



Preschool



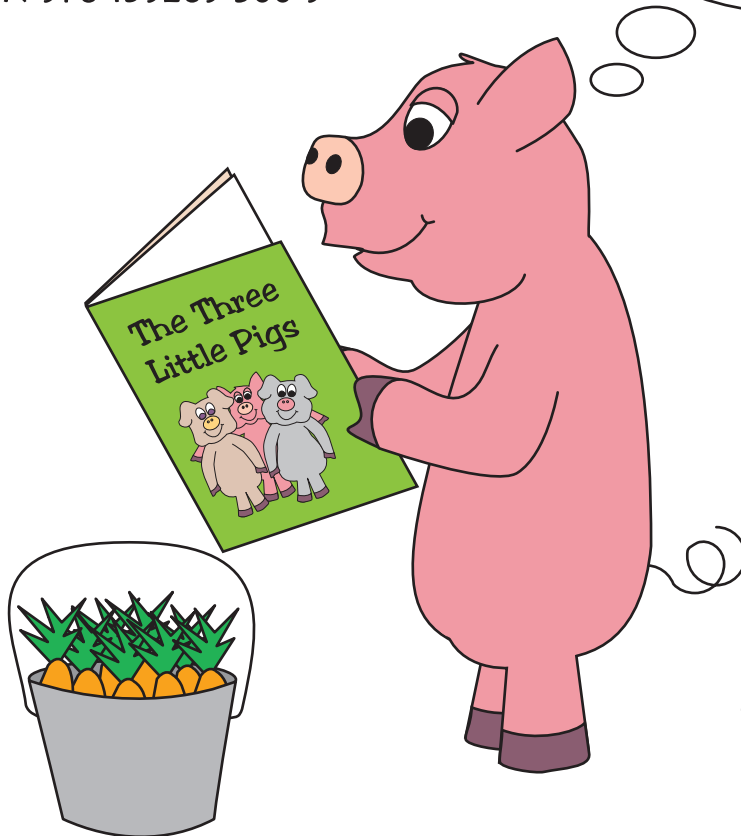
Language Arts Teacher's Manual

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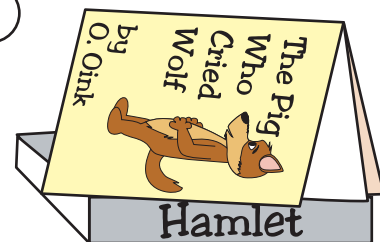
Bricks!
Oink, oink!



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Preschool Language Arts Tasks and Activities

In general all activities in the McRuffy Press preschool Language Arts curriculum have some value regardless of the ability level of the child as long as the activity is not too difficult. Preschool learning deals with both form and substance. Activities that may be too easy for the child in terms of educational content still give the child practice listening, following directions, interacting with the teacher to develop school related speech, and simply working in a more formal instructional setting.

The curriculum uses the term *task* for the different lesson activities. This is to make a distinction between workbook activities. Not every lesson uses a workbook activity. A variety of materials are used such a reading books, cards, resource pack pages, and games.

We encourage you to use as many of these tasks as possible. Don't hesitate to repeat tasks on different days. Repetition is a natural part of learning at all ages, especially for young children. Combine several tasks in a day, especially across several categories, such as letter introduction and a literature task

As children mature academically, many of these tasks will only take a few minutes and need very little instruction. Your child may even develop some favorites that he or she might want to revisit on a daily basis. The curriculum is designed to be flexible.

Unlike our curricula starting in Kindergarten, the preschool program does not necessarily follow a daily sequence. This is to accommodate the wide variety of learning needs at the preschool age. The curriculum's purpose is to prepare young children with the foundational concepts that will make it easier for them to transition into kindergarten programs such as the McRuffy Press math and reading programs.

Pick and choose activities throughout the teacher's manual as you teach on a daily basis. Planning sheets have been developed to help organize your curriculum. These are located in the Resource Pack. A pdf copy is also made available on the McRuffy Press website in the Preschool Language Arts section. The teacher's manual features color coded corners with letter abbreviations to help locate the different sections of lesson instructions. See the table of contents on the next page for the color key.

The most foundational skills are in the purple section. We recommend working through at least some of each of the different foundational tasks (purple corners) before venturing out too much in the teacher's manual. Usually the first few tasks in each category are the most foundational for the other tasks.

Letters are introduced in groups of 3 letters. This helps compare and contrast letter shapes and sounds. There is an emphasis on both letter recognition and letter sounds. At the preschool level letter recognition is more essential than letter sounds. Learning the letter sounds is a higher developmental skill and not every child will be able to master them at a young age. If this is the case, put more of an emphasis on the letter recognition tasks. You may then go back after a few months and try letter sound activities. The letter sounds will also be introduced in the kindergarten level with an expansion into using the sounds to decode (read) words and encode (spell) words. So mastery at the preschool level is not mandatory for future success.

The preschool curriculum includes 12 books. The books are for literature and comprehension development, but not the decoding aspect of reading development. At no time are children expected to read the books or read words and sentences on workbook pages. Again, this is something that will be accomplished in the Kindergarten and grade level programs. Books will be read by the teacher. Sentences and words in workbook activities are generally for letter recognition, students are instructed to search for specific letters.

Pre-School Teacher’s Manual Table of Contents and Color Key

The color of the words matches the color key for the tabs. The abbreviations in the tabs are the first three letter of the words or the letter range for letter introduction. Book titles are abbreviated with the beginning letters of the first three major words in the titles. If there are only two words in the title, the first letter of the first word and the first two letters of the second word are used (second letter lower case). If minor words such as *the* or *and* were abbreviated, a lower case letter was used.

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Preschool Language Arts Materials

The McRuffy Preschool Language Arts curriculum consists of several materials.

The **Teacher’s Manual** include detailed instructions for 85 tasks (activities). The instructions are formatted with a statement of purpose, a list of materials used, and teaching instructions. Words in **bold print** in the instructions can be read directly to the students.

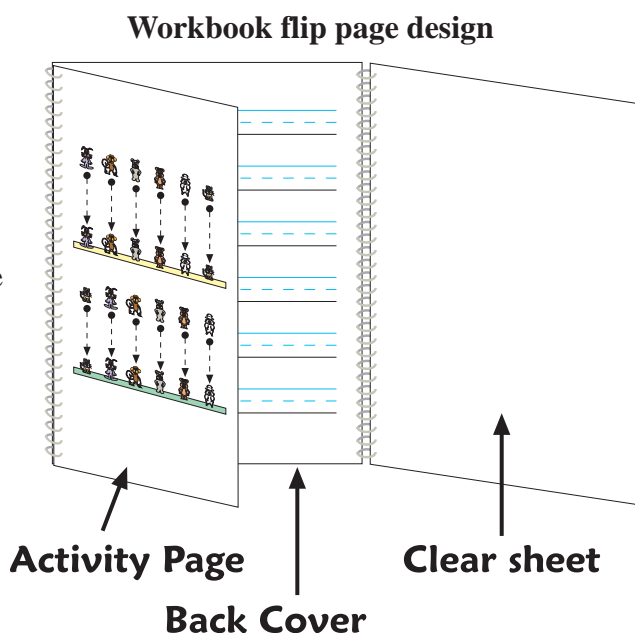
There are two workbooks. The **Language & Letters Workbook** is used for most of the foundational concepts, phonemic awareness concepts, and letter introduction.

The **Pre-writing Workbook** is full of activities to develop fine motor skills and practice basic strokes used in letter formation such as horizontal lines, vertical lines, and diagonals. There is also a more formal handwriting section for practicing writing letters. This section can continued to be used in the kindergarten level because of the reusable format.

The workbooks are designed with a flip out clear sheet that can be used with dry erase markers to make the book non-consumable. This allows for any activity to be repeated numerous times without have to reproduce it. Also some pages are formats that are used in different ways to complete various tasks.

The back cover also contains additional activities. The Pre-Writing book features practice handwriting lines. The Language & Letters Workbook back features a pictorial alphabet that also corresponds to *Ruff’s Alphabet Book*.

The **Resource Pack** includes lesson planning sheets, laminated game boards, precut cards, coloring sheets, cut-apart cards, puppet cut-outs, and additional sheets used in the different tasks. Game boards are printed two-sided. A different game is printed on the back of each game board.



Preschool Prewriting Book

The preschool writing exercises help develop fine motor skills. This involves coordination between the eyes, brain, and the muscles in the fingers controlling a writing instrument.

Pre-writing Guide

Specific pages are generally not assigned in the lesson plans for the pre-writing section of the workbook (pages 3 to 44). Begin these exercises at the beginning of the program. You may have students do one or more per session. They can be repeated and practiced with the flip sheet and dry erase markers. You may stick with one type of page in a lesson or mix, such as vertical lines only, or a mixture of vertical and horizontal lines.

The letter section can be used with letter introduction. Practice writing letters not only develops handwriting skills, it kinesthetically reinforces letter recognition. Numbers are also included in the book and can be used with the math program or just practicing number writing apart from the curriculum.

Pre-writing activities

Prewriting activities change from tracing to not tracing (connecting dots), long lines to short lines, types of lines (vertical, horizontal, diagonal, circles), direction, using handwriting guidelines, and a few designs with a mixture of lines and curves.

Vertical Lines: Activities 1 to 6 (pages 3 to 8)

Horizontal Lines: Activities 7 to 16 (pages 9 to 18)

Diagonal Lines: Activities 17 to 22 (pages 19 to 24)

Designs: Activities 23 to 30 (pages 25 to 32)

Vertical Handwriting lines: Activities 31 to 33 (pages 33 to 35)

Circles on handwriting lines: Activities 34 to 36 (pages 36 to 38)

Diagonals on handwriting lines: Activities 37 to 42 (pages 39 to 44)

Letters: Activities 45 to 51 (pages 47 to 53)

Numbers: Activities 52 to 57 (pages 54 to 59)

Back Cover: Handwriting practice lines

Opposites

Finding opposites combines classification and comparison.

Task 1 L & L Activity 21

Purpose: Recognizing opposites.

Materials

Preschool Language & Letters Workbook activity 21

A long and short string (A short and long piece of paper could be used instead of string.)

Teaching

Look at the two strings. One is long and one is short. Which one is the long one? Which one is the short one?

The words long and short can be used to describe things. They tell about the length of something. Long and short are opposites.

If you are feeling bad about something you might be sad. What would be the opposite of sad? What are you feeling if you are feeling very good? (happy) Happy is the opposite of sad. Both describe how people sometimes feel.

What would be the opposite of a girl? (a boy)

What would be the opposite of old? (young)

What would be the opposite of small? (big)

What would be the opposite of young? (old)

Use the Language and Letters Workbook Activity 21. **Look at the pictures on the page.**

What opposite does the first oval show? (Young and old)

What opposite does the second oval show? (happy and sad, it could also be interpreted as small and big, since it is a child and an adult)

What opposite does the third oval show? (big and small, it could also be interpreted as old and young, since it shows a man and a boy.)

What opposite does the last oval show? (A boy and a girl)

Letter Introduction

Each letter features an introduction page in the **Language & Letters Workbook**. Letters are grouped in threes (except y and z) with review letters scattered throughout the letter introduction Language & Letters Workbook activities. Activities feature both letter recognition and beginning phonics activities. If students struggle hearing sounds, you may emphasize just the letter recognition exercises and introduce all the letters, then start through a second time and review sounds.

Recognizing letter sounds may be limited by each child's developmental level, so mastery need not be the goal. Simple exposure to phonics concepts will help lay a foundation for kindergarten learning. The McRuffy Press Kindergarten SE Phonics and Reading curriculum will introduce the sounds again and use them in words.

As a part of a daily routine, you may want to start saying the alphabet and pointing out the letters, even without the formal instruction that the following tasks are intended to do. The back cover of the Language & Letters Workbook features a pictorial alphabet that can be used for this purpose.

Several places in the Language & Letters book it may appear by just glancing at the page that the program is asking children to read the words on the page. That is not part of the scope of this curriculum. It's certainly possible that students will begin to read some of the words, that is not the goal. Words are sometimes added for teacher reference to make it clear what the pictures are indicating. There are also activities featuring words and sentences where students are simply searching for specific letters. Students are not being asked to read the words.

Many preschool materials only emphasize recognizing letters in the beginning position. The McRuffy Program asks students to recognize letters throughout words. This starts laying the foundation for reading words because it is asking children to look at the complete word rather than just one part of the word.

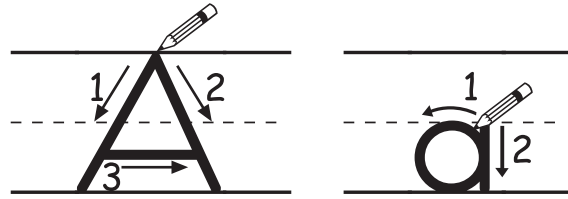
The short vowel sound is emphasized when the beginning sounds of vowels are introduced. This is because it is the first sound that students will begin to read in words at the kindergarten level. These tend to be the more difficult sounds to distinguish between each other in words (for example pen and pin). The visual word structure of the short vowel words are simpler. That's why they are typically the first words introduced in phonics programs.

The long vowel sounds are generally very similar to the letter names and students don't typically struggle with hearing the sounds, but the visual structure of the words is a bit more demanding because it requires scanning the word for a second vowel that controls the vowel sound (such as a silent e). Conceptually it is also a bit more difficult to decode long vowel words because of the second vowel in most long vowel words.

The most common sound of consonants are used when those letters are introduced. Specifically c and g. The hard sounds (as opposed to the soft sounds) are used. For example: c as in *cat*, not c as in *circle*. G as in *go*, not g as in *gem*. Although the soft sounds may be used in activities where the exercise is only for letter recognition.

The **Pre-Writing Book** features pages for each group of three letters. These can be for practice or review. You may have students practice an entire sheet or just specific letters on the sheet or maybe even a few of each letter. The flip sheet allows for sheets to be practiced multiple times in different ways using the clear sheet and dry erase markers.

Task 1 Letter A Introduction



Purpose: Recognize the letter A

Materials

Letter Flash Cards
 Language & Letters Workbook Activity 30
 Pre-Writing Book Activity 43

Teaching

There are two of every letter. There is a bigger letter called a capital letter, then there are smaller letters. These are called lower-case letters. All the letters together are called the alphabet. You may use different terminology such as upper-case for the capital letters. You could use big and small letters all the time, but students may confuse case with size. If someone wrote a large lower-case letter and a small capital letter, it could be a source of confusion. This curriculum will tend to use the term *capital letter* for upper-case letters. This is because using upper-case letters at the beginning of names and sentences is referred to as capitalization, so it builds familiarity with that concept.

The first letter in the alphabet is the letter a. Use the Language & Letters Workbook or the Pre-Writing book to introduce writing the letter a (capital and lower-case). Numbered arrows are on this page so you can demonstrate the order of strokes.

The Language & Letters Workbook letter introduction pages have three parts. The top section shows the handwriting format for the letter. The Pre-Writing Book Activity 43 is also available for practice and review, especially after B and C have been introduced. If the amount of tracing is overwhelming, you may limit it to fewer letters such as: trace 2 of each letter.

The Language & Letters Workbook middle section features pictures of objects that begin with the letter A. The second row shows pictures of things that contain the letter a. **The letter a is used to make several different sounds in words, but the first sound we're going to learn for the letter a is the *a* (say the sound, not the letter name when you see the letter italicized) sound you hear at the beginning of the words apple and ant.**

The next two pictures do not begin with the letter A, but they have the *a* sound in them. Say bat and cat emphasizing the a sound b-a-t, c-a-t.

Using the flip sheet, have students circle or underline the a's in the words apple, ant, bat, and cat.

The Language & Letters Workbook bottom section features rows of letters. **Circle all the capital A's. Underline all the lower-case a's.**

Trace the letters (Traditional Handwriting Style).

Activity 43

A a B b C c

A A A A A

a a a a a

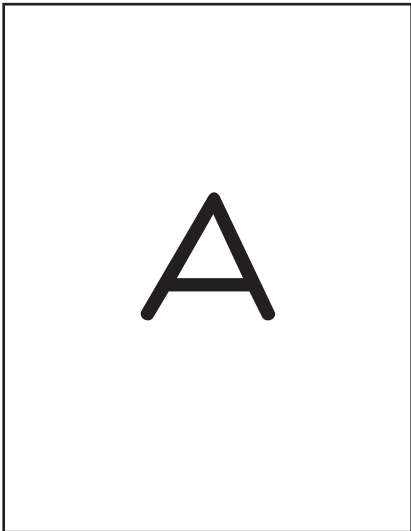
B B B B B

b b b b b

C C C C C

c c c c c

Pre-Writing Book Activity 43



Letter Flash Cards
Actual size

Language & Letters Activity 30

A a A a A a



apple



ant



bat



cat

V A Y A V H A N

o a c a u n a q p a

Literature Introduction

The McRuffy Preschool Language Arts program includes twelve books to be read to students. The first five books place an emphasis on phonemic awareness. They feature rhymes, consonance, and assonance to place an emphasis on how words relate based on sounds. Because of the meter of the poems it is helpful to practice reading them out loud before reading them to the students. We suggest completing the rhyme activities in the Phonemic Awareness section before using these books.

These books include:

Ruff's Alphabet Book
Spaghetti Dreams and a Duck on the Rocks
Crazy Cat
A, E, I, O, U
McRuffy's Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes

The next three books are picture books. Text is minimal with dependence on pictures to help tell the story. This provides children the opportunity to interpret and expand upon the story.

These books include:

Ruff Plays the Piano
Ruff's Surprise
Ruff and the Lion

The final four books are story books including two original stories and two classic stories. These provide children opportunities to discuss story elements such as characters, plots, and many other details. It also gives children the opportunity to learn and retell a story.

These books include:

Fuzzy Turtle
Bog the Dog
Goldilocks and the Three Bears
The Three Little Pigs

Each book can be read several times to children over a long period of time. Keep the books that have already been read handy and let students choose a book to be read one day. There are multiple tasks for each book. The tasks are generally expected to be done over several days. Even a single task might extend over several days. It is also helpful to read a book without doing a task to help students to familiarize themselves with the story to complete some tasks such as retelling and story sequence.

Many activities are rather long such as answering questions, reviewing vocabulary, nursery rhyme plays, etc. Often there is a suggested format for dividing the activity over many days. Feel free to spread the activities over even more days to accommodate students. Younger children may have shorter attention spans. It may be better to keep activities short, then move on to another activity if you wish to have extended instructional time. It may also be a good idea to mix new activities in with review activities (repeating some of the skills presented earlier in this teacher's manual, or reading books from previous tasks).

Poem 2 If...I Would

Purpose: Recognition of senses, rhymes

Materials

Spaghetti Dreams and a Duck on the Rocks

Senses Cards

Response Cards (optional)

Teaching

If...I Would follows a word pattern with every first line of a couplet beginning with *If* and the second line beginning with *I would* (except for the last line). It also features the five senses.

Read the poem to the students. Next, use the Senses Cards. Introduce each card: **Hear: What part of our bodies do we use to hear sounds?** (ears) Have students pick out the ear card. **Taste: What part of our bodies do we use to taste things?** (tongue) Have students find the card for taste. **Touch: What is a part of our body that is used for touching?** (hand) **Any part of our skin has the sense of touch. We will show it on a card with the hand.** Have students find the hand card. **See: What part of the body do we use to see things?** (Eyes) Have students find the eye card. **What is the last card?** (Nose) **How does it help us sense things?** (It helps us smell.)

Read lines of the poem and have students find a Senses card to match:

If it was too sour (taste). I would sniff a flower. If it had a nice smell (smell). I would ring a big bell. If the sound was too loud. (hear) I would watch a dark cloud (see). If I felt a raindrop (touch).

Have students draw sense pictures. **Pick one of the senses and draw a picture to show how you would use it. For example, draw something you might hear, taste, touch, see, or smell.** Have students draw the pictures and tell how it relates to one of the sense.

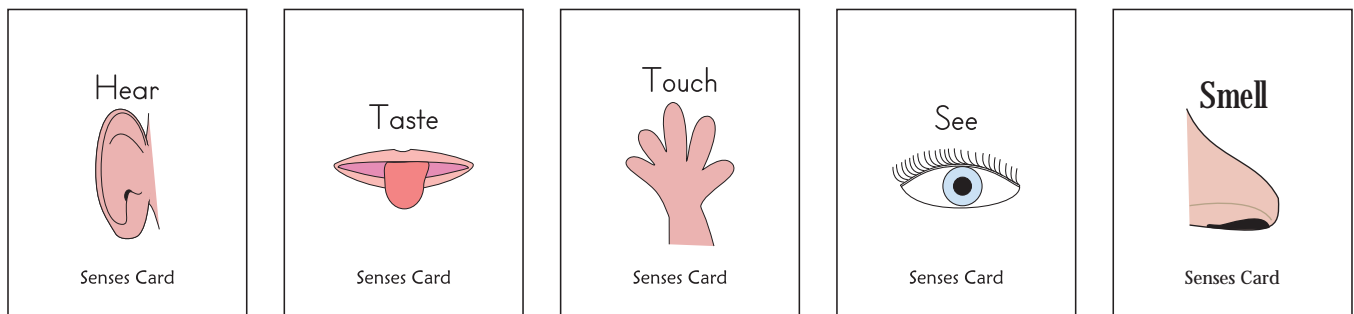
You may also do the rhyme/non-rhyme exercise with the rhyming lines in the poem. Choose pairs of words and ask if they rhyme. Some close sounding non-rhymes are provided for you.

Nickel, pickle rhymes: fickle, sickle, stickle, tickle, trickle. *Non-rhymes:* buckle, triple, knuckle, scribble, wiggle.

Sour, flower rhymes: shower, power, tower, hour, cower, scour, our. *Non-rhymes:* share, sure, pliers, fly, soar, star.

Smell, bell rhymes: fell, sell, tell, well, spell, yell. *Non-rhymes:* belly, small, bowl, bill.

Loud, cloud rhymes: cloud, crowd, proud, plowed. *Non-rhymes:* lad, prowl, clad



Bog the Dog

Bog the Dog is the second of four story books. In this story the antagonist is the main character. The story also has a different structure in that it begins by developing the character before developing the plot. This listening exercise front loads information to begin developing a frame of reference for listening. Compare to the listening exercise for *Fuzzy Turtle*. Use these methods with books outside this curriculum too.

Task 1 Guided Listening (Front Load, Read, Review)

Purpose: Practice listening skills with the book *Bog the Dog*.

Materials

Bog the Dog
Bog the Dog Coloring Sheets (2 sheets, Resource Pack)

Teaching

Introduce the story. Show students the cover. **The name of this book is Bog the Dog. What words rhyme in the title?** (Bog and dog) **The name of the dog is Bog.**

The guided listening has a different structure from the last story. This time the discussion takes place before reading each page with listening cue given before reading each section.

Bog liked to do something more than anything else. He even had a favorite place to do it. Listen as I read and be ready to tell me what it is he likes to do and where he likes to do it. Read pages 1 and 2. **What did Bog like to do?** (Chase cats) **Where did he like to do it?** (To the hollow log)

Bog was a tricky dog. Listen to the next part of the story and tell me how Bog liked to trick cats. Read pages 3 to 5. **How did Bog trick cats?** (He pretended to be asleep.)

One day, Bog saw a strange looking cat. Listen to the next part of the story and be ready to tell me what is different about the cat. Read page 6. (The cat had a white streak of fur on its back.)

Do you know what the word *confused* means? (It means you don't understand something. You may not be sure what to do or why something is acting a certain way.) **Something about the way the cat acted confused Bog. Listen for what confused Bog.** Read pages 8 and 9. **What confused Bog?** (The cat didn't seem to be afraid of him.)

Bog is about to have a big problem. Listen to what causes him a problem and what it causes him to do. Read pages 10 to 12. **What happened to Bog?** (He got squirted. That caused him to run into things and jump in the water.)

Bog liked to trick cats, but this time, the cats tricked Bog. Listen and find out how those cats sitting up in the tree were playing a trick on Bog. Read page 13. **How was Bog tricked?** (The cat was really a skunk.)

Bog decided he didn't want to smell like skunk again. Listen to the last part of the story and find out how he kept from being squirted. Read page 14. **What does Bog do now?** (He makes sure there are no cats in the log. Then he barks because he likes the way it sounds.)

Coloring Sheets: Students may color the coloring sheets after listening to the story.