

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dear Teachers,

Welcome back from the holidays. I hope you had a restful and meaningful break and are looking forward to the rest of the school year with your students.

Happy New Year to you all, and may this be the beginning of great things for many children as we start a new calendar year and continue our current school year.

Some of you may be feeling like I always felt at this time of year, "Oh, No!" half of our year is over! What about _____? (Fill in the blank with the child you are most concerned about.) Will he/she be ready to move on at the end of the year?"

If you are a kindergarten teacher, you are striving to make sure that each child recognizes letters and sounds and sight words. I've included activities for you.

If you teach any primary grade, you may be facing new students who do not have a command of the English language yet, and you are expected to meet their needs. For you, I am including strategies which should help.

Again, Happy New Year, and don't forget to log on in February.

Dr. Maggie



My Snowmen

By Dr. Maggie Allen
(Tune: "This Old Man")

My snowman number ONE,
I built him for lots of fun.
With a pit-pat, add some snow,
Roll it nice and round.
My snowman's the best in town.



My snowman number TWO,
I built him for me and you.
With a pit-pat, add some snow,
Roll it nice and round.
My snowman's the best in town.

My snowman number THREE,
He is really big, you see.
With a pit-pat, add some snow,
Roll it nice and round.
My snowman's the best in town.



My snowman number FOUR,
He stands in front of a store.
With a pit-pat, add some snow,
Roll it nice and round.
My snowman's the best in town.

My snowman number FIVE,
Looks like he could be alive.
With a pit-pat, add some snow,
Roll it nice and round.
My snowman's the best in town.



Special As Can BE

By Dr. Maggie Allen

Oh, yes, I'm special.
I'm very special.
I'm special as can be.
Oh, yes, I'm special.
I'm very special.
I'm special. Don't you agree?



Now I don't worry
If I can't do things
The very first time I try.
I just keep trying
Until I do them,
But not with a whine or a cry.



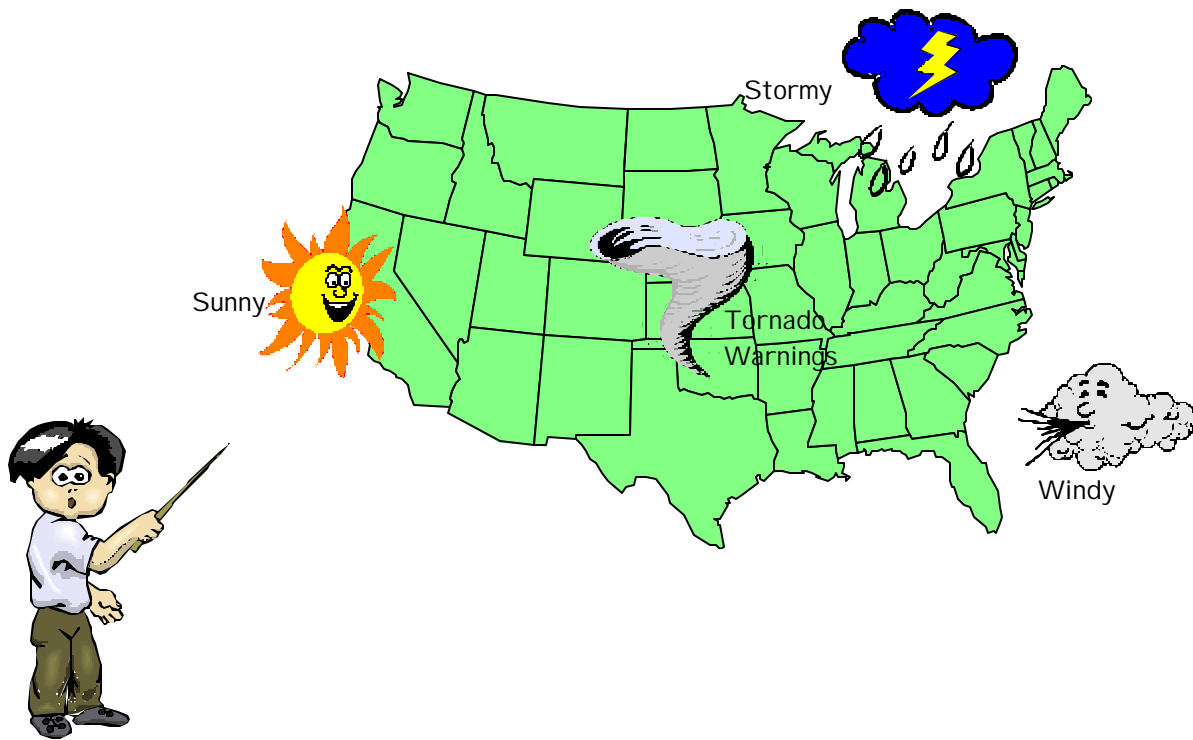
Because I'm special,
I'm very special.
I'm special as can be.
Oh, yes, I'm special.
I'm very special.
I'm special. Don't you agree?



Winter Wonder Activities

Weather Time

Have older students take turns being the class meteorologist. Provide a large weather chart with appropriate labels, a map, a pointer, a jacket, and a "microphone." Students take turns working in small groups to display and present the weather for each week. They log-on to weather station web sites, and read local and national newspapers to track weather patterns.



Additional Activities

Have older students write and/or collect a classroom "Winter Wonder" anthology of cold weather poems.

Give Me 5!

Purpose

This activity is designed to provide young students with an opportunity to recall character traits, recall and write about nonfiction in a paragraph format, and retell a story.

Directions

- 1 Copy a class set of the Give Me 5! reproducible. Prepare a sample reproducible by cutting out the hand and gluing it to a paint-stirring stick.
- 2 Choose a book to read to the class or for students to read independently.
- 3 After reading the story, have students think about the sequence of events in the story.
- 4 Encourage students to talk about how the story started, how the story ended, and three significant events in the story between the beginning and the ending. Record student responses on the chalkboard or a piece of chart paper. As students retell each event, hold up the sample reproducible and point to the corresponding finger.
- 5 Give each student a reproducible. Have students list the events of the story and cut out their completed hand.



Extension

Staple the completed "hands" on a bulletin board titled *Hands Up for Good Reading*.

Give Me 5!

Write the title, the beginning, three significant events, and the ending of your story.

A hand-shaped graphic organizer for story writing. The hand is outlined in black and has five fingers. Each finger is labeled with a part of a story: the thumb is labeled 'Beginning', the index finger 'First Event', the middle finger 'Second Event', the ring finger 'Third Event', and the pinky 'Ending'. The palm of the hand has two horizontal lines for writing, labeled 'Title' and 'Name'.

Letter/Word Awareness Activities

1.



Rolling Letters

Write large capital letters on individual paper plates. Give each child a plate. Call out a letter, and have the child with that letter plate hold it up and spin it around. As the child spins the plate, have the class sing the following to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell":

The _____ is rolling around.

The ____ is rolling around.

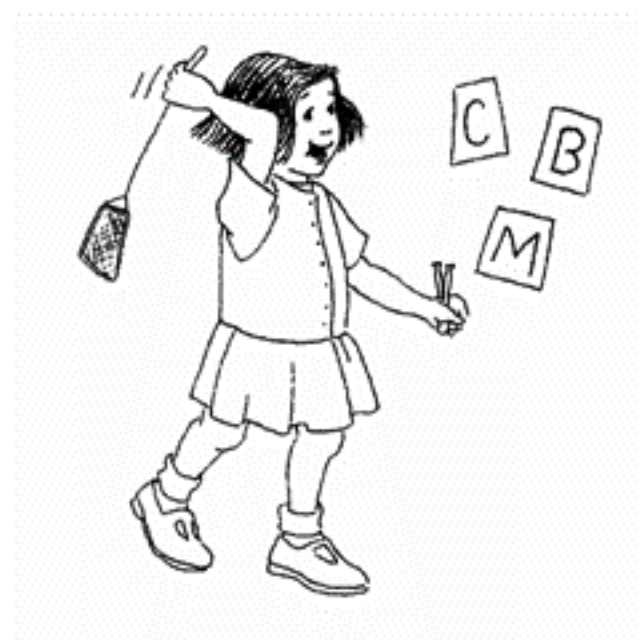
As soon as the letter ____ stops,

Name something that starts with its sound.

2.

Swat the Letter

Obtain a flyswatter and a pair of tweezers. Place letter cards on a table, or pin them to a wall. Call out a letter and invite a child to use the flyswatter to swat the correct card and then pick up the card with the tweezers. Then, challenge the child to spell a word that begins with the letter.



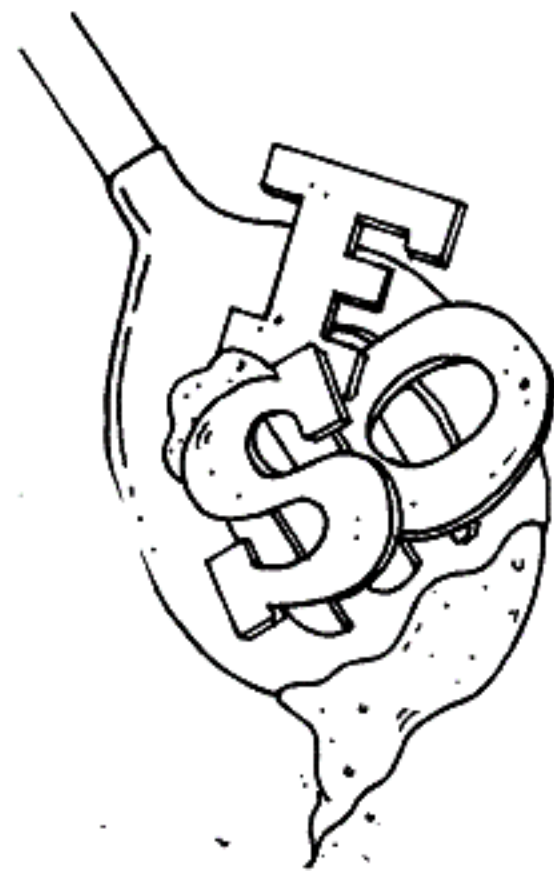


Letter/Word Awareness Activities

3.

Sift-a-Letter

For each pair, place in a pan plastic or magnetic letters. Cover the letters with 2" (5 cm) of rice or sand. Have children choose partners, and give each pair a pan of covered letters and a slotted spoon. Have partners take turns using the spoon to sift through the loose material. After a child scoops up a letter, have the partner identify it and say the corresponding sound. Then, ask the partner to "air write" the letter to practice its letter formation. Have children alternate positions and continue until they have sifted, identified, and air-written all the letters.



4.

Bounce-a-Letter

Write lowercase letters, blends, digraphs, or vowel patterns on dot stickers of various colors. Stick them on a smooth rubber ball. Have children form a circle and bounce-pass the ball to each other. Have the child who catches the ball identify the sound of one of the letters and then bounce it on to another child.

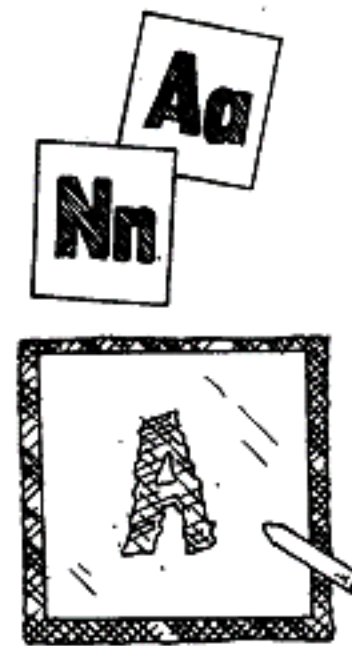


Letter/Word Awareness Activities

5.

Screening Letters

Give a handful of alphabet cards, newsprint, crayons, and a piece of porch screen to each child. Have children place their alphabet cards in a "fishpond" and draw out one at a time. Have children identify the letter, trace over it with a finger, and then place the screen on the table next to the letter card. Have children cover the screen with newsprint, look at the letter card, and use the crayon to write that letter on the newsprint. The harder the child writes, the more "sound" the handwriting will make and the more crayon wax will be left on the paper. Have children remove the paper and then trace the letter to feel the crayon texture they created.



6.

Shady Letters

Make letter cards by cutting out block alphabet letters from sandpaper and gluing them on index cards. Create a second set of letter cards by using colored glue to write letters on index cards. Have children select a letter card, identify the letter, and trace it with their finger as they describe the letter strokes. Next, ask children to place a sheet of newsprint over their letter card and use a crayon to shade over it to create a textured letter. Have children use their finger to trace their shaded newsprint letter while saying the sound or sounds of that letter.





Letter/Word Awareness Activities

7.

Name That Letter/Word

Divide the class into groups of four, five, or six. Have each group sit in a circle, and place letter cards in a pile in the center of each circle. Designate a leader in each group. On a signal (ring a bell or play music), have the leader draw a card from the pile and start passing it from child to child around the circle until the music stops or the bell rings again. Invite the child in each circle holding the card to name the letter. After the groups have practiced with letters, replace the letter cards with cards containing sight words.

