Introduction to Language

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\* Reflective Journal Entries are underlined. Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; 2004

### Points to Include in Language Introduction

1. History of Language: The evolution of language as it reflects the

evolution of the human family and the transmission of cultural heritage.

1. Language as a form of communication.
2. Basic Overview of language development in the child.
3. How the Language curriculum is linked to the child’s Sensitive Periods.
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Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; revised 2002

### Introduction to the Montessori Language Curriculum

The interest and ability of three to six year old children in language is the most obvious example of what Dr. Montessori meant by ‘sensitive periods’. Children of this age group are fascinated by language to a degree unequaled by any other age group, and their ability to absorb language is amazing. Consider that a child living where several languages are spoken, has the ability to absorb those languages effortlessly.

When a child enters a Montessori classroom they are receiving preparation for language all around them. The sensorial curriculum provides easy visual preparation necessary for later learning. The matching in sensorial provides an opportunity for the child to learn to discriminate between similarities and differences and trains the eye for reading. Practical Life activities are built around refining the child’s gross and fine motor skills so that they may have the control and dexterity to later hold and manipulate a writing instrument. The combination of fine motor control and strong eye-hand coordination will assist the child greatly in the reading and writing process.

Children have a genuine love of language and as adults, we must continually foster this natural love for language. It is important for the child to feel that he can communicate effectively. That is, the child needs to feel confident in expressing his needs, thoughts, and feelings. This not only extends his language and vocabulary, but also furthers his self-confidence. Enjoyment of language instruction is vital. There needs to be a positive emotional bond between the teacher and the children for learning to take place. The direct aim of the language curriculum is the building of positive attitudes towards both oneself, one’s community and learning. Our goal is for children to be able to fully express themselves, first on the oral level and later on the written level. Language is a pathway for the child and provides a link to the child’s world.

In a Montessori classroom, children are surrounded by language and because they are in a sensitive period for language absorption it is critical that the language is clear and correct. We begin by having simple conversations with children, centering on topics that are familiar to them and part of their everyday life. We continually enrich their vocabulary not only by modeling with our own language, but also through showing them pictures, reading them stories, and listening to them express themselves. We teach specific vocabulary and nomenclature through the three-period lesson. It is important to understand that language takes place continually throughout the classroom.

In a Montessori classroom, a phonetic approach to language is introduced to the child. In order for the child to learn to read phonetically, he must first become conscious of the fact that his language is made up of a limited number of component sounds. He has already absorbed this on an unconscious level in order to speak the language so we bring this to a conscious level by playing sound games (I Spy game).

The next step is to give the graphic symbol to these sounds with the Sandpaper Letters. The child traces the letters, sees the letter, and is given the sound of the letter. By tracing the letter, the child is imprinting the shape of the letter into his tactile memory.

Once the child has a repertoire of letter sounds and forms, they are introduced to the movable alphabet. The child begins by identifying the letter sounds they know and moves to composing simple words by breaking down each sound and associating the sound to a specific letter. It is important to understand that the child is not reading or writing at this point, but is analyzing the sounds of his language. Therefore, the child is not asked to read the word back, nor are corrections made in the child's selection of letters and sounds.

Dr. Montessori viewed the development of language as a dual path - the education of the mind and the education of the hand. The education of the mind is done through the sound games, through oral and auditory development, vocabulary development and visual discrimination. The education of the hand begins with the Practical Life exercises and is further refined through the Sensorial materials, where the child gains muscular control, finger grasp, lightness of touch and the ability to form contours. The direct preparation of the hand in the Language curriculum involves the metal insets and the chalkboard sequences. Initially, the child traces the frame of the inset, which controls the movement of the pencil and gives precision to the hand. As the child gains more control of his hand and the writing instrument, he traces the inset as well as the frame and practices variations.

The ‘explosion’ into reading and writing is a very individual experience. Each child is on their own personal timetable. The language materials give the child the preparation for reading and writing. The process of both reading and writing are internal ones that are highly respected and fostered in a Montessori classroom.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

### History of Language

(For Teacher Reference Only)

When humans first appeared on earth, they were small, like midgets, like children and they were without great power. The first men and women had no clothes and could not cook and lived out in the open without homes. They had no idea about fire and they had only two or three simple tools.

They lived terrified of the night and in constant fear of wild animals. But saddest of all, they were speechless. They could not utter a single word. They could make sounds, but they could not speak. They could grunt, moan, shriek, cry and widely wave their hands. They had no names, no way to explain how they felt, why they were sad or what hurt. The discoveries and secrets of their lives were bottled up because they had no way of expressing themselves. Their voices were silent and their minds were closed.

Then, after many ages and before the coming of the glaciers, a new race of women and men appeared. They were taller, stronger, and smarter. Their head was larger and their mouth had more power. They are the people who spoke the first words and they were the first to use fire.

At first, they did as their ancestors did, but as they were wiser, they came to a greater love of sounds and they began to babble. They learned to speak with their hands and their bodies and refined the art of gesture.

Throughout the history of humans, they have found ways of communication that did not require speech:

* the Greeks used signal fires
* the Native Americans used smoke signals and hand signals
* even today we communicate with gestures that might say “hello” or “goodbye”

Even after man learned to talk, his life was still very simple, but he needed a memory aid. Some examples of early memory aids include:

* A Peruvian Quipu: the Inca’s of Peru devised a system using a main cord and smaller knotted cords of various colors to count, send messages and record facts and events.
* Notched sticks and knotted ropes were used by ancient Chinese, West Africans and Australian Aborigines for the same purposes.
* Zulus of Africa had a system of colored beads that conveyed messages.
* Small pieces of bone, antler and stone with strange scratches and holes appear to be recordings of lunar calendars.

Primitive humans made tools for many purposes and at some stage, they used these tools to scratch crude drawings which would lead, many centuries later to writing and to an alphabet. Some of the earliest drawings might have been scratched into soft bones. Later, walls of caves were decorated with various pictures of animals. The cave art were pictures of animals but there was no movement depicted in the drawings. Even the earliest of drawings were in color. Primitive humans had discovered how to use minerals and charcoal left over from wood fires as paints for their drawings. The application of the paints might have been done by blowing the colors mixed with animal fat through bone tubes onto the walls.

We can only guess as to the reason for the drawings on the walls of the caves; perhaps as part of a religious ceremony, a way of recording events or an expression of creativity,

Thousands of years before the invention of true writing, men were depicting events in their lives with drawings called pictograms. These might be as simple as a wavy line to convey the idea of water, or the drawing might be more elaborate, perhaps the picture of a man holding a spear and a bison nearby to suggest a hunt.

Pictograms of life size bison's and other figures which had been painted in a cave by primitive humans more then 20,000 years ago was discovered by Maria, the five year old daughter of Merquis de Sautuloa, a Spanish archeologist in Northern Spain in the year 1879. This finding was the first and most famous of the discoveries that soon followed.

It was only a few years later that drawings were found in several countries in Europe. In the earliest drawings only animals were depicted, later, drawings of people were included. These drawings progressed from still to action to picture stories. Men and women were drawn running, shooting, hunting and eating. The drawing of moving creatures was a major step forward in the history of writing. For the first time, a story was being told and this telling of a story in pictures is called a pictograph. The next step in pictorial writing was the development of the ideogram. A pictogram is an image of something that can be seen or touched. When some general idea or abstract concept is added, it becomes an ideogram. For example, a roadside sign with a tractor on it indicates a tractor, but when a X is drawn through the figure of the tractor, it becomes an ideogram saying “no tractors allowed on pavement”.

When pictograms were converted into ideograms, the first real advancement toward conventional writing began. Ideograms played an important role in Egyptians hieroglyphics, one of the world’s first major writing systems.

Whole stories were recorded with the use of ideograms, but as time went on and people became more intelligent and busier, a need to simplify written messages became evident. Thus short hand steps were taken. As writing developed, pictographic images often became symbols and occasionally these evolved into signs standing for a letter, syllable or sound. Our present day Roman letter “M” was originally the common pictograph for water.

The Egyptians took a further step in the development of the written language when they began to utilize homonyms. A picture of a man bent over, holding onto a staff gives the idea of an old man. Eventually it came to mean “aging”, decrepit, or to lean upon, more then it signified an old man. In addition to using homonyms, they gave sounds to their pictographs. This was an evolutionary step in writing development. Following this improvement, came the rebus, a representation of a word or phrase by pictures suggesting the syllables of words, for example a picture of a cat on a log is a rebus for ‘catalogue”.

The most important step toward phonetic writing, that is, toward recording the sounds of his spoken language came when man began linking a single sign to a single sound, regardless of the visual meaning. The Egyptian hieroglyphics were very near to inventing the first true alphabet, the use of letter to sound pictures.

Northeast Montessori Institute; November 2002 Original Source Unknown

### Language Goals for Children in their First Year Curriculum

Goals for Reading: Classroom Activities:

* ability to appreciate and handle books - incorporated into Circle Time
* much work on the Oral Level, including: - Circle Time and small groups conversations, story telling, poems,

rhymes, labeling of familiar items

* development of children’s listening skills - silence games
  + listening games
  + I Spy game (beginning, ending and medial sounds)
* development of children’s ability to - matching sequences

visually discriminate - patterning exercises

* + Sorting activities
  + visual memory games
  + Sensorial materials of size, color and form.

Goals for Handwriting: Classroom Activities:

* refinement of the child’s hand for - all Practical Life sequences

preparation in writing - sand tray, chalkboard sequences, metal insets, name writing, art projects

* + Touch Boards and Fabric Boxes

### Language Goals for Children in their Second Year Curriculum

Goals for Reading: Classroom Activities:

* knowledge of sound/symbol association - Sandpaper Letters
* learning the “keys” to reading; - Initial Sound cards
  + unlocking the initial sound - Large Movable Alphabet
  + knowledge of short vowel sounds - orientation
  + composing simple phonetic words - composition
* exposure to Phonogram work - Phonogram Sandpaper Letters

Goals for Handwriting: Classroom Activities:

* experience with various writing - many opportunities for Art and

instruments writing with markers, pencils, etc.

* guided writing exercises - Sand Tray, chalkboards, insets
* ability to write first name - copy writing name tags
* ability to write some letters and words - sequenced from unlined paper to

lined paper.

### Language Goals for Children in their Third Year Curriculum (Extended Day Curriculum)

Goals for Reading: Classroom Activities:

* strong foundation in phonics and - Sandpaper Letters

letter recognition - Movable Alphabet

* ability to isolate beginning, middle - Initial Sound cards

and ending sounds - Object Boxes

* + Phonetic card material
  + Phonogram materials
* listening comprehension - Circle activities, Chapter books, lots of literature, songs, poems, fingerplays, etc.
* building Sight Word repertoire - Puzzle Words
* emergence into “reading” - Whole Language skills
  + decoding skills
  + developing reading strategies
* appreciation of Literature - reading, reciting and acting out stories, fables, poetry, original work.
* beginning skills in developmental - Journal writing spelling - editing process
  + self expression
* story writing - ability to create a story with characters and a plot.

###### Language Goals for Children in their Third Year (Extended Day) Curriculum cont’d

Goals for Handwriting: Classroom Activities:

* development of the hand and of - push pin, scissors, art, sand

the writing fingers tray, chalkboards, sensorial exercises

* correct pencil grip - practice with a variety of writing tools
  + direct teaching
* correct letter position in - chalkboard sequence and

relationship to a line paper sequence (unlined to lined)

* ability to write first and last name - practice copy writing

with upper and lower case letters - direct teaching

* ability to copy write - Nomenclature material, creating lots of booklets in all areas of the classroom

Source: Linda Seeley and Martha Monahan, NMI; 2004

### Suggested Reading List for the Language Curriculum

Montessori, Maria: The Montessori Method Chapters 16-18 Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook pp. 123-158 The Secret of Childhood pp. 130-134

Discovery of the Child Chapters 14-17

The Absorbent Mind Chapters 10-11

Source: Northeast Montessori Institute

Oral Development

### Introduction to Oral and Auditory Development

The beginning of language in the Montessori classroom is the day the child enters. Reading for the child begins with conversation - conversations with adults and conversations with other children. Conversation should be a natural part of the classroom from the first day.

By the time a child is 5 years old, he has mastered the language of his culture. The child from 3-5 years of age is learning new words to add to his vocabulary. The structure and grammar of his native tongue will be mastered during these young years.

There is a big difference between teaching the child to read and having the child come to reading on his own. Any child can be taught to read; reading is a skill and can be mastered. The reading referred to in the Montessori classroom is that which comes from the child having had many and varied experiences in working with materials which have prepared his eyes and hands for reading.

The main aim in the teaching of the Language Arts must be to enable the child to express himself or herself as fully as possible for his or her own satisfaction and for communication. Language teaching is going on continually in all subjects.

The first step towards language competency is the building of attitudes, not skills. A child’s reading progress is like a tree: without the strong roots of attitude preparation the tree will not support the heavy trunk and branches of skill development.

Many Montessori classrooms are weak in the area of Oral Language; that is, in building good attitudes toward the use of language and in allowing children to express themselves.

Conversations and Self Expression:

Children should be given every opportunity to express themselves. The more a child speaks, the more he develops his vocabulary and his language. The amount of conversation a child engages in is directly related to the ability to express himself orally, and later, in his writing and reading abilities.

Some idea’s to foster and build opportunities for conversation include:

* A Conversation Folder that is filled with interesting pictures to start a conversation. This is an excellent opportunity to show children pictures of children from other cultures, people involved in everyday living activities (gardening, harvesting, weaving, etc.).
* Daily Conversations with small groups of children discussing topics related to their experiences. Some favorite topics include the child's family or pets or their favorite flavor of ice cream. The topics are simple and the goal is to get the children to express them selves through conversation.
* Beautiful artwork or pictures on the walls throughout the classroom. Some teachers may highlight the work of a specific artist, which rotates during year. Choose pictures that are colorful and have a lot of detail. Again, this is a wonderful opportunity for exposing the children to other cultures and the Needs of Humans throughout the world (houses, foods, festivals and celebrations, climate, etc.).
* Grace and Courtesy lessons lend themselves naturally to conversations. Inviting a guest into the classroom (and offering them a cup of tea) is a wonderful opportunity for children to express themselves.
* Language Lessons are taking place throughout the classroom. Always name the material the child is working with, such as, “May I help you with the broad prisms?” Most children do not know how to tell their parents what they have worked with in the classroom because they do not know the names of the materials. Naming the materials will aid the child in developing vocabulary as well as to associate the learning taking place. (The children also have a greater command of the environment in inviting a friend to work together with a specific material.)
* Sensorial lesson plans should always take place after the introduction to the materials.
* Objects of the Environment is a simple activity that encompasses various purposes. It helps the child feel comfortable in his environment, as well as helping him become familiar with the objects in the classroom. Work with small groups of 3-5 children, bringing them around the classroom. Encourage vocabulary and conversation as you describe the areas of the classroom. Incorporate movement into the activity (“Go and stand behind a Practical Life shelf”).
* Poetry and Nursery Rhymes are incorporated into group circle time everyday. The teacher has on hand a compilation of poems and rhymes which they share with the children daily.
* Children love finger plays and songs and the movement that accompanies them. Movement helps muscular development as well as gives stories and song meaning. It is also a way in which the child can express his feelings by becoming directly involved through his voice and hands.
* Magic Circle is an activity that was designed by Humanistic Educators to encourage children to express their thoughts and opinions. This simple activity develops positive attitudes in oneself and builds self esteem.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; October 2002

### Activities That Develop Oral Skills

* 1. Engage the child in Casual Conversation
     1. morning greeting
     2. make time to finish lengthy conversations
     3. always get on the child’s level when speaking or listening
     4. tune into the child’s way of talking
     5. model being a good listener, always speak in complete sentences and with correct grammar
  2. News Period at Circle Time
  3. Question Game
  4. Discuss field trips, upcoming events, visitors to the classroom
  5. Read lots of books and poetry to the children
  6. Dramatize stories
  7. Tell true, personal stories
  8. Develop foreign languages
  9. Grace and Courtesy lessons
  10. Oral language cards with interesting pictures
  11. Problem solving discussions with the children
  12. Tag along stories
  13. Use of a talking stick or sharing stone to encourage talking and listening
  14. Flannel board stories
  15. Memory games
  16. Singing

17 Birthday walks

1. Artist or Author of the month
2. Basket of cultural materials
3. Sign language
4. Rhyming games

Source: Jackie Grannis-Phoenix, MECR; 1996 Adapted: Debbie Sabanty, NMI; 1999

### Oral Language Development and Communication Skills

Informing

* Responds verbally to simple commands and questions
* Asks questions
* Uses descriptive words and names
* Shares plans, experiences, or information

Self Expression

* Talks about self and personal experiences
* Talks about family experiences
* Talks about school experiences
* Expresses needs and desires verbally
* Expresses feeling verbally
* Uses gestures appropriately
* Uses appropriate speech intonation

Entertaining

* Participates in finger plays
* Participates in role playing and dramatic play
* Tells stories from objects
* Recalls and tells riddles
* Recalls and tells funny stories
* Recalls and tells finger plays
* Participates verbally in imaginative play

Persuading

* Able to convince others with ideas

Narrating

* Tells stories from pictures
* Names characters in stories
* Recalls and tells stories in correct sequence and tells what will happen next in a sequence of pictures

Describing

* Talks about textures
* Talks about appearance
* Talks about tastes
* Talks about odor
* Talks about the function of objects

Classifying

* Talks about likenesses and differences
* Talks about grouping things by likeness and difference

Evaluating

* Talks about favorite things and why
* Talks about dislikes and why

Source: Alice Renton: Thinking and Talking; IDRA Associates

### Magic Circle

Magic Circle is an activity that was designed by Humanistic Educators to encourage children to express their thoughts and opinions, and by doing so, to feel secure in those attitudes and beliefs about themselves.

One approach is to introduce Magic Circle by passing to the children a small, delicate, box that has a mirror in the bottom. It is explained to the children that: inside the box is a very important person; or the most important person in the world. The teacher models how to handle the box with care and demonstrates looking into the box, showing pleasure. The box then gets passed from child to child. The reactions are varied and important to note. Once the box has been passed around the circle, the teacher facilitates the discussion part of Magic Circle.

One discussion topic is presented at each Magic Circle. The children are not required to share their thoughts or feelings, only the children wishing to speak do so. In time as confidence and trust is established, others will join in. The leader keeps the conversation going, pointing out similarities and differences between the children’s thoughts. Lessons of Grace and Courtesy are woven into the discussion as children listen to others, wait to speak and show appreciation for another’s thought or opinion.

As the facilitator or Leader of the discussion there are some important considerations:

1. You must be an active listener, which involves:
   * showing external signs of listening through eye contact, nodding, smiling, etc.
   * ask open ended questions: “Would you like to tell us more about that?”
   * ask questions to clarify what the child is trying to say
   * allow times of silence and thought; calm silence is trust building, don’t feel you have to jump in every time someone stops talking
   * observe signals that people want to talk (leaning forward, seeking eye contact, etc.)
2. Focus on feelings:
   * go from experience to feeling: “How did that make you feel?”
   * accept all feelings as real without labeling them good or bad
   * notice and point out feeling/reactions participants have to other’s feelings
3. Give Recognition:
   * look at each person gently and calmly when you speak to them
   * thank each participant for their contribution
4. Paraphrase:
   * use words the speaker herself used as much as possible
   * don’t put words in the speaker’s mouth, but do supply words for which (s)he already has a concept or experience and needs words to express
5. Focus on Similarities and Differences:
   * the purpose of this activity is to show children how much the same they are and that their differences are not a bad thing
6. Involve Everyone:
   * to encourage the reticent child, ask if they would like to whisper their answer to you or to someone next to her/him
   * watch carefully for signs that reticent children want to be invited to participate

Suggested Topics:

1. My favorite place, thing to do, movie, food, TV program, song, etc.
2. Something that I do very well.
3. Something I can do all by myself.
4. I helped someone learn something.
5. I helped someone do something they couldn’t do.
6. Someone helped me learn to do something.
7. Something I just learned to do.
8. Something I don’t do well, but am learning to do better.
9. Something I wish I could do.
10. Something I need help on.
11. A special wish that I have.
12. Something that I like about myself.
13. Something I worry about.
14. How someone hurt my feelings.
15. I feel great when...

Source: Magic Circle

Revised: Linda Seeley and Martha Monahan, NMI; 2004

### Sound Games

1. In a group, ask a child to point out objects within the room that begin with a particular sound.
2. In a group, ask who can demonstrate an action the name of which starts with a particular sound: /h/- hop; /j/ - jump; /w/ - wiggle.
3. One child is chosen as the ‘namer’ and the others sit on the line. Child says, “I spy with my little eye, an object that begins with /m/ (use the letter sound, not the name). “Can anyone guess what it is?” – A mat. Later, use words that contain phonograms.
4. Show a detailed picture and ask children to find things in the picture that begin with various sounds.
5. Cut out felt letters that are exactly the same as sandpaper letters. Turn over the sandpaper letters (5 or 10) and children can play concentration, matching the felt letters with the sandpaper letters.
6. Make up card games with handmade alphabet cards and play Concentration or “Go Fish.”
7. Put 3 letters in a basket across the room. Ask child if she can find the letter that says

/m/. Children can play this game independently or in a small group.

1. Make a booklet for any of the sounds by cutting out pictures that begin or end with that sound.
2. Record sounds on tape recorder and have children identify them.
3. Use photographs, paintings, etc., and paste them on cardboard. Have the children dictate a story about the picture.
4. Sound lotto; make a lotto game with picture cards and sounds. Match picture with control card of sounds or match sounds to the picture.
5. Teacher: “I’m thinking of a person in our room whose name begins with /m/.

Can someone guess who it is?” Categories could include colors, animals, body parts, Montessori materials, etc.

Source: Carey Smith, NMI; 1980 Revised; November 2002

### Selecting Books for Children

Books for Babies

From the first moment, the first hour, the first day of birth, babies need to feel you and to hear you. Luckily, such communication seems to come naturally to most parents. (Even before birth the child has been listening!)

Parents seem to come equipped with ‘books in their heads’ - stories, poems, jingles, etc., gathered from their own past experiences or from common culture. Now is the time to reconnect with the world of Mother Goose and other traditional verses, which imprint on the baby the prose, rhythms and the joy of spoken language.

Sooner or later the baby sits up and now enjoys sitting in an adult’s lap for short periods of time examining objects. The first response to books will be to touch, manipulate and taste them. For this reason, many first books are made of cloth, hard cardboard or vinyl. The subject matter is simple, but the baby is using the book as a physical plaything and not as a source of learning names of objects.

When the child is still in the stage of tearing, pulling, eating and tasting, it is useful to have magazines available for the child to pull apart. The child will move out of this stage and begin to connect to the pictures of objects in the books and associate names to these pictures. This is the stage for introducing good quality board books. The main goal of these books is to show and label objects and people in the baby’s environment. Good board books are an introduction to the child’s lifelong process of naming and knowing.

Books for Toddlers

Reading material for the toddler aged child should have clear, realistic pictures and a simple story line. Read the book yourself and ask “does this make sense?” Toddlers love to turn the page to see what is next, but still do not have this skill perfected, so magazines are a perfect item for them to practice with during this stage.

When choosing books for toddlers, keep in mind these key points:

* Look for clear, uncluttered pictures that are easy to ‘read’.
* Little stories that reflect the child’s own world or daily routines.
* Books for independent reading should be of sturdy materials since turning the page is still difficult.
* Choose books that you will not mind reading and rereading many times.
* A supply of magazines is still fascinating to the child.

Books for Three Year Olds

A key theme for this aged child is independence and dependence: feeling secure but also reaching out to the bigger world. A classic book on this theme is The Runaway Bunny.

Other themes for the three year old:

* Are you my friend?
* Imaginary friends?
* Sibling rivalry
* Love to hear stories of when they were a baby.
* Is it real or unreal?
* Books with animals that play with words (a classic on this theme is Piggy in the Puddle by Charlotte Pomerantz.)

Books for Four Year Olds

Four year olds are generally characterized as sometimes being ‘out of bounds’ with their behavior. So, consequently, children of this age love characters such as the Gingerbread Boy and themes that involve a lot of action. Another favorite book along these same lines is Hungry Fred by Paula Fox.

Four year olds are busting not only with energy but with curiosity, as well, and love to ask “who, what and where” questions. Books that have real answers or deal with real objects are attractive at this age. Richard Scarry books are very popular with four year olds for this reason.

Another important theme for four year olds revolves around friendship and the Frog and Toad books are perfect for sharing this theme with children.

The theme of family life is also key to this age group, including books which deal with relationships with older members of the family. Tied into this theme are books dealing with death and the loss of family members and pets.

Books for Five Year Olds

Books for five year olds are similar to the books chosen for four year olds, although the text can be longer and the language less simple. Their attention spans are longer, so they can sit longer and deal with a more complex story.

Five year olds are gaining a better understanding of what is real and not real but the line between fantasy and reality is not firmly fixed. It is best to stay clear of fantasies that may fuel the child’s fears, and read realistic storybooks about people, animals and how things work. A wonderful story for this age is The Story About Ping, which is an adventure story that speaks directly to the hearts of five year olds and to their struggle with authority, and independence and dependence.

Five year olds love stories about real boys and girls who are dealing with issues they can easily identify with, such as friendships, families, and day to day life. Five year olds are also at a wonderful age for Oral Storytelling, which include stories of their family history, as well as classics that are easily remembered.

General Guidelines:

* Introduce a variety of books to the child, rereading old favorites while adding new books to story time.
* Encourage children to tell original stories or retell old favorites.

Provide them with puppets, paper and crayons, etc., to extend the verbal experience to a visual one.

* Introduce some classic fairy tales, but be selective and stay clear of ones that are too scary!

Books for Six and Seven Year Olds

Books take on a new dimension for this aged child because the child is beginning to read independently. It is also a time when, all too often, reading to children by adults begins to slow down. Reading aloud to children continues to be very important for all ages, especially for the beginning reader. Their ability to listen to a complex story goes far beyond their independent reading ability.

There is a great difference between what they can read independently and what they can listen to, contemplate and understand, and have read to them.

A classic book to read to children of this age is Amos and Boris because it touches on themes central to their development (adventure, friendship, individual differences, life, death, independence, etc.)

Books for Six and Seven Year Olds cont’d

General Guidelines:

* Offer a variety of books with more complex plots and characters.
* Take your cues from the interests of the individual child and expand on these.
* Provide a variety of easy to read books they can read independently.
* Continue to read aloud to the children every day!!

Additional Resources and Reflections as to Book Selections for Young Children:

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

### A Selection of Books for Young Children

Baby’s Bookshelf

Baby’s First Words Lars Wik

Baby’s Mother Goose published by Platt and Munk Eye Winker, Tom Tinker, Chin Chopper:

50 Musical Fingerplays Tom Glazer

The Me Book John Johnson

What it It? Tana Hoban

Mother Goose Book many choices Singing Bee: A Collection of Favorite

Children’s Songs complied by Jane Hart illustrated by Anita Lobel

The Toddler Bookshelf

Early Words Richard Scarry

Goodnight Moon Margaret Wise Brown

Marmalade’s Nap Cindy Wheeler

Pat the Bunny Dorothy Kunhardt

Sam Who Never Forgets Eve Rice

Shopping Trip Helen Oxenbury

Taste the Raindrops Anna Hines

Where’s My Baby? H.A. Rey

Where’s Spot? Eric Hill

The Three and Four Year Old’s Bookshelf

The Carrot Seed Ruth Krauss

Curious George H.A. Rey

Freight Train Donald Crews

Gilberto and the Wind Marie Hall Ets The Little Red Hen

Make Way for Ducklings Robert McCloskey

May I Bring a Friend? Beatrice Schenk de Regniers Poems to Read to the Very Young selected by Josette Frank The Snowy Day Ezra Jack Keats

The Tale of Peter Rabbit Beatrix Potter

The Five Year Old’s Bookshelf

Bedtime for Frances Russell Hoban

The Best Word Book Ever Richard Scarry

Caps for Sale Esphyr Slobodkina

The Little Engine that Could Watty Piper

Mike Mulligan Virginia Lee Burton

Millions of Cats Wanda Gag

Nutshell Library Maurice Sendak

The Runaway Bunny Margaret Wise Brown

Stone Soup Marcia Brown

The Story About Ping Marjorie Flack

The Six and Seven Year Old’s Bookshelf Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible,

No Good, Very Bad Day Judith Viorst Amos and Boris William Steig

The Fairy Tale Treasury Virginia Haviland

Frog and Toad are Friends Arnold Lobel

Go Dog, Go P.D. Eastman

The House at Pooh Corner A.A. Milne

Ramona the Pest Beverly Clearly

The Snowman Raymond Briggs

Stevie John Steptoe

Where the Wild Things Are Maurice Sendek

Source: Choosing Books for Kids Compiled: NMI; 2004

### Ten Tips for Storytelling

1. Know your strengths. Use your voice as a tool.
2. Find a story that feels right. Perhaps start with a familiar story from your past. If you have trouble learning a story, it’s not for you.
3. When choosing a story, it’s best to start simple and work up to a complex story.
4. Know your audience, their age and if possible, their life style, experiences, their environment. What type of stories will appeal to your audience?
5. Read the story over and over to yourself. Then learn it in your own words.
6. See the characters; imagine them in your mind. Research the lands or locations of the story.
7. Practice, practice, practice. Learn your story so that it flows naturally. Practice in front of a mirror. Use a lot of body language.

8, If necessary, use objects or pictures as cues to important points you want to remember to include in your story. The objects can be stored in a special bag or “story gourd”.

1. Add poetry, song, music, chanting, sound effects, etc. to enhance your story. Repetition will often encourage young children to join in the story.
2. Have fun and be flexible. Allow the story to change each time it is told.

Source: Group Storytelling

Compiled by Linda Seeley, NMI; 2004

### Story Beginnings

Story Beginnings are used to encourage children to create the story and to be the tellers. Some examples of story beginnings:

* It is autumn, I am a leaf on a tree hanging on to my last green of summer when.....
* My grandfather once cut down a tree and hollowed it out and made a canoe. He kept it behind the barn and on warm summer days we would carry it to the river. We would paddle along until we would see....
* Last Thursday when I woke up, I wasn’t the same. I had sprouted….
* In the city, just past the bank with the clock tower on the edge of the park, there is a bench. Under the bench by the back leg is a tiny hole. In that hole lives a....

Story Beginnings can come from situations that could use a bit of role playing or problem solving or a situation that took place during the day. When telling stories as a group use words such as “and then”, to help children along with the story.

This activity works best when children need some down time, when their bodies are tired and they just need to sit and listen until their turn. Sometimes an object is used to “pass the story” along.

Source: Compiled by Linda Seeley; NMI, 2004

### Tellable Tales

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tale  Anansi the Spider | Origin  Ashanti Tales | Source  Retold by G. McDermott |
| It Could Always be Worse | Jewish | Retold by Margot Zemach |
| One Fine Day |  | Nonnie Hogrogian |
| The Three Wishes |  | Retold by M. J. Craig |
| Ming Lo Moves the Mountain |  | Arnold Lobel |
| The First Strawberries | Cherokee | Retold by J. Bruchac |
| The Five Chinese Brothers |  | Claire Bishop |
| King Lion and his Cooks |  | Louise Brierly |
| Millions of Cats |  | Wanda Gag |
| The Kings’ Fountain |  |  |
| Jack and the Beanstalk |  |  |
| Ferdinand |  | Munro Leaf |
| The Cat and the Parrot |  | Retold by Judy Sierra |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Book Sources  The Greedy Cat | Scandinavian | Retold by Anne Rockwell |
| The Scared Little Rabbit | Jataka, India | Retold by Anne Rockwell |
| La Lee Lu | South U.S.A. | Retold by Anne Rockwell |
| Owl Feathers | Latin American | Retold by Anne Rockwell |

Book Source: How Many Spots Does a Leopard Have? Julius Lester

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Why Dogs Chase Cats | Jewish | Retold by J. Lester |
| Why Monkey’s Live in Trees | African | Retold by J. Lester |
| The Wonderful Healing Leaves | Jewish | Retold by J. Lester |

Book Source: Ready to Tell Tales: Published by August House

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Lazy Jack Honey Bunny  The Magic Mortar  How the Turtle Cracked his Shell | England  African American Japan  Cherokee | Retold by Gay Ducey Retold by Ed Stivender Retold by Jay O’Callahan Retold by Robin Moore |
| The Magic Pomegranate | Jewish | Retold by P. Schram |
| Fox’s Sack | England | Retold by Bill Harley |
| Panther and Rabbit | French Cameroon | Retold by Michael Parent |

Book Source: Tatterhood: Edited by Ethel Johnston Phelps

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Search for Lion Lake | Latin America | Retold by G. Barlow |
| Three Strong Women | Japan | Retold by Claus Stamm |
| Kamala & the Seven Thieves | India | Retold by F. A. Steele |
| Clever Manka | Central European | Retold by E. J. Phelps |

Book Source: Peace Tales by Margaret Read MacDonald

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Two Goats on the Bridge | Russia | Retold by M.R. MacDonald |
| Old Joe & the Carpenter | United States | Retold by M.R. MacDonald |
| Holding Up the Sky | China | Retold by M.R. MacDonald |
| A Blind Man Catches a Bird | Zimbabwe | Retold by M.R. MacDonald |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Story Source: From Tellers Tapes  The Hyenia |  | Jay O’Callahan |
| Ananzi’s Narrow Waist | South African | Retold by Len Cabral |
| The Begger Boy & |  |  |
| the King’s Daughter | Eqyptian | Retold by Len Cabral |

Source: Compiled by Linda Seeley, NMI; 2004

Auditory Development

### Introduction to the Development of the Child’s Auditory Skills

The child must be able to listen well and have good listening habits. Children can be taught to be better listeners but what is listened to needs to be interesting.

We need to train the ear before introducing the child to the sounds of language. Many of today’s educators have become increasingly concerned over the condition of children’s listening skills. It is the most important communication skill, yet very little is done with it at any educational level. There is a direct correlation between reading comprehension and listening comprehension and it stands to reason that many of our current reading problems can be attributed to a breakdown in children's listening skills.

Reading Aloud and Storytelling are two of the best stimulants for listening skills, but there are several others which are important to incorporate into the classroom:

* The Silence Game should be played from the first day of school and continue daily. Silence is a means of getting the child to hear some of the sounds he might not hear otherwise. It is also a means for getting the child to go ‘inside’ of themselves and know that they can find a quiet place within.

The teacher must be patient with the Silence Game and know that during the first days it might only be seconds long. But day by day the silence will increase in time and depth.

* Tapes and CD’s should be among the family’s first purchases after books. The act of listening takes much more mental energy then watching television. The listener must give all the characters faces and features - Are they tall or short? How are they dressed? What color hair do they have? The listener must provide clothes, mannerisms and modes of expression.

Tape Recorders are a very handy listening device and can be easily incorporated into a listening area in the classroom. The child can quietly listen to a story or songs with a set of headphones. There are many listening tapes and books available on the market, allowing children to listen to the tape while they follow along in the book.

* The sound of a familiar voice is very nurturing to the children and the teacher can easily make tapes for the children to listen to in class and at home. This could include:

Taping the poems, songs and finger plays that the children

are learning and have the tape in the listening center of the classroom.

Tape the children singing familiar songs and play them back for the children to hear.

Tape conversations with the children.

If you are reading a chapter book to your older children and know that you will not be in class, tape the reading of the next chapter.

Tape familiar sounds or purchase an environmental sound tape of rain, waterfalls, the wind blowing, etc., and have children identify the sounds.

Games for Developing Listening Skills:

Select three children to play the game. Each child has a small bell and they go to separate corners of the classroom. The teacher points to a child who rings their bell. The children point to the area of the classroom where the sound is coming from.

“Knock, Knock, Who am I?” One child goes into the center of the circle and sits with their eyes closed or curled up with their back facing up. The teacher silently invites one child to go the child in the center and gently tap on their back saying “Knock, Knock, Who am I?” The child in the center identifies the child by his or her voice.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; October 2002

### Activities Encouraging Listening

1. Listening to stories or incidents related by other children.
2. Singing, saying and listening (or choral speaking) to nursery rhymes and poetry.
3. Make a sound chart with pictures of objects whose names begin with the same sound. Children can point to each object, and note similarities in sound.
4. Play Games that include listening:
   1. Guess the Word: Children clap out syllables in each other’s

names or words and try to identify the word.

* 1. How Many Taps?: Teacher or Child taps on hard surface

several times while children count taps and recall correct number.

* 1. Do This: Teacher gives oral directions involving 2, 3, 4 & 5 activities progressively. Children try to remember the sequence and follow the directions.
  2. Who Said?: Children close eyes. One child recites a poem or jingle while others try to guess the identity of the speaker.
  3. What Sounds Like?: Teacher suggests words which the children

try to imitate with similarly sounding words, such as, sounds like ‘cherry’ - berry, sounds like ‘pie’ - my.

* 1. What is Opposite?: Teacher suggests word and children guess

an opposite (hot-cold, soft-hard, stop-go...).

* 1. Finish This: Teacher suggests part of word or phrase and children try to complete it (ice (cream), sand (wich), teeter (totter), lemon (aide), etc.
  2. Who Is It?: One child speaks while others are blindfolded. Children try to guess identity of speaker.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| i. | Ting A Ling: | A child leaves the room while one child |
|  |  | holds a small bell concealed in his hand. |
|  |  | When the child reenters the room, all the |
|  |  | children wave hands until child can locate |
|  |  | the bell ringer. |
| j. | Look and Listen: | Place groups of objects on a table or tray. |
|  |  | Children look at objects and close eyes. |
|  |  | Objects must be identified by sound they |
|  |  | make or sound as they are dropped onto the |
|  |  | floor. |
| k. | What Did I Do?: | Children sit in a semicircle while one child |
|  |  | goes behind group and performs some |
|  |  | action, such as skipping, jumping, tapping, |
|  |  | etc. When child goes before group, others |
|  |  | try to guess what he did. |
| l. | Tell a Story: | Teacher tells a story of two or three |
|  |  | sentences and children repeat it. |
| m. | What Am I Thinking Of?: | Teacher describes something in the room |
|  |  | and children try to identify it. |
| n. | Mother and Kittens: | Child who is the mother cat chooses three |
|  |  | kittens.Mother cat covers her eyes and the kittens hide. Mother Cat must locate kittens |
|  |  | by listening to their mews. There are many |
|  |  | variations to this game. |
| o. | Identify Environmental |  |
|  | Sounds: | Children blindfold eyes and try to guess |
|  |  | source of sound made by the teacher, such |
|  |  | as bouncing a ball, closing a door, tapping, |
|  |  | whistling, humming, etc. |

1. Riddles and rhymes are particularly suited to the development of ear training. As much as possible, have picture or item available to see, feel and taste.
   1. I am sour. b. You set me with dishes.

I flavor pies. You eat with me each day.

I’m used in lemonade I’m a word you all know

What am I? (lemon) And I’m easy to say. (table)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| c. | I’m soft and juicy, yellow and sweet. I rhyme with bear I am a (pear). | d. | I am round.  My juice is sweet. I’m good to eat.  What am I? (apple/orange) |
| e. | On me your mother cooks especially when I’m hot. But I’m quite dangerous, Touch me not! (stove) | f. | I am soft,  I am sweet,  I sound like reach. I am a (peach). |
| g. | I’m round and juicy, hard and sweet.  I rhyme with rapple; I am an (apple). | h. | I have four legs.  I’m good for the weary. Enough rest on me Will make you cheery. What am I? (bed) |
| i. | I am a fruit, I’m good to eat.  I rhyme with “yum,” I am a (plum) | j. | I’m small and red, Juicy and sweet.  I rhyme with berry I am a (cherry). |

1. Music offers many fine opportunities for good listening experiences:
   1. Use music to create mood or suggest inspiration for activity such as finger painting.
   2. Use musical selections as guessing games to encourage children to identify familiar sounds or use imagination.
   3. Music with varied activity, such as singing, listening, rhymes, instruments, body movements, etc.

Source: Compiled by Linda Seeley, NMI; Revised 2004

Name of Activity: **I Spy**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Oral/Auditory Development

Materials: A tray or basket containing 5 or 6 phonetic objects which are familiar to the child.

Aims: Direct: To refine listening skills.

Indirect: To name the objects and to isolate the initial, ending and medial sounds of the words.

Preparation: Sound games, storytelling and listening activities

Age: First year child

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Initial Sound

* + 1. Bring the basket or tray to the work space. Remove each object and name it, clarifying the language that will be used for the game.
    2. The teacher makes an eye glass with her hand and says “I spy with my little eye something on this rug that starts with the sound /-/.” The child indicates the object.
    3. The game is played with the remaining objects.

Note: When playing this game with very young children, it is helpful to place an object into their hand and say, “I spy with my little eye, something Sarah is holding that starts with the sound /-/.”

Presentation #2: Ending Sound

1. Names of the objects are reviewed and the teacher says, “I spy with my little eye something that begins with /-/ and ends with the sound /-/.”

Presentation #3: Medial Sound

Note: This game is played as described above with the focus being placed on the middle sound of the word. This is usually a vowel sound and is the last sounds for the child to distinguish.

1. “I spy with my little eye something that begins with the sound

/-/, ends with the sound /-/ and has a middle sound of /-/.”

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To name each object and to play the game. Use the

voice to clearly isolate the sound you want the child to hear.

Language: The names of the objects.

Points of Interest: The objects themselves are of great interest to the children.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Words are composed of sounds which are

represented by letters.

Control of Error: The teacher is the control at the beginning,

eventually it is the child’s ear.

Variations: Change the objects frequently in the basket.

Extensions: Play the game with objects in the classroom environment.

Show a detailed picture and ask children to find things in the picture that begin with a particular sound.

Make a booklet for any of the sounds by cutting out pictures that begin or end with that sound.

Teacher says: “I’m thinking of a person in our room whose name begins with /m/. Can someone guess who it is?” Other categories could include colors, animals, body parts, Montessori materials, etc.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; October 2002

Visual Preparation

### Introduction to Visual Preparation

Visual preparation in the Language curriculum is necessary to prepare the child for the skill of reading. The materials help to train the child’s eye. All of the materials are designed to provide the child with an opportunity to become comfortable with the written symbols in a non threatening way. These materials are unique in that they are applicable for both the reader and the non reader. For the reader, she is able to challenge herself by reading a label, finding the corresponding picture and checking her work with a control card. The non reading child uses the control card to find the matching picture and can have the word read to her by an adult or another reading child.

The Sensorial curriculum provides early visual preparation which is necessary for later learning. The matching in Sensorial provides an opportunity for the child to learn to discriminate between similarities and differences. This is preparing the child’s eyes to be able to make small visual distinctions such as those between b, p and d; or c and e. These are only small visual distinctions, but as they progress in their language skills, the ability to discriminate these letters from one another is vital in order to learn to communicate effectively.

The other very important aspect to this work is the introduction of vocabulary and the names for the parts of things (a tree, a flower, a horse, etc.) This is known in a Montessori classroom as Classified Nomenclature.

We know that children are in a sensitive period for language during their young years and that they are insatiable for words. Children always ask for the names of the objects they see around them. It is a natural tendency to explore and assimilate the environment - it is the miracle of the sensitive period for language. We respond to this hunger for language by offering the child the classified and varied nomenclature material. Three part matching cards are found throughout the curriculum areas in the classroom.

In order to understand the importance of the Classified Nomenclature, we need to understand the importance of names and their origin. Everything has a name: people, countries, things of creation - everything! Humans, since their origin, have given names to all things, even to their feelings and impressions. These names have remained as an indestructible heritage - moving and changing with the endless migrations of People throughout history.

It is this heritage that the child takes in with his Absorbent Mind, right from the first year, and earlier! But, enlarging his heritage of ideas is much more of a rapid process than is his abilities for expressing himself. Thus, the child searches for words to enrich his vocabulary. We must help the child in this natural need.

When she arrives in our classroom right from the first days, we offer her objects to be grouped in a certain order - cylinders, cubes, prisms, etc. Slowly, we teach her the names of the objects, now portrayed as pictures. The figures are grouped in an ordered and, sometimes, a scientific way, such as with the parts of a tree or the parts of a turtle.

In her book, The Discovery of the Child, Dr. Montessori explains very clearly the importance of expanding the child’s vocabulary*.....“It is obvious that a child in this period is engaging in mental work that will make him aware of what he has unconsciously acquired and encourage him to amplify and fix it.”*

There can be no doubt of the fact that a child absorbs an enormous number of impressions from his environment and that external help given to this natural instinct kindles within him a lively enthusiasm. In this way, education can be a real help to the natural development of the mind. Dr. Montessori states, “A teacher must busy herself with finding more and more new names to satisfy the insatiable demands of her young charge.” Between the age of three and five a child’s vocabulary grows spontaneously from 300 words to over 3,000 words. We assist the child in the development of their vocabulary by offering them a wide and interesting series of matching cards (along with the language activities and naming exercises involved throughout the classroom).

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

Name of Activity: **Matching Card Sequence**

Area: General: Language Specific: Visual Preparation

Materials: Three part matching cards (control cards, mute cards and written labels)

Aims: Direct: To make comparisons and decisions in determining

similarities and differences. Develop concept of classification. To refine visual discrimination.

Indirect: Indirect preparation for naming words.

Preparation: Previous Sensorial work.

Age: First year and up.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation for the Non-Reading Child:

1. Lay out the control cards in a column down the left edge of the work space.
2. Match the mute cards to the right of the control cards using matching system #2.
3. Adult models reading the labels and the adult and child lay the written label below the mute card.

Presentation for the Reading Child:

1. Lay out the mute cards in a column down the left edge of the work space.
2. Read the written labels and place underneath the mute cards.
3. Check the work by matching the control cards to the mute card and label.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To work from top to bottom and left to right.

To model reading the labels.

Language: The names of the pictures.

Points of Interest: The names of the pictures; vocabulary development. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Each picture has a name. Control of Error: The control card or the adult.

Variations: The order of laying out the cards is the variation.

Extensions: To match objects to the cards. To make a booklet of the cards or written labels.

Notes: The sequence of matching:

* object to object
* object to picture
* picture to picture
* same size pictures
* large and small pictures (old calendars are an excellent source.)
* color to black and white
* picture to silhouette
* picture to outline
* positive to negative
* pattern matching
* whole to part
* top half to bottom half
* different views of one item
* inside to outside

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

### Sequence Cards

Sequence cards can be made or bought. There should be at least four cards showing a progression over time, such as: the growth of a flower from a stalk, bud, open flower, fewer petals to no petals. Other examples are: an ice cube melting, a tree throughout the seasons, an apple being eaten, etc.

The cards are brought to a rug and laid out across the top of the work space. Ask the child: “What happens first?” Then move the first card in the sequence to the left edge of the rug. Continue looking for the card that comes next in the sequence until the whole sequence is in order across the rug.

When the child has finished ask her if she would like to draw the story and write it on a strip of long paper. It can also be made into an accordion booklet.

Extension: Show flip books which depict an object changing over time.

Older children may make simple flip books.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

### Basic Sensorial Language Lesson

Stage 1: Opposites

Language lessons should not be given until the child has had experience with the materials for which the qualities are inherent. This allows the child to unconsciously observe through direct experience the qualities for themselves before attaching names to those qualities. Language is used to help crystallize the concept or quality being presented.

Basic 3 Period Lesson on relational words (e.g., large and small) 1st period: Naming Stage

2nd period: Show Me Stage

3rd period: “What is this?” Stage

Stage 2: Comparatives

Once the child is confident with opposites, begin introducing comparative degrees (large/larger; small/smaller; etc.).

* 1. Review the opposites (large, small)
  2. This is large. This is larger. This is small, this is smaller.
  3. During the 2nd period (Show Me stage) guide the child into discrimination. “This is large.” (place your hand on the large cube, thus eliminating it as a possibility). Show me the larger cube.
  4. When the child is ready, move to the 3rd period of the lesson (What is this?), but never rush this last step.

Stage 3: Superlatives

1. Review stage 1 and 2 (large/larger; small/smaller)
2. This is large. This is larger. This is largest. This is small. This is smaller. This is smallest.
3. Continue through the 3 period lesson, guiding the child into discriminating the largest and smallest cubes.

Children are naturally drawn to these extremes.

Note: The comparative form of the adjective is used when comparing two objects. The superlative is used when comparing a group of three or more objects. Many words use more/less or most/least without changing the form of the word to show comparative and superlative. Look for wonderful examples of these in your read aloud books and introduce as is appropriate depending on the child.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; 1996, Revised 2002

Motor Preparation

*Writing is…*

## Writing is a picture. Writing is a scribble.

*Writing is a word*

*Or a pretty paint dribble.*

*Writing is a story and a letter, too.*

*Writing is a message from me to you!*

### Historical Overview of the Alphabet

### (For Teacher Reference Only)

Writing was invented for bookkeeping purposes by the Sumerians, who settled along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers about 5000 B.C.E. This location is in present day Iraq and is thought to be the first great advanced civilization. The Sumerians used the wheel, plow, sailboat, and also baked clay bricks for building. The people were weavers, builders and farmers. Many Sumerians lived in cities.

There was very little rainfall in this area and the people had to irrigate the land from nearby water sources. Barley was the main crop. The entire community had to work together and records had to be kept, since no one could remember how much barley had been paid to everyone the month before. Writing was invented for bookkeeping purposes and they used clay and reeds to record the information which was written by scribes.

At first, they used many tools for their pictograph, using straight and curved lines but soon writing became more complicated. They wanted to write faster and use only one tool; a stylus, which is a wedge shaped tool with a triangular tip, made of reed.

Writing was done from right to left, top to bottom with figures facing right. At a later time in the evolution of writing the figures were written from left to right. The writing was done on a clay tablet and a lump of clay was used as an eraser.

Curves gradually disappeared because they were hard to make with a stylus, as were symbols that rested on their backs, therefore they were simplified. Most symbols were made with four marks and one determiner (which helped to determine the meaning.) Syllables were the final step in cuneiform writing which had their own symbols. Cuneiform was an improvement over pictographs, but not a true alphabet, which needs a single symbol for each single sound.

Greek Letters

It is historical fact that the Phoenicians were experts in the area of commerce and seafaring. (Phoenicia was at the east end of the Mediterranean, in the region of present day Syria and Lebanon.) They did extensive trade with other peoples; among those were the Greeks. The Greeks adopted sixteen characters of the Phoenician’s alphabet because of their almost daily business relationships. All of these characters were consonants, no vowels were included.

The Greeks wrote entirely with consonants and it was up to the reader to decide where a vowel sound was intended and which one was needed. In many ways, it was a sort of abbreviation writing, similar to common abbreviations used today such as yr. for year, and bldg. for building. Phoenician could be written this way without confusion.

The Greeks developed their alphabet by changing various unused Phoenician consonant characters into the vowel letters which they needed. By adding some of their own, they eventually made a standard alphabet of twenty-four characters, not including several that were used for a while and then dropped. Many irregularities were followed by the Greeks in developing their letters. The forms were not exactly fixed and even the direction of writing could be reversed. However, for the sake of simplicity and uniformity, the practice of going left to right was agreed upon by the sixth century B.C.E.

Etruscans and Romans

The next people to be considered in this historical development of the alphabet are the Etruscans. We know very little about these people. They left behind pottery, jewels and arches of what must have been magnificent buildings. Their language, however, is still one of mystery, as only a couple hundred words have been deciphered. It is thought that Etruria (the region of north-central Italy along the shores of the Mediterranean) began to rise about a thousand years before Christ.

For several centuries, Etruria was the greatest military power in the region, sometimes fighting against the Greeks and sometimes with them. At last, soon after the time of Pericles in Greece, Etruria was beaten by the Romans, and, like most Roman victims, disappeared completely. History records that the Etruscans got their alphabet from the Greeks in Asia Minor.

The Romans got their alphabet from the Greeks to the South and the Etruscans to the North. Actually, the Etruscans originally ruled Rome and the first Kings of Rome were Etruscans. It was about 700 B.C.E. when Etruria was powerful in Italy that the Greek letters were taken by the Romans. That was three hundred years before the Greek alphabet was officially adopted by Greece. This means, of course, that to some extent the Greeks and the Romans were working out their alphabets at the same time.

Even the very ancient custom of boustrophedon writing\* still persisted when the Romans began to write. In several early Latin inscriptions there were examples of this system.

\*An ancient system of writing in which lines alternate from left to right and right to left. [Gr., lit., turning like oxen in plowing < bous, ox + strephein, to turn]

Besides changing the characters themselves, the Romans varied the alphabet of the Greeks by adding some letters and discarding others. The standard Greek alphabet had twenty-four letters and the standard late Roman alphabet had twenty-three. Ours has twenty-six. From the standard Greek alphabet, the Romans took A, B, E, Z, H, I, K, M, N, O, T, X and Y with hardly any change at all. The letter B, for instance, was merely a rounded form of the Greek character. Remodeling and finishing other Greek letters, the Romans produced C and G, L, S, P, D and V. F and Q were taken from two old characters abandoned by the Greeks themselves, making a total of twenty-three letters. The three missing letters; J, U and W were not used by the Romans at all. U and V were developed from V about a thousand years ago and J developed from the letter I, about five hundred years ago.

Besides finally establishing the order and content of the alphabet, the Romans greatly increased the beauty of the letter forms themselves.

Original Source Unknown NMI; Revised November 2002

### Introduction to Writing

Dr. Montessori designed an excellent language curriculum which for the most part, when followed as outlined and at the proper times in a child’s development, leads to a child’s ability to both read and write. As educators, we do know, however, that there are exceptions as with any prescribed method. Approximately one in five children will have difficulty learning to read and we need to bring in new techniques or seek advice in how to meet these children’s needs.

In order for the child to benefit from this curriculum, the sequence needs to be followed and children need to be introduced to the materials at the appropriate times, based on their sensitive periods. Very often the materials are presented too late and the child’s essential initial learning of the sounds becomes arduous.

When a young child of 3 to 3-1/2 yrs. is introduced to the sandpaper letters, the focus is not on reproducing that letter in a written form but is offered to the child as symbols for sounds occurring in his spoken speech. The sandpaper letters are used for a threefold, multi-sensory activity: **acoustic, muscular, and visual.**

The child traces the letter, looks at it while tracing, and verbally produces its sound. The question of reproducing them in written form does not occur at all at this time. The child will, at a later point “explode into writing”. They can then be taken back to the material to show them the formation of the letter. (The child should trace with their dominant hand, which will later be his or her writing hand. The other hand should be used to ‘anchor’ the sandpaper letter, just as it will be used to anchor the paper in the subsequent written stage.)

Children generally do not make distinctions between easy and difficult script. But rather, if the child has been introduced to the materials at those key developmental points, they should accept the “difficulty” as a challenge and enthusiastically accept it.

Both forms of script will have to be known by the child. We therefore render the child a great service when we introduce what we consider the more difficult script (cursive) FIRST and at a time when it is NOT considered difficult by the child. Later, he will come in contact and we should help him come in contact with the other form (print), which is then considerably easier and often mastered without there being any need to ‘push’ the child.

Montessorians report that it has been observed all over the world, that children who know cursive and have been using it while writing and reading spontaneously discover the other form of script and learn it without any difficulty, whereas children who know and primarily use print find it difficult to read cursive and will shy away from it.

So, children offered script first have little or no difficulty in tackling print, while the reverse is not true. Cursive writing is useful for a lifetime and children entering their elementary experience with writing skills are free to pursue their own interests.

The traditional Montessori approach is to use cursive letters until the child reaches the beginning of reading activities at the Phonetic Object Level. In this case, cursive letters are used for the movable alphabet as a direct preparation for the child’s writing of words. (It has been stated by some that, “Cursive is for writing, while print is for reading.”)

An activity is done which matches the cursive letters to print letters, this could be done with movable alphabets, sandpaper letters or card material.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; revised 2002

### How Children Learn to Write

Child must master many large muscle skills first.

Child develops muscle control from the head down and from the center out. Child continually refines eye - hand coordination.

Child learns to use arms/hands together. Child learns to use one arm/hand at a time.

Child learns to use arms/hands in a symmetrical fashion.

Child learns to use one arm/hand to stabilize as the other performs an action.

The child progresses in the ability to grasp from gross holding to refined precise control.

Child uses shoulders and arm is held rigidly; pumping motion is used horizontally or vertically.

Elbow control develops; child is able to move arm in a large circle.

Wrist movements become more precise; child begins more refined movements. Child is able to cross mid-line of the body.

Hand dominance becomes evident.

Hand and finger control comes last, allowing the child more manipulative ability. Child is able to steady the body and just use hands.

Child continually refines ability to balance and control the upper body.

NMI, 2004

Original Source Unknown

### Preparation for Writing

Indirect Preparation

Knobbed Cylinders: To prepare the fingers for holding the pencil in

writing.

Tactile Exercises: Touch boards, touch tablets and fabrics prepare

for lightness of touch which aids the fingers in not becoming fatigued when writing.

Geometric Cabinet: The muscles of the hand and wrist are prepared

for the movements of writing through the action of tracing around the insets.

Muscles of the fingers following outlines prepare for metal inset work with a pencil.

Visual memory of shapes.

Direct Preparation

Sandpaper Letters: This material uses three avenues of learning:

sight, touch, and sound. The symbol can be seen, the sound for which the symbol stands is given, and the fingers trace the shape.

Movable Alphabet: This comes before writing with a pencil. The

child composes words by putting sounds and symbols together by means of cutout letters.

Metal Insets: The frame of the inset controls the movement of the pencil and gives precision of the hand. The filling in of the double line made by the frame and the inset limits and controls the action of the pencil. The pencil is used in an up and down movement which is required in writing and reinforces the left to right movement.

When the child arrives at a stage when both indirect and direct preparation is achieved, then:

* the child knows the sandpaper letters
* the child can compose words on the movable alphabet
* the child has the control and coordination of the hand

The child has all the necessary skills to explode into writing. When he/she does so is dependent on the individual.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; October 2002

### Handwriting Development in the Classroom

Goal: Classroom Activity:

1. development of the hand push pins, art, sand tray and and of writing fingers chalkboards
2. correct pencil grip practice with a variety of writing instruments and direct teaching
3. correct letter position chalkboard sequences, paper in relationship to a line (unlined to lined)
4. correct letter formation sandpaper letters, copy writing, lots (print and cursive) of practice
5. ability to write first and practice, copy writing, direct last names with upper and teaching.

lower case letters

1. ability to copy write nomenclature, creating lots of books in all areas of the curriculum.

Source: Linda Seeley and Martha Monahan, NMI; 2004

Name of Activity: **Sandpaper Letters**

Area: General: Language Specific: Motor Preparation

Materials: A set of Sandpaper Letters (lower case, cursive or print)

Aims: Direct: To appreciate the genius of humans in representing a

sound with a graphic symbol. To develop an auditory perception of sounds of specific written symbols. To develop a visual memory of a letter and sound.

Indirect: Preparation for writing and reading.

Preparation: Rock painting, sand tray, chalkboard sequence, art work, sensorial materials, listening games and the silence game.

Age: First year child.

Presentation of the Lesson:

* 1. Choose 3 contrasting letters (letters that sound and look differently).
  2. Bring the letters to a table and place them face down beside you.
  3. Invite the child to sensitize their finger tips, by rubbing them on fabric or soaking the finger tips in warm water.
  4. Turn the top letter over and secure the edge of the letter with your subdominant hand. Trace the letter with the writing fingers of your dominant hand and say its sound. Invite the child to trace the letter and to say the sound.
  5. Move the letter to the top left of the table.
  6. Present the second letter by tracing it and saying the sound of the letter. Invite the child to trace the letter and say its name.
  7. Repeat for the third letter as above and give a three period lesson, using the sound of the letters.
  8. Return the 3 letters to the display and if the child is interested choose 3 more sandpaper letters and repeat the lesson.
  9. Record what letters were presented to the child on the appropriate record keeping form.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To trace the letter properly and to say the sound

clearly. Giving the three period lesson.

Language: The specific sound of each letter.

Points of Interest: The feel of the sandpaper letter is of interest to a three year old child as they are in the sensitive period for touch.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Each letter has a different and specific sound.

Control of Error: The teacher guides the child in tracing the letter

correctly.

Variations: Play games with the letter sounds that the child knows: Hide the letters in the classroom and ask the child to find the “s”. When the child knows the letter sound, play “knock, knock” by turning the letters over and knock on a letter. When the letter is turned over, say the sound.

Some teachers group the letters into sets.

Ask the child to identify words that begin or end with a particular letter sound.

Extensions: Trace letters in sand tray, chalkboards, do rubbings of the letters.

Notes: Suggested below are a number of activities which can be of help when children have difficulty with the letter material (sound/symbol association).

These games are also very useful to play with older children that have missed the sensitive age for introducing the sandpaper letters.

These activities are additions or variations to the traditional Montessori lessons.

Game #1: Place 2 familiar sandpaper letters in front of the child. The adult says a word containing either of the two sounds and the child points or traces the appropriate letter. This is an excellent game to play with vowels, as they are the most difficult for the child to hear.

Game #2: The above game can be varied to focus on ending sounds, as well as beginning and middle sounds. Eventually, the game can be played with no letters, just orally.

Game #3: Take a group of letters which most of the children know and distribute them among the children. Say “whoever has the “m” (say sound), please trace it and give it back to me.” Repeat for all the letters. If a child does not know their letters, they will either be helped by another child or at the end of the activity, you take the letter back, say its sound and remix into the pile.

This is another opportunity to do record keeping on the letter sounds individual children know or are mastering.

Game #4: A group of letters can be spread on the mat. Ask for a particular letter sound. The child traces the letter and places it back into the mix.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; October 2002

### Sandpaper Letter Pronunciation

###### Graphic Symbol Sound

**…as in…**

* + 1. at
    2. tub
    3. tic
    4. lid
    5. egg
    6. if
    7. mug
    8. hut
    9. ink
    10. jam
    11. look
    12. full
    13. am
    14. in

o on

1. up
2. queen
3. run
4. toss
5. mat
6. up
7. move
8. wind
9. ox
10. yet
11. quiz

**Note:** The above word examples show sounds in all three positions - initial, medial, and final. You may wish to use examples which do not change the location of the emphasized sound, as this may add a greater level of difficulty for the child. It is also important to be very precise in the pronunciation of the letter sound, as it not uncommon and easy to add a short u sound following many hard consonants, such as “bu”, rather than “b” - be careful not to do so!

Original Source: A Reading Scheme for English/Muriel Dwyer, 1968 NMI, 2002

### Motor Preparation Sequence

In the beginning of the year, I have a shelf in the language area of the classroom which is designated as the writing shelf. This houses rock painting, a sand tray, chalkboards and paper and pencil supplies. As children progress in their writing abilities, some of these materials can be integrated throughout the classroom.

As with all curriculum areas throughout the classroom, the materials are properly sequenced from left to right and top to bottom.

###### Rock Painting

Rock painting is the first in the motor preparation sequence and it would be placed on the top shelf on the far left. This work can be left out all year for the young children preparing their hand for writing. It is a very popular activity, especially when new rocks are added to the activity with interesting shapes and colors.

The child will choose a rock from the tray containing a variety of rocks and take the tray to a table. The tray will contain a small plastic mat, a paint brush, a small sponge and a small jar that the child can fill with a small amount of water.

The child rolls out the mat and places the rock on the mat. They wet the brush with a few drops of water and begin to paint the rock using similar strokes as with the metal insets (curved strokes for cursive, straight strokes for print). The child paints the rock until they are satisfied. The child carries the rock to a drying rack on the writing shelf and returns to tidies up the work.

The mat is wiped dry and is then rolled and placed on the tray. The child empties the water and tidies the tray. The work is replaced on the writing shelf.

###### Chalkboard Sequence

Please see separate handout on this sequence. There are a variety of chalkboards on the market which can be purchased, sequenced from a plain chalkboard to a chalkboard with squares to a chalkboard with a base line and additional lines. It is possible to have a blank chalkboard and to draw or tape the squares and lines on the board as the children progress through the sequence.

###### Paper Sequence

There should be a variety of paper available to the children for writing practice. Booklets are very popular with children and the materials for booklet making can easily be displayed on the writing shelf.

The basic sequence is from unlined paper to lined paper. Some teachers use products available on the market and others tailor the paper selection to the individual children in the classroom. All paper is neatly displayed for the children’s use as are the writing instruments.

###### Writing Utensils

There should be a variety of writing instruments available to the children for practice writing. All are neatly displayed on trays or in baskets. Pencils are sharpened each morning prior to the children's arrival and there is a pencil sharpener available in the room for the children to use independently.

The hierarchy of difficulty:

* pencils are the most difficult to manipulate effectively
* children choose markers as easiest, followed by chalk, crayons then pencils
* there is no advantage to the large sized pencils

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; October 2002

### Suggested Sequence for Chalkboards and Letter Writing On Paper

Chalkboard Sequence:

1. Chalkboard Erasing

The teacher writes a letter and the child dips their finger in a small dish of water and erases the letter. If necessary, the teacher guides the child’s hand to assure proper letter formation.

1. Addition of a Writing Tool

The teacher adds a brush to the chalkboard activity with a small dish for water. The child practices letter formations with a wet brush. The brushes can progress from a wide brush to a fine tipped brush. (Zen slate boards are designed for water ‘writing’ and offer a nice contrast and gradual drying.)

Eventually, chalk can be added to the activity, but not with water, for continued practice (not on the Zen boards.)

1. Sequence for Letter Formation
   * write the letter with finger dipped in water
   * a brush is added and child works on a blank chalkboard
   * child practices letter formations with a piece of chalk (still working on a blank chalkboard)
   * child continues to work with chalk, writing letters within a defined space, such as a square marked on the chalkboard
   * a baseline is introduced on the chalkboard and letters are formed in relationship to the baseline
   * additional lines are added to the chalkboard and letter formation is becoming refined

Pencil and Paper Sequence:

* + start with plain, unlined paper
  + paper strips with no lines
  + writing letters within a square
  + introduce a base line
  + addition of top and mid line
  + transition to standard writing paper Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; October 2002

### The Handwriting Lesson

Once the decisions have been made as to the writing instrument and the paper, the first lesson addresses pencil grip, body position and the lines on the paper.

###### Proper Pencil Grip

A proper pencil grip is essential in handwriting, although many children do not hold a pencil properly. Improper pencil grip can cause the hand to become easily fatigued and can cause improper letter formations.

A proper pencil grip preserves the muscles of the hand and creates the least possible stress during long periods of writing.

There are several techniques for helping children to establish a proper pencil grip:

* The pencil is in a vertical position with the point facing up.

Pinch the pencil below the point with the thumb and index finger and flip the pencil into position, adjusting the fingers and adding the support of the third finger.

* Pinch, then add a shelf. Form a V between the thumb and forefinger. Rest the pencil comfortably between the V and pinch with the thumb and forefinger. Use the third finger as a shelf to support the pencil. Children can verbalize:

“pinch, then add a shelf”.

###### Body Position

The position of the body is also significant for beginning writers. Young writers need to support their forearms and hands.

Writing tasks are performed while sitting at a table with both legs under the table and both forearms resting on the table surface. The back should be straight against the chair, which is comfortably tucked-in.

The paper is tilted at a 45-degree angle for ease of writing.

###### Paper

After discussing the grip of the pencil and the position of the body, the writing paper is examined. The lines on the paper are named with special emphasis on the base line. This review is part of each lesson.

At this point in the lesson, the child puts aside the pencil and paper.

###### Letter Groupings

The teacher has predetermined the groupings of the letters. The letters are grouped based on initial strokes; letters that are made in a similar manner.

The teacher introduces a letter and traces it several times on a sandpaper letter. The teacher then writes the letter several times, each time giving the sound of the letter.

The teacher and the child(ren) then discuss the letter to emphasize its features. Is it a tall letter, a short letter? Does it have a tail that goes below the base line? Where does the letter begin?

We want to draw out the similarities and differences.

**Practice Session for the Children** (without paper)

The children then practice the formation of the letter in several possible ways:

* Write the letter in the air while sounding it out.
* Write the letter on the tabletop or in a sand tray, again, sounding it out.
* Offer the child a piece of fine sandpaper or piece

of denim cloth for tracing and sounding out the letter.

The emphasis throughout the lesson is on forming a sensorial impression in the child’s mind so that eventually the movements used in recreating that impression become automatic.

###### Writing the letter on paper

After the above practices, the child writes the letter on paper. The goal is proper formation, not a perfect letter. The child writes 3-4 letters.

The adult observes carefully where the child begins the letter and ends the letter with encouragement not to lift the pencil until the letter is completed.

There are some exceptions to this in cursive: t,x;F,H,K,X.

###### Picking Samples

The child is invited to pick out samples they are pleased with and can circle these letters.

Children draw a line through letters that are unsatisfactory, then try again.

If necessary, the adult can guide the child’s hand in much the same way Montessori suggested with the sandpaper letters.

###### Notes

The letters within a group are presented, but not necessarily all of the letters within the group during a lesson, as the lessons are only 10 minutes long.

The adult must observe the letter formation carefully. Proper formation is essential in this process, as every time the child forms a letter, the movement is becoming automatic - “practice makes permanent.”

Once all the letters are presented, they are then reviewed again. Now the children are ready for opportunities to practice their new skill.

The following are some of their new found opportunities:

* Recording their Movable Alphabet Work
* Phonograms: presenting the sandpaper phonograms for writing purposes and then dictating words with the phonograms which the children write.
* Journal writing
* Practice Sheets

Source: C.K. Smith; Y. Loftus; AMS Seminar presentation: Teaching Handwriting Revised: Martha Monahan, Northeast Montessori Institute; October 2002

Name of Activity: **Phonogram Sandpaper Letters**

Area: General: Language Specific: Motor Preparation

Materials: A set of Phonogram Sandpaper Letters

Aims: Direct: To become aware of the sounds that are represented by

combinations of vowels or consonants.

Indirect: To introduce the key phonograms in preparation for reading.

Preparation: Sandpaper letters; sand tray; chalkboards; previous sensorial experiences for the lightness of touch.

Age: First year

Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Choose three contrasting phonograms to be presented (*sh, th, ee*)
2. Invite the child to a table and place the sandpaper letters face down to your right.
3. Sensitize the fingertips. Turn the top combination over and trace the letters as you say the sound of the letter combination.
4. Invite the child to trace the letters and say the sound.
5. Introduce the remaining two sandpaper phonograms in the same manner.
6. Give a three period lesson.
7. If the child is still interested, introduce another set of three letter combinations.

Note: Many teachers introduce the sandpaper letters and the phonograms simultaneously, for example, a sandpaper letter presentation may include the sounds: *t, c, sh*.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Tracing the letters properly with the writing

fingers of the dominant hand.

Language: The sounds of the phonograms

Points of Interest: The feel of the sandpaper. The new sound represented by the letter combinations.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Letter combinations produce different sounds.

Control of Error: The teacher or the child’s finger slipping off the sandpaper outline.

Variations: See games and variations for the Sandpaper Letters.

Extensions: Object Boxes 2 and 3; small movable alphabets and other specific phonogram study.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

Name of Activity: **Metal Insets**

Area: General: Language Specific: Motor Preparation

Materials: The set of 10 metal insets, trays, colored pencils and paper cut into 5-1/2 x 5-1/2 inch squares.

Aims: Direct: Development of eye and hand coordination. To gain

mastery over control of small motor movements. Develop control of a pencil. To develop a geometric and artistic sense.

Indirect: Preparation for writing. An indirect preparation for geometry.

Preparation: Sand tray, chalkboard sequences, pincer grip activities, lightness of touch developed in Practical Life and Sensorial.

Age: First year child.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Curved Frame only

1. Invite the child to go with you to the metal inset display. Choose a tray and on it, place a sheet of paper, a curved metal inset frame, and a colored pencil.
2. Carry the tray to a table and remove the materials from the tray and place them on the table.
3. Carefully place the frame on top of the paper. Demonstrate to the child the proper placement of the pencil into the writing fingers.
4. Secure the frame with the subdominant hand. Position the pencil tip in the 2:00 position and carefully trace around the frame in a counter clockwise direction.
5. Turn the paper over and repeat the activity. Write the child’s name and date on the metal inset.

Presentation #2: Frame and Inset with Lines

1. Invite the child to go with you to the metal inset display. Choose a tray and on it, place a sheet of paper, curved metal inset frame and inset, and three colored pencils.
2. Carry the tray to a table and remove the materials from the tray and place them on the table.
3. Carefully place the frame on top of the paper. Demonstrate to the child the proper placement of the pencil into the writing fingers.
4. Secure the frame with the subdominant hand. Position the pencil tip in the 2:00 position and carefully trace around the frame in a counter clock wise direction.
5. Remove the frame and place the inset on top of the drawn line. Secure the inset by its knob with the subdominant hand.
6. Choose a second color and demonstrate to the child the proper placement of the pencil into the writing fingers.
7. Position the pencil tip in the 2:00 position and carefully trace around the inset in a counter clockwise direction.
8. Select the third pencil and demonstrate to the child the proper placement of the pencil into the writing fingers.
9. Demonstrate drawing lines within the traced area. (Many teachers demonstrate drawing curved lines as a preparation for cursive writing, while others draw straight lines as a preparation for writing print.)

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Tracing in a counter clockwise direction, beginning

at the 2:00 position. The proper placement of the pencil into the writing fingers. Using a lightness of touch.

Language: Names of the geometric shapes found in the metal insets and frames.

Points of Interest: Tracing shapes and creating designs.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Writing is a mechanical skill. Pressure on the pencil

produces dark or light lines.

Control of Error: The frame guides the pencil initially and later the

control is in the child’s ability to handle a writing instrument.

Variations: See the handout outlining the metal inset sequence.

Extensions: Make a wall chart of the metal inset sequence.

Make punch outs of the metal insets and glue both pieces (positive and negative) onto opposite sides of contrasting paper.

Incorporate metal insets shapes into original art work.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

### Suggested Sequence for the Metal Insets

1. Frame only (curved shapes first)
2. Frame and inset with lines (serpentine lines for cursive, bottom to top; and straight lines for print, drawn top to bottom)
3. Frame and inset with lines closer together
4. Frame and inset with lines filling in shape completely
5. One metal inset used in two different orientations
6. Two different metal insets (using 2 different colors)
7. Three different shapes in three different orientations (using 3 different colors)
8. Marking dark and light lines
9. Grading shades of lines
10. Complete free design

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; October 2002

### Journal Writing

If we are to help young children break into the code of written language, we need to take our cues from how babies learn to talk. If we take our cue from how children learn oral language, then we will allow children to learn written language by using it, as best they can, for real purposes, and by having adults see through their errors to what they want to say. The baby says “ady” and yet we would never think of responding: “Oh no, he isn’t saying Daddy right”. We do not, for one moment, consider whether “ady” is right or wrong! Instead, we marvel at their language development and call all of the relatives to report the new word.

Our job, as adults, is to respond to children’s writing in such a way that they learn that marks on the paper have the power to convey meaning. We want young children to understand that writing is an important means of communication and we want them to have the confidence to freely express themselves, not to worry about mistakes.

When a young child brings you a piece of paper with pictures and marks representing letters, ask them, “Oh, will you read it to me?” or “What did you write about?” Even though her story is nothing more than wavy lines across the page, she will learn the power of print because we have treated it with tremendous respect.

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Children begin by recognizing that writing involves particular kinds of marks. Children may then move from wiggly lines to rows of lollipops and triangles. From these the child progresses to alphabet letters in their own names, followed by letters they find in environmental print, and then, in their early reading experiences. Eventually, young authors realize that the choice of letter depends on the sound it represents. At this point, they quickly move into the stage known as developmental spelling, also known as inventive spelling.

Meanwhile, some children will be more interested in developing their story line than in using written code. These children may, for a time, bypass print altogether and convey their meaning through pictures. In our eagerness to see evidence of writing on the children’s papers, it is easy to dismiss these picture-stories. Usually, more is happening in their drawing than meets the eye.

###### Children learn to write by writing, just as they learned to speak from speaking.

Many children rehearse for writing by drawing. The child does not necessarily know the direction his writing will take, just as a child playing with blocks doesn’t necessarily know what they will build. By piling one block on top of another he will announce, ”I’m making a tower.” The child’s writing process is similar - the child starts with what is familiar, which is drawing a picture. As they draw, they will announce, “This is my brother.”

Drawing has a very important role to play in the writing process. The act of drawing and the picture itself both provide a supportive scaffolding for the writing to be constructed. When the child begins to write, they are like a foal on shaky legs. When they do not have a visual memory for a word, they sound it out, isolating a sound (usually the initial or beginning sound). The child may then ask, “How do you spell......” or “how do you make a (s)?” When no one answers, the child looks around for a clue, makes a logical guess, and writes the letter on the paper. Meanwhile, he has forgotten what he wanted to write about. What a relief it must be to return to the drawing. As he fills in a figure, he remembers what he wanted to write, so he returns to the writing process. Back and forth he switches, from drawing to writing, then back to drawing again, moving between the known and the unknown.

For this stage of writing it is important to have picture/letter charts available to the children to help cue them. The teacher can even have small charts available for the children to keep with them during journal writing.

###### Development of Spelling

It is very important to give children the impression early on in their writing process that spelling is important and that it helps the reader when words are spelled correctly.

The American public sees good spelling just behind reading and mathematics in importance. In the eyes of many, spelling is even more important than what it is for - writing. Children’s spelling follows a natural development, but the goal is for them to move towards proper spelling. Only 46% of words in the English language can be spelled the way they sound; the other 54% draw on the writer’s visual memory of what the word looks like.

Children begin by writing only initial consonants and will soon use the beginning, or initial sound, combined with the last sound. Before long, young writers use a letter to represent each sound in a word. Their choice is not always correct, but research has shown that it is usually logical. These beginning stages are first approximations of writing, also known as inventive spelling. This level of spelling allows children to begin to make meaning before they know how to actually spell a word.

Give some examples of inventive spelling progression:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| avvetag | (everything) | fllaowz | (flowers) |
| sille | (silly) | lic | (like) |

In A Fresh Look at Writing, by Donald Graves, he states that there should be a definite time, especially toward the middle of the first grade year, when you make it a point to call attention to certain words the children will learn to spell. This can be done on a daily basis as a small group lesson. Children are also asked to contribute to the selection of words. Some teachers have weekly spelling tests of 3-4 words, with children adding 2 personal words they are learning.

Children compile a list of words they use frequently. This list can be kept in their personal writing folder. Some children benefit from a ‘pictionary’, where the child adds a picture to accompany the word.

Direct teaching in spelling is very important and needs to be built into the program. There are many workbooks available on the market, but what is most important is that children are able to contribute to these spelling lists with words that are useful and meaningful to them.

Proper spelling should not be a concern during free writing or journal times, but does need to be addressed in direct and guided lessons.

Source: Martha Monahan; NMI; October 2002

### Teaching Creative Writing

*“Since most of us associate writing with what schools have taught us about it, we lose out on learning about the purpose and place of writing for ourselves. Writing is a highly personal medium through which we communicate the facts and the meaning of our experience. The hard part is to realize that we actually have something to say. I’ve found that learning to write means first discovering where writing comes from, then seeing how it gets on the page. Writing comes from the events of our daily lives; what appears at first glance to be trivial.”*

Donald Graves, A Fresh Look at Writing pg. 36

###### Emergent Writers

Children learn spelling from a variety of activities. These include Easy to Read books, a strong visual memory, and a strong phonetic base (knowledge of sounds and symbols). Most first graders require mini-lessons that cover the variety of skill components emergent writers naturally need.

Children possess a natural urge to write, but many need specific help - from learning certain sound/symbol combinations (including consonant blends, phonograms, long vowels, etc.), how to separate words with spaces, how to spell frequently occurring words, and to compile personal word lists. For some children, these mini-lessons need to be repeated again and again while the teacher carefully observes.

###### Creative Writing for Early Elementary

To successfully engage children in the creative writing experience, it can be easily incorporated as a weekly lesson. Writing is an excellent way that we can creatively draw together pieces of the curriculum, fostering a more integrated curriculum.

There are many ways to get young writers excited about writing. Brainstorming with a small group of children is an excellent way to get thoughts out in the open. All responses are listed, no matter how strange or unrelated. We want to build the trust for children to share ideas and to give them the message that there are no bad ideas, only links to good ideas.

Another way to extend the brainstorming is to partner children. Each child freely expresses their thoughts on a given topic for 30 seconds (which are timed), followed by the second child expressing their thoughts for 30 seconds.

An individual brainstorming process involves short timed writing, where the child writes instead of speaking their thoughts on a given topic.

Reading a poem or story that is close to the style of the writing assignment is another way to inspire the children and to get the creative juices flowing.

Circle stories, also known as tag along stories, are yet another means to begin to ‘frame’ ideas for creative writing. An opening line begins the story and each child adds one or two sentences to build the story. This supports the discipline of sticking to the subject, listening to what came before, and creating a series of actions that have a sequence.

Source: NMI

### Ways to Stimulate Creative Writing

1. Encourage the children to keep a journal of interesting events. Older children can make their own journals.
2. Have children dictate and illustrate stories.
3. Reading aloud to children.
4. Have a basket of interesting objects to spur writing.
5. Provide magazines, glue, and scissors to cut out a picture and write about it.
6. Take photos of the children doing things in the room, which they can write about themselves.
7. Use art reproductions to stimulate writing.
8. Booklets with attractive covers that the children can use to write their own stories.
9. Write letters, thank you notes, get well cards, etc. Write about a class trip.
10. Write a cookbook or a class newspaper.
11. Make a book of poetry composed by the children. Give as a gift to parents.
12. Write to a Pen Pal school.
13. Write a letter to an author, politician, editor, etc.
14. Publish and laminate children’s own stories to put in the classroom.
15. Have a suitcase that goes home with objects or activities that stimulate writing.
16. Keep a special set of colorful markers used only for illustrating a story that a child has written.
17. Suggest that the children share their stories at circle time on the ‘Author’s Chair’.

Source: Deb Sabanty; Revised by Martha Monahan, NMI, 2004

Integration of Skill

Name of Activity: **Initial Sound Cards**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Integration of Skills

Materials: Individual sets of cards containing a card with the letter printed on it and a set of pictures of objects that begin with the sound

Aims: Direct: To develop auditory perception of initial sounds.

To develop auditory and visual perception of sounds and letters.

Indirect: To be able to match a picture to its initial sound. Preparation: I Spy game; listening games; sandpaper letters.

Age: First Year

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Individual Set of Letter and Picture Cards

* 1. Choose an individual set of cards based on sandpaper letters the child is learning.
  2. Show each picture card and ask the child to name the object pictured. Lay the cards in a vertical column.
  3. Name all of the picture cards and ask the child, “What sound do all of these pictures begin with?” Lay the letter card at the top of the column.

Presentation #2: Mixed Sets of Cards

1. Choose 2-3 sets of cards (based on the child’s knowledge of sandpaper letters).
2. Identify each letter sound and place the cards left to right across the top of the work space.
3. Name each picture one at a time and place it under the appropriate letter card based on the initial sound of the picture.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To name each picture card clearly and pronounce

the letter sounds clearly.

Language: The names of the pictures and the sounds of the letters.

Points of Interest: The pictures of the objects. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Individual letters have individual sounds.

Control of Error: The teacher - or the material can be color coded

to allow the child to work independently.

Variations: Games can be played with the materials based on the children's interest and the teacher’s creativity.

Extensions: Add objects to be matched to sound cards.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

### Introduction to the Movable Alphabet

The purpose of this stage is to enable the child who can neither read nor write to express him/herself in graphic form. They can quickly learn to produce not only words, but also, sentences and stories if the material is well presented and the necessary foundation has been thoroughly covered. This must be highly stressed, as so many teachers fail to lay a proper foundation and then wonder why the children do not progress. The preparation for this stage should also include the vocabulary exercises, conversations, stories and poems, and as much opportunity for oral expression as possible.

The teacher encourages a lot of dictation and then story writing. It’s important to realize that the whole aim of this stage is to encourage the child to express his or her thoughts in a graphic form and remember that the child is usually unable to read at this point in their development.

There are two levels to this work, the first being the analysis of a word by its letter sounds and then the higher level work of composition.

Analysis and Composition

Analysis is a process where the child is given a word from an external source (such as a teacher or an older child) in order to isolate its component sounds. The child determines what the beginning, ending and middle sounds in a specific word are.

Analysis is still considered preparation work for reading because the child is not yet able to compose independently, but needs external cues as an aid. It is possible for a child to be able to analyze words without being able to read.

The Movable Alphabet is used for this work because it is easy to manipulate and there are several of each alphabet letter.

Composition and Expression with the Movable Alphabet deal with internal motivation on the part of the child, rather than with an external source, as is the case with Analysis. The child can compose freely from his/her own mind with the Movable Alphabet. The teacher may also provide prompts for the child’s composition in the form of question cards (i.e., Do you have a pet? What color is your house?).

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

Name of Activity: **Movable Alphabet (Orientation)**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Integration of Skills

Materials: The Movable Alphabet (a box containing 26 sections, one containing cut-outs of each letter of the alphabet - consonants in red or pink and vowels in blue).

Aims: Direct: To develop auditory perception of initial, final and middle

sounds in words. To be able to express your thoughts in symbolic form. Reinforcement of the association of sounds and symbols.

Indirect: To develop the ability to decode component sounds of words. Preparation for writing and reading as an aid to recognition and memorization.

Preparation: Sandpaper letters, three-part matching cards, vocabulary exercises, conversation, stories, poems, fingerplays and oral expression.

Age: Middle to end of first year.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Orientation to the Movable Alphabet

1. Bring the Movable Alphabet to the mat.
2. Remove the cover and place under the box. Straighten out the letters in the box.
3. Say to the child, “you know a lot of sounds; please look at these letters and when you see a sound you know, take it out.”
4. The teacher helps the child to orient the letters from left to right, “please place it here”.
5. The teacher takes note of the letters the child has chosen (can use the record from the sandpaper letters to compare).
6. When the child is ready to replace the letters into the box, say to the child, “can you find where the “s” goes in the box?” (being sure to use the sound of the letter, not the letter name).

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Removing the letters with great care.

Placing letters from left to right correct orientation of letters.

Language: At this point the child is exploring individual sounds. At the next level they will be working with words and phrases.

Points of Interest: Recognizing sounds. The display of letters in the box.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Words are made up of sounds.

Control of Error: The child’s ability to discriminate sounds.

Variations: Gather like letters together before placing them into the box, playing games with putting the letters back.

Extensions: Use of objects and pictures.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

Name of Activity: **Movable Alphabet (Dictation)**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Integration of Skills

Materials: The Movable Alphabet (a box containing 26 sections, one for each letter of the alphabet).

Aims: Direct: To develop auditory perception of initial, final and middle

sounds in words. To be able to express your thoughts in symbolic form. Reinforcement of the association of sounds and symbols.

Indirect: To develop the ability to decode component sounds of words. Preparation for writing and reading as an aid to recognition and memorization.

Preparation: Sandpaper letters, 3 part matching cards, vocabulary exercises, conversation, stories, poems, fingerplays and oral expression.

Age: Middle to end of first year.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Dictation with the Movable Alphabet

1. Bring the Movable Alphabet to the mat.
2. Remove the cover and place under the box. Straighten out the letters in the box.
3. Say to the child, “today we are going to make up some words. Let’s start with the word “mat”. What is the first sound you hear in the word mat? (emphasizing the sound “m”). What is the next sound you

hear in the word mat? And what is the next sound you hear in the mat?

1. Continue dictating words from the same word family; sat, cat, hat, fat...
2. The teacher allows the child to orient the letters on the mat but guides the child to place them from left to right. If the child places a letter down backwards, the teacher does not correct the letter placement but makes a note to take the child back to the sandpaper letter at a later point.
3. The teacher takes notes of the child’s work.
4. When the child is ready to replace the letters into the box, say to the child, “can you find where the “s” goes in the box?” (being sure to use the sound of the letter, not the letter name). At this point the child

can gather all of one letter and place it into the box.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Dictating phonetic words in a word family.

Emphasize isolated sounds.

Language: The words that are dictated.

Points of Interest: Recognizing sounds. The display of letters in the box. Removing and replacing letters.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Letters have a correct orientation.

Control of Error: The child’s ability to discriminate sounds.

Variations: See sequence.

Extensions: Writing words into a booklet and drawing pictures to go with the words.

General Sequence of forming words: from teacher

from objects from pictures

from other children

from the child his/her self

Some teachers feel that giving the children pictures or objects with the Movable Alphabet acts as a limiting factor and put the “brakes” on the free expression of words and thoughts. The children know hundreds of words and have many ideas. All we have to do is open the door, as it were, and then be careful to move out of the way. We open the door by helping the children develop their spoken language, by giving them the graphic representations of sounds through the Sandpaper Letters, and by encouraging their enthusiasm and confidence. With this preparation, they have the possibility to write anything and everything they know.

Specific Sequence for forming words: 2-3 letter phonetic words

4 letter phonetic words longer words

double consonants blends

words with the same ending

words with the same beginning (sad, sat, Sam, etc.)

words with the same vowel sounds words with no relationships

\*IMPORTANT NOTES

1. Once a word is formed, it is NOT repeated. The child is incapable of reading at this point. The interest is an analyzing the component sounds.
2. The Movable Alphabet brings the child’s language into the outer world in a tangible form.
3. Work with the Movable Alphabet daily!!
4. If the child reverses or inverts a letter (m & w, b & d) make a mental note to bring the child back to the sandpaper letters.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

### Phonetic Words for Dictation with the Movable Alphabet

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3 letter words  **short “a”** |  |  | 4 letter words  **short “a”** |  | | |
| pan van | can | man | flag crab | trap | band | flax |
| fan ran  cat hat | tan  bat | mat | hand glad  land slap  grab scab | sand flat lamp | slam stab | pant slab |
| rat pat |  |  |  | | | |
| bag rag  gag tag | wag | lag |
| tap gap  rap sap | lap nap | cap |
| lad sad pad | dad | had |
| jam ham | ram |  |

###### short “e” short “e”

hen ten pen men belt tent vest desk stem

den next send bend went bent

sent rest best test west

net wet let met pet set bet get jet yet

peg leg beg keg

bed red fed led

web elf elk end

elm

3 letter words 4 letter words

###### short “i” short “i”

tin win bin pin milk film fist twig spin

kin fin sin trip sink wink skip spin mist twin swim limp clip

kid lid hid did

sit bit hit fit wit

pig wig dig fig jig fig

sip tip rip lip zip

six mix fix

dim him bib

###### short “o” short “o”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| pot got  top | dot  mop | lot  pop | not  hop | frog plot fond | pond clot slot | loft stop prod | blot flop | spot bond |
| dog hog | jog log | bog | fog |  |  |  |  |  |
| rod | pod | cod | nod |  | | | | |
| mob | sob | rob |  |
| box | fox |  |  |

3 letter words 4 letter words

###### short “u” short “u”

nut hut but rut bulb stub pump plum drum club dump lump hump gust

bug jug dug hug must jump tug rug

sun bun fun pun nun run

tub rub cub

bud mud

cup pup

hum rum sum

Source: NMI; 2002

Name of Activity: **Mystery Word / Mystery Object**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Integration of Skills

Materials: A tray containing small slips of paper, a pencil, a small basket with an object inside and another basket or container for written labels.

Aims: Direct: To become aware that words are composed of sounds.

To listen for the sounds in words.

Indirect: To hear the component sounds of words. To isolate out initial, middle and ending sounds of words in preparation for reading.

Preparation: Sandpaper letters, sound games and an orientation to the movable alphabet.

Age: First Year

Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Invite the child to the lesson and bring the materials to a table.
2. Remove the object from the basket and name it.
3. On a slip of paper write the name of the object or just the beginning sound of the object. Write your name on the back of the slip and fold the slip. Place the slip into the basket.
4. The child can write as many slips as she pleases.
5. At closing circle, the teacher will check the Mystery Object, naming it. The slips are read and returned to the children.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To model writing the name of the object. Language: The names of the objects.

Points of Interest: The teacher changes the object each morning so there is an element of surprise and intrigue.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Each letter has a specific sound.

Control of Error: The adult is the control or a reading and writing

child.

Variations: Change the objects each day.

Extensions: Have pictures of objects instead of objects.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; November 2002

Reading on the Word Level

### Developing Literacy

How a child learns to speak, write and read:

* child listens to adults speak
* child and adult converse
* hears stories
* has conversations
* asks questions
* learns new words everyday
* repeats words
* loves rhyming words
* plays with words
* chants and sings
* wants the story read over and over
* remembers significant lines
* “reads” the story
* reads signs and labels
* begins to scribble and identifies it as a word or name
* develops the coordination necessary to write/draw symbols
* learns words in context
* learns the rules of grammar through conversation
* incorporates stories into dramatic play
* learns the patterns and rhythms of reading by listening to adults read
* begins to relate individual letter with the sound it represents
* begins to write letters and words
* begins decoding words
* recognizes commonly used words
* reads a story with the help of pictures
* reads to self
* develops ease in reading aloud
* reads for content and contentment Source: Deb Sabanty, NMI; 2004

### Development Required Before a Child Can Read

Developmental Preparation:

* sensorial development to receive information
* perceptual development in order to organize, understand and integrate information
* neurological (tactile, stereognostic, etc.) to utilize information in a physical manner
* social development of interpersonal relationships to relate to people and events
* concept formation
* verbal language
* visual language reading Development Needed:
* gross motor control
* fine muscle control
* eye-hand coordination
* ability to perceive figures in space
* directionality (top, bottom, right, left, etc.)
* ability to differentiate contrasting symbol and sound
* ability to classify
* ability to understand conceptions presented in text (content meaning)
* well developed auditory discrimination
* ability to listen and focus to verbal instructions
* general ability to focus on task at hand Source: NMI

Name of Activity: **Object Box #1**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Reading on the Word Level

Materials: An attractive box containing 3-5 phonetic objects, a pencil and small slips of paper. Prepared labels.

Aims: Direct: Awareness that the written word has within it the ability

to carry a message; to communicate a thought.

Indirect: Blending the individual sounds of a word leading to blending into reading.

Preparation: Sandpaper letters, movable alphabet and other pre-reading activities.

Age: Second Year

Presentation of the Lesson: Presentation #1:

1. The teacher joins the child at a table and invites the child to remove the objects (you want the CHILD to name the objects. If they do not know the name, you provide it for them.)
2. The teacher tells the child, “I am thinking of one of these objects and I am going to write you a clue.”
3. The teacher writes the name of an object on a piece of paper, folds it up and hands it to the child.
4. The Child may sound out the entire word, or they may isolate the initial sound and then scan the objects to find the correct

match. The teacher should assist the child to sound out the words as is necessary.

1. Write clues for the remaining objects.

Note: It is important in this presentation that the writing is done in front of the child.

Presentation #2:

1. Show the child the prepared labels for independent work. The child can record the words into a booklet or into a notebook.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Be secretive in writing the clue and folding up the

paper. This makes it a “mystery” for the child.

Language: The names of the objects.

Points of Interest: The sense of mystery in unfolding the clue and figuring out the word.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Awareness that we can read someone’s thought

(you can communicate what you are thinking by both written and spoken words).

Control of Error: The teacher. Later, when the child reads, the

written labels can become a control.

Variations: The objects must be changed frequently to keep this material interesting and exciting to the children.

Extensions: Have the child write the names into a booklet, or the teacher does the writing.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December, 2002

### Word Families

Word families are small books made by the teacher to help the emergent reader become successful with vowel sounds in words. Each booklet concentrates on one particular vowel sound, followed by an ending consonant. For example, the first booklet may concentrate on the “an” sound.

The booklet will contain a longer piece of sturdy paper or cardboard with the “an” written on it. On top of this piece will be smaller pieces of paper, each containing a beginning consonant. As the top pieces of paper are flipped (containing a single new beginning consonant) they form a new word with the “an” from the sturdy back page. (Examples: fan, man, pan, van, tan, etc.) The booklet can be closed with rings or a binding for easy flipping. Children love to make their own books to keep with words they can read.

Vocabulary Enrichment Cards

Three part matching cards will help the emergent reader to associate words with pictures. These exercises are versatile because the child may choose to look at the control first when they are unsure of the correct word or she may choose to match the words without the control.

Another exercise, which is suitable for the emergent reader, is the classified nomenclature booklets. These are booklets made by the teacher that the child uses as a control. For example, one booklet may correctly name the parts of a flower or the parts of a rabbit. It is up to the child to choose a booklet, colored pencil and the appropriate pictures to fill in the same as the “guide” booklet. This work is enjoyed by all.

Picture cards (available through Neinhuis) are another wonderful enrichment material for the emergent reader. This activity consists of sets of picture cards, made of beautiful wood, separated by their vowel sound. The child must lay out the picture and find the correct name for the picture. When the pictures are standing in their specially made wood stand, the names are hidden. When the child has chosen the name for the object, she can lift the picture from the stand and check her work.

Flashcards

Flashcards can be made by the teacher to help children learn high frequency words that they will see consistently in books and in their world. Flashcards should be organized from easy (shorter high utility) words to more difficult longer words. A double set can be made for a game of “Memory” to further enhance the child’s correct spelling of the words or Bingo boards can be made (suitable for many phonemic elements: blends, phonograms, etc.). Flash Cards can also be made for phonetic words, starting with 3 letter phonetic words, to 4, 5 and longer words.

Source: Deb Sabanty; NMI, 2004

### Booklets Made by the Teacher

Booklets, in language, are a varied extension of almost every reading and writing activity. They range from large to small, unlined to lined, blank to a specific word sequence.

On the Word Level, booklets are often used to reinforce or fix a child’s attention on a certain activity. For example, after the child reads and matches all the words with the objects in Object Box 1, the teacher may then ask the child to dictate the words to her so that she may write each one in a booklet. This booklet is then given to the child to open and read whenever he wishes.

Phonogram booklets are an example of booklets made in advance by the teacher in order to offer the child continued practice in the understanding, recognition and sound of phonograms. Many words for these booklets are included under Phonograms.

After a child works with the phonogram booklets, she may wish to compose those words with the small movable alphabets or with pencil and paper, depending upon her level of writing development. Blank booklets of similar size should be available. If composed with the movable alphabet, another child who writes or the teacher may then write them in a book while the child watches.

Classified Nomenclature activities should involve a lot of bookmaking, either with pre-drawn paper (picture of a frog, flower, etc.) where the child colors one part and labels or with tracing paper where the child traces the outline of the frog and then colors in the appropriate part and writes the corresponding name. Booklets for Correct Expression, Vocabulary Enrichment, Compound Words, etc. may also be found in the environment.

Sequence for Booklets on the Word Level and Sentence Level

1. One picture, one word to a page: pictures are randomly selected
2. One picture, one word to a page: pictures are classified (flowers, fruits.)
3. One picture, one sentence: follows above sequence
4. Definition Booklets: scientific definitions
5. Sentences in 2 colors: highlight certain words
6. Sentences all of one color

Original Source: Carey Smith Revised NMI, 2002

Name of Activity: **Object Box #2**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Reading on the Word Level

Materials: An attractive box containing 3-5 phonetic objects and 1 object that contains a phonogram (example: ship or tree, etc), a lead pencil and a red pencil, small slips of paper. Prepared labels.

Aims: Direct: Awareness that the written word has within it the ability

to carry a message; to communicate a thought. Awareness that sounds of some words can not be represented by a single vowel or consonant.

Indirect: As an introduction to the study of phonograms.

Preparation: Sandpaper letters, phonogram sandpaper letters, movable alphabet and other pre reading activities.

Age: Second Year

Presentation of the Lesson: Presentation #1:

* 1. The teacher joins the child at a table and invites the child to remove the objects (you want the CHILD to name the objects. If they do not know the name, you provide it for them.)
  2. The teacher tells the child, “I am thinking of one of these objects and I am going to write you a clue.”
  3. The teacher writes the name of a (phonetic) object on a piece of paper, folds it up and hands it to the child.
  4. The Child may sound out the entire word, or they may isolate the initial sound and then scan the objects to find the correct match. The teacher should assist the child to sound out the words as is necessary.
  5. Write clues for the remaining objects, saving the object with the phonogram as the last object.
  6. Write the clue for the phonogram. There are 2 ways to highlight the phonogram: for example, the clue is tree - with a lead pencil write ‘tr’ and using the red pencil as a highlight, write ‘ee’ in red.

Or you can write the entire clue in lead pencil and when the child reads the clue, say, “Oh, you remembered the ‘ee’ sound and underline the ‘ee’ in red pencil. The point is to highlight the phonogram in red.

Note: It is important in this presentation that the writing is done in front of the child.

Presentation #2:

1. Show the child the prepared labels for independent work (again, the phonogram is highlighted in red). The child can record the words into a booklet or into a notebook.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Be secretive in writing the clue and folding up the

paper. This makes it a “mystery” for the child. Highlighting the phonogram in red.

Language: The names of the objects.

Points of Interest: The sense of “mystery” in unfolding the clue and figuring out the word.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Awareness that we can read someone’s thought

(you can communicate what you are thinking by both written and spoken words).

Control of Error: The teacher. Later, when the child reads. the

written labels can become a control.

Variations: The objects must be changed frequently to keep this material interesting and exciting to the children.

Extensions: Have the child write the names into a booklet, or the teacher does the writing. Study of phonograms will be the next step.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December, 2002

Name of Activity: **Object Box #3**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Reading on the Word Level

Materials: An attractive box containing 3-5 objects containing a phonogram, a lead pencil and a red pencil, small slips of paper, prepared labels.

Aims: Direct: Awareness that the written word has within it the ability

to carry a message; to communicate a thought. Awareness that sounds of some words can not be represented by a single vowel or consonant.

Indirect: Exercise for the study of phonograms.

Preparation: Sandpaper letters, phonogram sandpaper letters, movable alphabet, Object Box #1, Object Box #2.

Age: Second Year

Presentation of the Lesson: Presentation #1:

1. The teacher joins the child at a table and invites the child to remove the objects (you want the CHILD to name the objects. If they do not know the name, you provide it for them.)
2. The teacher tells the child, “I am thinking of one of these objects and I am going to write you a clue.”
3. The teacher writes the name of an object on a piece of paper, highlighting the phonogram in red, folds it up and hands it to the child.
4. The child may sound out the entire word, or they may isolate the initial sound and then scan the objects to find the correct

match. The teacher should assist the child to sound out the words as is necessary.

1. Write clues for the remaining objects always highlighting the phonogram in red.

Note: It is important in this presentation that the writing is done in front of the child.

Presentation #2:

1. Show the child the prepared labels for independent work (again, the phonogram is highlighted in red). The child can record the words into a booklet or into a notebook.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Be secretive in writing the clue and folding up the

paper. This makes it a “mystery” for the child. Highlighting the phonogram in red.

Language: The names of the objects.

Points of Interest: The sense of mystery in unfolding the clue and figuring out the word.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Awareness that we can read someone’s thought

(you can communicate what you are thinking by both written and spoken words).

Control of Error: The teacher. Later, when the child reads, the

written labels can become a control.

Variations: The objects must be changed frequently to keep this material interesting and exciting to the children.

Extensions: Have the child write the names into a booklet, or the teacher does the writing. Study of phonograms will continue with additional materials.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December, 2002

### The Study of Phonograms

The child has been introduced to phonograms through the phonogram sandpaper letters, Object Box #2 and Object Box #3. The child begins with the more common phonograms, such as: *sh; ch; th;* or *ee*. The small movable alphabets are introduced next in order to further reinforce the child’s understanding of the sound produced by the phonogram.

Small Movable Alphabets

The small movable alphabets are used for the study of phonograms. Two alphabets are used for the presentation. One is red and the other is usually blue, although another color may be used. A piece of felt cut lengthwise into a rectangle is also useful. The phonogram in a word will always be highlighted in red, with the remaining letters in the second color (blue).

When studying phonograms, you will only work on one phonogram at a time. For example: “Let’s work on the *“sh”* sound today. Can you find the letters that make the *“sh”* sound in the red box and place them at the top of the felt?” The teacher begins by dictating words that have the *“sh”* sound in them, being sure to place the sound in the initial and ending position in a word (ship, brush, shut, flush...). The phonogram is highlighted in red each time. Depending on the skill of the child, they may record the words into a booklet, with the phonogram highlighted in red.

Phonogram Folders

As the child progresses in their reading development, they will discover that the ‘key’ sounds are not always written in the same way. For example, the phonogram sound *“er”* can be written as *er, ur* or *ir.* The phonogram folders are a series of folders, each representing one of the key sounds of the English language which may be written in more than one way. There are 13 folders to cover the following key sounds: *er, or, ai, ee, ie, oa, ue, ou, oy, j, s, f, e*.

Inside each folder are cards approximately 10 x 15 cms, each showing one of the various ways in which the particular sound in question may be written. For example, for the sound *“ai”* there will be one card with *ai* written on it, another with *ay*, another with *ei,* and yet another with *ae* (long ‘a’ with a silent e).

Along with each card there is an accompanying little booklet containing words with that particular phonogram. The words are placed one to a page and are written with the phonogram highlighted in red.

The child is introduced to the folders one at a time. He should be able to recognize the symbols on the outside, know the sounds they represent, and know the names and sounds of all the letters of the alphabet.

The teacher chooses for the first folder one containing a silent e (*ai, ee, ie, oa* or *ue*). The child reads the sound on the outside of the folder. They remove the cards and line them up on the table. The teacher explains that each of the cards produces the same sound as on the outside of the folders. ‘Silent e’ is introduced to the child with the appropriate card. The child is invited to read a booklet in the folder and to continue with other booklets as long as they are interested.

Having understood this first folder, the child is free to work through the remaining 12 folders. The folders, cards and booklets should cover the following sounds and phonograms:

Symbol of Sound

On the outside of the folder Cards and booklets inside

*er er, ur, ir*

*\*or or, au, aw, ough* (as in “straw”)

*ai ai, ay, ei, a\_e*

*ee ee, ea, e\_e, y, ie*

*ie ie, y, i\_e, igh*

*oa oa, oe, ow, o\_e*

*ue ue, ew, oo, u\_e*

*ou ou, ow*

*oy oy, oi*

*j j, ge, gi*

*s s, ce, ci*

*f f, ph*

*e e, ea*

\* in the U.S.A. this folder should have *aw* on the outside and the *or*

card and booklet should be removed.

Phonogram Dictionary

The phonogram dictionary is for the reading child who already knows and understands the phonogram folders. The phonogram dictionary is a small notebook with tabs for each of the possible phonogram sound combinations. If a child has a question about a particular sound combination he or she can go to the phonogram dictionary and look up the combination to see which key sound it belongs with. For instance, if a child was wondering what sound *oi* made, he or she could look up *oi* on the tabs and on the following page will be *oy* (the key sound combination). The child needs to know the key sounds and the represented sound combinations for the key sounds before this book can be helpful.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

### Suggested Words for the Phonogram Folders

###### Symbol of Sound

**On the outside of the folder Cards and booklets inside**

*er er, ur, ir*

*\*or or, au, aw, ough*

*ai ai, ay, ei, a\_e*

*ee ee, ea, e\_e, y, ie*

*ie ie, y, i\_e, igh*

*oa oa, oe, ow, o\_e*

*ue ue, ew, oo, u\_e*

*ou ou, ow*

*oy oy, oi*

*j j, ge, gi*

*s s, ce, ci*

*f f, ph*

*e e, ea*

\* in the U.S.A this folder should have aw on the outside and the or card and booklet should be removed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***er*** | ***er ir*** | ***ur*** |  | |
| fern | bird | curl |
| herb | girl | burn |
| winter | first | burnt |
| sister | sir | surf |
| helper | skirt | curt |
| perhaps | dirt | burden |
| her | twirl | hurt |
| lantern | swirl | spurt |
| butter | stir | curd |
| stern | firm | occur |
|  |  | ***ee*** |
| ***ee*** | ***ea*** | ***e\_e*** | ***y*** | ***ie*** |
| reed | read | eve | penny | field |
| seem | sea | even | funny | priest |
| been \*\* | tea | Pete | silly | yield |
| week | eat | mere | sunny | brief |
| feed | seat | meter | frilly | grief |
| creep | team | develop | fussy | sieze |
| steep | stream | breve | Polly | fiend |
| wee | cream | cede | envy | frieze |
| peep | heat | here | Henry | chief |
| weep | meat | delete | putty | shield |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***ie*** | ***i\_e*** | ***ie igh*** | ***y*** |
| pie | line | high | fly |
| tie | pine | sigh | cry |
| die | time | light | try |
| lie | kite | tight | my |
| cried | wine | right | by |
| dried | twine | sight | sty |
| tried | wife | fright | pry |
| fried | ride | bright | fry |
| tied | pipe | right | sty |
|  |  | ***or*** |  |
| ***or\**** | ***au*** | ***aw*** | ***ough*** |
| cord | Paul | saw | ought |
| storm | Maud | lawn | bought |
| sport | fault | claw | brought |
| forlorn | default | raw | nought |
| lord | taut | draw | fought |
| port | haul | paw | sought |
| for | maul | jaw | thought |
| forget | fraud | yawn |  |
| morning | cauldron | hawk |  |
| pork | nautical | prawn |  |

\* in the U.S.A this folder should have *aw* on the outside and the *or* card and booklet should be removed.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***ai*** | ***ay*** | ***ai a\_e*** | ***ei*** |
| mail | tray | cake | rein |
| nail | play | late | feint |
| pail | clay | date | skein |
| aim | stay | snake | vein |
| brain | away | safe | neigh |
| stain | May | maze | veil |
| waist | day | flake | beige |
| laid | pay | blame | weigh |
| ail | stray | lake | sleigh |
| tail | ashtray | stake |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***oa*** | ***oe*** |  | ***oa o\_e*** | ***ow*** |  |
| goat | toe |  | note | bow |
| loaf | doe |  | cone | blow |
| roam | hoe |  | dome | low |
| Joan | toes |  | home | snow |
| toast | goes |  | tone | own |
| gloat | woe |  | poke | mow |
| coast. | foe |  | stroke | flow |
| coal | oboe |  | smoke | glow |
| roast | roe |  | Rome | row |
| boast | sloe |  | pole | sow |
| ***s*** |  |  |  |  | ***j*** |
| ***ce/ci***  cent | ***s***  since |  |  |  | ***\_j ge/gi dge***  job gem |
| central | sit |  |  |  | jug gent |
| lance | sun |  |  |  | jig edge |
| fence | stud |  |  |  | jagged ledge |
| pence | stand |  |  |  | jet bridge |
| cinder | sing |  |  |  | jam gin |
| Cinderella | song |  |  |  | eject gib |
| accident | set |  |  |  | subject giraffe |
| recind | scrap |  |  |  | object engine |
| cinema | sup |  |  |  | region |
|  |  |  |  |  | (some teachers choose to make *dge* |
|  |  |  |  |  | as a seperate set of combinations) |
|  |  | ***ue*** |  |  |  |
| ***ue***  sue | ***u\_e***  flute |  | ***ew***  new | ***oo***  hoof |  |
| blue | crude |  | few | root |  |
| flue | rude |  | stew | roof |  |
| glue | prune |  | mew | droop |  |
| true | include |  | news | stool |  |
| untrue | brute |  | newt | spoon |  |
| rue | lute |  | hew | moon |  |
| construe | salute |  | crew | gloom |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***ou***  ***ou*** | ***ow*** | ***e*** | ***e*** | ***ea*** |
| found | cow | pet |  | head |
| proud | frown | expect |  | bread |
| about | scowl | elect |  | lead |
| ground | brown | egg |  | instead |
| around | sow | lent |  | read |
| amount | all \*\* | spent |  | dread |
| stout | gown | tent |  | spread |
| account | owl | bend |  | bedstand |
| pout | trowel | pedal |  | tread |
| sprout | drown | felt |  | meant |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***oi*** | ***oy*** | ***oy*** | ***f*** | ***f*** | ***ph*** |
| oil |  | joy | fox |  | graph |
| boil |  | toy | felt |  | telegraph |
| soil |  | boy | elf |  | paragraph |
| coil |  | annoy | self |  | phone |
| join |  | royal | fan |  | telephone |
| point |  | loyal | fanatic |  | phonogram |
| coin |  | employ | fun |  | Philip |
| toil |  | destroy | fin |  | emphatic |
| joint spoil |  | ahoy coy | fact fix |  | phrase |

\*\* Some words do not depict the represented sounds as well as others, or account for differences due to regional dialects. It is suggested to review purchased materials prior to use and to be sensitive to regional or developmental issues which may exist within the child’s speech. (If a child is told early in life that what they say I wrong, silence may be his or her solution.)

Original Source: A Reading Scheme for English, Muriel Dwyer; A.M.I., 1968 Adapted NMI; 2002

Name of Activity: **Puzzle Words (also referred to as Sight Words)**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Reading on the Word Level

Materials: A file box containing index cards with a puzzle word written on each card. The cards will be organized in sets that are color coded.

Aims: Direct: A further awareness and appreciation of the English

Language. Refining memory skills.

Indirect: Some words cannot be sounded out phonetically and need to be memorized to ease the reading process.

Preparation: Previous language activities, memory games, Sensorial games.

Age: Second year

Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Bring the box of Puzzle Words to the work space and explain to the child that some words cannot be sounded out (give the child an example by trying to sound out a puzzle word. “This word makes no sense when I try to sound it out, but because I have a lot of practice learning words,

I know that this word says . I have memorized the word.

1. Choose three puzzle words (make sure the words have different beginning sounds (the more dissimilar in appearance the better).
2. Introduce the words by a 3 period lesson.
3. Give another lesson on 3 new words if the child is interested.
4. Record the words on the child’s record.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Three Period Lesson and explanation of how these

words cannot be sounded out.

Language: The words themselves.

Points of Interest: The interest of the child to memorize words. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Some words cannot be sounded out and must be learned by sight.

Control of Error: The teacher at first, and later, the child’s memory.

Variations: Create games to play with the puzzle words.

Extensions: Make a set of personal word cards for the child and add them to the box or have an individual box for the child. Make a personal dictionary of words the child uses frequently.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

### Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary Word List (Puzzle Words)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Set #1  a | Set #2  all | - cont’t  out | Set #3  after |
| and | am | please | again |
| away | are | pretty | an |
| blue | at | ran | any |
| can | ate | ride | as |
| come | be | saw | ask |
| down | black | say | by |
| find | brown | she | could |
| for | but | so | every |
| funny | came | soon | fly |
| go | did | that | from |
| help | do | there | give |
| here | eat |  | going |
| I | four |  | had |
| in | get |  | has |
| is | good |  | her |
| it | have |  | him |
| jump | he |  | his |
| little | into |  | how |
| look | must |  | just |
| make | new |  | know |
| me | no |  | let |
| my | now |  | live |
| not | on |  | may |
| one | our |  | of |
| play | yes |  | when |
| run | with |  | were |
| said | will |  | walk |
| see | who |  | think |
| the | white |  | then |
| three | what |  | them |
| to | went |  | thank |
| two | well |  | take |
| up | was |  | some |
| we | want |  | round |
| where | under |  | put |
| yellow | too |  | over |
| you | this |  | open |
|  | they |  | once |
|  |  |  | old |

### High Frequency Words

for Spelling and Visual Recognition

{The following information is from A Fresh Look at Writing, by Donald Graves, Heinemann, A division of Reed Elsevier, Inc., 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912, (1994) - pages 262 & 263}

There are certain common words children need to know how to read and spell. Marie Clay refers to these as **anchor words** that help children in beginning to read.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| \*I | look | here | \*is | this | up |
| am | \*a | go | come | \*in | \*it |
| see | \*to | \*you | \*the | like | \*of |
| we | me | \*that | at | my | on |
| \*and |  |  |  |  |  |

The eleven ‘\*’ words have been identified by Richard Lederer (1991) as constituting 25% of all words used in spoken language. He goes on to state that: “These are not the easiest words for children to learn, even though most of them are short. Most do not lend themselves to imagery and therefore they need to be taught in the context of reading or writing.”

###### Instant Words:

These are the most common words in English, ranked in frequency order. The first 25 make up about a third of all printed material. The first 100 make up about half of all written material.

###### Words 1-25 Words 26-50 Words 51-75 Words 76-100

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| the | or | will | number |
| of | one | up | no |
| and | had | other | way |
| a | by | about | could |
| to | word | out | people |
| in | but | many | my |
| is | not | then | than |
| you | what | them | first |
| that | all | these | water |
| it | were | so | been |
| he | we | some | call |
| was | when | her | who |

###### Instant Words cont’d:

**Words 1-25 Words 26-50 Words 51-75 Words 76-100**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| for | your | would | oil |
| on | can | make | now |
| are | said | like | find |
| as | there | him | long |
| with | use | into | down |
| his | an | time | day |
| they | each | has | did |
| I | which | look | get |
| at | she | two | come |
| be | do | more | made |
| this | how | write | may |
| have | their | go | part |
| from | if | see | over |

\*For additional instant words, see Spelling Book by Edward Fly, Laguna Beach Educational Books, 245 Grandview, Languna Beach, CA 92651 (1992)

Original Source: A Fresh Look at Writing by Donald Graves Compiled: NMI

Name of Activity: **Correct Expression**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Reading on the Word Level

Materials: There are 2 sets of materials for this exercise. The first set consists of pictures of animals\*; along with written labels (Animals and their Young, Animals and their Homes, Animals and their Sounds, etc.). The second set consists of written card material for matching and includes individual heading cards, rather than phrases.

Aims: Direct: To foster an enjoyment of words and their meaning. To

introduce the child to correct expression which serves to enrich their vocabulary for speaking and writing.

Indirect: To name the cards and match the proper name of the animal to their habitat, young, sound, etc.

Preparation: Previous reading on the word level materials.

Age: Second - third year

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Pictures and written labels

1. Place the label phrase at the top of the rug: Animals and their Young. Lay the picture cards\* out on the rug in a column along the left edge, leaving room between the cards for the written material. Make additional columns as needed. Name the pictures as you lay them

out - “a gaggle of geese”.

1. Lay the phrases out in the bottom right area of the rug and lay out the single name cards, as well.
2. Read the phrase and place under the matching picture. Find the word that completes the phrase: “a gaggle of geese”.
3. Go back and read all of the phrases once they have been laid out.

\* If possible, start with objects. Presentation #2: Written Card Material

1. Lay out the heading cards at the top of the rug or table: Animal Home
2. Lay out all the animal cards in a column beneath the Animal card. Read each card as you place it down.
3. Take one card from the Home set. Read the card and match to the first card to determine if it is a logical match. If not, continue down the column, reading for logical matches, until the correct one is found.
4. When all the cards are matched, go back to the top and read all of the matches.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To know the correct expression and to guide the

child in laying out the material.

Language: The completed phrases.

Points of Interest: Learning correct expressions. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Language is very specific and that animals have

groups, places they live, names for their young, etc.

Control of Error: Material can be color coded for independent work -

(animal names one color, cards to match another).

Variations: Create games to play with the materials.

Extensions: Have child draw the animal groups and label, making a booklet or a poster. Do additional research on correct expression.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

### Correct Expression (Homes and Young)

Animals and their Homes Animals their Young

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| rabbit | hutch | bee | pupa |
| sheep | pen | cat | kitten |
| cat | barn | cattle | calf |
| dog | kennel | chicken | chick |
| horse | stable | dog | puppy |
| pig | pigsty | donkey | foal |
| turkey | field | duck | duckling |
| chicken | coop | goat | kid |
| bee | beehive | goose | gosling |
| cow | barn | horse | foal |
| duck | pond | pig | piglet |
| goat | barn | rabbit | bunny |
| walrus | ocean | sheep | lamb |
| whale | ocean | turkey | poult |
| mountain goat | mountain | kangaroo | joey |
| ant | anthill | lion | cub |
| bear | den | owl | owlet |
| beaver | lodge | reindeer | calf |
| bird | nest | seal | pup |
| coyote | den | tiger | cub |
| deer | forest | whale | calf |
| fish | water | zebra | foal |
| fox | den | bear | cub |
| lion | lair | deer | fawn |
| mole | burrow | beaver | kit |
| monkey | tree | eagle | eaglet |
| moose | forest | elephant | calf |
| mouse | nest | frog | tadpole |
| raccoon | tree |  |  |
| seal | ocean |  |  |
| squirrel | tree |  |  |

Source: Materials from the Montessori Development Foundation

### Correct Expression (Voice and Group)

Animals and their Voices Animals and their Group

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| mouse | squeaks | kittens | kindle |
| monkey | chatters | pigs | litter |
| owl | hoots | hounds | pack |
| seal | barks | geese | skein |
| snake | hisses | swine | sounder |
| squirrel | chatters | mules | span |
| tiger | roars | bees | swarm |
| wolf | howls | goats | tribe |
| bee | buzzes | ducks | brace |
| cat | meows | chicks | brood |
| chicken | clucks | chicks | clutch |
| chick | peeps | cats | litter |
| rooster | crows | cattle | drove |
| cow | moos | sheep | flock |
| dog | barks | seals | pod |
| donkey | brays | lions | pride |
| duck | quacks | fish | school |
| goat | bleats | monkeys | troop |
| goose | hisses | toads | knot |
| horse | neighs | hares | husk |
| pig | grunts | leopards | leap |
| sheep | bleats | kangaroo | mob |
| turkey | gobbles | vipers | nest |
| bear | growls | gorillas | band |
| bird | sings | clams | bed |
| coyote | howls | oysters | bed |
| elephant | trumpets | gnats | colony |
| fox | barks | quail | covey |
| frog | croaks | geese | flock |
| goose | honks | elephants | herd |
| lion | roars | wolves | pack |

Source: Materials from the Montessori Development Foundation

### Correct Expression (Gender)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Animals and their Names Animal  fox | Male dog | Female vixen | Young cub |
| wolf | dog | bitch | pup |
| swan | cob | swan | cygnet |
| pigeon | cock | hen | squab |
| sea lion | bull | cow | pup |
| mountain goat | billy | mammy | kid |
| moose | bull | cow | calf |
| elk | bull | cow | calf |
| elephant | bull | cow | calf |
| deer | buck | doe | fawn |
| tiger | tiger | tigress | whelp |
| seal | bull | cow | pup |
| bear | he bear | she bear | cub |
| lion | lion | lioness | cub |
| whale | bull | cow | calf |
| goat | billy | nanny | kid |
| goose | gander | goose | gosling |
| horse | stallion | mare | foal/colt |
| pig | boar | sow | piglet |
| rabbit | buck | doe | bunny |
| sheep | ram | ewe | lamb |
| turkey | tom | hen | poult |
| bee | drone | queen | pupa |
| cat | tom | queen | kitten |
| cattle | bull | cow | calf |
| chicken | rooster | hen | chick |
| dog | dog | bitch | puppy |
| donkey | jackass | jenny | foal |
| duck | drake | duck | duckling |

Source: Materials from the Montessori Development Foundation

Name of Activity: **Compound Words**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Reading on the Word Level

Materials: There are 2 sets of materials. The first set consists of pictures with matching labels. The second set has labels only, consisting of two sets of word cards for matching.

Aims: Direct: To appreciate the complexities of the English Language.

To gain an understanding that sometimes two separate words, when combined, can form another word with a separate meaning. Example: the words butter and fly, when combined, makes butterfly.

Indirect: To find the combinations of words to make compound words.

Preparation: Previous reading on the word level materials.

Age: Second to Third Year Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Pictures and card material

1. Lay out the picture cards and name the picture (sailboat, butterfly, rainbow, etc.). Arrange pictures in a column along the left edge of the rug, making additional columns as needed.
2. Lay the written labels out in the bottom right corner of the rug.
3. Look at the first picture and name it. Find its corresponding label and place it beneath the picture.

Presentation #2: Written Labels only

1. Labels should be color coded and divided into tow sets.
2. Lay out one colored set of labels , arranging in a column top to bottom, along the left edge of the rug.
3. Select one card from set #2 and find the appropriate word to create a compound word. Match to each word in set #1 until a logical combination is found.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Laying out the cards and guiding the child in

forming compound words.

Language: The compound words.

Points of Interest: Combining 2 words to produce a different word. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Compound words are made of 2 separate words. Control of Error: Material can be color coded for independent work.

Variations: Create games to play with the materials.

Extensions: Make booklets or posters. Find pictures in magazines to make card materials.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

### Reading Activities: Extensions

Newspaper: Create a classroom newspaper by, about, and for the students.

Who’s Who: Compile a biographical book of children in the class.

Intangible Terms: Encourage children to come up with personal ideas for

describing intangible terms:

happiness is.........................

peace is................................

I Feel: Give the children an opportunity to write feeling responses:

I feel............. when...................; or

How do you feel when it is time for your swimming lesson?

Logging Feelings: Keep a chart of your feelings for a period of time. See

what kinds of things or circumstances affect the children.

Logical Thinking: Select a story familiar to the children. List 10 or 12

incidents or events on cards. Have the child list them in order.

Rhyme a Word: On a cardboard divided into 2 sections, write these

words: bag, best, bed, cat, fish, big, house, hair, hill, hook, leaf, chief, train. On the back of the cardboard is an envelope with cards inside to match to the word that it rhymes with.

Opposite: Write a group of words that are opposite on cards.

Shuffle them and have the child find the opposites. You can color code the matches for self correcting.

Joke Box: Have a box for the collection of jokes, either written by the children or brought from home.

Travel by Postcards: Collect postcards from various places. Have the child

pretend he has visited one of the places. Talk about it or have him write a story about it. If the

child needs to he can dictate the story and copy write it, adding illustrations.

Story Starters: Type out subjects on cards and place in a basket as

story starters;

The Trap Surprise Package

The Secret Spell The Lost City

My Adventure My Tree Story

My Pet My Family

Word Basket: Select pictures from old magazines and paste them on a piece of poster board. On the back, write the word and the meaning of the word on the back.

Example: chaps: leather trousers worn by cowboys

Completing Stories: Write a simple story leaving blanks for some key words. Have the child copy the story filling in their own words.

Add a Word Game: Have 5 or 6 words belonging to the same category in an envelope. Have 5 or 6 categories in the same envelope. Have the child put the words of the same category together. Classifications: color, people, transportation, animals, clothing, action words, people’s names, etc.

Scavenger Hunt: Each child draws a slip of paper that lists things to find

from home for the next child. Child copies the list to bring home.

Examples: Find a piece of paper that is smaller than your hand.

Find a pencil that is as long as your thumb. Find a stone that is bigger than a chicken’s egg. Find a twig that is longer than two inches long.

Command Cards: Gather a small group of children. Give a command card to one child. Have him read the card and act out the command. The other children guess what the command card says:

run to the table close the window hop on one foot etc.

Other possibilities: Bingo with Puzzle Words

Memory or Concentration with Puzzle Words

***Be sure to add your own ideas…***

Compiled: Northeast Montessori Institute; 2002

### Environment Labels

Simple phonetic labels of items found in the Classroom:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| bag | desk | lock | plant |
| basket | drink | magnet | rabbit |
| bell | dust mop | map | rack |
| block | dustpan | map stand | red rods |
| box | felt | mat | rock |
| bucket | felt map | mop | rug |
| cabinet | flag | mug | rug basket |
| can | glass | napkin | sink |
| clock | inset | nut | snack |
| clip | insect | peg | stamp pad |
| cup | lamp | pig | tongs |
| cactus | lid | pin | top |
| crab | list | pet | plug |

Environment Labels with Phonograms:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| fish | shell | floor | window |
| door | pitcher | apron | soap |
| paper | pencil | faucet | picture |
| spoon | broom | line | rocker |
| mirror | shelf | polish | switch |
| scissors | dust cloth | chalk | stapler |
| chalkboard | tissue | chair | glue |
| sponge | stool | beanbag | tray |
| vase | easel | brush | hook |
| toilet | glove | globe | calendar |
| plate | hanger |  |  |

Source: Deb Sabanty, NMI; 2004

### Notes on Whole Language

On a basic level, whole language can be defined as a child centered approach to language instruction which recognizes that language and literacy development are best facilitated when the sub-skills (reading, writing and talking) are interrelated. In whole language classrooms there is a blurring of language sub-skills and subject disciplines. Reading, writing and talking emerge as logical developments of every lesson and as a result, it is difficult to distinguish a writing lesson, per se, from a reading lesson. Certain strategies and teaching techniques consistent with psycholinguistic research are generally applied and labeled as generic whole language strategies.

There is another, more sophisticated level of whole language which is more difficult to articulate. At this more sophisticated level, teachers move beyond formula teaching towards taking control of their own learning. Such teachers are professionals. They read, question the theories “out there”, question personal assumptions about learning and begin to develop personal theories about the way in which learning goes. Such teachers know that they are responsible for personal learning and have no fear of allowing children to structure their own learning. At this level there is recognition that we are always, all of us, growing, changing and learning.

In a Montessori classroom, teachers implement the language curriculum designed by Dr. Montessori, which is a phonetic system. Teachers also recognize that not all children learn a phonetic system based on sound-symbol association. Therefore, many teachers interlace components of whole language into their existing Montessori language curriculum.

What Whole Language Is:

1. Language kept whole - reading, writing, and talking are natural parts of each lesson.
2. Child centered. Language lessons are geared to meet individual interests and needs. The curriculum is organized around broad themes within which each child can explore his/her own interests.
3. Context is rich. Specific reading skills are taught within the context or rewarding material. This way, children can access four cueing systems: graphophonic, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic.
4. Literature based. In order to come to literacy naturally, children need exposure to high impact reading material. This material is read to, by and with children in a variety of ways.
5. Writing is rich. From the beginning, children are encouraged to write. The writing helps establish links to the graphophonic cueing system and enables children to practice being authors. They pretend their way into writing and in so doing, learn the writing process.
6. Talk focused. Because whole language teachers know that children need to talk to facilitate thinking, reading and writing, they provide many opportunities for verbal interaction. Children talk about what they are doing and the teacher listens.
7. Activity based. Children learn best when they are actively involved in structuring their own learning. The opportunity to play with toys, with language, with each other is important in whole language classrooms. The teacher must have a demonstrated plan for designing and using activity centers in the classroom. Specific objectives for each center need to be articulated. These objectives are not those which determine the child’s learning, rather, they provide a rationale for the center.
8. Parent involved. Whole language teachers know that parents can be their strongest allies, provided they have some knowledge of what the teacher is doing. Whole language teachers reach out to parents to involve them in the classrooms. Newsletters feature children’s writing, class news, parent information and professional articles.
9. Self esteem building. Children in whole language classrooms feel that they are capable. The program focus is on the individual child’s strengths. The program is accommodated to the child. When a child in a whole language classroom does not seem to be functioning effectively, the teacher examines the program, the teaching and the materials in order to better enable the child to learn.
10. Corporate, small group and individual teaching/learning situations. No single teaching methodology suits all children. Whole language teachers use all of their knowledge and strategies with every class. A total program of corporate reading does not work, nor does the ubiquitous three reading groups. Teachers are judicious in their choice of strategy and use each

when appropriate.

1. Fun! What a marvelous way to teach! What exciting classrooms are those in which whole language is featured.
2. Hard work! You will never put in more hours than you do in whole language teaching. You must know each child. You must vary your teaching style. You must become a learner. For many of us, saying that we have a tremendous amount to learn is the most difficult task of all.

In the past few years, educators and researchers all over the world have been wrestling with the problem of finding better ways to teach reading and writing to young children. As a result, many teachers are adapting their methods to the “Whole Language” philosophy, which they find more appealing, more effective and more suitable to the needs of individual children.

Source: Whole Language Newsletter Revised: NMI; 2004

### Holistic Approach to Reading and Writing

Children learn to read and write when they enjoy and appreciate literature. Children learn to read and write when they find success.

Children learn to read and write when the vocabulary is familiar to them. Children learn to read and write when they find meaning in what they are reading.

Children learn to read and write when they understand the sound-symbol relationships within words.

*“The best time to teach a child is when the child is ready to learn.”*

Maria Montessori

The Four Cueing Systems Used by Good Readers:

* 1. Semantic Cues: Interpreting the same word in different ways.
  2. Syntactic Cues: What we know about the structure of how our language works.
  3. Graphophonic or Phonic Cues: The sound-symbol relationship within

words.

* 1. Context Cues: Cues a reader brings to text based on background knowledge.

Montessori Materials for Three of the Cueing Systems: Visual/Auditory (Graphophonic): Sandpaper Letters

Movable Alphabets

Room and Environment Labels Phonogram Materials

Puzzle Words

Structure/Syntax: Grammar Symbols/Function of Words

Meaning/Semantics: Read Aloud Literature Punctuation Study Object Boxes Command Cards Nomenclature Work Word Study

Literature Based Reading Program

Source: Deb Sabanty, NMI; 2004

Reading on the Sentence Level

Name of Activity: **Definition Work**

Area: General: Language

Specific: Reading on the Sentence Level

Materials: Control book with colored pictures and definitions Loose set of colored pictures

(control book and pictures may be used with all sets)

Set #1: (Complete Definitions)

Loose set of definitions with defined word printed in red.

Set #2: (Mute Definitions)

A set of definitions written with defined words left out.

A set of defined words printed in red as single labels to be used with mute definitions.

Set #3: (Cut Definitions)

Complete definition with defined word printed in red and cut into phrases for child to reassemble.

Example:

Set #1: *The corolla is built up of petals which are sometimes brightly colored.*

Set #2: *The is built up of petals which are sometimes brightly colored.*

Labels: *corolla, pistil, calyx, stamens*

Set #3: *The corolla is built up*

*of petals which are*

*sometimes brightly colored.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Aims: | Direct: Indirect: | To appreciate the English language and its complexities. To learn the definition of words. This material is found throughout the classroom. |
| Preparation:  Age: |  | Previous reading on the word level materials.  Third Year |

Presentation of the Lesson:

Exercise #1:

* + 1. Introduce the control book.
    2. Ask the child to read the definition from Set #1 (complete definition) and place it with the picture.
    3. Do about four definitions and check the work with the control book.
    4. Continue adding the remaining definitions and check work.

Exercise #2:

1. Place Set #2 (mute definitions and loose labels) on the mat one at a time.
2. Child reads set #2 cards and finds appropriate label from to place in the blank.
3. Help the child check her work with the control book.

Exercise #3:

1. Take out Set #4 label strips (cut definitions).
2. Read and assemble cut strips to form definitions and place with each appropriate picture card.
3. Check work with control book.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Organizing the written labels and introducing

children to explore the materials as above.

Language: The definition itself.

Points of Interest: Learning the proper definitions of words. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Words (and objects) have specific definitions.

Control of Error: The control book is the control of error for the

child.

Variations: Lay the card materials out in a different combination.

Extensions: Make definition materials using pictures from magazines. Make a poster.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

### Language Command Cards for the Prepared Environment

Practical Life:

Dust a Movable Alphabet. Mist two plants.

Polish a tarnished object. Feed a classroom animal.

Dust the Book Corner. Wash three dirty cloths.

Straighten the books. Sweep the floor.

Scrub a table or chair. Clean the snack area.

Clean an animal cage. Dry a wet table.

Sensorial:

Trace the shapes formed by the triangles in Rectangle Box 1 and label them. Dust all the shapes in the Geometric Cabinet and replace them.

Teach the Mystery Bag to a younger child.

Build towers with the red, green and yellow Knobless Cylinders. Find objects to match the seven shades of blue in Color Box 3.

Trace each type of base for the Geometric Solids and write the name of each solid that fits the base.

Grade the Sound Cylinders.

Build the Trinomial Cube outside of the box. Find the thickest and tallest Knobbed Cylinders.

Language:

Write a command card for a friend on a strip of paper. Write a message on the chalkboard.

Read a poem and draw a picture about it.

Teach a child three new sounds with the Sandpaper Letters.

Choose a friend and take turns reading and writing the Puzzle Words. Work at the Farm with a friend.

Practice your handwriting on a piece of blue lined paper. Make a metal inset with two shapes.

Pick a phonogram and write eight words that contain it.

Math:

Do the Hundred Board without the board. Practice printing three different numerals. Measure ten objects with a ruler.

Match the cubes from the Bead Cabinet with the Pink Tower. Write a number roll to 250.

Do an addition chart.

Use the Short Bead Stair to do a greater and lesser activity. Play the Bank Game with two friends.

Do subtraction with the Table Rods.

Do three problems with the Stamp Game.

Make the geometric figures with the Square Chains.

Culture:

Dust a globe.

Play an instrument softly. Trace your favorite continent.

Say “Hello” in French to a friend.

Find the State of Maine on the U.S.A. map. Do a science experiment.

Feel a seashell and write about it. Label the parts of a plant.

Make up a name for a painting in the room.

Source: Jackie Grannis-Phoenix, MECR, and Debbie Sabanty, NMI

### Helping Young Children Develop Language Competencies: The Teacher’s Role

Language is normally learned through both an enriching environment and interactions with other people. The classroom teacher is faced with many responsibilities in providing children with a quality language program. It is important as a teacher to look at your OWN ROLE in providing meaningful communication in the classroom. The following checklist was designed to help you look at your own skills. Which ones do you feel comfortable with? Which ones are hard for you? Which ones do you want to work on?

*Do You: I need help I’m OK I’m Competent*

1. encourage children to engage you in conversation?
2. provide children with both open and close ended questions?
3. do too much of the talking in the classroom?
4. listen attentively to children?
5. provide language production that is geared to the child’s level of understanding?
6. use a variety of words and sentence structure?
7. involve children in activities that lend themselves easily to promoting verbal interactions?
8. provide a maximum chance for children to converse with each other?
9. direct a child’s question to another child instead of answering it yourself?
10. spend time observing children’s language skills?
11. encourage children to remain in dialogue?
12. encourage children to ask questions?

The Teacher’s Role cont’d:

*Do You: I need help I’m OK I’m Competent*

1. encourage children to use new words?
2. maintain eye contact with children?
3. use facial expression and gestures?
4. ensure ample opportunity for child to child as well as adult to adult interactions?
5. model good language?
6. provide verbal interaction related to the child’s world?
7. expand children’s sentences?
8. have a variety of appropriate materials in each center of the room to support your language goals?
9. substitute, add, remove materials when it seems developmentally necessary?
10. engage children in conversation about what they are doing?
11. give some special time to the shy/quiet child?
12. foster problem solving, creativity, curiosity and independence in the classroom?
13. exchange information with parents i.e., find out about speech/language history and share information about classroom happenings?

Source: Whole Language Teacher’s Checklist

Function of Words Introduction to the Function of Words

The Function of Words materials are designed to give the child an awareness and appreciation for her language and, thus, enhance her own style of expression. This is done through experiencing the uniqueness of the different role that each word plays in helping to express ourselves. Because this material in NOT to teach grammar or the ‘parts of speech’, each kind of word is named functionally; that is, to concretely describe what it actually does in a sentence.

Each word has its function in speech, as well as its respective position in relation to the other words. We try to present the function and the position of the words to the child in a lively and interesting way with repeated exercises. To clarify and complete these exercises, Dr. Montessori united a symbol to each one of the parts of speech. (This is a vivid example of the concept of ‘concretized abstractions’.)

In speech, each word has a proper function and there are two important centers in speech: the noun and the verb. Around these two fundamental centers, all the other words rotate. Thus, we can say that we have two great “families”.

Family of Nouns: noun, article and adjective Family of Verbs: verb, adverb and pronoun\*

Other Functions: conjunction, preposition and interjection

\*It is easily thought that the pronoun would belong in the noun family; however, here it is considered as a member of the verb family because of the agreement which must exist between the verb and the pronoun, as follows:

example: I am.

You are. He/She is. We/They are.

The games can be played with young children, but it is the children between the ages of 5 and 7 who are the word lovers.

Note: The rules of grammar are cultural, in that some languages - such as Spanish or French - the adjective precedes, rather than follows the noun, as in “casa blanca” (house white) or “Baton Rogue” (stick red). Chinese, for example, does not include the use of articles nor generally use plural noun forms. This information is not important to discuss with young children, but may be relevant when working with children whose primary language is not English.

Ed. note: Introduce each symbol and give out the handout on the Ancient Symbolism.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

**Ancient Symbolism (Grammar Symbols explained)**

Area: Language

Specific: Function of Words

Noun Family

Noun: A large, black, equilateral triangle

Perhaps the oldest human made structure that we know is the pyramid. Therefore, the shape of the symbol for the naming word is triangular, as are the sides of the pyramid.

It is believed by many that the first mineral discovered was carbon, therefore, black has been chosen as the color. Also, coal was a more common commodity in 1900’s Europe.

Article: A small, light blue, equilateral triangle

The article does not occur except when preceding a noun, Therefore its shape is that of the noun’s symbol. It is the smallest, as it offers the least specific information.

The color of the article is light blue.

Adjective: A medium, dark blue, equilateral triangle.

The adjective is used to modify the noun; therefore, its shape is that of the noun symbol.

Because the adjective is more informative than the article, its color is darker and size larger than the article, but lighter and smaller than those of the noun.

Pronoun: A purple, isosceles triangle, equal in height to the noun symbol.

The symbol is a triangle to show its relationship to the noun family, being as tall as the noun symbol to show its ability to replace the noun. It is narrower, as it is not as powerful as the noun.

As it is close to the verb, the original black has taken on some of the red and become violet.

Verb Family

Verb: A large, red circle

The verb, the action word, is like the sun. It is the one around which all the other parts of the sentence revolve. It is the life giving element in language.

Red is the color that speaks of life and vibrancy. Therefore, it is the color symbolic of the verb.

Adverb: A small, orange circle

The adverb is compared to a planet orbiting around the sun. It depends on the verb for its existence.

Orange is related to red.

Other Word Functions

Conjunction: A small, pink bar

The small bar represents the link of a chain, joining words or phrases within a sentence.

There is no color significance to the conjunction.

Preposition: A green crescent

The crescent symbolizes a bridge, establishing the relationship between nouns within a sentence.

There is no color significance to the preposition.

Interjection: A gold triangle with a circle on top resembling a keyhole (as the child’s sense of surprise looking through a keyhole)

This symbol is a combination of the noun and the verb. Its function is to imply many things. Therefore its symbol combines the two basic symbols for noun and verb.

It is gold. The interjection is known as “the King of all words”.

Source: NMI; 2002

### Function of Words Lesson Format

General Sequence Followed for Each Function:

* 1. Oral Presentation
  2. Introduction: an activity which highlights the role/function of the word.
  3. Introduce written aspect and play with the syntax.
  4. Return to the correct syntax.
  5. Symbolizing: begin by finding naming word and continuing from there.
  6. Symbolize the rest of the activity.
  7. Put away the material or record.
  8. Show printed labels.

Source: NMI; December 2002

Name of Activity: **Noun - The Naming Word**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: A large black triangle, objects in the classroom, a black tray, a pyramid, a piece of carbon, a black pencil, the noun symbol and slips of paper.

Aims: Direct: To help the child explore language and to develop an

awareness and refinement of our language. To aid communication skills.

Indirect: To understand the function of nouns as naming words.

Preparation: Other games involving listening skills.

Age: First year through third year Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Oral Game (Played with young children)

1. Gather a group of children at a rug and lay out the large black triangle.
2. Ask a child to bring an object from the classroom environment: “Sarah, please bring me a pencil.” When the child returns with the object, ask, “How did you know what to bring me? Yes, I told you its name of it.”
3. Continue to give many oral commands to the children, each time asking them how they knew what to bring and drawing out the concept of naming words. Be sure to include commands such as jump, pink, if...

Presentation #2: Written Labels

1. Gather a small group of children at a rug and lay out the large black triangle.
2. Bring the tray to the rug and introduce the paper symbol for the naming word and the ancient symbolism (the pyramid and the piece of carbon).
3. Write labels for objects (writing with the black pencil). Children bring objects and place on the black triangle along with the slips of paper.
4. At the conclusion of the game, say, “We can use this black triangle to remind us of the name of things.” Paste slips of paper onto a sheet of paper with a paper noun symbol on the top of the page.
5. Invite the child to work independently with the naming word tray.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Introduce the concept of naming word, placing

objects on the black triangle.

Language: noun, naming objects

Points of Interest: The black triangle and playing a group game. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Nouns are naming words symbolized by a black

triangle.

Control of Error: The teacher

Variations: Have older children ask for the names of objects to bring to the black triangle.

Extensions: Children can make booklets with the noun symbol on the front.

Class makes a list of naming words.

Write labels and tape around the room: *plant, window, door, sink*, etc.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

Name of Activity: **Article - The Specifying Word**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: The Farm and/or a basket of objects, some in quantity, some individual. A tray with a black triangle paper symbol, a light blue triangle paper symbol, slips of paper, a black pencil and a light blue pencil.

Aims: Direct: To gain an appreciation for the exactness of language. To

familiarize the child with correct nomenclature for specifying materials in the environment. Preparation for composition and analysis.

Indirect: To gain the understanding that when there is one object, we use the definite article “the” and when there are two or more articles, we use the indefinite article “a” or “an”.

Preparation: Introduction to the Naming Word and the Farm

Age: Oral games can be played with First Year children and written games can be played with a reading child.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Oral Game

1. Remove objects from the basket and have the child name them, placing groups of objects together.
2. Ask for an object back using the correct article.
3. Make a conscious mistake, “Please, pass me the shell, Oh, there’s more than one shell, I should have said a shell.”
4. Continue asking for the objects back using both the correct article and making conscious mistakes to make an impression on the child as to the correct use of articles.

Presentation #2: Written Level

1. The game is played as above only with written labels.
2. Teacher writes in light blue and black pencils “*the pencil*” and child places the label with the pencil.
3. Teacher writes a second label: *the shell*. “Oh, I should have written ‘*a’ shell* because there is more than one.” Teacher rewrites the label to read *a shell*.
4. Continue writing the labels for the objects as above.
5. Cut the label and play with the syntax: “Can we say *rock a*? No!” Return to the correct syntax: *a rock*, and symbolize, beginning with the naming word. Place a black triangle over rock.
6. Introduce the symbol for the specifying word (light blue triangle) and place over the article.
7. The written slips can be stapled into a booklet.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Write the slips in front of the child.

Stress ‘a’ or ‘the’

Write words in correct color

Language: specify ‘a’, ‘the’ and the objects used in the game Points of Interest: The objects, correction of mistakes, and

symbolizing.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: When there is one object the definite article the

is used and when there are two or more objects the indefinite article a is used.

Control of Error: The teacher.

Variations: Change the objects in the game. Play the game with the Farm animals and objects.

Extensions: Use pictures instead of objects. Make prepared labels for independent work.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

Name of Activity: **Adjective - Describing Word**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: The Farm and/or a basket with a group of objects that are similar (a collection of shells that are different colors), a lead pencil, dark blue pencil, paper slips, scissors, adjective symbol

Aims: Direct: To gain an appreciation for the exactness of language.

Enlarge and enrich the child’s vocabulary.

Indirect: To understand the function of describing words in speaking and writing.

Preparation: Introduction to the Naming Word, the Specifying Word and

The Farm.

Age: Oral games can be played in the First Year and the written games can be played with children that are reading.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Oral Game

1. Gather a small group of children around a rug and ask one of them to bring you an object from the classroom environment (the pencil).
2. When the child returns with the pencil, say “Oh, I’m sorry, that's not the one I wanted; I didn’t describe it carefully enough. Please bring me the red pencil.”
3. When the child returns with the red pencil, say “Oh, I’m so sorry, but that is not the pencil I was thinking of. Please bring me the short, red, pencil.”
4. Continue playing the game emphasizing the impression that the object was not described carefully enough.

Presentation #2: Written Level

1. Bring a prepared basket to the table and have the child name the objects as they are removed.
2. The teacher writes a slip (with a lead pencil): *the shell*. The child chooses a shell and the teacher responds, “Oh, I’m sorry, but that is not the shell I was thinking of; I didn’t describe it carefully enough.”
3. Teacher cuts the slip between the words *the* and *shell* and writes a separate label with a dark blue pencil: *small*. The label now reads: *the small shell*.
4. The child chooses a shell and again, the teacher responds, “Oh, I’m sorry, but that is not the shell I was thinking of; I didn’t describe it carefully enough.”
5. The teacher writes another clue with the dark blue pencil so that the label now reads: *the small, pink shell*.
6. Cut the labels into individual words and play with the syntax: “Can we say *shell, pink, small, the*?” “No!” “Can we say *pink, the small shell*?” Continue to play with the syntax, finishing with correct order.
7. Return the phrase to the correct syntax: *the small, pink, shell*. Begin to symbolize the phrase beginning with the naming word (black triangle) followed by the specifying word (light blue triangle) “which word tells us if there is one or more than one?”
8. Introduce the symbol for the describing word (the dark blue triangle) and show the child the tray for independent work.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To emphasize the ‘describing’ word and to keep the

game lively and entertaining.

Language: ‘describing’ word and the names of the objects

Points of Interest: The game itself should be fun, along with the retrieving objects from the classroom environment.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: To specify exactly what we want, we need to

describe the word carefully.

Control of Error: Initially, the teacher, and later, the written label.

Variations: Change the objects in the game.

Extensions: Written labels for independent work, making pattern cards.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; December 2002

Name of Activity: **Logical Adjective Game**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: Two identical boxes, one with the symbol for the naming word on it which contains nouns written on black paper. The second box has the describing word symbol on it and contains adjectives written on blue paper.

Aims: Direct: To deepen the child’s impression of the function and role

of the describing word.

Indirect: To find logical combinations of describing words and naming words.

Preparation: Previous Function of Word games, specifically introducing

the naming word and the describing word.

Age: Reading child; second to third year Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1:

1. Take out the symbols for the naming word and the describing word and place them at the top of the work space. The describing word is on the left and the naming word on the right.
2. Take out labels for the naming word and read each word and lay in a column under the symbol.
3. Choose a describing word and match with each naming word until an appropriate combination is found.
4. Continue finding logical combinations.
5. Record the work into a booklet or make a paste up.

Presentation #2:

1. Choose one naming word and find 2, 3, or 4 describing words to describe the naming word.
2. Record the work or make a paste up.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: The placement of the labels on the work space.

keeping the game fun by making logical and illogical combinations.

Language: The words used in the game.

Points of Interest: Playing a game and playing with words. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The placement of words in a sentence is

important in understanding the meaning.

Control of Error: The reading ability of the child.

Variations: Find other ways to play the game.

Extensions: Creative writing, symbolizing a piece of creative writing.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Detective Adjective Game**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: Detective Adjective box consisting of triangles of various sizes, colors, angles (acute, right, obtuse) and types of sides (equilateral, isosceles, scalene). A long strip of paper, a pencil and grammar symbol box.

Aims: Direct: An appreciation for the exactness of language.

Enrichment of the child's vocabulary. The more information we can provide, the more accurate of an understanding is possible.

Indirect: To find the triangle that is described by a series of clues.

Preparation: Naming Word game, Specifying Word game and Describing word game and the Farm. Geometric names of triangle sides and angles.

Age: Second Year

Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Invite the child to lay out all of the triangles on the rug.
2. Write a clue “the triangle” and ask child to choose a triangle.
3. Depending on the triangle chosen write a second clue, “red”. Cut the original label so the label now reads “the red triangle”.
4. Child replaces all the triangles into the box, leaving the red triangles on the rug.
5. Child chooses a red triangle.
6. Depending on the triangle chosen write another describing word, and place into the phrase: “the small, red, triangle”.

Child replaces the large and medium sized triangles into the box.

1. Game continues: “the small, isosceles, red triangle”. Replace all triangles that do not fit the clue back into the box.
2. Give the final clue that allows the child to find the exact triangle you were thinking of: “the small, right angled, isosceles, red triangle”.
3. Cut the phrase up and play with the syntax.
4. Return to the correct syntax and symbolize the phrase, starting with the naming word, describing words and specifying word.
5. Introduce child to the pre-written labels.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: writing the clues

Language: types of triangles (sides), types of angles, colors and sizes.

Points of Interest: The game-like quality of the game, the triangles. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The more information we can provide the

more accurate of an understanding is possible.

Control of Error: The teacher or child.

Variations: Simplify the game based on the child’s understanding of triangles.

Extensions: Child can make their own set of triangles. Labeling the triangles. Recording the clues into a booklet or onto a poster and drawing the triangle.

Name of Activity: **The Farm**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: A farm including a barn, a variety of farm animals, a farmer, his wife, farm workers, trees, etc.

Aims: Direct: To familiarize the child with correct nomenclature for

farm animals. To foster an enjoyment of the use of language.

Indirect: To introduce the function of words through various games.

Preparation: Previous listening games and work with nomenclature cards.

Age: First through third year Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Naming Word

1. The game is first played on the oral level with a young child. The teacher asks for an animal by its proper name and the child indicates the animal. A three period lesson can be played to learn the names of the animals and parts of the farm.
2. The game is brought to the written level by writing the name of the animal on a paper slip (using a black pencil). As with the naming word game, the teacher will ask, “How did you know what to bring me? Yes, I told you its name.”

Presentation #2: Specifying Word

1. The teacher asks the child for an object using the correct article. The teacher makes a conscious mistake: “Oh, I meant to say ‘*a’ hen* because there is more than one.”
2. Written labels are used for this game. The teacher writes the clue on

a slip of paper, using a black pencil for the naming word and a light blue pencil for the specifying word (article).

1. An error is made by the teacher and the label is cut and the correct article is placed into the phrase. The syntax is played with and the new symbol is introduced.

Presentation #3: Describing Word

1. The game is first played on the oral level with a young child by asking for either an object or an animal. When the child indicates the animal, the teacher says, “Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t describe it carefully enough, I wanted the brown horse.” The game can be extended by adding another describing word: the small brown calf.
2. The game is brought to the reading level by writing the child a clue (the name of an animal) in a black pencil. Whichever animal the child chooses is not the correct one, and the teacher continues to provide describing words (written in blue pencil) until the object is found.
3. Play with the syntax, then return to the correct syntax and symbolize the naming word and introduce the symbol for the describing word.

Games are played based on the lesson plans provided for the remaining word functions. The games are to be kept lively and interesting for the child.

The Farm is the original miniature environment, although others may also be use, such as: a dollhouse, a spaceship, a ship, an airport, gas station, construction site, etc. Some teachers use the farm or another miniature environment to introduce all of the Function of Words. Follow up activities can be placed on the shelves for independent work, but The Farm is the primary material used for this work.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To keep the lessons fun and entertaining. To clearly

explain the function or role of each word and its symbol.

Language: The language used in the games. Describing the word functions.

Points of Interest: The farm and the animals invite the child to play. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: That all of the animals in the farm have names. Control of Error: The child’s ability to name the animals.

Variations: The various games that can be played to introduce the other word functions.

Extensions: Make booklets, draw pictures, write stories. Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Verb – The Action Word**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: Large red circle floor mat, paper slips, red pencil, ‘Action’ symbol, a tray with a red ball, a piece of white paper, and a glue stick.

Aims: Direct: To help the child explore his/her language; enlarge and

enrich the child’s vocabulary. Develop an awareness of the refinements of our language.

Indirect: To give the child an impression of the function of the Action Word.

Preparation: Previous function of word games.

Age: Oral game can be played with first year children and other games with second and third year children.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Oral Game

1. Gather a group of children together and spread out the red circle mat.
2. “We are going to play an action game. I will give you an action to act out for your friends and we’ll see if they can guess.” Whisper oral command which requires vigorous action: jump, hop, shake, etc. to one child and have others guess. Repeat with other children. Children act them out on or near the circle symbol.

Presentation #2: Written Labels

1. Teacher writes out an action (*hop*) on a slip of paper with a red pencil.
2. Child reads the slip and does the action. Other children playing the game guess the action.
3. After children have had turns and left their slips of actions on the mat, the teacher says, “I’m going to glue all our action words on a piece of paper.” Slips are glued onto the paper and the symbol for the action word is introduced and placed at the top of the paper.
4. Have available on the shelf written labels for independent work, as well as booklets with the verb symbol on the cover, for children to play

their own action word game.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Emphasizing the function of the action word. Language: The names of the actions.

Points of Interest: Doing the actions (charades). Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The action word (verb) involves action and is need

not be associated to objects. (We will not concern ourselves with transitive verbs at this level.)

Control of Error: Teacher or another child.

Variations: Create other games to play to emphasize the function of the action word.

Extensions: Introduce written labels for small group work and independent work.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Action Word and Naming Word Game (Verb & Noun)**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: Large red circle floor mat and large noun triangle floor mat, paper slips, red pencil and black pencil, ‘Naming’ symbol and ‘Action’ symbol, a piece of white paper, a glue stick.

Aims: Direct: To help the child explore his/her language; enlarge and

enrich the child’s vocabulary. Develop an awareness of the refinements of our language.

Indirect: To give the child an impression of the functions of the Action Word and the Naming Word and how they differ.

Preparation: Previous function of word games.

Age: Second and third year children. (May be done on the oral level with first year children.)

Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Bring the large red circle mat and the black triangle mat to the work area and lay them out.
2. Write labels for the children, alternating action words and naming words (with red and black pencils).
3. Children do the action near the action symbol mat or bring back the objects and labels to the black triangle.
4. Continue writing alternate labels for the children.
5. Eventually, draw the children’s attention to the work rug, noticing there are no objects on the red circle. The red circle symbolizes action!
6. Do a paste up of the labels: Action Word Symbol with labels and Naming Word Symbol with labels.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Emphasizing the function of the action word and the

absence of objects on the mat.

Language: The names of the actions and of the objects.

Points of Interest: Doing the actions (charades) and bringing the objects.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: The action word (verb) involves action and is not associated to objects.

Control of Error: Teacher or another child.

Variations: Create other games to play to emphasize the function of the action word and the difference in functions between action words and naming words.

Extensions: Introduce written labels for small group work and independent work.

Pattern Cards

Also, children may play a Logical Agreement game between nouns and verbs, using matching sets of prepared noun and verb cards. Children lay out

the set of noun cards beneath a noun symbol and then make a ‘logical agreement’ with the set of verb cards (placed to the right of the matching noun card, with a verb label at top of column.

Examples: *scissors cut*

*dogs bark bees sting ice melts planes fly phones ring fire burns stars shine* etc.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Adverb - The Word that Describes the Action**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area: | General: Specific: | Language Function of Words |
| Materials: |  | A tray with paper slips, a small orange ball, paper symbol for the adverb, orange and red pencils. Optional is an orange floor mat smaller in size than the verb floor mat. |
| Aims: | Direct:  Indirect: | To foster an enjoyment of language and an appreciation for the exactness of language.  To gain an understanding of the function of the adverb. |
| Preparation: |  | Previous Function of Word games, especially an introduction to the Action Word. |
| Age: |  | First through third year. |

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Oral Level

1. Gather a small group of children together and tell them we are going to play a game.
2. Give a command to a child, “Walk to the door.” When the child begins to walk to the door say, “Oh, I’m sorry, I did not tell you how I wanted you to walk to the door. Please walk quickly to the door.”
3. Continue playing this game as long as the children are interested.

Presentation #2: Written Level

1. Write out a command on a slip of paper with the red pencil.
2. Hand the slip of paper to the child and ask them to follow the command, “*walk*”.
3. As the child begins to walk away, write an adverb on another slip of paper using an orange pencil “*quickly*”.
4. Approach the child saying, “Oh. I’m sorry, I forgot to tell you how to walk.” Hand the child the second slip of paper which they read and now says “*walk quickly*” to the door.
5. Continue playing the game and add more than one adverb to the activity:

*walk slowly and quietly*

1. Do a paste up of the slips of paper with the verb symbol on the left

and the adverb symbol on the right. Introduce the symbol for the adverb.

Presentation #3: Introduction to the Tray for Independent Work

1. Bring the orange tray to the work space and introduce the small orange ball and explain the symbol.
2. Presentation #2 is repeated, explaining to the child that they can now play the game independently using the tray.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To keep the game fun and lively. To make a

mistake and add an adverb to the action.

Language: The actions and adverbs used in the game.

Points of Interest: Doing the actions and playing a game. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Adverbs describe and tell how to do the action.

Most end in -y or -ly.

Control of Error: The child’s ability to read and carry out an action.

Variations: Have the children play their own games.

Extensions: Pattern cards, making booklets or paste ups

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Logical Adverb Game**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: Two boxes identical in size and shape. One box has the verb symbol on it and contains verbs written on red paper. The second box has the adverb symbol on it and contains adverbs written on orange paper.

Aims: Direct: Deepening an understanding and appreciation for the exactness of language.

Indirect: To make logical word combinations of verbs and adverbs.

Preparation: Previous Function of Word games, particularly the action word game and the word that describes the action.

Age: Reading child; second to third year Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1:

1. Invite a child to the work and bring it to a table or work space.
2. Open the verb box and explain that these are action words. Place the paper symbol at the top left of the table. Read each label and place in a column under the symbol.
3. Open the adverb box and explain that these words describe the action. Place the symbol at the top of the table to the right of the action symbol.
4. Remove one label, read it and begin to place with the action word labels until a logical combination is found. Leave the adverb to the right of the action label.
5. This work can be recorded into a booklet or made into a paste up.

Presentation #2:

1. Open the box of action words and choose one label and lay it in the center of the work space.
2. Open the box of describing words and begin to make a logical phrase, using one action word and as many describing words as are logical.
3. Record the phrase and repeat the activity.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: To explain the function of the action word and

adverb. The placement of the labels on the work space.

Language: The words used in the game.

Points of Interest: Playing a game, making logical and illogical combinations.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Words need to be placed in a proper order to

make sense.

Control of Error: The child’s ability to make logical combinations.

Variations: Find other ways to use the materials.

Extensions: Write and illustrate a story using the card material.

Write an original story and symbolize it.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Conjunction – The Joining Word**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area: | General: Specific: | Language Function of Words |
| Materials: |  | The Farm can be used for this activity or a separate exercise can be prepared. A basket containing three or four objects having a relationship (artificial flowers), a pink ribbon and a box of grammar symbols, slips of paper, pink and lead pencils |
| Aims: | Direct: Indirect: | To develop an awareness of the refinement of our language. To help children explore their language. Furthering composition techniques. To understand the function of the conjunction as a joining word. |
| Preparation: |  | Previous Function of Word games. |
| Age: |  | Oral games can be played with first year children and written games can be played with reading children. |

Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Have child remove flowers from the basket and name them by color.
2. Teacher writes: *the yellow flower*. The child reads the label and places it with the yellow flower.
3. Write labels for the remaining flowers. Child places the labels with the flowers.
4. Teacher ties the flowers together with the pink ribbon.
5. Using the pink pencil, write the joining work and to place between the flower labels. . “Now, we have: *the red flower and the yellow flower and the pink flower*.”
6. Cut up the phrase and play with the syntax.
7. Return to the correct syntax and symbolize the phrase beginning with the naming word.
8. Introduce the symbol for the joining word.
9. Record the phrase and symbolize. Introduce written labels for independent work.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Tying and untying the objects. Using symbols and

inserting and.

Language: Joining word, conjunction and names of the objects.

Points of Interest: Tying and untying objects, using symbols. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Words that join are conjunctions. Control of Error: The teacher, later, written labels.

Variations: Change the objects in the activity.

Extensions: Play the game using The Farm. Pattern cards. Have children symbolize their original work.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Preposition - Words that Tell Where**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: The Farm can be used for this activity or a separate activity can be made which includes a box containing objects, slips of paper, a green and lead pencil, box of grammar symbols.

Aims: Direct: To gain an awareness of the unique roles words can play.

An appreciation for the exactness of language.

Indirect: To gain an understanding of the function of the word that tells when or where (preposition).

Preparation: Previous function of word games.

Age: Oral game can be played with first year children and written games can be played with reading children.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Oral Game

1. Ask a child to bring over a chair to the work place.
2. Ask another child to stand *next to* the chair, stand *behind* the chair, stand *in front of* the chair, etc.

Presentation #2: Written Level

1. Write *the button* and *the box* on slips of paper with a lead pencil. Hand these to the child to read.
2. On a separate piece of paper, write *in* with a green pencil. Child reads the complete phrase: *the button in the box* and places the objects accordingly.
3. Continue playing the game by writing different prepositions (*over, under, inside, beside, behind*...). Preposition is written in green.
4. Cut up the phrase and play with the syntax. Return to the correct syntax and symbolize the phrase starting with the naming word.
5. Ask the child, “What word told us where the button is?” Introduce the symbol for the preposition.
6. The phrase can be recorded and symbolized by the child.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Writing the preposition in green.

Language: Words that tell when or where and the prepositions used in the activity.

Points of Interest: Placing the object (button) in different positions.

Learning a new symbol.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Prepositions are words that tell when or where. Control of Error: The teacher and written labels.

Variations: Change the objects in the activity.

Extensions: Pattern cards. Make phrases for the children to symbolize.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Pronoun - Words that Take the Place of a Naming Word**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: A tray containing scissors, a roll of paper, a lead and a purple pencil and a box of grammar symbols.

Aims: Direct: To develop an awareness and appreciation for the

exactness of language.

Indirect: To understand the function of the pronoun.

Preparation: Previous word function games.

Age: Second to third year children.

Presentation of the Lesson:

Presentation #1: Written Level

1. Gather a small group of children and tell them you are going to write a story about some friends.
2. Using the lead pencil begin to write, “ *Bri and Keira and Kyle went for a walk in the woods*.” Cut the paper.
3. Now write, *“Bri and Keira and Kyle fell into the brook.”* Cut the paper.
4. Next write, *“Bri and Keira and Kyle got wet.”* Cut the paper
5. Finally write, *“Bri and Keira and Kyle were cold and wanted to go home.”* Cut the paper.
6. Tell the child, “I’m getting tired of writing all of those names. I wonder if there is a word I can use to take the place of all those names?”
7. Write *‘they’* in purple pencil.
8. After the first sentence cut the names out of the phrase and replace with the word *'they'* (in purple pencil).
9. Cut up the phrase and play with the syntax. Return to the correct syntax and symbolize the phrase, starting with the naming word and introducing the paper symbol for the pronoun.
10. This is the symbol we use for a word that takes the place of a name. Explain that it looks like the naming symbol and has an important role, so it stands tall, but it doesn’t have the same importance as the naming word, so it is narrow.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Cutting the story apart and inserting the pronoun.

Showing and explaining the symbol.

Language: The story and the introduction of the pronoun.

Points of Interest: Hearing the story and seeing it cut up. Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Words can be used to take the place of nouns. Control of Error: The teacher.

Variations: Change the story and the characters.

Extensions: Pattern cards.

Child can symbolize his or her own stories.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

Name of Activity: **Interjection - Words that Show Excitement**

Area: General: Language Specific: Function of Words

Materials: The Farm can be used for this activity or a separate activity can be designed with: a tray with strips of paper, a lead pencil, a gold pencil and an interjection symbol, along with the box of grammar symbols.

Aims: Direct: To gain an awareness of and appreciation for the unique

roles words can play.

Indirect: Appreciate and understand the role of the interjection.

Preparation: Previous work with the Function of Words.

Age: First through third year.

Presentation of the Lesson:

1. Write a sentence on a strip of paper: *I love the spring!*
2. Say, “If I wanted to show you how excited I am about the spring, I could add another word to this.” Write the word “*WOW*” in gold and place at the beginning of the sentence.
3. Think of some other exciting words and write them in gold and place into the phrase.
4. Cut the phrase up and play with the syntax.
5. Return to the correct syntax and symbolize, introducing the symbol for the interjection.

Work of the Teacher:

Points of Emphasis: Drama in showing the emotion. Thinking up exciting words.

Language: Exciting/emotional words used in sentences.

Points of Interest: Learning a new symbol.

Work of the Child:

Points of Consciousness: Words showing excitement or emotion are called

interjections.

Control of Error: The teacher or written labels.

Variations: Making up different sentences and interjections.

Extensions: Pattern cards, having sentence cards available for the children to symbolize.

Source: Martha Monahan, NMI; January 2003

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