

Questions And Answers



Kindergarten teachers have the awesome responsibility of launching students' school careers. Perhaps no aspect of teaching little learners is more rewarding than preparing them for the adventure of lifelong reading.

This book is brimming with teaching strategies and educational activities designed to strengthen your reading program and foster students' love of literature. These ready-to-use ideas are educationally sound and developmentally appropriate, and they require little preparation—just what busy, dedicated teachers need!

What makes this book different from other reading books?

This book is unique because it addresses both phonics and phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the foundation upon which phonics skills are based, and it is an essential component of successful reading programs.

Aren't phonemic awareness and phonics the same?

Phonemic awareness is the understanding that oral language is composed of a series of sounds. Phonics, however, is the relationship between oral and written language—translating sounds into print. Phonemic awareness is critical to the long-term effectiveness of phonics programs. Phonemic awareness activities explore and manipulate sounds. These activities should be presented in a general progression. However, the stages of phonemic awareness are not mutually exclusive. The phonemic awareness skill areas (rhyming, alliteration, comparing and contrasting, blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds) complement each other and can be woven together in lessons.

But what about my current program?

This book is designed to supplement, not replace, your current phonics program, and it can be used in conjunction with any reading program. This book explains how to

- establish a print-rich environment;
- create, organize, and use a variety of teaching tools;
- involve parents in your educational program;
- use literature to target skills;
- develop phonemic awareness;
- teach letter recognition and sounds; and
- prepare students for the transition to first grade.

About This Book

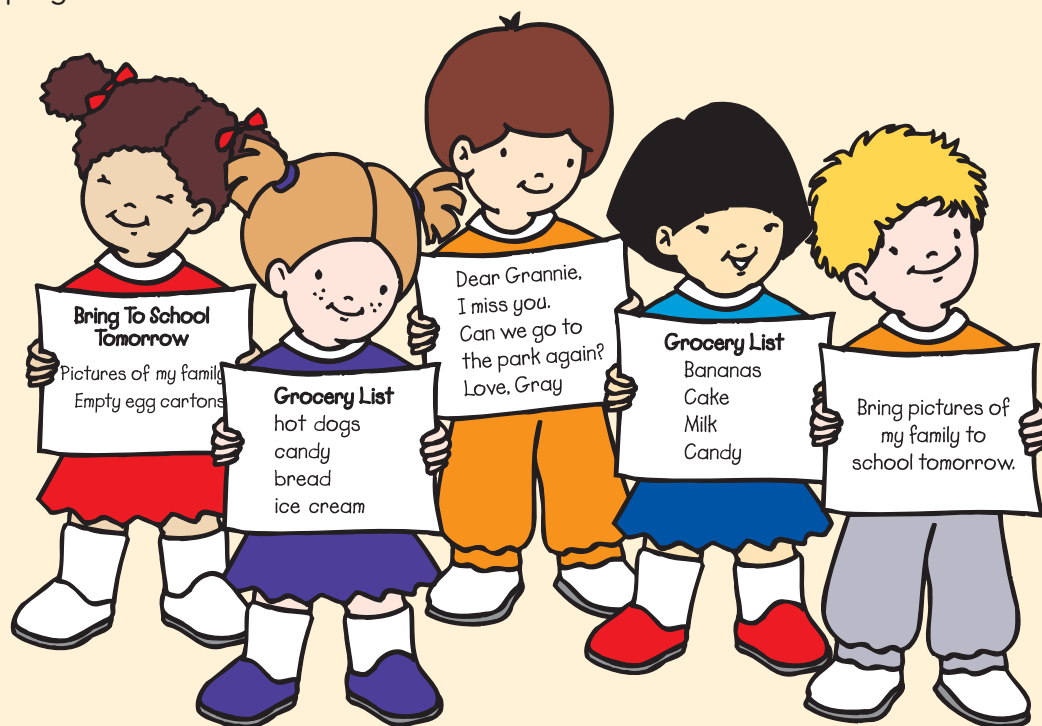
Where does literature fit into phonemic awareness and phonics?

Everywhere! Literature is an integral part of successful reading programs. Students need to be exposed to high-quality literature right from the start. Students need to learn that sounds are related to print and that print has meaning. Using literature to address phonemic awareness and phonics skills is very effective. This book recommends some wonderful titles and suggests ways to reinforce skills with literature. With your modeling, students will also acquire concepts about print, such as directionality and one-to-one correspondence between oral and written words. Even more important, they will be excited about reading!

What about writing?

When should I introduce it to my students?

Right away! Even the youngest of children are eager to imitate adults writing grocery lists, letters, or notes. By watching adults in their environment, youngsters learn that written symbols have meaning. Reading and writing are interrelated skills. This book provides activities and suggestions for establishing a print-rich environment that facilitates the development of both reading and writing. You'll also find ideas for publishing student work in the section titled "The Reading And Writing Connection." With these tips and activities, you'll be well on the way to launching a successful reading program!

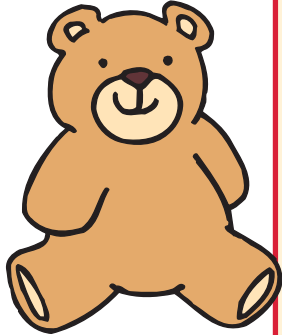


Setting The Stage!



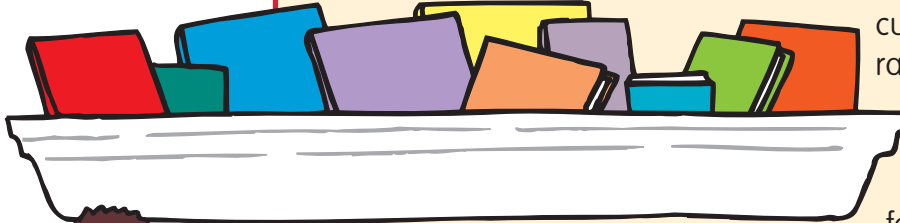
Your Classroom Environment

The first step to assure phonics and reading success is to establish the right environment. Classroom settings have the potential to motivate and engage students in exciting learning experiences. They can also convey a warm and inviting tone to visitors. Above all, the settings can and should send the message that children and learning are valued. Try these appealing ideas to establish a print-rich classroom that promotes literacy.



Rain Gutter Book Holders

Before making this unique book holder, check with the school administrator to see if you may attach a rain gutter section to your classroom wall. To make this book holder, purchase a section of rain gutter from your local building-supply store. Rain gutters are sold in metal or plastic ten-foot sections. You may want to buy end caps as well to prevent books from sliding



off the display. Ask the school custodian to help you attach the rain gutter to the wall. (The space below the chalk ledge is a good level for children.) Place the books that you'd like to feature in the resulting book

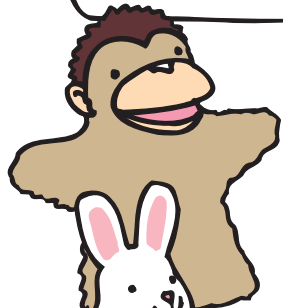
holder. It will accommodate books of nearly any size, and the covers will be visible to young readers at a glance. Rain or shine, these handy holders will please you and your students!

Library Lure

Entice students to check out the classroom library by making it a focal point in your room. Display colorful posters, banners, and mobiles promoting literature. Provide comfortable seating with carpet squares, a rocker or an overstuffed chair, and beanbag chairs. Station several puppets and stuffed animals in the library to make it even more inviting. Display as many books as possible with the covers visible to students. No doubt the library will be the number one attraction in your classroom!

Book Commercials

Channel students' attention to featured books with commercials. At a pre-determined time each day, select a book to advertise, and tell students about the unique aspects of the book. Be sure to highlight the cover, illustrations, and a portion of the text in your commercial. Then place the book in a "Special Book Of The Day" exhibit. The next day, add this book to the classroom library and choose a different book to promote. Students will be eager to check out the advertised "specials"!



Connecting Literacy And Centers

Incorporate these engaging ideas into your centers to capture students' interest and to promote literacy.

- **Reading Center**

Bears: Create a den with a large cardboard box and paint. It will make a perfect hideaway for young readers.

Picnic: Spread a red and white checkered tablecloth on your classroom library floor, and pack tempting books in a large picnic basket.

Farm: Create a cozy reading area by making a barn with a large cardboard box. Add a bale of hay for a look of authenticity.

Summer Fun: A small inflatable wading pool makes a great place to relax and read. Don't forget a supply of beach towels!

Circus: Decorate the classroom library with balloons and streamers. Provide clown hats for students to wear when they read.

- **Writing Center**

As you know, it's important for each student to work at his level, whether it is drawing, scribbling, or writing letter strings. Provide opportunities for students to experiment with their developing writing skills with a variety of writing materials, such as discarded greeting cards, stencils, assorted paper, decorative notepads, blank books, pens, and colored pencils.

- **Dramatic Play**

Restaurant: Supply small notepads for writing orders. Copies of take-out menus would also be great additions to the center.

Grocery Store: Gather a supply of empty cracker, cereal, and cookie boxes. Youngster will love to read them as they "shop." Provide small notepads for writing lists, too.

Shoe, Toy, Or Pet Stores: Have large strips of paper and small index cards available for students to make store signs and price tags. Catalogues would also be useful materials.

- **Blocks**

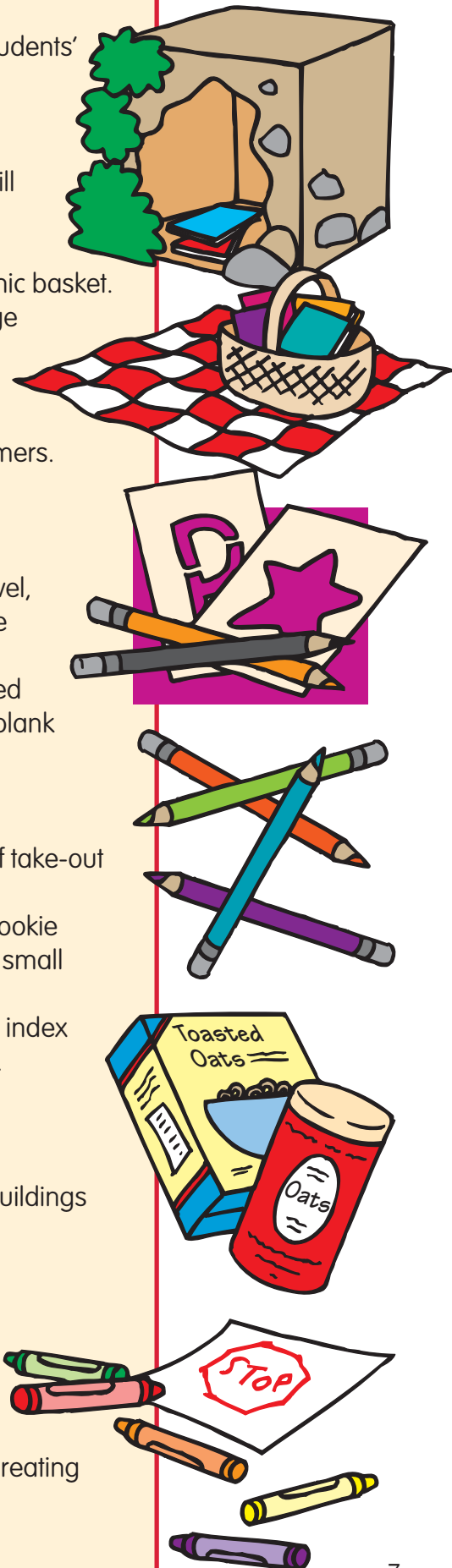
Provide paper, pencils, and crayons for students to label their buildings and to make road signs.

- **Science**

Station science logs in this center for students to write and draw about your class pet, plants, or science experiments.

- **Art**

Place a variety of paper strips and cards for students to use in creating artwork labels and signs.

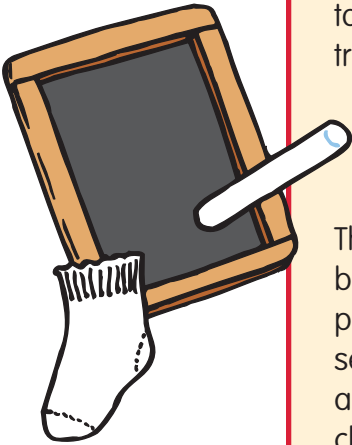


Teaching Tools And



You've seen in your own classroom that children learn more by doing than by watching. As active engagement increases, management problems decrease and learning increases. Teaching tools that interest and involve every student can be inexpensive and require little, if any, preparation time. Having a wealth of organizational ideas at your fingertips ensures that the tools you need will be easily accessible and convenient. Be sure to add these tricks of the trade to your teacher's toolbox!

Write On!



Provide each student with chalk, an individual chalkboard, and a sock. Then have him respond to a question or direction by writing on his chalkboard. You may, for example, ask each student to write a specific letter. At a predetermined signal, ask each student to hold up his chalkboard for you to see. At a glance, you'll be able to tell which students understand a concept and which need more practice. Have each student use a sock to erase his chalkboard and put his chalk in the sock's toe for easy storage.

Smile While You Work

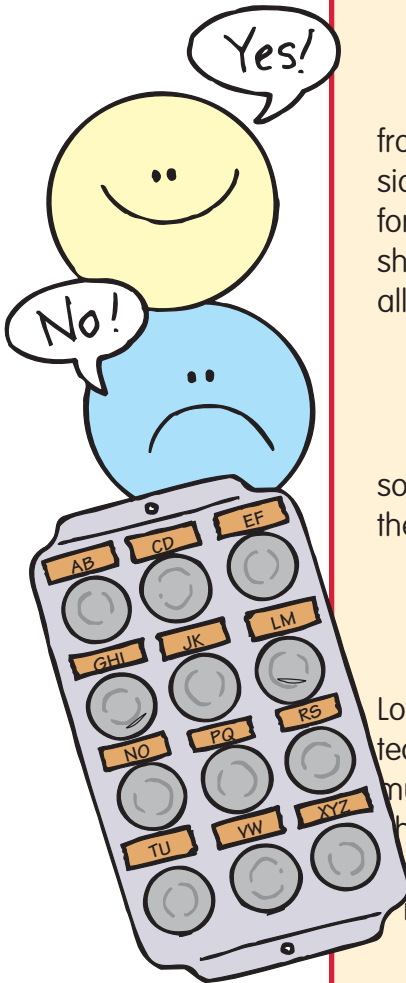
Elicit responses from all of your students with a smile. Cut a five-inch circle from poster board for each student in your class. Draw a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other. Ask students to use their happy/sad faces for activities that require yes/no responses. Upon request, have each student show a happy face to indicate yes or a sad face for no. Your students will be all smiles with this approach to active engagement!

Magnetic Surfaces

Looking for surfaces where magnetic letters can be used and displayed? If so, try magnetic cookie trays or burner covers. They are inexpensive and just the right size for little hands!

Dozens Of Letters

You probably have batches of alphabet manipulatives in your classroom. Lots of loose pieces are an organizational headache when you prepare and teach language arts lessons. Here's a solution! Obtain a 12-serving-size muffin pan. Use masking tape and a marker to label each cup with two or three letters in alphabetical order. Place magnetic, foam, or tile letters in the corresponding cups. Not only will each letter be easy to find when you need it, but students' matching and ABC skills will be reinforced as well.



Organizational Ideas

Tips For Pointers

When reading charts and big books, use captivating pointers to spark students' interest and increase attention to print. Here are a few ideas for creating pointers:

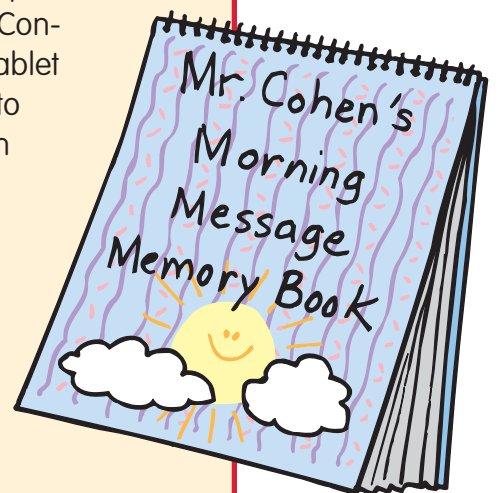
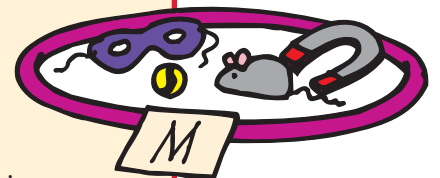
- Wooden spoon: Use with a recipe chart or a story about food.
- Magic wand: Perfect for fairy tales. (If a store-bought one isn't readily available, one can easily be made with a cardboard tube or dowel, paint, and glitter.)
- Versatile pointer: For a pointer that can be used with any topic, tape a thematic poster-board cutout to the tip of a dowel.

Hoops Of Fun

Try this idea for ABC sorting in a jiffy. Place two Hula-Hoops® beside each other on the classroom floor. Label two index cards with the categories that will be addressed in the activity, such as words that begin with /b/ and those that begin with /m/. Place each index card in front of a hoop, and have students place picture cards or small objects into the appropriate hoops. Students can clearly distinguish between the two sets, and the hoops can be quickly emptied and prepared for a different sorting lesson.

Morning Message Memory Book

Keep those morning messages! Instead of discarding or erasing your daily messages, save them and use them as a teaching tool throughout the year. Emphasize a skill, such as uppercase letters, as you record your morning message on a small chart tablet. Then ask a student to illustrate the message. The next day, review the previous day's message and then turn the page to write a new one. Continue in this manner until the tablet is full. Cover the front of the tablet with decorative Con-Tact® paper and use a permanent marker to add a title. Display the book in a special section of the classroom library for students to enjoy again and again.



Pocket Charts

As you know, a pocket chart is a great management tool for centers, classroom jobs, and a variety of other classroom routines. A pocket chart is also an invaluable tool for teachers of developing readers. It is a highly effective context for shared reading with groups of kindergarten students.

Benefits Of Shared Reading With Pocket Charts In Kindergarten

- The whole group can see the pocket chart as the teacher models fluency and expression.
- Pocket charts give students the opportunity to manipulate print in a concrete manner, allowing them to make choices and develop a sense of autonomy and ownership.
- Shared reading connects spoken and written language.
- All students can participate in a noncompetitive and supportive environment in which they can be successful.
- Children's comfort level with text increases and they become more confident.
- Youngsters learn the conventions of print, such as tracking from left to right, letters, words, and sentences.
- The reading material is easily made available for students to revisit and practice independently.
- Students gain sound-symbol knowledge and increase their sight-word vocabularies. With repeated shared readings, children develop fluency.
- Reading together is fun. Shared reading fosters a love of literature!

Hickory Dickory Dock.
The mouse ran up the clock!
The clock struck one.
The mouse ran down.
Hickory Dickory Dock.



Build-A-Word Cards

As you plan ahead for phonics lessons, you may want to prepare individual student sets of Build-A-Word cards as well as a teacher set. Specific ideas for using these cards are provided in the phonics section of this book. These easy-to-make cards will be one of the most useful tools in your classroom. Each child manipulates his own cards during phonics lessons and is actively engaged in the learning process. At a glance, you'll be able to check students' comprehension of the concepts you're teaching.

Teacher Card Set

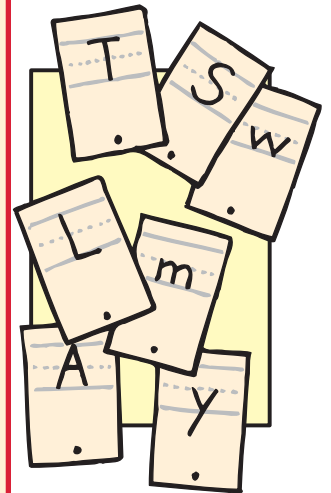
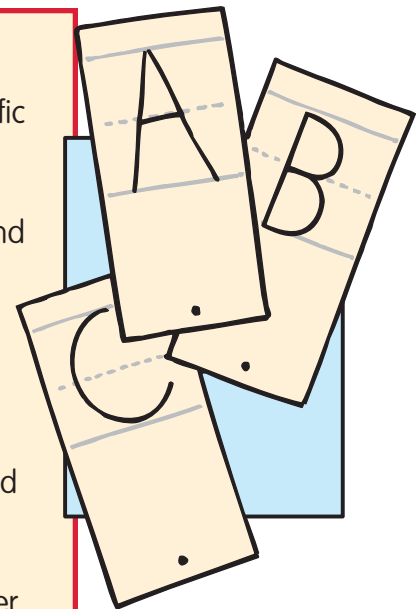
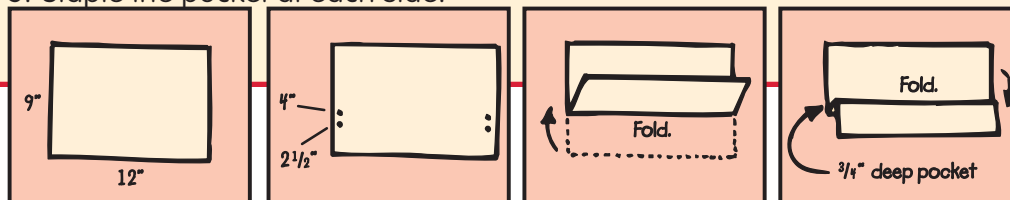
This set of cards is perfect for whole-group instruction. You can display them on the chalkboard ledge or on an easel. They are also easy for you and the students to hold and manipulate during individual or small group activities. To make a set of cards, duplicate on tagboard 26 copies of the "Teacher Build-A-Word Card Patterns" on page 17. Using a thick black marker, print each upper and lowercase letter on a separate card. If desired, highlight the vowels to alert students to these special letters. Create extra cards of commonly used letters as needed. Laminate the cards for durability before cutting them apart.

Student Card Sets

This set of cards provides easy-to-manipulate letters for children to use at their desks as you model letters and words with your set of large cards. A dot below each letter helps students correctly orient their letter cards. For each child in your class, duplicate a set of "Student Build-A-Word Cards" (pages 12–16) on white construction paper. If desired, highlight the vowels. Create extra cards of commonly used letters as needed. Laminate the cards for durability, then cut them apart.

Directions To Make A Card Holder:

1. Hold a sheet of 9" x 12" heavy paper as shown. (Laminate it before use to increase durability if desired.)
2. Mark each side $2\frac{1}{2}$ " and 4" from the bottom edge.
3. Make a fold at the $2\frac{1}{2}$ " marks.
4. Place the fold at the 4" marks to create a $\frac{3}{4}$ "-deep pocket.
5. Staple the pocket at each side.



Finished size:
 $7\frac{1}{2}$ " x 12"