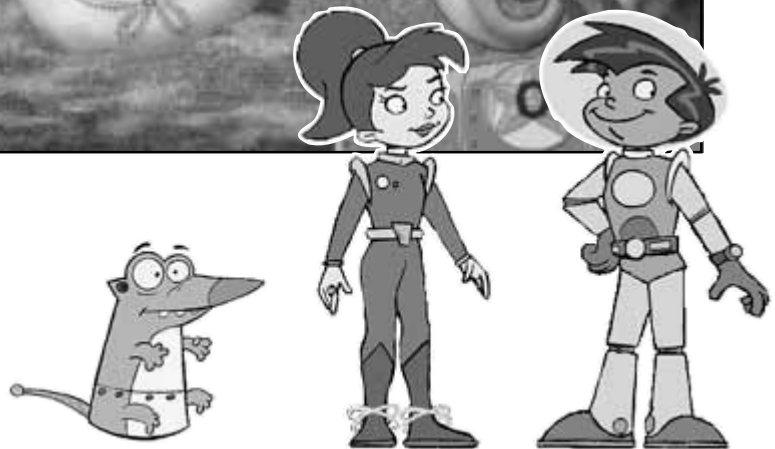


READING BLASTER™ AGES 4–6

Teacher's Guide



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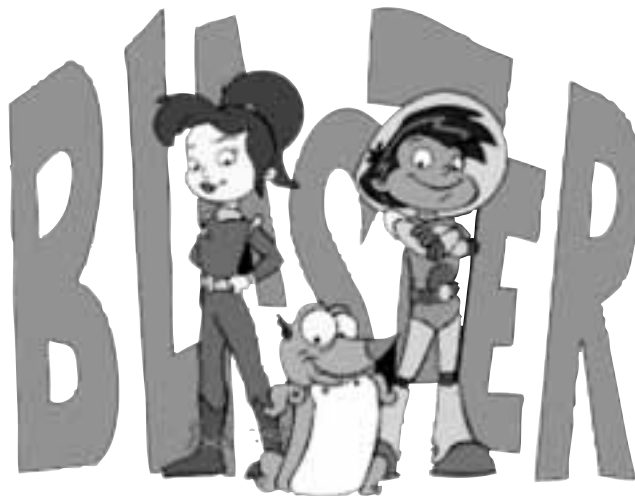
Reading Blaster™ Ages 4–6 Teacher's Guide

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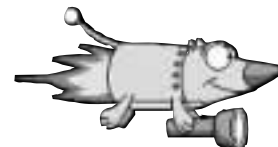
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READING BLASTER™ AGES 4–6

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READING BLASTER™ AGES 4–6

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PHONICS AND READING SKILLS

1. Reading comprehension
2. Listening comprehension
3. Beginning sounds
4. Rhyming words
5. Vocabulary development
6. Oral language
7. Visual discrimination
8. Consonant blends
9. Classification and grouping
10. Sight words
11. Alphabetization
12. Word building
13. Sentence building
14. Consonant-vowel-consonant sounds
15. Problem solving



ACTIVITY COMPONENTS

B-Mail

Exchange e-mails with Reading Blaster characters.

Paint by Letters

Search for word categories or word patterns in this hidden picture activity.

Sand Dollar Match Game

Match letters to sounds and more.

Sea Horse Race

Join an exciting race at the underwater track searching for bubbles containing like and unlike things.

Letter Dive

With the help of Blaster and Mel, put letter-carrying bubbles in ABC order.

Clamshell Scramble

Put words and sentences back together from the mixed-up shells.

Story Corner

Read and listen to eight cleverly written and illustrated stories.

Blaster Message Board

Use all kinds of stickers to create messages on this electronic magnetic board.

Treasure Chest

Meet interesting sea creatures while matching like attributes.

WELCOME



Welcome to the intergalactic undersea world of the Blasterpals! *Reading Blaster™ Ages 4–6* takes you and your students on an exciting adventure to the beautiful Aquatic Moon. This brightly colored underwater world, filled with friendly fish and sea creatures, awaits children who join GC and Blaster in a fun and lively reading adventure. Join GC, Blaster, and their pal Mel as they jet off to the Aquatic Moon in search of lost treasures.

Reading Blaster™ Ages 4–6 is an exciting new addition to the Blaster family of products. A variety of phonics skills, word building exercises, and reading comprehension strategies will help emergent readers become more confident and proficient.

This Teacher's Guide is designed to provide meaningful skill-based activities for students to use in conjunction with the *Reading Blaster™ Ages 4–6* program. Each unit of the student activities is centered around a game or an activity from the program. The lessons complement the activities from the software but don't require students to be at the computer to do them. Each activity contains a detailed teacher instruction page explaining the lesson and at least one reproducible sheet (blackline master) for student use.

Be sure to check out the Scope and Sequence of the Activities for a listing of the skills reinforced by each of the student activities. We hope you and your students enjoy your interstellar trip to the Aquatic Moon!

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITY TITLE & NUMBER

Letter Recognition
Letter Sounds
ABC Order
Vocabulary Development
Word Families
Rhyming Words
C-V-C Words
Sentence Building
Reading Comprehension
Upper & Lower Case Letters
Classifying Words
Writing
Spatial Sense
Visual Discrimination
Like & Different

ACTIVITY TITLE & NUMBER	Letter Recognition	Letter Sounds	ABC Order	Vocabulary Development	Word Families	Rhyming Words	C-V-C Words	Sentence Building	Reading Comprehension	Upper & Lower Case Letters	Classifying Words	Writing	Spatial Sense	Visual Discrimination	Like & Different
1. ABC Order	X		X							X					
2. Alpha Bubbles	X		X							X					
3. Alpha Chains	X		X												
4. Coloring Word Families				X	X						X			X	
5. Beginning Letter T	X			X							X			X	
6. Edible Letters	X									X					
7. Letter-Picture Matching		X		X											
8. Rhyme Mobile				X	X	X									
9. Uppers and Loweres	X									X					
10. Shape Up!															X
11. Sea Horse Letters	X														X
12. Sea Horsin' Around												X			
13. Picture Words				X	X		X								
14. I Can Make Sentences!				X				X	X						
15. The Shell Game				X			X		X						
16. ABC Maze			X										X	X	
17. Amazing Maze Race													X	X	
18. Make-a-Maze													X		
19. E-mail a Character				X					X			X			
20. Around the Submarine				X								X			

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

WHAT ARE THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES?



This school edition of *Reading Blaster™ Ages 4–6* contains twenty student activities correlated with the program's online lessons and games. The student activities are divided into eight units. Each unit focuses on specific language arts skills and is adaptable to a wide range of abilities. Some of the activities are hands-on in nature, some are in a paper-and-pencil format, and some are designed for movement and whole-group game set up. The activities all contain a detailed teacher page that thoroughly explains the lesson and at least one reproducible sheet (blackline master) for student use.

WHEN AND HOW DO I USE THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES?

Student activities are provided as a resource for you and your students. Select the ones that are most appropriate to the needs and interests of your students. You may want to use an activity as a means of introducing students to one of the online skill areas in the program. Or, use the activity as a follow-up lesson once all students have mastered a skill area. The student activities are independent of each other and do not need to be completed in any particular order.



SUMMARY OF THE STUDENT ACTIVITY UNITS

The following information offers a summary of each *Reading Blaster™ Ages 4–6* online activity and a list of the student activities and skills that correlate with the program skill areas.

UNIT 1 LETTER DIVE

Letter Dive is an alphabetical sequencing and letter recognition game. Letter-carrying bubbles rise from the bottom of the sea to the surface. Then students try to put letters in alphabetical order with the help of Blaster and Mel.

Activity

ABC Order
Alpha Bubbles
Alpha Chains

Skill Focus

Letter recognition, uppercase letters, alphabetical order
Letter recognition, uppercase letters, alphabetical order
Letter recognition, alphabetical order

UNIT 2 PAINT BY LETTER

Paint by Letter is a coloring game in which students search for word categories or word patterns. As these are identified, a hidden picture emerges.

Activity

Coloring Word Families
Beginning Letter T
Edible Letters

Skill Focus

Word families, classifying words, vocabulary development, visual discrimination
Beginning letters, classifying words, vocabulary development, visual discrimination
Letter recognition, uppercase and lowercase letters, color blending

UNIT 3 SAND DOLLAR MATCHING GAME

In the Sand Dollar Matching Game, students have fun matching sounds with letters and words. The game also promotes vocabulary development and an understanding of rhyme.

Activity

Letter-Picture Matching
Rhyme Mobile
Uppers and Loweres

Skill Focus

Beginning letter sounds, vocabulary development
Identifying rhyming words, vocabulary development
Uppercase and lowercase letters, letter recognition

UNIT 4 SEA HORSE RACE

The Sea Horse Race is an action-packed arcade-like game requiring visual discrimination skills. Students choose similar and different shapes, letters, and words to advance Blaster and GC in this exciting race.

Activity

Shape Up!
Sea Horse Letters
Sea Horsin' Around

Skill Focus

Shape recognition, like and different
Letter recognition, like and different
Writing, creativity

UNIT 5 CLAMSHELL SCRAMBLE

Students join three crabby crabs who play the traditional shell game with letters and words. Both words and sentences can be put together once the letters and words have been revealed.

Activity

Picture Words

Sentence Strips

The Shell Game

Skill Focus

Word families, short a vowel, vocabulary development, C-V-C words
Vocabulary development, sentence building, reading comprehension
Vocabulary development, reading comprehension, C-V-C words

UNIT 6 TREASURE MAZE

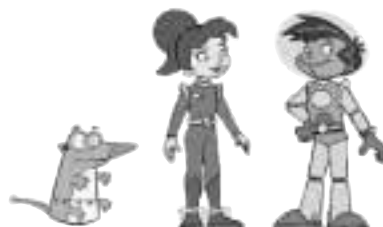
Once students earn five starfish stickers for achievement, they help Blaster find treasure in this fun interactive activity. Maneuver through the maze to uncover matching shapes, colors, and patterns.

Activity

ABC Maze
Amazing Maze Race
Make-a-Maze

Skill Focus

Alphabetical order, spatial sense, visual discrimination
Spatial sense, visual discrimination
Spatial sense, planning and design, creativity



UNIT 7 B-MAIL

B-Mail (Blaster Mail) is a reading comprehension and writing skill-based activity area. Students can send B-Mail messages to characters in the program and receive replies.

Activity

E-mail a Character

Skill Focus

Letter writing, vocabulary development, reading comprehension

UNIT 8 STORY CORNER

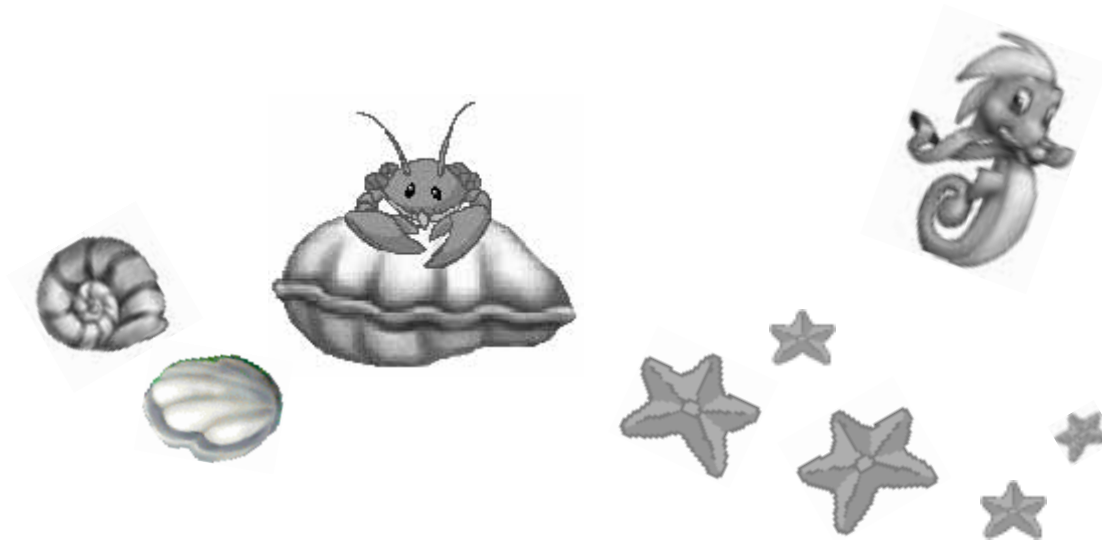
Story Corner provides eight cleverly written and illustrated stories that use rhyming words, prepositions, adjectives, and sight words.

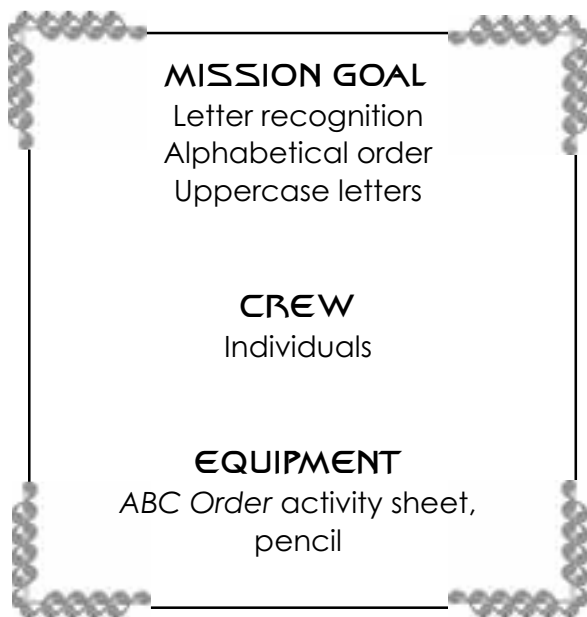
Activity

Around the Submarine

Skill Focus

Using prepositions, vocabulary development, creative writing



**PERISCOPE UP!**

Have the students sing or say the “Alphabet Song” together. Then write this letter sequence on the board: A, __, C, __, E. Ask students to look at this letter string and decide which two letters are missing. Now have the class sing the first part of the “Alphabet Song” again and point to the letters as they sing. Fill in the missing letters, B and D. Use this strategy for other letter sequences.

THE DIVE

Pass out the *ABC Order* activity sheet and explain that students will complete the letter sequences in ABC order. Do the first sequence together as a large group. Ask students to look at the first string of letters (___ E F G H ___), and help them identify the letters that complete the sequence. Have students fill in the correct letters. Monitor students as they work independently (or with a partner) to complete the activity. Depending upon the ability level of your students, you may want to conduct this activity as a whole-group lesson with teacher direction all the way through.

BLASTING BEYOND

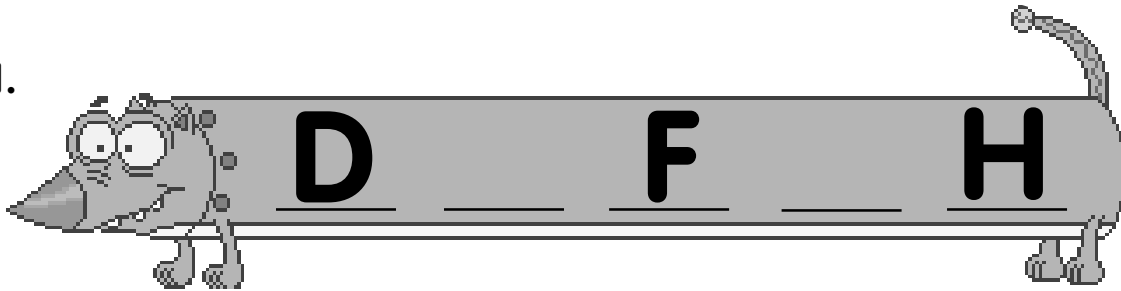
Create letter lines—similar to number lines—using construction paper. Write in most letters of the alphabet, but leave blank spaces for some letters. Have students finish the letter line by filling in the missing letters. The letter lines can be laminated and used as an alphabet reference for students. Read several alphabet books to students. The bibliography offers suggestions.



Name: _____

Write in the letter that completes the sequence.

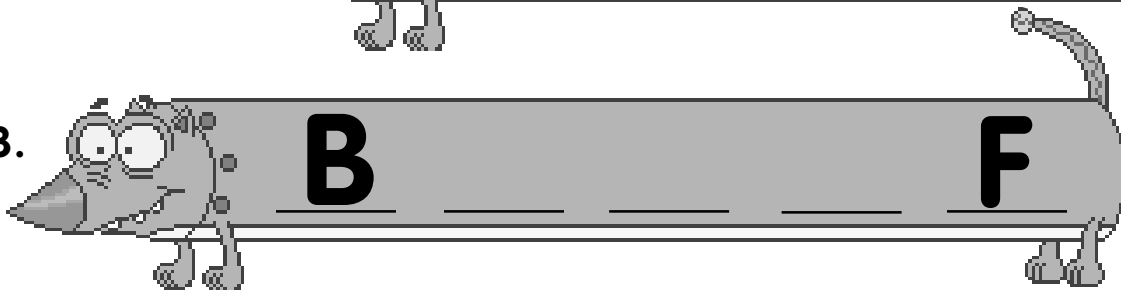
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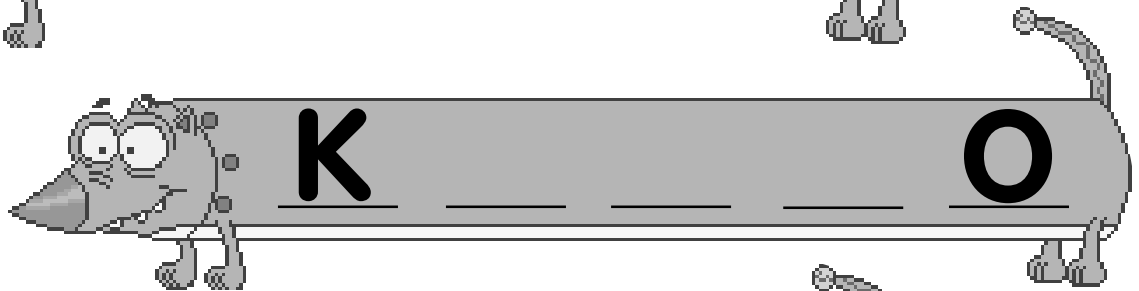
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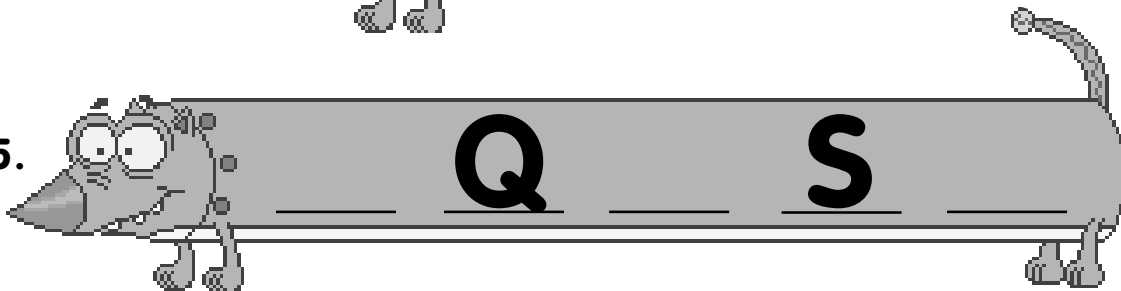
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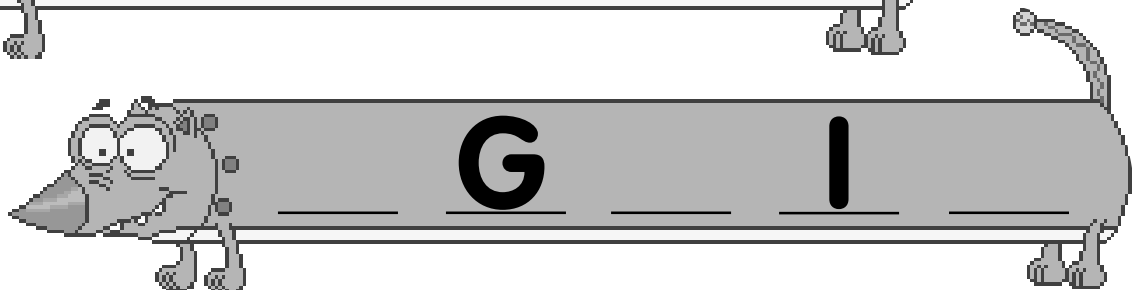
4.



5.



6.



MISSION GOAL

Letter recognition
 Alphabetical order
 Lowercase letters

CREW

Individuals

EQUIPMENT

Alpha Bubbles activity sheet,
 scissors, glue, crayons

PERISCOPE UP!

Bring a bottle of bubble solution and a bubble maker to class. Fill the room (or school yard) with bubbles and have students try to pop them. Next, have the class sing the “Alphabet Song” together as they pop the bubbles. Play the game in slow motion and in fast motion.

THE DIVE

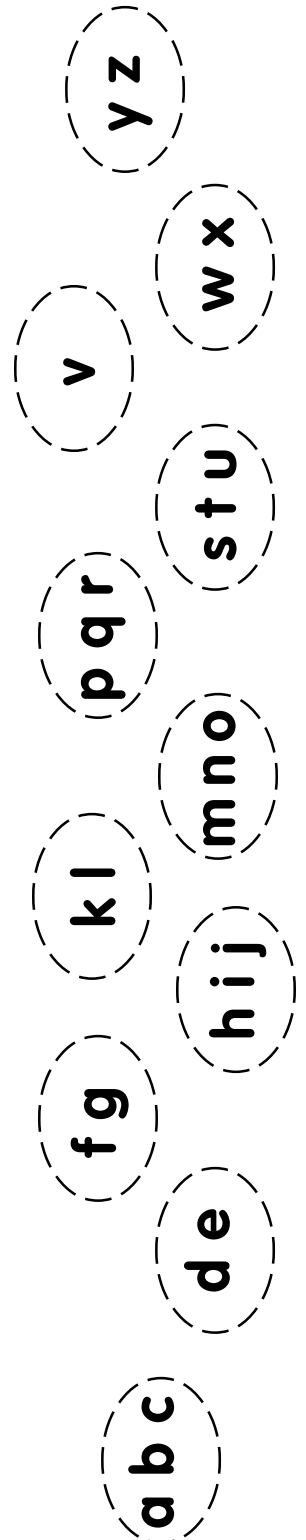
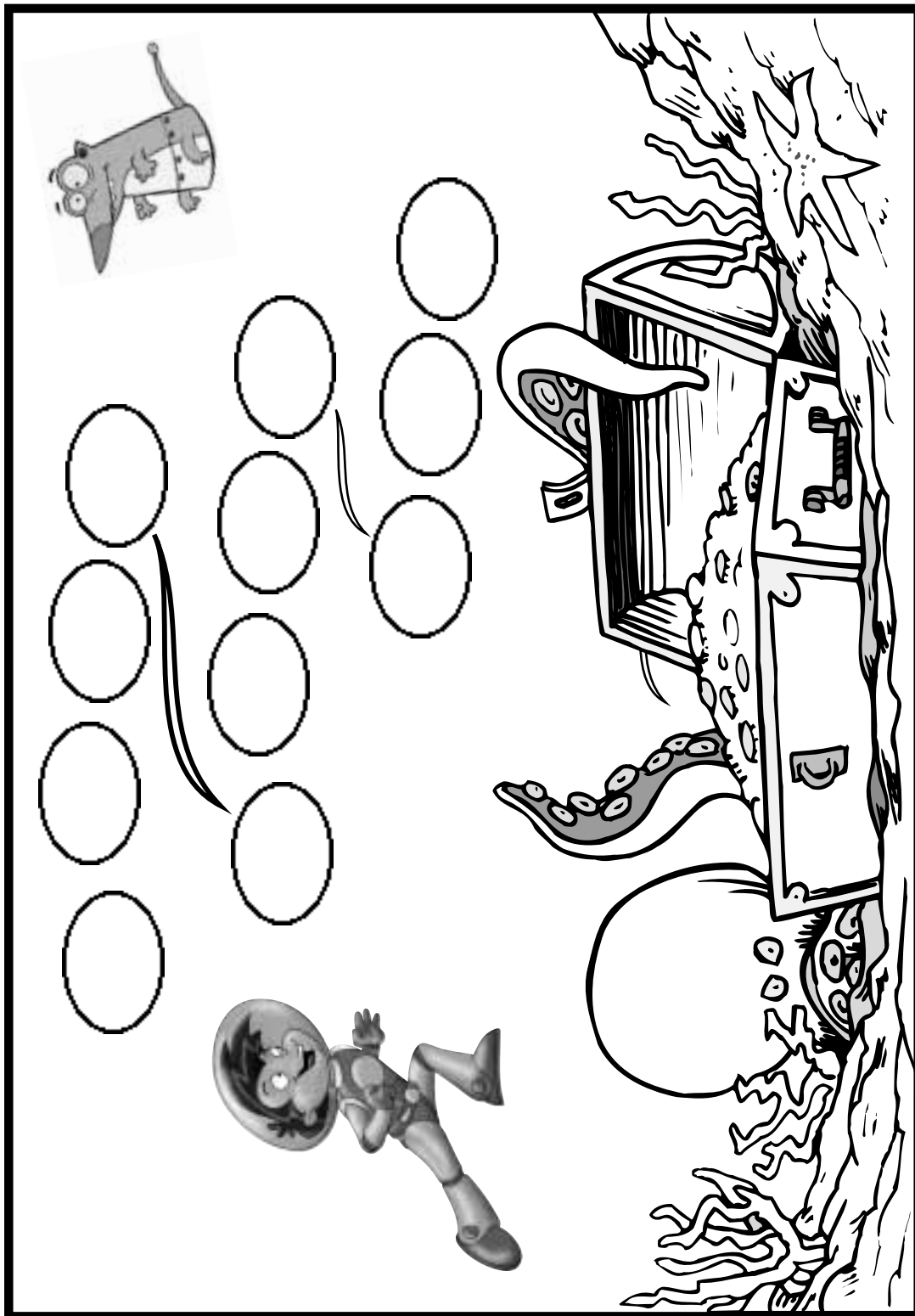
Pass out the *Alpha Bubbles* activity sheet and have students color the underwater scene. Next, have them cut out the alpha bubbles at the bottom of the page and put them in a pile. Tell students to glue the alpha bubbles in ABC order on the underwater scene. Then have them find the alpha bubble with the ABC string and glue it in the bubble place numbered 1. Ask students what letter comes after C. Help them find the DE string and glue it in the second space. Monitor students as they work independently or with a partner to complete the activity.

BLASTING BEYOND

Bring bubble solution and bubble makers to class for a fun hands-on game. Assign each child a letter of the alphabet, and call out the letters in alphabetical order. When a letter is called, the child representing that letter blows a bubble. Play the game slowly at first, then play quickly and fill the room with bubbles!



Name: _____



MISSION GOAL

Alphabetical order
Letter recognition
Working cooperatively

CREW

Whole group

EQUIPMENT

Alpha Chains activity sheet,
cut into individual cards
Note: You may want to duplicate
the *Alpha Chains* activity sheet on
card stock for better durability.
Or, glue the letters on separate
index cards.

PERISCOPE UP!

Ask three students to come to the front of the room, and hand out an A card, a B card, and a C card. Students hold their letter card in their left hand. Ask the class to put the students in alphabetical order. When they are in order, hook them up by having each student place his right hand on the right shoulder of the person in front of him. Then tell students that they will play a fun movement game in which the class will create a human alphabet chain!



THE DIVE

Decide where to play the *Alpha Chains* game—you will need an open space because the student chain will be long. Move some tables to create the space you need, or play the game in the multi-purpose room, cafeteria, or outdoors. Have the students stand in various parts of the room, and pass out a card to each student. Tell students to keep the cards facedown and not peek at them! When you say “Go,” students move around the room, searching for classmates with the letters preceding and following their own. Once a connecting letter has been found, students hook up with that letter. The game is over when all the letters are in alphabetical order. To check for accuracy, have the students in the alpha chain stand in a line and call out their letters in order. Listen for accuracy and make changes by moving students if necessary. If you have more than 26 students in your class, use the lowercase alpha cards as part of the mix. Decide with the class if lowercase letters should come before or after uppercase letters.

BLASTING BEYOND

Play the *Alpha Chains* game silently! This challenges students to work cooperatively and use nonverbal communication skills.



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

MISSION GOAL

Word families
Classifying words
Vocabulary development
Visual discrimination

CREW

Individuals or partners

EQUIPMENT

Coloring Word Families activity sheet, red, yellow, and green crayons (one of each per student or student pair)

PERISCOPE UP!

Prior to the activity, have handy several index cards or sentence strips and a boldface marker. Write on three cards as follows: *ip*, *ap* and *ay*. Then, gather students around the pocket chart, and place the *ip* card at the top. Ask students to think of words that rhyme with *ip*, such as *ship*, *tip*, *lip*, *rip*, *skip*. As students think of words, write each one on a card and place the cards in a column beneath the *ip* card. Do the same for *ap* and *ay* cards. Tell students that these rhyming words form word families.

THE DIVE

Decide whether students will work individually or in pairs. Distribute the activity sheet and a red, green, and yellow crayon to each student. Help students read the color key at the top of the activity sheet, and have them color it with the appropriate crayons. Read the first word in the table, *bat*, and ask students if *bat* rhymes with any of the color key sounds. Then, have them color the *bat* box green. Follow the same process across the first row. Remind students that not all boxes will be colored. (Some of the words are site words and will not rhyme.) When all the word family boxes have been colored, students count and record how many words of each color they found. Note: It may be helpful to create an overhead transparency of the activity sheet to use with an overhead projector. Go through the activity using red, green, and yellow overhead pens.

BLASTING BEYOND

Continue the introductory activity with several other word families: *ate*, *ail*, *ing*, *og*, *ake*. When the pocket chart is full, transfer the lists to chart paper and post them around the room for students to add to.



Name: _____

Color Key:

at words = green ig words = yellow op words = red

bat	the	stop	and
can	just	mat	mop
hop	do	not	pig
wig	no	rat	hat
big	it	twig	yes
top	cat	pop	dig

How many yellow words are there?



How many red words are there?

How many green words are there?

MISSION GOAL

Beginning letters
Classifying words
Vocabulary development
Visual discrimination

CREW

Individuals

EQUIPMENT

Beginning Letter T activity sheet,
blue crayons (one per student)

PERISCOPE UP!

Prior to the activity, write several site words for your class's ability level on sentence strips or index cards. Choose several words that begin with the same letter and underline the first letter or write it in a different color (e.g., first letter red; remaining letters black). Gather students around the pocket chart, then hold up one of the cards and read it. Ask students to identify the beginning letter and chart the word. When you come across words with the same beginning letter, chart them in the same column.

THE DIVE

Tell students that they will learn about words that begin with the letter *T*. Have students make the letter *T* with their fingers. Then have them make the *T* sound. Write an uppercase and a lowercase *T* on the board. Distribute the activity sheet and blue crayons. Look at the first row of words together. Ask students to find a word that begins with *T* and color that word box blue. Continue across the top line, coloring all three *T* words blue. Monitor students as they work independently to complete the activity. An uppercase *T* will emerge as students color the boxes with *T* words.

BLASTING BEYOND

Create your own beginning letter activity for any letter. Using chart paper with 1/2 inch or 1 inch squares, follow the pattern for this activity. Write words for a given letter first, then fill the chart with site words beginning with different letters. Or, use the table feature in a word-processing software program to create a template.



Name: _____

Color all the words that begin with the letter T blue.

at	turtle	tell	train
cake	dad	glove	tiger
lift	door	fox	dog
table	fence	can	carrot
mop	truck	fish	mom
cat	moon	toe	star
pig	hot	sun	tea
goat	blue	rain	leg
take	leaf	red	town

Write uppercase letter T three times.

Write lowercase letter t three times.

MISSION GOAL

Letter recognition
Uppercase and lowercase letters
Color blending

CREW

Cooperative learning groups

EQUIPMENT

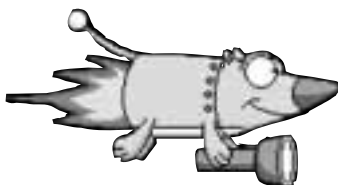
Edible Letters activity sheet,
crayons, box of food coloring,
graham crackers, ready-made
white frosting, plastic knives (one
per student), seven plastic spoons,
seven small containers (empty
margarine tubs)

PERISCOPE UP!

This activity is a good follow-up to the Hidden Pictures activity as students will already have worked with the different-colored paint buckets. Tell students that they will learn about colors and create letters they can eat!

THE DIVE

Set up a table with all the supplies. Then gather students around the table so they can see you mix the colors. Tell students that you will make tubs of primary colors. Explain that there are three primary colors: red, yellow, and blue. Put generous



portions of white frosting in the seven containers. Squeeze several drops of blue food coloring in the first container, mix well, and keep adding drops until you make frosting of the desired color. Repeat for the colors red and yellow. Then put the three tubs aside.

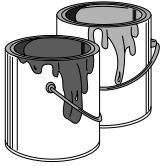
Tell students that primary colors can be combined to create other colors. To make the color green, for example, squeeze equal amounts of yellow and blue food coloring in a container of white frosting. Mix and add drops until you have the desired color. To make purple, follow this ratio: 5 drops red food coloring to 1 drop blue. To make orange, add 2 drops red food coloring and 3 drops yellow. To make brown, add 7 drops red to 4 drops yellow and 2 drops green.

Distribute the activity sheet to students and review the color combinations. Have students fill in the correct colors for each question. Then divide students into seven small groups, and assign a different letter and color to each. Give each group the container of their assigned color, plastic knives, and graham crackers. Using the frosting and the knives, each student writes the uppercase and lowercase letter for their group on graham crackers. After showing the letters to the rest of the class, students can eat them!

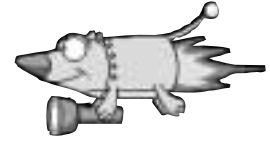
BLASTING BEYOND

Try some experiments in chromatography (the stretching of colors) to see the color spectrum in a drop of ink. Check science activity books for lesson plans.

Name: _____



What two colors make green?

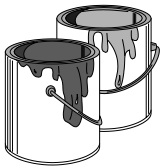


_____ + _____ = green



What two colors make purple?

_____ + _____ = purple



What two colors make orange?

_____ + _____ = orange



What three colors make brown?

_____ + _____ + _____ = brown

MISSION GOAL

Matching
Identifying beginning letter sounds
Vocabulary development

CREW

Individuals

EQUIPMENT

Letter-Picture Matching activity sheet, scissors, glue, crayons

PERISCOPE UP!

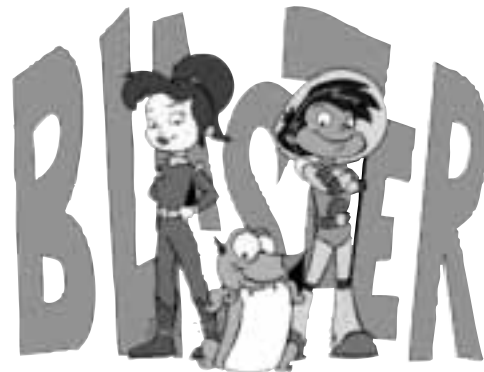
Gather several pictures of single objects (e.g., pictures on flash cards, large magazine pictures). Hold each picture up for students to see and ask them to think about the name of the object. Then have students think about the beginning letter of the object and make the letter with their fingers. On the count of three, have students shout out the beginning letter. Do this with several pictures.

THE DIVE

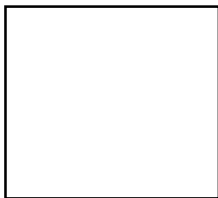
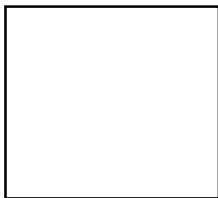
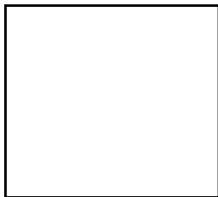
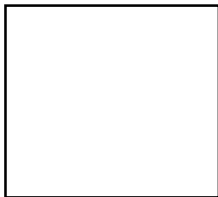
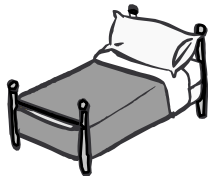
Pass out the *Letter-Picture Matching* activity. Tell students to cut out the letter squares along the bottom of the page and put them in a pile. Do the first picture (bed) together as a class, and ask students what object they see. Ask them to say the beginning sound for that object and name the beginning letter. Then, have students find the letter *b* in the pile of letters and glue it in the space beneath the picture of the bed. Monitor students as they work independently or with a partner to complete the activity. Students may color the finished pictures with crayons.

BLASTING BEYOND

Create a “Beginning Letter Mural” by having students cut pictures of their favorite objects from magazines and paste them on a large sheet of butcher paper. Beneath each picture they write the beginning letter for the object.



Name: _____



P

S

D

Z

U

B

MISSION GOAL

Identifying rhyming words
Vocabulary development

CREW

Individuals

EQUIPMENT

Rhyme Mobile activity sheets A and B, scissors, string or yarn cut into 12-inch lengths, tape, crayons, coat hangers

PERISCOPE UP!

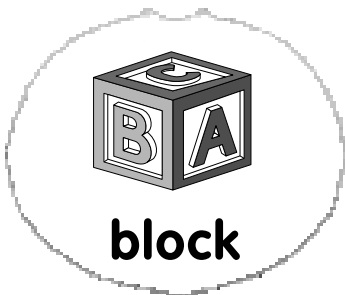
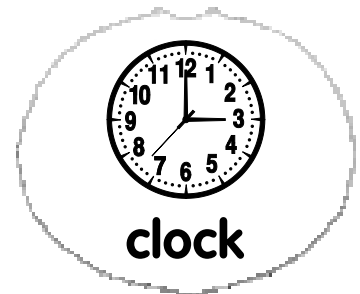
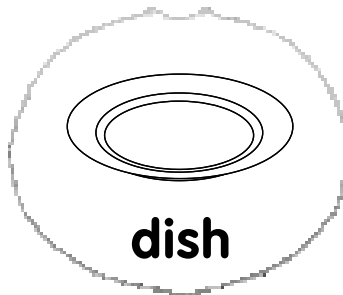
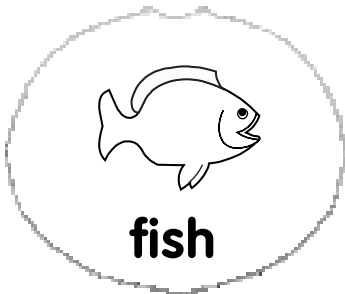
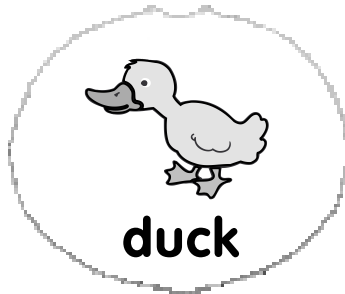
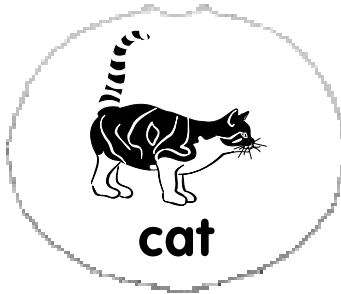
First, ask students what they know about rhyming words. Tell them that rhyming words, like *cat* and *bat*, have the same vowel and ending sounds. Write the word *log* on the board and ask students for words that rhyme (e.g., *hog*, *dog*, *fog*, *jog*). (Note: If you have time, prepare a *Rhyme Mobile* as a model for students and tell them they will make mobiles of rhyming words.)

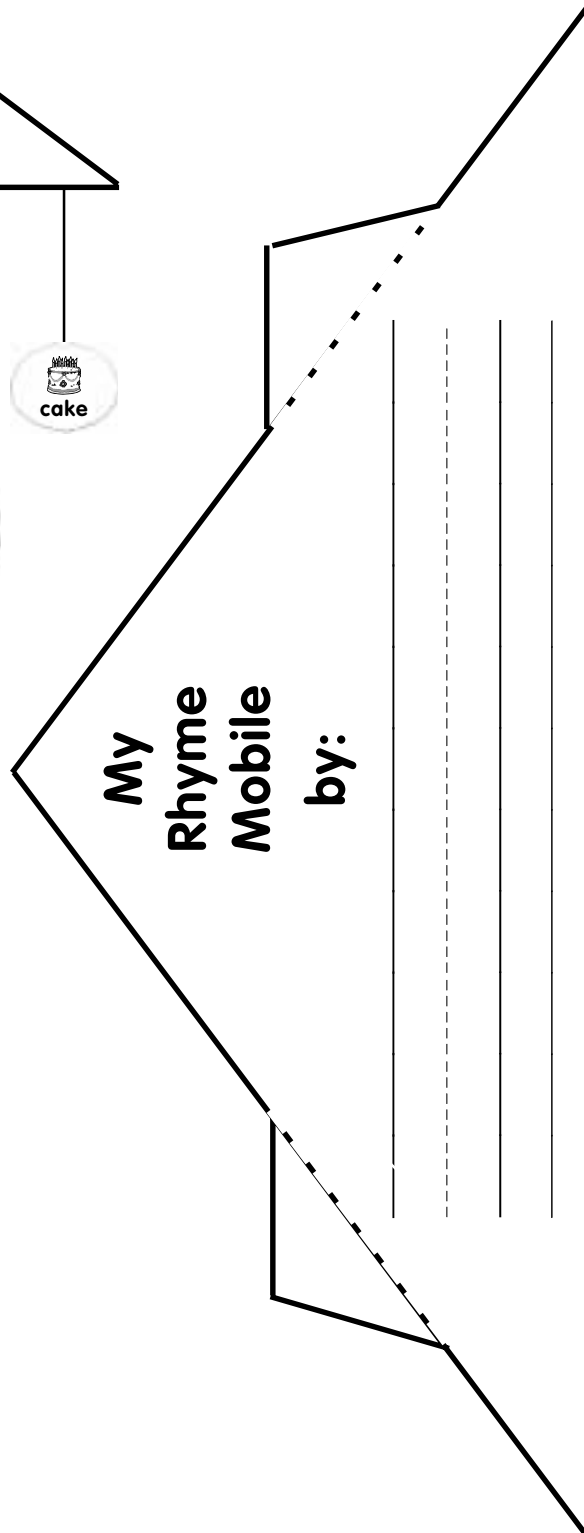
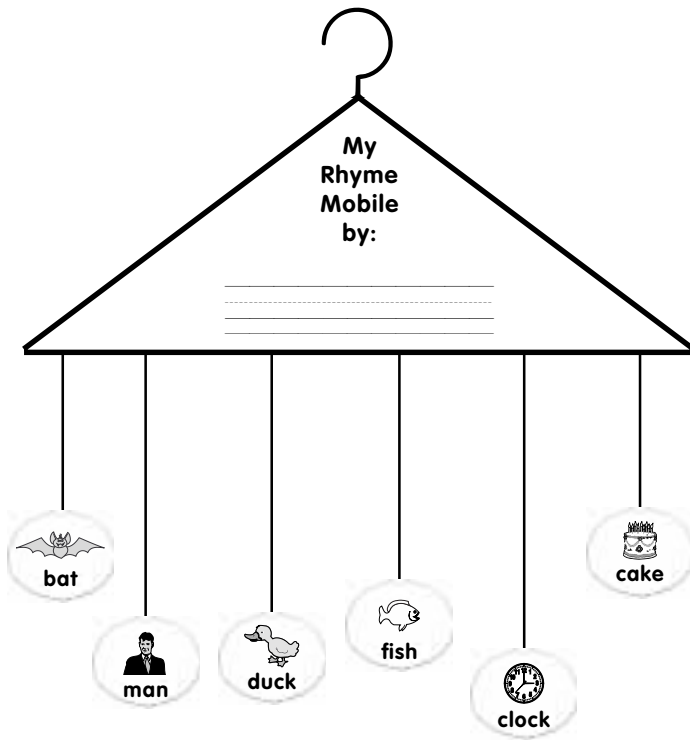
**THE DIVE**

Pass out *Rhyme Mobile* activity sheets A and B. Have students color the pictures and write their name in the triangle on the appropriate line. Name the pictures with the students. Then have students cut out the rhyming word circles and the triangle. Ask students to look at a picture, name the object in it, and find another picture with a rhyming object. Place the two pictures in a pile. Repeat the process for all the rhyming words. This activity can be done collectively or independently. Next, lay one 12-inch length of yarn or string on the table. Choose one pair of rhyming words and tape the rhyming word circles on the yarn. Tie one end of the yarn around the bottom of the coat hanger. Repeat this process for each set of the rhyming word pairs until all five are attached to the coat hanger. Attach the triangle title piece to the top of the coat hanger (just below the hook) by folding back the tabs around the hanger and taping them to the back of the triangle. Display the coat hangers about the room.

BLASTING BEYOND

Have students create mobiles for beginning letters and pictures. Students draw pictures on index cards, then write the beginning letter for each picture on another card.





MISSION GOAL
 Matching
 Identifying uppercase
 and lowercase letters
 Letter recognition

CREW
 Individuals

EQUIPMENT
Uppers and Loweres activity sheet,
 scissors, paste

PERISCOPE UP!

Create two columns on the board, one for uppercase letters and the other for lowercase letters. Be sure that the letters are mixed up, then ask several volunteers to draw a line connecting each lowercase letter with the matching uppercase letter. Tell students that they will match uppercase and lowercase letters in this activity.

THE DIVE

Pass out the *Uppers and Loweres* activity sheet. Have students cut out the letter squares on the bottom of the page and put them in a pile. Next, have them match the uppercase letter blocks in the pile to the lowercase letters on the paper. When they find a match, they paste the uppercase letter on the paper in the correct space.

BLASTING BEYOND

Make a set of uppercase letters and a set of lowercase letters on index cards. Divide the class in half. Pass out uppercase cards to one half of the class and the corresponding lowercase cards to the other half. When you say "Go," have the students find a match.



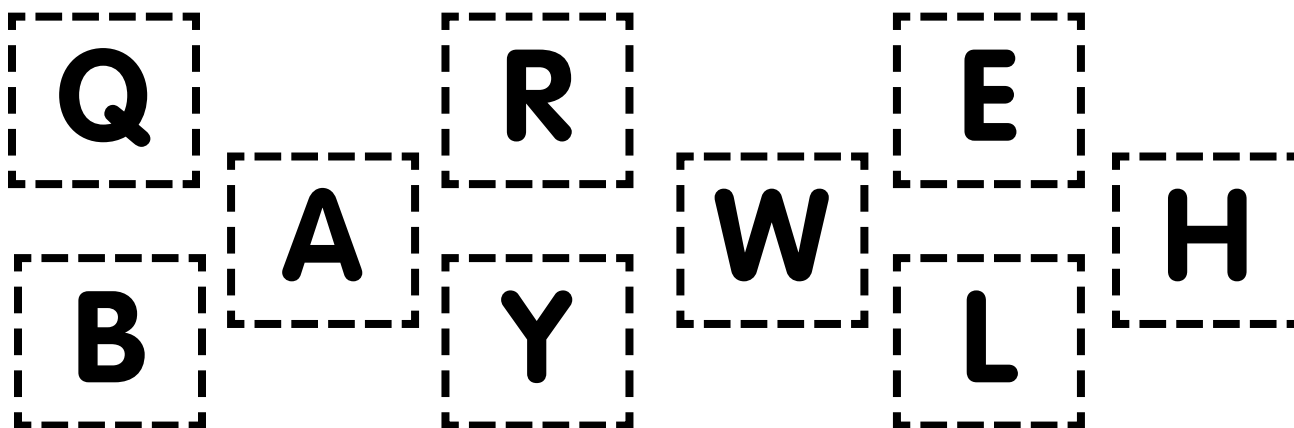
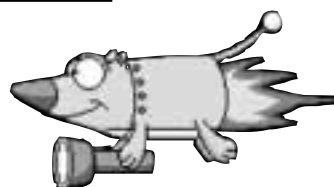
Name: _____

Cut out the letter blocks at the bottom of the page. Paste the uppercase letter next to the matching lowercase letter.

l q b

a w e

h y r



**PERISCOPE UP!**

Gather pictures with shapes on them (e.g., flash cards, worksheets, posters, hand-drawn shapes on index cards). Hold up one shape at a time, and ask students to think of the name of the shape and make the shape with their fingers. Then on the count of three, have all the students shout out the name of the shape. Hold up two pictures of the same shape and ask students if the shapes are the same or different. Students give a thumbs-up sign for shapes that are the same and a thumbs-down sign for shapes that are different. Do this for several shape pictures.

THE DIVE

Distribute the *Shape Up!* activity sheet and have students color the shapes in the circles blue. Talk about each shape with students. Discuss the similarities and differences between shapes, and where these shapes can be found. Complete the first shape question together, then ask students to look at all the shapes for question one and point to the shape that is the same. Have students show the answer to their neighbor for confirmation. Finally, have students color the matching star shape blue and the other shapes in the row red. Monitor students as they complete the activity independently. When they are finished, let them correct their own papers for further reinforcement.

BLASTING BEYOND

Play *Match the Shape*. Use shape flash cards or make your own set with index cards. There must be at least two cards for each shape in the set. Pass out one card to each student and ask students not to show it to anyone. When you say "Go," students search for the shape card that matches their own.

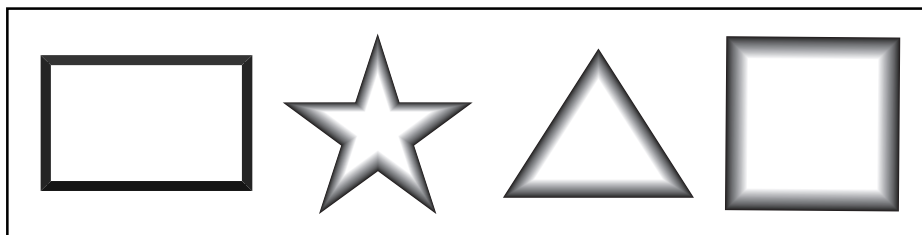
The game can also be played by asking students to find a shape card different from their own.



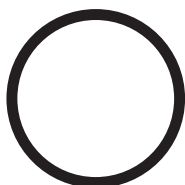
Name: _____

Find shapes that are the same and color them blue. Color shapes that are different red.

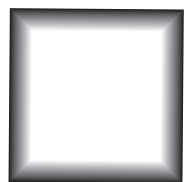
1.



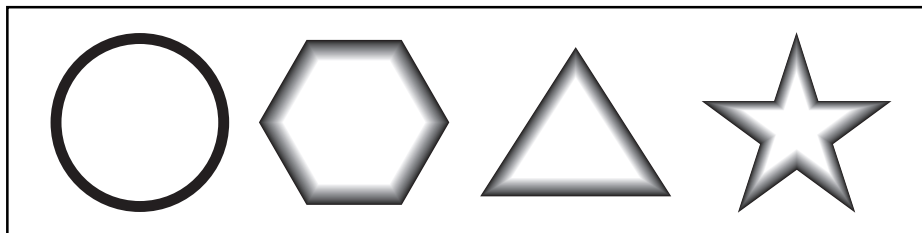
2.



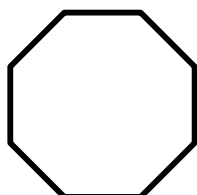
3.



4.



5.



<p>MISSION GOAL Letter recognition Understanding same and different Visual discrimination</p> <p>CREW Individuals</p> <p>EQUIPMENT <i>Sea Horse Letters</i> activity sheet, pencil</p>

PERISCOPE UP!

Draw four large boxes on the board and write one of the following letter strings inside each box: *FTF*, *FTF*, *FLF*, *FTF*. Point to each box and have students say the letters aloud. Ask them which box contains a set of letters different from the rest. Students can point to the box while you circle the box with the letters *FLF*. Repeat this activity several times with other letter strings.

THE DIVE

Distribute the *Sea Horse Letters* activity sheet, and complete the first question together. Ask students to look at all the sea horses and observe the letter strings. Go over each letter string and have students say the letters. Then go back to the letter string *WAV* and ask students if this set of letters is the same as the other sets. Have them circle the sea horse with a different set of letters. Monitor students as they complete the activity independently. When they are finished, let them correct their own papers for further reinforcement.

BLASTING BEYOND

Extend the activity for use at a classroom center. Using index cards, make two matched sets of letter-string game cards. Shuffle the cards, then have students lay them flat and play a matching game.



Name: _____

Circle the sea horse with the different letters.



MISSION GOAL

Writing
Creativity

CREW

Individuals

EQUIPMENT

Sea Horsin' Around activity sheet,
pencil, crayons, scissors, white glue,
blue construction paper,
green construction paper,
sand from the sandbox

PERISCOPE UP!

Gather pictures of real sea horses (from library books, the Internet, magazines, etc.) and share them with students. Tell students interesting facts such as these about sea horses:

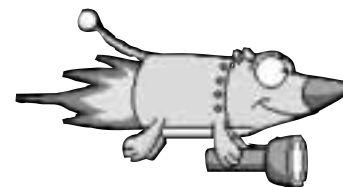
- The sea horse is a fish with a horse-shaped head and neck.
- Its long tail is like a monkey's, and can grasp objects.
- The male sea horse carries the eggs and delivers them.
- The eggs are brightly colored.
- Sea horses are not good swimmers; they like to live in seaweed, clinging to it with their tails.

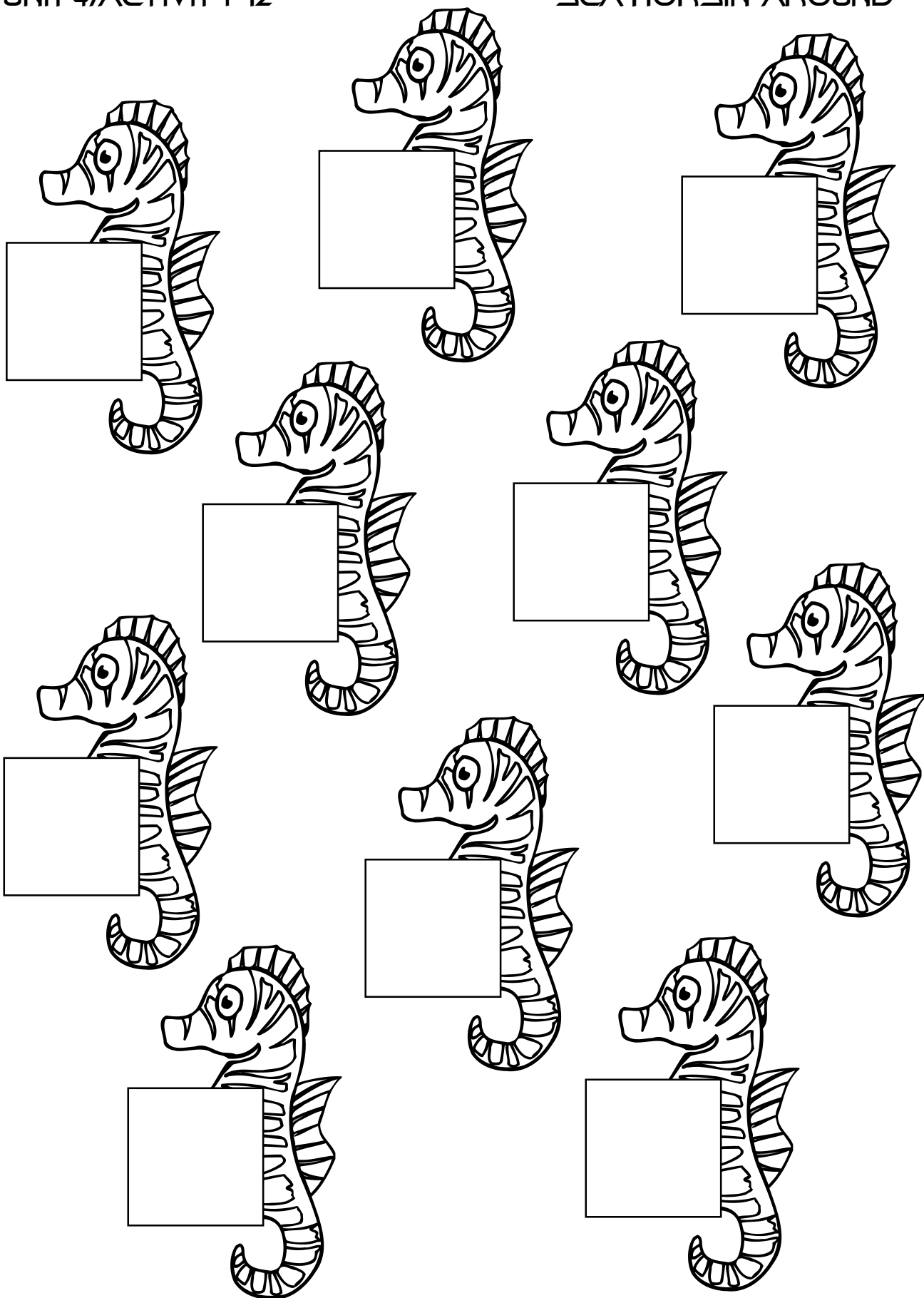
THE DIVE

Tell students that they will make an underwater scene. If possible, create a model to show students before they begin. Distribute the *Sea Horsin' Around* activity sheet, and have students write the letters of their name in the bellies of the sea horses (one letter per sea horse). Be sure students write the letters boldly. Next, have students color the sea horses bright colors and cut them out. Give each child a piece of blue construction paper. Have students apply white glue liberally about two inches from the bottom edge of the paper, and smear it with a finger. Then they pour sand over the glue to create the seafloor. Students make long strips of wavy kelp and seaweed from green construction paper and glue them along each side of the paper. Finally, they arrange the sea horses so the letters of their name are in order and glue them to the paper. Let the sand and glue dry completely before displaying the underwater scenes.

BLASTING BEYOND

Conduct a class research project on sea animals. See the bibliography for suggested resources.





MISSION GOAL
 Word families
 Short a vowel
 Vocabulary development
 Consonant-vowel-consonant words

CREW
 Individuals

EQUIPMENT
 Picture Words activity sheet
 pencil, crayons

PERISCOPE UP!

Write the word *an* on the board and ask students to sound it out. Draw a blank line in front of the letters (___ *an*), then write the letter *c* on the line and help students sound out the word *can*. Erase the letter *c* and write the letter *m* on the line. Repeat this process for the following letters: *r*, *t*, *v*, and *f*. Discuss the similarity of the words (all have the same ending and vowel sound). Tell students that they can make many new words by changing just the first letter.

THE DIVE

Pass out the *Picture Words* activity sheet, and ask students to sound out the *at* sound in all four boxes. Next, identify the letters in the letter box at the bottom of the page. Have students choose the *b* for the first box, and instruct them to write the letter *b* on the line. Then ask them to sound out the word *bat*. (Have students cross out the letter *b* in the letter box to help keep track of the letters they use.) Tell students that they can use any one of the letters in the other three boxes (using each letter only once) to create new words. When students are finished writing the beginning letters on the lines, they draw pictures in the boxes to illustrate their newly created words.

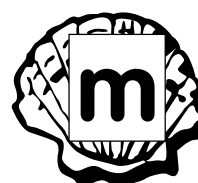
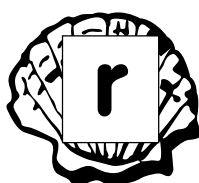
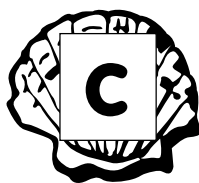
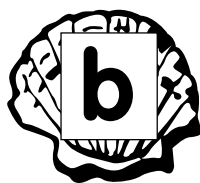
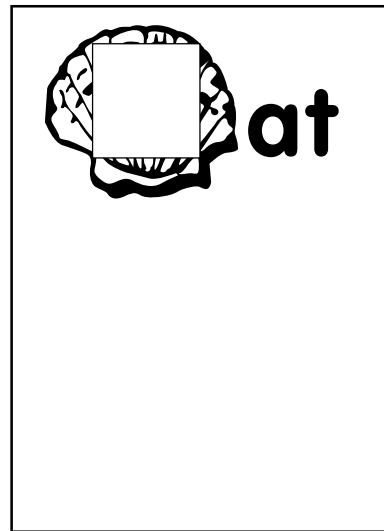
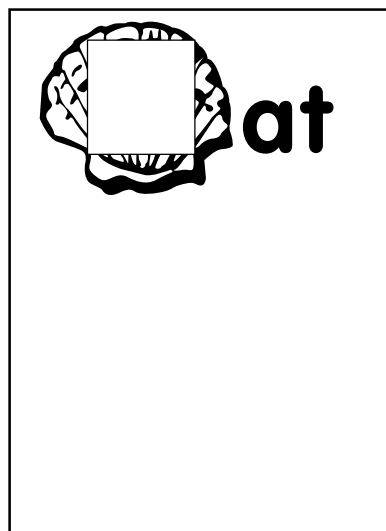
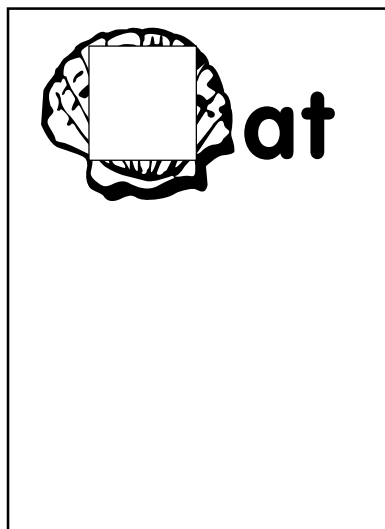
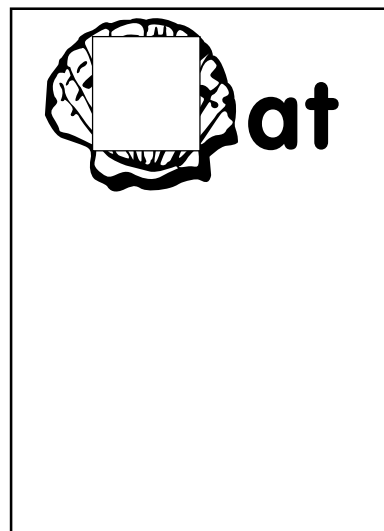
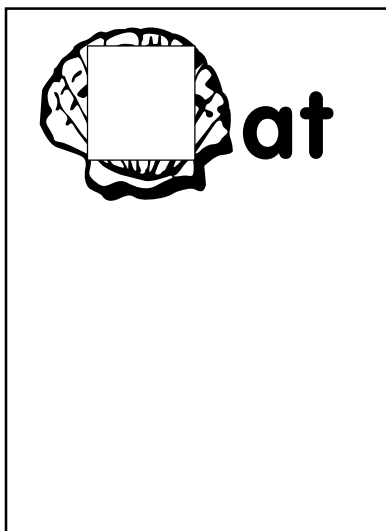
BLASTING BEYOND

Create Word Family charts for display in your class. On large sheets of butcher paper (or using pocket charts and sentence strips) write word endings (*ed*, *ig*, *op*, *ug*). Have the class make as many new words as possible for these word families by adding beginning letters. Write the new letters on the butcher paper in a different color pen.



Name: _____

1. Write a beginning letter to make a new word in each box.
Then draw a picture of your word.



MISSION GOAL

Vocabulary development
Sentence building
Reading comprehension
Oral language

CREW

Individuals

EQUIPMENT

I Can Make Sentences! activity
sheet, scissors, glue, crayons

PERISCOPE UP!

Gather several pictures from magazines, flash cards, posters, travel brochures, etc. Ask students to choose a picture and think of a sentence they could say about it. Have students take turns standing up and sharing their sentences with the group. Here are some examples: "I like to make cookies"; "My family goes to the beach"; "My dad likes to work on cars."

THE DIVE

Pass out the *I Can Make Sentences* activity sheet. Have students color the four pictures and cut them out. Discuss the content of each picture as students work. Next, read the four sentence strips aloud and talk about how the sentences are different. Ask students to choose a picture that depicts something they like to do and glue it on the line for the first sentence. Encourage students to read their sentences to their neighbors. Monitor students as they complete the activity. When all the students are finished, organize them into groups of three or four and have them take turns reading their sentences to the rest of the group.

BLASTING BEYOND

Extend the activity by having students draw pictures for each sentence strip instead of using the four selections provided. Have students cut interesting pictures from magazines and use them for writing sentences. Provide similar prompts ("I like to," "I can," "I am happy when") to use with the pictures.



Name: _____

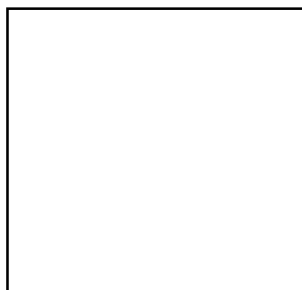
Cut out the pictures below. Glue them on the lines to make sentences.

1. I like to



.

2. I can



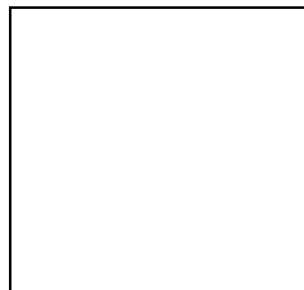
.

3. She likes to



.

4. He can



.



MISSION GOAL

Vocabulary development
 Word building
 Reading comprehension
 Consonant-vowel-consonant words

CREW

Small groups of three or four students each

EQUIPMENT

The Shell Game activity sheets A and B, scissors, pencils, margarine tubs (or similar to serve as clamshells), envelopes, permanent marker (Note: You may want to duplicate activity sheet A on card stock for better durability.)

PERISCOPE UP!

To prepare for this game, first decide on the number of student groups. Give each group a complete set of game cards from *The Shell Game* activity sheet A and each student a copy of activity sheet B. The cards should be cut out and put in separate numbered envelopes. Using the permanent marker, write the numbers 1, 2, 3 on the bottom of three margarine tubs.

THE DIVE

Divide the class into groups of three or four students each. Students will take turns being the “sheller” (the person who sorts the shells and reveals the letters beneath.) The sheller puts one letter from each of the three envelopes beneath the corresponding shell. For example, he takes a letter from envelope 1 and places it beneath container 1. When all three shells hold letters, the sheller mixes them up, then pulls up each shell to reveal the letter beneath. The group decides if a word can be made with these letters. If it can, each member of the group records the letters and the new word on his activity sheet. If a word cannot be made, the letters are placed in a free area on the table for future use. Another student now gets to be the sheller and the game continues. Letters from the free area can be used to make words.

BLASTING BEYOND

Using an overhead projector, play *The Shell Game* as a whole-group activity. Duplicate *The Shell Game* activity sheet A on an overhead transparency sheet and cut out the letter cards. Use small containers such as medicine cups or paper cups as the shells and play the game as described above.



Letters for Shell #1

B	C	S	M	R
B	H	D	P	B
W	M	H	T	B
R	C	M	V	P
J	W	P	W	J

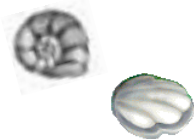
Letters for Shell #2

A	A	A	A	E
E	O	I	I	I
I	O	O	O	U
U	A	A	A	E
E	E	I	I	O

Letters for Shell #3

T	T	T	T	D
D	T	G	G	G
G	P	P	P	G
G	N	N	N	T
T	T	N	N	B

Name: _____



I made these words!



1.

--	--	--

2.

--	--	--

3.

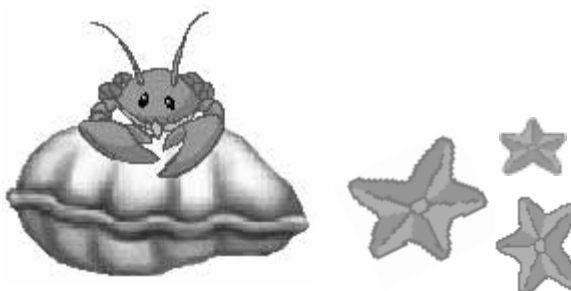
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4.

--	--	--

5.

--	--	--



**PERISCOPE UP!**

First, show students mazes from activity books or draw a simple maze on the board. Explain that the challenge is to find a way from one end of the maze to the other. Tell students that they will find their way through a maze of alphabet letters and numbers. To reach the end of the maze, they must follow letters in alphabetical order.

THE DIVE

Pass out the ABC Maze activity sheet, and point out the beginning of the maze—the letter A. Have students draw a line from A to the next stop in the maze, the letter B. Students complete the maze by following the letters in alphabet order. Remind them not to be fooled by the numbers they see. Monitor students as they complete the activity.

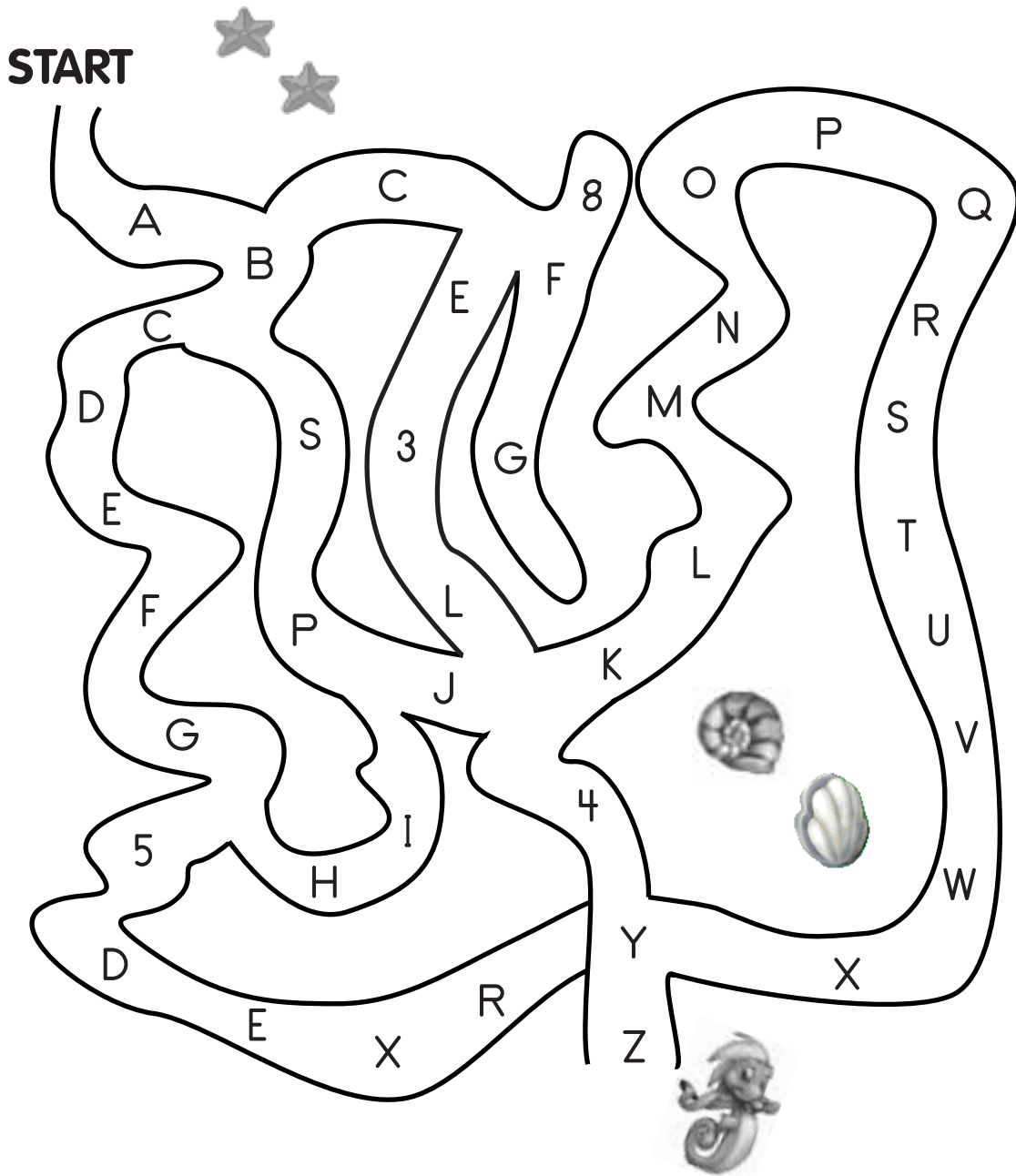
BLASTING BEYOND

Have students use graph or grid paper with large boxes to make simple mazes of their own.



Name: _____

Follow the letters through the maze. Start with the letter A and end with the letter Z.



MISSION GOAL

Spatial sense
Visual discrimination

CREW

Individuals, then pairs

EQUIPMENT

The Amazing Maze Race activity sheet, a pencil or dark crayon, dice (one set per student pair), and two game pieces

PERISCOPE UP!

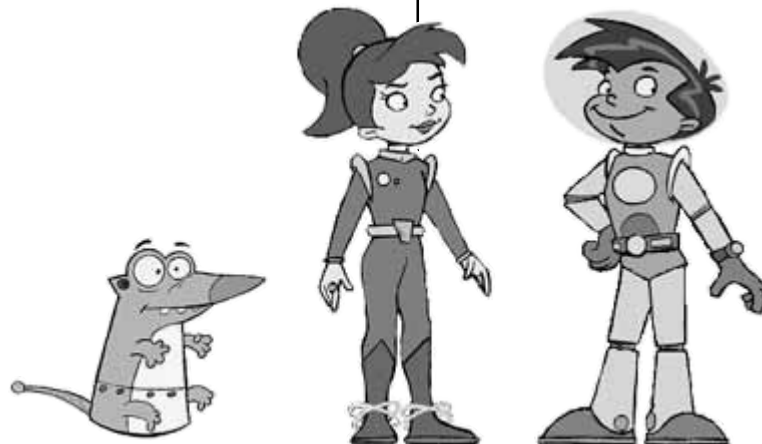
This activity has two parts. In Part 1, students create game boards using grid paper. In Part 2, they play a game with their new boards.

THE DIVE

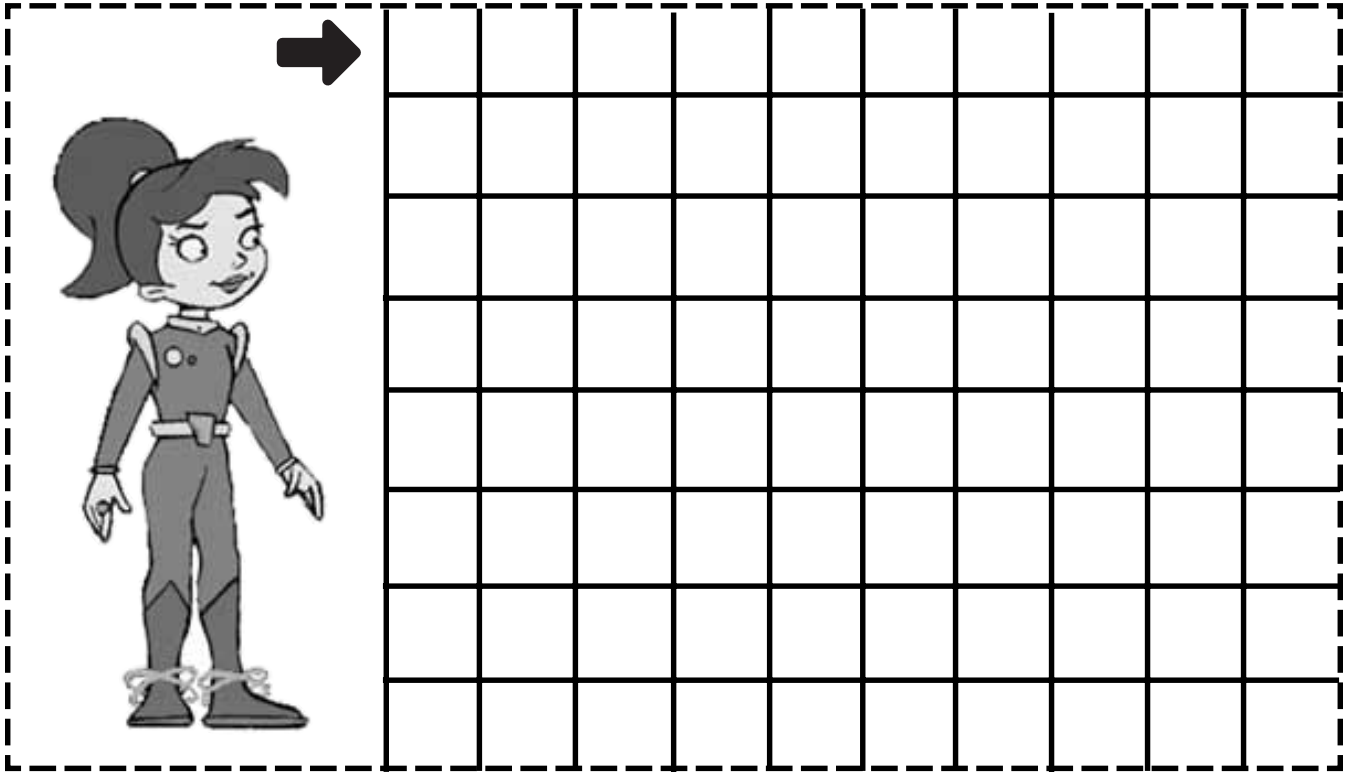
Pass out *The Amazing Maze Race* activity sheet. Have students copy the grid path for GC in the grid space provided for Blaster. Explain that the paths must match exactly. Students can use pencils or crayons to color the paths. When their game grids are complete, they play *The Amazing Maze Race*. One player is GC and the other is Blaster. Distribute dice and game tokens, and let students try out their games. Players take turns tossing the dice and moving the number of spaces indicated. The winner is the first to reach the end of the path. Have players switch characters and play again.

BLASTING BEYOND

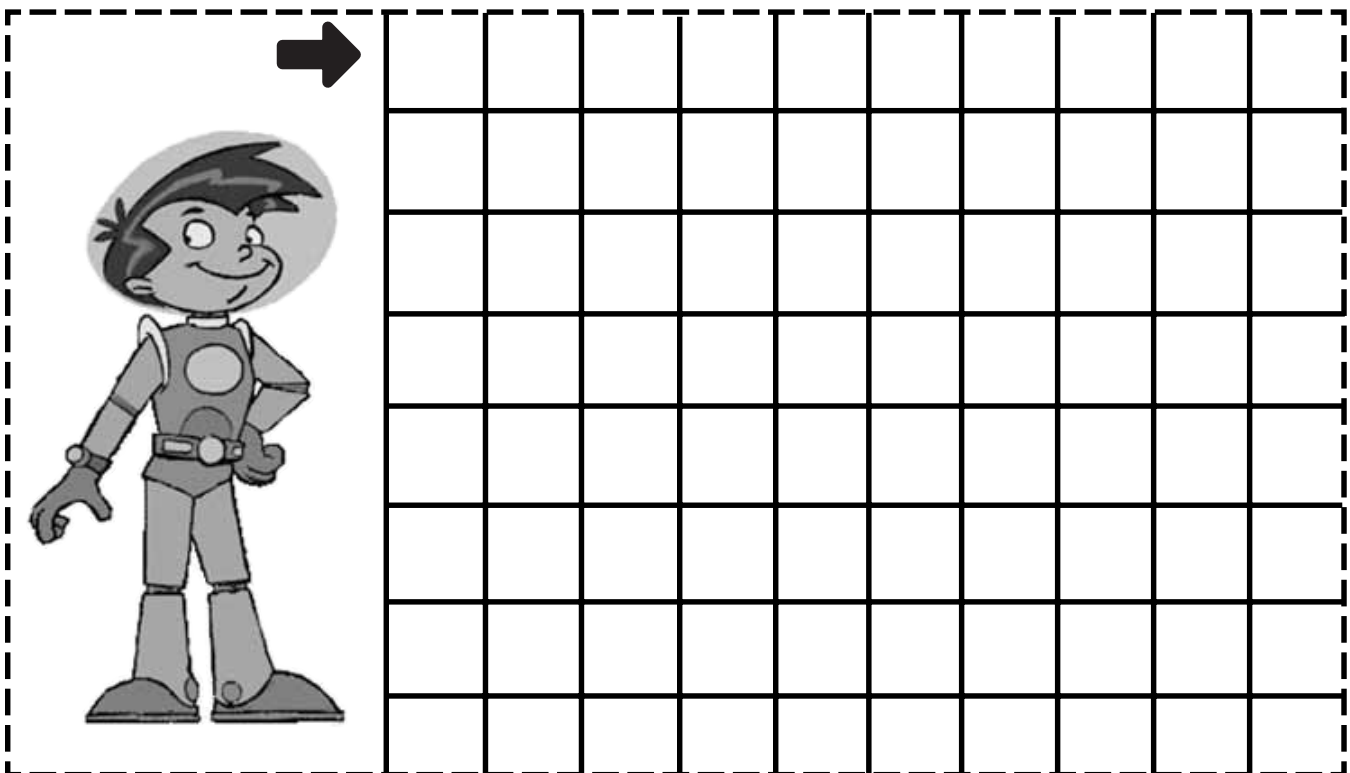
Students take their game board home and play the game with family members. Have students use blank grid paper to create game boards with two paths. Mix up the game boards and distribute them for students to try out.



Name: _____



A girl character with a ponytail, wearing a space suit and boots, stands on the left side of a 10x10 grid. A solid black arrow points to the right from the top of the grid. The entire scene is enclosed in a dashed rectangular border.



A boy character with a helmet, wearing a space suit and boots, stands on the left side of a 10x10 grid. A solid black arrow points to the right from the top of the grid. The entire scene is enclosed in a dashed rectangular border.

MISSION GOAL

Spatial sense
 Planning and design
 Creative construction

CREW

Individuals

EQUIPMENT

The *Make-A-Maze* activity sheet,
 pencil, tongue depressors
 (several per student), modeling
 clay (large hunk per student),
 marbles (one per student), shoe
 box lids (one per student)

THE DIVE

Explain the nature of a maze, and tell students that they will make a maze of their own. Before they start to build, students will sketch a design. Distribute the activity sheet and explain that the large rectangle represents the shoe box lid they will be using. Once students have designed their mazes, pass out the supplies. The students place the shoe box lid with the edges facing up in order to contain the marble. Then they attach tongue depressors with small pieces of clay to create paths. A path can be created by placing two tongue depressors side by side and leaving space for a marble to pass between them. To create shorter turns in the maze, break some of the tongue depressors in half. When the maze is complete, students maneuver a marble through it by holding the sides of the shoe box and tipping it gently.

PERISCOPE UP!

Students make a maze of their own using the supplies above. If possible, build a maze to share with students prior to the activity. If you have access to movie clips of mice or other small animals navigating a maze, show these to students as an example.

BLASTING BEYOND

Have students tell or write a story from the point of view of the marble. What is it like to roll around in a maze? Do you mind being lost? Do you want to find the end of the maze? Would you like to navigate the maze again?



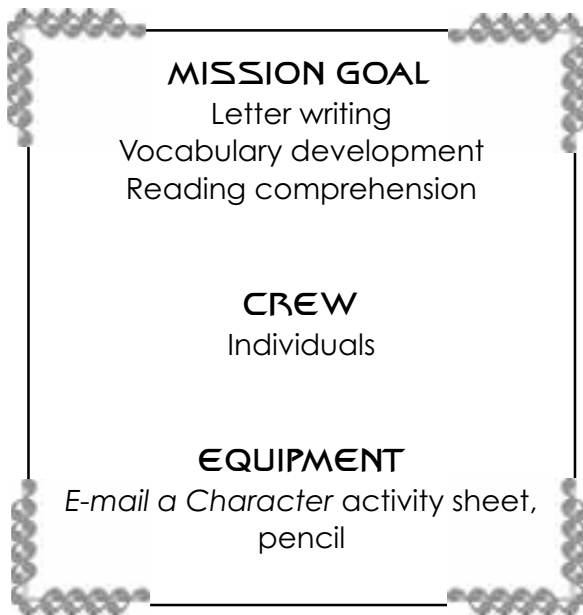
Name: _____

start



finish



**PERISCOPE UP!**

Ask students what they know about e-mail and the Internet. Explain that e-mail (electronic mail) is a quick and easy way to communicate. Stress the importance of using the Internet and e-mail only with an adult, then share some of your own experiences with e-mail. Refer to the B-Mail activity in the *Reading Blaster* program, where students can correspond with Blaster, Mel, and GC. If feasible, show students examples of the B-mail feature while logged onto the computer.

THE DIVE

Tell students that they will write an e-mail message to a favorite nursery rhyme character. Review nursery rhymes with students by referring to a book of rhymes or by asking students to recite rhymes from memory. Then write a list of characters on the board: Little Miss Muffet, Jack Be Nimble, Mary (had a little lamb), Humpty Dumpty, Jack Sprat, Jack and Jill. Distribute the *E-mail a Character* activity sheet and read the e-mail message to help students comprehend the text. Tell students to spell the words they use to the best of their ability. (If you will be evaluating spelling, consider this the first draft. Students can go back later and edit spelling errors.) Guide children through the writing portion of the activity and enlist the help of older student tutors (e.g., 4th graders) to help your students with writing. Finally, ask students to share their letters with the class.

BLASTING BEYOND

Extend the lesson by replying to each child's e-mail. Research the e-mail addresses of favorite children's authors by contacting the author's publisher or running a search on the Internet under the author's name. Compose a collective letter to the author and send it on school e-mail.



Name: _____

Read	Fwd	Copy	Save	Delete	Send
------	-----	------	------	--------	------

Dear _____,










I really liked the nursery rhyme called _____ . You are my favorite character because _____ . If I were in the rhyme, I would help you by _____ .

I am at school right now. I like to learn about _____ and _____ .

We like to use computers. Do you? My birthday is _____ . When is yours?

Write back soon!

Yours truly,
(Your name) _____

MISSION GOAL

Using prepositions
Vocabulary development
Writing

CREW

Individuals

EQUIPMENT

Around the Submarine activity sheets, scissors, color crayons, stapler, pencil

PERISCOPE UP!

Use the *Reading Blaster* story *Ben's House* for this activity on prepositions. Write each line of the story on a sentence strip, underlining or coloring the prepositions in the sentence. As you tell the story, put the sentence strips in a pocket chart.

Ben's House

Ben lives in my shoe.

Ben is inside my shoe.

Now he is outside my shoe.

He is on top.

Now he is under my shoe.

Now he is in front of my shoe.

Now he is in back of my shoe.

Now Ben is asleep in my shoe.

Good night, Ben.

Explain that the underlined words describe the location of an object. In this case, the object is Ben.

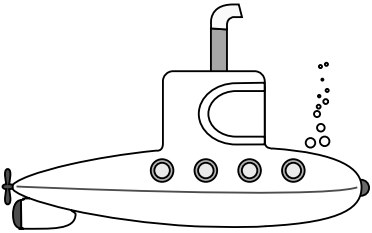
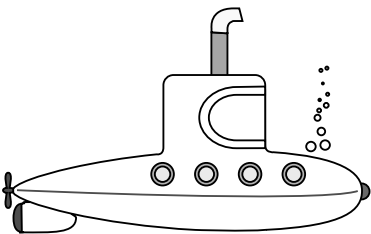
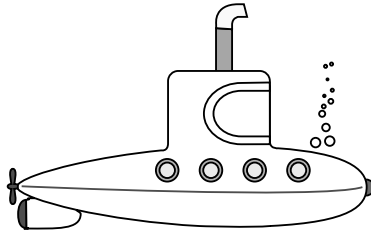
THE DIVE

Tell students that they will write a story about a submarine, using prepositions to talk about themselves and the submarine. Distribute *Around the Submarine* activity sheets to each child. You may want to make an overhead transparency of the sheets as you guide students through the activity using an overhead projector. Have students fill in the boxes with the following prepositions (in this order): *in, on, beside, below, behind*. As students write each preposition, tell them how the meaning of the sentence changes. Students then draw a self-portrait illustrating each preposition and color their pictures. Cut out the boxes, combine them, and staple them to create mini-booklets. Give students time to read their submarine stories to one another.

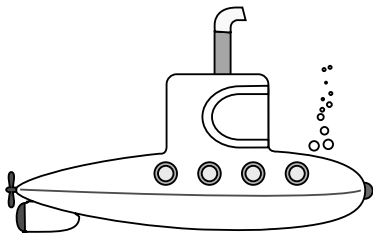
BLASTING BEYOND

Conduct research on submarines using the Internet or books from the library.

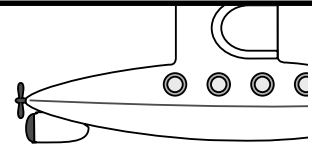
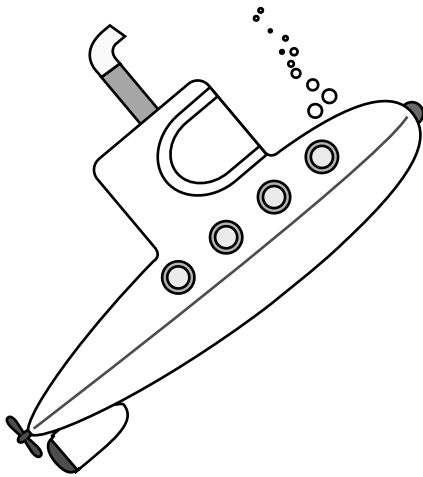
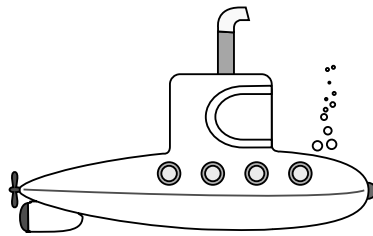


<p>My Submarine</p> <p>by</p> <p>_____</p> <p>-----</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>I am _____ the submarine.</p> 
<p>I am _____ the submarine.</p> 	<p>I am _____ the submarine.</p> 

I am _____
the submarine.



I am _____
the submarine.



Goodbye!

RESOURCES

FOR TEACHERS:

- Caplan, Theresa and Frank. *The Early Childhood Years: The 2 to 6 Year Old*. Bantam, 1983.
- Gardner, Howard. *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory into Practice*. Basic Books, 1986.
- Gillas, Karen. *The Languages of Learning: How Children Talk, Write, Dance, Draw, and Sing Their Understanding of the World*. Teachers College Press, 1994.
- Powell, Debbie, and David Hornsby. *Learning Phonics and Spelling in a Whole Language Classroom*. Scholastic, 1993.

FOR STUDENTS:

ALPHABET BOOKS

- Calmenson, Stephanie. *It Begins with A*. Hyperion, 1993.
- Gardner, Beau. *Have You Ever Seen? An ABC Book*. Dodd, 1986
- McMillan, Bruce. *The Alphabet Symphony*. Greenwillow, 1977.
- Sendak, Maurice. *Alligators All Around*. Harper and Row, 1962.

LETTER SOUNDS

- MacDonald, Suse. *Alphabetics*. Bradbury, 1986.

LETTER WRITING

- Ahlberg, Janet and Allan. *The Jolly Postman*. Little, Brown, 1986.
- Alexander, Sue. *Dear Phoebe*. Little, Brown, 1984.
- Winslow, Nancy. *Love From Uncle Clyde*. Dodd Mead, 1977.

PREPOSITIONS

- Bancheck, Linda. *Snake In, Snake Out*. Crowell, 1978.

SPATIAL CONCEPTS

- Allen, Pamela. *A Lion in the Night*. Putnam, 1986.
- Matthies, Catherine. *Over - Under*. Children's Press, 1984.

WRITING BOOKS

- Dr. Seuss. *I Can Write!* Random House, 1971.
- Nixon, Lowery Joan. *If You Were a Writer*. Four Winds, 1988.

RELATED WEB SITES

- A card catalog of children's online sites: <http://www.yahooligans.com/>
- The Children's Literature Web Guide: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html/>
- Read Aloud!: [http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~epling/readaloud.html /](http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~epling/readaloud.html/)
- Kindergarten links to grade level information: <http://www.ucdsb.on.ca/crec/kindergarten.htm/>
- International Reading Association: <http://ira.org/>
- KinderArt: <http://www.kinderart.com/>