

Grammar games

A gentle introduction to grammar and punctuation



Note

These games have been designed to familiarise children with basic punctuation and grammar rules without the need for much writing. Some children enjoy learning these rules but struggle with the mechanics of writing; reducing the writing element allows them to focus on the grammar instead (leaving writing practice for handwriting/copywork). Even children who like to write can benefit from a more visual/hands on approach in the early years.

Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to make the resources for the games in good time before you want to use them! All that is required is some hand made (or printed) cards and a dice or two.

If your child is happy writing, simply adjust the games accordingly, or move onto the next level.

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Topic 1 What makes a sentence a sentence?

Learning objective: the four rules for making a simple sentence

A simple sentence must:

1. have a verb (a doing or being word)
2. have a subject (someone or something doing the verb)
3. start with a capital letter and end with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark
4. make sense (express a complete idea)

Practice games

Random silly sentence generator

Objective: to create silly but grammatically correct sentences

- On a piece of A4 card, make a table with 6 rows and 7 columns. Label the second row adjective, the third row noun, the fourth verb, the fifth adjective, and the sixth noun. Number the columns 1-6 (leave the first blank)
- In the spaces, write six words for each type (so you'll end up with 12 nouns, 12 adjectives and six verbs)
- On a separate sheet, make six template sentences like this:

The the (the last dot is a full stop!)

Here is a ready made example: [Random silly sentence generator](#)

To play, roll a dice and write down whichever adjective corresponds to that number. Write it in the first gap. Roll again, and in the next gap write whichever noun corresponds to the number you rolled. Continue, filling in the gaps. You should end up with a grammatically correct (if completely silly) sentence

e.g. The (adjective 'blue') (noun 'dog') (verb 'ate') the (adjective 'jolly') (noun 'cow').

The blue dog ate the jolly cow.

It may be very silly, but it has the four properties of a sentence. Identify these with your child. If he/she is interested, point out how some words (called adjectives) describe things (called nouns) and make them more interesting. Labelling parts of speech is not so essential at this point as understanding their roles. Play until you or your child gets bored. Have him write the sentences if he's keen, or write them for him if he struggles.

Silly sentence card race

Objective: be the first to create a grammatically correct sentence

Make four sets of differently coloured cards: nouns, verbs, articles, and full stops/ exclamation marks. All the verbs must be past tense and intransitive, i.e. they must denote an action which was done to something or someone (ate, hit, sat on, gobbled up etc.). Make sure some of the articles (the, a, an) have capitals so they can be used to begin sentences.

Here is a ready made example: [Silly sentence card race](#)

Level 1 - very simple

Divide each set in half. Keep one half of each set and give the other to your child (two children playing is even better), keeping them in distinct piles in this order:

capitalised articles, nouns, verbs, articles, nouns, full stops/exclamation marks.

Object of the game: The first to create and read back his own grammatically correct sentence is the winner – he must have put a full stop too!

Level 2

Divide each set in half and give one half to each child but this time do not put them into distinct piles: the children have to work out which is which for themselves. Play as before. If you have time and want to make this more difficult, make new cards which are all the same colour (i.e. not colour coded either).

Level 3

Add a set of adjective cards. At least one adjective must be used, but not more than two attached to each noun or it gets crazy. Play as for Level 2

If you want to be a real stickler, you'll need to give a set of commas at this point too, to separate any listed adjectives. The word order would now be:

capitalised article, adjective, noun, verb, article, adjective, noun, full stops/exclamation marks

New beginnings

Objective: Make expanded sentences using fronted adverbials.

Use all the cards from the last game. Add a new set of capitalised 'beginning words and phrases' in three different types (listed below). Mix them up so the different types are separated. Add a set of commas as these words or phrases (properly known as fronted adverbials though your child doesn't need to know that yet), are normally separated from the main part of the sentence by a comma.

Model a sentence using one of the openings (highlight the need for a comma after the opening word/phrase). Then have the child make his own sentences, one for each category.

Types of beginning word

Time (e.g. Last night, Yesterday, Once upon a time, Long, long ago, Last week...)

Manner (e.g. Carefully, Quietly, Lazily, Greedily, Hungrily, Carelessly, Cunningly...)

Place (e.g. Across the road, In the jungle, At the shops, Under the bridge, On the mountain)

Examples Last night, the slimy toad ate the prickly banana.

Quietly, the fat, pompous policeman sat on the smelly socks.

In the jungle, the beautiful princess chatted to the gorilla.

Here is a ready made example: [New beginnings](#)

Topic 2 Using question marks

Learning objective: to use question marks at the end of interrogative sentences

Practice games

Ask me a question

First, have the child draw ten or so neat question marks on a piece of paper. Then have him cut them up into individual pieces. On a strip of paper, write a simple un-punctuated statement which, by re-arranging the words can become a question (check beforehand that exactly the same words can be used!). Read the sentence together then cut up the strip and mix up the words. Have your child rearrange the words into a question. Finally, he needs to add one of his question marks. Don't bother with speech marks here as the focus is on the question mark. Brownie points if your child points out that these sentences are missing capital letters....(it's impossible to put them in as the word cards need to be swapped).

Here are a few suggestions:

you are going to the shop	are you going to the shop?
we are best friends	are we best friends?
they will go home soon	will they go home soon?
we shall go swimming tomorrow	shall we go swimming tomorrow?
you have bought a comic	have you bought a comic?
that is a very exciting book	is that a very exciting book?
it is Tom's birthday tomorrow	is it Tom's birthday tomorrow?

Here are some ready made cards: [Question marks](#)

What's the question?

Have the child give you five random words – anything (objects, numbers, names, places, people etc.). These are the answers. Now the child has to work out a suitable question which could lead to each answer. Working together, you might write these questions down – letting him fill in the question marks – then give it to a third person as a short quiz. This game emphasises the format of a question and the need to identify it with a question mark. It is surprising how often children forget all about them when they write questions.

e.g. Answer: snow	Question: What is white and freezing cold and falls in winter?
Answer: child's name	Question: Which member of the family is seven years old, clever and great at grammar?

Topic 3 Using exclamation marks

Learning objective: to use exclamation marks at the end of exclamatory sentences

Practice games

Do you? I do!

This is very similar to the question marks game. First, have the child draw ten or so exclamation marks on a piece of paper. Then have him cut them up so they are separate. Write on a strip of card a simple question (no capital letter needed) which, by re-arranging the words can become an exclamation (check beforehand that exactly the same words can be used!).

Read the question then cut up the strip into its separate parts and have him re-arrange them, replacing the question mark with an exclamation mark.

It's neat if you use < I > in all your questions as then you can end up with a capital at the start of your exclamatory sentences.

e.g. do I eat ice-cream?	I do eat ice-cream!
am I very hot?	I am very hot!
am I crazy about football?	I am crazy about football!
did I draw that picture?	I did draw that picture!

I say!

Give the child a cartoon strip, as in the speech marks exercise. This time, have him put short exclamatory speech in the speech bubbles.

Note

When your child starts to write more be careful that he doesn't use exclamation marks too frequently. Most children have a tendency to overuse them as a way of making their own writing seem more exciting. Show him how to use better words and sentence structure to convey tension and excitement rather than relying on exclamation marks.

Topic 4 Using speech marks

Learning objective: four basic rules for using speech marks

Rules for speech marks:

1. all spoken words must be contained within speech marks
2. the first spoken word must be capitalised
3. there must be some form of closing punctuation before the speech marks close
4. information about who is speaking is separated from the spoken words by a comma.

Practice games

Speech mark sandwich

Children need to learn that the speech marks enclose spoken words AND closing punctuation, as they often try to put the closing punctuation after the closing speech marks.

Make four sets of cards: opening and closing speech marks, closing punctuation (full stops, questions marks and exclamation marks) and cards with simple spoken sentences (un-punctuated except for the opening capital letter).

In this game, do not include information about who is speaking; keep the sentences very simple.

Model how to make a correct sentence by using the cards in this order:

Opening speech marks; spoken words; closing punctuation; closing speech marks

For example: *“Give that back to me!”*
 “My name is Harry.”

It is very important to point out to the child that the first spoken word begins with a capital letter.

Have the child compose several sentences correctly. If he's keen, let him make up his own speech sentences and play the game in the same way, or simply write some sentences for him to punctuate.

Sorry, what did you say?

Level 1

Make two sets of cards, one with sentences of reported speech and the other with the corresponding spoken words (correctly punctuated with speech marks etc). You don't need any information about who is speaking. Place the sets in two parallel columns, not matched. Ask your child to match up the sentences.

Be sure to point out, again, the capital letter on the first spoken word.

e.g. The man said that his feet were sore. = "My feet are sore."
The princess said that she loved peas. = "I love peas."

Level 2

Make two sets of cards, one with reported speech and the spoken words, the latter time with a capital letter but no other punctuation. Give your child these, together with the set of opening and closing speech marks, and closing punctuation from the last game. This time, he has not only to match the cards correctly but punctuate the spoken words correctly too. If necessary, remind him to follow the order from his 'speech marks sandwich' game:

Opening speech marks; spoken words; closing punctuation; closing speech marks

e.g. You give the card *The man said that his feet were sore*
Your child chooses the card *My feet are sore.*
Then he adds speech mark and closing punctuation cards *"My feet are sore."*

Who said what?

You will need a set of reported speech sentences (you could re-use those from the last game but you might prefer new ones), together with spoken word cards (again, capital letter only, no other punctuation), a set of commas and a set of full stops. This time, you also need to add a separate set of cards containing matching information about **who was speaking** ('said the man', 'said the teacher' etc.).

Explain that words spoken are usually separated from information about the speaker by a comma.

Give a few examples e.g. "My name is Tom," said the boy.
"That hat is mine," said the lady.

Be sure to show that, as before, the comma must go INSIDE the closing speech marks (remember the sandwich!)

This time, you give a reported speech card and the child constructs a corresponding sentence containing the spoken words and the information about who speaks, all correctly punctuated. He will need to use speech marks around the spoken words, a comma before the closing speech marks and a full stop at the very end.

For this game, the model will be:

Opening speech marks; spoken words; comma; closing speech marks; information about speaker; full stop

e.g. You give the reported speech card: *The lady said that she was very tired.*
Your child chooses the matching spoken sentence *I am very tired*
He punctuates this with speech marks and a comma before adding the correct speaker card and ending with a full stop *"I am very tired," said the lady.*

Create a comic strip

Just for practice, you might give your child a blank comic strip and have him put speech bubbles above the characters to show what they are saying (if you are artistic, draw one yourself, otherwise you can print one and just cover the speech with paper). The only rule is that each piece of speech must start with a capital, be inside speech marks and have some ending punctuation (full stop, exclamation mark or question mark). Only require direct speech, not speaker details unless your child is keen.

Topic 5 Using capital letters

Learning objective: To use capital letters correctly and only when there is a reason to.

Make a rule for your child that he should not use a capital letter unless he can say why he is using one (and a rule never to use them in the middle of words, unless he is writing the whole word in capitals, as on a poster).

Remind your child that he has already met two uses of a capital:

at the start of a sentence

at the start of direct speech

Now we need to look at using capitals for names (including God and I), places, certain types of times, books, films etc, and a host of other odd and interesting things.

Practice games

Who needs capitals?

Explain very carefully the difference between ordinary things and special, named things (you can use the terms nouns and proper nouns if you want, but it's more important to grasp the distinction than know the names).

Ordinary thing (common noun)

boy
river
country
continent

Special named thing (proper noun)

Peter
Thames
France
Africa

Make two headings as above, and give cards with nouns of both types. Have your child sort them into the correct columns. The capital is a bit of a give-away so for an extension, write all the nouns with lower case letters then ask him if he needs to change the first letter to a capital. This will lead to a discussion about common versus proper names (particulars and universals).

Who am I?

Explain that first names, middle names and last names all need to start with a capital letter, as do titles like Mr. and Mrs. and Dr. (point out the full stop too).

Give cards with several names (a mixture of first and last names) and others with titles (abbreviated form with full stop). Have the child make names up (you can make them silly and /or able to be

matched up e.g. Dr. Tom Sawbones).

Give a list of names with the first letter missing and have him fill them in – all capitals of course.

Where am I?

Explain that many places names need to begin with a capital letters. This is a HUGE category and includes: planets, continents, countries, cities, seas, streets, rivers, mountains and specific buildings

This is a bit of a geography game. Make cards with a few of each of the following, including your own address:

street or building names

village, town and /or city names

County names

country names

continent names

First, make your own address using one each from the five categories (street, town, county, country, continent).

Next, do a few more of these identifying real places e.g.

The Eiffel Tower,

Paris,

France,

Europe,

For fun you can have your child make up his own imaginary place on another planet, with made up place names for each e.g.

The Big Crater,

Martian Town,

Redland,

Alienstate,

Mars.

The important thing to stress is the need for capitals on place names.

What day is it?

Explain that times with names (days of the week, the months of the year, religious holidays) often use capitals too (though NOT the names of the seasons, and not times on a clock).

Make cards with the days of the week and months of the year and ask him to order them correctly. Again, stress the use of capital letters.

Now make cards or write a list of lots of 'time' words: do not add any capitals and do include words which do NOT require capitals such as seasons and clock times. Have him sort all the words correctly. If you like, play again adding in the words tomorrow, yesterday, week, day, month and year, and Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and so on.

What's your favourite book?

Explain to your child that when we write the title of a book or film or a poem we usually use a capital letter at the beginning and on the most important words. So, for example, we would write 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Little House on the Prairie' and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.' (Point out that we put the titles in speech marks too' this often seems quite odd at first to children).

Have your child choose a favourite book, film and poem and either have him write (perhaps copy) the titles out or write them for him with no capitals. You may have to help him choose suitable examples with a mixture of important and 'linking' words.

Try to find examples of references to titles in books you have so that he gets used to seeing how they are written.

If he's keen, have him write or narrate a short review saying why this is his favourite book, film or poem. Don't forget to have him write the author's name too (properly capitalised!)

Topic 6 Using commas in lists

Learning objectives: to know how to separate items in a list with commas

There are other uses of a comma - your child has already had practice using them in speech and to separate fronted adverbials. The other main use of a comma is to separate a subordinate from a main clause as in the sentence:

The boy, *who could not swim*, was afraid to play in the sea.

This is a bit difficult to explain at this stage as your child lacks the grammatical vocabulary. So, for now, it is better to teach him how to use commas to separate items in a list

Practice games

Make some cards with various things which can be grouped together e.g fruits, vegetables, animals, games, names. Make a few opening phrase cards such as

I love to eat

My best friends are.....

My favourite animals are.....

Have plenty of comma cards handy too. Give phrase cards, name cards and comma cards, and have the child construct sentences using commas to separate the items in the list. Be careful to emphasise that there is normally no need to use a comma before the 'and' at the end of the list (when a comma IS used before the word and it is known as an Oxford comma. There are times when such usage is necessary for clarity of meaning. A comma clears up the meaning of a sentence such as

I love my parents, Tom and Billy.

I love my parents, Tom, and Billy.

Misuse of commas (or missing them out) can cause all sorts of misunderstandings. Miss out the comma from

Let's eat, Grandma

And instead of a pleasant invitation to Grandma to share some food, we have a potentially menacing suggestion:

Let's eat Grandma!

For more examples of comma mis-usage see the book '*Eats, shoots and leaves*,' by Lynn Truss (the title is meant to refer to the eating habits of pandas but the book is illustrated, for obvious reasons, with a panda leaving a restaurant waving a gun).

Topic 7 Using apostrophes

Learning objective: To use apostrophes to show contraction and possession

Practice games

Contractions: *Did you do that? No, I didn't!*

This game helps to show how apostrophes are used to take the place of letters which have been missed out, usually to shorten a word.

Make cards for word pairs which are commonly contracted such as

can not did not should not I am he is we are you are I will it is

Then make cards for each matching contraction:

can't didn't shouldn't I'm he's we're you're I'll it's.

Put the cards in two separate columns, not matched. Have your child match up the correct word sets and contractions. Then, for each set, make up a short sentence and show how both options can work e.g.

I am not hungry
I'm not hungry

Finally, have him look closely at the pairs of words and tell you which letters have been dropped out and replaced with the apostrophe.

Possession: *That's mine!*

This game is to illustrate how apostrophes can be used to show belonging.

Level 1

Make a set of cards with opening phrases such as

This hat These books Those gloves That football

You will also need several cards with the words 'belong to' (and some with 'belongs to') written on them. Finally you'll need a set of name cards – anything you like (e.g. John, Paul, Lucy...).

Have the child use the cards to construct several sentences – he can say what he wants so long as it is

my (mine)
your (yours)
his/hers/**its**
our (ours)
your (yours)
their (theirs)

Level 1

Make some cards with simple sentences showing possession using the word belonging. Then make cards with matching sentences which use possessive pronouns (**don't use its yet**). Here are some examples:

That hat belongs to me.	That is my hat.
Those books belong to you.	Those are your books.
These toys belong to him.	These are his toys.
That house belongs to them.	That is their house.

Have him match up the cards. Then say more sentences like this to him and have him respond by reframing the sentence with a possessive pronoun.

Level 2

Give a few sentences as above, this time using **its**. These are a bit trickier to come up with!

That bone belongs to the dog.	That is its bone.
These seeds belong to the bird.	These are its seeds.
Those leaves belong to the tree.	Those are its leaves.

After he's sorted these, do a few more orally as before. Help him come up more examples: together, think of a thing (not a person) and something which belongs to it.

Finally, go back over all the **its** sentences you have used in this part of the lesson, and read (or have him read) them all as if **its** said **it is**. They will all be nonsense. This should reinforce the lesson that **its** only ever needs an apostrophe when it means **it is**.

It will save a lot of trouble later on if your child learns this simple rule now:

It's = it is
Its = belongs to it

There are lots of practice exercises with this in the next book

Topic 8 Making plurals

Learning objective: to know the different ways in which plural words can be formed

(This is not technically grammar - it is spelling - but it comes up very early on in a child's writing and it will help him avoid a lot of errors if some basic rules are covered).

Practice games

'S' or 'es'?

Most words simply make a plural by adding 's'. Give some basic word cards with short words making a plural with 's' (pen, dog, hat, pig...). Give lots of 's' cards and have the child add them and read the plural. This is easy!

Next, give a set of cards with words which need to add 'es' to form a plural (i.e. all words ending in s, x, ch, sh, e.g. bus, fox, match, wish, kiss). Have the child add 'es' cards to them all and read the plural words formed.

Now mix them all up and see if he can work out which cards need which ending. Be sure to check that he is applying the rule and not guessing.

's' or 'ies'?

Here is another rule to learn:

When a word ends in y, it makes its plural in one of two ways: either it simply adds an 's' or it needs to change the y to 'ies'. How do we know which it needs? We don't need to learn each individual spelling, just one rule: look at the letter just before the 'y'.

If the letter before the 'y' is a **vowel**, we can just add 's':

monkey monkeys
key..... keys
boy..... boys

If the letter before the 'y' is a **consonant**, we need to change the 'y' to 'ies'

berry.....berries
baby.....babies
fly.....flies

Make several cards with both types of words, and a set of 'ies' endings to go with your 's' cards. First, have the child match them up in separate groups, then when he understands the rule, mix them up and see if he gets them right. If he doesn't, remind him of the rule and go through it with him again.

Plain old odd.

Some words simply make odd plurals and none of the above rules apply. Your child will know most of these simply by being a native English speaker. There isn't a game here; simply make a list of these and help him see the patterns (and exceptions).

mouse....mice louselice (but house.... houses)
tooth...teeth foot...feet goose ...geese (but room...rooms)
sheep...sheep deer... deer fish... fish

Many of these irregular words stem from the Old English origins of our language. If you are keen, you could explain that plurals of Latin words often end in 'i' or 'ae' (depending on whether the Latin singulars are feminine (ending in a) or masculine (ending in us)

cactus... cacti fungus....fungi
larva... larvae

You don't need to explain this to your child but it is helpful to know and makes spelling seem less mysterious!

Topic 9 Making the past tense

Learning objective: to understand the use of tenses and to know the different ways in which the past tense can be formed

Again, this is not really grammar but children often wish to write in the past tense and a few basic rules can make all the difference.

Make sure the child understands about tenses (when we are doing something NOW we say it is in the present tense; when we did something in the PAST we call it the past tense; if we plan to do something tomorrow we call it the future tense).

Usually when we write a story we want it to be in the past tense, so we need to know how to write words in the past tense. Practise by giving a few sentences in the present tense and have the child say them back to you in the past tense (e.g. I am doing my lessons now/ I was doing (or did) my lessons yesterday.) YOU might as well add in the future tense for completeness' sake

Practice games

Good old 'ed'

Most of the time we can form a past tense by simply adding '**ed**' onto the end of a present tense word. For example, the present tense word 'jump' becomes the past tense word 'jumped'.

Give a set of cards with present tense verbs which add 'ed' to form the past tense. Also make a set of 'ed' cards (write the **ed** as close to the left hand side of the card as possible). Have your child match the 'ed' cards to the verbs and read the words produced. (examples: paint, shout, point, rest). Don't use words with an 'e' ending, and try to use words where the child can actually hear the 'e' and the 'd' rather than just a 'd' or 't' sound (e.g. avoid smashed, fastened, ruined etc. for now)

Next, make some cards with verbs ending in 'e' (e.g. bake, trace, chase, hate, race). Have your child add the 'ed' cards as before and see what happens. If we have a word ending in 'e' such as skate and we add 'ed' we will get **skateed**, which is nonsense!

Explain that we solve this problem by dropping the e at the end of the word before adding our 'ed' ending. Play the game again, this time showing him to place the '**ed**' card *over* the other 'e'

Now mix all the words from both games together and see if he can apply the rule to work which need to drop the 'e' and which do not.

If you like, you can use this as an opportunity to teach that we often do not hear the 'ed' at the end of a word, we only hear 'd' or 't'. Children often misspell words like this and write, for example, 'smasht' or 'ruind'. Remind them that they almost always need an 'ed' even if they cannot hear the 'e'.

Building a wall

There are other words which need to be changed before we can add 'ed'. These are short words which have a vowel before their final letter (e.g. hum, nod, rip, peg).

Write a few of these down and ask the child to add an 'ed' card to the end of each. Ask him to read what he's written. Give a few moments (and maybe a hint if he doesn't spot straight away); he should see that he's created a set of magic 'e' words, but nonsense ones!

hum - humed nod - noded

rip - riped peg - peged

Read them with him and make up some silly sentences to show that this is not the word we wanted to make. e.g. I hum a nice tune./I humed a nice tune. I rip my shirt/ I riped my shirt.

Now explain how we stop this happening. We need to stop the 'magic e' from changing the vowel sound: we build a 'wall' to stop the 'magic' jumping over by doubling the final letter in the our original word. e.g.

hum - hummed rip - ripped

nod - nodded hop - hopped

Make a set of basic present tense words such as those given here. Make a separate set of matching single letters which can be added to each word. Give the child the word card, extra letter cards and 'ed' cards and have him make plurals by applying the doubling rule.

Plain old odd

Many words do not form the past tense with 'ed'. You can teach these through your spelling programme, but it might be useful to focus on some of the commonest ones at this point. This is just a verbal game. Give a sentence in the present tense using an irregular verb, and have the child give the sentence back to you in the past tense. Be careful to spot any 'eds' where they shouldn't be! If your child is a native speaker, most of these will come naturally to him.

Here are some of the more common words, in alphabetical order:

am blow break bite bring buy choose come dig do draw drink eat
fall feed fight find fly get give go grow have hide hold keep
know leave lose make meet ring run say see sell send shake
shine sing sit sleep speak stand steal swim take tell think
throw understand wear win write

Topic 10 Alphabetical order of words

Learning Objective: to learn how to sort words into alphabetical order for dictionary use

Practice games

Easy as ABC

Level 1

Make a set of four cards each with a simple word beginning with a different letter (e.g. hat, dog, cat, tree). Show the child how to put them in alphabetical order by looking at the first letter only. If this is too easy, move straight into the next level. If the child struggles with the concept, give more sets of cards for practice.

Level 2

Make a set of four word cards, two of which begin with the same letter and two beginning with different letters (e.g. horse, fish, bird, hand). Show the child how to sort them into order according to the first letter (he might come up with bird, fish, horse, hand). Then show him how to order the two words which begin with the same letter by looking at the second letters and placing those in alphabetical order (this time he should give you bird, fish, hand, horse). Give a few sets of these before moving on, perhaps with five or six cards as your child becomes more confident.

Level 3

Make a set of four word cards. This time all four words should begin with same letter but each second letter should be different (e.g. gnu, gap, girl, grass). Show the child how to apply the same rule as in level 2: look at the second letter of each word. He should then be able to order them alphabetically by the second letters: gap, girl, gnu, grass. Give a few sets until the child can do this easily. If he enjoys the challenge, use five or six words at a time.

Level 4

Make a set of four word cards, in which each word had the same first two letters (e.g. man, map, marble, mad). Show the child that since the first two letters are the same, he needs to sort these words by the third letter (mad, man, map, marble). You can stop here and just give a few of these games for fun, or you can take it a step further by giving four words each with the same first three letters

(e.g. porch, porridge, pork, porpoise – porch, pork, porpoise, porridge.
harp, hard, hark, hare - hard, hare, hark, harp)

The main purpose of teaching how to alphabetise is to facilitate dictionary use. Show your child a section of the dictionary, pointing out the alphabetical pattern and how to find words within each letter section.