

Alphabet

Topic

The alphabet

Aims

To develop and practise (depending on stages chosen):

- vocabulary: alphabet letter names, alphabet letter sounds, alphabet upper and lower cases, animals
- integrated skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing

Age

Younger primary (7–9 years)

Time

90 minutes approximately (depending on stages chosen)

Materials

1. Song, activity sheet, answers and lyrics: 'The ABC fruity band'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/songs/the-abc-fruity-band>
2. Game: 'Alphabet antics'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/games/alphabet-antics>
3. Song, activity sheet, answers and lyrics: 'The alphabet song'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/songs/the-alphabet-song>
4. Game: 'Sounds fun'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/games/sounds-fun>
5. Story, activity sheet, answers, transcript and flashcards: 'ABC Zoo'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories/abc-zoo>
6. Game: 'Animal countdown'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/games/animal-countdown>
7. Game: 'ABC countdown'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/games/abc-countdown>
8. Your turn: 'Alphabet'
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/your-turn/alphabet>
9. Soft ball (stage 2)
10. Sets of small cards with upper- and lower-case letters (stage 5)
11. Mini sets of the animal flashcards (stage 6) – optional
12. Pieces of coloured paper for frieze/picture dictionary (stage 7)

For a complete list of all 'Alphabet' content on LearnEnglish Kids, click here:

<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/category/topics/alphabet>

Introduction

In this lesson, learners will practise the alphabet, the letter names and sounds and writing upper and lower case through a song and various games. For extension, they will watch a story about animals for every letter of the alphabet, and work as a class to produce an alphabet wall frieze or a picture dictionary.

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw pictures of an apple, a banana and a cat on the board. Elicit what they are from learners. Write A, B, C in upper case next to each picture. Ask learners, if they can, to tell you the rest of the alphabet. Write the letters on the board. • Now invite learners to come up to the board and write the lower-case letters next to the corresponding upper-case letters. Alternatively, ask them to write their name next to the relevant letter, or write/draw a word next to the relevant letter.
2. Song for lower levels (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play ‘The ABC fruity band’ song. Let learners sing along if they like, leaving the alphabet on the board for reference. After the song, give learners the activity sheet and ask them to complete exercise 1 by writing the remaining letters in the alphabet. They can use the alphabet on the board for reference. • Say the alphabet together as a class, in the same sections as in the song. Focus on any letters that are particularly difficult for your learners. • Now practise the chorus of the song together, and then sing along to the song. • Next, play a game. Ask all learners to stand in a circle. Throw a soft ball to one learner, saying ‘A’. That learner throws the ball to any other learner, saying ‘B’. Repeat until all the alphabet has been said. • Now give learners exercise 2 of the activity sheet. Brainstorm as a class ideas for other fruits (or any words if that is too narrow a lexical area for your learners) starting with different letters of the alphabet. Learners can then work in groups to draw more pictures and write the letter they begin with. Which group can get the most? Which letters are the most difficult? • Finally, you might like to play the ‘Alphabet antics’ game. Learners listen to a letter name and click the corresponding written letter. Put learners into small groups and play in teams.
3. Song for higher levels (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play ‘The alphabet song’. Let learners shout out the letters of the alphabet as they appear on the coconuts. After the song, give learners the activity sheet and ask them to complete exercise 1 by writing the remaining letters in the alphabet. They can use the alphabet on the board for reference. • Say the alphabet together as a class, in the same sections as in the song. Focus on any letters that are particularly difficult for your learners. • Now practise the five other lines of the song together, and then sing along to it. • Next, play a game. One learner says any letter of the alphabet, and the other learners must try to be the first to say the next letter. The learner who says the next letter then says another letter, and so on. Play as a class first until they get the hang of the game, then they can play in small groups. To make it more difficult, learners could try to say the previous letter of the alphabet instead. • Now give learners exercise 2 of the activity sheet. They write their name and draw a picture of themselves. Which learners have the most and least letters in their name?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finally, you might like to play the ‘Alphabet antics’ game. Learners listen to a letter name and click the corresponding written letter. Put learners into small groups and play in teams.
4. Letter sounds (15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you think your learners need to focus on the standard sounds that each letter makes in English, then refer back to the alphabet on the board. Elicit that ‘a’ says /æ/ as in ‘apple’, ‘b’ says /b/ as in ‘banana’, and ‘c’ says /k/ as in ‘cat’. Go through the rest of the alphabet finding examples. • Now play the ‘Sounds fun’ game. You can choose to use upper- or lower-case letters in the game. Learners listen to a letter sound and click the corresponding written letter. Put learners into small groups and play in teams. • Finally, play a writing race, with the class in two teams. You say a letter sound, and two learners from each team must race to write it on the board. When learners have got the hang of the game, you could sound out words, for example /k/-/æ/-/t/ and learners must write the word ‘cat’ on the board.
5. Upper and lower case (15–20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you think your learners need to focus on the upper- and lower-case written form of the alphabet, then refer back to the alphabet on the board. If you haven’t already, make sure the lower-case letters are written next to the upper-case letters. • Prepare some small cards with the upper and lower case of each letter. Ask learners to work in small groups and match the cards. Fast finishers can put the pairs of cards in alphabetical order too. • Play a writing race, with the class in two teams. Show learners one of the letter cards, either upper or lower case. Two learners from each team must race to write the corresponding upper- or lower-case letter on the board. • Ask learners if they know when we use upper-case letters in English. For example, for names, days of the week and to start a sentence. Play a dictation game: spell out a simple sentence that contains words with upper-case letters, for example ‘My brother is Alex.’ or ‘Today is Friday.’ or ‘My birthday is in April.’ Learners should work in pairs and write the sentence down in their notebooks, using upper and lower case appropriately.
6. Story (20–30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell learners they are going to watch a story about an unusual animal called a zorilla in an unusual zoo. Ask learners to watch the story to find out what’s special about a zorilla and about the zoo. Play the ‘ABC Zoo’ story, then elicit the answers: a zorilla makes a very bad smell, and the ABC Zoo has different animals which begin with each letter of the alphabet. • Use the flashcards to review all the animals in the story. Then play a game of bingo: ask learners to draw a grid of six squares in their notebooks. They should write any six of the animals from the story in the squares, using the transcript from the story to help them. Now show one of the flashcards and ask the learners what it is. If they can’t remember, you can remind them. If a learner has that animal written down, they can cross it off. The first learner to cross off all their animals shouts ‘bingo!’ Learners can play in small groups once they get used to the game. • Alternatively, learners can play Pelmanism in pairs or small groups. They will need a set of the word flashcards and picture flashcards per group. Each learner takes it in turns to turn over one picture card and one word card to try to find a matching pair. As they turn over each card, they should say the animal.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For fun, learners will love playing the 'Animal countdown' game, where they have to click on the animals from the story in alphabetical order. Get them to say the names of the animals as they play. • Finally, give learners exercise 3 of the activity sheet. Ask them to write their name down the left side, and then draw and write an animal for each letter of their name. They can use the animals from the story or their favourite animals.
7. Class project (15–20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners can work together as a class to make a wall frieze or a picture dictionary for the classroom. Brainstorm ideas as a class about animals they know beginning with each letter of the alphabet, both animals from the story and other animals. • Allocate a letter of the alphabet to each learner, and a piece of coloured paper. They should draw as many animals as possible for that letter, then label each animal and write some simple sentences about it, if they can. They should also draw their letter in both upper and lower case, large and colourful. Monitor and help as necessary. • When learners have finished, ask them to stand in line with their pictures in the order of the alphabet, and say the alphabet together. Each learner could also say '... is for (aardvark)' after their letter. • Finally, either stick each letter around the top of the room to make an alphabet wall frieze, or assemble them into a book to make a class picture dictionary.
8. Round off activity (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For fun, play the 'ABC countdown' game! Learners should play in teams and try to click on the letters of the alphabet in order in less than 30 seconds. Which team can finish the quickest?
9. Setting homework (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners can listen to the songs and story again, and complete the remaining activities on the story activity sheet. For exercise 2 they will need to do some research at home. Can they find any other animals that come from those areas to tell the class about next time? • Learners can also play any of the games again at home. If they are members of LearnEnglish Kids, they can also read comments on the 'Alphabet' Your turn and leave their own comments on the page.

Contributed by

Rachael Ro