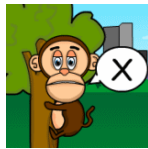


## Topic: Alphabet

By Sue Clarke



The alphabet is one of the fundamental teaching points at primary level and needs to be frequently recycled and practised using a variety of different activities. On the LearnEnglish Kids website you will find a wide range of activities and materials for teaching and practising the alphabet. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-topics-alphabet.htm>. On this page you will find ideas for using and exploiting the alphabet materials available.

### Presenting the alphabet

You can use some simple activities and games to familiarise your students with the sounds and letters of the English alphabet. At the simplest level there are two games to practise identifying sounds – ‘Sounds Fun’

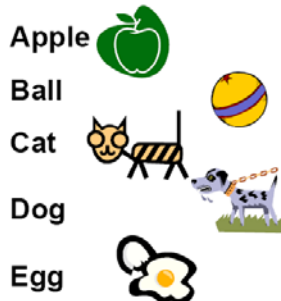
[http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids/phonics/index\\_obtree.html](http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids/phonics/index_obtree.html)

where children listen to and click on the right sound, and ‘Alphabet antics’, a similar game sounding out the letters of the alphabet

[http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids/antics/index\\_obtree.html](http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids/antics/index_obtree.html). You can also play the game ‘ABC Countdown’ – children must click the letters of the alphabet in order against the clock.



Another idea for introducing the alphabet is to use the words and visuals contained in the ‘Picture Dictionary’ worksheet. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-alphabet-dictionary.pdf>.



Ask children to point to the letters of the alphabet first, then give you the word when you call out a letter. You can then progress to spelling complete words. Spell out a word letter by letter while the children point to it. Write words up on the board and let the children spell them out and draw the right picture on the board next to it. You can then move on to the matching worksheet which accompanies the picture dictionary. You could make picture and /or word cards for more practice. Or you could blow up the visuals and words and put them up on the classroom wall as a reference dictionary for sounds and letters.

Another suggestion would be to make mini word and picture cards and ask children to spell them. You could do this individually, or as pair work or make a game with the children working in groups.

Or you could use dictation activities. Dictate some of the words from the worksheets letter by letter and ask the children to write them. You can then move on to other familiar vocabulary items or names. You could make a fun game by dictating a short sentence including some of the words on the worksheet e.g. I have a cat and a dog. Dictate letter by letter and ask children to find the word boundaries and tell you the sentence. Children could also dictate simple words to each other.

Spelling races are also very popular. Divide your class into two teams and call out a word from the worksheet. One child from each team should run to the board and write the word. Award a point for the first correct answer. Or have a ‘spelling quiz’, asking each team in turn to spell a word.

You could also use these visuals to play ‘Alphabet Bingo’. Ask your students to draw a simple grid (or prepare one for them). They should draw or copy six of the worksheet pictures. You can call out whole words or just initial letters of words. e.g. If you shout out A, children cross out apple.

### Activities for further practice

All children love singing the alphabet and you could use the ‘Alphabet song’ to consolidate <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-alphabet.htm>. There is also a very nice follow-up worksheet for the song where children identify animals in a jungle picture and make their own animal alphabet.

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/>

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish.htm>

Other worksheets for further practice include an 'Alphabet crossword' <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-alphabet-crossword.pdf> which uses the same vocabulary as the dictionary worksheets.

In addition, you will find a worksheet for practising sounds and pronunciation in the 'Alphabet Maze' worksheet. Go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-print-alphabet-maze.pdf>. For this activity you will need to do some introductory work to familiarise students with the concept of matching sounds which have different spellings. Write some pairs of words from the worksheet on the board randomly e.g. red/head; toes/nose and ask your students to try and pair them up according to sounds. Once they have mastered the idea, you can move on to the worksheet.

bag	red	head	knee
big	pig	toes	nose
dog	bird	mum	goes
cat	book	dad	bad

### Extension work/Recycling activities



One of the most 'fun' activities on the LearnEnglish Kids website is the 'Alphabet Zoo' story. This is a flash-animated story about a 'Zorilla' with lots of follow-up activities. You can find it at

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-stories-abc-zoo.htm>.

Play the story a few times and use the downloadable animal flashcards to practise the animals from the story. You will need to do quite a few games and activities with the flashcards to familiarise the students with all the weird and wonderful animal vocabulary! You can find

many suggestions for using the ABC flashcards in a separate tips sheet. Go to

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/download/kids/abczoo.pdf>

As follow-up work to the story you could use the worksheet 'ABC Zoo' containing vocabulary matching, quiz and animal description activities. Or the worksheet 'ABC animals' – a cut and stick activity in which children make their own alphabet zoo.

Extend this activity by making your own alphabet zoo for the classroom. You will probably need to simplify the list of animals first. Write the letters of the alphabet on the board as a list and ask the children to write in animals for each letter e.g. A = ant, B = Bear, C = Crocodile. Use the bizarre animals from the story to complete all the letters. Make a display for the classroom, allocating one letter/animal to each student and asking them to draw a picture of their animal, label it and write a few simple sentences. Before you put the pictures on the wall ask the students to stand in line with their pictures in the order of the alphabet.

There are also some really fun follow-up games for the ABC Zoo story. Try 'Animal Countdown'

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-animal-countdown.htm> a game in which children must click on the animals in alphabetical order against the clock.

There is also a squash the monkey hangman type game practising the animal vocabulary from the story.

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-hangman-abc-zoo.htm>

Finally there is a gap-filling activity completing information about the 'Zorilla'

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-gapfill-zorilla.htm>. If your students are at a slightly higher level you could ask them to invent another bizarre animal by mixing two or three animals together, then drawing and writing about their crazy animal.

