

Stellar Home Language

Supporting early language and literacy teaching in Grade R

Teacher's Guide for a two-week cycle

Second Edition 2018

DEAR TEACHER

Wordworks is a non-profit organisation established in 2005 to support early language and literacy development. The Stellar programme was designed by Wordworks to support Grade R teachers in their important role as teachers of language and emergent literacy. We focus on Grade R because evidence shows that strong early language and literacy skills support all later learning.

Early language and literacy development

In order to learn to read and write, children need to have opportunities to build their competence and understanding in two key areas:

- language skills (listening, speaking, vocabulary and comprehension)
- code-related skills (phonological awareness and letter-sound knowledge).

Children also need many opportunities to see how reading and writing work, and for these processes to be modelled by teachers. They need to read and enjoy books and use drawing and early writing to share their ideas.

Our programme

Stellar provides theoretical and practical ideas to help you build a language-rich classroom that supports early literacy development. The programme has been developed and revised in response to feedback from Grade R teachers and trainers. Stellar aligns with CAPS requirements.

Stellar classroom materials

This *Teacher's Guide* is one of a set of guides for the teaching of Home Language, each 'starring' a new story! Each *Teacher's Guide* contains a two-week programme of integrated activities for teaching Home Language to your Grade R class every day.

A *Teacher's Guide for parent meetings* assists you to guide parents to support language learning at home.

Stellar training

For teachers training to use the Stellar programme, there is a set of *Teacher Workbooks* that takes you through the different elements of the programme while deepening your understanding about why each element is important.

Your stories

We know that teachers are creative about using whatever is available to them. We encourage you to adapt the activities in this guide to suit your context and the resources available to you. As you become familiar with the two-week framework in the Stellar programme, you will be able to use your own story books and oral stories as a basis for teaching language and emergent literacy.

Meet Stella

You will see that there is a teacher present throughout this *Teacher's Guide*. She will keep you company on your learning journey and will often give advice based on her years of experience in the Grade R classroom. Teachers have affectionately come to call her Stella!

We hope you enjoy using this programme. You will be giving your Grade R learners the best possible gift – and we know you will enjoy learning with them!

Our best wishes,

Stella and the Wordworks Team



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Introduction to Stellar

How to use this book

Two-week planner: Week 1				
ACTIVITY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
SHOW AND TELL	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
WHOLE CLASS LETTERS AND SOUND ACTIVITIES	Tell the story for the first time. Introducing a letter from the story (m)	Forming the letter (multisensory activities)	Letter boxes	Listening for beginning and end sounds
WHOLE CLASS STORY BASED ACTIVITIES	Storytelling and building vocabulary	Storytelling and singing	Storytelling and role play	Sequencing pictures
ROTATION GROUP ACTIVITIES	Group 1 Practising the letter (m)	Group 1 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 1 Letter puzzles and games	Group 1 Independent reading
	Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher guided)	Group 2 Practising the letter (m)	Group 2 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 2 Letter puzzles and games
	Group 3 Independent reading	Group 3 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher guided)	Group 3 Practising the letter (m)	Group 3 Creative play
	Group 4 Letter puzzles and games	Group 4 Independent reading	Group 4 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher guided)	Group 4 Practising the letter (m)
	Group 5 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 5 Letter puzzles and games	Group 5 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher guided)	Group 5 Practising the letter (m)
STORY TIME	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.

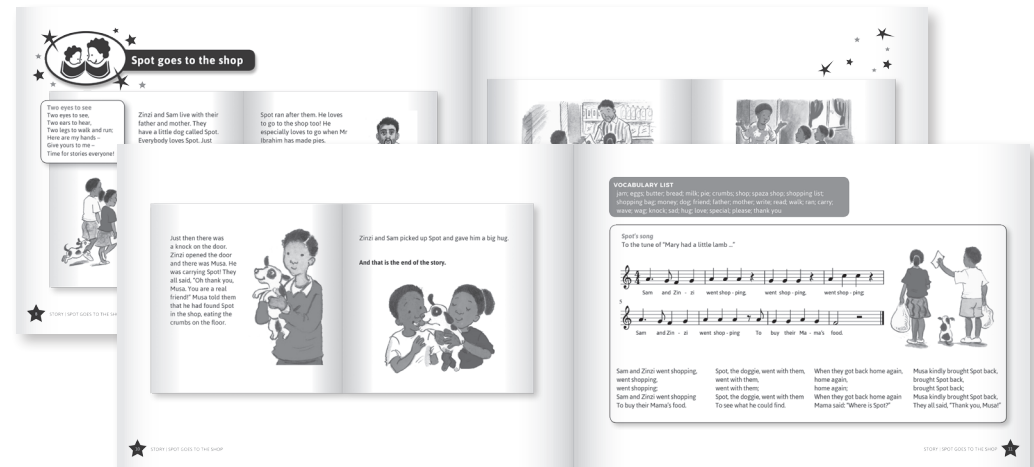
Each *Stellar Teacher's Guide* stars one story, which you will find on page 8, together with a verse, a song or poem and a vocabulary list. Refer to this story at the front of the book whenever you need to.

Be sure to tell the story at the very beginning of the two-week cycle, before you do any of the activities.

As you prepare for teaching a two-week cycle, start with the Two-week planner (page 12). It maps out all the activities you will do, every day, for two weeks.

If you follow the planner, you will be covering everything you need for good Home Language teaching in line with CAPS.

Children will have a balance of whole class and small group activities, some of which they do independently; others are teacher-led.



The activities have been divided into three sections, each with its own introduction:

- 1 Letters and sounds activities
- 2 Story-based activities
- 3 Rotation group activities

Find your way easily by looking at the section names at the top and bottom of each page.

We give you two kinds of **Resources** at the end of the book: teacher resources and photocopiable resources for the children. The footer text tells you where to use each resource.

Building up a toolkit

You will need to build up your own toolkit of resources over time to teach the Stellar programme. Some of these resources relate to the story in each guide. We have started you off with puppets, sequence pictures and a Big Book in each Story Pack, as well as a template to make little books. We know that as a creative teacher you will plan ahead to make and collect other resources to support the Stellar story. Children will enjoy props during storytelling and costumes for fantasy play, and you will need scrap materials for art and construction activities. Remember how important it is for children to see printed materials connected to the story: look out for picture books, shopping flyers and magazines for your book corner and posters for your walls.

You will always need colourful crayons, paints and paintbrushes, scissors and glue, and paper for children to draw on. You can make simple sand trays, white boards and play dough (recipe and method on page 51). This guide provides templates to make your own puzzles, game boards and letter cards as well as a few activity pages for you to photocopy for your children. If you cannot make photocopies, feel free to adapt the activity or to use the other options given to you in the guide.

We suggest that you make sure everything is set up before you start lessons, so you can make the most of your lesson time.

Assessment

Assessment in Grade R is informal, which means it is particularly important for you to remain aware of each child's language and literacy strengths, challenges and progress, as well as their levels of confidence and enjoyment throughout Home Language lessons. We encourage you to keep notes about each child and jot down significant learning events, challenges being experienced at the time, together with any ideas you have for how you might respond. In addition to daily observations, there are many assessment opportunities built into the Stellar two-week cycle which give you the opportunity to focus on individual children's progress.

These include:

- rotation group activities: you will spend focused time with individual children as you support their drawing and emergent writing.
- paper-based activities: children will produce their own paper-based work in the *Rainbow letter* activity, the *Read and do* activities, and the second sequence picture activity (called *More sequencing pictures*).

It is vitally important that children never feel that you are assessing them or their work. Young children find it almost impossible to learn in an environment where they feel frightened, anxious or insecure. Your job is to build their confidence together with their skills and knowledge so they can show you their very best work.

Language learning opportunities throughout the day

The Stellar programme gives structured activities for different parts of the day. However, we know that language learning happens all day in classrooms where teachers are responsive to children and allow rich to-and-fro conversations. It is so important for you to be responsive to what interests your children. Transition times, show and tell, snack times and morning ring all provide excellent opportunities to build language through questions, comments and conversations. On the next page, we give ideas for how you can maximise language learning during two much-loved Grade R activities – *Show and tell* and *Story time*.



Show and tell

Show and tell is a much-loved part of the daily programme in Grade R. Children bring something from home to share with their class: it can be anything from a photograph of a family member to a story book to an autumn leaf newly fallen. It is important that this does not become a time for children to show off new possessions like clothes or expensive toys.

STEPS

- 1 Children sit in a circle with you. (This can be the whole class, or a small group depending on how you structure this activity.)
- 2 Begin: *"Aren't we lucky! Three children have brought something for Show and Tell today. Let's sit quietly and listen attentively."*
- 3 Ask each child to tell the group about what they have brought.
- 4 Affirm the child's choice of object. For example: *"I love picking up shells; they remind me of summer!"*
- 5 Listen actively to the child speaking. Make eye contact.
- 6 Repeat and then elaborate on what they say about their object.
- 7 Draw them out by asking specific questions and listen carefully to their answers. Ask if anyone else has a question.
- 8 Once all the children have spoken about their object, do a quick memory and comprehension quiz:
 - Who told us about ... ?
 - Where did ... get her ... ?
 - Someone in the group explained why ... Can you remember the reason?



Rules for Show and tell:

- Take turns to talk.
- Look at the person speaking.
- Listen carefully to what each person is saying and think about it.

Story time: Reading aloud for enjoyment

The Stellar programme is story-based. We have written simple stories and adapted folk tales as the basis for learning activities over two weeks.

It is also important for children to hear stories for pure enjoyment. There needs to be time in the day when children are read stories with rich language and beautiful illustrations, with no expectations or activities. We want children to truly 'be in the moment' – to become absorbed in a story and to experience the magic of books.

We propose that reading aloud happens at the end of every day. You will need to plan ahead to line up a selection of storybooks that you and the children will love. See our website for some recommendations.

STEPS

Before reading

- 1 Show children the cover of the book. Ask them to predict what the story will be about.
- 2 Take a picture walk through the book, looking at the pictures and predicting the story. (If the story has a delightful surprise, you may want to skip the picture walk or stop half way through!)
- 3 Link the story to the children's own knowledge and experience.
- 4 Introduce a few key words from the story.
- 5 Read the title of the story and the name of the author and illustrator.

During reading

- 1 Read with expression, using different voices for different characters.
- 2 Keep eye contact with the children.
- 3 Use dramatic pauses to make the story exciting.
- 4 Show the children the pictures as you read each page.
- 5 Keep the children involved by asking them, *"What do you think will happen now?"*
- 6 Enjoy the experience of sharing the story with your children!

After reading

- 1 Simply enjoy the magic of a shared story.
- 2 Discuss which character or part of the story they liked the most.

Supporting multilingualism

It is likely that the children in your class speak a wealth of different languages at home. This means that some children's mother tongue is different from the Home Language chosen by the school. Although Stellar is a Home Language programme, we know that all children benefit from rich multilingual teaching spaces. Wherever possible, we encourage you to allow children to use their own language with peers, while they are building confidence using the new language of the classroom. Early in the school year, children who speak more than one language can be invited to assist with translating your instructions and children's responses. The voices of young children should never be silenced because they are not yet able to speak the language of the classroom. A second language should always build on the first, rather than replace it.

Although you will introduce the Stellar story in the language of instruction at the school, second language learners will benefit from hearing the same story in their own language. If you don't feel confident telling the story in this way, you could invite a parent to tell the story to the class in their language. Translations of the stories are free to download from the Wordworks website.

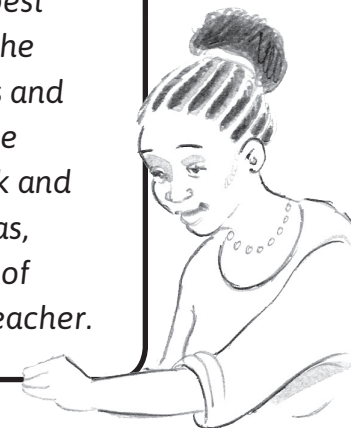
In some of the Stellar activities, we encourage you to work with words from more than one language. This gives you the opportunity to talk with your children about our multilingual world. It also allows you to acknowledge the contribution of children who bring language diversity to your classroom – give them a chance to shine! We encourage you to have fun with words from the story, and build your own knowledge of other languages. Try to introduce some vocabulary words from the Stellar stories in different languages to ensure comprehension for those learning a second language, and to broaden the knowledge base of your monolingual children.

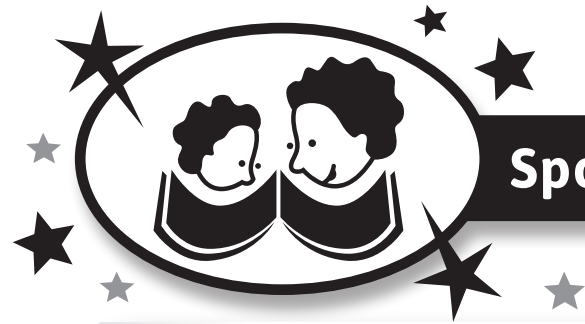
Parents

It's very important for parents to be involved in their children's learning, particularly when children are young. When parents are positive about what happens at school, this helps children hold two very important parts of their world together – the home part and the school part. When parents pay attention to their children talking and reading, writing and drawing, then children will believe these activities are valued and important.

The *Stellar Teacher's Guide for parent meetings* has been developed to help you get parents interested in your Grade R classroom, especially with your implementation of the Stellar Home Language programme. Even if you never organise parent meetings, there are many simple ways to encourage parental involvement in children's learning. Look out for the suggestions to send little books home for children to read to their parents, possibilities for parents to assist with storytelling and games in the classroom, and the ever-important idea that parents talk and read with their children!

Research has shown that one of the best measures of quality in classrooms is the level of interaction between teachers and children. Make your classroom a place where children are encouraged to ask and answer questions and share their ideas, and where they are given the benefit of meaningful conversation with their teacher.





Spot goes to the shop

Two eyes to see

Two eyes to see,
Two ears to hear,
Two legs to walk and run;
Here are my hands –
Give yours to me –
Time for stories everyone!



Zinzi and Sam live with their father and mother. They have a little dog called Spot. Everybody loves Spot. Just down the road from their house is a spaza shop. This is Mr Ibrahim's shop.

One Saturday, Mama Madiswa said, "Zinzi and Sam, please go to the shop. I need some bread, eggs, butter, milk and jam." Zinzi and Sam love to go to the shop for their mother so they said, "Yes, Mama." First, they wrote a shopping list, then their mother gave them some money, and then off they went!

Spot ran after them. He loves to go to the shop too! He especially loves to go when Mr Ibrahim has made pies.

The shopkeeper, Mr Ibrahim said, "Good day, Zinzi and Sam. And how are you, Spot?" The children said, "Good day to you, Mr Ibrahim". Spot wagged his tail. Then the children looked at their shopping list. They asked, "Please can we have a loaf of bread, six eggs, butter, milk and jam?"

Mr Ibrahim put everything in a packet and he also put one





of his special pies in the packet for them. They gave him the money and said, "Thank you very much, Mr Ibrahim. We love your pies!" And they waved goodbye.



Zinzi and Sam walked home, but they were talking so much that they did not notice that Spot was not with them. When they got home, their mother said, "Zinzi! Sam! Where is Spot?" Oh my! Spot had not followed them home. The children were very sad. Where do you think Spot is?

Just then there was a knock on the door. Zinzi opened the door and there was Musa. He was carrying Spot! They all said, "Oh thank you, Musa. You are a real friend!" Musa told them that he had found Spot in the shop, eating the crumbs on the floor.



Zinzi and Sam picked up Spot and gave him a big hug.

And that is the end of the story.

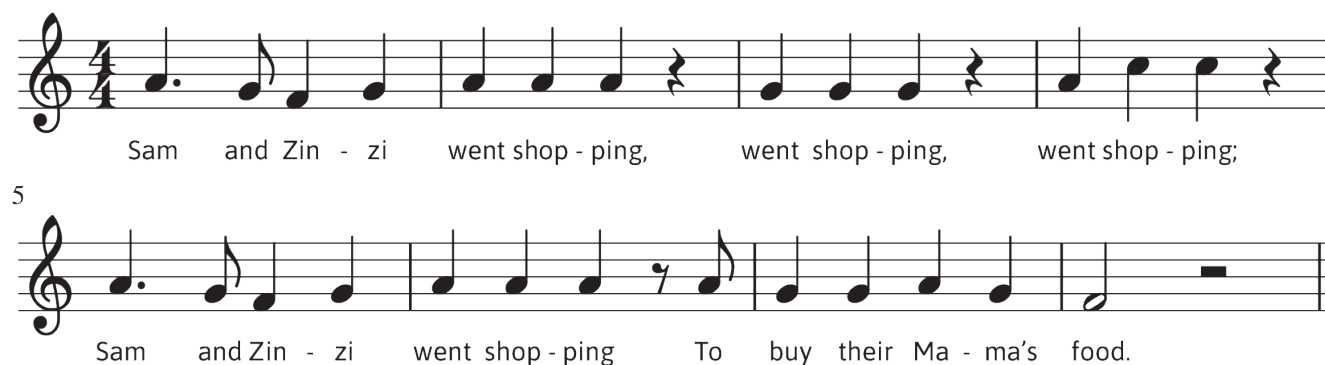


VOCABULARY LIST

jam; eggs; butter; bread; milk; pie; crumbs; shop; spaza shop; shopping list; shopping bag; money; dog; friend; father; mother; write; read; walk; ran; carry; wave; wag; knock; sad; hug; love; special; please; thank you

Spot's song

To the tune of "Mary had a little lamb ..."



Sam and Zinzi went shopping,
went shopping,
went shopping;
Sam and Zinzi went shopping
To buy their Mama's food.

Spot, the doggie, went with them,
went with them,
went with them;
Spot, the doggie, went with them
To see what he could find.

When they got back home again,
home again,
home again;
When they got back home again
Mama said: "Where is Spot?"

Musa kindly brought Spot back,
brought Spot back,
brought Spot back;
Musa kindly brought Spot back,
They all said, "Thank you, Musa!"

Two-week planner: Week 1

ACTIVITY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
SHOW AND TELL	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
WHOLE CLASS LETTERS AND SOUNDS ACTIVITIES	Tell the story for the first time. Introducing a letter from the story (m)	Forming the letter (multisensory activities)
WHOLE CLASS STORY-BASED ACTIVITIES	Storytelling and building vocabulary	Storytelling and singing
ROTATION GROUP ACTIVITIES	Group 1 Practising the letter (m)	Group 1 Creative play (Art and construction)
	Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 2 Practising the letter (m)
	Group 3 Independent reading	Group 3 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)
	Group 4 Letter puzzles and games	Group 4 Independent reading
	Group 5 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 5 Letter puzzles and games
STORY TIME	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.



WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
Letter boxes	Listening for beginning and end sounds	Blending and segmenting (syllables)
Storytelling and role play	Sequencing pictures	Shared writing and reading
Group 1 Letter puzzles and games	Group 1 Independent reading	Group 1 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)
Group 2 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 2 Letter puzzles and games	Group 2 Independent reading
Group 3 Practising the letter (m)	Group 3 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 3 Letter puzzles and games
Group 4 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 4 Practising the letter (m)	Group 4 Creative play (Art and construction)
Group 5 Independent reading	Group 5 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 5 Practising the letter (m)
Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.

Two-week planner: Week 2

ACTIVITY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
SHOW AND TELL	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
WHOLE CLASS LETTERS AND SOUNDS ACTIVITIES	Introducing a letter from the story (p)	Forming the letter (multisensory activities)
WHOLE CLASS STORY-BASED ACTIVITIES	More sequencing pictures	Shared reading: Big Book
ROTATION GROUP ACTIVITIES	Group 1 Practising the letter (p)	Group 1 Creative play (Fantasy play)
	Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 2 Practising the letter (p)
	Group 3 Independent reading	Group 3 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)
	Group 4 Letter puzzles and games	Group 4 Independent reading
	Group 5 Creative play (Fantasy play)	Group 5 Letter puzzles and games
STORY TIME	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.



WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
Letter boxes	Listening for beginning and end sounds	Blending and segmenting (syllables)
Read and do	Shared writing and reading	Listen and do
Group 1 Letter puzzles and games	Group 1 Independent reading	Group 1 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)
Group 2 Creative play (Fantasy play)	Group 2 Letter puzzles and games	Group 2 Independent reading
Group 3 Practising the letter (p)	Group 3 Creative play (Fantasy play)	Group 3 Letter puzzles and games
Group 4 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 4 Practising the letter (p)	Group 4 Creative play (Fantasy play)
Group 5 Independent reading	Group 5 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 5 Practising the letter (p)
Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.



Introduction to letters and sounds activities

The world of letters and sounds

We know from research that children who know something about letters and the sounds they make are likely to learn to read and write more easily than children who have limited letter–sound knowledge. However, we are not suggesting that children in Grade R should be taught about letters in a formal way. The Stellar programme includes many fun, age-appropriate ways to build children’s knowledge of letters.

We don’t believe Grade R children should be drilled or chant the alphabet, copy letters from a board or practise writing letters between lines or on paper with a pencil. In the Stellar programme, children learn how to form letters through big movements and through experiences that involve all of their senses. We know that children learn best when something has meaning to them, so we take care to link letters and sounds to stories – and to new words, pictures and objects. Children learn about language while building their knowledge of letters.

In addition to learning about the relationships between letters and sounds, research has shown that it is vital for children to become aware of sounds in spoken language (phonological awareness). If children don’t learn to pay attention to sounds in spoken language, they might know what they want to write, but not be able to hear the sounds in words in order to write them. The letters and sounds section of the Stellar programme includes many oral activities that help children to develop this awareness.

We have included multilingual lists of words from the story in an activity to develop children’s ability to break words up into syllables, and to blend syllables to make words. Research tells us that young children who learn to pay attention to sounds in words in one language can transfer this skill to another language. Most importantly, children come to know that there is so much to learn about

words from all languages – and so much fun to be had while playing with words!

Spending time on these activities will take Grade R children on a journey of exploration into the world of letters and sounds, which will ensure that they are well-prepared to meet the demands of the Grade 1 curriculum.

Teaching letters and sounds

The Stellar programme focuses on a new letter every week. The letters that have been selected for each story are different for each language because they are linked to words in the story. It is ideal to introduce a new letter by linking it to words from a familiar story, but if you must teach letters in a different order, you can still make use of the ideas for teaching letters in the Stellar Programme.

Plan for the letters and sounds activities to take approximately 15 minutes every day. We have given you activities to use from Monday to Friday. The Week 1 activities are repeated in Week 2, with a focus on a new letter. The whole class usually does these activities together at the beginning of the daily programme. However, you can focus on letters and sounds at any time in your everyday routine, particularly during outdoor play and transition times (lining up outside the toilet; preparing for lunch time and so on). Use opportunities to point out letters in the environment and ask children what letters they see around them. This helps children to see how we use letters as clues to read things around us.



Resources to make for the letters and sounds activities

Play dough mats

Put copies of the letter templates in the **Resources** into plastic sleeves. Children can use the printed letter as a guide when forming play dough letters. Play dough mats can also be downloaded and printed from websites such as www.sparklebox.co.uk.

Whiteboards

Insert a piece of cardboard or paper into a plastic sleeve. Children can use a whiteboard marker to practise 'writing' big letters. These can be cleaned easily with a cloth or tissue.

A set of letter boxes

Fill empty ice-cream containers with objects (or pictures of objects) that start with a specific sound. For example, the **g** box will contain objects whose names begin with the sound /g/.

Use the word lists to help you choose items for the boxes. Label each letter box using the letter templates. It is best to trace letters onto a sensory material like felt, sandpaper or corrugated cardboard. Cut out the letter and stick it onto the lid of the letter box. Stick a smaller letter on the side of the box so that you can easily identify the box you need when the letter boxes are stacked on a shelf.



*It is not necessary to make a letter box for every letter of the alphabet. Finding appropriate objects for the letters **q**, **x**, **y** and **z** can be difficult and children will learn these letters as they encounter them in print when they are learning to read. Very few words begin with vowels in English, and vowels make different sounds in different words, so letter boxes are not a good way to introduce vowels.*



MONDAY

Introducing a letter from the story

Letter-sound knowledge: Children learn about two new letters linked to words from the story. In Week 1, the focus letter is **m**, and in Week 2, the focus letter is **p**.

YOU WILL NEED

Spot goes to the shop story on page 8; big alphabet chart; board

Tell the story of *Spot goes to the shop* on page 8.

**STEPS****Listening for sounds**

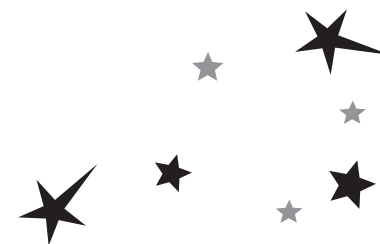
- 1 Ask the children to sit on the mat and listen carefully to you. Say these words from the story: "money, milk, mother, Ma Madiswa, Mr". Ask the children where they have heard the words before.
- 2 Say to the children: "Can you hear what sound these words start with: m-m-money, m-m-milk, m-m-mother? Yes, you are right, they start with the sound /m/. Listen carefully, here are some more words that start with /m/: monkey, man, meat, moon, mushroom, moth, music, mouse." (Emphasise the beginning sound as you say these words, for example: m-m-monkey, m-m-man.)

Saying the sound

- 1 Say the sound /m/ clearly and tell the children to watch your mouth carefully as you make the sound.
- 2 Ask the children to say the sound /m/: m-m-m-m-m. Make this fun: say it softly, loudly, to the wall, to the ceiling and to each other. Make sure the children are saying the sound of the letter and not the letter name **m** ('em').
- 3 Teach the children an action associated with the sound. For example: the children can rub their tummies while saying m-m-m-m-m.

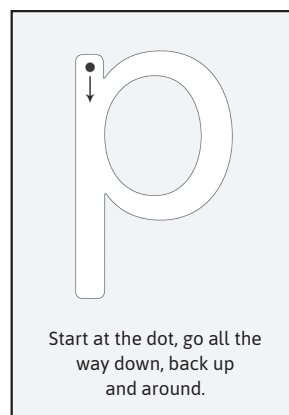
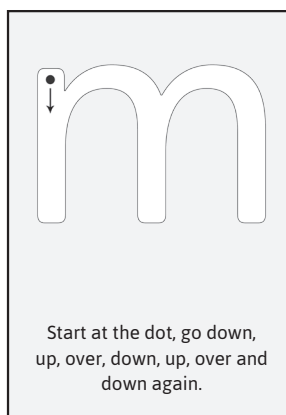
Thinking of words beginning with the sound

- 1 Ask the children if anyone's name starts with /m/. Can they think of any other words that start with the sound /m/?



Forming the letter

- 1 Ask the children if they know how to write a letter that makes the sound /m/.
- 2 Show the children how to form the letter **m**. Write a large letter on the board as you say the letter formation instruction: "Start at the dot, go down, up, over, down, up, over and down again."
- 3 Let the children practise the letter formation in the air, on the carpet, on their hands and so on.



Linking the letter to the alphabet chart

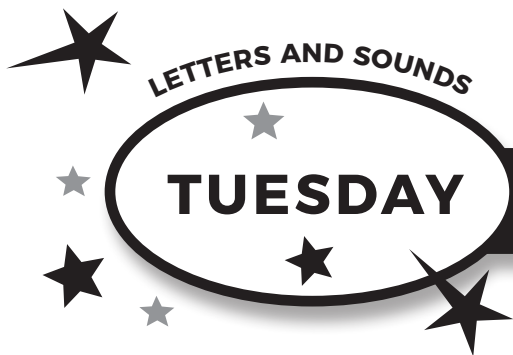
- 1 If you have an alphabet chart in your class, show the children the letter **m** on the alphabet chart. Explain that this letter also has a name: 'em'. This will help them to link the sounds they are learning with the letter names and the alphabet song.

These activity steps focus on the letter **m** and should be used in Week 1.

In Week 2, follow the same steps but focus on the letter **p**.

- Emphasise the words from the story that start with the sound /p/: pies, packet, please.
- Other /p/ words: paper, party, pasta, peanuts, pear, pets, pig, puppy.
- When you form **p** with the children say: "Start at the dot, go all the way down, back up and around."
- Teach the children an action associated with the sound. Pretend you are playing a piano and say "**p-p-p-p**".
- If you have an alphabet chart in your class, show the children the letter **p** on the alphabet chart. Explain that this letter also has a name: 'pee'.





Forming the letter (multisensory activities)

Letter–sound knowledge: Children learn to form the focus letters using different materials which give them a rich sensory experience that helps them to remember the shape of the letter.

STEPS

- 1 Begin by modelling how to write the focus letter: ask the children if they can remember words that start with the focus letter. (Remember to say the sound the letter makes (/m/) and not the name of the letter ('em').)
- 2 Show the children how to form the letter. Write a large letter on the board or in the air. Say the following as you model forming the letter **m** in Week 1: "Start at the dot, go down, up, over, down, up, over and down again." In Week 2, say the following as you show the children how to form the letter **p**: "Start at the dot, go all the way down, back up and around."
- 3 Let the children practise the letter formation in the air, on the carpet, on each other's backs or on their hands.
- 4 Once you have modelled how to write the letter, choose from the following activities to give children the experience of forming these letters using big movements and as many of their senses as possible.

In Week 1, the focus letter is **m**.

In Week 2, the focus letter is **p**.



Chalk letters

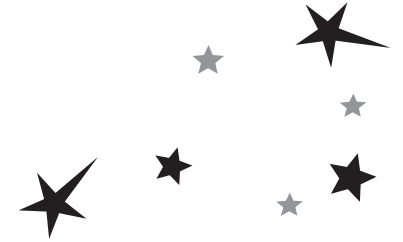
YOU WILL NEED

A large piece of chalk

STEPS

- 1 Go outside and give each child a piece of large chalk.
- 2 Ask the children to write a letter in chalk on the bricks/wall/paving.
- 3 Encourage the children to say the sound the letter makes as they write the letter.





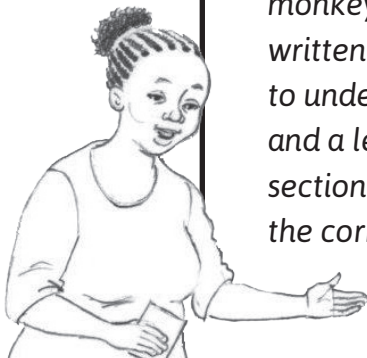
Water letters

YOU WILL NEED

Water; paintbrushes

STEPS

- 1 Go outside and give each child a container with water and a paintbrush.
- 2 Ask the children to paint a letter many times in water on the bricks/ wall/paving.
- 3 Encourage the children to say the sound the letter makes as they write the letter.



*Once children can hear sounds in spoken words (such as the /m/ sound at the start of the word monkey), they need to learn that the sound /m/ is written as a letter that looks like this: **m**. They need to understand the link between the sound they hear and a letter they see in print. The activities in this section link the oral practice of a new sound to how the corresponding letter looks and feels.*

Sand letters

YOU WILL NEED

Sand trays or a sandy area outside

STEPS

- 1 Divide the children into small groups and give each group a sand tray. Alternatively, take the children outside to a sandy area.
- 2 Ask the children to write a letter in the sand with their finger or a small twig.
- 3 Encourage the children to say the sound the letter makes as they write the letter.





Play dough letters

YOU WILL NEED

Play dough (recipe on page 51); play dough mats

STEPS

- 1 Give each child a ball of play dough. Ask the children to roll the play dough into long sausage shapes.
- 2 Put copies of the letter templates in a plastic sleeve. Show the children how to form a letter out of play dough using the printed letter as a guide.
- 3 Encourage the children to make their own letter and trace over the play dough letter with their finger while saying the sound the letter makes.



Whiteboard letters

YOU WILL NEED

Whiteboards; marker pens; pieces of cloth

STEPS

- 1 Give each child a whiteboard and let the children write the letter while saying the sound the letter makes.
- 2 The children can repeat this many times. At the beginning of the activity, encourage them to write letters that take up the whole page. Once they feel confident, they can try writing smaller letters.

Formal handwriting practice is part of the Grade 1 curriculum; it is not appropriate for Grade R learners. However, it is important that children are taught how to form letters correctly. You can do this in a relaxed and fun way by using these creative, multisensory activities and encouraging children to write letters as big as they can.



LETTERS AND SOUNDS

WEDNESDAY Letter boxes

Letter-sound knowledge: The children build their knowledge of the focus letters by linking them to the beginning sounds of the names of objects.

YOU WILL NEED

Small mirror; two letter boxes (see page 17) containing objects or pictures of the objects that start with the following letters:

Week 1 m: mask; mirror; make up; marbles; mermaid; monkey; mango; magnifying glass

Week 2 p: powder; pram; pencil box; plug; plate; pirate; patch; paintbrush; pot; plasters; purse; peach; pot plant; paint; pig; peg; pin; puzzle; penguin

STEPS

Naming objects

- 1 Ask the children to sit on the mat and let them hold the objects or pictures of objects and pass them around as you name each one.
- 2 Ask questions about the objects: "Have you seen one of these? What do we use this for? What colour is it? How does it feel?"

Listening for beginning sounds

- 1 Say to the children: "Listen to this word: m-m-mirror. Can you hear what sound 'mirror' starts with? What is the first sound of the word?"
- 2 Encourage the children to emphasise the beginning sound when they say a word.

Linking the sound with a letter

- 1 Once the children have practised the new sound, then show them the letter on the letter box and say: "This is how we write m.". Let the children trace over the letter on the lid with their fingers.
- 2 Demonstrate to the children how to 'write' the letter with their finger: in the air, on their hands and on a child's back. The children can also make letters with their bodies (note that some letters are easier than others to form with one's body!).



THURSDAY

Listening for beginning and end sounds

Phonological awareness: Children learn to hear and identify beginning and end sounds in words.



Begin today's listening activity by saying: "Let's close our eyes and be quiet for a few minutes while we listen carefully to the sounds around us."

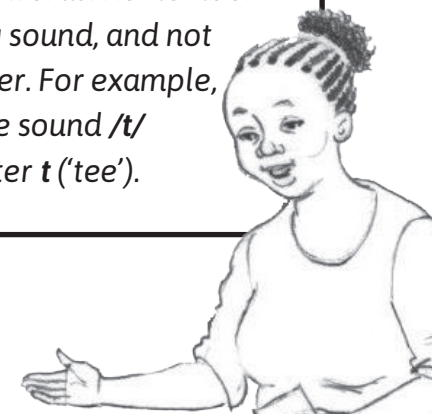
I spy with my little eye

STEPS

- 1 Ask the children to sit on the mat and listen very carefully to you.
- 2 Identify something in the classroom without telling the children what you are thinking of, then very clearly give the children the first sound of the word as a clue. For example: if you are thinking of a book, say: "I spy with my little eye something that begins with the sound /b/."
- 3 Children must look for things that start with that sound. If they guess 'book' correctly, it is their turn to look for something and say: "I spy...".
- 4 If a child names something else starting with the sound /b/, you can say: "Yes, you are right, 'ball' does start with the sound /b/, but I am thinking of something else that starts with /b/".

- 5 If children struggle with this at first, you can give them clues in addition to the beginning sound. For example, for a door you could say: "I spy something beginning with /d/. It is something that you can open and close."

I spy with my little eye is an excellent game to help children to start hearing beginning sounds in words. Remember to say the beginning sound, and not the name of the letter. For example, 'table' starts with the sound /t/ and not with the letter t ('tee').



FRIDAY

Blending and segmenting (syllables)

Phonological awareness: Children learn to blend syllables to make words and segment words into syllables.

YOU WILL NEED

Multisyllabic words relating to the story: butter; spaza; money; shopkeeper; packet; little; packet; children; everything; Ma Madiswa
A small bag with pictures or objects for any of the multisyllabic words relating to the story; **Say-it-and-move-it** board (page 54); counters and Prestik

Say-it-and-move-it (multisyllabic words)**STEPS**

- 1 Draw your own **Say-it-and-move-it** board on a piece of paper or on a board in your classroom.
- 2 Begin by drawing a large rectangle and ask a child to select a multisyllabic picture card out of the cloth bag and stick it in the large rectangular space. Draw the correct number of blocks under the picture. For example, the word 'bu-tter' has two syllables, so you would need to draw two blocks.
- 3 Now ask the child to name the picture and stretch the word, or say it slowly, to help them to hear each syllable in the word. Give them the correct number of counters and help them to move a counter into a small block each time they say a syllable.

- 4 Continue the activity and let children take turns to listen to a word and move the counters for each syllable that they hear.

To help promote multilingualism and affirm children's home languages, try this activity with a few of these multisyllabic words. Ask children to help with your pronunciation if needed.

Xhosa: ivenkile (shop); amaqanda (eggs); nkqonkqoza (knock); ukhwanga (hug); umhlobo (friend); ibhotolo (butter); funda (read); hamba (walk); baleka (run); ubisi (milk)

Afrikaans: hondjie (puppy); spazawinkel (spaza shop); Saterdag (Saturday); asseblief (please); inkopielys (shopping list); pasteitjies (pies); konfyet (jam); gesels (speak); ontsteld (upset); krummel (crumb)

If the children in your class speak other languages, ask them to give you a word from the story in their language.





Introduction to story-based activities

Moving from oral to written language

Storytelling (Monday, Week 1)

Stellar is a story-based programme that takes children on a journey from spoken to written language. The children's first encounter with the story is when they hear the story being told by their teacher with puppets to make the characters come alive. Although you will have the printed version of the story, please understand that it is a script to guide you, rather than a text to be read to the children. It is important that you speak directly to the children as you tell them the story, rather than focusing on the printed words.

Singing and role play (Tuesday and Wednesday, Week 1)

After hearing the story being told, children will have a chance to sing a song related to the story. Songs are a wonderful way to develop language skills and some children find it easier to remember new language through melody, rhythm and rhyme. After singing, children participate in role playing the story as it is narrated. This gives them a chance to participate in the telling of the story in an active way and use the words and phrases of the different characters. It also requires them to think about the story sequence – what happens next.

Story sequencing (Thursday, Week 1; Monday, Week 2)

Once children have heard the story being told, and participated in singing and acting out the story, they have an opportunity to think carefully about the events in the story and to sequence these in the correct order. Telling a story in the correct sequence is a very important skill, and something that can be challenging for young children. When children understand that stories are made up of sequenced events, they are able to plan their own stories to have a beginning, middle and end. They learn to ask themselves, "What do I want to happen next?"

The sequencing of the events in the story is first led by you as the teacher, as you guide children's conversations about how the story started and what came next. At first you work with big colourful pictures in the whole class. Later on, the children are encouraged to sequence the events more independently. This provides a useful assessment opportunity.

Writing inspired by the story (Friday, Week 1)

Building on the oral telling of the story, the singing, role play and sequencing of events, children have a chance to discuss their ideas related to something in the story, and then see how these ideas can be written down. This activity begins with rich discussions and sharing of ideas, with contributions from as many children as possible. As you model the writing process, using the children's words and ideas, they see that what we say can be written down. This will give them the confidence to start trying to write themselves – even if they begin with scribbles and made-up letters!

Shared reading (Friday, Week 1; Tuesday, Week 2)

Shared writing provides an ideal text for shared reading as the text contains ideas and words that are very familiar to the children. It is important to take the time to read over the text you have written together, pointing to each word as you read so that children start noticing how our speech is made up of different words, with spaces between each word.



In addition to reading the texts they have co-written with you, children will have another opportunity to see how reading works when you read the Big Book in the second week. Here they will encounter the same, familiar story but in print form. When you read the Big Book to them they will see how words on a page link with the words you say. The story in the Big Book is a simplified version, so that children feel confident to try to 'read' it themselves. This gives them the experience of being a reader – even if they are just reciting the words in the book from memory.

Read and do (Wednesday, Week 2)

While shared reading activities are teacher-led, children benefit from trying to 'read' and make sense of text themselves. The Read and do activity gives children a chance to read pictures and symbols and follow what the symbols tell them to do. This provides another assessment opportunity.

Listening (Friday, Week 2)

The two-week cycle of story-based activities ends with a whole class listening activity to support the development of children's ability to pay attention, follow instructions and understand what they hear.

Using story-based activities to build vocabulary

Some teachers have initially been concerned that it may become boring for children if the activities for two weeks are based on one story. However, teachers have repeatedly reported the benefit of having so many ways for children to engage with new language. We know that in order to learn new vocabulary and make it their own, children need to hear and use words often and in different contexts. Children often understand words before they have the confidence to use them, so it is important that we do not move on to another theme or story before they have had the chance to develop a deep and lasting knowledge of new words.

Although children will learn new language and word meanings through all of the activities in the Stellar programme, we have selected new words from each story for you to focus on. These are listed on the last page of the story section under the heading Vocabulary list. The list includes a combination of common, everyday words and more difficult words. As a teacher, you know your children best, so choose to focus on words that are appropriate for the children in your class. Be especially aware of what will be helpful for children who are learning in a second language, and remember to extend children whose basic vocabulary is strong.

When you are working through the activities with the children, remember to draw their attention to the words you have introduced. Ask them what they know about these words, and how they say a particular word in their own language. Build on children's natural curiosity by encouraging an interest in word meanings in your class. This is one of the most important building blocks for comprehension.



Children hear the *Spot goes to the shop* story while learning new vocabulary.

YOU WILL NEED

- Puppets and props: Zinzi; Sam; Mama Madiswa; Spot the dog; Mr Ibrahim and Musa; shopping list (write out before the lesson)
- Objects or picture cards for a few words from the vocabulary list
- Story, rhyme and vocabulary list on pages 8–11.

When children hear their teachers using the story language with confidence, they will mimic them and adopt the same style. Teachers become language models for children who are still learning language skills and vocabulary.

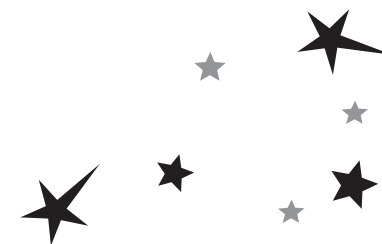
Try to use the story language and vocabulary regularly during the day and over the entire two weeks. This will help the children build their language skills and vocabulary, and will give them opportunities to use the new words and language more often.



STEPS

Before you tell the story

- 1 Say the rhyme **Two eyes to see** with the children, to focus the class on the story to come.
- 2 Introduce the story to the children: “The title of our story is **Spot goes to the shop**.”
- 3 Relate the story to the children’s lives: “This story is about a dog called Spot. Who has got a dog at home? What is your dog’s name?”
- 4 Introduce the characters: “This is Zinzi and her brother Sam. This is Mama Madiswa, and this is the dog, Spot. Mr Ibrahim is the shopkeeper and Musa is his son.” Help the children link the characters to **Ali and the paint** and **The green dress**: “Do you remember Musa? He is Ali’s brother.”
- 5 Introduce two or three new words from the vocabulary list: “Before we begin, I want to tell you the meanings of some new words which we will find in the story.”
 - Discuss what each word mean.
 - Where possible, show children an object or a picture to illustrate what the word means.
 - Ask children who speak different languages at home, to say the word in their own language.



While you tell the story

- 1 Make sure you tell the story in a lively way to keep the children's attention. Do actions, use props and tell the story in different voices.
- 2 Ask children to predict what happens next in the story and involve them through open-ended questions, such as: *"What do you think Mama Madiswa is going to say when the children get home without Spot?"*
- 3 Emphasise new vocabulary. Give short explanations if you feel it will help the children to understand the story. Ask if anyone can remember the meaning of a new word.

After you tell the story

- 1 Ask questions to check and consolidate children's understanding, such as: *"Why didn't Spot notice when the children left?"* Praise and elaborate on even the simplest answers. For example: *"Yes, that's right. Spot was hungry. Spot was so busy eating the crumbs on the floor of the shop that he didn't see the children leave to go home."*
- 2 Ask open ended questions to stimulate discussion: *"If Musa hadn't brought Spot home, what would Zinzi and Sam have done?"*
- 3 Consolidate new vocabulary from the story by asking questions about a word, for example: *"What is a ... ? Can you point to a ... ? What is a ... used for?"*
- 4 Talk about the category the new words belong to, for example 'kinds of food' and 'feeling words'.

Two-way conversations, which allow children to talk as well as listen, are one of the best ways for children to build language skills and vocabulary.

It's a good idea to pause expectantly and often when communicating with children. This will give them time to process the information and understand that you are wanting them to join in and participate.



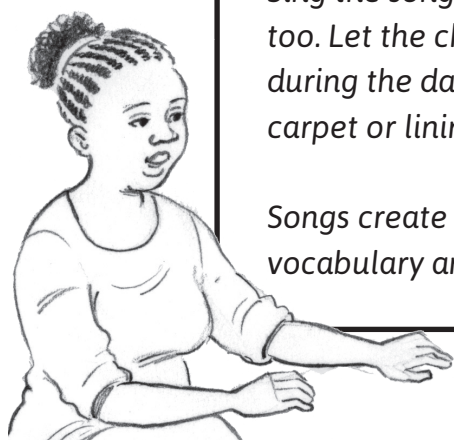
WEEK 1 STORY-BASED

TUESDAY Storytelling and singing

Children learn the language of the story by listening to the story again and singing a song related to the story.

YOU WILL NEED

Words and music for *Spot's song* (page 11)



Sing the song every day! Remember to do the actions too. Let the children sing the song at certain times during the day, such as when they are waiting on the carpet or lining up outside the door after break.

Songs create opportunities for reinforcing new vocabulary and language in a fun and interactive way.

STEPS

- 1 Re-tell the story using the puppets. Ask questions as you tell the story. Encourage the children to predict what will happen next.
- 2 Sing the song to the children.
- 3 Teach the song in small parts – it may be difficult for the children to remember all the words at once.
- 4 Teach the children the actions for each line of the song.



WEEK 1 STORY-BASED

WEDNESDAY Storytelling and role play

Children take on different roles and use the story language themselves while the story is narrated.

YOU WILL NEED

Puppets; a table; a loaf of bread/empty bread packet; an egg box; butter containers; a milk bottle; a jam tin; a hand-written shopping list

STEPS

- 1 Sing *Spot's song*.
- 2 Choose six children to play the characters in the story (Mama Madiswa; Sam; Zinzi; Mr Ibrahim; Spot; Musa).
- 3 Talk about each character in the story. Tell the children who they are going to be in the role play.
- 4 Discuss the props that will be used in telling the story.
- 5 Tell the children who is going to be the storyteller, also known as the narrator. The acting children are going to act out everything the narrator says. Help them to organise where they are going to stand.
- 6 Start the story like this: *"One Saturday, Mama Madiswa was busy writing a shopping list in the kitchen. She called the children and asked them: 'Please will you two walk to the shop and buy the things on my list?'"* The child playing the role of Mama Madiswa does the actions and says the words.

- 7 Continue telling the story in this way. The children will do the actions to match the narrator's words. *"First, they wrote a shopping list, then their mother gave them some money, and then off they went!"* The children playing the role of Sam and Zinzi head off to the shop.
- 8 The rest of the class watches the role play.
- 9 If there is time, you may want to repeat the role play with different children.



THURSDAY Sequencing pictures

Children learn that stories are made up of a sequence of events by re-telling the story using pictures.

YOU WILL NEED

Big sequence pictures in the Story Pack



STEPS

- 1 Sing **Spot's song** (page 11).
- 2 Choose one of the sequence pictures and hold it up.
- 3 Ask the children what they see and talk about the picture in detail.
- 4 Once you have discussed each picture, stick it on the board so the children can see it. Make sure the pictures are not in sequence at this stage of the activity.
- 5 After talking about all the pictures, ask the children: "Are the pictures in the correct order?"
- 6 Ask the children to point out the picture for the beginning of the story.
- 7 Work together to rearrange the sequence of the pictures so the story makes sense.
- 8 Keep the children actively involved in this process. Ask questions like: "What happened next? Who can remember the next part of the story?"

These are useful questions to ask about each picture:

- "**Who** can you see?" (characters)
- "**What** is he/she/it **doing**?" (verbs and actions)
- "**What** else can you see?" (looking again)
- "**Where** is the...?" (naming places/ position)
- "**Why** do you think...?" (creative thinking, expressing opinions)



- 9 When the pictures are in the correct order, invite a few children to retell the story in the correct sequence.
- 10 If you have extra time, muddle up the order again and repeat the activity.

WEEK 1 STORY-BASED

FRIDAY

Shared writing and reading

Children learn how their words and ideas can be recorded as you model the writing of a shopping list.

YOU WILL NEED

A large sheet of paper; marker pens; an A4 blank page for each child and crayons

STEPS

- 1 Write the title, 'My shopping list', at the top of each child's page before the lesson. Read the title together as the children point to each word.
- 2 Retell the story using the puppets.
- 3 Talk about different kinds of shops and what we buy at a grocery store, a clothing shop, a toyshop, a bookshop and so on.
- 4 Let the children share their personal shopping experiences.
- 5 Create a scenario, such as shopping for supper or a birthday party.
- 6 Tell the children that the class is going to make a shopping list together. Ask the children to give suggestions of what to buy for the occasion.
- 7 As the children make suggestions, write the words on the paper in a list. Draw a simple picture to illustrate each item.
- 8 When a list has been created, read it together with the class.

Always encourage children's efforts to 'write', whether they are using odd letters, scribbles or numbers. As they begin to understand that spoken words can be written down on paper, they will try to represent sounds in words with letters. This is called invented spelling and it is an important step in learning to write.



- 9 Explain to the children that they are going to make their own shopping list. (You may want to remove your list as you don't want the children copying.)
- 10 Tell the children to draw the items they would like to buy at the shop. Encourage the children to 'have-a-go' and 'write' the words to match their drawings, using pretend or invented spelling.
- 11 Let the children sit in pairs and 'read' their shopping lists to each other.

Children consolidate their own story knowledge by sequencing pictures more independently.

YOU WILL NEED

- Sequence pictures in the Story Pack
- A black and white photocopy of small sequence pictures (page 55) for each child; additional white paper for each child; scissors; glue;
- Photocopied and folded little book for each child (page 56).
- Set up the tables beforehand with a set of black and white pictures for each child and enough pairs of scissors and glue for all the children to use.



Prepare all the little books in advance. At this stage of the year, it is likely to be too difficult for the children to fold their own little books and it will waste valuable teaching time if you do it during the lesson.

STEPS

On the mat

- 1 Begin with the children sitting on the mat. Choose children to stand in front of the class, each holding one of the colour sequence pictures. Make sure that the pictures are not in the correct order.
- 2 Ask the children if the pictures are in the right order. Ask them to point out the picture which should be at the beginning of the story.
- 3 Together as a group, move the children that are holding the pictures until the story makes sense. Ask questions such as: "What happened next? Who can remember the next part of the story?"
- 4 Once you have sequenced the story using the colour pictures, children will need to move to their tables and sit in small groups.



At their tables

- 1 Ask the children to cut out the black and white pictures, arrange them in the correct order and then glue them on a blank page. Walk around the class and assist where necessary. This activity is useful for assessing the children's ability to put the main events of the story in the correct order.
- 2 Once children have completed their sequence pictures, give each child a little book. Encourage them to look at the cover and read the title of the story with them.
- 3 Take the children on a picture walk through the little book, helping them to notice that the pictures in the book are the same as the sequence pictures.
- 4 If there is time, children should 'read' their little book to a partner in the class.
- 5 Encourage the children to take the books home to read with their families.



The **Stellar Teacher's guide for parent meetings** includes guidelines for showing parents how to make a little book. In this way, you are encouraging the family to get involved in creating 'reading' and 'writing' opportunities at home for the children.



Children learn about reading a familiar story in print as you model the reading process.

YOU WILL NEED

Spot goes to the shop Big Book

STEPS

- 1 Say the rhyme **Two eyes to see** with the children, to focus the class on the story to come.
- 2 Encourage the children to look at the cover picture and talk about what they see and recognise.
- 3 Read the title of the story to the class. Point to each word as you read. Read it again and ask the children to read with you.
- 4 Take the children on a picture walk through the book, discussing the pictures in detail and allowing children to ask questions.
- 5 Allow the children to talk about the story and make connections to the language and experiences from the week before.
- 6 Point out the page numbers as you go and talk about what number will come next.

Show the children how to hold the book upright when reading and encourage them to look at the pictures for clues about the story. Talk to the children about the difference between the front and the back of the book and how we read from left to right.



- 7 When you have 'walked' through the whole book, go back to the beginning and read the title again.
- 8 Turn the pages and read each sentence in a clear, steady and natural voice.
- 9 Point to each word as you read.
- 10 Point out any letters the children may know and reinforce the focus letters for this story.
- 11 Read the book again and encourage the children to 'read' with you.

WEEK 2 STORY-BASED

WEDNESDAY Read and do

Children learn to interpret written and picture cues and follow instructions.

YOU WILL NEED

Shopping trolley templates (page 57); shopping brochures; scissors; glue



Ask your local grocery shop for a shopping brochure for each child. Stores are often helpful when they understand the educational purpose. It is best if each child in the class has their own copy of the same brochure.

STEPS

- 1 Tell the children to look through the shopping brochure.
- 2 Encourage the children to 'read' the labels and name the items they see in the brochure.
- 3 Ask the children to look for something specific in the brochure. (For example: "Can you find any healthy food? Which food do you need to keep in the fridge? Can you find any pictures of vegetables?")
- 4 Tell the children that they must look through the brochure and choose things they would like to 'buy'.

- 5 Explain that they must cut out the items and glue them into their trolley.
- 6 When the group is finished, let them sit in pairs and talk about what is in their trolleys.

Use printed adverts for learning:

- They encourage children to read environmental print.
- They can be used to reinforce beginning sounds in words.
- They can be used to practise hearing syllables in words. (For example: "Let's clap the word broccoli ... bro/cco/li.")
- They can be used to practise letter recognition.
- They can be used to reinforce colours.
- They can be used for maths concepts.
- Meeting 4 in the **Stellar Teacher's Guide for parent meetings** includes an activity with shopping brochures.



WEEK 2 STORY-BASED

THURSDAY Shared writing and reading

Children learn how their words and ideas can be recorded as you model the writing of a story.

YOU WILL NEED

A piece of paper with the heading: 'Spot's new adventure'; a thick black marker

STEPS

- 1 Say to the children: "Do you think Spot stayed safely at home after he was brought home? No! Spot loves walking about the streets, doesn't he? In fact, Spot went on another adventure the very next day! Where do you think Spot went? What happened to him?"
- 2 Explain to the children that you are going to write another story about Spot going on an adventure. Say to them: "Let's write our own story. Let's think together. Does the story begin in the day or the night? Where is Spot? Who is he with?" Once children have shared ideas about the beginning of the story, discuss and agree on what they want to say. Write down their words. You can begin with the words: 'Once upon a time' or 'One day'.

- 3 Say to the children: "Now that we have written the beginning of our story, who has ideas of what could happen next?" Listen to a few ideas then negotiate with the children about the events in the story. Write down the children's words, then go back and read the story from the beginning.
- 4 Then say: "Now we need to think how the story ended. What happened next to Spot? Who has ideas about what to write for the end of the story?" Write down the children's words, then finish with the words: 'The End'. Read the story from the beginning, pointing to each word as you read.
- 5 If there is time, you can ask some of the children to illustrate the story. Stick the story on the wall.



WEEK 2 STORY-BASED

FRIDAY Listen and do

Children learn to listen carefully and follow verbal instructions.

YOU WILL NEED

- A few items of food or pictures of food from a shopping brochure
- Items to make sounds (a bell; an instrument; a phone)

STEPS

- 1 Seat the children in a circle and settle everyone down so that the class is quiet and calm.
- 2 Begin today's listening activity by saying: *"I want you to close your eyes, then I am going to make a sound. I want you to listen carefully and put up your hand if you can tell me what sound it is."* Make sounds such as knocking on the table, clapping your hands, ringing a small bell, clicking your fingers and playing a note on a musical instrument. You can also play animal sounds from a cell phone or play the first notes of a song.
- 3 Now pick up four items of food or pictures of food and name each one. After showing the children the items, put them behind your back and ask if anyone can remember what you showed them. Listen to their responses, then try with five items.
- 4 The next activity is to build children's auditory memory by naming items of food without showing the actual items or pictures.

Encourage children to take time to think about what they have heard before rushing to answer.



- Start a story: *"The children went to the shop to buy butter."*
 - The next child in the circle must add another item of food: *"The children went to the shop to buy butter and sugar."*
 - The next child in the circle adds another: *"The children went to the shop to buy butter and sugar and soap..."* Keep it to a maximum of five items in the list; start again after five children.
- 5 Here is another activity to build auditory memory. Say to the children: *"My aunty is very forgetful. She forgets things easily. She went to the supermarket to buy ingredients to bake a chocolate cake. She needed milk, salt, flour, eggs and sugar... When she got home she had bought flour and eggs. What did she forget?"*

Introduction to rotation group activities

Helping children to work independently and in groups

There are five group activities for each story. These activities are repeated in the second week, with some new activities added in Week 2.

Before beginning the activities, talk to the whole class about what they will do in each activity. The children might find it difficult to work independently and manage themselves initially, but as they become familiar with each other, the classroom rules and the activities, you will find they need less guidance.

The importance of rules

Negotiate some rules for rotation group activities. Allowing the children to come up with some suggestions will help them to take pride in the rules. Make sure the rules are clearly displayed and include drawings next to the written words as a reminder to children.

Here are some suggestions:

Rules for Fantasy play area

- Share and take turns
- Don't push or pull each other
- Clean hands
- Take good care of our dress-up clothes and props
- Don't hurt each other's feelings
- Talk in quiet voices
- Tidy up after playing

Rotating the activities

Children will do a different activity each day, so by the end of the week they will have done all five activities. Plan carefully and prepare everything in advance.

You may choose to begin the year with all the children doing the same activity on one day, and then another activity on the next day. This will reduce your daily preparation and allow you to give instructions to all the children at the same time.

However, as soon as you feel your class is ready, we advise that you rotate the groups between activities, with each group doing a different activity on a day.

Our two-week planner (page 12) shows how each group does all the activities in a week.

*Four of the groups will be busy with activities that need less teacher guidance so that you can focus on the group that is doing **Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)**. Therefore you will be able to interact meaningfully with each of the groups in a week, giving you an opportunity to connect with the children and assess their individual progress.*





Overview of the activities

Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)

Focus your time on the group doing this activity as this group is likely to need the most support. You might need to help children decide what they want to draw, and guide them with prompts without telling them how to draw! Talk with them about their drawings and encourage them to 'write' something themselves or tell you what to write on their behalf.

Display the pictures at the children's eye level around the classroom. Don't choose only the most advanced work to display. It is important to affirm every child's work throughout the year. Once all the children have done this activity, you could bind all the drawings together to make a class book which the children can 'read'.

Creative play

Art and construction (Week 1)

Encourage children to talk with each other about what they are making and how it links to the story. You can give the children freedom with a wide range of materials or you can structure the activity by providing selected materials.

Fantasy play (Week 2)

Fantasy play can be noisy, but remember that when children play in this way, they have to negotiate roles and explain what they are doing. They also learn about representation - that one thing can stand for another. This will help them to understand that the writing on a page stands for the words we speak.

Some children might find it difficult to negotiate with others for roles and the sequence of events as they play. Try spending time with them guiding their play and interacting with children who are shy to join in.

Letter puzzles and games

Set up the puzzles and games before the lesson. The children might find it difficult to play the games independently at the beginning of the year. You may want to play one game with the whole class a few times before setting it up as a small group rotation activity. You may like to invite some parents to help manage the game activity.

Practising the letter

Children need regular practice to become confident with the letters of the alphabet. This activity gives children the practice they need to form letters correctly and connect a letter to the sound it makes and to objects that begin with that sound. Begin by setting up one activity for the group. As the year progresses and children become familiar with the activities, you can set up more than one activity.

Independent reading

Choose different types of storybooks, picture books, magazines, shopping brochures, picture dictionaries, atlases, non-fiction and recipe books for the children to 'read'. Include reading material that reflects the different languages and cultures in your class. Include content that connects with the theme of the story. Include copies of the Big Book, little books and sequence pictures. If you are able to spend some time with this group during rotation activities, you might try sitting next to a child and saying, "That looks like a lovely book. Can you read some of it to me?"

ACTIVITY

Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)

Children learn to record their ideas through drawing and emergent writing, as you write what they say about their drawings.

YOU WILL NEED

A blank A4 page for each child; crayons

Week 1: My favourite part of the story**STEPS**

- 1 Write ***Spot goes to the shop*** at the top of each child's blank page before the lesson. Ask the children to point to the words of the title as you read them together.
- 2 Ask the children to think about the story and discuss the part that they like best. Give some suggestions. For example: "*Did you like the part when Mr Ibrahim put one of his special pies in the packet for the children?*" Encourage the children to draw their favourite part of the story. Ask the children if they would like to write something about their picture or if they would like you to write for them.
- 3 Make a comment or ask a question about the drawing, such as: "*You have drawn so many things to buy. Can you tell me what these are?*"
- 4 If they would like you to write for them, keep them involved by asking them to say the words slowly as you write them down. Think aloud as you write the child's sentence for example: "*Spot ... went ... to ... the ... What word did you want to say next? Shop. I am going to write shop.*"

More children will be wanting to write themselves. Don't worry if some children write a long string of letters without spaces. Sometimes it can be helpful to count the child's words on your fingers as they tell you their sentence. Say the sentence again, pointing to each finger as you say each word. Encourage the child to do the same with their fingers as they decide what to write. This may help them understand the spaces between words.



- 5 Write exactly what the child tells you, word for word or ask the child if they agree before making any changes to their wording. Remember to write neatly and clearly.
- 6 When you have finished writing, encourage the child to read the sentence with you. Point to each word as you read and acknowledge their efforts.

Week 2: My own idea

STEPS

- 1 Write **My pet** at the top of each child's blank page before the lesson.
- 2 Ask the children to point to the words of the title as you read them together.
- 3 Ask the children: "Do you have a dog like Spot or another kind of pet at home?" Ask the children to draw their pet, or a pet they wish they had. Ask the children if they would like to write something about their picture.
- 4 Make a comment or ask a question about the drawing, such as: "That's a fat cat!" or "Do you like to swim with your dog? That's a fun thing to do! What a beautiful drawing and such good writing."
- 5 If they would like you to write for them, keep them involved by asking them to say the words slowly as you write them down. Think aloud as you write the child's sentence for example: "My ... dog ... is called ... Fluffy."
- 6 Write exactly what the child tells you, word for word. Remember to write neatly and clearly.
- 7 When you have finished writing, encourage the child to read the sentence with you. Point to each word as you read and acknowledge their efforts.

Here's another idea linked to the story:
Write Fun things to do with a pet on the children's pages. Follow the steps for Week 2, but ask your class to draw fun activities they would like to do with a (real or imagined) pet.



ROTATION GROUPS **ACTIVITY** Creative play

Children build on the story language and theme through pretend play and art and construction activities.

Week 1: Art and construction

YOU WILL NEED

Recycled boxes; glue; scissors; paint; crayons; kokis/felt tip markers; waste material such as paper or cloth; wooden blocks if available

STEPS

- 1 Ask children to choose a box that they will make into a home for a pet. (It can only be for their own pet or an imaginary pet.)
- 2 Talk about different homes for pets and the importance of pets having a safe and warm place to stay.
- 3 Help the children to get started. For example, say: "Does your house have a door? Oh, but your pet needs a door to get into his house! How are you going to make one?"
- 4 When children have finished making their house, suggest that they write their pet's name on the front door of their house.

If we always give children very neat and well-planned tasks, they never learn to sort, organise and create. Learning in the primary school will require that children need to be able to plan, organise and complete tasks independently. Activities such as this pet-home building task help develop these skills.



Week 2: Fantasy play

YOU WILL NEED

The following props: a table; a collection of empty grocery containers; boxes; shopping bags; paper and pencils

STEPS

- 1 Lead the group to the fantasy corner and settle them down quickly.
- 2 Read the rules for the fantasy corner to the children.
- 3 Show the children the new props in the fantasy corner this week. Talk about how Sam and Zinzi went to the shop. Point out the grocery containers, boxes, shopping bags and play money.
- 4 Say: "Today you are going to play **Shop-shop**."
- 5 Now start them off by saying: "Who is going to the shop? Who else is going shopping? Remember, you will need to write a shopping list. Who is going to be the shopkeeper? Looks like you are going to be busy today – I hope you are ready for customers!"
- 6 Visit the corner at least once to observe and encourage the children's game. For example, if there are too many children waiting in a queue to see the shopkeeper, you could go up to a group and say: "Hello, I am the shopkeeper's assistant. How can I help you today?"

Children expand their vocabulary when they hear as well as say words. They are more likely to understand and remember new words when they can hear and use them in a context that is meaningful to them. Playing shop will give the children many opportunities to role play the language and vocabulary from the story, in an informal but meaningful way.





ROTATION GROUPS

ACTIVITY

Letter puzzles and games

Children consolidate their letter–sound knowledge as they do puzzles and play games.

Letter puzzles

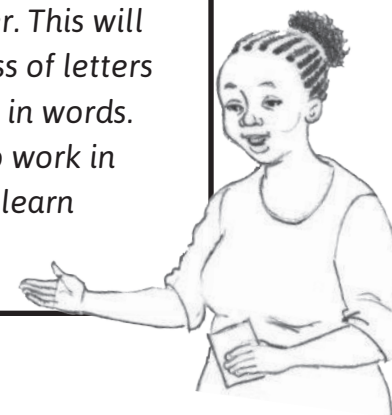
YOU WILL NEED

A set of letter puzzles (page 58)

STEPS

- 1 Pick up a puzzle piece with a letter on it and say the sound that the letter makes. Show the children how you look for a picture that starts with that sound: *“This letter makes the sound /s/; let’s look for a picture that starts with /s/... look there is a snake!”* Try and fit the pieces together. Show the children how they fit.
- 2 You could also begin by picking up a picture, naming it, saying the beginning sound and then looking for the corresponding letter: *“Here is a butterfly... butterfly starts with /b/. Let’s look for a letter that says /b/.”*
- 3 Repeat this process, but choose a picture that is incorrect and show the children that the puzzle pieces do not fit.

Those children who don’t know any letters or their sounds can begin by just trying to fit the puzzle pieces together. This will slowly build awareness of letters and beginning sounds in words. Encourage children to work in pairs so that they can learn from each other.



Post box game

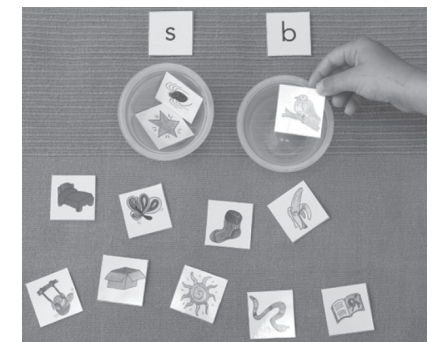
YOU WILL NEED

Letters printed on card; picture cards that start with the corresponding sounds – choose two or more letters that have been taught in class already (page 62); small containers or 'post boxes' (page 60); Prestik

STEPS

- 1 Stick letter cards on the sides of the containers/post boxes.
- 2 Spread the picture cards on the table.
- 3 Explain the rules of the game to the children:
 - Each child has a turn to pick up a picture card. The child holding the picture card must name the object in the picture and say the beginning sound.
 - The group agrees or gently corrects the child.
 - The child now places the picture card in the correct container for that sound.
 - The group agrees or gently corrects the child.
 - The game ends when all the cards have been posted.
- 4 If you have time, go through one of the containers with the group, saying the beginning sound of each object and confirm that it was correctly posted.

Once children know a few letters, set up more than two post boxes. You may give the children a set of pictures of objects that start with three to four different sounds. This will make the post box activity more challenging.





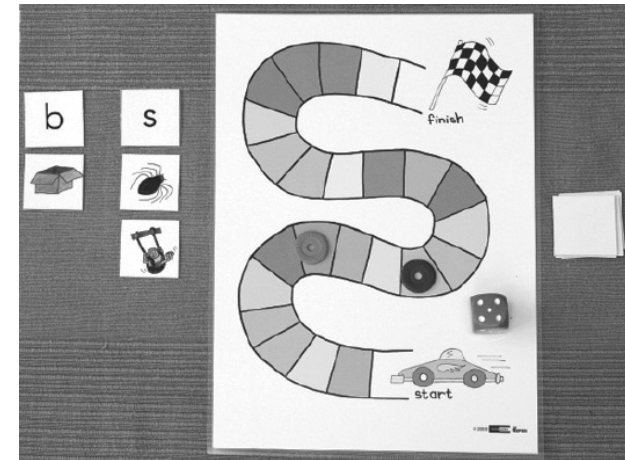
Racing car game

YOU WILL NEED

Two racing car game boards (A3 if possible; page 60); two sets of letter and picture cards (printed on A3 if possible; pages 61–64); two dice and counters

STEPS

- 1 Place the game board on the carpet with two to three children seated around it.
- 2 Put the picture cards in a pile, facing downwards. Put the letter cards face up so the children can see them.
- 3 Explain the rules of the game to the children:
 - Each child has a turn to throw the die and move the counter the correct number of spaces.
 - After moving the counter, the child picks up a picture card from the pile, names the picture and says the beginning sound.
 - The child then puts the picture card next to the correct letter card.
 - The game is over when the first child reaches the flag and is the winner.





Practising the letter

Children work independently to practise the formation of the focus letters and draw objects that start with the focus sounds.

YOU WILL NEED

An activity page per child with a letter written on the page (photocopy the activity page on page 52 or write the letter as large as possible on pieces of paper); coloured pencils or crayons (six to eight different colours)

Rainbow letters

STEPS

- 1 In Week 1, practise the letter **m** and the sound /**m**/ (like in mmmother, mmmilk and mmmoney).
- 2 Point to the letter **m** and say: "Do you remember this letter? It makes the sound /**m**/ like in mmmother, mmmilk and mmmoney." Ask the children to say **mmmmm** with you.
- 3 Ask the children to trace the shape of the letter with their fingers, starting from the dot: "Start at the dot, go down, up, over, down, up, over and down again."

The activity steps focus on the letter **m** and should be used in Week 1.

In Week 2, follow the same steps, but focus on the letter **p**: p-p-please, p-p-pies and p-p-packet. Remember to say what you are doing if you model writing **p** for the children: "Start at the dot, go all the way down, back up and around."



- 4 Explain to the children that they will be making rainbow letters. This means they will write over the letter on their page – each time in a different colour.
- 5 Ask the children to think of things that start with the sound /**m**/ and to draw as many /**m**/ pictures as they can on their page.



Independent reading

Children learn to read independently and enjoy books and other printed material.

STEPS

- 1 Lead the group to the book corner and settle them down quickly.
- 2 Read the rules for the book corner to the children
- 3 Show the children what is new in the book corner this week. Ask them: "Why do you think I have chosen these books/magazines/leaflets?"
- 4 Spend a few minutes motivating and helping children to choose something they would like to read.
- 5 Visit the corner at least once to observe and encourage the children's reading.



You could also put the **Spot goes to the shop** Big Book and sequence cards in the book corner. Some children will value the opportunity to read and retell the familiar story.



When children show an interest in books and 'read' out of choice rather than because they have to, it is a clear sign that they are motivated to read. Having an internal motivation to read is a strong predictor of reading success in the higher grades.



Resources

How to make play dough

YOU WILL NEED

2 cups flour; 1 cup salt; 2 cups water; 2 dessert spoons oil; 4 teaspoons cream of tartar (available at supermarkets and chemists); food colouring



STEPS

- 1 Mix all ingredients and cook over heat until the dough comes away from the sides of the pot.
- 2 Store in an airtight container once it has cooled.

Show the children how to warm up the play dough by squeezing it in their hands. This is a good exercise for the children's hand muscles. Divide the play dough into enough plastic bags so that each child has a ball to work with. Children roll the play dough into a ball at the end of each activity. Pack it away in the bag to keep it fresh.



How to make a little book

STEPS

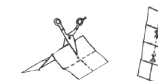
- 1 Fold an A4 page into eight pieces. Unfold.



- 2 Fold the page in half.



- 3 Cut on the middle fold.

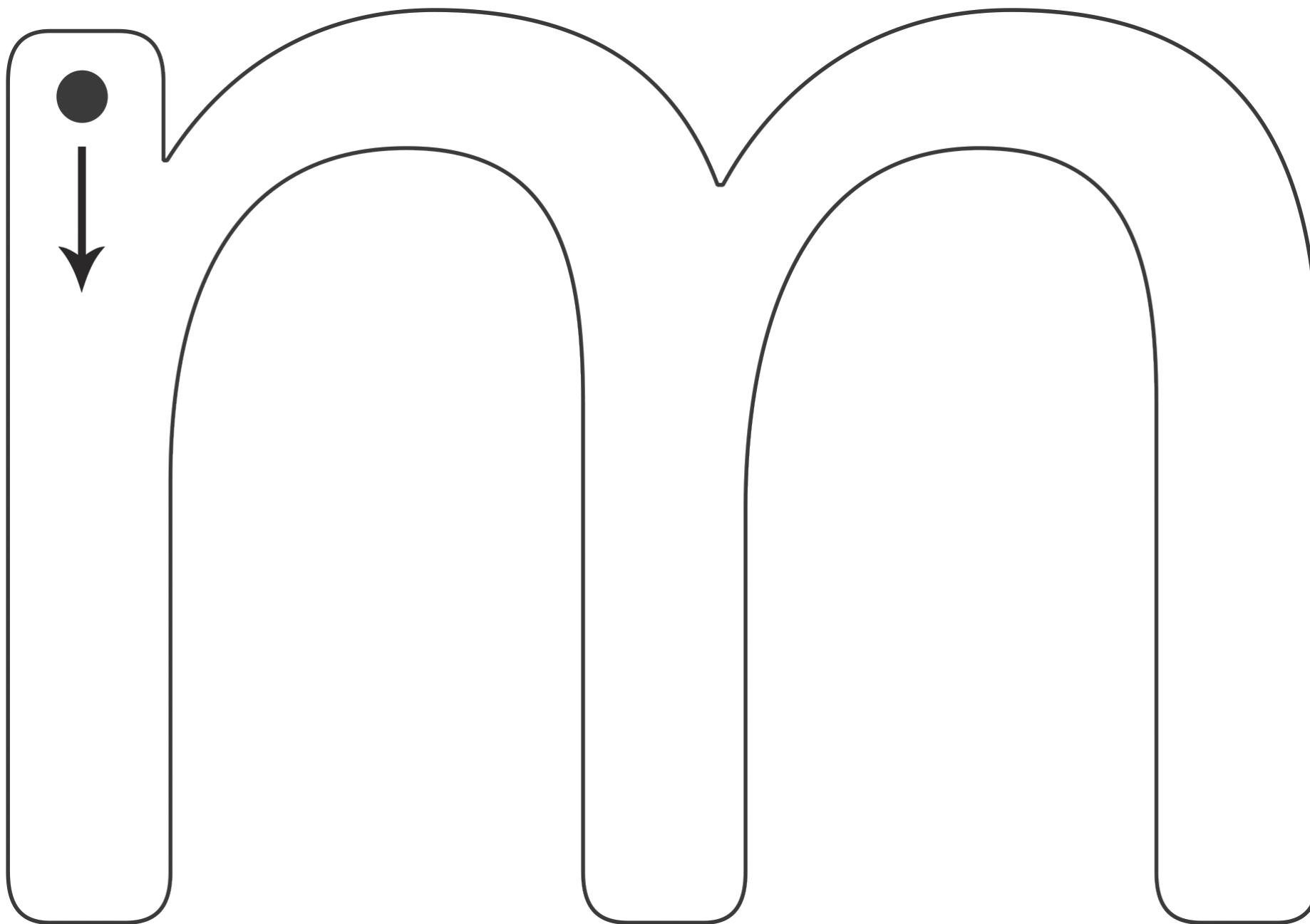


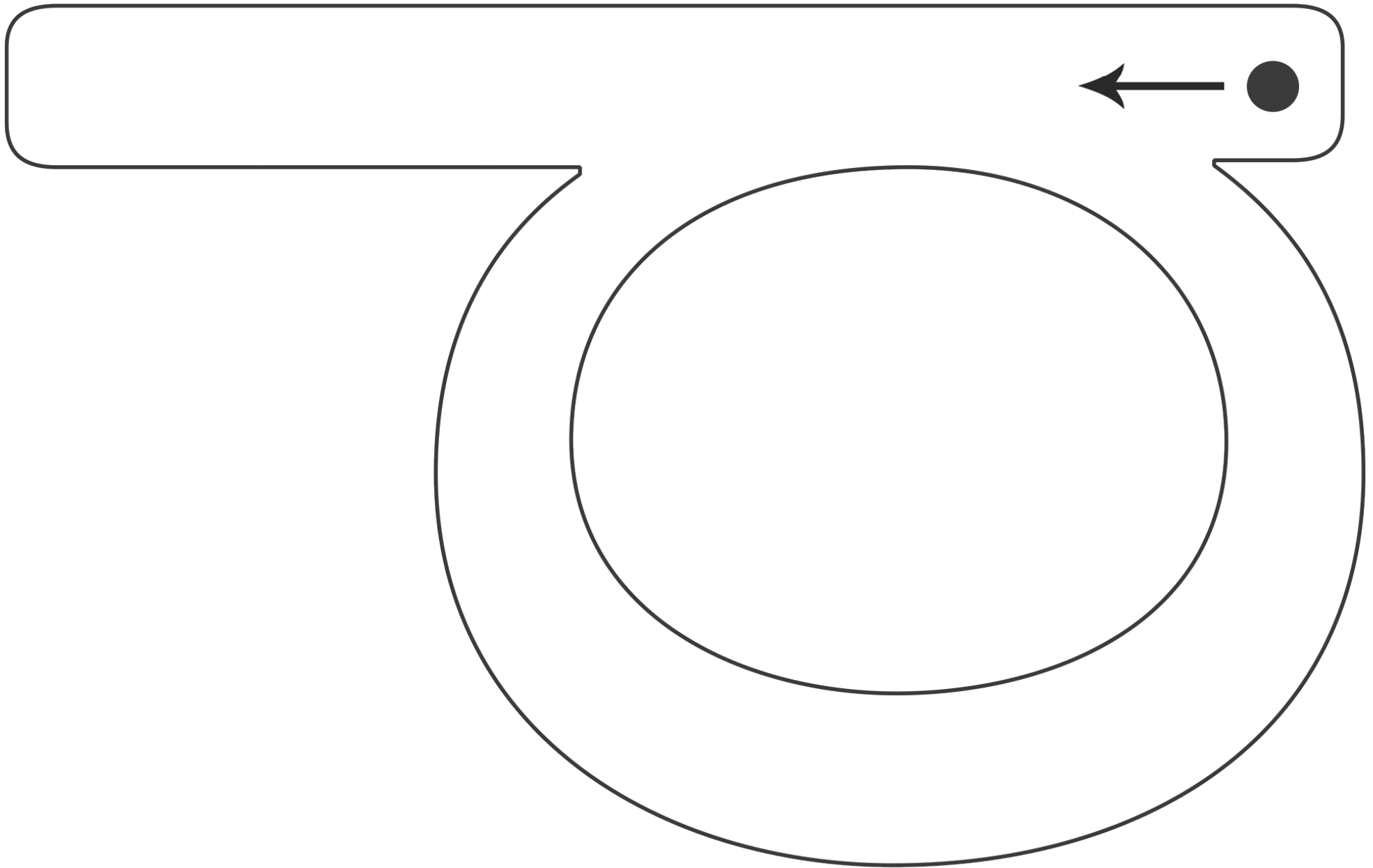
- 4 Hold the page between your finger and your thumb on both sides.



- 5 Bring your hands down and together.







Say-it-and-move-it / Sê-dit-en-skuif-dit / Yibize uyiHambise

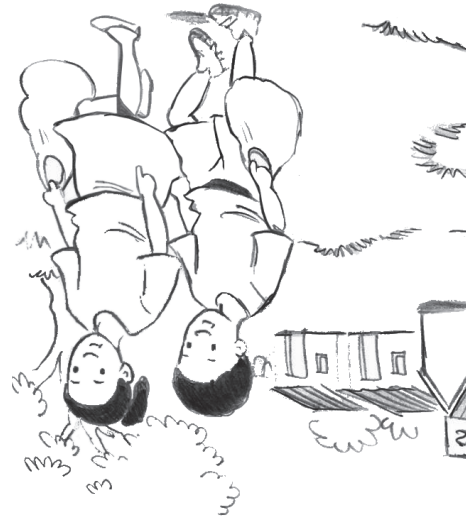
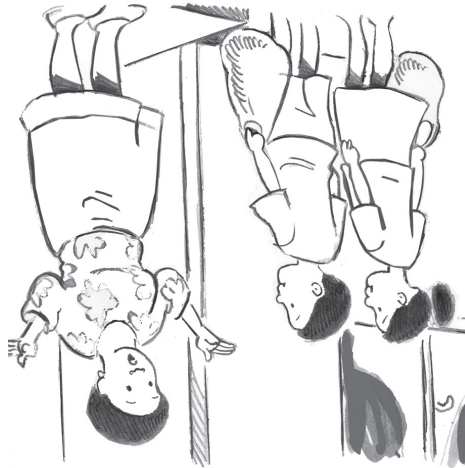


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Say-it-and-move-it / Sê-dit-en-skuif-dit / Yibize uyiHambise

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This book
belongs to:

.....

Spot goes
to the shop





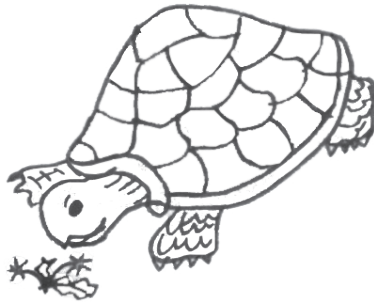
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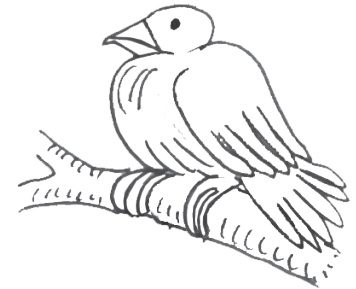
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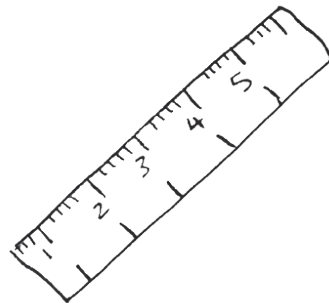
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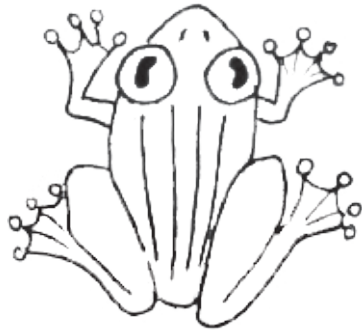
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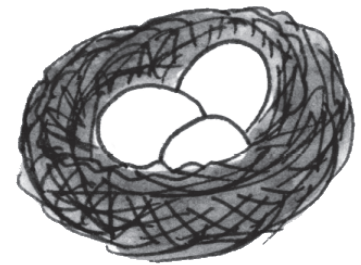
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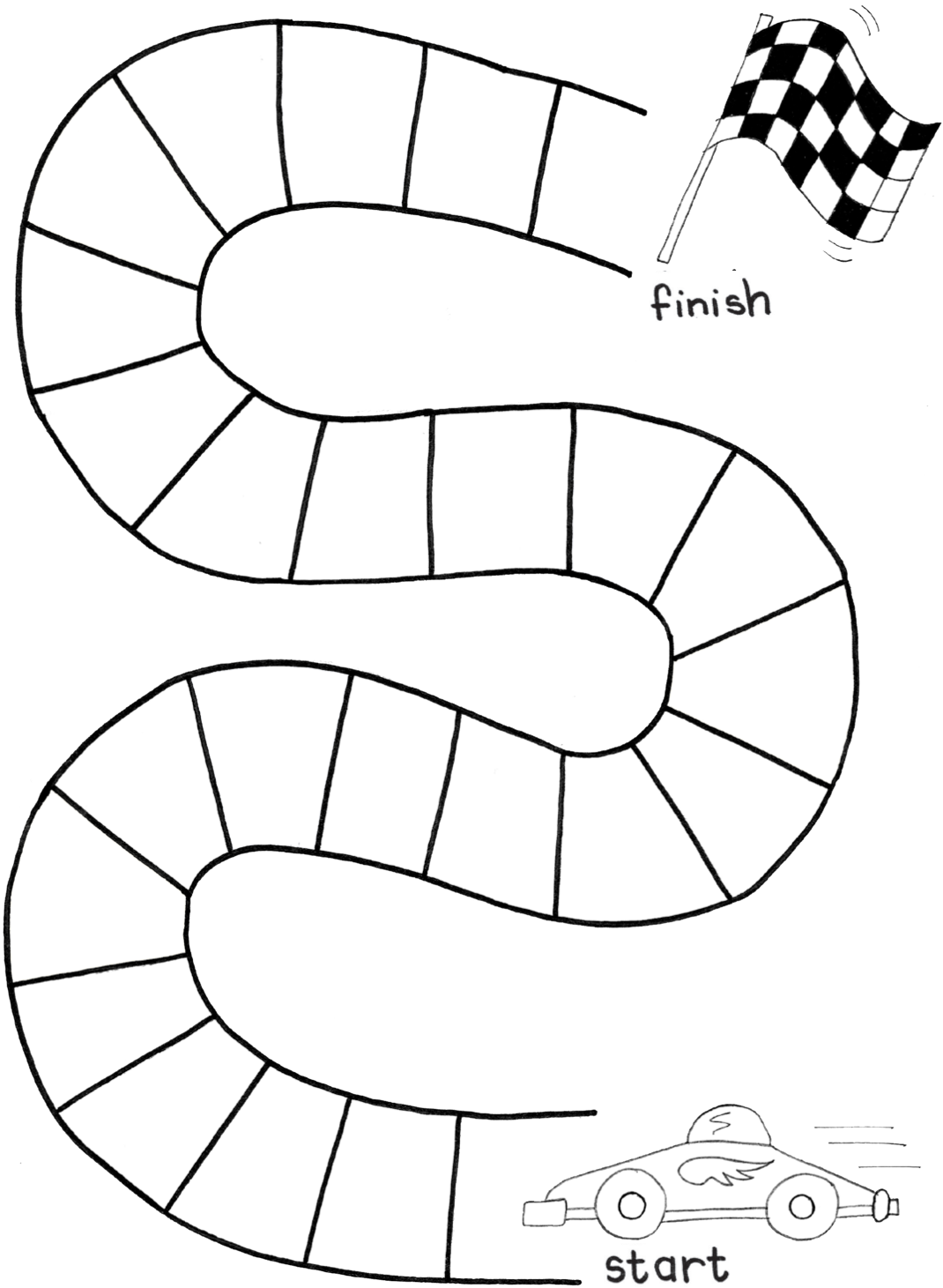
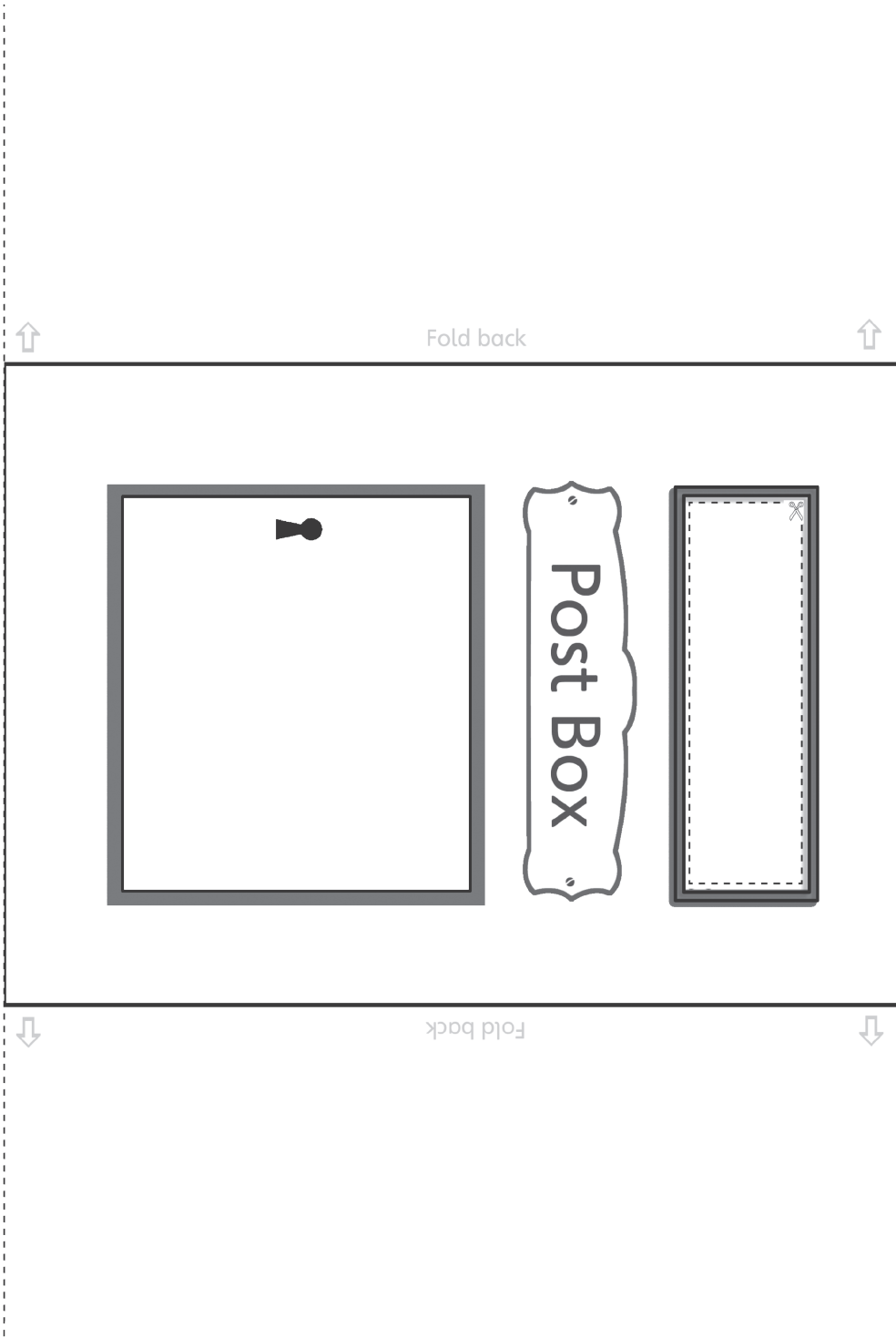


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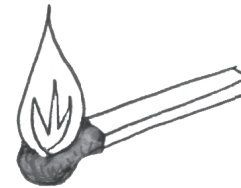
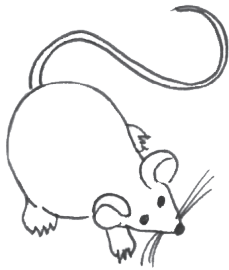
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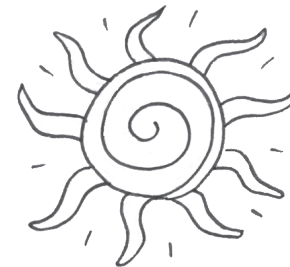
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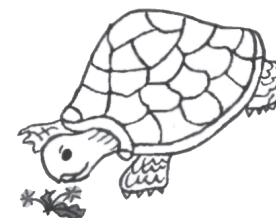
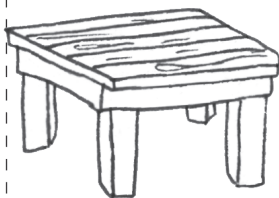
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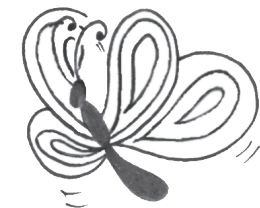
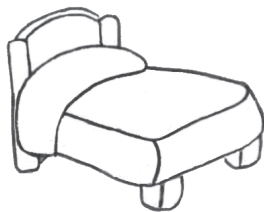
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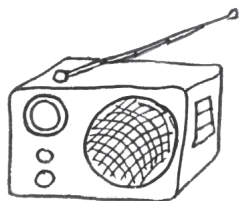
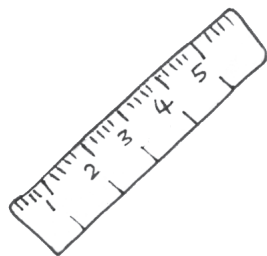


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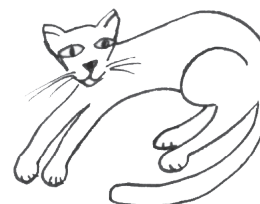
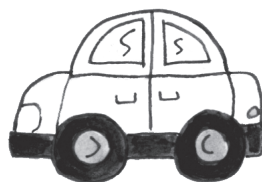




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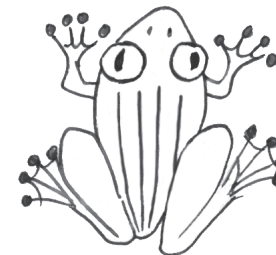
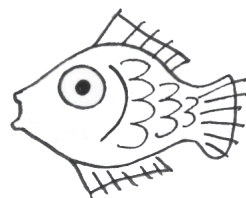
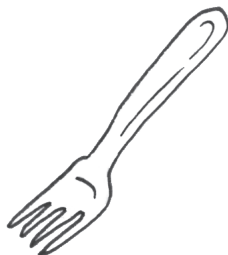


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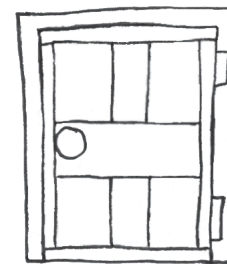
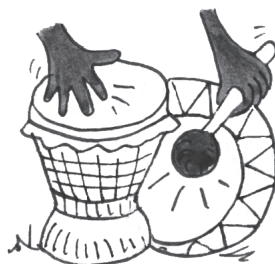


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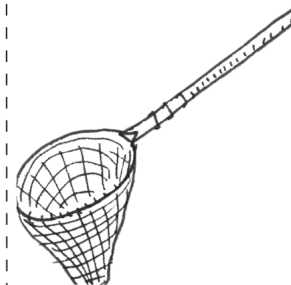
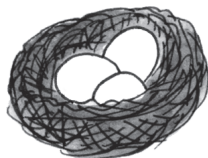




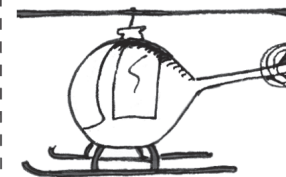
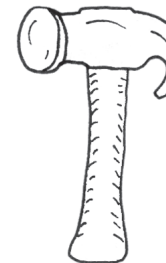
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