

The Alphabet Arc

The alphabet is the building block of literacy: phonemes provide the knowledge of oral language, the alphabet is foundation of written language. Using the alphabet is a life skill. Alphabetical order is used for lists of computerised files, lists on the internet, indexes, filing systems and whenever anything needs to be ordered by letters / words.

Set out a wooden alphabet arc (a,e,i,o,u coloured red on the back).



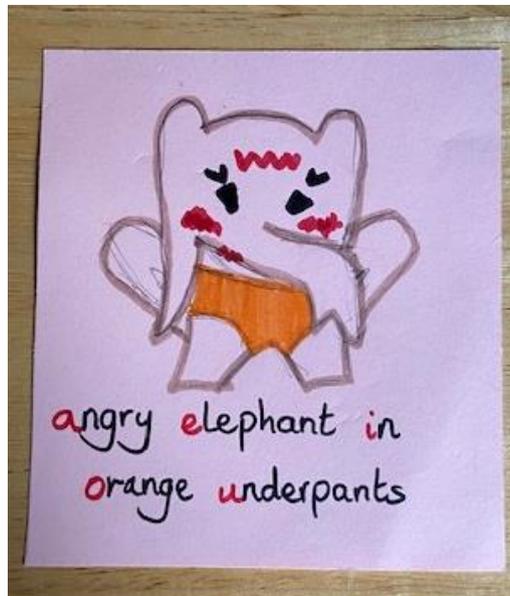
Set into chunk patterns: ABCD EFGH IJKL MNOP QR STUV WXYZ (It may help to dot the front of the wooden letters A, E, I, M, Q, S, W to make the start of each chunk pattern more obvious)

Model saying the alphabet pausing between each chunk to encourage saying the sequence using the 'rhythm' of the chunk patterns. Note that the centre of the alphabet is between M/N.

Turn over the 5 main vowels to reveal them as red. Bring them down and put them in a line. Practise saying the five vowels: use multisensory overlearning strategies, finger tracing and saying, writing and saying, touching the digits on their hand and saying them.

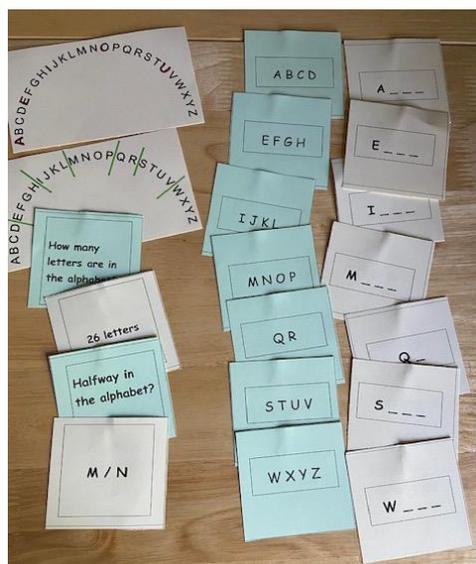


Create a vowel prompt card: if useful the mnemonic 'Angry Elephant In Orange Underpants' can be useful. The student draws their own prompt card to match mnemonic.



Use a consonant prompt card to explain that all the other letters other than the vowels are known as consonants.

Prompt cards showing the order of the alphabet, the different chunk patterns and key alphabet information should be provided according to student need:



The upper-case version of the letters is used initially, as the discrimination between B and D is clearer than in the lower-case form. Matching activities should form part

of further alphabet work to ensure the student has a good grasp of the letter forms, both lower and upper case.



Activities to promote letter recognition and consolidation of alphabet order.

- Place a letter of the alphabet into an opaque bag. Just by feeling the letter can the student identify which letter they are holding?
- Place 2 letters in an opaque bag can the student identify the correct letter when asked to find one of the letters. Increase the number of letters in the bag to increase the level of challenge. Mixing upper-case and lower-case letters will also increase the level of challenge.

- Ask the student to say which letter follows another letter in the alphabet
- Remove some letters from the alphabet arc and close the gaps. Ask the student to say which letters are missing.
- Ask students to complete alphabet patterns or insert missing letters from patterns. For example DEF_ _ , F_ HI _ J
- Reciting the alphabet from any letter. Ask the student to start reciting the alphabet from any letter, allow the student access to an alphabet arc prompt card to support the activity where necessary.
- Play 'The Alphabet Pattern Game': A Game for two players. The aim of the game is to collect the most sets of alphabet patterns. E.g. ABCD; EFGH; IJKL; MNOP; QR; STUV; WXYZ. The players take turns to take a letter from the bag, building up patterns as they go. The player can use their pattern prompt cards to support where necessary. Each player has three swap cards. A swap card can be used to swap a letter with the other player.
- Play Battle of the Alphabet: MN remain at the top and a visual alphabet arc prompt card is visible at all times. The 2 players decide who will take the A and who will take Z. Rest of letters (excluding M/N) are shared between 2 players: encourage each player to name the letters as they take them. The players then take turns placing down as many letters as they can which either follow the alphabet sequence after N or before M working backwards, so the arc is reconstructed. The visual prompt card can be used at any time to support the players, verbally reminding them of the relevant chunk patterns will also help the reconstruction of the arc. The winner is the first player to use up all their letters.