

ENGLISH Stage 1 (c 4-5 or when ready)

READING LEVEL 1 (*presumes sounds of alphabet letters are well known*)

Aim 1: Begin to sound out three letter words (cat, dog, bus)

- Write a three letter word on one side of a card, put the matching picture on the reverse. Have your child sound out the word and then check the picture to see if he is correct.

Here are some [Level 1 flashcards](#) you can print off.

You can also find a [list of Level 1 words](#).

- make two sets of cards - on one set write the word, on the other draw the picture: have your child match the cards correctly. You can just print off an extra set of flashcards and cut them up to use in this way.
- make a little book with one word on each page and its matching picture on the reverse.
- another helpful method, especially for a child who is quite confident at this stage, is to make plenty of individual letter cards (say, three or four of each letter, not too small). Place the letters for a simple word in front of your child but mix them up. Now give him the correct picture and see if he can 'spell' the word. When he's done, have him turn the picture over and see if his word matches the one on the card. This not only re-inforces the reading but also ensures that the child really grasps what is happening with the sequence of letters: it also helps him to understand better how writing works.

Aim 2: Read simple one syllable four letter words with double letter sounds.

This refers to words such as hiss, miss, bell, well, fizz, buzz. Don't forget to include words with a double 'ck' too: even though the letters are different it is still effectively a double letter sound and children don't seem to have any trouble with the idea that both letters are simply saying 'k'. Many words use this combination so it's worth learning early on.

Use the same methods as above. Here are some [flash cards](#) to print out.

Aim 3: Begin to recognise capitals

- point these out as you are reading, keep it casual at this point as the child will pick up a lot of them just by seeing them around him.
- make two sets of cards, one lower, one upper-case. Give the ones he knows and have him match them up. Introduce new ones as he picks them up from seeing them around. The aim eventually is of course to set out all lower-case and have him match to all the capitals.

Click here for cards to print:

[lower case letters](#) [upper case letters](#)

Aim 4: Match names as well as sounds to letters

Sometimes, when you have taught the sounds of the letters phonetically, it takes a child longer to learn the names of the letters. It's important that he is clear as to how the sounds he has learned match up to the names. For this you just need to teach him an alphabet song and look at the alphabet pointing out that 'a' says 'a', 'b' says 'b' etc.

WRITING Level 1

Aim: Trace forms of letter with fingers

There are many ways to achieve this: textured letters (I made mine from sandpaper), cut-outs in cardboards, a tray filled with sand. Try a felt tip on paper or a whiteboard marker if your child is keen to write properly. No need to use lines at this stage, as this is more about recognition than line placement which is taught later.

USING LANGUAGE

Aim 1: To recognise and use rhyming words

- Say a word, ask for a rhyme – as many as possible!
- Use a picture matching game with two or three cards for each rhyme (you can find plenty of matching cards on the 'Net to print out). Have the child match them all up then have him make up silly sentences about the rhymes. You can buy games for this such as Orchard Toys' 'Slug in a jug').

Aim 2: To learn easy verses

- Choose a few simple verses/poems and read them to your child to help him learn them. If he likes to draw, have him illustrate the poem; otherwise give him a picture to colour. Finally, encourage him to recite the poem to someone, explaining how the picture illustrates the verse.

My children have all loved 'The Macmillan Treasury of Nursery Rhymes and Poems'. 'The Usborne Book of Poems for Young Children' is also a nice one to start with.