pieces and the capital letter.
2. We recommend auditory instruction, while demonstrating once or twice where the pieces are to be glued (good practice for following directions). The corner picture showing the finished project may also be displayed. Assembling the pieces onto the letter in approximately the correct place provides good visual skill practice - similar to a puzzle.



LETTER SHIELDS

(using upper and lower case letters and picture cards)

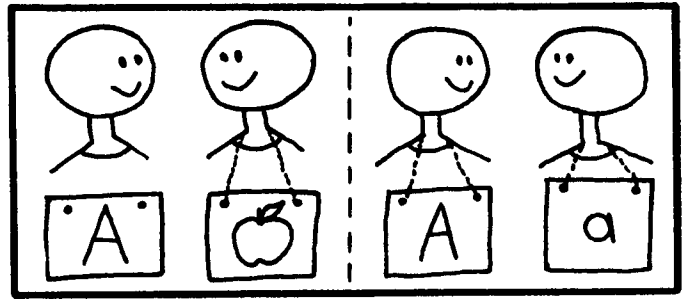


To make the letter shields, reproduce, trace, or glue each upper case letter, lower case letter, and picture card INDIVIDUALLY to a separate piece of 8-1/2" x 11" construction paper. Punch a hole in each top corner. String a 12" piece of yarn from corner to corner. When worn around the neck, the "shield" should be on the child's chest.

SKILL: letter recognition / sound association

1. Have the children form a circle and face out. Pass out an upper case letter and matching lower case letter to the children at random. EXAMPLE: if you have ten children, pass out ABCDE and abcde, one to each child, at random. When you say, "GO," the children turn into the circle and try to find their matching letters. If there is an uneven number of children, the teacher plays too.
2. Play the same game using the letter and picture cards.

3. Pass out the letter shields to children sitting on the rug. Hold up a picture card. The child wearing the beginning sound letter stands up. When they are all standing, shuffle the cards, hold them up one at a time, and have children sit when they recognize their pictures.
4. Play the game with lower case letters instead of pictures.

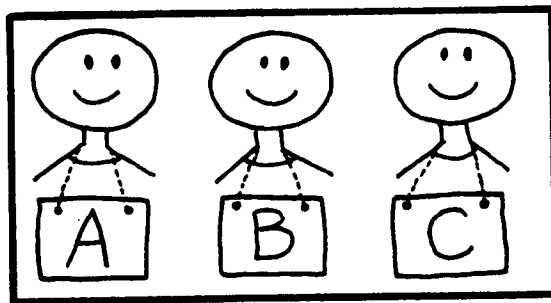


SKILL: differentiating letters

The most confusing letters are the lower-case groups of (b , d) (c , e) (f, h, k) (u ,v) (j, g,q) and (s , z). Make four or five extra shields for each of these lower case letters.

1. Play the games as instructed for letter recognition, but use the confusing letter groups.
2. Hand out five each of two letters that are easily confused. EXAMPLE: five b's and five d's. Let the children put themselves into groups that match.

SKILL: sequencing

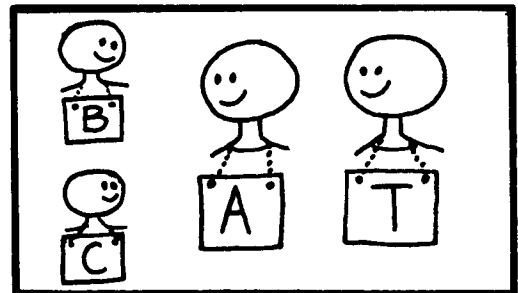


1. Pass out the shields at random. Let one child place them in sequential order.
2. If you can handle a little chaos, let them put themselves in sequential order. Usually, a few leaders emerge but there is more participation by the group.
3. Mix the upper and lower case and the picture cards for #1. Example: AbcD elk.

4. Do sections of the alphabet. Stand G at one side of the room and O on the other side. Let the children fill in the correct letters.

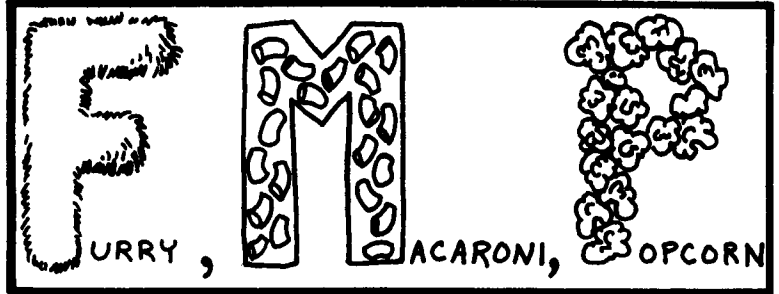
SKILL: putting sounds together

1. Pass out the shields and choose two letters (A T or A G are good to start with) to stand up next to one another. Sound them out. Then ask if others can stand up with them and make a word.
2. After some practice changing the beginning sound, change the ending sound. Be sure to watch for children who have difficulty hearing the difference in the ending sounds.
3. After some practice making words with your direction, let them make words of their own.
4. If you can handle a little chaos, form a circle facing out. When you say, "GO," they turn in and find partners to make words. This can lead to discussions about certain letters that are hard to make words with and certain letters that are more in demand. With two classes and a good-sized room, this is a fun rainy day game. You can play it like musical chairs; those that don't make a word are out. Between games, switch letters so that everyone gets a chance to be a coveted vowel.



TOUCH AND FEEL LETTERS (upper and lower case letters)

Touch and feel letters are most helpful for letter identification and differentiation between letters. They are especially helpful for children who are having difficulty with these skills. Basic touch and feel letters are traced and cut from sandpaper or embossed and velour wallpapers.



SKILL: letter recognition / sound association

1. Let the children close their eyes and feel the letter. Can they tell you which letter it is or what sound it makes?
2. Let the children make their own touch and feel letters by gluing rice or peas to letters cut from construction paper or tag board.
3. Let the children make touch and feel letters using something that starts with that letter. Example: beans on B; fake fur on F; glitter on G; macaroni on M; popcorn on P; ribbon pieces on R; sunflower seeds on S; yarn on Y; etc.

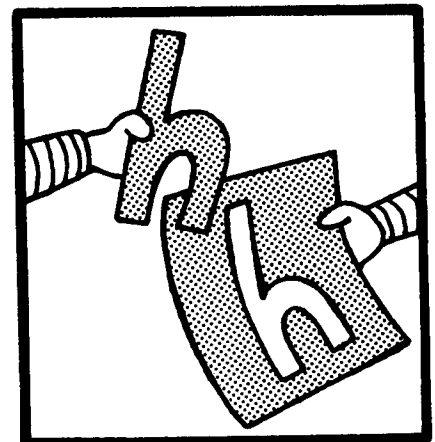
SKILL: differentiating letters

1. Use two letters, upper and lower case (example: Dd, Pp). Mix them up. Ask the child to close his eyes and feel the letters. Can he match the two letters that make the same sound?
2. Place the "look alike sets" of lower case letters on the table, one set at a time, (b, d) (c, e) (f, h, k) (j, g, q) (u, v) (s, z). Ask the child to close his eyes, feel the letters and identify each one with a name and a sound.



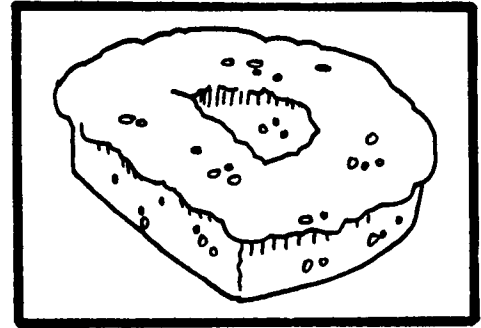
STENCILS (upper and lower case letters)

Stencils not only offer opportunities to better basic skills with letters, but they also help to bridge the gap between oral identification of a letter and the writing of that letter. In terms of strengthening motor skills, it is important that children be given the opportunity to trace around the outside of the positive part of the stencil, as well as the inside of the negative part of the stencil. Use the letter patterns to make stencils out of tag board.



SKILL: letter recognition

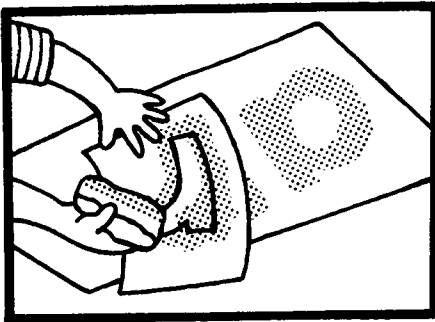
1. Let the children trace the stencils with colored pencils.
2. Let the children use stencils to cut the letter of the week out of tortillas, biscuit dough, or premade bread dough. Cook and eat.

**SKILL: letter differentiation**

Let the children trace the "look alike sets" of letters discussed in the touch and feel section. This reinforces the differences between these letters.

SKILL: sequential order

1. Use the stencil negatives, strips of butcher paper, and sponge squares with paint. Pass out the stencils. Let A start by sponge painting her letter at one end of the butcher paper. Ask who comes next until you have the completed alphabet.
2. A variation on the activity above: the teacher sponges some random letters, and the children must fill in the blanks.

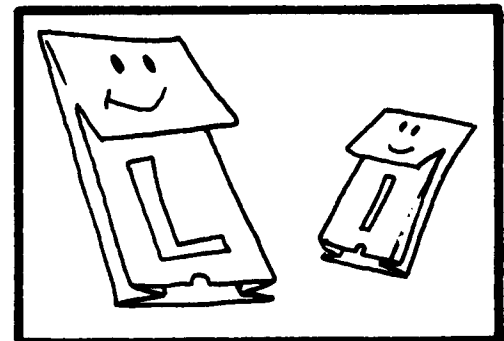
**SKILL: putting letters together**

1. Let children stencil their names. The repeated process of searching for and tracing each letter reinforces the concept that words are combinations of letters.
2. Use the sponge painting technique above to print words on the butcher paper. The teacher prints a letter. Ask a child to add a letter. Does it make a word? Do you need more letters? Which ones? Once you have a word, can you add letters to make new words? Cut up the butcher paper into

separate words. Can you make a sentence? What words can be added to make a sentence? Pin the stenciled sentences to the wall. Now everyone can read a sentence.

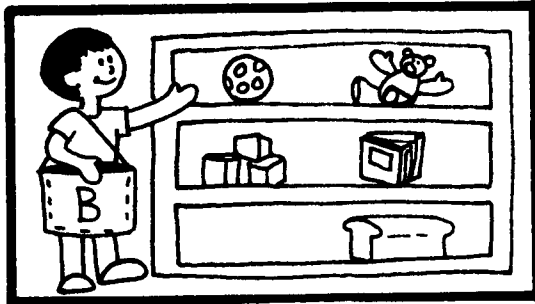
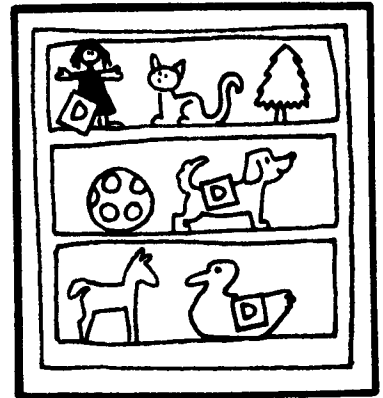
CONSTRUCTION PAPER LETTERS

Letters cut out of construction paper can be used in lots of ways besides the art activity at the beginning of the book. You may want to cut the letters yourself but letting the children cut them out is good practice for their small motor skills. If you have 12 children in the class, and they each cut out two copies of the letter of the week, you now have 24 cut out letters to use on some of the following activities.

**SKILL: letter / sound recognition**

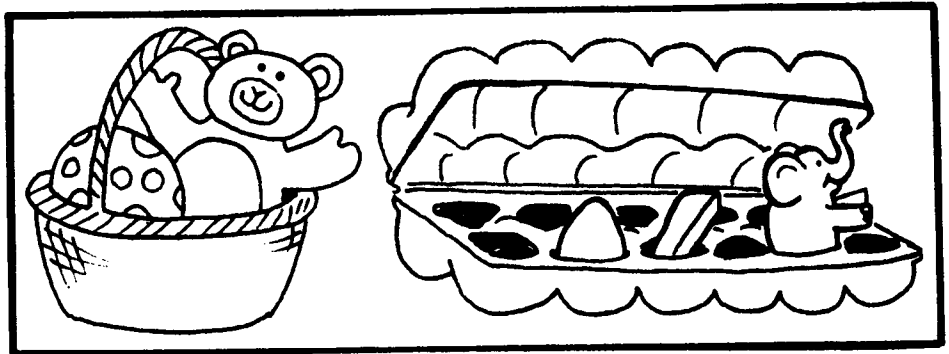
1. Glue the letter of the week on a lunch bag. Let the child make a face on the flap. See how many words the puppet can say that begin with its letter.

- Let the children tape the letter of the week to objects in the room that begin with that letter. They can also identify ending sounds.



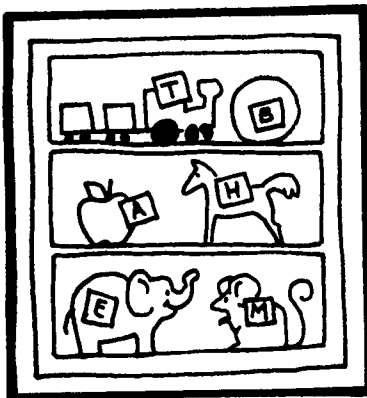
- Staple the sides of a manila folder and string it with yarn for a shoulder strap. Glue the letter of the week on the folder. Let the children "shop" for items in the room that begin with that letter.

- Decorate a container with the letter and picture card of the week. Let the children collect things with the same beginning sound and put them in the container. Be imaginative with the containers: basket for B, jar for J, pail for P, wagon for W, egg carton for E, etc.

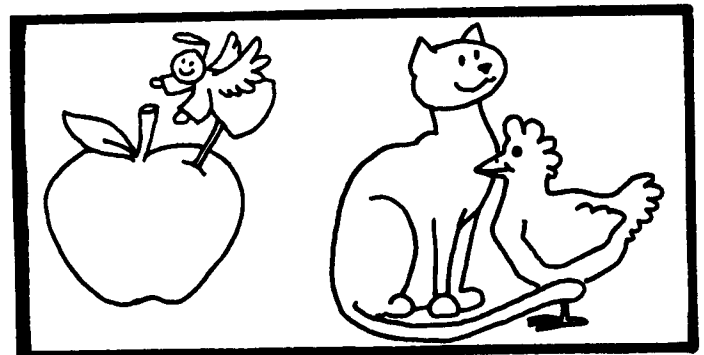


SKILL: letter differentiation

- Place items on a shelf and let the children tape the letter with the correct beginning sound onto the item.

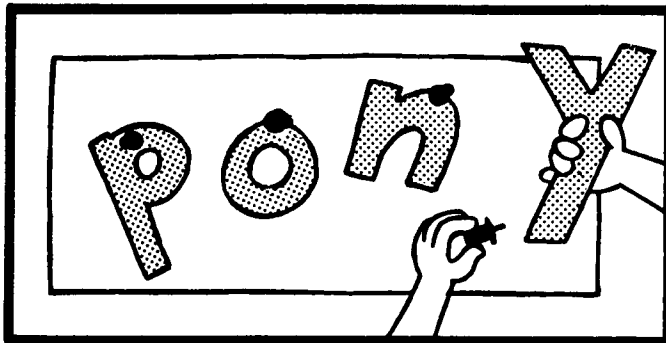
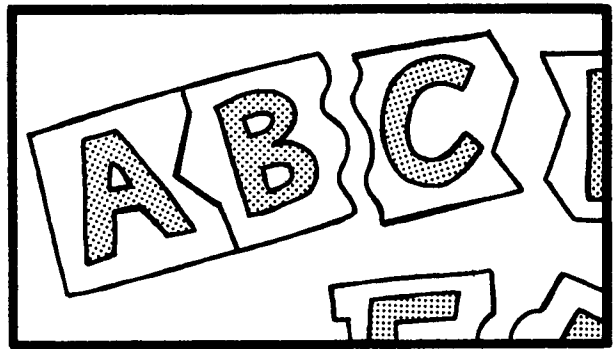


- As children work with letters, pictures, and coloring books, they begin to realize that some words begin with the same letter, but when you say the words, they have different sounds. Cat and chicken are often shown as starting with "c." Apple and angel start with "a." Begin discussing long and short vowel sounds and how some letter combinations can change the sound of one or both letters.



SKILL: sequential order

Make a floor puzzle. Use 26 pieces of 8-1/2" x 11" construction paper. Trim the right and left sides so they interlock to form one long puzzle. Glue the letters on each page, in order.



SKILL: putting letters together

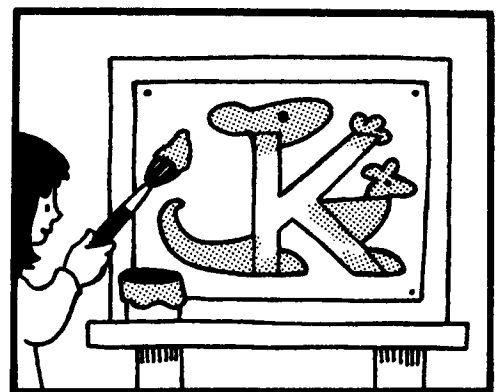
Laminate the letters and put them at an activity center. After experience with the letter shields and sponge painting stencils, children will want to see what other words they can make. Let them share their new words with the class during sharing time or as a minute filler before lunch or recess.

Two More Activities

Over the years teachers have written letters about some of the things they do with the big letter patterns. Two activities were mentioned repeatedly and it was felt that they should be included in this revision of the book. Thanks to all those who have written!

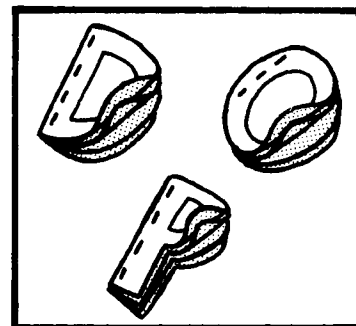
Easel art:

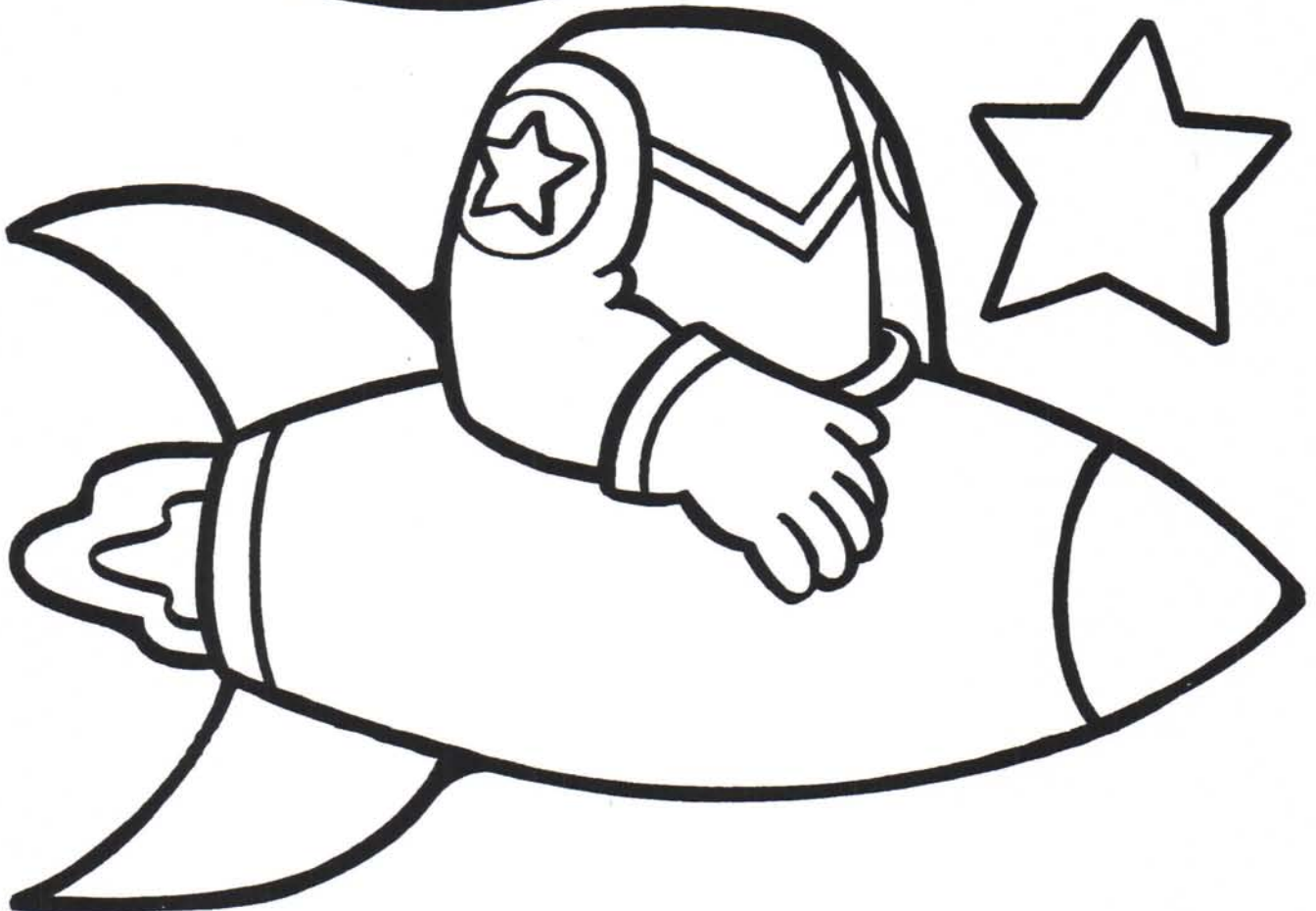
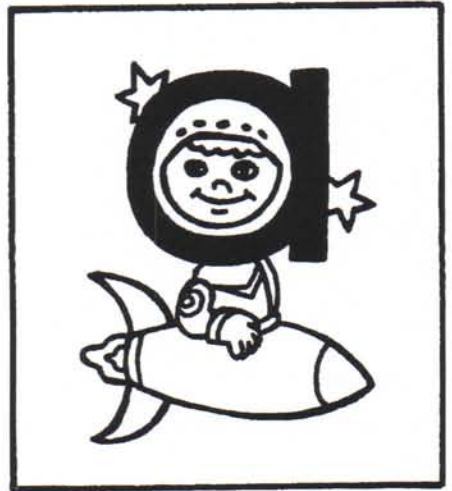
After making some of the characters out of the large letter patterns, glue a large letter to plain paper on the easel and let the children make up their own characters whose names start with that letter. The children can use paint, chalk or markers to complete the characters.

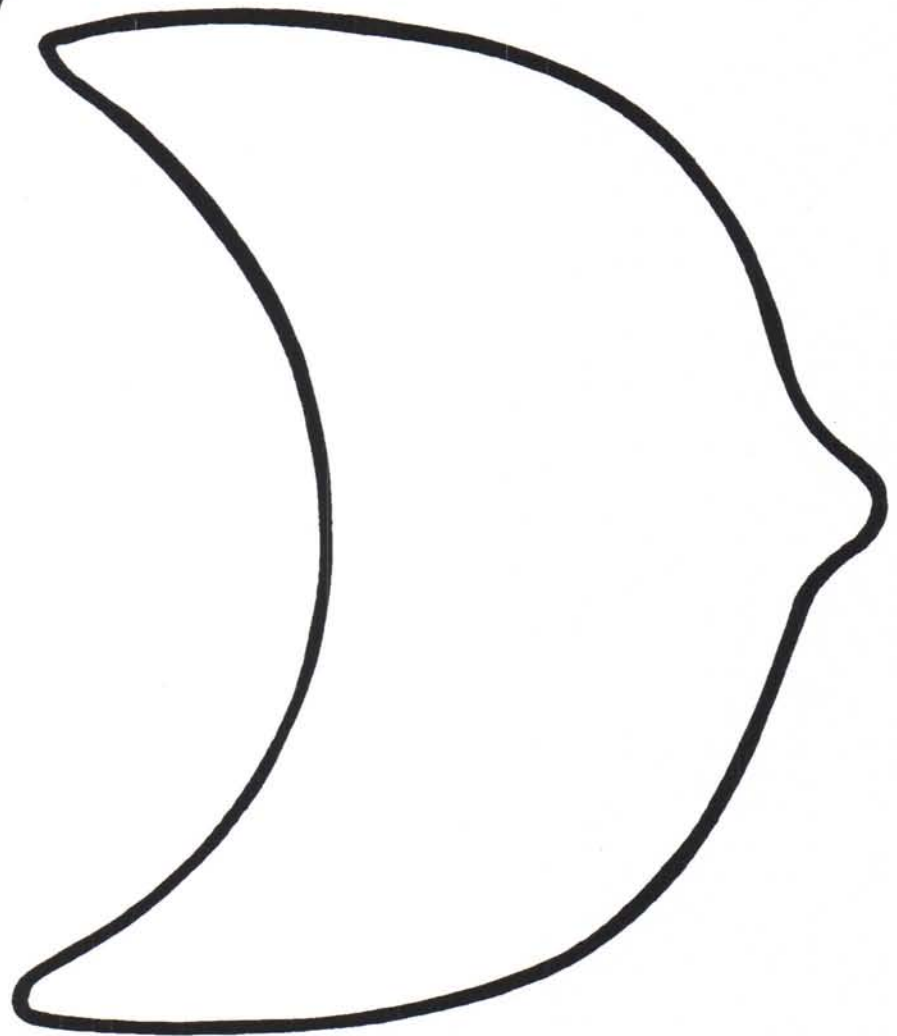
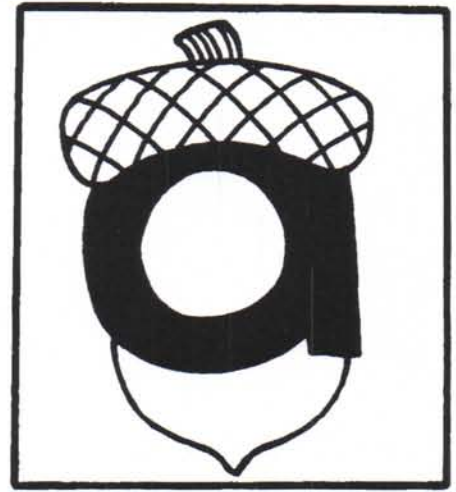
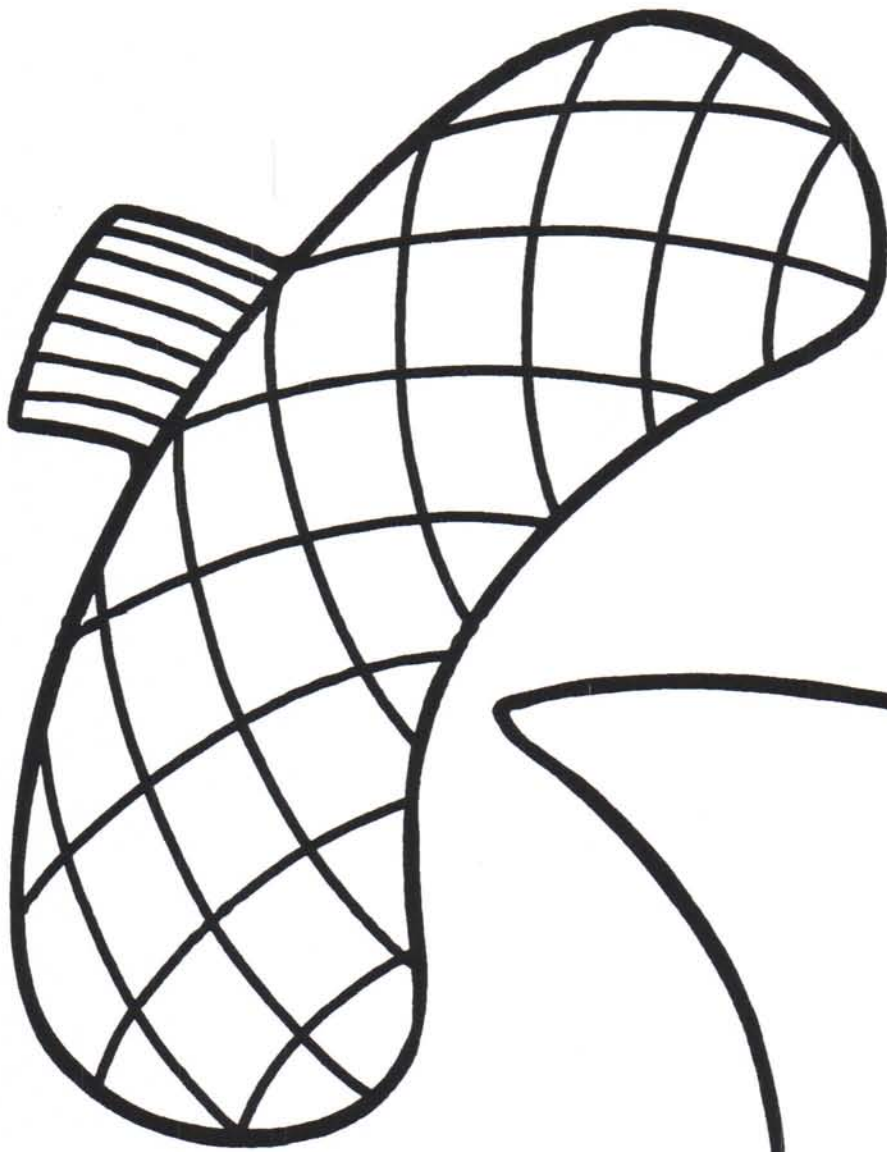


Letter books:

Reproduce and cut out one of the large letter patterns from construction paper. Trace the letter on several pieces of lined paper and cut them out. Gather and stack the letters with the construction paper letter on top. Staple together on the left side. Some letters work better than others for this project. The letter books can be used to list words that start with that letter, as a place to practice printing that letter, or for writing stories about the character the child made using that letter.







acorn - long vowel lower case a

