

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
---------------------------	---

Getting Started

Imagine It: Creating a Kit	4
Make It: Preparing the Materials	5
Take It: Using the Materials	7

Alphabet Kits

Apple Activities	11
Back-to-Work Briefcase	18
Camping with Critters	24
Dinosaur Duffel Bag	30
Elephant's Everything Trunk	36
Fun with Friends and Family	42
Giraffe's Gym Bag	47
Happy Hearts Bag	54
Inchworm's Interesting Bag	59
Jammin' Jungle Bag	65
Kitchen Kit	72
Ladybug's Luggage	78
Making Magic	85
Number Fun Notebook	92
Our Outing to the Ocean	97
Packing for a Picnic	106
Queen's Quilt Bag	112
Reading Rodeo	118
Science Sack	126
Teddy Bear's Toolbox	132
Uncle Sam's U.S.A. Bag	139
Bon Voyage Vacation Bag	144
Waterworks	151
Our Exciting Box	158
A Year to Remember	165
Zigzag Bag	171

Introduction

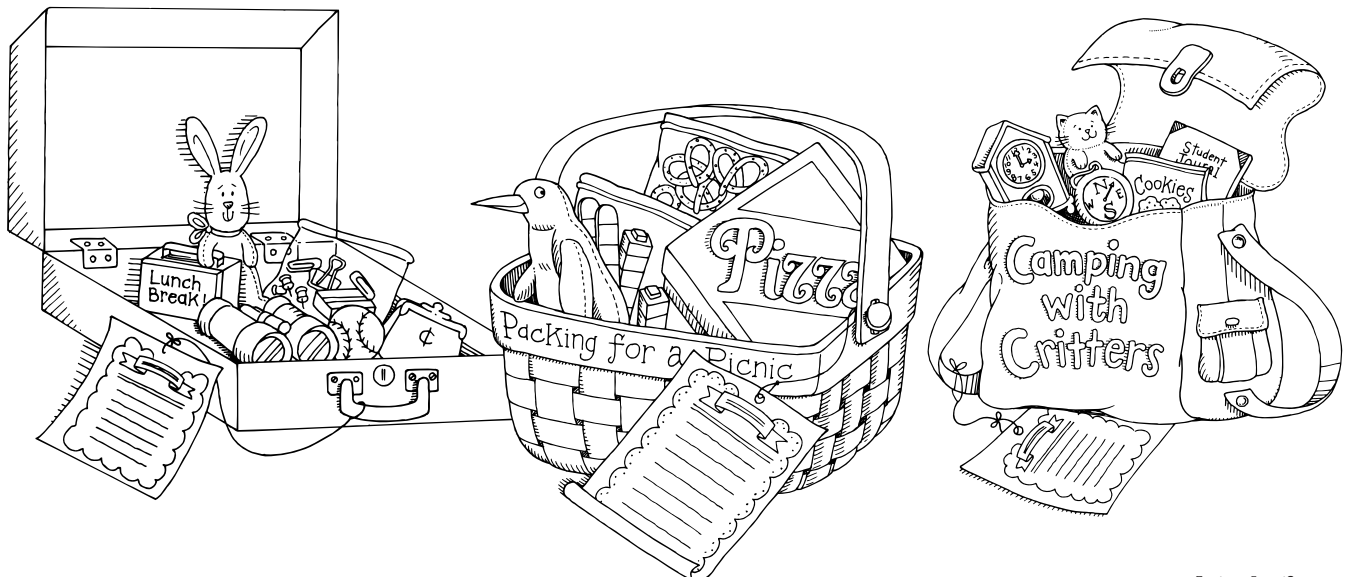
No child can resist the charm of a wrapped gift. Colorful paper and shiny bows grab children’s attention and suggest that something equally as interesting is inside. *Literacy Bags* gives you dozens of ways to organize 26 thematic mini-units from A–Z in fabulous “packages” that children cannot wait to handle!

This resource presents each letter of the alphabet as a mini-unit designed to give children practice with fundamental skills. Developmentally appropriate games and activities, as well as books, props, snacks, and other items that relate to the theme, are stored in one of several inviting bags or containers that you create from simple, easy-to-find items and personalize with art supplies. These customized containers not only fascinate children but also provide you with an easy way to manage your materials and send them home for children to share with their families.

Detailed materials lists, clear activity directions, instruction cards for completing the activities, templates for making student and parent journals, lists of literature links, and a parent letter that introduces the *Literacy Bags* program are included in this book. Use these tools to create versatile, valuable lessons that give children opportunities to practice several language, math, science, social studies, writing, and thinking skills. Or, add your own activities to the bags to supplement your district and state curriculum objectives.

Once you have collected and prepared the materials for a mini-unit and placed them in the customized kit, children will have no difficulty participating in the games and activities independently or with a small group at a center. And, these marvelous mini-units travel very well. Send home the kits to strengthen your home–school connection and give children a chance to practice their skills, parents an idea of what their child is learning in your class, and families another opportunity to spend quality time together.

Pack your bags and get ready to learn. It’s as easy as A-B-C!



Getting Started

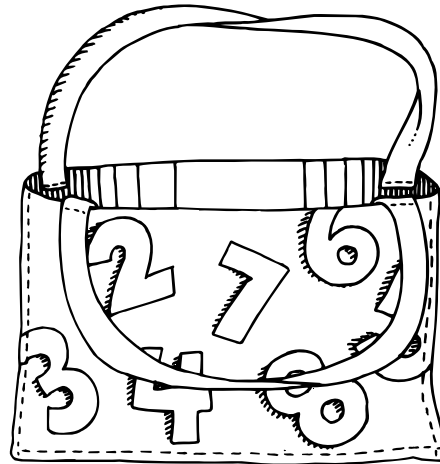
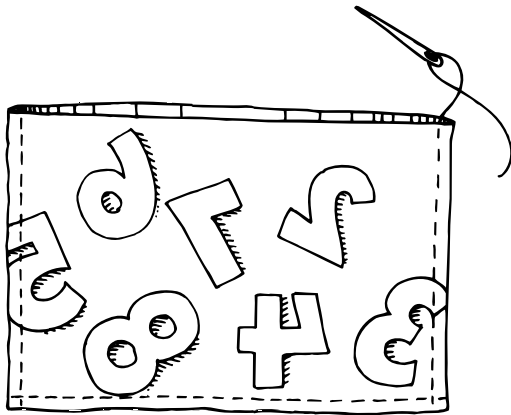
Imagine It: Creating a Kit

Choose a mini-unit, and follow the simple directions to create a thematic kit, or use the suggestions below to make a kit from a different type of container. Keep in mind that the kit should be durable and manageable because it will change hands many times over the course of the year.

Fabric Bags

Choose a fabric with a print that coordinates with your theme. Drapery fabrics, polished cottons, and denims provide the sturdiness necessary for holding unit items. 100% cotton fabrics can also be used but should be doubled for support.

Cut two 20" x 14" (51 cm x 36 cm) rectangles from the fabric. Place them back-to-back so that the front sides of the patterns touch. (At this stage, the unsewn bag looks as if it is inside out.) Use a needle and thread or a sewing machine to stitch together the sides and bottom of the bag. Cut two 16" (40.5 cm) strips, and sew the ends of each strip to the top of the bag to create two handles. Turn the fabric inside out so that the front side of the fabric shows. As an option, cut out a square from the same fabric or a coordinating fabric, and sew it on the bag to create a pocket.



Other Containers

Get the word out that you are searching for fun containers for your mini-units. You never know what a parent, friend, neighbor, or relative may have stored away in his or her basement or attic. Collect containers such as these:

- backpack
- duffel bag
- lunch box
- beach bag
- bucket
- divided make-up box
- gift bag
- toolbox
- pillowcase
- tackle box
- detergent box
- suitcase
- overnight bag
- large purse
- large pail or bucket

Make It: Preparing the Materials

Each unit outlines ideas for preparing each kit. Choose from the suggestions what you would like to include in your kits. Each mini-unit should be tailored to the needs of your class and the materials that are available to you. The following suggestions will likely spark your ideas about what to place in your kits.

Literature Links

Collect various books that relate to the theme of the mini-unit or specific lessons in the mini-unit, and place a few in the kit for children to share with each other and their families.

Props

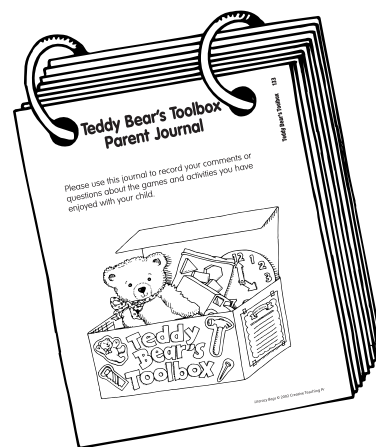
Add to the kit factory-made and homemade toys, stuffed animals, and puppets that relate to the letter or theme of the mini-unit. Encourage children to use these props to retell stories or make up their own.

Snacks

Each mini-unit features suggestions for snacks that coordinate with the theme or games and activities. Encourage children to use these food items for sorting, sharing, graphing, dividing, and identifying initial sounds. Adding food to a kit is a fun little extra touch, but it is an optional part of the program.

Journals

Include a student journal and a parent journal in each kit. These journals give children and parents an opportunity to respond to the games and activities they have explored. To make a journal, copy the journal reproducible for the mini-unit on card stock, cut apart the paper along the dotted line, and laminate both pieces. These pieces will serve as the front covers of the student and parent journals. Laminate another blank piece of card stock, and cut it in half to make the back covers for the journals. Cut 10–20 pieces of white copy paper in half. Place a stack of paper between each laminated cover, and hole-punch two holes at the top. Insert a metal ring in each hole, and place the journals in the kit. Make one student journal and one parent journal for each mini-unit. Refill the white copy paper as needed.



Games and Activities

For each mini-unit, read the Preparations section, and decide what you want to include in the kit. This section describes the materials you need to collect, prepare, and place in the kit.

Instruction Cards

Each game and activity comes with a coordinating instruction card that features directions written directly to the children. Copy the cards on card stock, laminate them, cut them apart, and attach them to their corresponding game or activity. Create new cards for games or activities that you develop on your own, and add them to the kit.

Reproducibles

Make the necessary copies of the reproducibles that correspond with the games and activities, and place them in the kit.

Inventory List

Record the contents of each kit on the Inventory List (page 8). Copy the reproducible, and write the title of the mini-unit on the top line. List below the books, props, snacks, games, activities, and other materials you have included in the kit. Laminate the list, and either glue, tape, or pin it directly to the kit. Or, hole-punch the paper, and use a piece of ribbon or string to tie it to the outside of the kit. As an option, tape a copy of your class list to the back of the inventory list. Encourage children to cross off their name after they have shared the kit with their family.

The image shows a decorative 'Inventory List' form. At the top, the title 'Inventory List' is written on a ribbon banner. Below the banner, the text reads 'Please find the following items in this kit titled'. There are three horizontal lines for writing. The first line is blank. The second line is preceded by the number '1.' and the third line by the number '2.'. The entire form is enclosed in a decorative border of small flowers and leaves.

Checkout Chart

Make a simple checkout chart to track the kits and ensure that children have taken each one home. Copy the Checkout Chart (page 9) on card stock, and laminate it. Use a transparency marker to write the name of each child in class in the first column. When a child takes home a kit, use a green transparency marker to draw a checkmark beside his or her name in the column for the kit. When the child returns the kit, erase the green checkmark, and use a red transparency marker to draw another checkmark.

Take It: Using the Materials

Once you have assembled the kits, make them available to your class for use in a variety of settings. When sending home the kits, encourage children to explore them for a few days and then return them intact for another child to investigate.

Center Work

Introduce the theme and contents of a kit to your class. Make sure that children understand how to complete each game and activity. Then, make the kit available to children for use during center time.

I'm Done!

Invite children who finish their work early to read one of the books or complete one of the games or activities in a kit.

Volunteers

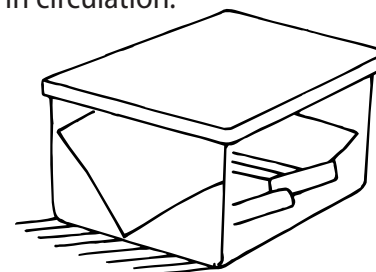
Invite parents or older students in your school to visit your class and explore the contents of a kit with a group of children.

Home and Back

Encourage children to take home a kit for a few days. Use the Checkout Chart (page 9) to determine who has checked out each kit.

Tips

- Stock up on large and small resealable bags, file folders, card stock, transparency markers, crayons, markers, colored pencils, and tape. These materials are used in a majority of the games and activities.
- To make the resealable bags more manageable, cut small slits in the bottom to let air escape. Always write on the outside of the kit detailed descriptions of the contents in the bags. Staple small bags to the file folders or games to which they belong.
- Label everything that goes into a kit with your school name and grade level.
- Remember that some materials (e.g., snacks) may need to be replaced from time to time.
- Check the kits periodically to determine whether additional copies of reproducibles are needed.
- Store kits in large plastic tubs or on hooks when they are not in circulation.
- Keep a large box filled with extra materials, including reproducibles, journal materials, resealable bags, and other things that might need to be replaced over the course of the year. You might consider making an additional set of the games and activities that involve small pieces in the event that some are lost. Keep extra snack items in a separate box.



Inventory List

Please find the following items in this kit titled

_____.

1.

2.

3.

4.

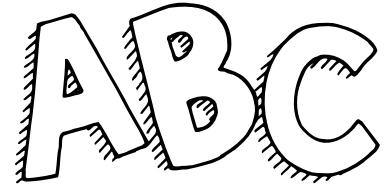
5.

6.

7.

8.

Parent Letter



Dear Parents,

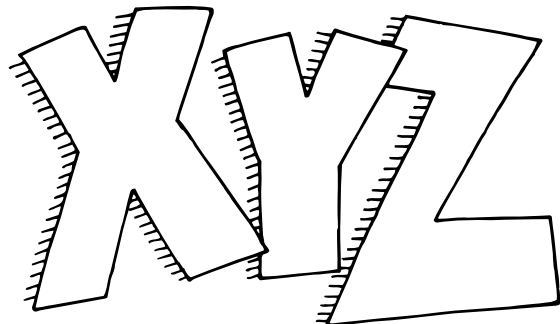
An important part of your child's primary school experience is to develop prereading skills, one of which is learning the letters and sounds of the alphabet. During the course of the year, your child will bring home a series of alphabet kits that contain developmentally appropriate games and activities, as well as books, props, snacks, and other items that reinforce prereading skills. Use these tools to help your child practice language skills, as well as a variety of math, science, social studies, writing, and critical thinking skills.

Your child has worked with the kits in the classroom. The kits are designed for you to use with ease at home and include materials and instruction cards for completing all the games and activities. You will also find student journals for your child to use to reflect upon his or her work and parent journals you can use to communicate your comments and questions to me. These kits can also be considered as assessment tools because they will help you identify firsthand the skills your child has mastered and those he or she needs to continue practicing.

When your child brings home a kit, feel free to take a few days to explore its contents with him or her. When your child is ready to return a kit, please ensure that each item on the inventory list is in the kit.

The children enjoy these fun and inviting kits in part because of the interesting contents but mostly because they are able to share the joy of learning to read with you!

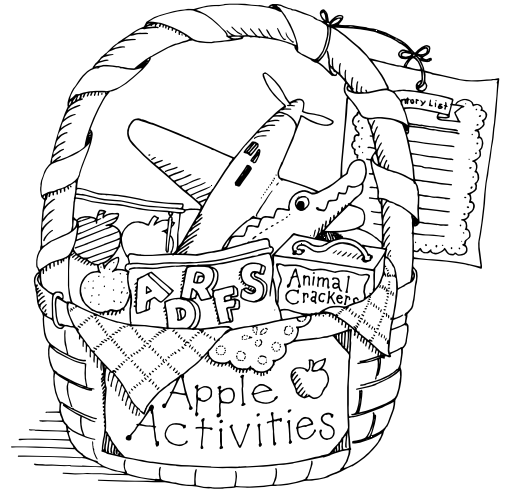
Thanks,





Apple Activities

Find a large basket, and paint several apples on the sides of it. Or, cut out apples from craft foam, felt, or fabric, and use hot glue or fabric glue to attach them to the basket. Paint *Apple Activities* on the side of the basket.



Alternative Theme Ideas

- Find fabric with an airplane, alligator, alphabet, animal, ant, apple, or astronaut print, and use it to make a bag (see page 4).
- Use a purse or carrying case made from imitation alligator hide.

Literature Links

- *Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing* by Judi Barrett (Aladdin)
- *An Anteater Named Arthur* by Bernard Waber (Houghton Mifflin)
- *Apron Annie in the Garden* by Joellyn Cicciarelli (Creative Teaching Press)
- *Eating the Alphabet* by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt)
- *For Pete's Sake* by Ellen Stoll Walsh (Harcourt)
- *I Can't Said the Ant* by Polly Cameron (Scholastic)
- *I Want to Be an Astronaut* by Byron Barton (HarperFestival)
- *The Lady with the Alligator Purse* by Nadine Bernard Westcott (Little, Brown and Company)
- *The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree* by Gail Gibbons (Harcourt)
- *Very Boring Alligator* by Jean Gralley (Henry Holt and Company)

Playtime Props

- ★ alligator or ant stuffed animals or puppets
- ★ astronaut figure
- ★ foam or magnetic letters
- ★ plastic or wooden apples
- ★ toy airplane or ambulance

Snacks to Sort, Sound Out, and Share

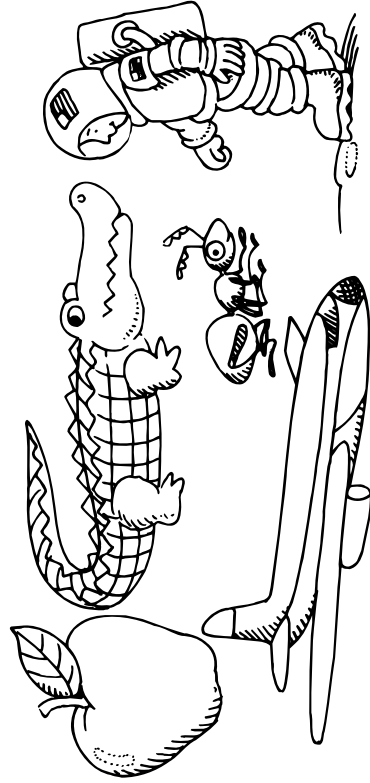
- ♥ animal crackers
- ♥ dried apples or apple fruit snacks
- ♥ Famous Amos® mini-cookies
- ♥ raisins for "ants"

Apple Activities Student Journal

Here are some of the things you can write in this journal.

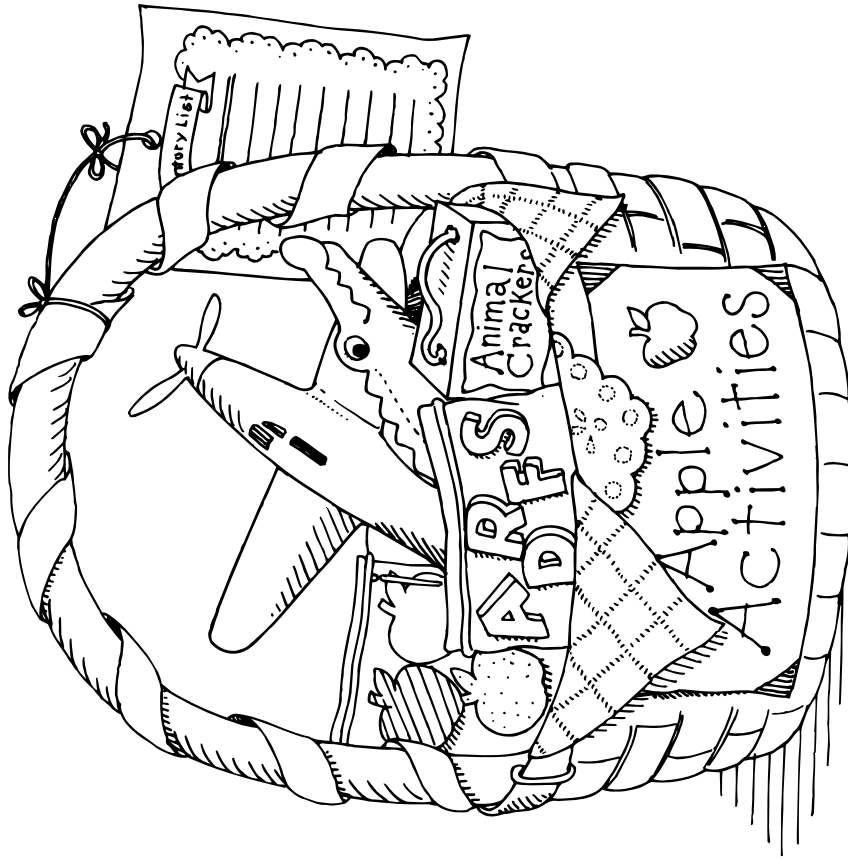
1. Read one of the books in the kit, and write about your favorite part of the story.
2. Write your own story.
3. Write about something that you have eaten that was made with apples.
4. List as many words as you can that begin with the letter *a*.
5. Write about your favorite game or activity in this kit. Tell why you liked it.

Remember: Always write your name before you write anything else in the journal!



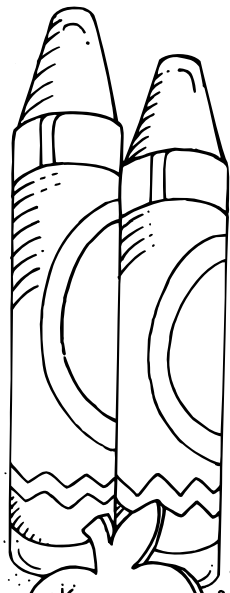
Apple Activities Parent Journal

Please use this journal to record your comments or questions about the games and activities you have enjoyed with your child.



Apple Activities Preparations

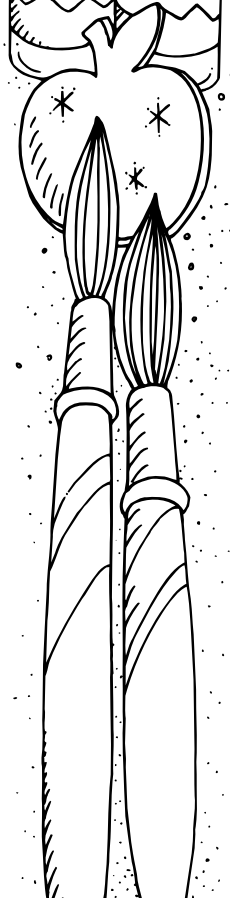
Apple Words



Children will practice reading high-frequency words that begin with the letter *a*.

Make two copies of the **Apples reproducible (page 15)** on **red card stock**, and cut out the twelve apples. Write one of the following high-frequency words on each apple: *about, all, along, also, am, an, and, any, are, as, asked, and at*. Put the apple cutouts and the **Apple Words instruction card (page 14)** in a **resealable bag**, and place the bag in the kit.


Apple Tree ABC



Children will use alphabetical order to connect dots to make a picture.

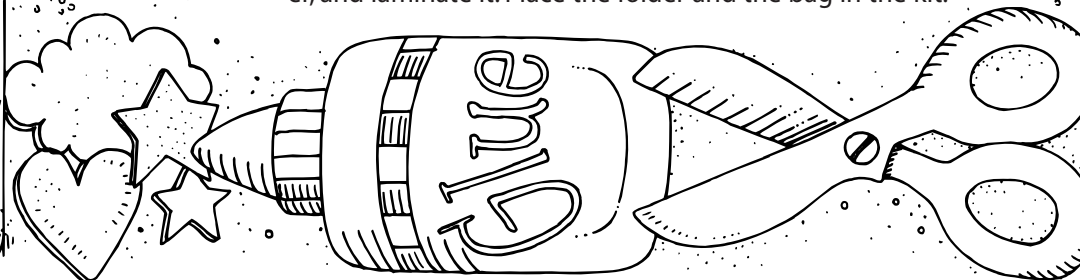
Copy the **Apple Tree ABC reproducible (page 16)**, and laminate it. Tie a **string** to one end of a **transparency marker**. Hole-punch the top of the reproducible, and tie the other end of the string through it. Put the paper and the **Apple Tree ABC instruction card (page 14)** in a **resealable bag**, and place the bag in the kit.

Apple Graph



Children will sort apple cutouts by color and graph the data.

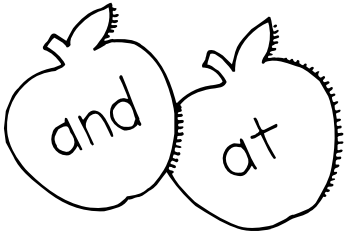
Make two copies of the **Apples reproducible (page 15)**, cut out the apples, and color ten of the apples to make three green apples, four red apples, and three yellow apples. Laminate the apple cutouts, and put them in a **resealable bag**. Copy the **Graph reproducible (page 17)**. Open a **file folder**, and glue the paper to the right side. On the left side, write 1. *Which color has the most?* 2. *Which colors have the same amount?* 3. *How many apples are there in all?* Glue the **Apple Graph instruction card (page 14)** and the two remaining apples to the front of the folder, and laminate it. Place the folder and the bag in the kit.



Apple Activities Instruction Cards

Materials

- ✏ red apple cutouts
- ✏ student journal

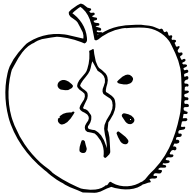


Apple Words

1. Place the apple cutouts facedown in a pile.
 2. Turn over a cutout, and try to read the word on it. If you can read the word, keep it. If you cannot read the word, return it to the bottom of the pile.
 3. Keep turning over cutouts until you can read all twelve words.
 4. Write the words in the student journal.
 5. Place all the apple cutouts back in the bag, and return all items to the kit.
-

Materials

- ✏ Apple Tree ABC paper
- ✏ transparency marker
- ✏ paper towel

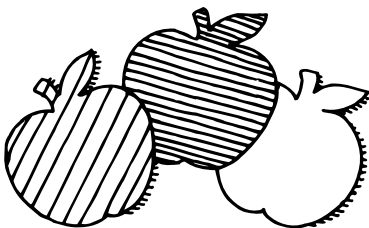


Apple Tree ABC

1. Use the special marker to connect the dots in ABC order. Begin with the letter A and end with the letter Z.
 2. When you are done, use a damp paper towel to wipe away the picture.
 3. Return all items to the kit.
-

Materials

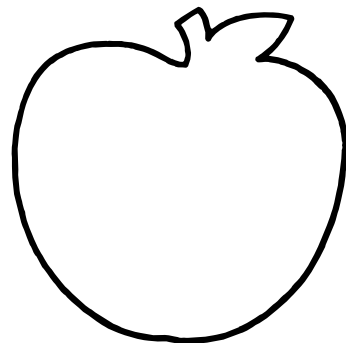
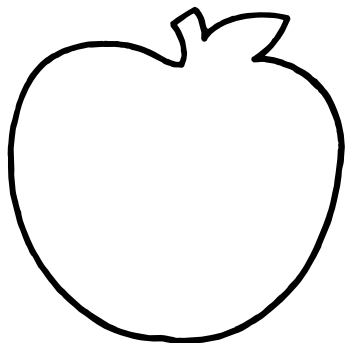
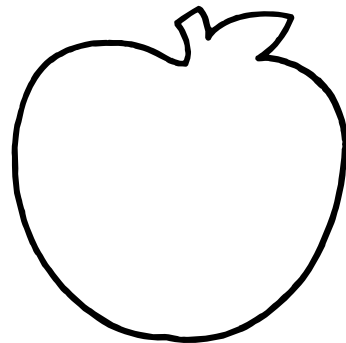
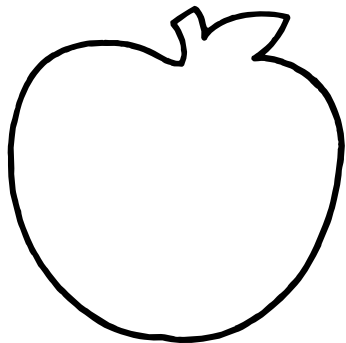
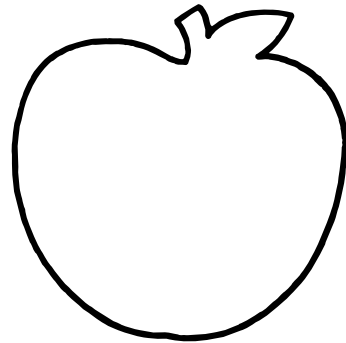
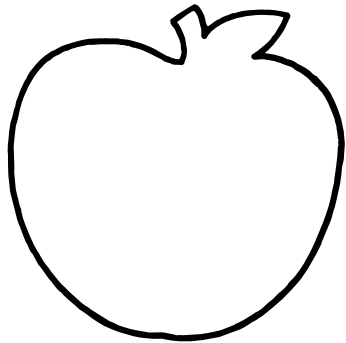
- ✏ Apple Graph folder
- ✏ red, green, and yellow apple cutouts
- ✏ student journal



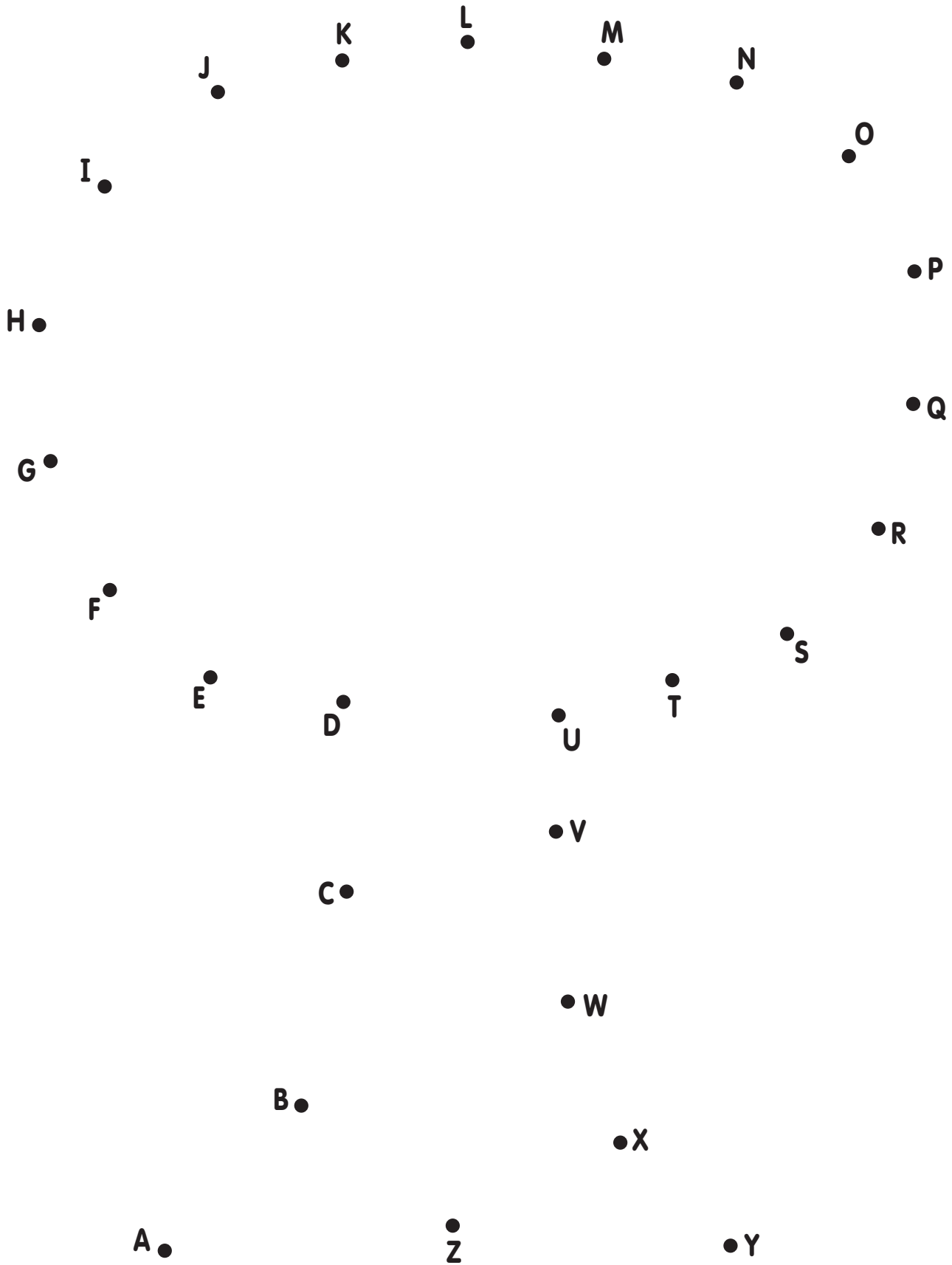
Apple Graph

1. Open the folder, and place it on a flat surface.
 2. Arrange the apple cutouts on the graph.
 3. Write the answers to the questions in the student journal.
 4. Place the apple cutouts back in the bag, and return all items to the kit.
-

Apples



Apple Tree ABC



Graph

red apples	green apples	yellow apples