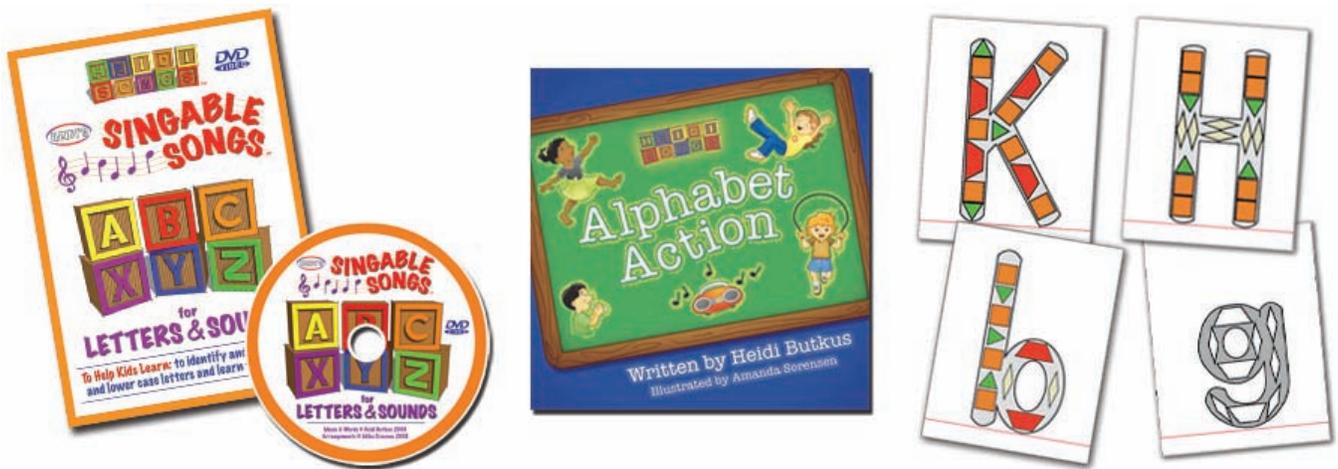


HEIDISONGS

Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds User Guide



This manual is intended as a guide to help teachers and parents use the Singable Songs for Letters & Sounds CD and DVD more successfully in their classrooms and homes. These are the things that Heidi and other HeidiSongs users have done in their classrooms to produce the excellent results that this program is known for. However, each teacher will likely develop his or her own routine for teaching the alphabet. My advice to administrators is that if a teacher is successful, then do not disturb! Teaching is an art form with a foundation in science, and every teacher's version of this art is likely to look a little bit different.

Quick Start Guide

Program Integration - How the Singable Songs for Letters & Sounds Program works and integrating it with your existing Language Arts Program (Page 3)

Pacing - A general rate that tends to work is introducing two new songs per week per subject. However, if your students are getting it, then you are doing it right! If not, then slow down and sing the songs more often during the day to increase the number of repetitions. (Page 3)

Heidi's Kindergarten Pacing Guide - 38 weeks to cover the year. (Page 26)

Making the Most of Heidisongs Resources- Make the Heidisongs products work to give you the best results possible! (Page 6)

Classroom Management - Songs can be used as a way to "get the wiggles out", to fill extra minutes, and much more. (Page 10)

Other Activities - Reinforcement can take place in learning centers or other activities. Children are usually excited to get some practice in using a variety of materials. (Page 13)

Extra Support for Students - Assess students who are struggling, and decide on a strategy to help them be successful in the classroom. (Page 18)

Additional Resources - If a resource has been indicated as a free download from Heidi's blog, we have included it here at the end of this guide. Be sure to follow Heidi's blog regularly to receive weekly updates and more free downloads as they become available! The blog address is below.

<http://heidisongs.blogspot.com>

Song Lyrics and Movement - Detail stick-figure illustrations are perfect support for the music CDs and duplicate exactly what you would see Heidi doing on the DVD version of the same music volume.

(Available Online @ HeidiSongs.com)

Program Integration

How Does This Program Work to Teach the Alphabet?

Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds helps children learn the alphabet in a multisensory way. Here is how it works: children listen to and are taught to sing song about the general shape and look of each letter and its basic sound. While they sing, they are supposed to be looking at the letter either in the teacher's hand or on the screen if using a DVD. Children learn movements in which they form the shape of the letter with their bodies, and do these movements in time to the music. It is this simultaneous multisensory mixture of learning activities that imprints each letter onto the brain for optimum learning.

For the letters that have the capital and lower case letter that look different from each other, there are always at least two verses in each song: one verse to describe the upper case letter, one verse to describe the lower case letter, and if the sound has not been mentioned, there is often a third verse to remind children of the letter sound.

This means that each song may be a bit longer than most of the HeidiSongs that you have gotten used to, particularly the spelling songs, which rarely have more than a verse and a chorus! So when you come to a song that seems a bit longer than usual, remember to give it a few more repetitions than you might need to do with the average spelling song, etc. Every effort was made to keep them short and sweet, but in the end, certain things needed to be covered in each song! So some of the songs necessarily became a bit longer than I would have liked as a result.

Can this HeidiSongs Program Be Combined With Other Alphabet Programs, or Will the Students Get Mixed Up?

This Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds DVD was designed so that you can use it as a supplement to any language arts program. In the years since its release, I have not had anyone tell me that it has confused their students or left anyone mixed up. Even though the DVD may use some motions that are unfamiliar to your students, teachers report that their students simply don't care *why* I am doing a certain movement on the screen; they just enjoy moving to the music! The teachers are the ones that are very concerned

about having a "reason" for each motion, and about combining programs, but children don't seem to care at all and by all accounts seem to be just fine with it. If this were not the case, I would tell you so up front, honestly, and from the very beginning.

Pacing

Pacing for Introducing New Letters and Songs

To maximize results, introduce just two to four brand new alphabet songs per week for Kindergarten. You can increase the number of songs introduced per week for older children. One new song per week may be enough for many preschoolers. Start with five or six new letter songs per week for first grade, and see how it goes. **If they are learning those letters well enough, then you are doing it right! If not, then slow down. Each class will probably be just a little bit different, and teachers should use their best judgement in how quickly to introduce each new song.** If they are getting it, then you are doing it right! If not, then slow down and sing the songs more often during the day to increase the number of repetitions. You can vary the activity and maintain interest by inviting different children to lead the songs at different times of the day and by playing games that incorporate the songs. You can have the children sing the songs in funny voices, as well! Please see my Pacing Guide for Kindergarten for more information on this.

In my district, we must introduce (or review!) five letters per week in Kindergarten in order to be on target with the district pacing guide for the rest of the year. This will allow us to introduce the entire alphabet quickly and then move on to teaching the children to read, since they are supposed to master reading short a vowel sound words (such as "cat" and "ran") by the end of the first trimester, plus know 15 sight words. The time in the classroom absolutely FLIES by at the beginning of the year, I often wind up behind, due to one "crisis" or another! All it takes is for someone to get hurt, or another child to wet their pants, or someone to start crying for their mother, and my window of opportunity to introduce a new song that day may simply be gone! If this happens to you, don't panic. Just prioritize the alphabet songs that you need the most and focus on singing THEM with your students. For example, if I know that I have many students in my class that are mixing up the G and the J, and I will make sure that we sing the G and the J songs

each day. In fact, I may do this FIRST, right after we update the calendar each morning. Typically, the Q is hard for the children to learn, but they LOVE the Q song, so singing the Q song is well worth my time. The letter Y is often rather hard for many students to learn, so we will definitely work on that one, too. My point is that if you cannot find the time to introduce all of them, then figure out which letters are the least known (or the most confusing) for your class to learn, and make sure you hit those as often as possible.

HeidiSongs Kindergarten Pacing Guide								
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Week No.	Letters and Sounds	Number	Color Wd. or Wd. Family	Shape/Coin	Sight Words	Language Arts Concepts	Math Concepts	Theme/Singable Book
1	A-D	0-5	red, yellow	circle	none	write name, rhyme,	sorting, counting aloud, count objects to 10	Wiggles Learns the Rules at School, Wiggles' First Day at
2	E-H	6-10	green, blue	square	none	beginning sounds, name writing, rhyme	sorting, counting aloud, graphs, days of the week, patterns,	Round Is a Pancake Book
3	I-L	0-10 review	purple, orange	triangle	the	Write letters, rhyme, beginning sounds	matching sets 0-10, numbers in order, sorting, patterns	Wiggles Learns to Pay Attention, Round Is a Pancake Book
4	M-P	0-10 review	brown, black	rectangle	I, see	review and practice above, concepts of print (title, title page, front cover, back cover)	review and practice above; compare sets with more, less, and equal	The Shape Song Book

Find this complete 38 Week Pacing Guide on page 30

Introduce the Letter Songs in Any Order

It makes no difference which order you introduce the songs and letters in! You can do them in order, or mix them up. The only good reason to introduce them in alphabetical order is because that is the order that they are given in the DVD. Therefore, it is more convenient to simply go from A to B and from B to C on the DVD, etc. However, you may wish to start with the songs for the letters S and M, because you want to reinforce what is being taught in your district's language arts program. Of course, that is a good idea! In this case, just look at the menu at the beginning of the DVD that says "Play All" and "Single Songs." Choose the menu that says "Single Songs" and then select the song that you want to play. Your DVD player, interactive white board, or computer should jump directly to that song. When that song is over, then the DVD will go back to that menu so that you can pick the next song.

Making the Most of Heidisongs Resources

Use Simultaneous Multi-Sensory Lessons To Boost Memory Power

People remember lessons better that are presented in a simultaneous multi-sensory manner. This means that all of the senses are used at the same time in the learning process. In particular, children that are active learners tend to respond very well to this method of teaching. That's why this method works so well to help kids remember the alphabet!

1. For example, research tells us that *only ten percent of what we hear, we generally retain.*

Example: You are lecturing your students only, with no visual aids. They won't remember much; only about 10%.

2. But *thirty percent of what we hear and see, we retain.*

Example: You tell your students the material, and have a visual aid to refer to. You may be reading a picture book, or have flash cards to refer to. Your students may retain about 30% of your lesson.

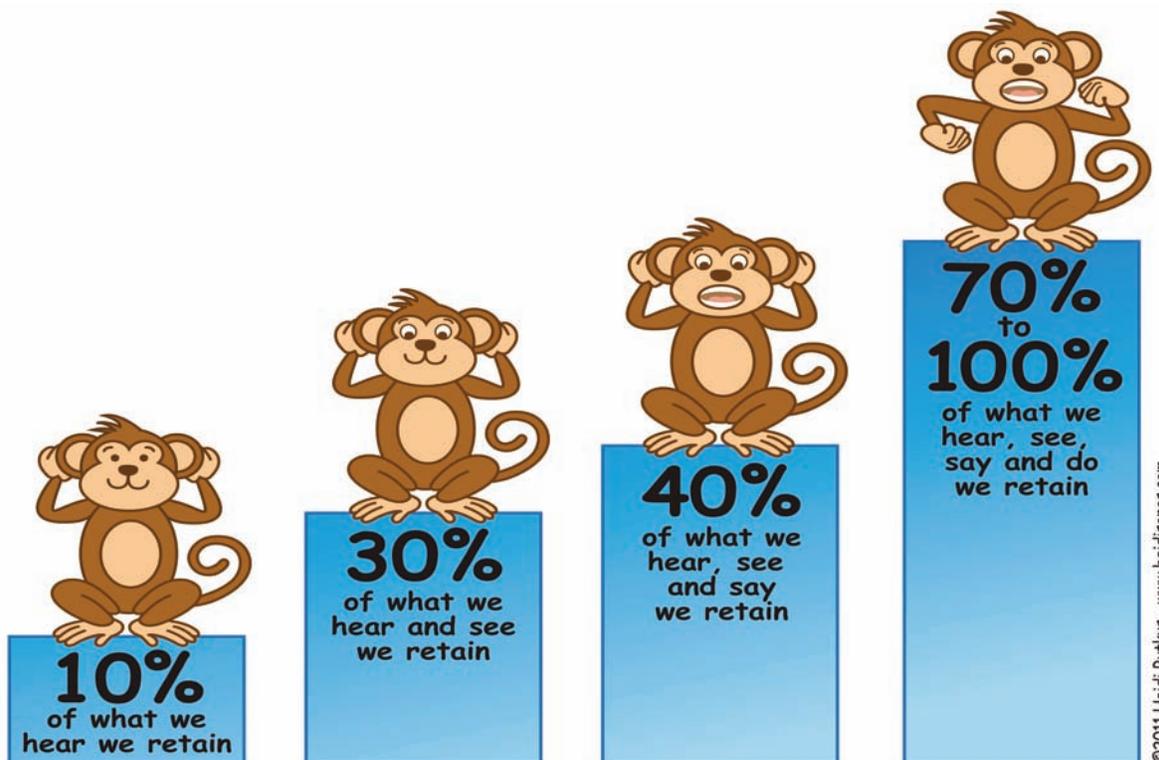
3. *We retain forty percent of what we hear, see, and say* in a lesson.

Example: You have a book, visual aid, or some flash cards in your hand, and you are drilling your students, asking them to respond verbally by answering your questions. "Saying" the information that is being taught could include singing it or simply speaking. By asking them to repeat the information, you raised the likelihood of the learner remembering the information from 30% to 40%.

4. BUT..., if we can get our students to **hear, see, say, and do**- all at the same time- in a lesson, we can get anywhere from 70 - 100% retention of a concept in a single lesson. The "say" part can also be covered by singing. The "do" part of the equation means that you must add movement into the lesson, and that they must do the movements while seeing, saying, and hearing the concepts being taught.

Example: You have alphabet flash cards in your hand. The children are asked to stand up and give a motion for each for each letter as they say the letter name or sound. By adding the motion for letter into the mix, you just raised the likelihood that your students will remember the information by 30% from

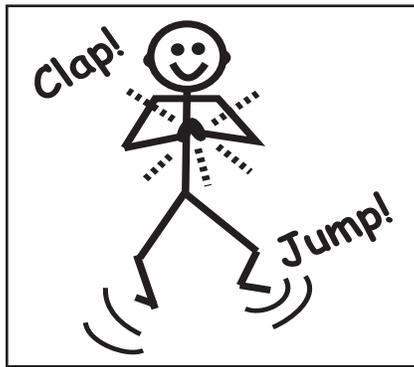
the previous example, all the way up to 70-100%!



There are many multi-sensory programs that help children learn the alphabet that will complement HeidiSongs very well in this manner. **The program that matches up the best with HeidiSongs is called Zoo-Phonics, and is sold at <http://www.zoo-phonics.com/>.** But there are others, including Jolly Phonics, Picture Me Reading Alphabet Cards, Itchy's Alphabet, Animated Literacy, and Orton-Gillingham. An internet search will give you more information on all of these programs.

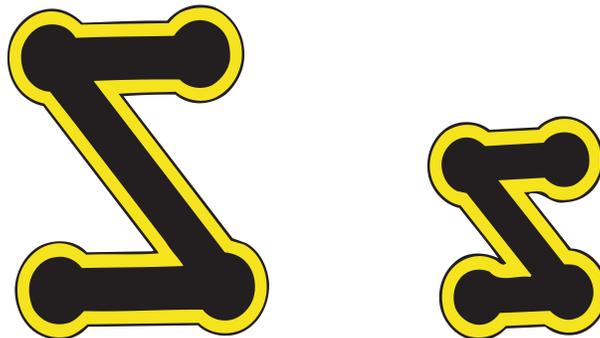
Any Motions Will Do: Just Keep Them Moving!

It's not the specific motions that make a difference, but rather the multisensory mix of the visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and musical elements that matters. So feel free to change any of the movements that you like! A written description of the motions that I use are posted on the website for you to download free. It has stick figures on it that should help you figure out what the movements are intended to be, if you are using the CD rather than the DVD.



When Facing Your Students, Remember to "Mirror Image" the Letters as You Draw Them

When you are facing your students, remember that they will be looking at any letter you "draw in the air" from the other side. So you'll have to train yourself to draw it backwards so that your students will see you form it correctly from their perspective. This is very important, of course, or they will be picturing and practicing the letter backwards.

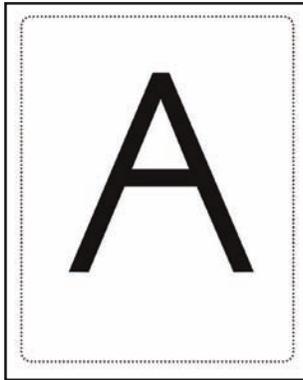


Get used to drawing the letters in the air "backwards" while facing your students.

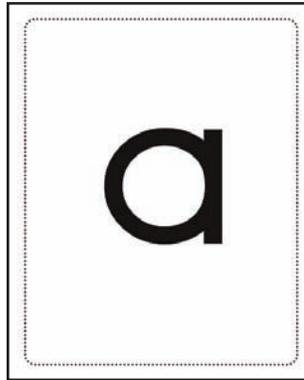
Show the Letter While You Are Singing

Connecting the visual to the auditory is extremely important! Always show the letter when you sing a song. Have the children practice saying the letter aloud when you draw it, and have them practice drawing it in the air with you. When teaching with a CD or iPod rather than the DVD, I always hold large letter cards in my hands. These cards have the capital letter on the front and the corresponding lower case letter on the back. You can purchase these cards as a download and print them yourself, or make some of your own. They come in a set with upper and lower case alphabet bingo games, a letter sound bingo game, and the Sing Along Songbook for this CD. I prefer to bind my

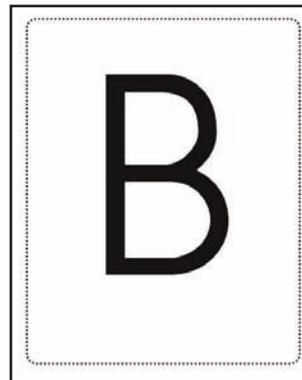
cards into a book with large O rings to keep them in order. There is a special set of cards for the Alphabet Action song that is included in the download with these letter cards as well.



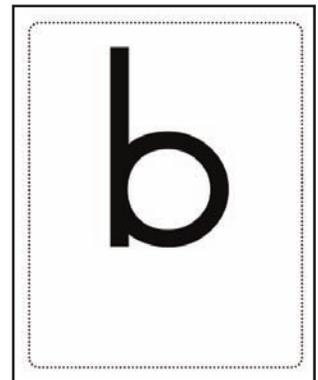
Front of card



Back of card



Front of card



Back of card

How to Introduce a Letter Song

Whenever I introduce a new letter song, I ask the children to say the words to the song aloud, slowly at first. Then we pick up the pace, saying the words aloud a few more times a bit more quickly until we hit the approximate tempo of the song. Once the children get used to spelling the word aloud quickly, then it is time to teach them the motions of the song. Either put on the DVD and have them watch it, or teach them the motions yourself in person. When I teach a song, we sing it without the CD or DVD once or twice together, a bit more slowly than the real music. Then when we do it with the real music, there is a better chance that the children will be able to keep up.

Watch Out for the "Schwa" Sound!

The "schwa" sound is that sound that sounds like an "uh" that sometimes creeps in after we make other sounds. Be careful with your pronunciation of each of the letter sounds! Make sure that you don't insert an extra "uh" sound after your letter sounds when you teach them, because you don't want your students to sound out new words incorrectly as a result. For example, if you teach a child that the letter b says "buh" instead of "/b/," then you could have a child that sounds out the word "bat" as "buh-a-t."

Every effort was made to make sure that we kept that schwa sound out of our musical recordings; however, when you try to sing a letter sound, that sound must go somewhere! And occasionally, you may hear something in the

recordings that sounds a bit like the schwa sound. Explain to your students what the letter sound should be, and when they practice making it without the music, make sure that they make the sound correctly. That should clear up any possible confusion that may arise from learning the letter sounds via music.

Classroom Management

Keeping Children Calm While Singing

The songs are designed to be fun for children, and when kids are not used to being allowed to have fun, sometimes things can get a bit out of hand! The best solution is to practice getting your children to calm down when you are done singing. Demonstrate the behavior you expect, and practice it with the children before you begin. Make sure that the children know what is expected, and what will happen if they do not comply, including missing music time altogether for the rest of the day. Years ago, I once took my entire CD player and put it in the closet, just to emphasize my point that we were not going to sing again for the rest of the day due to their behavior. This got their attention and produced the desired effect the next school day. Consistency is the name of the game; whatever you say will happen, must happen! If you do not follow through with your consequences, then whatever you have stated will happen "next time" will be meaningless to the children. They will know that you are bluffing! So never offer up a consequence that you cannot or are not willing to follow through on.

This is the kind of thing that I usually say when children are getting a bit overly excited: "Okay, everyone! I would like to sing the Zero the Hero song with you, but when we are done, I need you to stop when I say "stop," alright? Can anyone show me what that looks like? Let's sing the end of the song right now, and then show me how you stop quietly and then sit down in your place." Then, once the children have watched one or two of their peers demonstrate what this looks like, you may wish to choose a child that is typically naughty to demonstrate those same good behaviors. This will establish that the child really *does understand what is expected, and that he or she is able to follow the directions*. Then, if this same child chooses to disobey and gets out of control following a song, you will have no reason to feel badly about removing some other privilege. And by all means, praise those that follow your directions lavishly!

Rewards, of course, are great too. Whatever classroom system you have in

place for maintaining a learning environment is likely going to work; it's a matter of deciding what is important to you to put a stop to, and what is not as important. In my opinion, if the behavior is interrupting anyone's learning, then it should stop. If the behavior is not preventing anyone from learning, but is annoying for the teacher then it might not be such a big deal- but then that's YOUR call, not mine! Every teacher has to decide for him or herself what that person can tolerate in the classroom.

Everyone Participates, Every Time!

Learning is not a spectator sport! If this program is to help your class learn, then it is vital that all of the children participate with the music to the best of their ability. This means that they need to be looking at the letter, doing the motions as much as they are able, and singing along or saying the words. This multi-sensory "soup" will produce the best learning and help students commit whatever it is you are teaching to long term memory, rather than cram it into short term memory. The children that are learning the most slowly are most likely going to be the ones that are very reluctant to participate, for whatever reason. Very little benefit is achieved from a child sitting and watching others sing, dance, and look at the letters.

Nip any non-participation in the bud, and make sure that parents understand from the very beginning that music in your classroom is a non-optional learning activity, not just something we do for entertainment. If you allow one child to opt out of it, you will surely have a few more that will join him or her, because bad attitudes are contagious. If one child is allowed to be "too cool for school," then more will join that child, so my best advice is to treat non-participation in music as you would treat any situation in which the child decided not to complete any work. If the child refused to do a worksheet, then this would be an issue that would need to be corrected. And if the child is refusing to participate in music, this is also an issue that needs to be corrected. Positive techniques are best, of course! Please see my blog post on positive ways to motivate kids to participate in music.

<http://heidisongs.blogspot.com/2012/06/motivating-kids-to-participate-in-music.html>.

Squeezing in More Review by Singing During Transitions

One thing that I do is put on a DVD and play it each time we are about to

change from one group to another. I first ring a bell, and then begin playing a DVD. This is a signal to the children that it is time to clean up, and then join me (or at least the movie of me on the screen!) on the carpet while we sing a few songs and get our wiggles out while the rest of the children are cleaning up their centers and getting ready to join us in singing as well. The children that are still cleaning up are at least *hearing* the songs in the background, and the children that are done and are waiting for their classmates to finish are not wasting any time. Once everyone is finished cleaning up and is ready to move to their next group, we have usually sung anywhere from two to four songs, and then I pause the DVD by pushing the space bar on my computer. Then we walk to our next table and begin our next activity. By the end of the day, we have reviewed anywhere from eight to sixteen more songs, just by taking advantage of that extra time in between groups!

Cue Up the Music Before School Starts

Try to have your CD player, iPod, or DVD player, etc., all cued up and ready to go *before* the school day begins, so that no time is wasted. That way, you can start a song in an instant at any time, including when the phone rings, or if someone walks into the room and needs to speak to you for a few moments. You can really squeeze a lot more instructional minutes into your day quite easily with just this one easy step. You'll feel much less pressured during the day as well, since you'll be better prepared for contingencies. One teacher told me once, "I don't have an aide, except for YOU! YOU are the aide in my classroom! Whenever I need a minute, I start up the DVD, and the kids are happy singing for at least five minutes."

Use the Songs as a Classroom Management Tool

Any time your students are getting restless, have them stand and sing a song with movements. They can get their wiggles out AND learn at the same time. Plus, it guarantees lots of chances to review any words or concepts that are included in your music. It also helps you proactively avoid discipline problems as you give children permission and an *instructionally sound reason* to stand up and move.

Students can also sing as they wait for their classmates to put things away or finish up their work. This is a good way to fill up those extra minutes that seem "unteachable." Children can be taught to clean up toys or put away be-

longings while songs play. I always used to tell children that they could get a "two song drink" or that they could have two songs to away their homework. It works as a way to measure time for the children. Many teachers also play the songs as background music while the children are simply playing each day, just to get it into their subconscious minds! (However, I would NOT depend on this to be the *only* method of sight word instruction, since I have seen in a colleague's classroom that it does **not** work.

Other Activities

Reinforce the Alphabet with Other Games and Activities

The more you practice the letters and expose your students to them, the greater the chances are that they will learn them. There are a variety of activities that are available to compliment Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds on HeidiSongs.com. Below are a few of them. Take advantage of these games, and of any other learning centers and activities that you can find elsewhere!

1. Use the CD in a listening center.

Print out a Sing Along Songbook with the words to the songs and let the children read along!

Aa

The A Song

Oh, the A goes /a/, /a/, /a/!
The A goes /a/, /a/, /a/!
The big A is a mountain
With a stick across like that!

Oh, the A goes /a/, /a/, /a/!
The A goes /a/, /a/, /a/!
The little A is a circle
With a stick right after that!

(repeat from beginning)

5

The A Song

Cc

The C Song

To make the letter C, C, C,
It's half a circle, C, C, C,
It looks like ears on me, me, me!
But it's /c/, /c/, /c/, /c/
/c/, /c/, C, C, C!

(repeat 1 more time slowly,
then two more times fast!)

7

The C Song

Oo

The O Song

An O is just like a circle or a zero,
Oh, it's so easy for me!
You just make the sound
With your mouth open wide!

/o/, /o/, /o/ /o/, /o/, /o/ /o/, /o/, /o/ /o/, /o/, /o/

An O is just like a circle or a zero,
Oh, it's so easy for me!

(repeat)

19

The O Song

Ss

The S Song

For an S I make,
Just a curvy little snake!
For an S I make,
Just a curvy little snake!
And that /s/, /s/, /s/, snake!
Makes my knees a little shaky!
For an S, I make,
Just a curvy little snake!

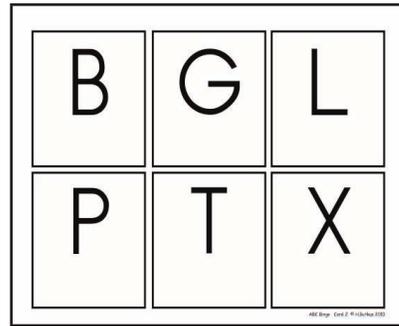
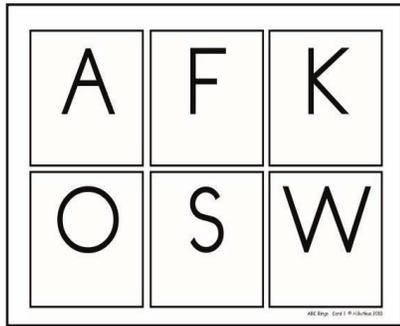
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The S Song

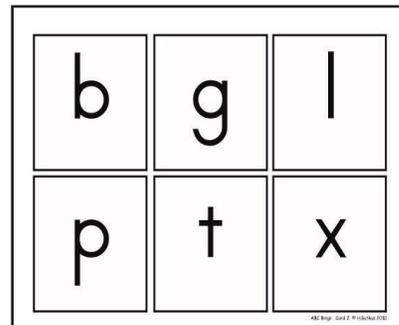
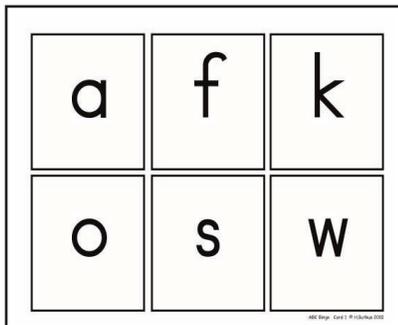
2. Play Alphabet Bingo!

(This download is included with the Sing Along Songbook and the large letter flash cards to show your kids while you are singing.) Make sure that your version of alphabet bingo or other games keep the lower case letters separated

from the capitals. Sometimes, children get used to seeing them together, and then do not recognize them when they see them apart.



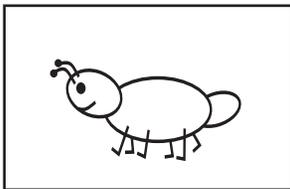
Alphabet Bingo With Capitals Only



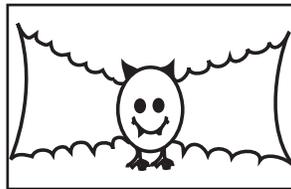
Alphabet Bingo With Lower Case Letters Only

3. Match the letters with pictures that begin with that sound.

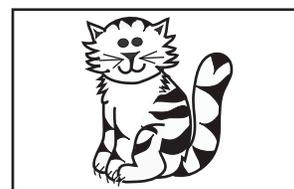
Included in the download of the alphabet bingo and the Sing Along Songbook is a set of picture cards that you can use to match up with each letter. There is one picture card for each letter of the alphabet. You can also use these as calling cards for the bingo game, and have the caller simply say the name of the picture on the card. Then have the children look for the letter that has that beginning sound.



A is for Ant



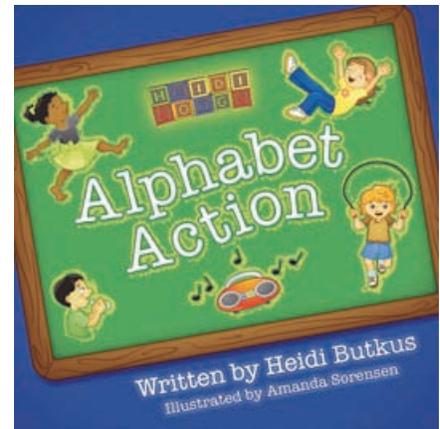
B is for Bat



C is for Cat

4. Read the Alphabet Action Picture Book

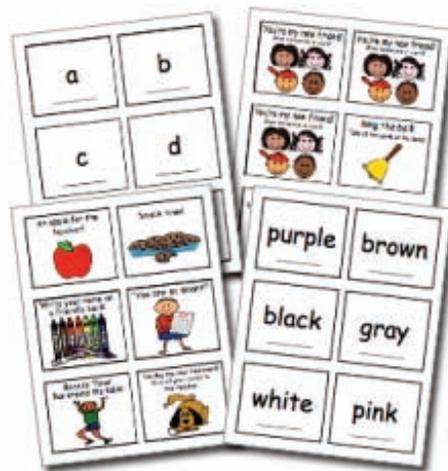
Once they know the Alphabet Action song, children will enjoy reading the picture book that goes with it! It makes a good book for the listening center, and it also is a great book to go with your easy readers! Once your students know the song, they will be able to read the picture book easily. It became quite a popular book in my reading center last year due to the fact that everyone felt successful with it. I kept a set of six in my room and used them for a reading group as well!



5. Play the "Ring the Bell!" Game

This is a printable small group game with a 'Back to School' theme helps kids practice their numbers, alphabet and sight words! It plays a lot like the traditional Bang game, but with a lot of other special cards thrown in for fun, and a school bell to ring! If kids are not ready to practice the color words or other sight words included, simply remove those cards when you play.

http://www.heidisongs.com/our-products/index.php?id=1&keywords=Games_&_Other_Tools

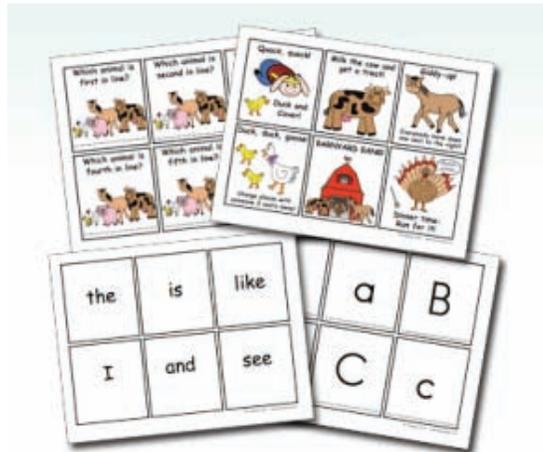


Ring the Bell! Game

6. Play the "Barnyard Bang!" Game

This is another printable small group game for practicing sight words, color

words, alphabet, the numbers 0-30, ordinal numbers, and sorting. This one has a fun farm theme that also includes some turkeys, so it works for Thanksgiving fun, too! If your students are not ready to practice the concepts such as ordinal numbers, etc., simply remove the cards that you do not wish to include and play as usual. http://www.heidisongs.com/our-products/index.php?id=1&keywords=Games_&_Other_Tools



Barnyard Bang!

7. Jingle Bell Bang! Game

Here is one more printable game with a holiday theme that helps kids practice their numbers, alphabet and sight words! Kids enjoy ringing a set of jingle bells when they get that "Jingle Bell Bang!" card, and then they receive all of the other player's cards. Other cards also give children fun directions to follow that keep interest high. http://www.heidisongs.com/our-products/index.php?id=1&keywords=Games_&_Other_Tools

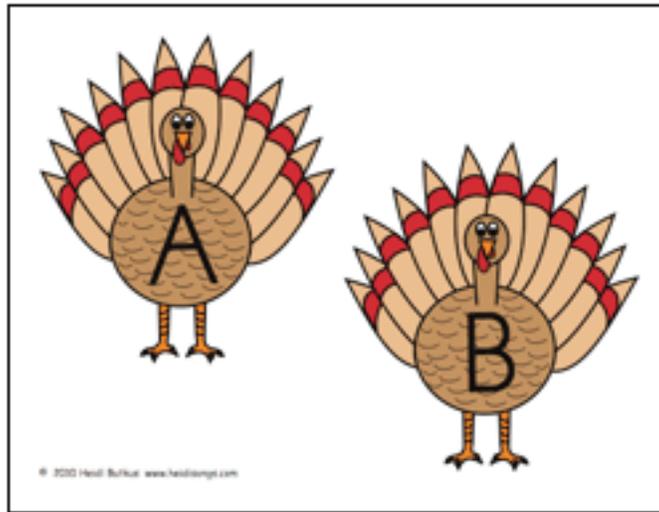


Jingle Bell Bang!

8. Turkey Tails Alphabet Game

This game is a free download on my blog! You can play it with sight words or letters, or numbers, or whatever you like. All you have to do is hide something underneath one of the turkeys and then ask each child to guess which lettered turkey it is hidden under in turn. Kids practice identifying the letters while they search for the hidden object. Fun!

<http://heidisongs.blogspot.com/2010/11/turkey-talk-week-twelve.html>



Jingle Bell Bang!

9. Have children write the letters as the songs play.

Children also learn by connecting the written letter to the songs that they hear. So give them opportunities to try to write the letters as the songs play. I usually pass out dry erase boards and markers to the whole class, and have them try to write the letters as the DVD plays, pointing out that the letter is drawing itself over and over again in the upper left hand corner of the screen. Then they should tell me what letter they wrote and its sound.

Extra Support for Students

What to Do For Children That Are Struggling

There is a blog post that I wrote that has lots of ideas and tricks that I use to help children that are struggling to learn the letter names and sounds, despite all of my best efforts as listed above. These are the ideas that I listed on that post. Be sure to watch my blog for more suggestions and ideas as they come up!

1. Letter Sounds Club (AKA: A Little Motivation, Please!)

Last year, one of my talented colleague came up with the idea of making up a chart that the children could add their name to when they all learned their letter sounds. It is very similar to the Number Club, in which the children get to add their names once they know all of their numbers 0-30. I also sent home a note about it in hopes that the parents would want to help their children get their names up on the board. I designed it to look like an awards ribbon, and I really like the way it came out! I am including it today for you as a free download, too! And in case you were wondering, my priority is this: first I concentrate on the letter sounds, then the lower case letter names, and finally the capitals. Why? Because once they know the letter sounds, they can begin to learn to read. Also, they will see the lower case letters much more often than the capitals, so these will be more important for them to learn first. Once they know the lower case letters, the capitals will follow, especially since many of them are look-alike letters anyway. :)



2. Progress Report (AKA: A Little Help from Home, Please!)

I sent home a progress report at the end of last week to let parents know how their children were doing. (Yes, I do realize that it was only the end of the fourth week of school!) But I figure that if I am going to get them to help their children master the alphabet by the end of the first trimester, I will have to start lighting that fire ASAP, because it is not going to be an easy task for some. I am attaching this progress report for you as a free download, just in case you would like to do the same! I know that some parents may not do anything with the information, but at least half of them will take the information to heart and try a little harder to help their children. And anything that the parents do is one less thing that I have to do myself, that's for sure! Even if it just helps a little bit, it's worth a try. I will also send home a fresh set of alphabet flash cards with some of them to practice with.

3. Extra Parent Conferences for Those That Are REALLY Struggling (AKA: Empower Those at Home to HELP!)

I held an extra parent conference last week with one child's parents who were really concerned about her slow progress in learning the letter names. At this conference, I showed the parents how I would work with the child at home, if she were my own child. I sat with them and showed them three or four different ways to practice the alphabet with their child, and also gave them a Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds DVD. So basically, I sat and modeled how to teach their child the letters. Last week, the little girl knew just four or five lower case letters, but today during after school tutoring, she identified SEVENTEEN lower case letters!!!! So I think this must have really paid off! Even I was amazed at the change in her ability to identify the letters! Wow!

4. Individualized Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN) Boards for My Tutoring Group (Break Down the Task Into Manageable Chunks)

For my after school tutoring group, I made an individualized Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN) Board for each child to work on. If you are unfamiliar with these RAN boards, they are charts that can be used to practice any items that need to be memorized, such as letters, shapes, numbers, or words. The basic idea is that you need to limit the number of items on the board to just few, and repeat them over and over. Then the child practices reading the en-

tire chart as fast as he or she possibly can. It is really the equivalent of giving the child a stack of flash cards, but with the same words or letters written several times on lots of different flash cards for lots of practice. So during my tutoring group, I had these children each try to find all of a certain letter on their RAN boards and color them all the same color. For example, find all of the lower case a's and color them all red. Then find all of the lower case c's and color them yellow. On my blog, you will find a free download of one these RAN boards in Microsoft Word format, so that you should be able to edit it yourself. Sorry, we cannot attach an editable one for you to this .pdf document, but we will attach a pdf sample of one so you can see what it looks like. If you would like one that can be edited in Microsoft Word on a PC, then please visit our blog and download one online:
<http://heidisongs.blogspot.com/2011/09/five-weeks-down-tricks-for-learning.html>.

a	b	c	d	a
d	b	a	c	b
a	c	d	a	b
c	d	a	a	b
a	d	b	d	b

Alphabet Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN) Board

Meanwhile, once I got all of the children in the group started, I stopped ONE of them and asked that child to practice saying the letters on his or her RAN board with me. When that child finished, I went on to the next child and did the same thing, and so on. It's a method that has worked for me fairly well, year after year. I also send a copy of these RAN boards home with each child so that they can work on them at home, and I update them regularly as well.

5. Try Zoo Phonics!

If you haven't tried Zoo Phonics to help your kids learn the letter sounds, I highly recommend it! Zoo Phonics is a multi-sensory method of teaching the letter sounds, and kids love it. I own the Zoo-Phonics font, and I LOVE this because it allows me to make my own flash cards! (This is from www.zoophonics.com)

ics.com). One thing that their company does not offer (at least not that I know of,) is something that I like to refer to as "Transitional" flash cards. To make these, I print out the Zoo-Phonics card and glue it on one side of the card, and then I print out an ordinary matching letter and glue it on the back of that card. Then I laminate the cards, trim off the excess lamination, and voila! I have a set of "Transitional" Zoo-Phonics Flash Cards.

These cards are very important to me in helping the children learn the names of the letters, because once they know the letter sounds, (which are fairly easy to learn with the use of their cards and my Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds CD/DVD,) I can help them transition over to the letter names with the use of these cards. I can also train them to tell me the sounds of the letters WITHOUT looking at the Zoo-Phonics card by using these cards. This is what I do; it's actually pretty sneaky, I think, because the children don't even seem to notice the change!

One day when I'm about to drill the children with the Zoo-Phonics cards, I just flip them around to the back and simply start using the other side and ask them to respond the same way. Usually, I don't even have to ask! Somebody will start going "/a/, /a/, /a/!" and making alligator chopping motions, for example when they see the letter A. If the kids are stumped, I flip the card to back for a quick peek at the Zoo-Phonics card, and then quickly flip it back again to the regular letter. That way, when they are making the motion, they are looking at the regular flash cards, NOT the Zoo-Phonics card! This "imprints" the sound on their minds, and most children make the transition away from the ZP cards onto plain letter cards very quickly.

Once most of us have that part down, I add a third element to the drill (and by the way, this is all usually done in a whole group situation.) Each time I show a card, I say, "Sound?" Then they make the sound. Then I say "Letter name?" Then they say the letter name. Given that this is a whole group activity, the more advanced children tend to pull the struggling learners along, and that really helps! They hear their peers responding, and do the same. I watch the entire group, and NOBODY is allowed to just stand there and so or say nothing. They MUST all try, even if they are only repeating what they hear after somebody else says it first, AND I must see their bodies moving with the motions. This full body response is vitally important to the learning

process for young children. Insisting that everyone participate may seem a bit "over the top" to some, but I am convinced that this is the key to learning, so I continue to insist upon it each year. Once the children understand that I don't take "no" for an answer, I do get full cooperation, and learning usually follows. (By the way, this is the exact same process I use for teaching the names of the numerals, but I use the Jumpin' Numbers and Shakin' Shapes flash cards and songs, and it works like a charm!)

6. Mnemonics for Learning the Letter Names

Once I have the children in small groups, I try to show the children the relationship that many of the letter sounds have to the letter names. For example, the sound of the M and its letter name have a definite connection, so these letters will be easier for them to learn. The "Sounds to Letters" song on the Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds CD/DVD is also useful for establishing this connection.

But over the years, I have developed a few tricks to help the children remember some of the letter names that have no connection to the letter sound, such as the letter Y. Below I have listed the ones that I know of. If you know of any others that work well for you, I would LOVE to hear about them! Please leave a comment on this blog and tell us! I am confident that if we all put our heads together, we can come up with a MUCH better curriculum than anything our district can hand us, so let's go for it!

Y:

For this letter, I tell them to throw their hands up in the air and make a letter Y with their bodies. Then they should say, "WHY can't I remember?????" This always makes them laugh, and they usually remember it from that point on.

G:

For the lower case G, I have them trace it in the air, but when they get to the "tail" of the G, they turn it into a "pirate-like" motion, and say, "GEE, I wish I could remember!"

H:

For the H, I have them make the H sound and start running, just like they do at the beginning of my H song. Once they start singing the song, the lyrics of the song itself will lead them to the letter name. Here are the lyrics for the beginning of the "H" song: (Sorry, this one is not a familiar tune.)

*/h/, /h/, /h/, /h/,
/h/, /h/, /h/, /h/,
Hop, hop, hop!
Make an H and stop!...*

Q:

The beginning of the Q song has the children making cuckoo clock motions, which the kids seem to remember, but I tell them to say "Q, Q!" instead of "cuckoo!" (with my head popping forward and back, of COURSE!) They think that is hilarious, too, and anything that tickles a kids' funny bones is more likely to help them remember something, at least according to research. And it seems to work in practice, too!

C:

I taught the children to make a C with their hands when they see the C card. (This looks like a sign language C, which is also the motion for the letter C song on the DVD.) Once they make the motion for the C, they usually start singing the song. Once they start singing the C song, and then a second or two later they have already said the letter name, just like magic! Here are the lyrics, sung to the tune of "A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea:"

*To make a letter C, C, C,
It's half a circle, C, C, C...
It looks like ears on me, me, me,
But it's /c/, /c/, /c/, /c/,
/c/, /c/, C, C, C!*

I:

If they can think of the motion for the letter I, then they are off an running, because the song for the letter I begins with the motion! Once they have started singing the song, they have said the letter name, just like that! Here are the lyrics, sung to the tune of "This Old Man:"

*/i/, /i/, I! /i/, /i/, I!
I is just a big straight line,
With an extra line on the top and down below,
Now it's time to go, go, go!
/i/, /i/, I! /i/, /i/, I!
Little i is one short line
With a tiny dot above it in the sky!
Now it's time to fly, fly, fly!*

J:

The children usually really like the J song, so when I show them the J card, I have them shout out the end of the song. It ends just like "John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt," but it goes "J, J, J, J, J, J, J, J!" They raise their hands up in the air and bring them down to the ground as they do it, so it makes it fun. Here are the lyrics, sung to the tune of "John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt:"

*Big J has a tail and a dot!
That makes big J!
So when I see a J,
A /j/, /j/, /j/, /j/, J,
I think John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt!
J, J, J, J, J, J, J, J!*

U:

I draw a couple of eyes on top of it and say, "It's YOU!" And then we sing a snippet from the U song: "It's a smiley, smiley, letter U!" Here are the lyrics, sung to the tune of "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho:"

*It's a smiley, smiley, letter U!
Letter U! Letter U!
It's a smiley, smiley letter U!
It's an /u/, /u/, /u/, /u/ U!*

W:

I have them draw a W in the air and start to sing the W song, which goes with the motion of drawing the W. "It's a W, a W! Everybody make a W!" (We only sing the beginning of the song, because that's all it takes!) Here are the

lyrics to the full song, if you were wondering what the rest of it looks like, though! (Sung to the tune of "Father Abraham.")

It's a W! A W!

Everybody make a W

/w/, /w/, /w/, /w/, /w/,

/w/, /w/, /w/, /w/!

And it just looks like this:

First down, then up, then down then up!

www.HeidiSongs.com

P.O. Box 603, La Verne, CA 91750

(909) 331-2090 • Fax (909) 592-2110

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HeidiSongs Kindergarten Pacing Guide									
Week No.	Letters and Sounds	Number	Color Wd. or Wd. Family	Shape/Coin	Sight Words	Language Arts Concepts	Math Concepts		
									© Heidi Butkus 2009
1	A-D	0-5	red, yellow	circle	none	write name, rhyme,	sorting, counting aloud, count objects to 10	Theme/Singable Book	Wiggles Learns the Rules at School, Wiggles' First Day at
2	E-H	6-10	green, blue	square	none	beginning sounds, name writing, rhyme	sorting, counting aloud, graphs, days of the week, patterns,	Round Is a Pancake Book	Round Is a Pancake Book
3	I-L	0-10 review	purple, orange	triangle	the	Write letters, rhyme, beginning sounds	matching sets 0-10, numbers in order, sorting, patterns	Wiggles Learns to Pay Attention, Round Is a Pancake Book	Wiggles Learns to Pay Attention, Round Is a Pancake Book
4	M-P	0-10 review	brown, black	rectangle	I, see	review and practice above, concepts of print (title, title page, front cover, back cover)	review and practice above; compare sets with more, less, and equal	The Shape Song Book	The Shape Song Book
5	Q-U	11	white, pink	oval	like	review and practice above, concepts of print (letters vs. words)	review and practice above; compare sets with more, less, and equal, count aloud to 20	Our School Farm Book	Finish Shape Song Book, start Our School Farm book
6	V-Z	12	gray	rhombus	is, a	review and practice, concepts of print (letters vs. words vs. sentences)	review and practice above;	Our School Farm Book	Our School Farm Book
7	review	13	practice blending sounds	octagon	my	review and practice above; blending onsets and rimes, concepts of print (L-R progression, tracking words, return sweep)	review and practice	Our School Farm Book	Our School Farm Book
8	review	14	practice blending sounds	star	and	review and practice above; blending onsets and rimes	review and practice	The Rhyme Song Book	The Rhyme Song Book
9	review	15	practice blending sounds	hexagon	can, as	review and practice above; blending CVC sounds orally	Measurement; review and practice	Finish The Rhyme Song Book; Begin the Halloween Song Book	Finish The Rhyme Song Book; Begin the Halloween Song Book

10	review	16	practice blending sounds	review	am, at	review and practice above; blending CVC sounds orally	Measurement; review and practice	The Halloween Song Book
11	review	17	at family words	model & draw	go, to	review and practice	review and practice	Study Fall; do Fall page from The Seasons Book
12	review	18	at family words	model & draw	play, you	review and practice	review and practice	Dinner's Ready Book
13	th	19	at family words	model & draw shapes	for, it, that	review and practice, introduce the th sound	Identify and build numbers from 11-20, matches sets 0-20, numbers in order to 20	Dinner's Ready Book
14	th	20	an family words	Make large shapes out of small ones	with, in	listening comprehension (predict, characters, setting) write alphabet (A-H), th sound	Identify and build numbers from 11-20, matches sets 0-20, numbers in order to 20	Gingerbread Man Play, Christmas Around the World; Christmas Countdown 20-10 Book
15	th	21	an family words	Make large shapes out of small ones	here, he	Role of author & illustrator: write alphabet (P-Q) th sound	More complicated patterning; continue working on concepts with numbers 11-20.	Gingerbread Man Play, Christmas Around the World; Christmas Countdown 20-10 Book
16	sh	22	an family words	Make large shapes out of small ones	had, she	Identify topic of informational text, write alphabet (R-Z), sh sound	More complicated patterning; continue working on concepts with numbers 11-20.	Gingerbread Man Play, Christmas Around the World; Christmas Countdown 20-10 Book
17	sh	23	it, in family words	sphere	have, on, if	review writing alphabet A-Z, sh sound,	Numbers in order to 20 (or 30 if they can), matching sets to 20 or 30	Study weather; Let's Build a Snowman
18	ch	24	it, in family words	cube	we, up	review listening comprehension, writing alphabet,	Numbers in order to 20 (or 30 if they can), matching sets to 20 or 30	Study Winter; Do Winter page from the Seasons Book
19	ch	25	it, in family words	cone	one, said	phoneme segmentation & deletion, review story comprehension, practice dictation and alphabet writing	Introduce addition; continue practicing concepts for numbers 11-30	Study Sea Animals; Look Out, Fishies! Book

20	ar	26	ip, ig family words	review all volume shapes	his, by	phoneme segmentation & deletion, review story comprehension, practice dictation and alphabet writing	Addition; continue practicing concepts for numbers 11-30	Study Sea Animals; Look Out, Fishies! Book
21	er, ir, ur	27	ip, ig family words	review all volume shapes	was, are	phoneme segmentation, identification of medial sounds	Introduce decomposing numbers in addition; continue practicing concepts for numbers 11-30	Study Sea Animals; Look Out, Fishies! Book
22	or	28	ip, ig family words	review shapes and position words	two, of	review and practice above; encourage writing of more sentences, identification of medial	Addition & decomposing numbers; continue practicing concepts for numbers 11-30, review patterning	100th Day of School; 100's theme
23	ing	29	op, ot, ox family words	review shapes and position words	they, from	review and practice above; identification of medial sounds	Addition & decomposing numbers; write numbers 0-30, review patterning	Valentine's Day Theme; begin Addition Doubles Book
24	ink	30	op, ot, ox family words	review shapes and position	this, will	Identification of non-fiction topic, introduce writing about non-	Addition & decomposing numbers; write numbers 0-30, review patterning	President's Day Theme; Addition Doubles Book;
25	ay	review	op, ot, ox family words	review shapes and position	review all sight words	Introduce writing about non-fiction	Introduce subtraction, review and practice above	Study Insects; Addition Doubles Book
26	ee	#'s to 100	et, en, eg family words	penny, nickel	review all sight words; introduce more words as they are needed	Introduce story writing with characters, setting, beginning, middle, and end	Introduce subtraction, review and practice above	Insects; Begin Very Hungry Caterpillar Book
27	oo as in book	#'s to 100	et, en, eg family words	penny, nickel, dime		Introduce story writing with characters, setting, beginning, middle, and end	Practice subtraction, review and practice above	Insects; Very Hungry Caterpillar Book
28	oo as in boot	#'s to 100	et, en, eg family words	penny, nickel, dime, quarter		Introduce story writing with characters, setting, beginning, middle, and end	Practice subtraction, review and practice above	Seasons Book: Spring Page; Life Cycle of the Frog (use Wide Mouthed Frog Songs), Plants: Tops and

29	ow	# 's to 100	et, en, eg family words	penny, nickel, dime, quarter		Identification of ending sounds, review and practice	Practice subtraction, review and practice above	Frogs: Plants: Tops and Bottoms Book, Spring
30	ou	# 's to 100	ug, ut, un family words	review		Identification of ending sounds, review and practice, work on	Practice subtraction, review and practice above	Begin Rosie's Walk Book: life cycle of the chicken
31	oy	# 's to 100	ug, ut, un family words	review		Identification of ending sounds, review and practice, work on reading fluency	Introduce problem solving with word problems, review and practice above	Get ready for Easter (chicks, bunnies, ducks)
32	aw	# 's to 100	ug, ut, un family words			review and practice, work on reading fluency	Introduce problem solving with word problems, review and practice above	Finish Rosie's Walk Book
33	unk	# 's to 100	ug, ut, un family words			review and practice, work on reading fluency	Introduce problem solving with word problems, review and practice above	Mother's Day: Cinco de Mayo
34	Bossy E	# 's to 100	review			review and practice, work on reading fluency	Introduce problem solving with word problems, review and practice above	The Zoo Book: Sing The Wide Mouthed Frog zoo animal songs
35	Bossy E	# 's to 100	review			Practice skills to be retested: alphabet writing, dictation, phoneme deletion, etc.	Introduce problem solving with word problems, review and practice above	The Zoo Book: Sing The Wide Mouthed Frog zoo animal songs
36	Magic Y	# 's to 100	review			Practice skills to be retested: alphabet writing, dictation, phoneme deletion, etc.	Introduce problem solving with word problems, review and practice above	The Zoo Book: Learn the rest of the Wide Mouthed Frog songs
37	review	# 's to 100	review			review	review	The Zoo Book: Perform the Wide Mouthed Frog play
38	review	# 's to 100	review			review	review	Last week! Last day of school: Pirate Day!