

# Letter Recognition Activities

Letter recognition, or knowing letter names and how to recognize an uppercase and lowercase form of each letter, is an important literacy skill. Use these activities to strengthen children’s skills, whether they need more support and practice or are ready for a challenge. Activities are appropriate for children in grades K–2.

## 1. Naming Letters in Sequence

**Purpose:** *Say the letters of the alphabet in sequence*

**Materials:** *Alphabet Cards, an alphabet strip, letter cards, (optional) Tactile Cards*

“The Alphabet Song,” sung to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” is an easy way for children to learn their letters. Have them sing the song as you point to each letter of the alphabet in order. Be sure they enunciate each letter clearly, especially L, M, N, and O. Here’s a new ending you can teach them: “Now I’ve sung my alphabet. I’m the smartest kid you’ve met!”

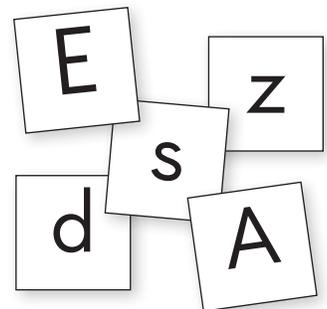
After children can sing the alphabet with ease, give them additional practice naming and describing individual letters in sequence. Point out that each letter has two forms, a big letter called an *uppercase letter* and a smaller letter called a *lowercase letter*. Encourage children to use the terms *uppercase* and *lowercase* when naming letters, such as *uppercase A*, *lowercase a*. Help them notice characteristics of each letter’s shape. For example, uppercase A is made up of straight lines and has a point at the top. Have children run their fingers over Tactile Cards with raised letters for a kinesthetic reinforcement of each letter’s shape.

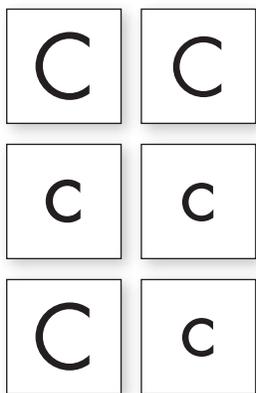
## 2. Naming Letters out of Sequence

**Purpose:** *Identify letters of the alphabet out of sequence*

**Materials:** *Letter cards, alphabet strip*

Mix a set of uppercase letter cards and show one letter at a time. On your signal, have everyone say the letter name, such as “uppercase B.” Repeat for lowercase letters. For more challenge, use a mixed set of uppercase and lowercase letters. If children struggle to identify a letter, help them find it in an alphabet strip or point out characteristics about the letter’s shape that will help them recall the letter name. Repeat the activity with individuals so children can develop their speed and accuracy in letter recognition.





### 3. Matching Letters

**Purpose:** Match two uppercase letters, two lowercase letters, or pairs of uppercase and lowercase letters

**Materials:** Letter cards

Gather or make pairs of letter cards that show the same uppercase letter, such as C and C. Show one pair to children and have them name the letter that both cards show. (*uppercase C*) Then mix the cards and spread them faceup on the table. Have children take turns picking up one of the cards and putting it on top of the other card with the same letter. Repeat the activity using pairs of lowercase letters, such as c and c.

Have children match the uppercase and lowercase forms of a letter, such as C and c. As children make matches, point out the letters whose uppercase and lowercase forms look alike, such as S and s, and letters whose uppercase and lowercase forms look very different, such as R and r.

In the letters you show, initially leave out letters that children commonly confuse. (See Letter Recognition Activity 4.) As their letter-recognition skills develop, include those letters in the set.

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## 4. Distinguishing Confusing Letters

**Purpose:** Compare and distinguish confusing letters

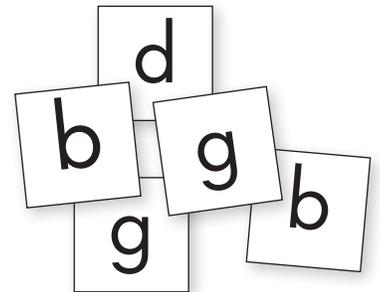
**Materials:** Letter cards

First show two letters whose shapes are easy to distinguish, such as uppercase A and uppercase T. Have children name each letter and describe the similarities and differences between their shapes. For example, uppercase A and uppercase T are both made of straight lines. Uppercase A has a point at the top and uppercase T has a straight line across the top. Continue with other letters and include letters that children often confuse, such as the following:

C and G	L and T	a and d	d and p	k and y
D and O	M and N	a and o	d and q	m and n
E and F	M and W	b and d	f and t	m and w
G and Q	O and Q	b and h	g and p	n and u
I and J	P and R	b and p	g and q	p and q
I and L	U and V	b and q	h and n	u and v
K and X	V and Y	c and e	h and u	v and w
		c and o	i and j	v and y
		d and g	i and l	

**Variation 1** Show two letters children often confuse, name one of the letters, and have children point to the letter you name.

**Variation 2** Give children a mixed set of letter cards, including multiples of two or more letters, such as a set of *b*, *d*, and *g*. Have them sort the cards, putting the same letters in one pile.



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## 5. Naming Letters in Different Fonts

**Purpose:** Identify letters set in different fonts, or typefaces

**Materials:** Letter cards, old newspapers and magazines, or word-processing software

Once children can name letters correctly, give them practice identifying, matching, and sorting letters set in other fonts. Cut letters from headlines in newspapers or magazines or print letters in different fonts using your computer. In particular, give practice identifying lowercase *a*, *g*, and *q* as shown since these shapes can appear in standardized tests.

g a b k z  
y s q j r m

**TIP: Using alphabet books** Reading alphabet books is a fun way to review letters. Focus on books that emphasize the names of letters and not their sounds so you don't confuse children with letter-sounds associations that haven't been taught yet.