

## Sound!Start Phonics Handwriting Materials

The Sound!Start Phonics programme places a strong focus on handwriting from the beginning of the Reception year. We recommend that, during the first term, the children complete a small-group adult-led handwriting task each week **in addition** to the daily “Learning a Letter” and “Main Phonics Lesson” and provide planning and resources to support the delivery of these lessons.

The fifteen-week programme focuses on establishing good handwriting habits and securing correct letter formation. It provides an opportunity for the children to apply the knowledge and skills they have been taught and to practise some of the core teaching activities for spelling in a small group context before they become part of the whole-class lesson. The skills taught and practised within the tasks (letter formation, recall and accurate segmentation) are essential for independent writing. They support the children to move on from writing letters to represent sounds, to spelling words, and eventually to writing captions and sentences with confidence and accuracy, without the risk of “practising” and over-learning errors. These activities are age-appropriate and can be completed by most children in only a few minutes. If required, the tasks can be broken down into smaller chunks and completed by some or all of the children across a longer period of time.

Focused practice should take place alongside a wide range of language development and writing activities which introduce the children to the compositional as well as the transcriptional aspects of writing. This ensures they understand the purpose of writing, are motivated to write in different contexts, AND have the skills they need to be successful in their efforts.

Provision for writing at the beginning of the Reception year may include the following:

Small-group adult-led writing	Shared / guided writing	Child-initiated writing
<p>Adult-led task which provides an opportunity for children to apply <b>taught</b> phonic knowledge and skills. The content of these tasks should be carefully controlled so that the children are successful in their early attempts at writing / spelling.</p> <p>(linked to Guided Reading with matched texts)</p>	<p>Adult-led task which provides an opportunity to engage the children in purposeful writing. The children share their ideas and the adult provides support with composing sentences and writing them down. As the adult is doing the writing / spelling, there is no need to control the content.</p> <p>(linked to Reading Aloud – adults do the “work” and the children enjoy the experience)</p>	<p>Generally within Continuous Provision. Adults may scaffold the learning, providing support with segmentation (using sound spaces), recall (with reference to a grapheme chart or a sound to spelling mat), or letter formation (using the letter formation patten) as appropriate.</p>

It is important that small-group teacher-led writing tasks are carefully planned / controlled to provide opportunities for the children to apply and embed the knowledge and skills they have been taught. This ensures they are successful in their early attempts at writing and spelling. Tasks which require the children to write words and sentences containing GPCs that have not yet been taught can be frustrating for both children and adults and should be avoided.

**The weekly tasks cover the following objectives / skills:**

	Good Handwriting Habits	Tracing / Copying lines and shapes	Tracing / Copying letter shapes	Writing letters in response to spoken sounds <i>Find and Trace</i> <i>Find and Copy</i> <i>Quick Copy</i>	Spelling practice <i>In the Frame</i>
Week 1	✓	Tracing lines			
Week 2	✓	Tracing lines and shapes			
Week 3	✓	Drawing lines			
Week 4	✓	Copying lines and shapes			
Week 5	✓		Basic Curly Caterpillar letters c o a d g	✓	
Week 6	✓		Basic One-Armed Robot letters r n m h b	✓	
Week 7	✓		Basic Long Ladder Letters l t i u	✓	
Week 8	✓		Revisit Curly Caterpillar letters c o a d g	✓	✓
Week 9	✓		Revisit One-Armed Robot letters r n m h b	✓	✓
Week 10	✓		Revisit Long Ladder Letters l t i u	✓	✓
Week 11	✓		Zig-Zag letters v w x z	✓	✓
Week 12	✓		Further Curly Caterpillar letters c q u e s f	✓	✓
Week 13	✓		Further One-Armed Robot letters r h b k p	✓	✓
Week 14	✓		Further Long Ladder Letters l u j y	✓	✓
Week 15			Revisit Zig-Zag letters v w x z		

Step-by-step guidance for teaching “Good Handwriting Habits” and “Letter Families” tasks can be found on the pages which follow and a photocopiable formats for each lesson can be downloaded.

## Organisation


When completing handwriting tasks, the children should be seated at correctly sized tables. Adults may choose to model the task using an enlarged copy of the format or a visualiser but should also interact with the children as they write, supporting correct pencil hold and guiding movements verbally, using the focus vocabulary, and physically if required.

Thin pencils should be used in the first instance and will continue to be appropriate for most children. Each handwriting task is broken into separate sections and the children are asked to put their pencils down at the end of each one. This provides an opportunity to re-cap the “good handwriting habits” prompts (posture, paper, pencil hold) several times within each task. This vocabulary should also be used at other times to ensure consistent expectations for writing / handwriting are maintained.

Most children will be able to complete some, if not all the task each week. Some children may choose to repeat the task within Continuous Provision and additional formats should be provided to facilitate this. Children who lack previous experience with writing tools may benefit from completing some of the task in a one-to-one context with an adult who can provide support with pencil hold and guide the child through the correct sequence of movements as required. The “Good Handwriting Habits” tasks may also form part of intervention work beyond Week 4 alongside “Letter Families” practice.


### “Good Handwriting Habits”

**Posture**




*Support the children to sit correctly with their bottoms at the back of the chair and their feet firmly on the floor.*

**Paper**



*Remind the children to use their supporting hand to put pressure onto their paper as they write. The paper should be tilted slightly towards the left for right-handed writers and towards the right for left-handed writers as shown above.*

**Pencil Hold**



*Support the children to hold their pencil effectively using a “froggy fingers” pincer grip.*

*The writing tool must be held beneath the sharpened area (so that the child can see the writing they produce) and rest securely in the web of the hand as the child writes.*

## Weeks 1-4 Good Handwriting Habits

The purpose of these tasks is to establish the “Good Handwriting Habits” vocabulary and expectations, practise the skills of tracing and copying and introduce some of the key vocabulary used within the Sound!Start Phonics letter formation patter. This includes:

*Start at the top*

*Straight down (top to bottom movement)*

*Across (left to right movement)*

**This** way round and stop (basic curly caterpillar / anti-clockwise orientation)

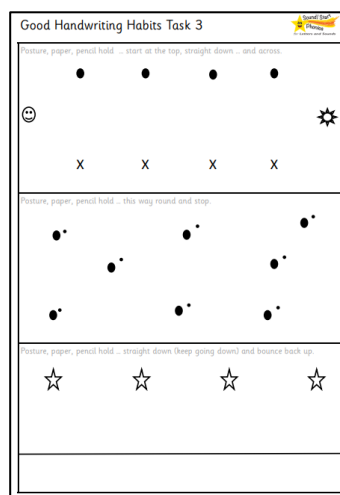
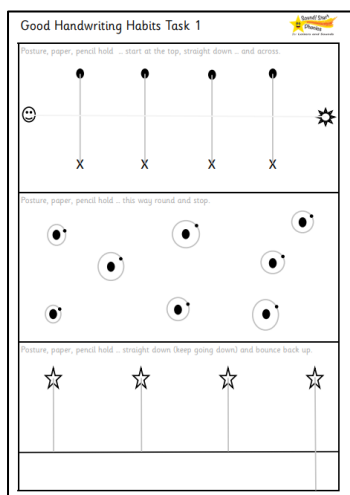
*Bounce back up (over-tracing a line)*

*Keep going down (descending below a line)*

Opportunities to introduce further vocabulary such as on top, underneath, in the middle, at the side (left and right) are also likely to arise during the tasks.

### Good Handwriting Habits: Tracing Lines (week 1) / Drawing Lines (week 3)

#### Printable Resources:



#### Getting Started:

1. Talk the children through the process of sitting correctly on their chair. Practise lifting the chair whilst in a sitting position to “tuck in” to the table.
2. Give out the “Good Handwriting Habits” format and support the children to tilt the paper and steady it with a supporting hand.
3. Practise picking up and holding a pencil talking through the correct hold and position
4. Re-cap the “Good Handwriting Habits” expectations: posture, paper, pencil hold

### Section One

Model tracing over / drawing vertical lines starting on the circle and moving down to the cross using the key vocabulary: **start at the top and straight down**.

Ask the children to do the same.

Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct movements repeating the key vocabulary “start at the top and straight down” to guide children’s movements.

Some children may also benefit from gentle physical support.

When the children have finished their top to bottom lines, model tracing / drawing a horizontal line from the smiley face **across** to the sun.

Ask the children to do the same providing verbal and gentle physical support as described above.

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

### Section Two

Re-cap “Good Handwriting Habits” checking posture, paper, and pencil hold.

Model tracing over / drawing circles starting on the smaller circle and following an anti-clockwise (curly caterpillar) movement using the key vocabulary: **this way round, keep going and stop**.

Ask the children to do the same.

Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct movements repeating the key vocabulary “this way round, keep going and stop” to guide children’s movements.

Some children may also benefit from gentle physical support.

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

### Section Three

Re-cap “Good Handwriting Habits” checking posture, paper, and pencil hold.

Model tracing over / drawing vertical lines from the centre / middle of the star down to the line and straight back up re-tracing their line. Use the key vocabulary: **start at the top, straight down and bounce back up**. On the final one, talk through the process of continuing the line beneath the horizontal line using the vocabulary “**keep going down**”.

Ask the children to do the same.

Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct movements repeating the key vocabulary outlined above to guide the children’s movements.

Some children may also benefit from gentle physical support.

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

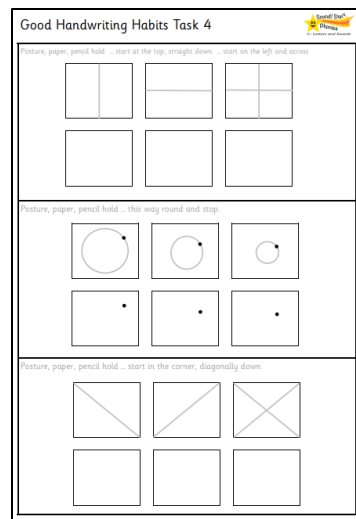
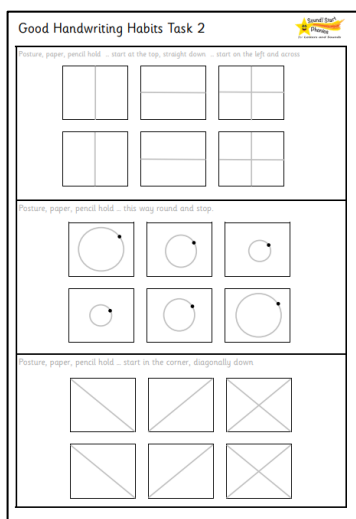
### Finally ...

Re-cap “Good Handwriting Habits” checking posture, paper, and pencil hold.

Support the children to write their name onto the back of the format copying from a name card as required.

## Good Handwriting Habits: Tracing Lines and Shapes (week 2) / Copying Lines and Shapes (week 4)

### Printable Resources:



### Getting Started:

1. Talk the children through the process of sitting correctly on their chair. Practise lifting the chair whilst in a sitting position to “tuck in” to the table.
2. Give out the “Good Handwriting Habits” format and support the children to tilt the paper and steady it with a supporting hand.
3. Practise picking up and holding a pencil talking through the correct hold and position
4. Re-cap the “Good Handwriting Habits” expectations: posture, paper, pencil hold

### Section One

Model tracing over / tracing and then copying\* the vertical and horizontal lines within each guide square. Use the key vocabulary:

**Start at the top and straight down**

**Start on the left and across**

Ask the children to do the same.

Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct movements repeating the key vocabulary as usual.

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

### Section Two

Re-cap “Good Handwriting Habits” checking posture, paper, and pencil hold.

Model tracing over / tracing and then copying\* circles starting on the dot and following an anti-clockwise (curly caterpillar) movement. Use the key vocabulary:

**this way round, keep going and stop.**

Ask the children to do the same.

Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct movements repeating the key vocabulary as usual.

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

### Section Three

Review "Good Handwriting Habits" checking posture, paper, and pencil hold.

Model tracing over / tracing and then copying\* diagonal lines within each guide square.

Use the key vocabulary:

**Start in the top (left / right) corner, diagonally down**

Ask the children to do the same.

Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct movements repeating the key vocabulary as usual.

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

### Finally ...

Review "Good Handwriting Habits" checking posture, paper, and pencil hold.

Support the children to write their name onto the back of the format copying from a name card as required.

*\*In week 4 model tracing and then copying each line or shape before moving onto the next one so that the children copy the movement / sequence of movements straight after tracing it.*

## Weeks 5 - 15 Letter Families

These tasks focus on teaching correct formation of lower-case letters in basic letter family groups:

- Curly Caterpillar (and linked) letters
- One-Armed Robot Letters
- Long Ladder Letters
- Zig-Zag letters

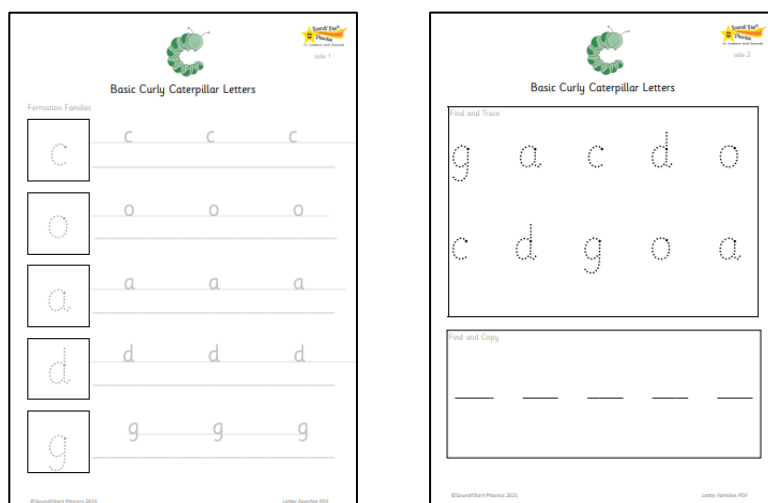
The letter formation patter introduced during the “Learning a Letter” teaching sequence should be used when modelling correct formation of each letter and throughout the task. The patter should be spoken slowly to talk the children through the sequence of movements, and they are not expected to learn or recite the patter themselves. A consistent intonation should be used particularly for key phrases such as “This way round” “bounce back up” “Reach up high” and so on.

The tasks also provide an opportunity for the children to practise speedy recall of the focus GPCs (writing the correct letter in response to a spoken sound). As the children gain confidence with these skills, they also practise using **letters they have learned** to form to spell simple words.

As usual, “Good Handwriting Habits” are reviewed and consolidated at the beginning of each section.

### Letter Families: Basic Letters (weeks 5 - 7)

Printable Resources (two pages for each letter family):



#### Getting Started:

1. Talk the children through the process of sitting correctly on their chair. Practise lifting the chair whilst in a sitting position to “tuck in” to the table.
2. Give out the double sided “Letter Families” format and support the children to tilt the paper and steady it with a supporting hand.
3. Practise picking up and holding a pencil talking through the correct hold and position
4. Re-cap the “Good Handwriting Habits” expectations: posture, paper, pencil hold



## Section One (Formation Families)

Focus the children's attention on the basic letter shape (c, r or l).

Re-cap the basic letter formation pattern whilst **tracing** over the dotted letter and encourage the children to air-write it. Repeat as required.

Now trace over some of the "greyed" letters repeating the appropriate sound as each letter is formed.

Ask the children to do the same. Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct letter formation repeating the letter formation pattern to guide children through the correct sequence of movements and providing gentle physical support as required. If necessary, pause to re-model the correct formation on the last few greyed letters. Ask the children to put their pencils down.

Now model **copying** the letter, using the line guide, and writing a letter underneath each of the greyed letters. Again, repeat the appropriate sound whilst writing each one.

Re-cap "Good Handwriting Habits" and ask the children to do the same.

(NB: Some children may benefit from small starting "dots".)

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

Repeat the "Formation Families" process for each letter.

## Section Two (Find and Trace)

**Some children may complete this part of the task during a different session or at home** (providing the instructions and the correct formation patterns have been shared with parents.)

Re-cap "Good Handwriting Habits".

Focus the children's attention on the first row of dotted letters.

Say a sound (phoneme) and ask the children to find (touch) the corresponding letter.

Ask the children to repeat the sound (phoneme) and then trace over the letter shape.

Practise finding and tracing each of the letters on the top row, saying the sounds in a random order.

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

Repeat the process using the letters on the second row.

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

Repeat the process, this time asking the children to copy the appropriate letter onto one of the "sound spaces".

**NB: Ensure the children repeat the sound (phoneme) as they trace or copy the appropriate letter.**

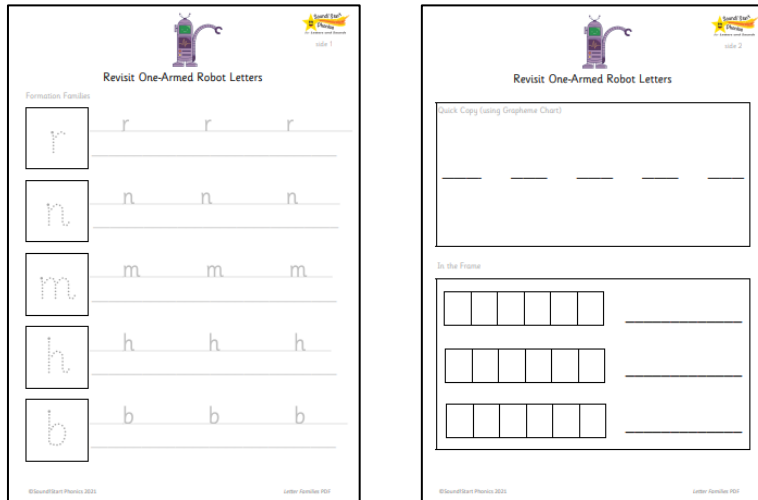
## Finally ...

Re-cap "Good Handwriting Habits".

Support the children to write their name onto the bottom of the format copying from a name card as required.

## Letter Families: Revisit Letters / Further Letters (weeks 8 - 15)

Printable Resources (two pages for each letter family):



### Getting Started:

1. Talk the children through the process of sitting correctly on their chair. Practise lifting the chair whilst in a sitting position to “tuck in” to the table.
2. Give out the double sided “Letter Families” format and support the children to tilt the paper and steady it with a supporting hand.
3. Practise picking up and holding a pencil talking through the correct hold and position
4. Re-cap the “Good Handwriting Habits” expectations: posture, paper, pencil hold

### Section One (Formation Families)

Focus the children’s attention on the basic letter shape (c, r or l).

Re-cap the basic letter formation patter whilst **tracing** over the dotted letter and encourage the children to air-write it. Repeat as required.

Now trace over some of the “greyed” letters repeating the appropriate sound as each letter is formed.

Ask the children to do the same. Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct letter formation repeating the letter formation patter to guide children through the correct sequence of movements and providing gentle physical support as required. If necessary, pause to re-model the correct formation on the last few greyed letters. Ask the children to put their pencils down.

Now model **copying** the letter, using the line guide, and writing a letter underneath each of the greyed letters. Again, repeat the appropriate sound whilst writing each one.

Re-cap “Good Handwriting Habits” and ask the children to do the same.

(NB: Some children may benefit from small starting “dots”.)

Ask the children to put their pencils down.

Repeat the “Formation Families” process for each letter.

## Section Two (Quick Copy)

**NB A colour-coded Grapheme Chart is required for this section**

Re-cap “Good Handwriting Habits” and tell the children the activity (Quick Copy).

Say a sound (phoneme) and ask the children to find (touch) the corresponding letter on the grapheme chart.

*In the early stages, it may be beneficial to focus the children’s attention on the appropriate colour-coded line of the grapheme chart **before** saying the phoneme.*

Ask the children to repeat the phoneme and then copy the letter onto the first “sound space”.

*When saying each phoneme record the correct grapheme onto an enlarged version of the format or a small whiteboard in preparation for the next step.*

Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct letter formation repeating the letter formation pattern and providing gentle physical support as usual.

Repeat the process with further letters from the focus letter family. Provide opportunities to practice some of the focus letters more than once during the task, focusing particularly on any “wobbly” GPCs.

Then show the children the graphemes you have written and support them to check and change their letters as required.

As the children gain confidence, build in opportunities to practice previously taught letters from other letter families, tuning children into the appropriate family at the beginning of each set, for example:

*Now let’s practice some curly caterpillar letters.*

*Remember we will start at the top and go this way round ...*

*Find c (it’s on the yellow line) ...*

*Say the sound as you write it onto the sound space.*

*Find a (it’s on the red line) ...*

*Say the sound as you write it onto the sound space.*

*Find g (it’s on the yellow line) ...*

*Say the sound and copy it onto your grid.*

**NB: Ensure the children say each sound as they trace or copy the appropriate letter.**

## Section Three (In the Frame)

**NB A colour-coded Grapheme Chart is required for this section**

Re-cap “Good Handwriting Habits” and tell the children the activity (In the Frame).

Say a word and ask the children to repeat it.

Use segmenting arms to prompt the children to segment it.

*In the early stages it may be beneficial to repeat this process, quietly joining in with the segmentation to support accuracy before asking the children to have another go on their own.*

Ask the children to segment the word again, this time marking sound spaces into their phoneme frame as they say each sound.

*Mark the sound spaces into your own phoneme frame in preparation for the next step.*

Ask the children to count how many sounds are in the word by counting their sound spaces. Refer to your phoneme frame to confirm accuracy.

Ask the children to segment the word again, this time writing the appropriate letters onto each space. Encourage the children to use the colour-coded grapheme chart to find and copy the letters if necessary.

Talk the children through the process of checking their spelling and copying the correctly spelled word onto the pre-drawn line.

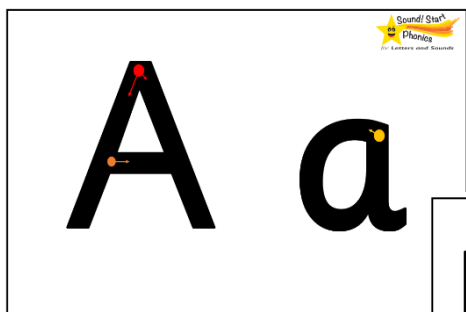
Carefully monitor good handwriting habits and correct letter formation (particularly for letters from the focus letter family) repeating the letter formation pattern and providing gentle physical support as usual.

Repeat the process with two further words.

**NB The words used during this task should be familiar words previously used with the main phonics lesson containing the focus GPCs practised within Section One.**

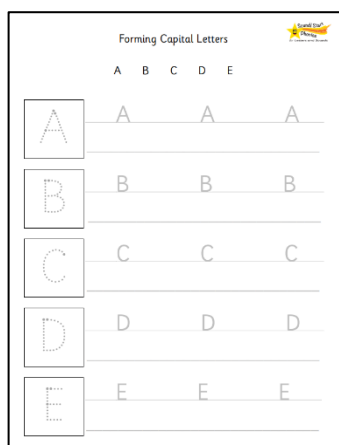
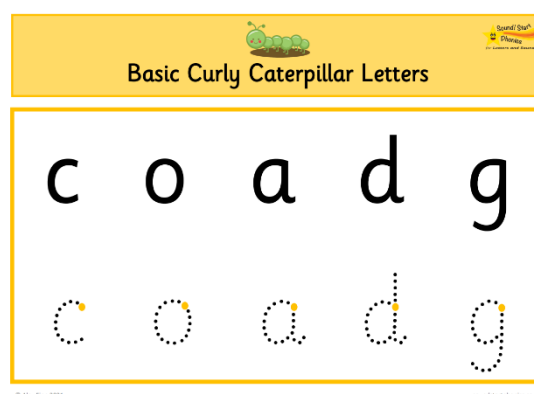
## Additional Resources

Further printable resources to support correct letter formation are also provided for additional practice at home or in school as required. This includes:

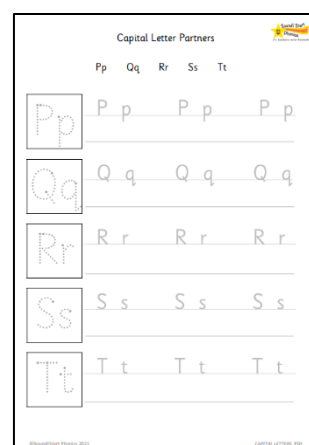


An alphabet frieze showing upper- and lower-case letter partners with colour-coded starting points.

Letter Families letter formation posters for display and / or additional handwriting practice.



Further practice sheets focusing on correct formation of capital letters.



NB: "Capital letter partners" should be introduced as soon as each child secures formation of the basic lower case letter shapes.