



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
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 (a)	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 (a) Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided) Group 3 Independent reading Group 4 Letter puzzles and games Group 5 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 1 Creative play (Art and construction) Group 2 Practising the letter (a) Group 3 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided) Group 4 Independent reading Group 5 Letter puzzles and games
STORY TIME	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 50). 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.

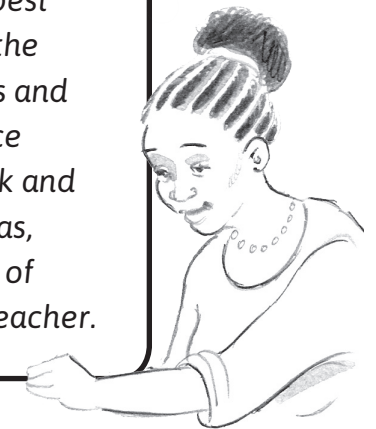
In some of the Stellar activities, we encourage you to work with words from more than one language. This gives you the opportunity to talk with your children about our multilingual world. It also allows you to acknowledge the contribution of children who bring language diversity to your classroom – give 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.

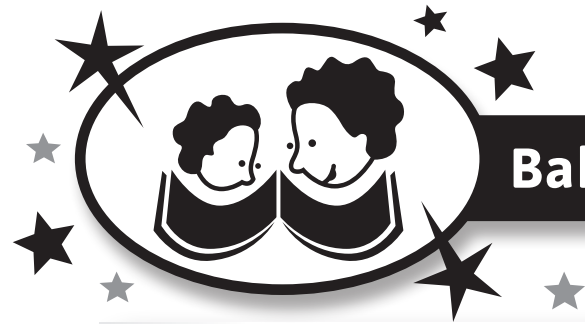
Parents

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.





Baby Bird finds his Mother

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!



Once upon a time there was a Mother Bird and she built a beautiful nest in a big tree. She laid an egg in her nest and sat on it to keep it warm. Mother Bird sat in her nest, on her egg for a long time. But she wanted to go out and find a fat juicy worm. So what do you think she did? Yes, Mother Bird flew away to find worms.

Do you know what happened while she was away? Baby Bird was in the little egg but he wanted to come out. He tapped the egg with his beak.

Then he tapped again and made a little hole. He pushed his beak through the hole and the egg broke, and out came Baby Bird! He was so pleased he shook his little wings. Baby Bird looked around for his Mother and said, "Where is my Mother?" Baby Bird looked up and down and all around, but he could not see her.

"I will go and find my Mother," said Baby Bird. Do you know what he did? He stepped right out of the nest... and fell right down to the ground! Of course, he couldn't fly yet – he was still too small. He was a strong and brave little bird, so he stood up and shook himself, and went off to find his Mother.

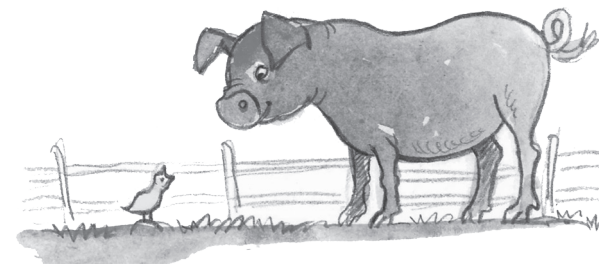


The first animal he saw was a cow. "Cow, are you my Mother?" he asked the cow. "Moooo," said Cow. "I'm not your Mother, but I will give you some milk". "No thank you," said Baby Bird, "I must find my Mother". He walked on, saying, "Where is my Mother? I must find my Mother."



Soon he met a goat. "Goat, are you my Mother?" he asked the goat. "Meh meh" said Goat and shook his hairy head. "Come and eat sweet grass with me." "No thank you," said Baby Bird, "I must find my Mother." Baby Bird walked on saying, "Where is my Mother? I must find my Mother."

The next animal he met was a pig. "Pig, are you my Mother?" asked Baby Bird hopefully. "I am not your Mother but you can come and roll in the mud with me, snort-snort." said Pig. "No thank you!" said Baby Bird, "I must find my Mother."



Baby Bird was feeling sad. He thought to himself, am I ever going to find my Mother? Just then Sam and Zinzi's Gogo was walking down the path with her basket. She heard a little voice saying, "Tweet-tweet." She didn't know that Baby Bird was saying, "Where is my Mother?"

What do you think Gogo Madiswa did? Listen and I will tell you. She picked up Baby Bird and put him in her basket. "You look lost," said Gogo. "I know where your Mother is." She walked down the path towards the trees. Gogo found the nest and very carefully put Baby Bird back into the nest. Then she sat down on a rock and watched. Do you know what happened?



Very soon Mother Bird flew back to the nest with a long worm in her mouth. Baby Bird called excitedly, "Are you my Mother? I know you are my Mother!" She said, "Yes, I am your Mother." He opened his little beak, and ate up the worm. Mother Bird settled down with her baby in the nest. Baby Bird was very happy to be back with his Mother.

And that is the end of the story.



VOCABULARY LIST

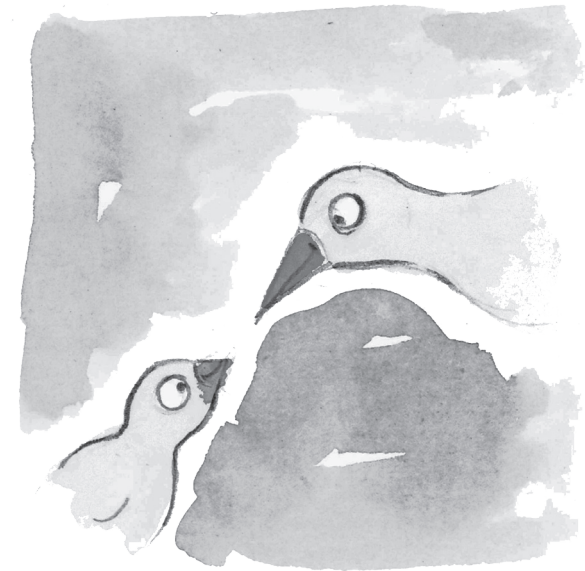
nest; egg; milk; basket; tree; mud; beak; wings; animal; pig; goat; cow; bird; worm; eat; shake; push; tap; break; roll; bump; hatch; fly; up; down; around; beautiful; warm; strong; brave; sweet; sad; excited; lost; found

Two little birds

To the tune of "Two little dickie birds"



Two lit-tle birds have a sto-ry to tell Mother Bird and Ba-by Bird - We
7 know them both so well. Ba-by Bird hatched out his egg and felt all a-
12 lone He did-n't know his Mo-ther went to find a jui-cy worm.



Two little birds
have a story to tell
Mother Bird and Baby Bird –
We know them both so well.
Baby Bird hatched out his egg
and felt all alone
He didn't know his Mother went
to find a juicy worm.

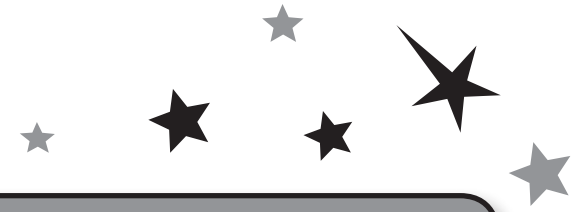
Down stepped Baby Bird
As silly as can be –
He flapped his tiny wings and
Landed near the tree.
He stood up and he shook himself
and looked all around,
He walked about the farm to see
Where Mother could be found.

He met a Cow, he met a Goat,
he met a muddy Pig –
and suddenly the whole world
Felt really really big.
His little heart felt very sad
cause he thought his Mother lost,
But just then Gogo rescued him
And put him in his Nest.

And then came Mother Bird
Swooping from above –
With a long worm in her mouth
And a heart just filled with love.
Two little birds
have a story to tell:
Mother Bird and Baby Bird
We know them both so well.

Two-week planner: Week 1

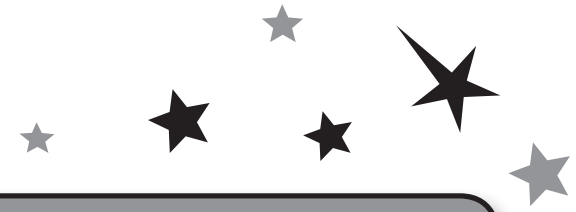
ACTIVITY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
SHOW AND TELL	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
WHOLE CLASS LETTERS AND SOUNDS ACTIVITIES	Tell the story for the first time. Introducing a letter from the story (n)	Forming the letter (multisensory activities)
WHOLE CLASS STORY-BASED ACTIVITIES	Storytelling and building vocabulary	Storytelling and singing
ROTATION GROUP ACTIVITIES	Group 1 Practising the letter (n)	Group 1 Creative play (Art and construction)
	Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 2 Practising the letter (n)
	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 (n)	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 (n)	Group 4 Creative play (Art and construction)
Group 5 Independent reading	Group 5 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 5 Practising the letter (n)
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 (f)	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 (f)	Group 1 Creative play (Fantasy play)
	Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 2 Practising the letter (f)
	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 (f)	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 (f)	Group 4 Creative play (Fantasy play)
Group 5 Independent reading	Group 5 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 5 Practising the letter (f)
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

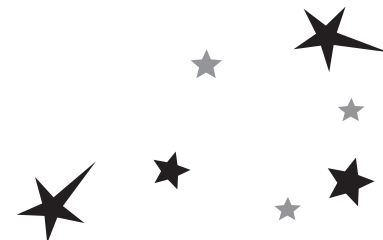
words from all languages – and so much fun to be had while playing with words!

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 **n**, and in Week 2, the focus letter **f**.

YOU WILL NEED

Baby Bird finds his Mother story on page 8; big alphabet chart; board

Tell the story of *Baby Bird finds his Mother* 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: “*nest, no, new, not, now, next.*” Ask the children where they have heard the words before.
- 2 Say to the children: “*Can you hear what sound these words start with: n-n-nest, n-n-new, n-n-not? Yes, you are right, they start with the sound /n/. Listen carefully, here are some more words that start with /n/: nail, night, nine, name, necklace, nurse.*” (Emphasise the beginning sound as you say these words, for example: n-n-name, n-n-night.)

Saying the sound

- 1 Say the sound **/n/** clearly and tell the children to watch your mouth carefully as you make the sound.
- 2 Ask the children to say the sound **/n/**: **n-n-n-n-n**. 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 **n** (‘en’).
- 3 Teach the children an action associated with the sound. For example: the children can shake their heads and wave their index finger from side to side, saying “*no-no-no; n-n-n*” in a cross voice.

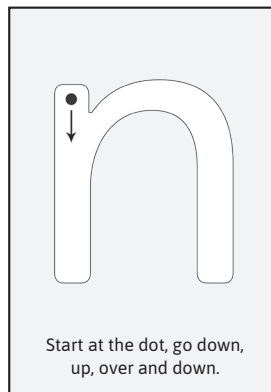
Thinking of words beginning with the sound

- 1 Ask the children if anyone’s name starts with **/n/** or if they can think of any other words that start with the sound **/n/**.

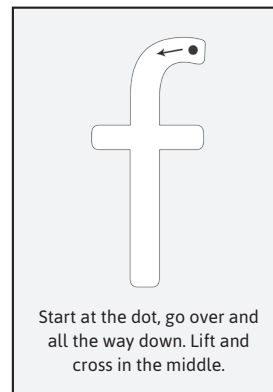


Forming the letter

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



Start at the dot, go down, up, over and down.



Start at the dot, go over and all the way down. Lift and cross in the middle.

Linking the letter to the alphabet chart

- 1 If you have an alphabet chart in your class, show the children the letter **n** on the alphabet chart. Explain that this letter also has a name: 'en'. 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 **n** and should be used in Week 1.*

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

- *Emphasise the words from the story that start with the sound /f/: fly, fat, find, fell, first flew.*
- *Other /f/ words: fridge, funny, finger, family, feathers, fast, fire.*
- *When you form **f** with the children say: "Start at the dot, go over and all the way down. Lift and cross in the middle."*
- *Teach the children an action associated with the sound. They can wriggle all their fingers and say "f-f-f-f".*
- *If you have an alphabet chart in your class, show the children the letter **f** on the alphabet chart. Explain that this letter also has a name: 'eff'.*



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 (/n/) and not the name of the letter ('en').)
- 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 **n** in Week 1: *"Start at the dot, go down, up, over and down."* In Week 2, say the following as you show the children how to form the letter **f**: *"Start at the dot, go over and all the way down. Lift and cross in the middle."*
- 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 **n**.

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



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 in water on the bricks/wall/paving.
- 3 Encourage the children to say the sound the letter makes as they write the letter.



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 50); 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 to 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 them 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 objects that start with the following letters:

Week 1 n: nappy; nails; necklace; nose; nest; nail polish; noodles; naartjie; nectarine

Week 2 f: flag; feather; fishing rod; frog; fish; flamingo; fridge; fan; fireman; fire truck; fingers; flowers; fork; fairy; fence; fly

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?”*

Listening for beginning sounds

- 1 Say to the children: *“Listen to this word: n-n-nose. Can you hear what sound ‘nose’ 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 n.”* Let the children trace over the letter on the lid with their fingers.

Working with more than one letter

- 1 Now, combine objects from two or more letter boxes and spread them on the floor or table.
- 2 Ask children to find objects that start with one of the sounds. For example: *“Ayanda, can you find something that starts with the sound /n/?”* The child must name the object, say the beginning sound and place the object in the correct letter box.
- 3 You can also give each child an object and then say one of the sounds. Ask all those children who have an object starting with that sound to come forward and put the object in the correct letter box.



THURSDAY

Listening for beginning and end sounds

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

What do you hear?

STEPS

- 1 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."
- 2 Ask the children to sit quietly on the carpet and cup their ears with their hands to listen carefully. Explain that you are going to say four words. When you have finished saying all four words, the children can put their hands up if they know what sound they heard at the beginning of all the words.
- 3 Teacher and children: "Listen, listen, loud and clear, what's the first sound that you hear?"
Teacher: "Soap, sweet, swim, supper"
Teacher and children: "Tell me, tell me, what do you hear?"
Children: /s/
- 4 Once children have identified the beginning sound of the words, say the sound slowly and clearly while emphasising the movement of your mouth. Let the children watch you carefully and copy your mouth movements as you pronounce the sound. If possible, let them look in a mirror, watching their mouths as they say the sound.

Use only four of these words at a time in the activity. Go back to the same sound as often as you need to, using different combinations of words to keep it interesting.

/s/: soap; sweet; swim; supper; surprise, sand, stick, swing

/r/: rain; run; red; rose; ring; radio; rice; rhinoceros

/b/: banana; breakfast; beautiful; brave; big; beetle; bucket; bell

/c/: candle; cucumber; clothes; cabbage; cream; carrot; carpet

/m/: monkey; man; meat; moon; mushroom; moth; music; mouse

/p/: paper; party; pasta; peanuts; pear; pets; pig; puppy

/n/: nail; night; nine; no; new; name; necklace; nurse

/f/: fridge; funny; finger; family; feathers; fast; fantastic; fire

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: baby; grandmother; sister; brother; grandfather; happiness; animal; shelter; beautiful; juicy

What am I saying? (multisyllabic words)**STEPS**

- 1 Choose a word from the list and say the word slowly, breaking it into syllables. For example: **beau | ti | ful**.
- 2 Ask the children: "What word am I saying? **beau | ti | ful**." They must blend the syllables together to make a word.
- 3 Repeat the steps above with the other words on the list, and then include some words from other languages spoken by children in your class

This activity can be done in any language, as the activity focuses on children learning the skill of blending or putting syllables together to make a word. Try this activity with a few of these multisyllabic words. Ask children to help with your pronunciation if needed!

Xhosa: ihagu (pig); intaka (bird); igusha (sheep); inkomo (cow); amaphiko (wings); ukuqandusela (hatch); umthi (tree); ibhokhwe (goat); umakhulu (grandmother); inesi (nest)

Afrikaans: voëltjie (baby bird); pragtig (pretty); honger (hungry); eiertjie (egg); snawel (bill or beak); vlerkies (wings); veertjies (feathers); hartseer (sad); mandjie (basket); verdwaal (lost)

If the children in your class speak other languages, ask them to give you a multisyllabic 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 *Baby Bird finds his Mother* story while learning new vocabulary.

YOU WILL NEED

- Puppets and props: Mother Bird; Baby Bird; nest; egg; hatching egg; Cow; Goat; Pig; Gogo; tree; a piece of thick wool/string for a worm
- Objects or picture cards for a few words from the vocabulary list
- Story, rhyme and vocabulary list on pages 8-11.

Taking turns is a crucial part of being a good communicator. Model this skill as often as possible when in conversation with the children. Acknowledge and praise children who take turns to listen and speak in class, group and individual situations. You can use the conversation between *Baby Bird* and the animals as an example.



STEPS

Before you tell the story

- 1 Say the rhyme ***Two eyes to see*** (page 8) 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 **Baby Bird finds his Mother.***”
- 3 Relate the story to the children’s lives. Ask them what they know about birds, nests, eggs and what birds eat. Show them the puppets and the props.
- 4 Introduce the characters, for example: “*This is **Mother Bird** and **Baby Bird**. These animals are in the story too – **Cow**, **Pig** and **Goat**. And this is **Gogo Madiswa.***” Ask the children to say good morning to them.
- 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 means, using simple words.
 - 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.



It takes courage to communicate, especially in a second or third language. Try to be aware of this and acknowledge the children's attempts at communicating their ideas and thoughts. Remember that children learn words gradually through hearing and using new words over and over again. Hearing new words once or twice is not enough.



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: *"Do you think Baby Bird is going to find his Mother?"*
- 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: *"Who can remember what the cow said to Baby Bird?"* Praise and elaborate on even the simplest answers. For example: *"Yes, that's right. The cow said that she was not Baby Bird's Mother. She did offer Baby Bird some milk but Baby Bird didn't want any."*
- 2** Ask open-ended questions to stimulate discussion: *"Do you think it is a good idea for baby birds to jump out of their nest to go and look for their mother?"*
- 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: 'farm animals'.



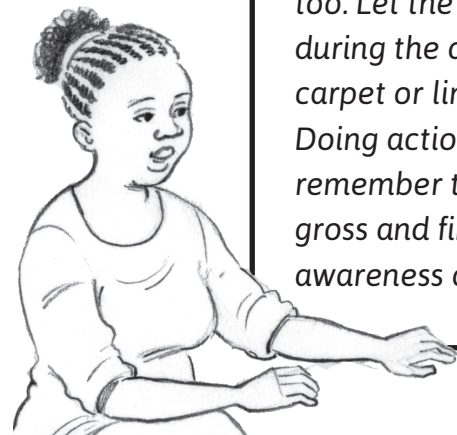
TUESDAY Storytelling and singing

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

YOU WILL NEED

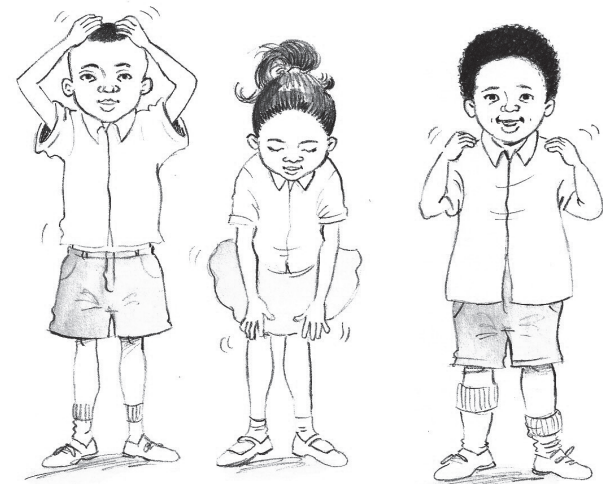
Words and music for the song *Two little birds* (page 11)

Sing the song every day! Remember to do 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. Doing actions while singing the songs helps children remember the words. It also helps them to develop gross and fine motor skills, co-ordination and awareness of their body in space.



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 actions for 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; clothes for Gogo; a basket; feathers; material/objects/masks for the animals to wear; nest; egg

STEPS

- 1 Sing *Two little birds*.
- 2 Choose six children to play the characters in the story (Mother Bird; Baby Bird; Cow; Goat; Pig; Gogo Madiswa).
- 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 to tell the story.
- 5 Start the story like this: "Once upon a time there was a Mother Bird and she built a beautiful nest." The child playing Mother Bird pretends to make a nest.
- 6 Continue telling the story in this way. The children will do the actions to match the narrator's words. "Mother Bird wanted to go out and find a fat, juicy worm to eat." The child playing Mother Bird flies away.
- 7 The rest of the class watches the role play.

- 8 Now, if you think your children are ready, organise the class into groups of seven (one child is the narrator). Help the children decide who is going to play each character and the narrator.
- 9 Let the children have time to practise the role play as a group.
- 10 If there is time, let some of the groups present their role play to the class.



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



Jumble up the pictures and try to tell the story in this sequence – the children will find it very funny! The silly story will help to make the correct sequence obvious and meaningful for them.

STEPS

- 1 Sing *Two little birds*.
- 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?”

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)



- 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?”
- 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.

Children learn how their words and ideas can be recorded as you model the writing of the song, *Two little birds*.

YOU WILL NEED

A large piece of paper; a thick black marker

STEPS

- 1 Ask the children to sing *Two little birds* with you and do actions.
- 2 Then say: "Now I would like you to help me to write the words of this song. Which verse is your favourite?" Help the children to identify their favourite verse.
- 3 Sing each line of the favourite verse together with the children. As you sing the words, write them down so that the children can see how written words link to the words we say, or sing!
- 4 When you have finished writing the song, sing it again slowly with the children, pointing to each word as you sing.



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 for each child (page 54); additional white paper for each child; scissors; glue
- Photocopied and folded little book for each child (page 55)
- 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.

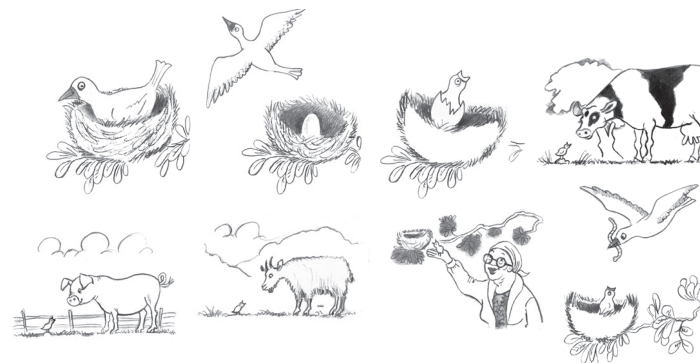


*Photocopy a little book for each child before the lesson.
Fold all the little books in advance.*

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.



Encourage your learners to 'read' their little books to their younger siblings so that they can also enjoy the story of Baby Bird. This will help to make stories part of the family's routine.



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

YOU WILL NEED

Baby Bird finds his Mother Big Book



Explain to the children that in English and many other languages we read the text from the top of the page to the bottom and from left to right. Pointing to the words as you read is a simple way of showing children how the text flows through the 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.
- 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

An activity page; an activity page photocopied per child (page 56); coloured pencils/crayons



This is a new activity and the children will need much support from you to organise their thinking and their work space. Take the children through the process step by step and allow them enough time to complete each step before moving to the next task on the list. Encourage the children to 'have-a-go' and keep reminding them to trust their choices and decisions.

Let the children decide where to place the objects on the page. Some children will create a 'story' and put all the objects together, others will simply draw the objects randomly on the page. Both are correct if the child has drawn what is on the list.



STEPS

- 1 Tell the children to look at the list on the activity page and to talk about what they see (numbers, pictures and words).
- 2 Tell the children they are now going to do a fun activity called 'read and do'. They must read each line and do what it says using the blank space on the page.
- 3 Read the first line together again. Tell the children to draw one tree but don't tell them where to draw the tree.
- 4 Ask if any of the children can 'read' what to do next on the list; they must draw one nest.
- 5 Continue in this way with each of the instructions.
- 6 Now read each of the instructions again and say to the children: "Have you drawn one tree? If you have, then tick that on your list."
- 7 Continue checking and ticking each instruction until the end of the list.



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.

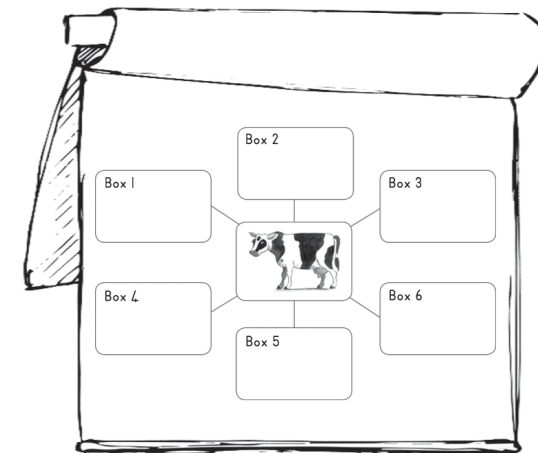
YOU WILL NEED

A piece of paper with a space in the middle and six bubbles drawn in a mind map format; puppets from the *Baby Bird finds his Mother* story; a thick black marker

STEPS

- 1 Say to the children: "Today we are going to write our own story about one of the animals in the *Baby Bird* story. To start, let's choose which animal to write about." Show the children the animal puppets. Once you have decided which animal to write about, place the animal puppet in the middle of the mind map.
- 2 Use the following questions to guide the story-writing process:
 - **Box 1:** Ask the children to think of a name for the animal. Write it down.
 - **Box 2:** Ask the children for ideas about where the animal lives. Describe this place in a sentence.
 - **Box 3:** Discuss what the animal likes to eat; once you have agreed, write a sentence.
 - **Box 4:** Ask the children for ideas about something the animal did one day. Choose one of the ideas and write a sentence.

- **Box 5:** Talk about what happened next; write the children's words down in a sentence.
 - **Box 6:** Discuss with the children how they think the story should end and write a sentence.
- 3 Now read the story to the children using the boxes to help you.
 - 4 Ask the children if they like the story. If there are any changes they would like to make, write them on the mind map. Then read the story again.
 - 5 If there is time, you can ask some of the children to illustrate the story. Stick the story on the wall.



Children learn to listen carefully and follow verbal instructions.



Try to avoid talking too much during listening activities. Let children focus on the instructions without having to process additional auditory information.

YOU WILL NEED

Per child: an activity page (page 57); coloured crayons (pink, blue, green, yellow); alarm clock; cellphone



STEPS

- 1 Begin today's listening activity by saying: "I want you to close your eyes and then I am going to hide something in the classroom." Hide a loudly ticking alarm clock or any noisy thing (could be a cellphone playing soft music). Choose one child to look for it while the rest of the class is very quiet.
- 2 Seat children at tables and settle everyone down so that the class is quiet and calm.
- 3 Now say the name of each colour and ask the children to pick up the matching crayon in front of them. Speak in a clear, steady voice.

- 4 Talk about what they see on the page (two trees, a worm, two birds and a nest).
- 5 Now give the instructions slowly and clearly:
 - "Pick up your green crayon. Colour the tall tree green."
 - "Pick up your pink crayon. Draw a short pink worm under the long worm."
 - "Pick up your blue crayon. Colour the bird with the long tail blue."
 - "Pick up your yellow crayon. Draw a small yellow egg in the nest next to the big egg."

Here's another idea if you have extra time. Ask the children to clap twice when you make a true statement about things that can fly. Try a few examples together first.

- A bird can fly (clap clap)
- A dog can fly (no clap)
- A bee can fly (clap clap)
- A cow can fly (no clap)



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.

Week 1: My favourite part of the story

STEPS

- 1 Write *Baby bird finds his Mother* 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 Baby Bird spoke to Cow?" Encourage the children to draw their favourite part of the story. Ask the children if they would like to write something about their picture.
- 3 Make a comment or ask a question about the drawing, such as: "I like the way you used the letter **b** for bird in your writing – good thinking!"
- 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: "Baby... Bird ... ate ... the ... What word did you want to say next? Worm. I am going to write worm."
- 5 Write exactly what the child tells you, word for word 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.

YOU WILL NEED

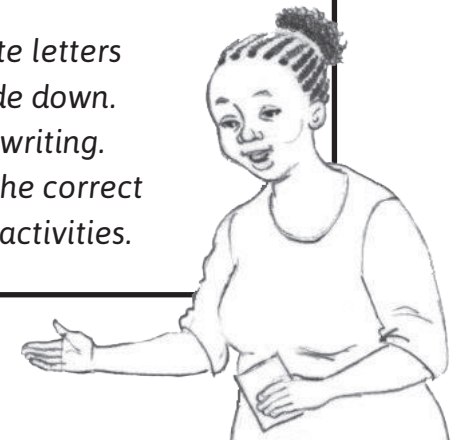
A blank A4 page for each child; crayons

As the year progresses, children may start using single letters to represent some sounds in words. Make a comment when you notice letters in their writing.

Children might write letters backwards or upside down.

Don't correct their writing.

They will practise the correct formation in other activities.



Week 2: My own idea

STEPS

- 1 Write **The day I got lost** 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 Remind the children that Baby Bird was looking for his Mother. Ask the children: "Have you ever been lost? What did you do?" They may have to imagine they were lost. They must draw a picture to show where they got lost and how they felt. Ask the children if they would like to write something about their picture.
- 3 Make a comment or ask a question about the drawing, such as: "Did you feel scared?" or "I can see you are trying very hard with your writing today. Well done!"
- 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: "I ... got ... lost ... in ... a ... very ... big ... shop."
- 5 Write exactly what the child tells you, word for word, 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.

Here's another idea linked to the story: write **Which animals did Baby Bird meet?** on the children's pages and follow the steps for Week 2, but ask your class to draw one of the animals that Baby Bird met along the way.



ACTIVITY Creative play

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

YOU WILL NEED

Glue; scissors; scrap paper; cardboard; grass; feathers; sticks; paper plates or old cardboard boxes; pictures/real nests

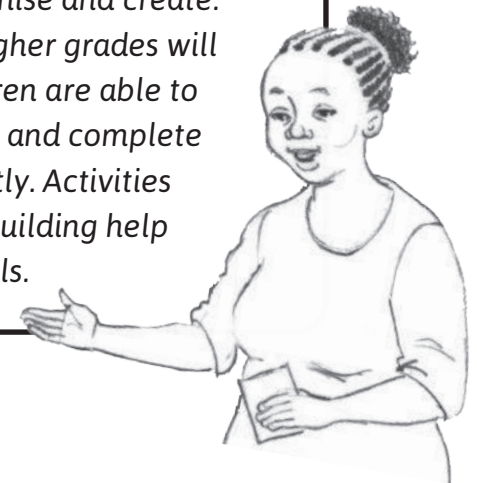
Week 1: Art and construction

STEPS

- 1 Tell the children to look carefully at everything that has been set out on the table and to talk about the objects they can see.
- 2 Show the children a nest or pictures of a nest and tell them that they are going to make a nest!
- 3 Explain that they can use anything on the table for the nest and can make it any way they want to.
- 4 If children finish quickly, suggest they make eggs to go in their nest.



This activity may become noisy. Monitor the children's behaviour. Children who have difficulty with organisation and/or starting a task may become playful and disruptive. Help them to choose the material they want to use for their nest. Once they get started the children tend to become more confident and focused. If we always give children very neat and well-planned tasks, they never learn to sort, organise and create. Learning in the higher grades will require that children are able to plan and organise and complete tasks independently. Activities such as this nest building help develop these skills.



Week 2: Fantasy play

STEPS

- 1 Ask the group leader to take the group to the fantasy corner and to settle down quickly.
- 2 Ask the children to tell you the rules of the fantasy corner.
- 3 Ask the children what new props they see in the fantasy corner. Talk about how we go to the doctor when we are sick. Pets also go to a special kind of doctor when they are sick – we call this doctor a vet. Animals are often very scared when they go to the vet so we must be very gentle and kind to them.
- 4 Ask the children what game they think they could play with the props. Help them if necessary by asking: “How about playing **At the vet?** Welcome to Mike’s Vet. Here is his table where he looks at the sick animals. Zulpha is the nurse that helps the vet to treat the animals. You are all here with your sick pets (point to the soft toys). You must give the name of your animal to Lindo who is the receptionist and explain what is wrong with your pet. Lindo will write the names down and tell you when it is your turn to see the vet.”
- 5 Visit the corner at least once to observe and encourage the children’s game. For example, you could walk up to the receptionist and say: “Hello, my name is Ms Zama. I am here with my teeny tiny kitten. Her name is Baby. She is very sick.” If this doesn’t get the receptionist to respond, ask the people in the waiting room for help: “Listen to her crying, ‘Meow, meow, meow!’”

YOU WILL NEED

The following props: a doctor’s kit, for example a stethoscope; crayons or pens for injections; an empty pill box; nurse or doctor’s clothes; soft animal toys; a note book and pencil/pen



ACTIVITY Letter puzzles and games

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

YOU WILL NEED

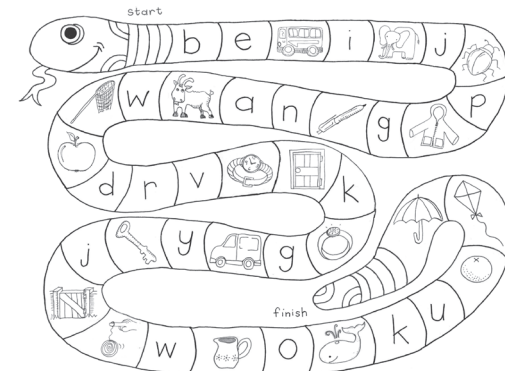
Two letter snake game boards (A3 size if possible); two large dice

Letter snake game

STEPS

- 1 Place the large game board on the carpet with two to three children seated around it.
- 2 Explain the rules to the children:
 - Children begin by putting their counters on the snake’s head.
 - Children take turns to throw the die and move the counter the correct number of spaces.
 - If they land on a letter, they must say the sound and move their counter forward to a picture that starts with that letter.
 - The first child to reach the end of the snake is the winner and the game is over.
- 3 Once children have played this game a few times, you can introduce a new rule: if they land on a picture, they must name the picture, say the beginning sound and then move back to the corresponding letter.

If children are finding it challenging to play the games independently, it might be a good idea to invite some parents to come in and help with this rotation group. Play the games together with the parents before the school day, so they feel confident to work with the children.



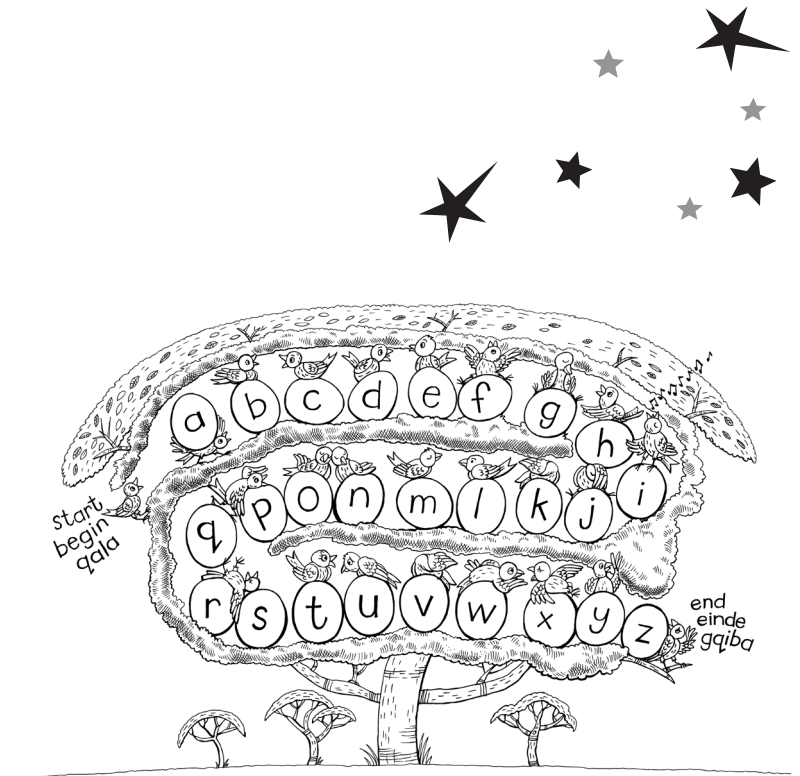
Word bird game

YOU WILL NEED

Two word bird game boards (A3 if possible) (page 59); two dice and counters

STEPS

- 1 Place the large game board on the carpet with two to three children seated around it.
- 2 Explain the rules to the children:
 - Children put their counters on Begin.
 - Each child takes a turn to throw the die and moves the counter the correct number of spaces following the path on the word bird.
 - When they land on a letter, they must say the sound that letter makes and name something that begins with that sound.
 - The first child to reach the end of the birds is the winner and the game is over.



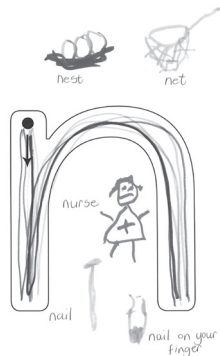
ACTIVITY Practising the letter

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

Rainbow letters

STEPS

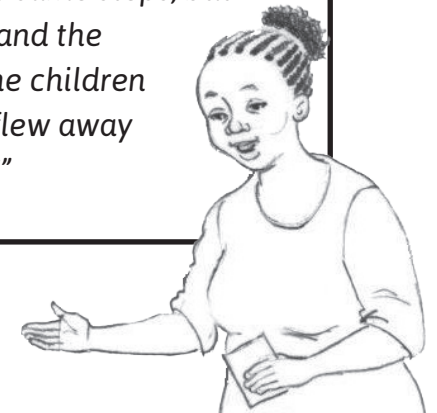
- 1 In Week 1, practise the letter **n**. Point to the letter **n** and say: "Do you remember this letter? It makes the sound /n/ like in nnnest, nnnew and nnnnose." Ask the children to say **nnnnn** with you.
- 2 Ask the children to trace the shape of the letter with their fingers, starting from the dot: go down, up, over and down.
- 3 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.
- 4 Ask the children to think of things that start with the sound /n/ and to draw as many /n/ pictures as they can on their page.



YOU WILL NEED

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

The activity steps focus on the letter **n** and should be used in Week 1. In Week 2, follow the same steps, but focus on the letter **f** and the sound /f/. Remind the children that: "Mother Bird ffflew away to fffind fffat worms!"



ACTIVITY 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 *Baby Bird finds his Mother* Big Book and sequence cards in the book corner. Some children will value the opportunity to read and retell the familiar story.



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.



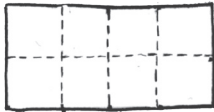
How to make a little book

YOU WILL NEED

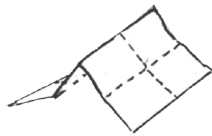
Photocopy of the little book for this story

STEPS

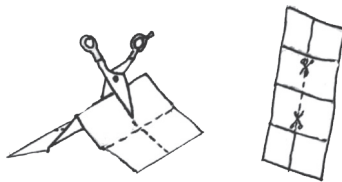
1 Fold an A4 page into eight pieces. Unfold.



2 Fold the page in half.

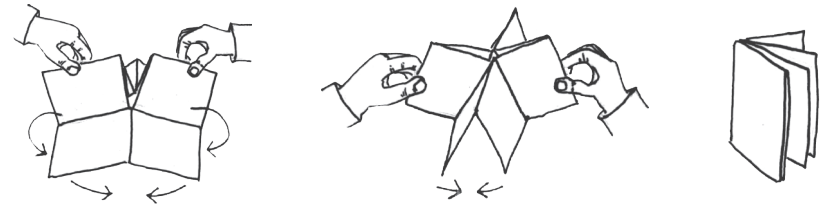


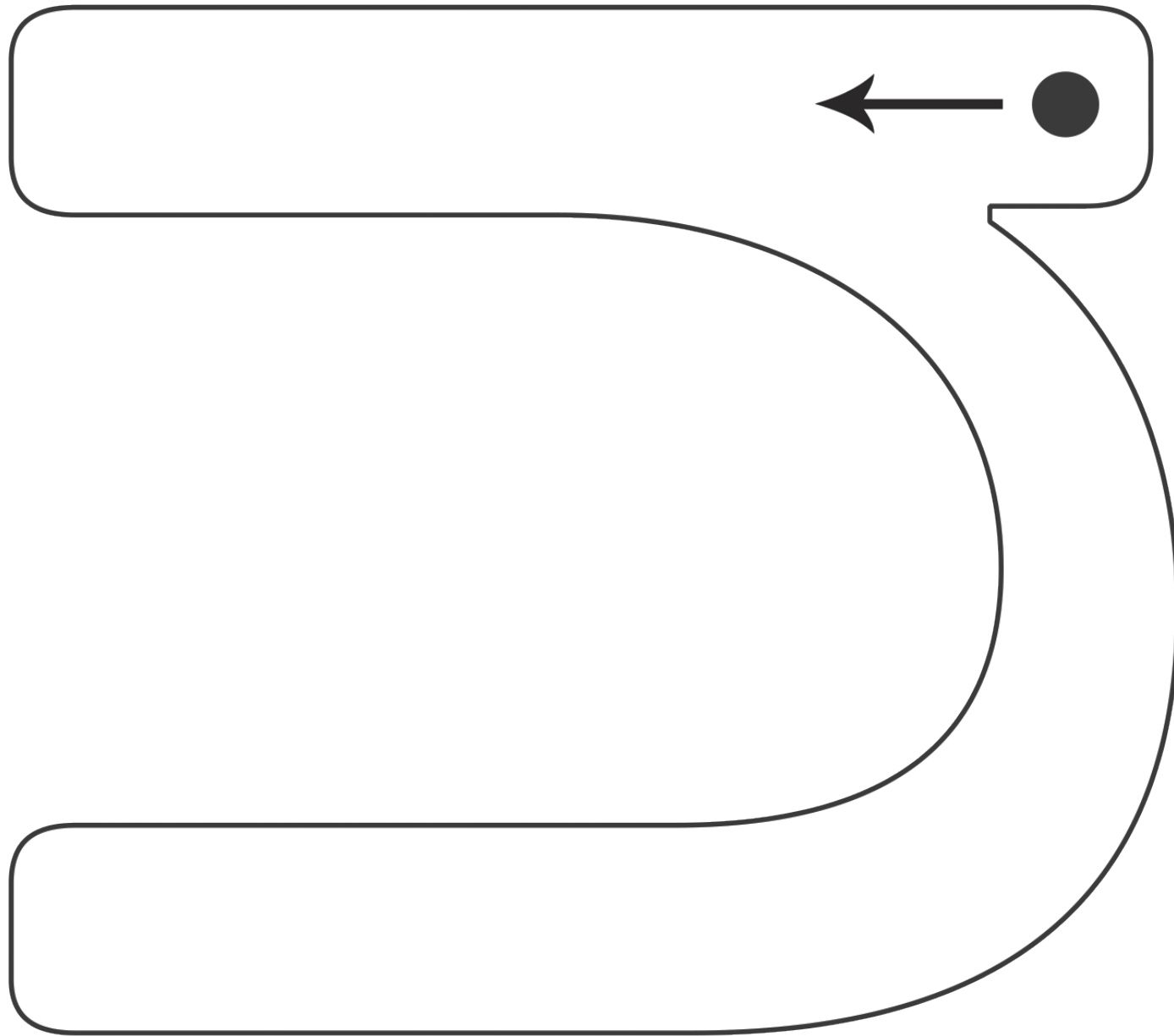
3 Cut on the middle fold.

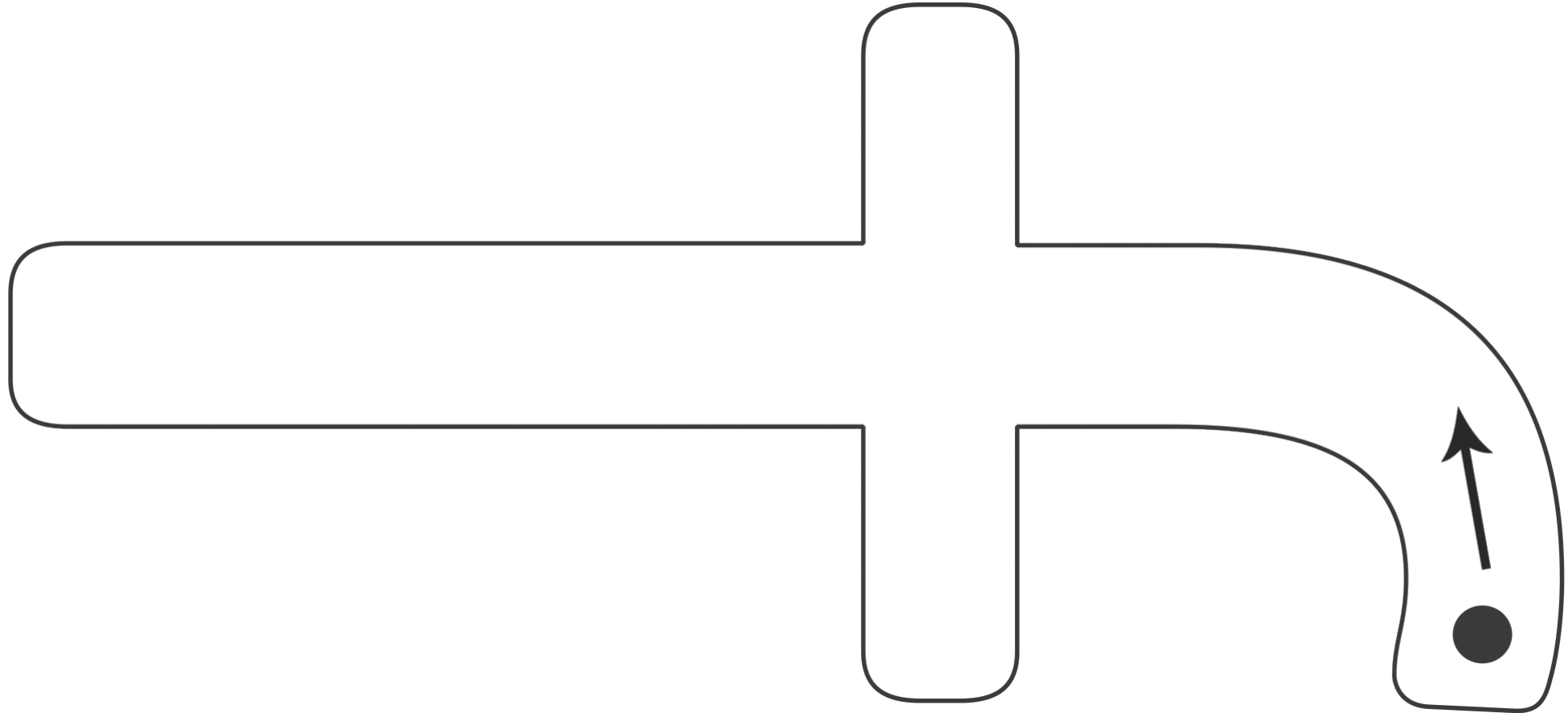


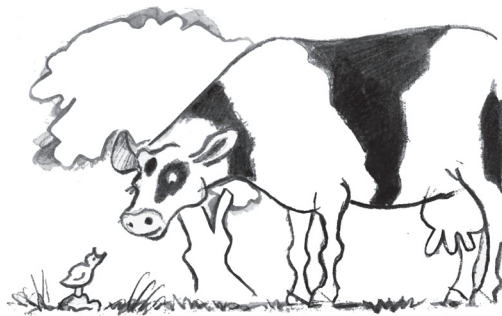
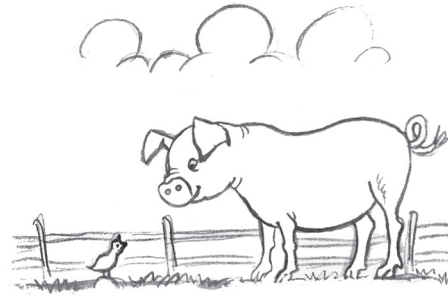
4 Hold the page between your finger and your thumb on both sides.

5 Bring your hands down and together.









7



9



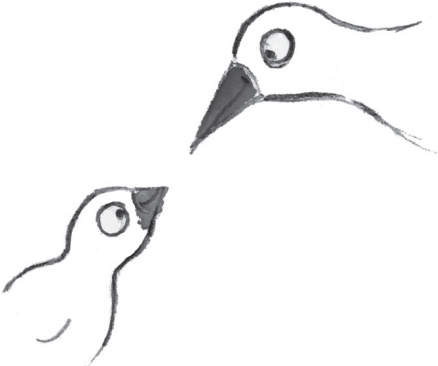
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






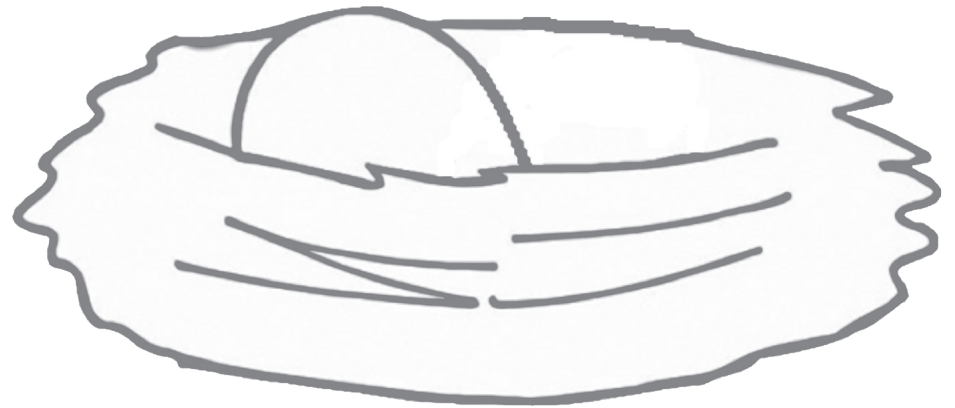
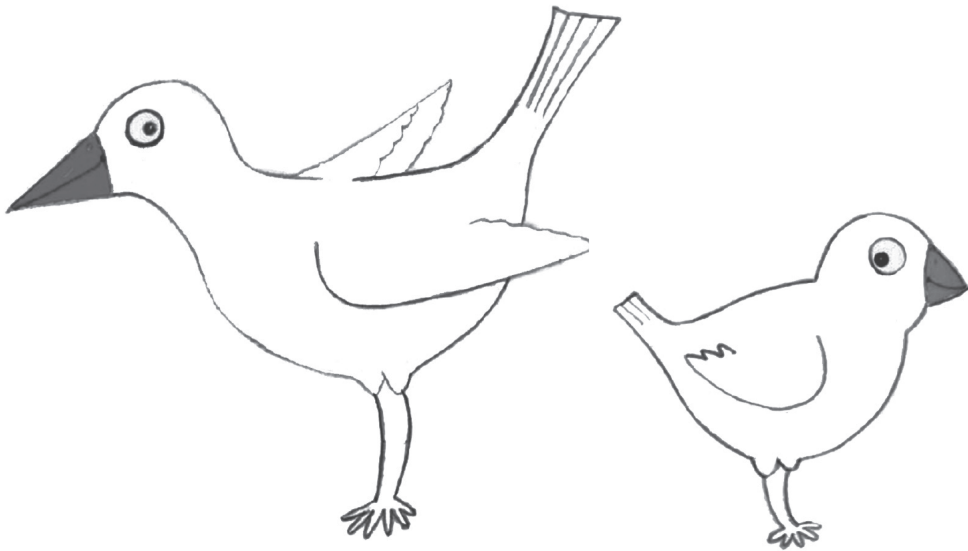
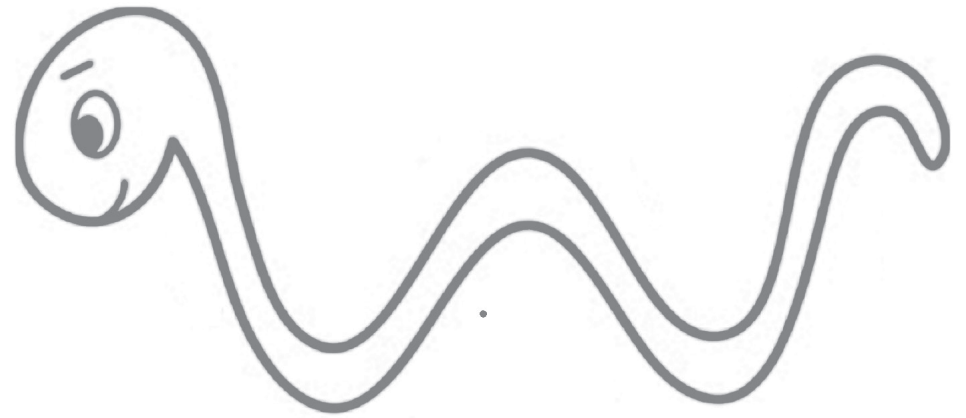
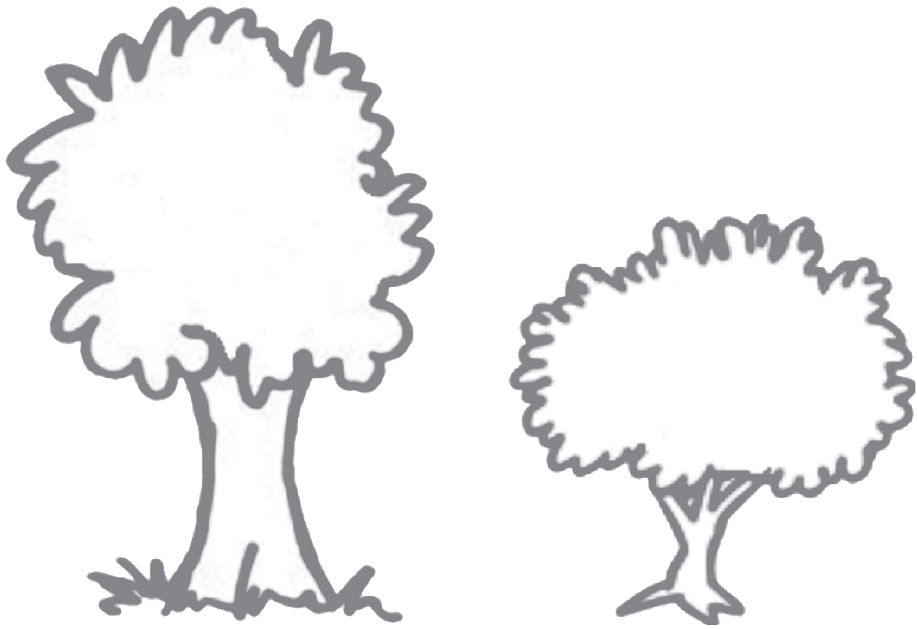
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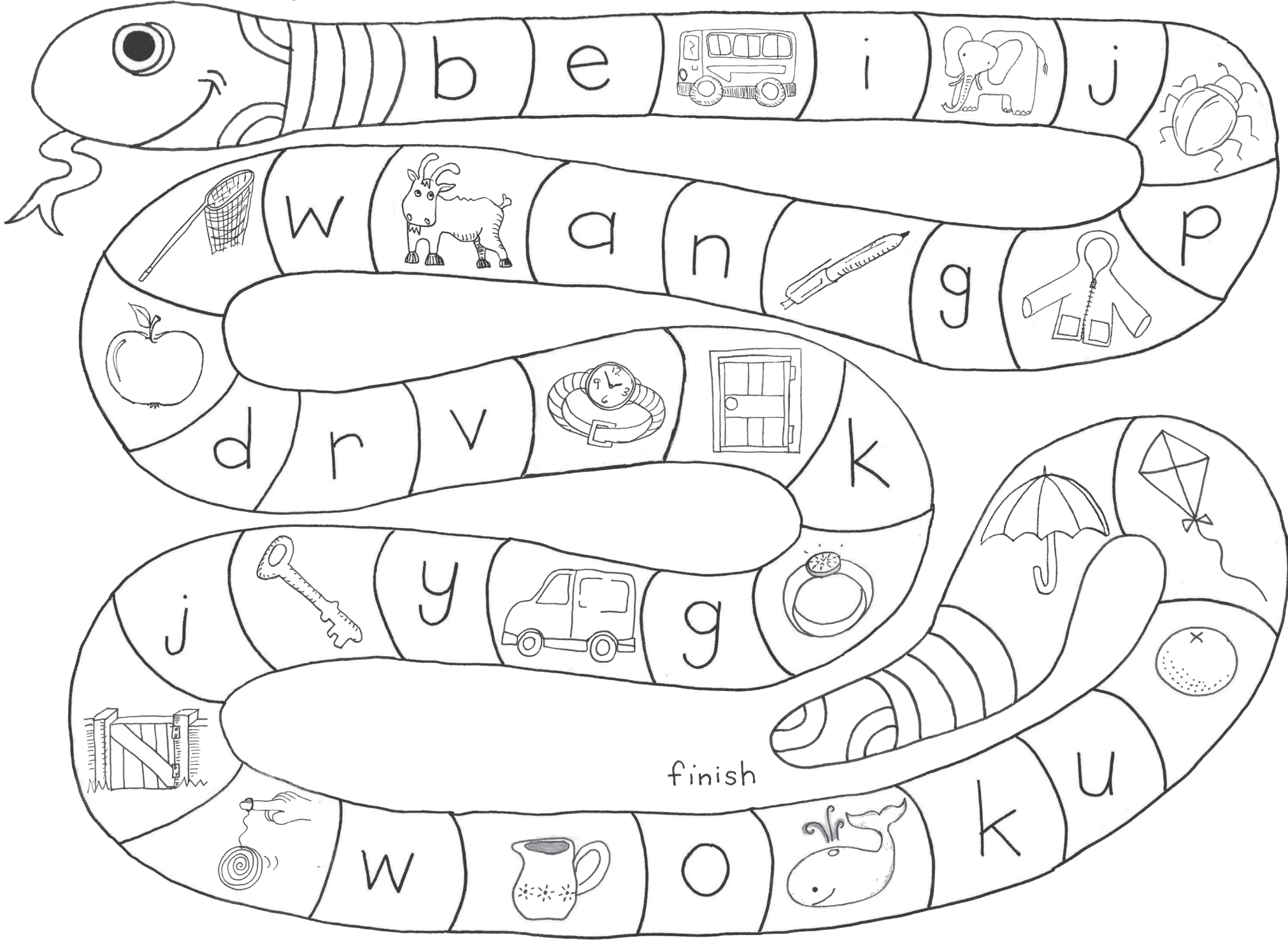
Baby Bird
finds his
mother



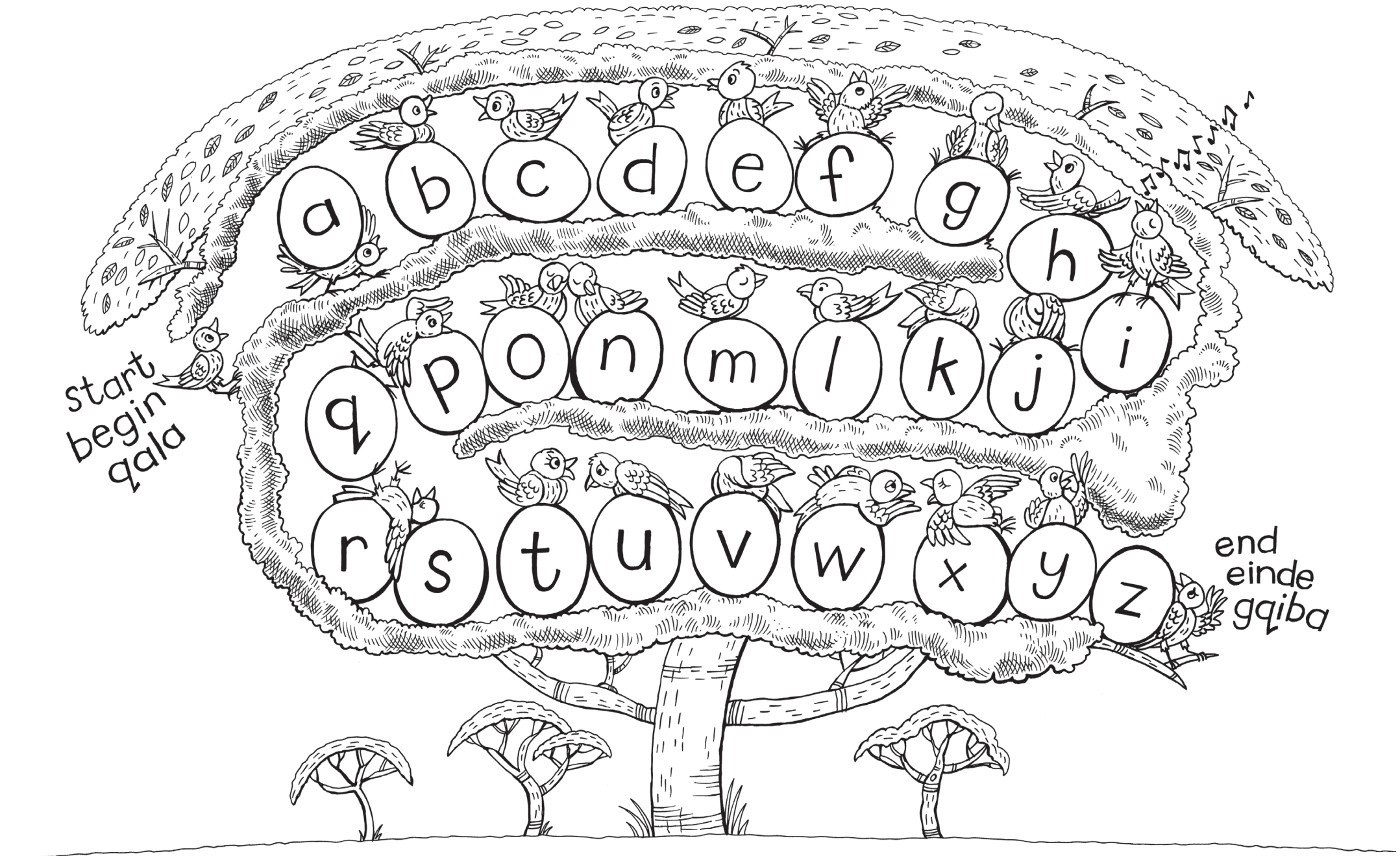

				
				
tree	bird	pig	goat	cow



start



finish



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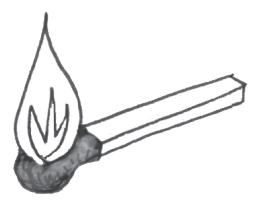
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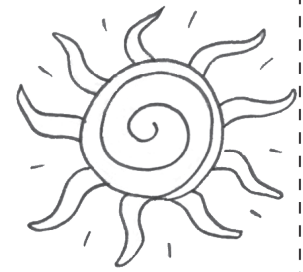
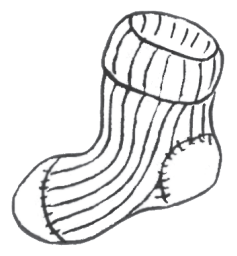




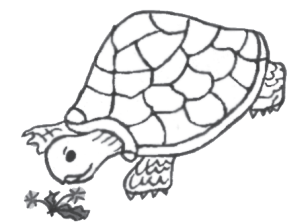
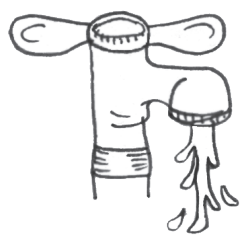
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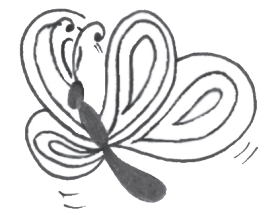
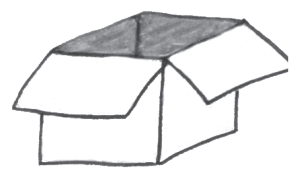
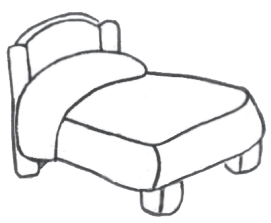
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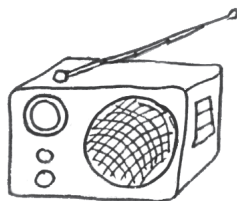
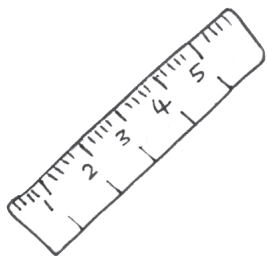


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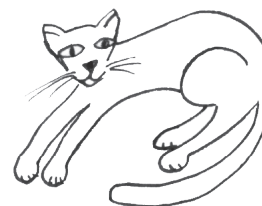
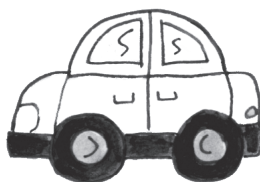




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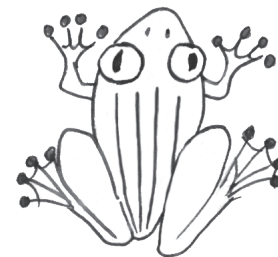
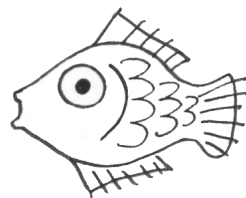


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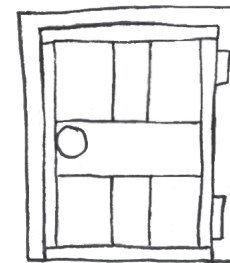
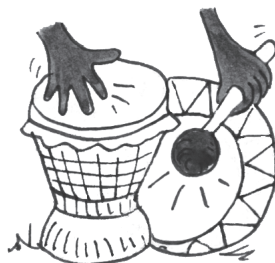


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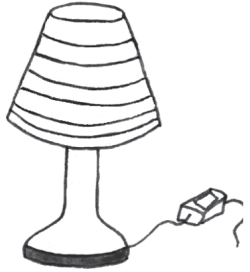


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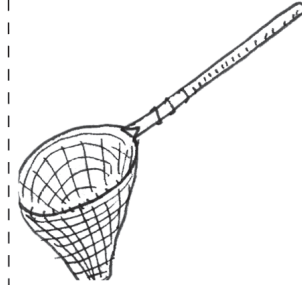
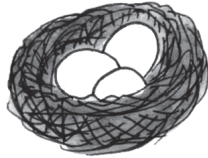




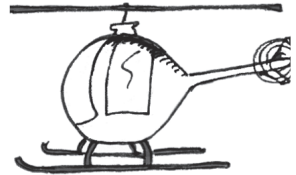
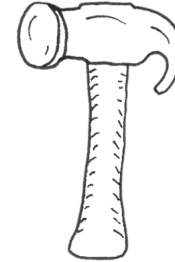
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