

Dear Family:

We are now ready for you to be your child's Coach. In Unit 1, your child will learn (or review) letter names and sounds for the letters a-z, and letter formation for lower-case letters. This is laying the necessary foundation for your child to become a fluent, independent reader.

During the next few weeks, I will be teaching or reviewing:

- *Letter recognition a-z*
- *Letter formation from a-z for lower-case letters*
- *Sound recognition (consonants and short vowels)*
- *Print awareness*
- *Word awareness*
- *Story re-telling and comprehension*
- *Rhyming*
- *Phonemic awareness skills to identify the beginning and ending sounds in words*

I will explain these in more detail as we go through the Unit. As you can see, it is a lot! That is why Unit 1 will take us the next 12 weeks.

Each week, I will send home the letters that we are working on in class. I will also send home other activity suggestions to reinforce skills.

If you have any questions, please write them down and I'll get back to you. WE ARE OFF!

Sincerely,

Important! Please keep each letter page. You will need them to construct an alphabet book when you are in Unit 2.





Review Letter Formations With Your Child

For the next 12 weeks, your child will practice writing the letters in **lowercase**. As you may notice, these will not be taught in alphabetical order. This is because we group letters with similar formations.

| WEEK | LETTERS | WEEK | LETTERS | WEEK | LETTERS |
|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|
| 1 | t b f | 5 | a g | 9 | l h k |
| 2 | n m | 6 | d s | 10 | v w |
| 3 | i u | 7 | e r | 11 | y x |
| 4 | c o | 8 | p j | 12 | z q |

Encourage correct pencil grip

Be sure your child has the pencil between the index finger and the thumb and then rests it on the other fingers.



Right Hand Pencil Grip



Left Hand Pencil Grip

When your child writes, both elbows should be on the table and feet should be on the floor, if possible. You can use an old box under the table if the table is too high. Also, have your child hold the paper with the non-writing hand.

(Continued on next page)



Review Letter Formations With Your Child (Continued)

Practice the letter formations

You can practice the letter formations at home just like we are practicing them in school.

We call the special lines our **Writing Grid**. The pictures indicate the names of the lines: the sky line, plane line, grass line and worm line (see below).



_____ SKY LINE



----- PLANE LINE



_____ GRASS LINE



_____ WORM LINE

Letter Formation for t

t is a sky line letter.
It starts on the (sky line).

1. Point to the sky line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Cross it on the plane line.
4. Say t - top - /u/, have students repeat.

As your child traces the letter, guide him or her by reading the directions on the enclosed **Letter Formation Guide**.

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case letter** with his or her **finger**. *Try to do the week's letters every night.* Have your child color the pictures as well.

Remember, you are not only sharing a fun experience but you are being the Coach as well, reinforcing some of the things we are doing in school.



Fundations Letter Formation Guide

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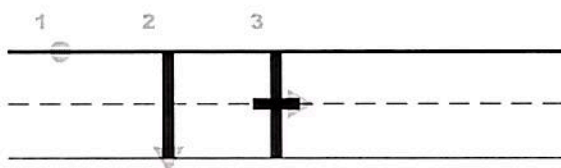
WEEK 1

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for **t**

t is a sky line letter.

It starts on the (sky line).

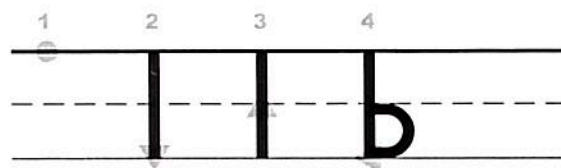


1. Point to the sky line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Cross it on the plane line.
4. Say t - top - /t/, have students repeat.

Letter Formation for **b**

b is a sky line letter.

It starts on the (sky line).

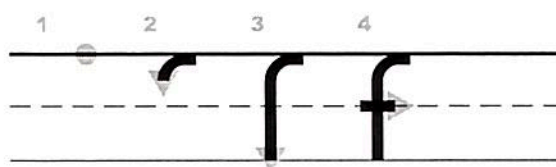


1. Point to the sky line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Trace up to the plane line,
4. and around to the grass line.
5. Say b - bat - /b/, have students repeat.

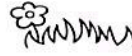
Letter Formation for **f**

f is a sky line letter.

It starts on the (sky line).

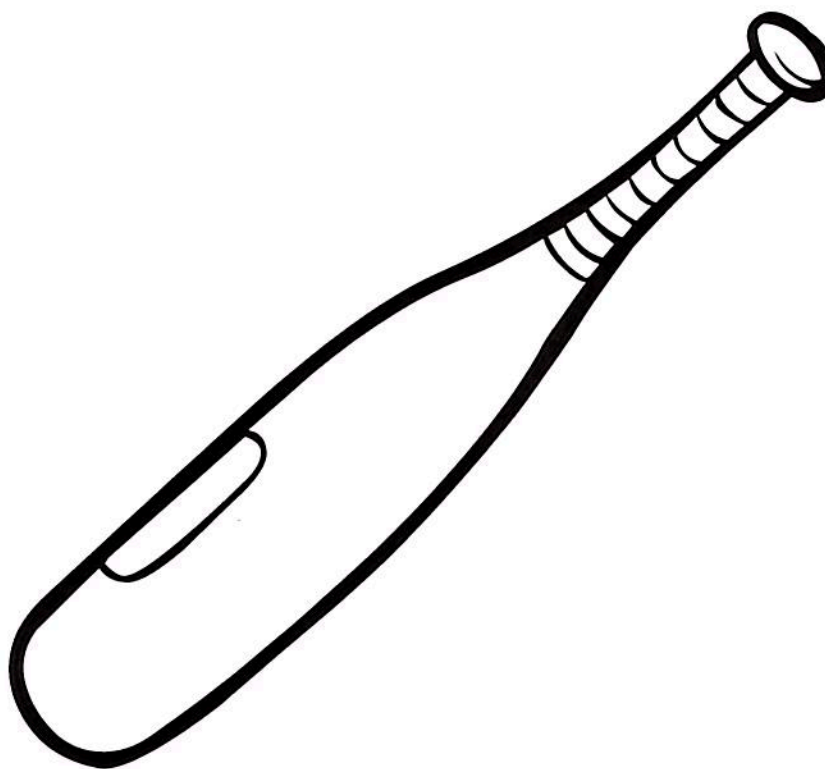


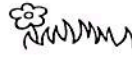
1. Point to the sky line.
2. Trace back on the sky line,
3. and then way down to the grass line.
4. Cross it on the plane line.
5. Say f - fun - /f/, have students repeat.



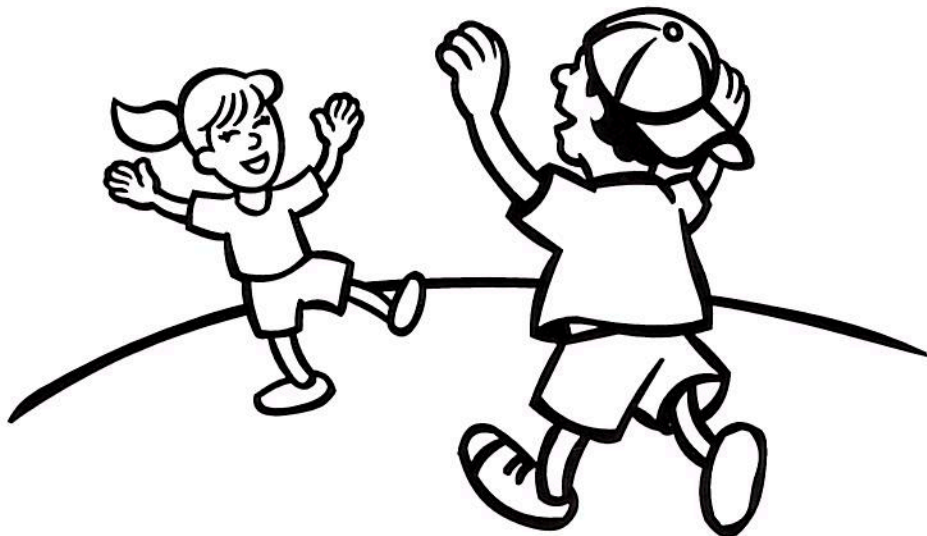
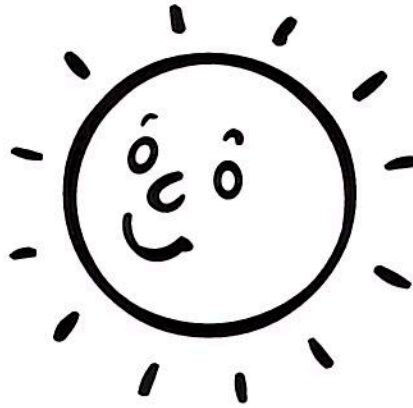
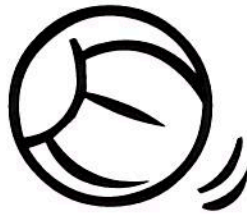


Bb





Ff





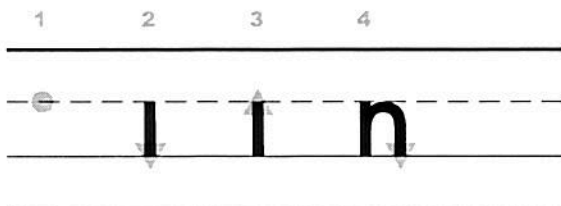
Fundations Letter Formation Guide

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for **n**

n is a plane line letter.

It starts on the (plane line).

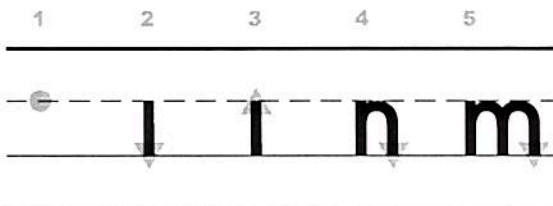


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Trace back up to the plane line,
4. and make a hump.
5. Say n - nut - /n/, have students repeat.

Letter Formation for **m**

m is a plane line letter.

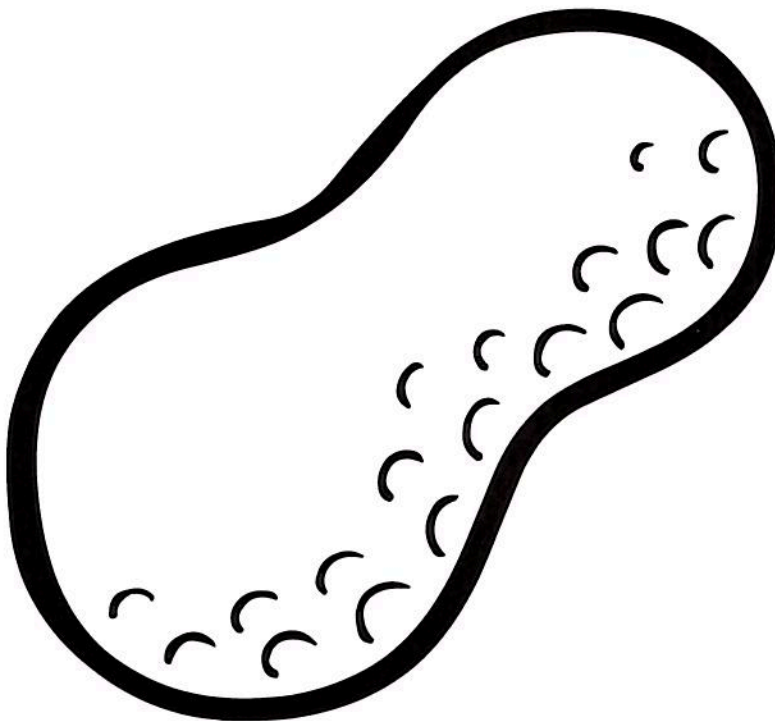
It starts on the (plane line).

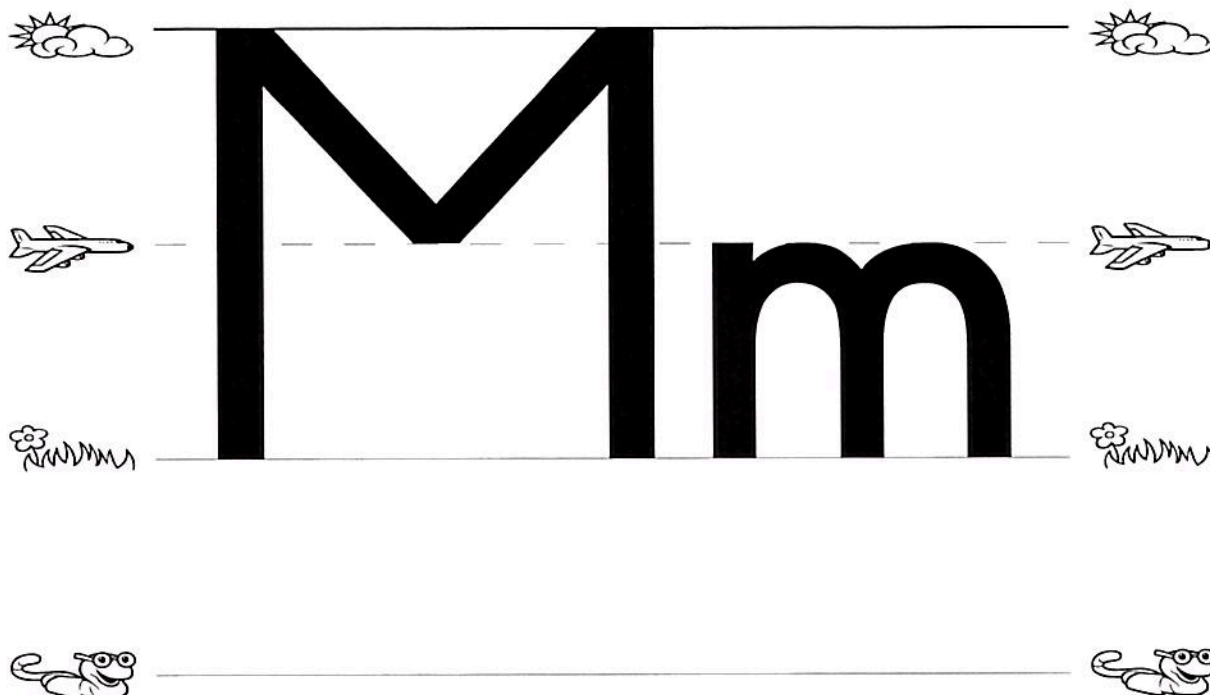


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Trace back up to the plane line,
4. and make a hump,
5. and then back up to the plane line and make another hump.
6. Say m - man - /m/, have students repeat.



Nn







Help Your Child Develop Print Awareness

Print awareness means an understanding that spoken words can be transferred to print.

The importance of reading to your child as often as possible cannot be overstated. While you read to him or her, you can do some things to help develop an awareness of print.

As you read a story, you can help your child **develop print awareness** by doing these three things:

- 1. Following the printed word with your finger.**
- 2. Indicating the left to right progression of words.**

3. Noting periods between sentences with pauses.

Rhyming is also an important skill. Help your child do this by letting them fill in the rhyming words in stories that contain rhymes. For example: ***Is Your Mama a Llama?***, ***The Cat in the Hat***, etc.

You will find the **suggested books** listed below helpful at this time. They should be available at your local library.

Reading with your child is a great “end-of-the-day” activity.

| Title | Author | Publisher / Date |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>The Cat in the Hat</i> | Seuss, Dr. | Houghton Mifflin; 1957 |
| <i>Green Eggs and Ham</i> | Seuss, Dr. | Random House; 1960 |
| <i>In the Tall, Tall Grass</i> | Fleming, D. | Holt, Rinehart & Winston; 1991 |
| <i>Is Your Mama a Llama?</i> | Guarino, D. | Scholastic; 1989 |
| <i>Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?</i> | White Carlstrom, N. | Little Simon; 1996 |
| <i>Little Bear Sleeping</i> | Johnston, T. | G.P. Putnam's & Sons; 1991 |
| <i>Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile</i> | Waber, B. | Houghton Mifflin; 1965 |
| <i>Owl Moon</i> | Yolen, J. | Putnam & Grossett; 1987 |
| <i>There's a Wocket in my Pocket</i> | Seuss, Dr. | Random House; 1996 |



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WEEK 3

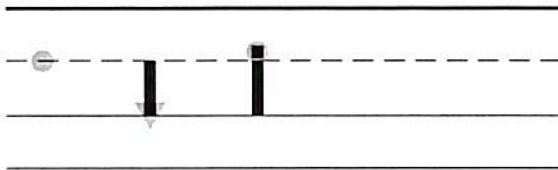
Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for **i**

i is a plane line letter.

It starts on the (plane line).

1 2 3



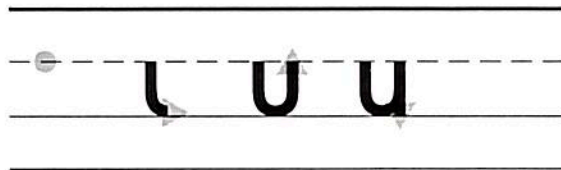
1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Add a dot.
4. Say i - itch - /i/, have students repeat.

Letter Formation for **u**

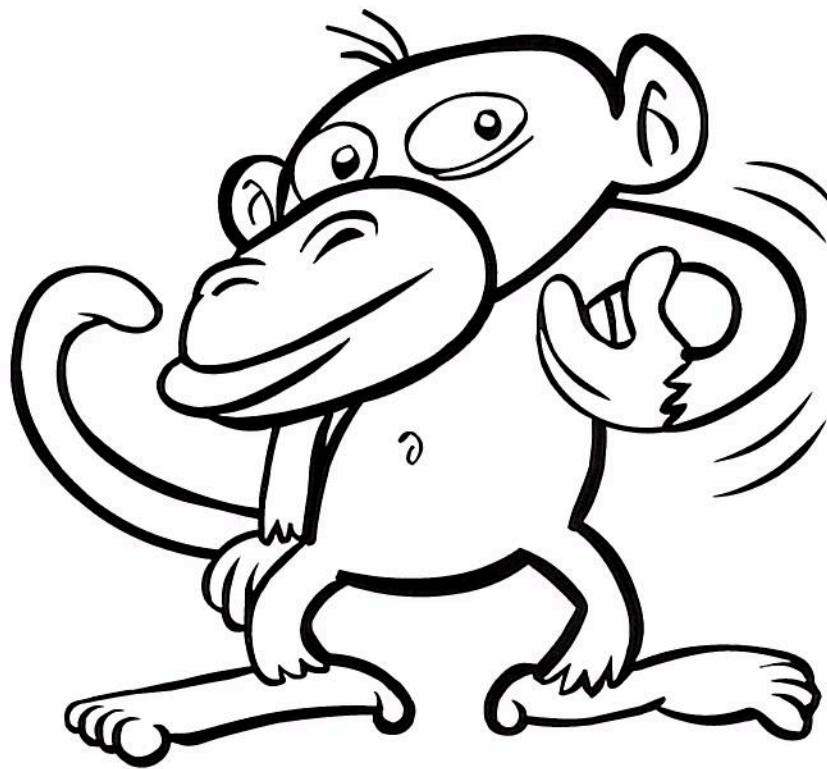
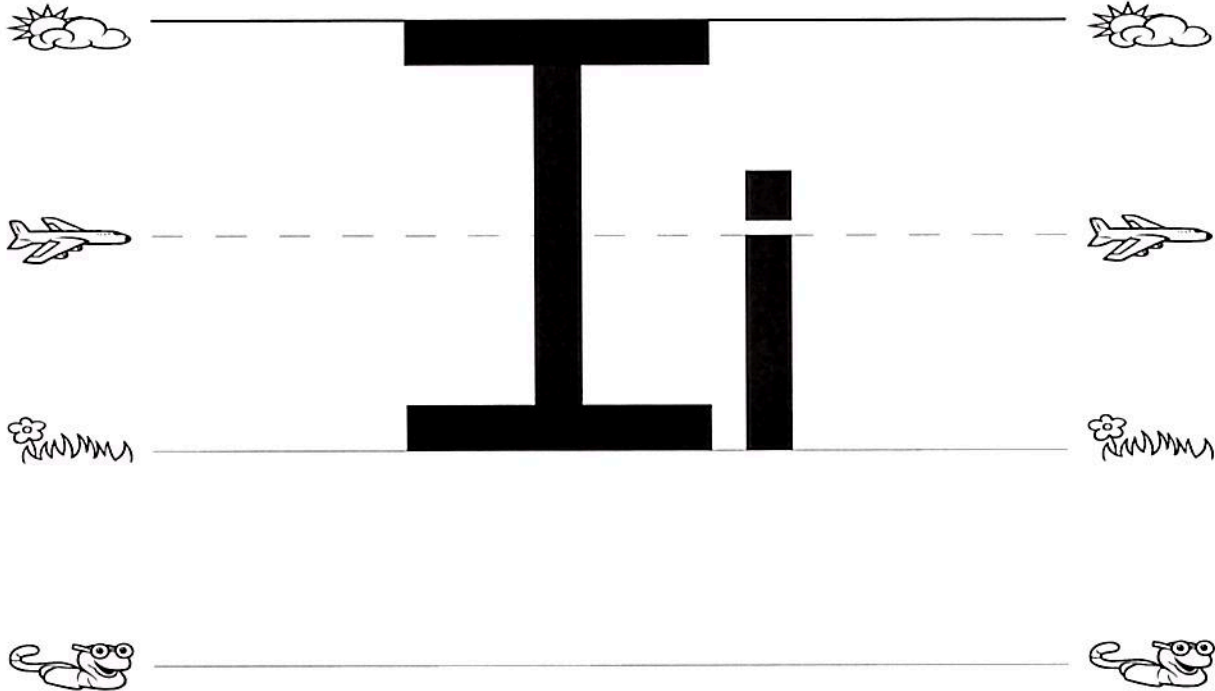
u is a plane line letter.

It starts on the (plane line).

1 2 3 4

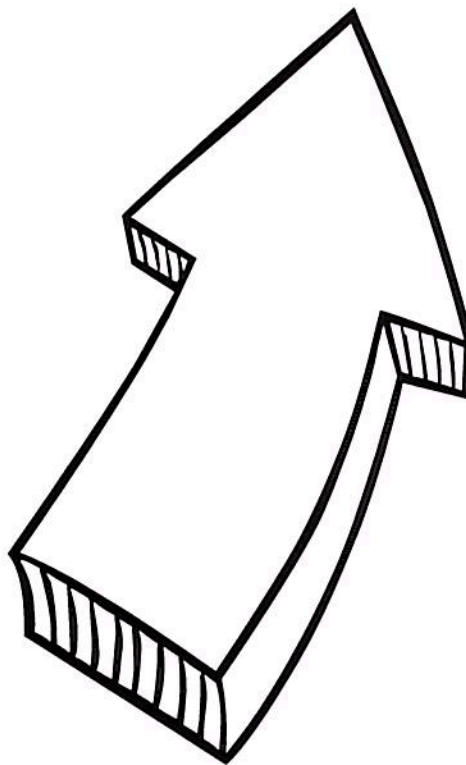


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Curve up to the plane line,
4. and trace straight down to the grass line.
5. Say u - up - /ü/, have students repeat.





Uu





In Addition to the Letter Formation Activity You Can Help Your Child Develop Sound Recognition

Pictures and Sounds Activity

The sound at the beginning of a word is easiest to distinguish, so that is where we begin. Use a child's simple picture book or a magazine.

Point to a picture and ask, **"What is this?"** Repeat the word or tell them the word, stressing the first sound. Then ask, **"What sound is at the beginning of the word?"**

If your child says the sound, respond, **"Yes! And what is that letter?"** The child should then say the letter name.

For now, avoid words that begin with **c**, **k**, **sh**, **ch**, **th**, and **ph**.

Listen for Sounds

Explain that you are going to say three words. Two of the words will begin with the same sound. One will not.

Stress the first sound when you say each word. Ask your child to tell you which word does not belong. (Your child listens but should not see the words.)

The following words will get you started:

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| map | dog | mud |
| brother | basket | slide |
| cat | cracker | jump |
| egg | daisy | donut |
| frog | sing | flower |
| glue | grape | boy |
| kitten | jacket | jug |
| fish | lip | lantern |
| neck | drink | napkin |
| paint | puddle | tie |
| king | ride | raspberry |
| snake | gum | sun |



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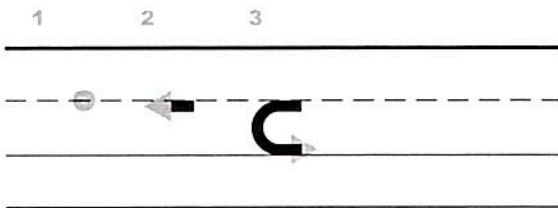
WEEK 4

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for **c**

c is a plane line round letter.

It starts on the (plane line).

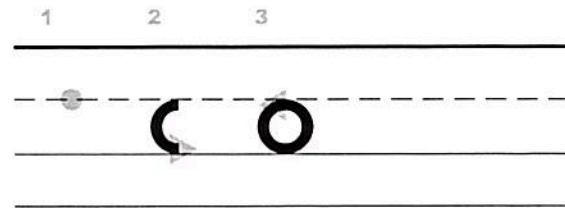


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Start to fly backwards,
3. and go down and around to the grass line.
4. Say c - cat - /k/, have students repeat.

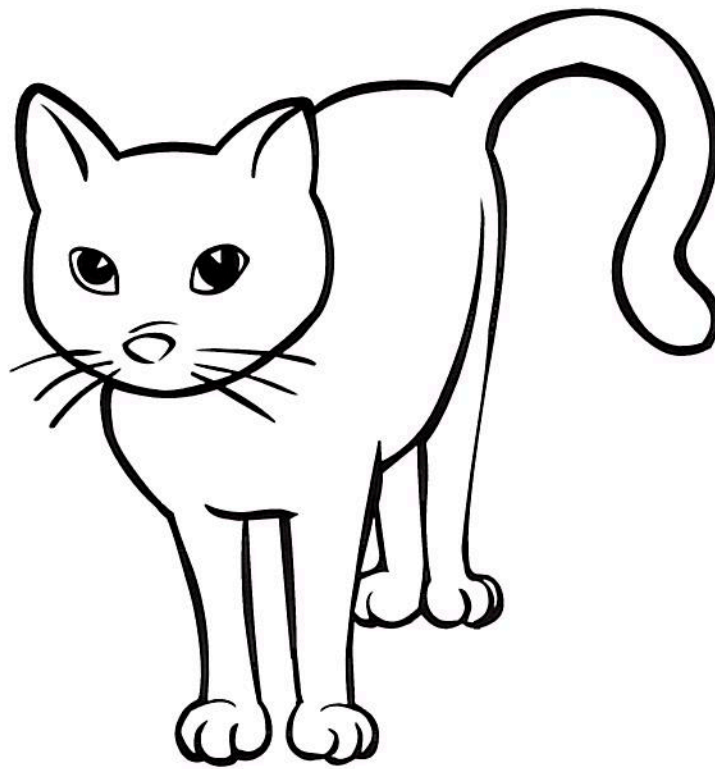
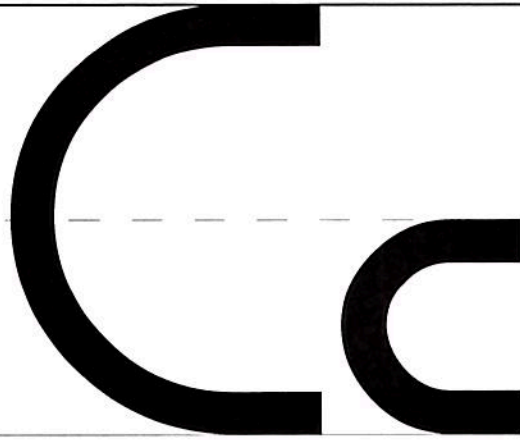
Letter Formation for **o**

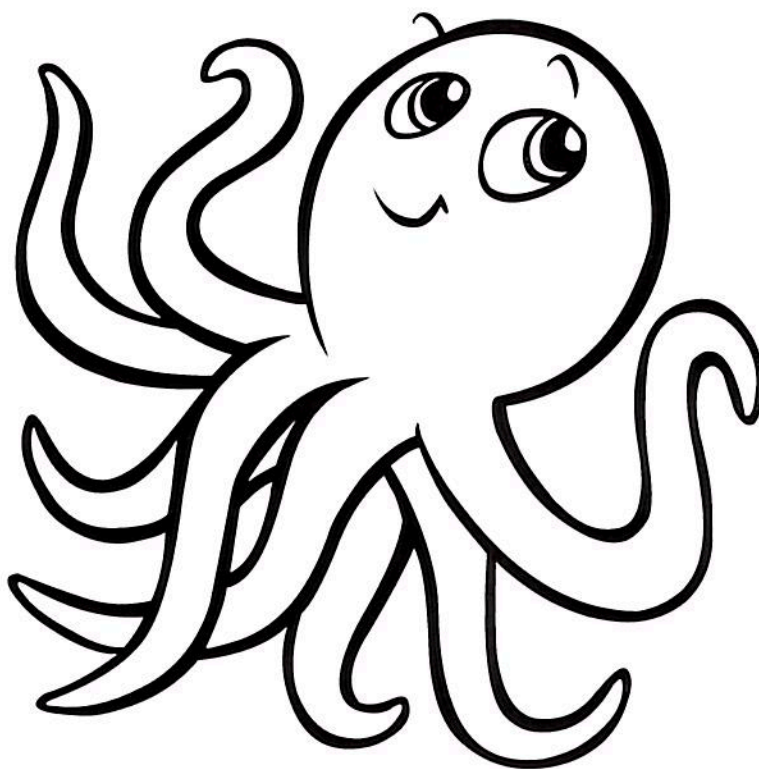
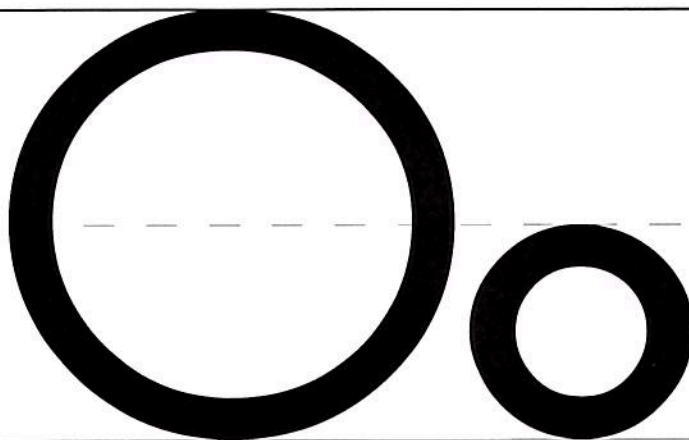
o is a plane line round letter.

It starts on the (plane line) just like a c.



1. Point to the plane line.
2. Trace back, then down to the grass line,
3. and around back up to the plane line.
4. Say o - octopus - /ō/, have students repeat.







In Addition to the Letter Formation Activity Help Your Child Develop Comprehension Skills

When you read to your child, he or she will develop **comprehension** and **story re-telling** skills.

Reading Comprehension

Develop comprehension by pausing on some of the pages to talk about the story:

1. **Let your child discuss how the characters feel.**
2. **Let your child predict how the story will end.**
3. **Let your child discuss what "they" would do.**
4. **Ask your child, "Where is (name an object)?" to develop vocabulary.**

Story Re-telling

Children love to hear the same story read over and over. **After your child knows a story well, have them tell you the story, using the pictures as a guide.**

Encourage them to do this in their own words, not mimicking the exact written words.

You can say, "You know this story so well, tonight you tell me what happens on each page and then I'll read the words to see if you are right. On this page do you remember what happened?"

The **suggested books** listed below focus on comprehension and re-telling. They should be available at your local library.

| Title | Author | Publisher / Date |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|
| <i>A Baby Sister for Frances</i> | Hoban, R. | Harper Trophy; 1992 |
| <i>Alexander and the Terrible Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day</i> | Viorst, J. | Atheneum; 1972 |
| <i>Are You My Mother?</i> | Eastman, P.D. | Random House; 1988 |
| <i>Lily's Purple Plastic Purse</i> | Henkes, K. | Greenwillow Books; 1996 |
| <i>Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel</i> | Burton, V. | Houghton Mifflin; 1967 |
| <i>The Mitten</i> | Brett, J. | G.P. Putnam's Sons; 1989 |
| <i>The Runaway Bunny</i> | Wise Brown, M. | HarperCollins; 1970 |



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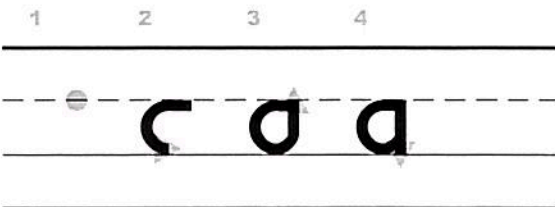
WEEK 5

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for **a**

a is a plane line round letter.

It starts on the (plane line).

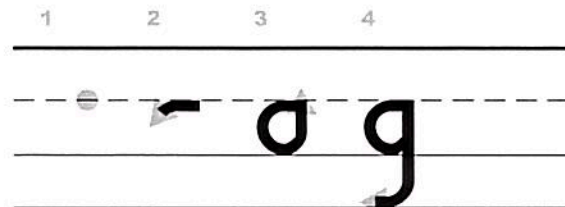


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go back on the plane line then down and around on the grass line,
3. and up to the plane line.
4. Trace back down to the grass line.
5. Say a - apple - /ă/, have students repeat.

Letter Formation for **g**

g is a plane line round letter.

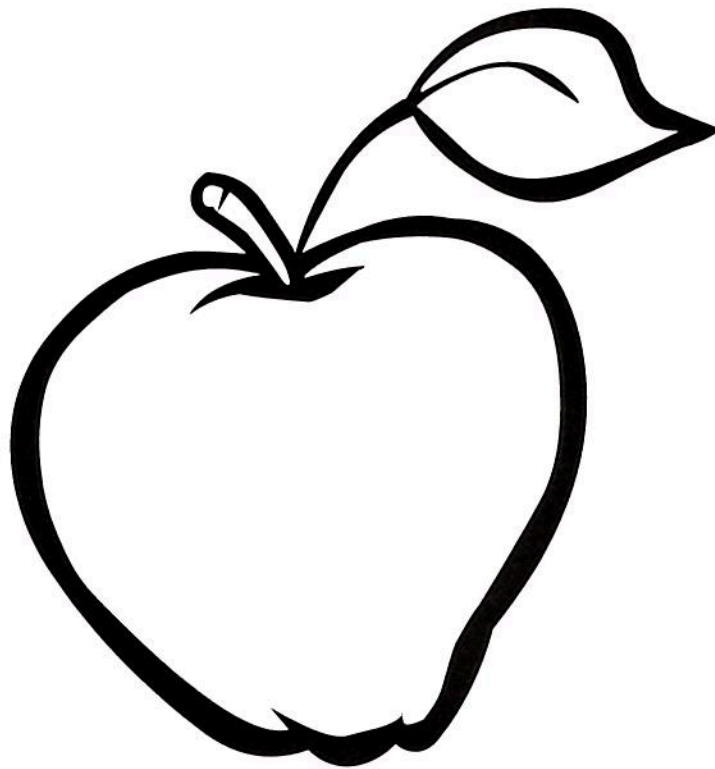
It starts on the (plane line) just like a c.



1. Point to the plane line.
2. Trace back on the plane line,
3. down and around all the way back to the plane line.
4. Trace back down all the way to the worm line and make a curve.
5. Say g - game - /g/, have students repeat.

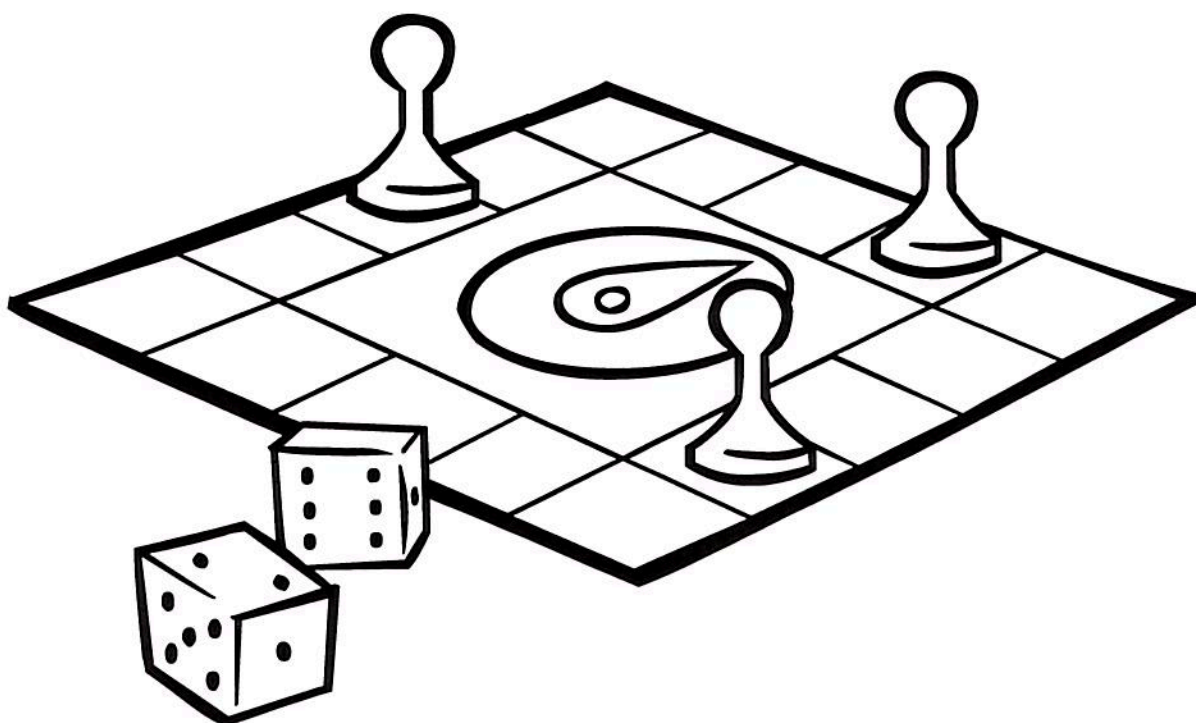


Aa





Gg





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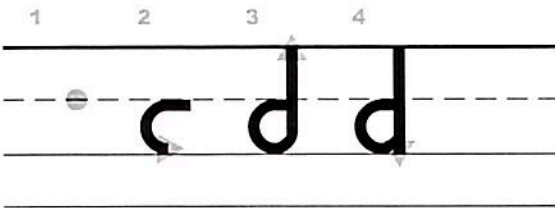
WEEK 6

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for d

d is a plane line round letter.

It starts on the (plane line) just like a c.

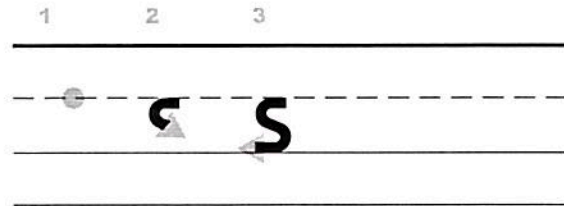


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go back, down and around to the grass line,
3. all the way back up to the sky line.
4. Trace back down to the grass line.
5. Say d - dog - /d/, have students repeat.

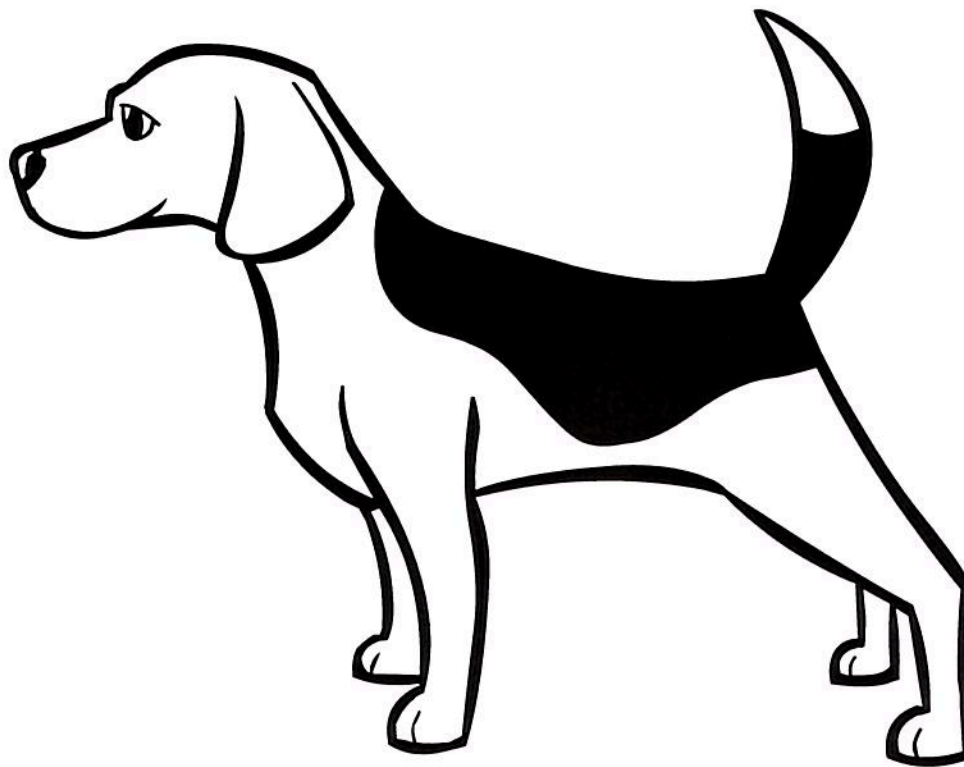
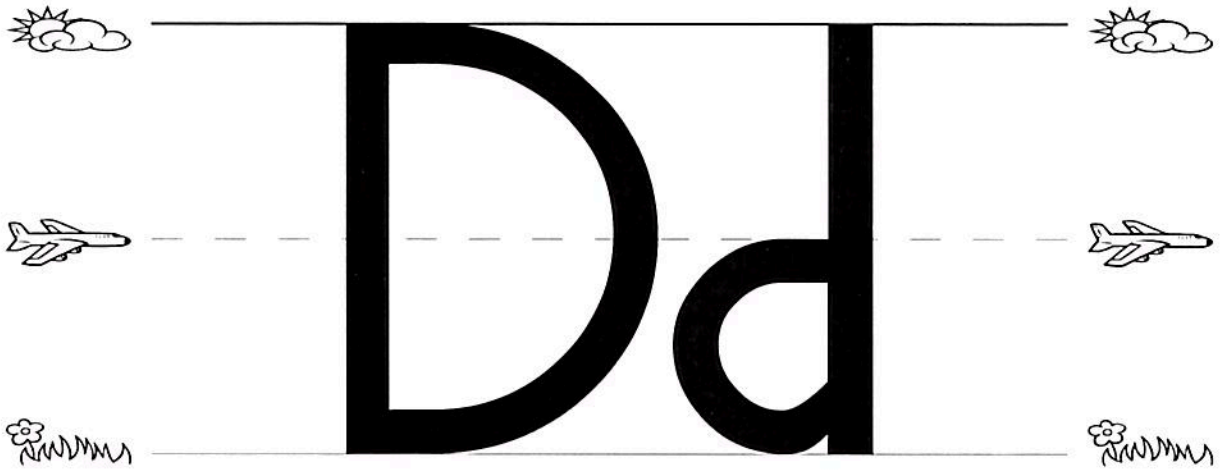
Letter Formation for s

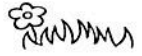
s is a plane line round letter.

It starts on the (plane line) just like a c.

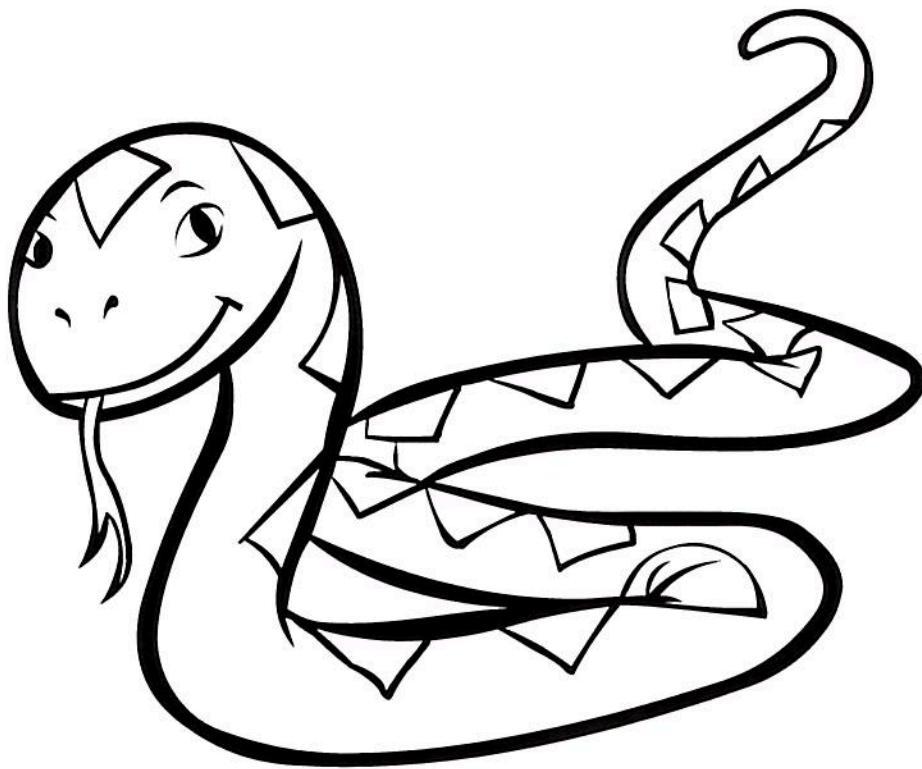


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Trace back and it curves in,
3. and goes back again and lands on the grass line.
4. Say s - snake - /s/, have students repeat.





Ss





In Addition to the Letter Formation Activity You Can Help Your Child Develop Word Awareness

Word awareness is the ability to distinguish the individual word in a spoken sentence. You can help your child do this by playing the following games.

Count Words

You say a sentence and your child repeats as you put up a finger for each word, then your child counts your fingers.

Example: **"Mom likes cats."** (Three fingers). Increase the number of words as your child becomes good at this. **"Mom likes dogs and cats."** (Five fingers).

Fill in Words

You can also do the following activity to count words. Say a sentence and draw a line for each word you say in the sentence. Ask what word goes on each line and fill it in as your child tells you.

Example: Say, **"The cat is soft."** And draw four lines, with a period at the end:

_____.

Note: This activity also helps them develop print awareness (the awareness that spoken words can be written).

The following sentences will get you started:

I can swim.

It is hot.

I like candy.

We have fun.

Mike likes trucks.

We had lunch.

The cat is grey.

I like the dog.

Jane is my friend.

I go to school.

My teacher is nice.

The grass is green.

Mom and Gram drink tea.

Tom has a red ball.

My favorite color is red.

I ride on the bus.



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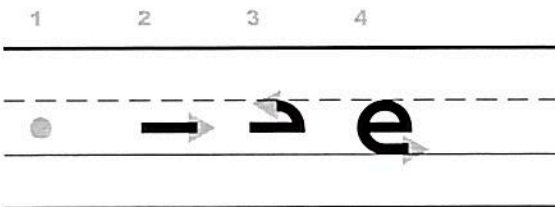
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WEEK 7

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for e

e is a plane line round letter, but it is special.
e starts below the plane line.

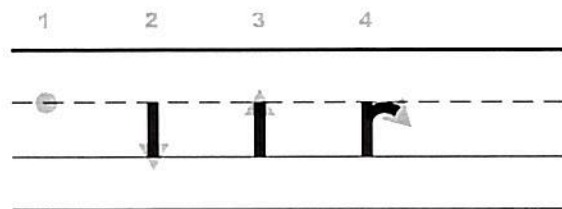


1. Point between the plane line and the grass line.
2. Fly under the plane line.
3. Then go up to the plane line,
4. and around to the grass line.
5. Say e - Ed - /ě/, have students repeat.

Letter Formation for r

r is a plane line letter.

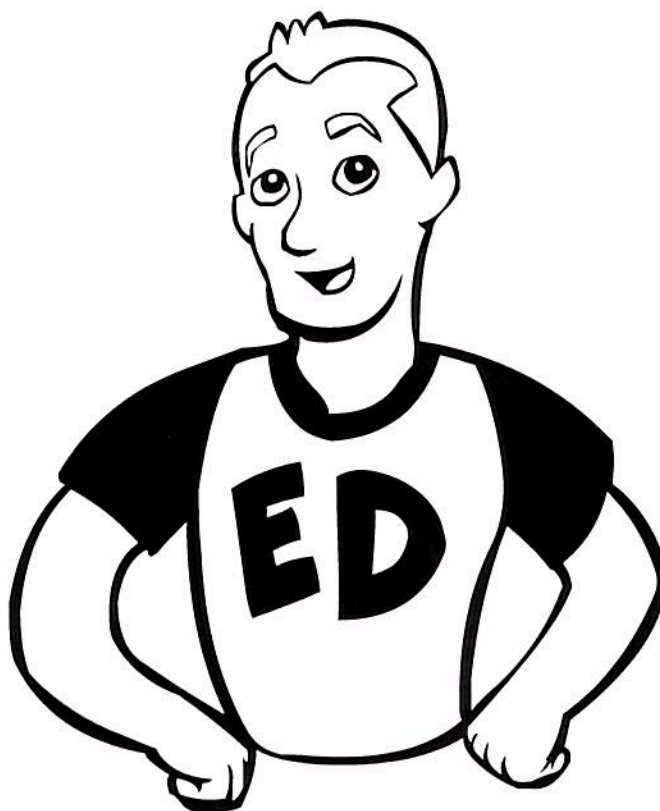
It starts on the (plane line).

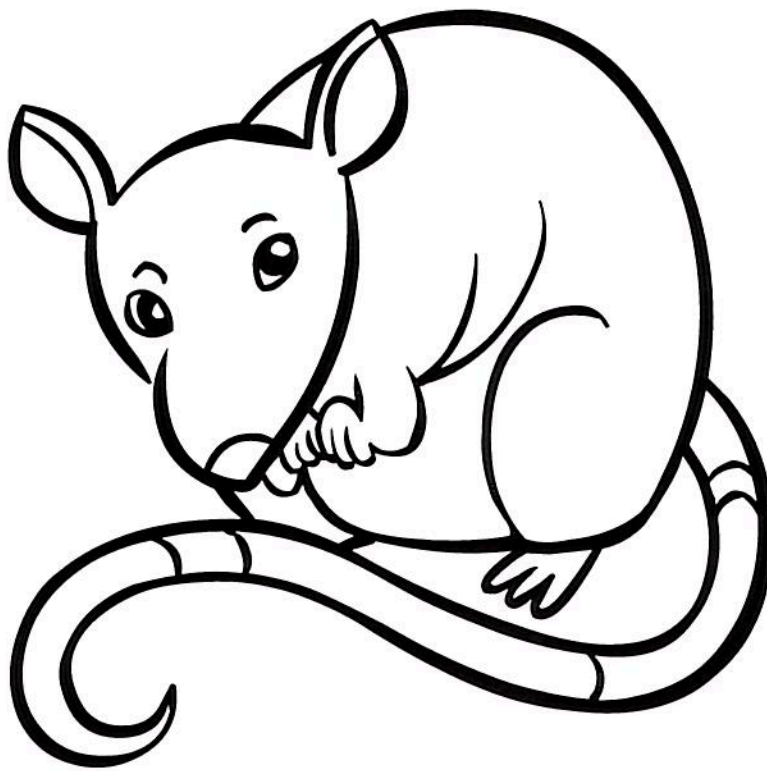
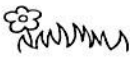


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Trace back up to the plane line,
4. and make a little curve.
5. Say r - rat - /r/, have students repeat.



Ee







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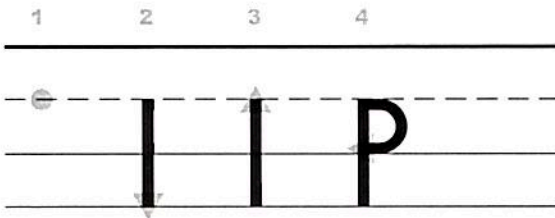
WEEK 8

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for p

p is a plane line letter.

It starts on the (plane line).

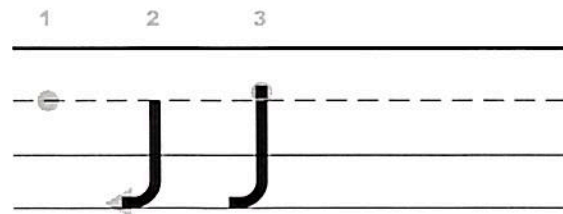


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go down to the worm line.
3. Trace back up to the plane line,
4. and curve all the way around to the grass line.
5. Say p - pan - /p/, have students repeat.

Letter Formation for j

j is a plane line letter.

It starts on the (plane line).

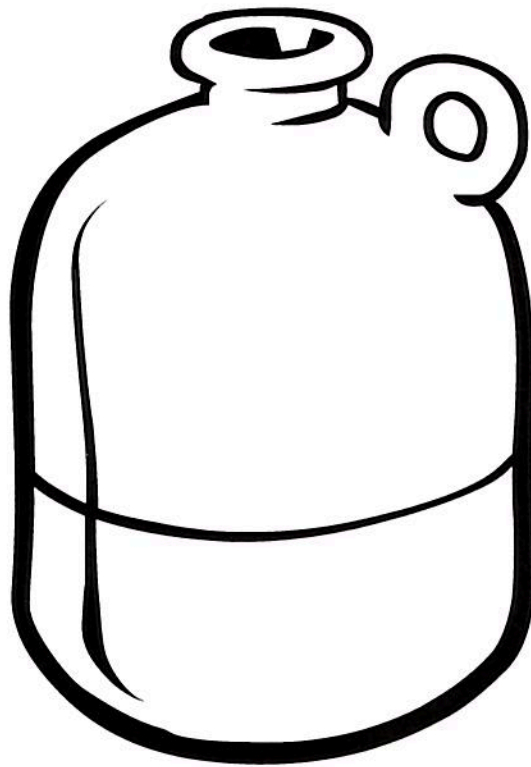


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go all the way down to the worm line, and make a curve.
3. Add a dot.
4. Say j - jug - /j/, have students repeat.



Pp







Help Your Child Recognize Sounds at the End of Words

A word's **ending** sound is much more difficult for your child to hear. You will need to pronounce the words very carefully. This is another activity where you can give mini-rewards and then count responses.

Picture Book Activity

You can use a picture book and ask for the ending sound on the name of the picture (rather than the beginning sound). For example: for the word **dog**, the sound /g/ is the answer.

Word Play Activity

Say the word. Ask your child to repeat the word and tell you what sound was at the end of the word (one piece of cereal) and if possible what letter makes that sound (another piece of cereal).

You can do this activity several times. Mix up the words or just do a few at a time.

| Word | What sound? | What letter? |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| chin | /n/ | n |
| farm | /m/ | m |
| map | /p/ | p |
| heart | /t/ | t |
| bark | /k/ | k |
| hill | /l/ | l |
| tap | /p/ | p |
| hit | /t/ | t |
| rob | /b/ | b |
| fluff | /f/ | f |
| mom | /m/ | m |
| ran | /n/ | n |
| hop | /p/ | p |



Foundations Letter Formation Guide

UNIT
1

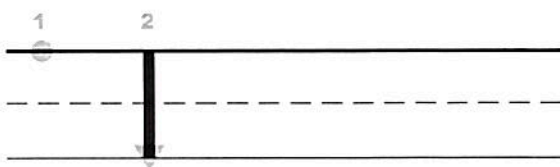
WEEK 9

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for **l**

l is a sky line letter.

It starts on the (sky line).

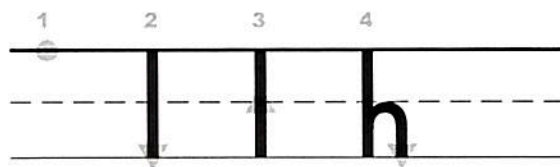


1. Point to the sky line.
2. Go down to the grass line and stop.
3. Say l – lamp - /l/, have students repeat.

Letter Formation for **h**

h is a sky line letter.

It starts on the (sky line).

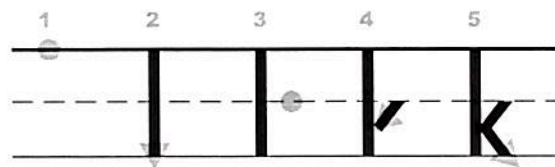


1. Point to the sky line.
2. Go down to the grass line.
3. Trace back up to the plane line,
4. and make a hump.
5. Say h - hat - /h/, have students repeat.

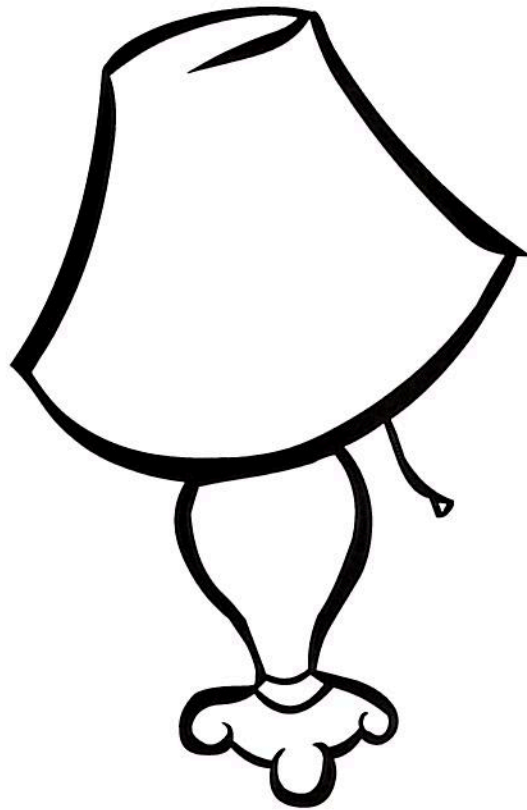
Letter Formation for **k**

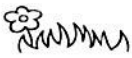
k is a sky line letter.

It starts on the (sky line).

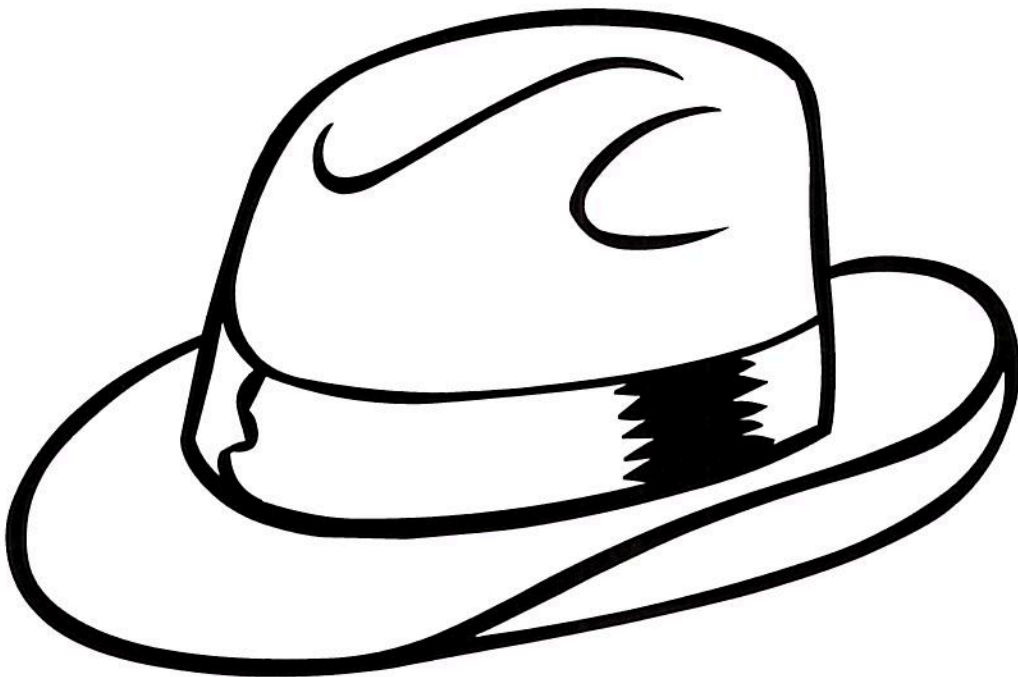


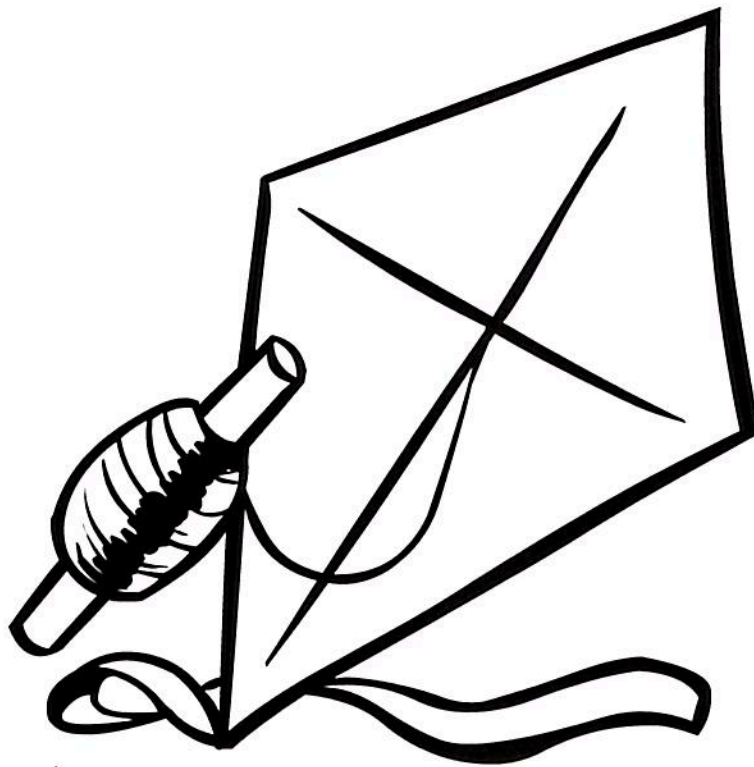
1. Point to the sky line.
2. Go all the way down to the grass line.
3. Point to the plane line and leave a space.
4. Slide over and touch your tall line,
5. and slide back to the grass line.
6. Say k - kite - /k/, have students repeat.





Hh







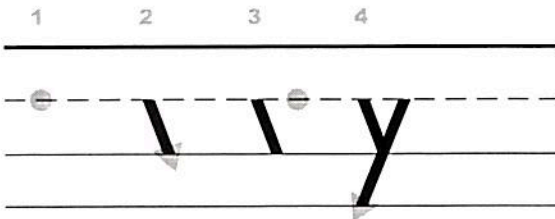
Fundations Letter Formation Guide

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for **y**

y is a plane line slide letter.

It starts on the (plane line) and (slides).

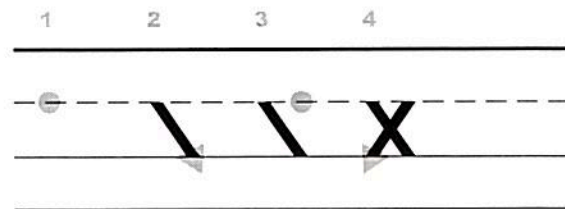


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Slide down to the grass line.
3. Pick up your pencil (finger) and leave a space and point to the plane line.
4. Slide back - all the way to the worm line.
5. Say y - yellow - /y/, have students repeat.

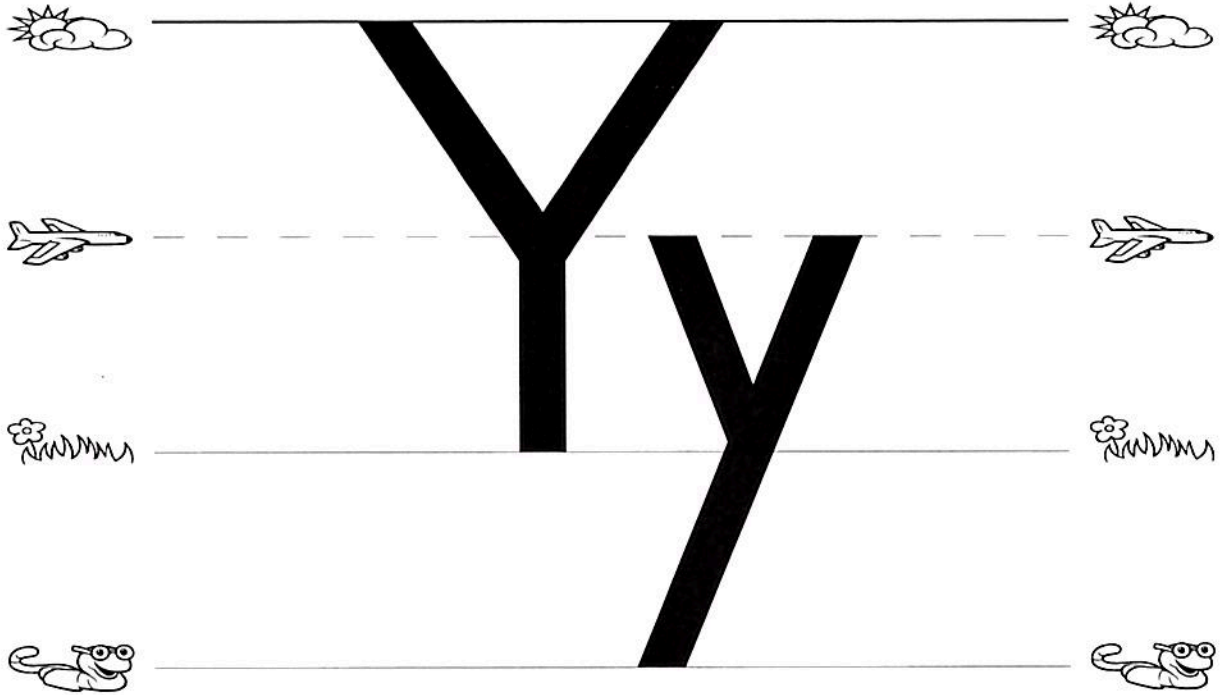
Letter Formation for **x**

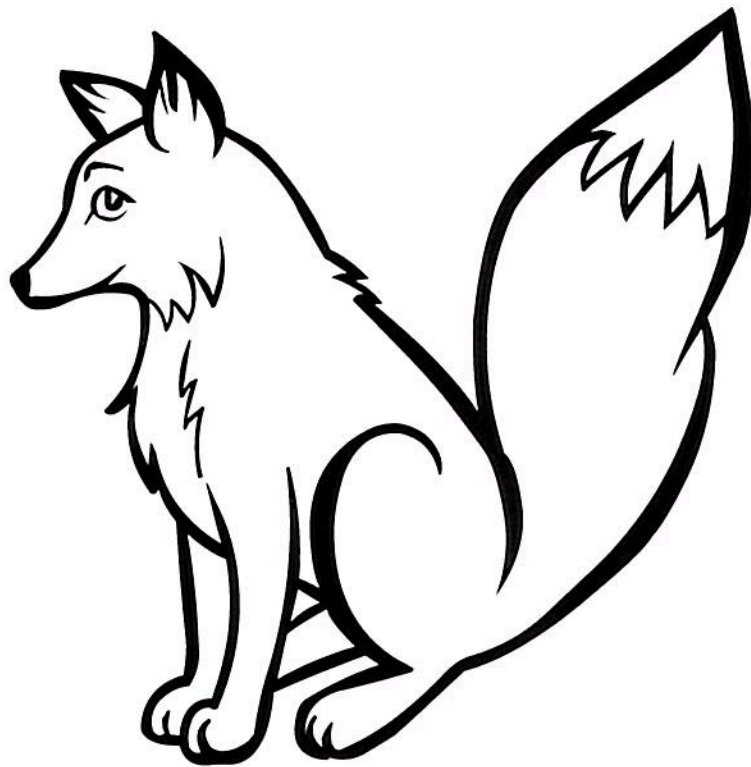
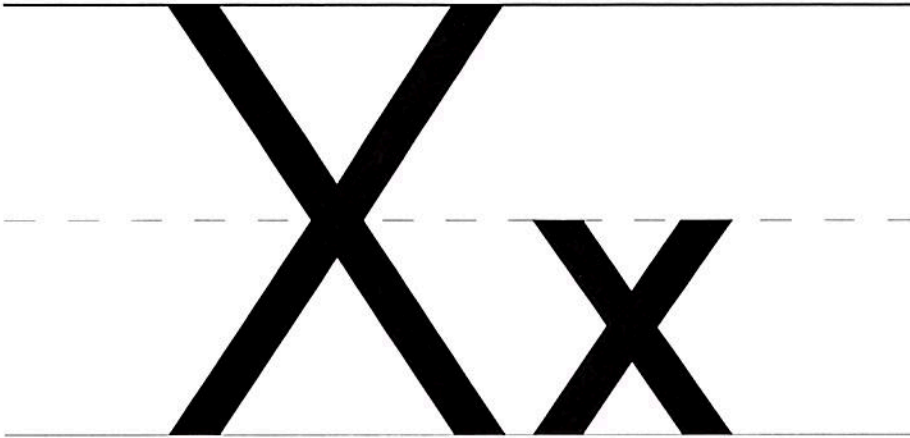
x is a plane line slide letter.

It starts on the (plane line) and (slides).



1. Point to the plane line.
2. Slide down to the grass line.
3. Leave a space and point to the plane line.
4. Slide back to the grass line.
5. Say x - fox - /ks/, have students repeat.







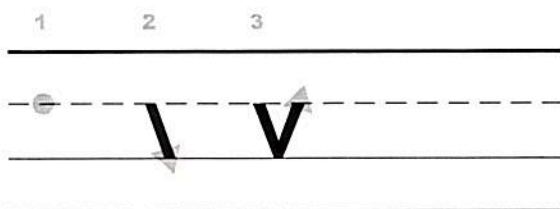
Foundations Letter Formation Guide

Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for V

v is a plane line slide letter.

It starts on the (plane line) and (slides).

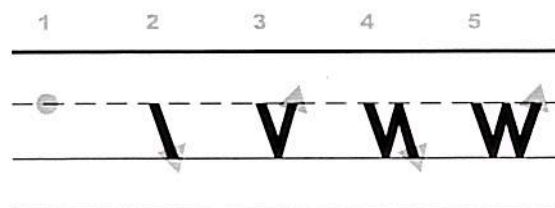


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Slide down to the grass line.
3. Slide up to the plane line.
4. Say v - van - /v/, have students repeat.

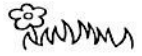
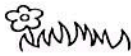
Letter Formation for W

w is a plane line slide letter.

It starts on the (plane line) and (slides).

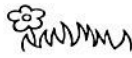
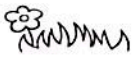


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Slide down to the grass line.
3. Slide up to the plane line.
4. Slide down to the grass line.
5. Slide up to the plane line.
6. Say w - wind - /w/, have students repeat.



V v







Foundations Letter Formation Guide

UNIT
1

WEEK 12

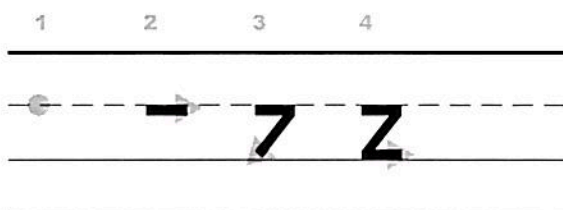
Say the verbal step-by-step guidelines while your child traces the **lower-case** letter with his or her finger. Try to do the week's letters every night. (Only do the lower-case letter.) Have your child color the picture.

Letter Formation for Z

z is a plane line slide letter, but it doesn't slide right away.

Where does it start? (On the plane line).

Before it slides, the z goes on the plane line.



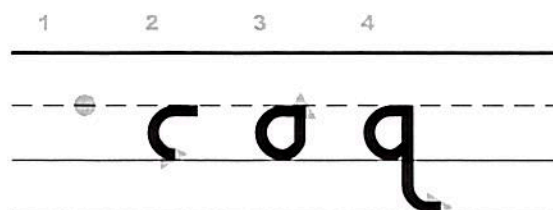
1. Point to the plane line.
2. Go on the plane line.
3. Slide back to the grass line.
4. Then go on the grass line.
5. Say z - zebra - /z/, have students repeat.

Letter Formation for q

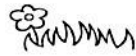
q is a plane line round letter.

It starts on the (plane line).

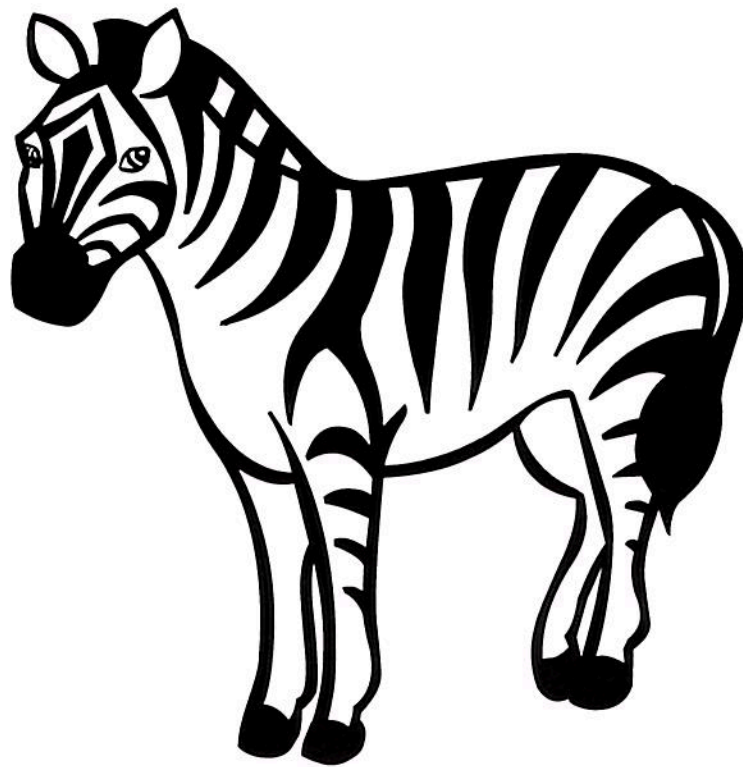
Remember that q is the buddy letter so in the end it wants to point up to its "buddy," u.

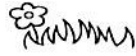


1. Point to the plane line.
2. Trace back and go down to the grass line around, back to the plane line.
3. Trace back down to the worm line,
4. and point up to his "buddy," u.
5. Say qu - queen - /kw/, have students repeat.



Zz





qu





***In Addition to the Letter Formation Activity
You Can Help Your Child Develop Letter Recognition***

Say, "**Find the letter** (name a letter)" Have your child point to it. When this seems easy, have your child point to and then name the letters. First do them in alphabetical order, then do them in mixed order with different fonts.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e | f | |
| g | h | i | j | k | l | |
| m | n | o | p | q | r | s |
| t | u | v | w | x | y | z |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| h | z | a | v | t | c | f |
| b | u | g | y | e | d | m |
| r | j | o | g | k | a | p |
| q | w | e | r | t | y | u |
| f | j | d | s | a | n | k |