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# Using This Book

Welcome to *Overhead Teaching Kit: Manuscript Handwriting Lessons!* These lessons and accompanying overlays are designed to enrich and enliven your letter-formation lessons—and make the most of whole-group learning.

Teaching with the overhead projector is a great way to bring the whole class together and engage them in learning. Children can watch you as you model the formation of each letter in a fun whole-class activity. Each transparency has a companion page in the book, so you can copy the sheets onto regular paper and have children work along at their desks.

Many of the step-by-step lessons in this book can be used to teach or reinforce any letter of the alphabet, lower- or uppercase, and they're open-ended enough for you to tailor them to the needs of your group. You'll also find suggestions for extending each lesson.

## Helpful Hints

- ✓ Before presenting each lesson, distribute copies of the overhead sheet to each child so they can work along with you. Each child will need a pencil with an eraser.
- ✓ Try using different color dry-erase markers to get kids to focus on different letters, or different strokes within a letter.
- ✓ Children should have a model of the alphabet at their desk (such as a sticker-strip), or an alphabet frieze should be visible.
- ✓ Adjust the size of the overhead display as needed. You can easily enlarge the pages for easy reading by turning a knob on the projector.



# Letter Formation Rhymes to Remember

A mnemonic rhyme will help children, especially auditory learners, remember a letter's formation. "Narrate" as you demonstrate each letter for the group.

**A** Pull down twice  
from the point at the top.  
Add a seat to view the apple crop.

**a** First make a round apple to eat,  
then a slide for an ant  
when he's finished his treat!

**B** Big old **B** has a tall straight back,  
and two big bellies  
'cause he just ate a snack!

**b** Draw a straight back, just like me.  
Don't forget to add a belly for **b**!

**Cc** Cars can cruise down curvy **Cc**.  
Stop near the ground—  
that's it you see!

**D** Down to the ground,  
then take a break.  
Half a circle is what you'll make.

**d** First you make a dime to spend.  
Go way up high,  
then down to the end.

**E** Pull straight down for capital **E**.  
Then add some shelves,  
1, 2, 3.

**e** A little line starts off **e**.  
Add a plate for an egg—  
here's breakfast for me!

**F** Big **F** is a tall flower for you.  
E has three lines, F has two.

**f** This flower grows tall,  
and hangs a little.  
Add a line right in the middle.

**G** Big round circle,  
but don't go too far.  
Add a garage to park your car!

**g** A garden starts with a little seed.  
The roots grow down.  
That's all you need!



**H** Make two lines, high to low.  
Connect the lines  
so they can say hello!

**h** First start high,  
then take a jump.  
Little **h** has a little hump.

**I** Big **I** starts with one side of a door.  
All it needs is a roof and a floor.

**i** Little **i** goes down.  
It's an ice cream treat.  
Add a sprinkle on top  
and it's ready to eat!

**J** Jumping jack **J**  
jumps down and then curls up.  
Jack needs a hat  
'cause he likes to dress up!

**j** Little **j** is so thin and lean.  
Jump way down,  
then add a jellybean!

**Kk** **K** and **k** have three lines,  
as you can see:  
a tall straight back,  
and a sideways v.

**L** Pull down a line and add a lap.  
Lay down, lazy!  
It's time for a nap.

**I** Little **I** looks like a number one.  
Just draw a line and you are done!

**M** Go down, hit the ground,  
then draw a V.  
Down to the ground again,  
big **M** is two mountains for me.

**m** Go down, hit the ground,  
then get ready for bumps.  
Little **m** is easy to write,  
just add two humps.

**N** Stick a nail in the ground,  
slant another one right.  
Add a third pointing up,  
And say nighty-night!

**n** Go down, hit the ground,  
and you're almost done.  
Little **n** has two humps,  
little **n** has one.

**Oo** Oh, yum! An orange to eat!  
Nice and round,  
**O** is a healthy treat.

**P** Pull down your pencil.  
Then pick it up off the ground.  
Add half a penny, nice and round.

**p** Pop on down and then up, you see.  
Finish it off with a little pea!

**Q** Big **Q** is a round quarter to spend.  
Add a line when you're at the end.

**q** A fancy queen with a little pearl.  
Give **q**'s hair a special curl.

**R** First draw a line and then a "rainbow."  
Add a ramp and you're ready to go!

**r** Go straight down,  
then race on back.  
**r** has an arm, like a little rack.

**Ss** Silly **S** and **s**, those slithery snakes.  
Twisty, turny, ready to shake!

**T** Big **T** is a big tall tree.  
Add a fort at the top  
so you can see.

**t** Little **t** is a little tree.  
Add a fort in the middle  
for you and me!

**Uu** **U** and **u** are just like cups.  
Start by going down,  
and then curve up.

**Vv** Slant down first,  
then slant up like so.  
Then this upside-down volcano  
is ready to blow!

**Ww** **W** and **w** have two pointy waves.  
Swim in the water if you're brave!

**Xx** Criss, cross,  
one and two,  
**X** marks the spot—  
here's a treasure for you!

**Y** Capital **Y** has a V in the air.  
The pole at the bottom  
holds it there.

**y** Slant down right,  
down to the ground.  
Slant down left,  
and take it underground.

**Zz** Zigzag **Z** and **z** are easy, you see.  
Just zig a zag—1, 2, 3!



# A Drumroll Please . . .

Use this lesson to introduce any letter! This is a great way to get children excited about practicing rows of letters.

## Skills

- ✓ Letter Identification
- ✓ Visual Discrimination
- ✓ Writing Practice

## Materials

- \* Overlay Sheet #1
- \* Dry-erase markers
- \* Reproducible (page 9) for each child

## Directions

1 Place the “A Drumroll Please . . .” overlay on the overhead. Ask children what they see, and what they think you might write on the “stage.” Invite them to make a soft drumroll sound on their desks, using their fingers!

2 Introduce a letter. Write the letter on the lines within the curtains and ask children which letter they think it is you’ve written.

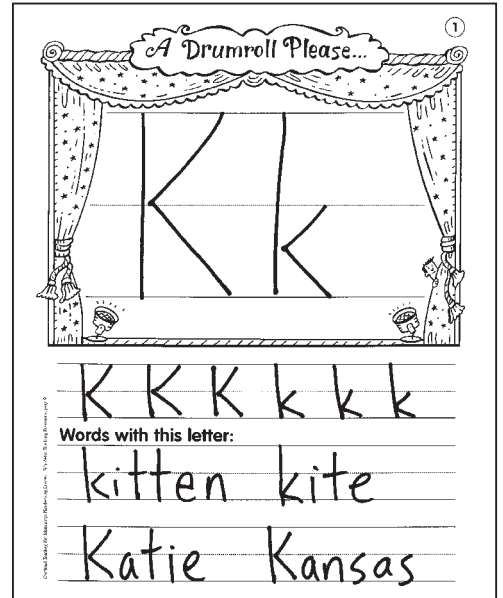
3 Once children have guessed correctly, erase the letter and write it again, this time using the “rhyme to remember” mnemonic (see page 5). Invite them to write the letter on their own papers.

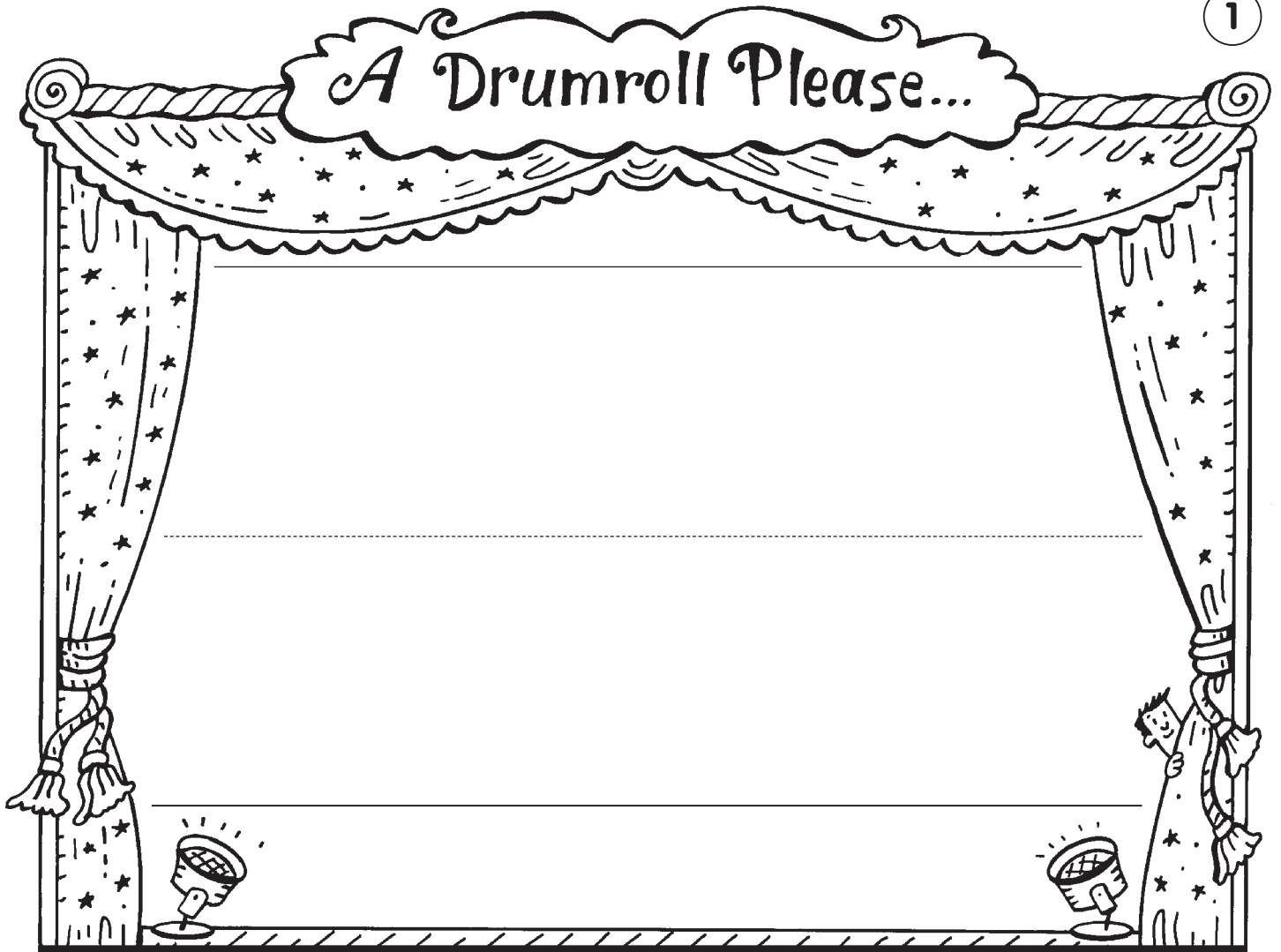
4 Have children practice the letter on the write-on lines on their reproducible pages. After children are comfortable with forming the letter, invite volunteers to come to the overhead and make “their best letter” until the first practice line is filled with the target letter. You might choose children whose names contain that letter.

5 On the second and third write-on practice lines, write words beginning with the target letter (ask children to provide the words).

## To Extend the Lesson

- Play “Who Am I?” by writing the letter you are introducing very slowly on the lines. Stop at various points and invite children to guess which letter it is you’re forming.
- Invite children to write the letters in the air before they write on their pages.
- For older children use this overlay to practice the more difficult letters. Or, have a child introduce a letter to the group.





Words with this letter:

# The Letter Tree

Give kids an overview of the entire alphabet—  
as each letter “climbs” up a tree!

## Skills

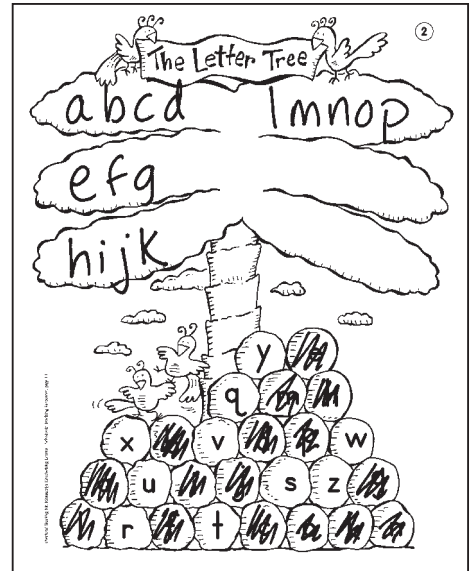
- ✓ Letter Recognition
- ✓ Alphabetical Order

## Materials

- \* *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr., John Archambault, illustrated by Lois Ehlert (Aladdin, 2000)
- \* Overlay Sheet #2
- \* Dry-erase markers in different colors
- \* Reproducible (page 11) for each child

## Directions

- 1 Read *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* aloud to children. Place “The Letter Tree” overlay on the overhead and say, *Let’s make our very own letter tree.*
- 2 Chant again, this time pointing to the letters on the coconut pile at the bottom of the overlay as you go. Chant slowly one more time, writing the lowercase letters on the overlay as you go (you might use a different color for each letter group). As you write each letter at the top of the tree, color in its corresponding coconut at the bottom. (Older children can write the letters themselves along with you on their reproducible pages, younger ones might just practice filling the tree with the letter that begins their name after the activity is completed. Younger children can also simply color in the coconuts along with you.)



- 3 Once all the letters are at the top of the tree, stop the chant, point to letters randomly and have children name each letter. Or, have a child come to the overhead and be the “pointer.” How quickly can the class name each letter?
- 4 To reenact all the letters falling off the tree, invite a child to erase all the letters!

## To Extend the Lesson

- ☛ Once all the letters are written on the tree, erase one or more of them and ask children which letters are missing. Invite a volunteer to come to the overhead and rewrite the missing letters.
- ☛ Try this with uppercase letters.
- ☛ Give each child a celery stalk with peanut butter (check for peanut allergies first) and have children press on alphabet-shaped cereal letters as you name them. They can then eat their letter trees!
- ☛ Draw a simple tree shape on the chalkboard. Give each child a magnetic letter and have the group act out the song on the chalkboard (most have a magnetic surface).
- ☛ Try this with the traditional ABC song (you’ll have to sing very slowly)!

# The Letter Tree

