

Session Three: Language Experience



Session Three: Language Experience

Welcome	Welcome participants and review the agenda
Review	Review last week Review group agreements
Warm-up Activity	Family literacy bingo
Group Discussion	Self-esteem and learning
Reading Strategies	Language experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Guidelines▪ Word cards▪ Sequence▪ Games
Craft Activity	Flashcards, labels, games
Closing	Session review Evaluation



Session Overview

All children love to tell stories and see their stories written down. We can use children's language and experience as a starting place for learning to read. In this section, you will learn how to use the learner's voice to teach reading. This is called the language experience approach. The discussion topic for this session is self-esteem and learning. It is important that we build children up to feel good about themselves and their learning abilities.


Goals

- To show participants how to use language experience.
- To provide a chance for participants to share their ideas and experiences.
- To discuss why self esteem is important to learning.

Time

You will have to choose from the activities in this session. The interests of the participants and the amount of time you have for your program will determine the number of activities you can do. You can make this session into two sessions if you would like to do all the activities.

You need

- Participant and door prize forms
- Agenda
- Handouts
- Flipchart paper
- Book kit
- Free books
- Prizes
- Workshop supplies  – markers, paper, pencils, name tags, post it notes, craft supplies



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The day before the session

Call each participant to remind him or her about the session. Ask them if they need transportation to the meeting. Talk with the participants about the program or other issues.

Before the session

The facilitator should arrive at least 45 minutes before the session to set up the room, organize equipment and supplies, and make coffee and snacks.

Workshop preparation

- Review the facilitation section.
- Review the background information.
- Review the session and decide what activities you want to do.
- Research information for discussion topics not included in the manual.
- Change the agenda if needed.
- Photocopy handouts.
- Prepare craft materials.
- Ask community businesses to donate prizes for the program. Some suggestions for prizes are:
 - Adult and children books
 - Gift certificates for the local grocery store, gift shop etc.,
 - Gift baskets
 - Bath stuff
 - Candles



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There are detailed facilitator notes for each activity

- Welcome and Introductions
- Review
- Warm-up Activity
- Group Discussion
- Reading Strategy
- Craft Activity
- Closing

The following pages give background information, facilitator notes and handouts for each activity in the session.

We use this symbol for background information.



We use this symbol for facilitator notes. Facilitator notes give detailed information on how to do the activities.



We use this symbol for handouts. Handouts are pages you need to copy for participants to use during the session. Some activities have no handouts. Some have several.





Background Information

What is language experience?

Language experience is an easy-to-use teaching tool. When we write down a child's stories and ideas, we create reading material that they know and love. They can use familiar language to learn to read.¹

When we accept children's language and experience as a starting point for literacy, learning to read and write can be easier.

Jamal's Story

Learning to read and write had been difficult for Jamal, a third grader, who went to a special reading program. He was only able to read three words on a pre-primer list. He stumbled through reading and often said "I can't read this." When he was asked to talk about himself he talked about a basketball game he had recently attended. He had a wonderful way with words and described his experience in detail. The tutor wrote his words down in a story and read it to him. When asked to read the story, Jamal was able to read the whole story. He was able to read words like basketball, game, score and referee. Why was this so easy for Jamal? Words describing personal experiences provide a context of maximum support. Jamal knew these words and they were important to him. These words were in a context that he could understand.²

¹ Adapted from A Guide for Tutoring Adult Literacy Students, Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, British Columbia, Joyce Cameron with Myrna Robinowitz, 1988

² Adapted from Ronald L. Cramer on the Language Experience Approach – <http://www.literacyconnections.com/Cramer.html>



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What is the value of language experience?

Language experience is a good place to start for non-readers and it works with children at any reading level. Children feel successful and they like hearing their own words in a story.

How does language experience work?

The tutor and child work together on a story. The child tells the story and the tutor writes the words. They practice the story together and do related activities.

What are some activities you can do with language experience?

Once you write the story you can do a variety of activities. Ask the child to pick out the words she or he knows and make flashcards for the words she or he does not know. Make a list of sight words and play sight word bingo. Make a memory game of all the words the child is learning. The list is endless!

The handouts give detailed instructions on how to do language experience and all the activities you can do with it. All you need to begin is paper and a pen.



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Welcome

Time 5 minutes

Handouts 1, 2

Agenda

Post the agenda on the wall and give the agenda handout to participants. Go over the agenda with participants. Ask for any changes.

Meet and greet

As participants arrive, introduce yourself to new people and welcome participants from last week. Ask them to write their name on a name tag and ask new people to fill out the participant form, handout 2. Invite participants to enter their name for the door prize.

Note: Offer to help them fill out the participant form. This gives you a chance to informally assess the group's literacy skills.

Introduction of facilitators and participants

Sit in a circle where everyone can easily see each other. You may have new participants for this session. Ask people to use these questions to introduce themselves.

- What is their name?
- Are you a parent or a volunteer tutor?
- What is the age of the child you are working with?
- Why did they decide to come to the program?
- What do you look forward to in this session?





1 Session Three Agenda – Language Experience

Welcome	Welcome and review the agenda
Review	Review last week's topics Review agreements
Warm-up Activity	Family literacy bingo
Group Discussion	Self-esteem and learning
Reading Strategy	Language experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidelines• Word cards• Sequence• Games
Craft Activity	Flashcards, labels and games
Closing	Session overview Evaluation





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Participant Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Learners' names and ages:



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Review

Time 15 minutes

Handouts none

Review

- Review group agreements. Ask participants if they would like to add or delete any.
- Review last week's session. Ask participants if they used the reading strategies from last week with their learners. Go around the circle and encourage everyone to share. Use these questions:
 - How did it go?
 - Does anyone have any suggestions for the group?
 - Did you follow your action plan?
 - Which strategies did you find most useful?



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Warm Up Activity – Family Literacy Bingo

Time 15 minutes

Handouts 3

Bingo

People always enjoy bingo. You can use this activity over and over again and no one will ever complain.



Instructions

Brainstorm ‘What is family literacy?’ To get people started suggest a few examples like sharing, reading together, cooking, shopping etc. Ask them to come up with 16 responses. Write down their responses on flipchart paper.

Give participants handout 3, a blank bingo card. Ask participants to write the 16 words randomly on the bingo card. Call bingo once everyone has their bingo card done. Decide if they need a straight line or 4 corners etc. Give a prize to the winner. The session overview has a list of suggested prizes.





3

Bingo Card





Group Discussion

Time 30 minutes

Handouts 4, 5, 6

Activity 1: Brainstorm

- What is self-esteem?
- Where do we get our self-esteem?
- What things affect our self-esteem?
- Why is self-esteem important for learning?

Brainstorm these questions in a variety of ways:

- As a large group.
- In smaller groups.
- Each group takes a different question and reports back to the larger group.

Activity 2: Self-esteem and Learning

Give out handout 4, Self-Esteem and Learning. Ask participants to work in pairs and talk about when they learn best and when they think their learners learn best. Ask them to report back to the larger group. Write down their ideas on flipchart paper. Give participants handout 5 and compare the two lists. Draw attention to ideas that are not on their list.

Activity 3: Self Esteem Bags

Self-esteem is like a bag. We can fill up our bag with good things about others and ourselves. This helps us feel good and adds to our self-esteem.



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Hand out a brown paper lunch bag or envelope to each participant. Ask participants to decorate the bag with their name and pictures or words to show what makes them feel good. Ask them to share their bags with each other. Ask each participant to write a compliment about each other and put it into their self-esteem bags. At the end of the session share the compliments with one another.

Talk about how you could use this activity with a learner, family, or class. Ask them to try it and report back next week.

Extra self-esteem activities (handout 6)

1. Who am I?
2. Name poems
3. Achievement flags
4. "I know something you're good at.."
5. Letter to your child (postcards)
6. Pal of the day
7. See how many positive words you can come up with
8. Spin the bottle
9. Collages





4

Self-esteem and Learning

Get into small groups and talk about why self-esteem is important for learning.

Why is self-esteem important for learning?

I learn best when I am...



Children learn when they are...





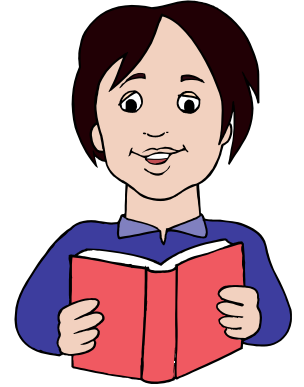
5

Why is Self-esteem Important for Learning?

Studies show that bright children who think poorly of themselves may do poorly in school, but average children who believe in themselves can do really well.

Good self-esteem has a positive effect on just about every part of a child's life:

- How they get along with others?
- How they handle school and studying?
- How they deal with pressure and stress?
- How they do as children, adolescents, and adults?



So why is self-esteem important to learning?

Children who have high self-esteem are:

- Willing to try tough learning assignments.
- Willing to try something new.
- Willing to keep on trying until they get it right even if they don't get the answer right the first time.

High self-esteem helps children in other ways too. Kids with high self-esteem:

- Are happier.
- Have more friends.
- Are more accepted by others.





6

Self-esteem Activities

Who Am I?

What you need:

- Paper
- Crayons

Directions:

Ask your child to write, "Who am I?" at the top of a piece of paper. Below this heading, ask her to describe herself.

For example:

- I am a girl.
- I am a daughter.
- I am blue-eyed.
- I am a helper in the kitchen.
- I am a Canadian.
- I am smart.
- I am a good soccer player.
- I am a babysitter.
- I am sometimes funny.
- I am freckled.
- I am a sister.



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Name Poems

What you need:

- Poster board
- Colorful crayons or markers

Directions:

Spell your learner's name down the left side of a poster.

Ask her to come up with a positive word or phrase beginning with each letter of her name. Write the word or phrase, or ask your learner to write it across the poster next to each letter. For a bigger challenge, see if you can make the words rhyme.



Achievement Flags

Ingredients

- Large strip of butcher or computer paper
- Colorful pens or crayons



Directions

Ask your learner to list the things she is good at or proud of, both in and out of school. Get ideas from teachers, friends, and family members. Cut a pennant out of the paper. Ask your learner to decorate the pennant with these achievements.

These activities are from *50 Fun Ways to Improve Reading*, which was created as part of the *Bridges to Reading* kit, developed by [Schwab Learning](#).



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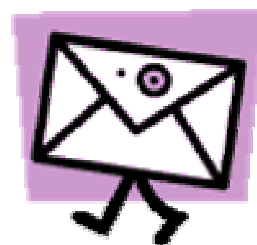
"I know something you're good at.."

Play this fun game with your learner. Think about something your learner is really good at and say to him, "I know something you're good at." When he responds and it is not the thing you were thinking about you say, "No you are really good at skating but I was thinking of something else." Continue until he guesses the right thing.



Letter to Your Learner

Write a special letter to your learner about how well they are doing. Put it somewhere they will find it - in their lunch or backpack, or on their pillow.



Pal of the Day

Use a big piece of flipchart paper and ask your learner to lie down. Trace the outline of their body onto the paper. Brainstorm positive things about them and write them down on the paper. Do this with your family, in your classroom, or with a group of learners.

Positive Word Game

Divide the group into two teams of 1 – 5 players. Each team has 10 minutes to brainstorm as many positive words as they can. The team with the most words wins.

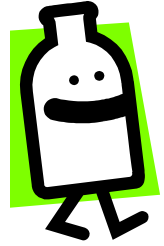
- Happy
- Smart
- Funny
- Hilarious
- Sweet



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Spin the bottle

Sit in a circle with up to 12 players. Choose someone to start the game. That person spins the bottle and says something positive about the person the bottle points to. The person the bottle landed on goes next. Do this until everyone has had a turn.



Collages

Make a collage with your learner about:

- Their goals for the future.
- The things they like.
- The things they are good at.



You need old magazines, glue, scissors, and paper or cardboard.



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Reading Strategy – Language Experience

Time 60 minutes

Handouts: 7, 8, 9

Read the background information before you plan this session. Give a copy of the background information to participants or read it to them. The following handouts are a step-by-step guide to the language experience approach.

Model the language experience approach

Read the handouts over with the participants. Do an example language experience with the whole group. Give the group a topic like hunting or camping. Ask them to come up with a story and write it down. Read the story back to them and ask them to read it with you.

Now it's the participants turn

Ask participants to pair up and role model a language experience story. Make sure they follow the guidelines on handout 7. Ask participants to do the learning activities on handout 9. They may not be able to complete all the activities because it could take too long. Make sure each person gets a chance to be both child and adult.

After everyone practices the language experience approach, discuss how it went. Use these questions to encourage discussion:

- Do you think your learner will enjoy this activity?
- Did anyone do any variations to the activities?
- What are some other ideas or learning activities you can do with language experience?





7 Language Experience Approach

Language experience is an easy-to-use method to teach reading and writing.

Guidelines

1. Talk with your learner about what they want to write about. Ask them questions like “What did you do last weekend?” or “What did you do for summer vacation?” to stimulate ideas for the story.
2. Jot down in point form what your learner wants to include in the story.
3. Help your learner organize their thoughts into a story.
4. Ask your learner to tell you the whole story.
5. Use a short story if your learner doesn’t read well.
6. Ask your learner to tell you the story again slowly so you can write it down.



- Print the story.
- Say each word as you print it.
- Skip a line.
- Write exactly what they say. Do not correct their grammar.



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7. Read the story to your learner and ask if they want to change anything.
8. Read the story again with the changes. Read the story several times and point to the words as you say them.
9. Ask your learner to read the story with you.





8 Language Experience Examples

Sally's Story

I like to play outside. Sometimes I play ball or play with my dog Jack. I don't like being outside when it is raining. When it is raining I play inside or watch TV. Sometimes I play with my baby brother Peter. He is three years old.

Billy's Story

I went with my grandpa to the cabin. It was cold out there. We caught fish and snared rabbits. I like being on the land with my grandpa. He teaches me how to do things.

Your task

Role play a language experience approach with a partner. One person is the learner and the other is the tutor. Follow the instructions on handout 7. Do the activities on handout 9. Take turns being the tutor and the learner.





9

Language Experience Learning Activities

Once you complete the story do these activities. It takes lots of time to do all of them. Usually you work on a story for several weeks.

What you need:

- Index cards
- Scissors, glue, paper, cardboard
- Tape and tape recorder
- Recipe holder for cue cards

Learning activities directions:

1. Ask the learner to circle the words that they can read. This provides review of those words.
2. Create word cards with these familiar words. Use index cards or make up your own cards with cardboard. Read the words together and ask the learner to match the words with the story.
3. Choose some new words to learn from the story and create word cards them. Match them to the story.
4. Spread all the words on the table face up and say the word. Ask your learner to try and pick out the correct word card.
5. Use both the familiar and unfamiliar words to make a memory game. Write each word out twice. Place the cards face down and try to find the matching pair.
6. Make rhyming words and create new word cards for them. For example cold – hold, fold, sold, told.... Or like – hike, bike, mike



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7. Make sentence strips and ask your learner to put them in the correct order.

my grandpa to the cabin

I went with

8. Make sentence strips and ask your learner to put the whole story back together. This teaches sequence and helps with comprehension.

I like being on the land with my grandpa.

It was cold out there.

I went with my grandpa to the cabin.

He teaches me how to do things.

We caught fish and snared rabbits.

9. Record the language experience on tape and ask your learner to read along with the tape.
10. Create a word bank such as a recipe box and store the word cards in alphabetical order



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Craft Activity – Flashcards, labels, games

Time 30 minutes

Handouts 10, 11, 12, 13

Flashcards and Labels

Ask participants make to flashcards or labels to use with their learner. Cut pictures from magazines or use clip art. Write the word on one side and put the picture on the other side. Create a word bank with a recipe card holder for all the words. Or use the cloth book that participants made last week to hold the flashcards. Participants can make their own flashcards and labels or use the handouts 10 and 11.

You need

- Handouts 10 and 11
- Cardboard
- Envelopes
- Clipart
- Glue
- Scissors
- Material
- Magazines

Games

Make some fun educational games for learners.

- Memory Game – handout 12.
- Spelling Game – handout 13.
- Charades – handout 13.



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You need

- Handouts 12 and 13
- glue
- scissors
- cardboard
- markers

More Fun games you can play at home

Handout 13 has different words games participants can play at home. Play the games with participants if there is time.

- Word Hunt
- Singing Alphabet
- Toss a Sound
- Locomotion Letters
- Alphabet Strip





10

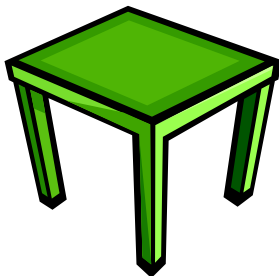
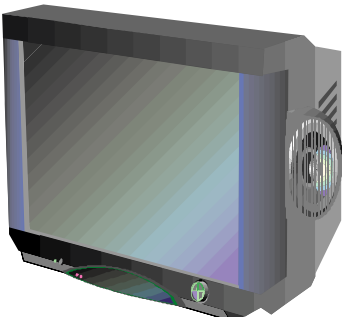
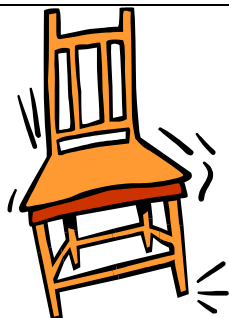
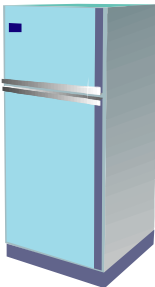

Household Flashcards



- Fill in the blank set of flashcards next to the pictures of household items on the next three pages.
- Ask your children to help you write out the labels.
- Glue the labels onto pieces of cardboard, such as cereal boxes.
- Put the labels up around the house.
- Ask your children to say all the labels in their room or around the house every night before they go to bed,
- Use these pictures and words as a matching or memory game.

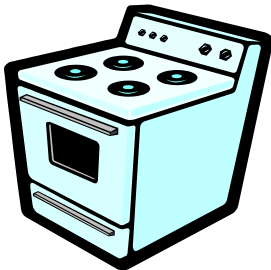
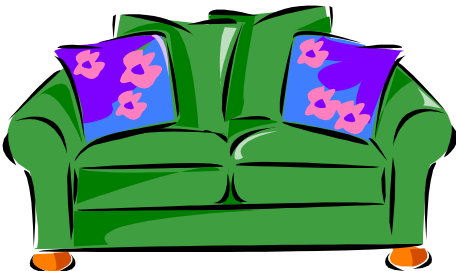
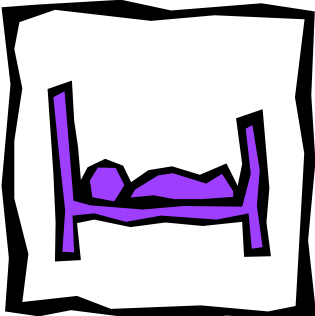


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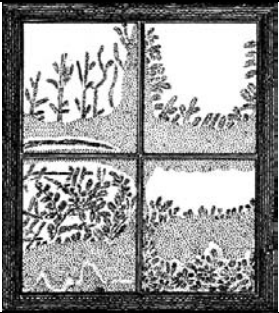
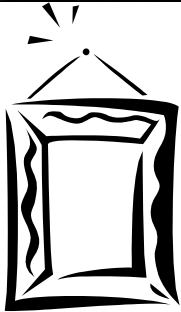




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11 Grocery Story Labels


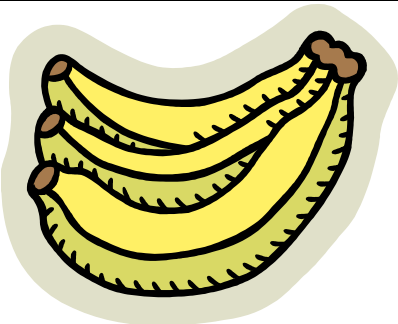


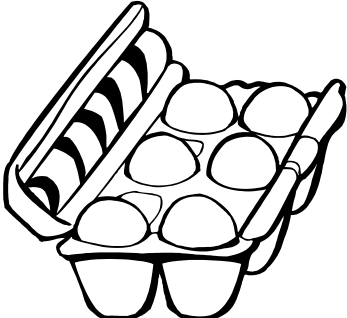


This is similar to the household labels activity, but this time use it for shopping.

- Fill in the blank set of labels next to the pictures of food items on the next three pages.
- Ask your children to help you write out the labels.
- Glue the labels onto pieces of cardboard, such as cereal boxes.
- Give your children the labels when you go grocery shopping and ask them to find the matching items in the store.
- Use these labels as a matching or memory game.

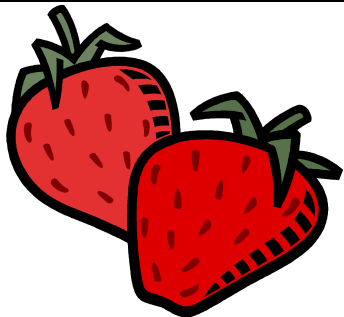
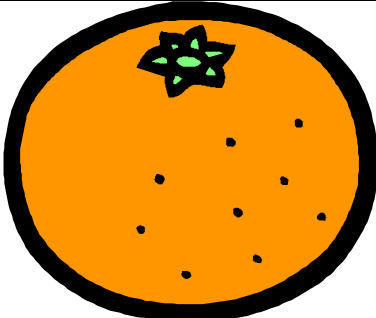
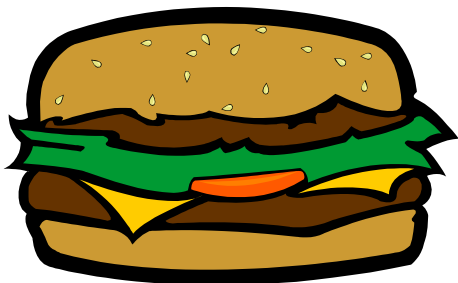
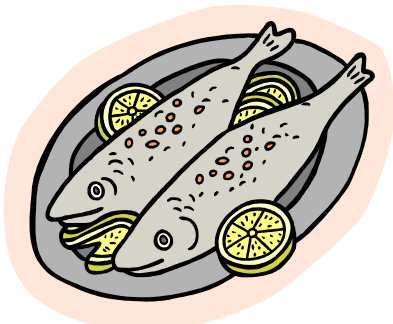


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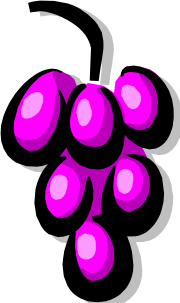
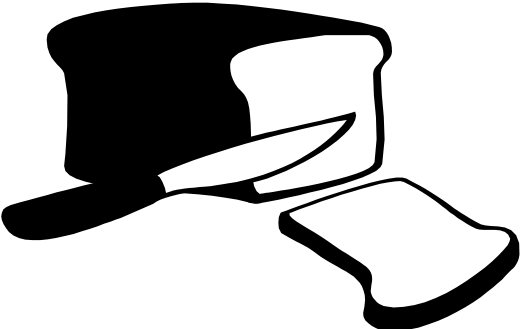




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	 Two cans of tomatoes. Each can is white with green horizontal stripes and a label showing several red tomatoes.
	 A bunch of purple grapes hanging from a short stem with a single leaf.
	 A slice of butter and a knife. The butter is white and rectangular, and the knife is black with a white handle.
	 Three brown cookies. Each cookie has a simple face with two eyes and a smile.
	 A hot dog in a bun. The hot dog is brown and has a yellow mustard and red ketchup sauce on it.





12






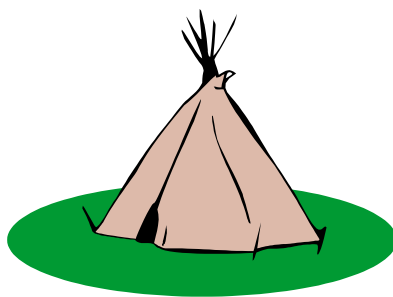
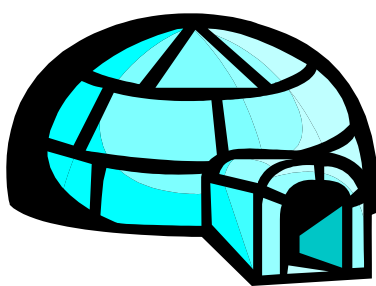


Memory Game

1. Glue the memory card sheet to cardboard or some other type of backing.
2. Cut out each card.
3. Mix up all the cards and turn them face down.
4. Take turns and flip over two cards at a time and try to find matching pairs.
5. Play on your own. Flip the cards over two at a time and try to find matching pairs.

Make up your own memory game by using pictures from magazines, clip art, or draw your own pictures.



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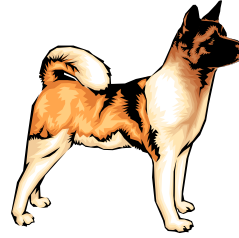
 	family		book
	reading		writing
	tent		igloo
	canoe		singing



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caribou



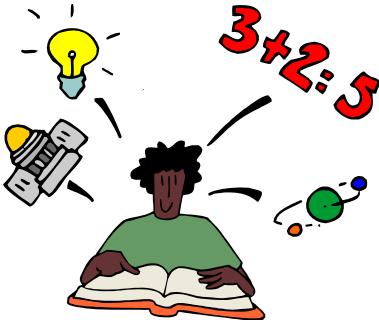
dog



camp
fire



camping



math



do not
disturb



toys



games

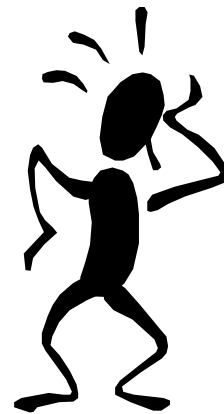




13

Games

- Spelling Game
- Charades
- Word Hunt
- Singing Alphabet
- Toss a Sound
- Locomotion Letters
- Alphabet Strip



Spelling Game

1. Make one deck of alphabet cards to prepare for the game.
Use index cards or squares of paper and write out the letters of the alphabet, one letter on each card. Make a few extra vowels.
2. Give the deck of alphabet cards to your learner. Ask them to spread the letters facing up, on a table or the floor.
3. Call out a word from your story, flashcards, or labels.
4. Ask them to spell the word.

Variation

Make two alphabet decks and play with your whole family. Split into two groups. Say a word. Ask them to spell it out with the alphabet cards. The first team to spell out the word properly wins a point.



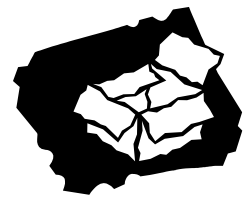
Charades

1. Write a number of short sentences or phrases on strips of paper. For example:

- He goes bowling every week.
- She often orders pizza for supper.
- My father hunted ducks last weekend.

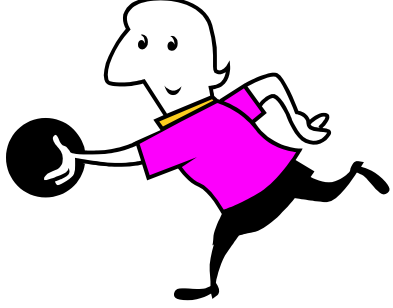





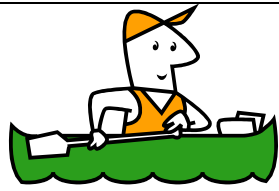

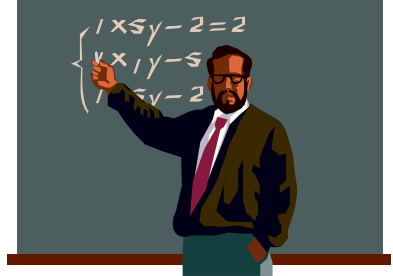

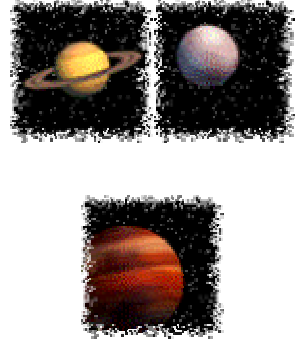

Or use the pictures on the next page.

2. Put the strips of paper or pictures in a bag.
3. Ask your learner to pick one out of the bag and act it out. Try and guess what it is. Take turns doing this. Get your whole family or class involved.



Session Three: Language Experience

Picture Charades

 <p>bowling</p>	<p>reading</p> 	<p>laughing</p> 	 <p>playing</p>
 <p>homework</p>	 <p>talking</p>	 <p>canoeing</p>	 <p>project</p>
 <p>teacher</p>	 <p>math</p>	 <p>solar system</p>	 <p>Inukshuk</p>



Word Hunt

This game is similar to the alphabet game. Give children some books, magazines, or newspapers and ask them to hunt for various words. The first team or person to find the word gets a point. Play up to 10 points.

Adaptation

Take a trip around town and identify words and letters. Sing the song 'Going on a bear hunt' and substitute the word 'letter' or 'word' for bear.

Singing Alphabet

Sing the alphabet song with different versions:

- Monster version – loud, deep voice
- Mouse version – high, squeaky voice
- Opera version – sing dramatically with your arms stretched out
- Upside down version – put head on the floor and sing
- With a cold version – Hold nose and sing
- Underwater version – put finger between lips and wiggle
- Backwards version – sing backwards from Z to A
- Silent version – mouth the letters with no sound



Adapted from *Transition Tips and Tricks for Teachers*, 2000 Gryphon House Inc.

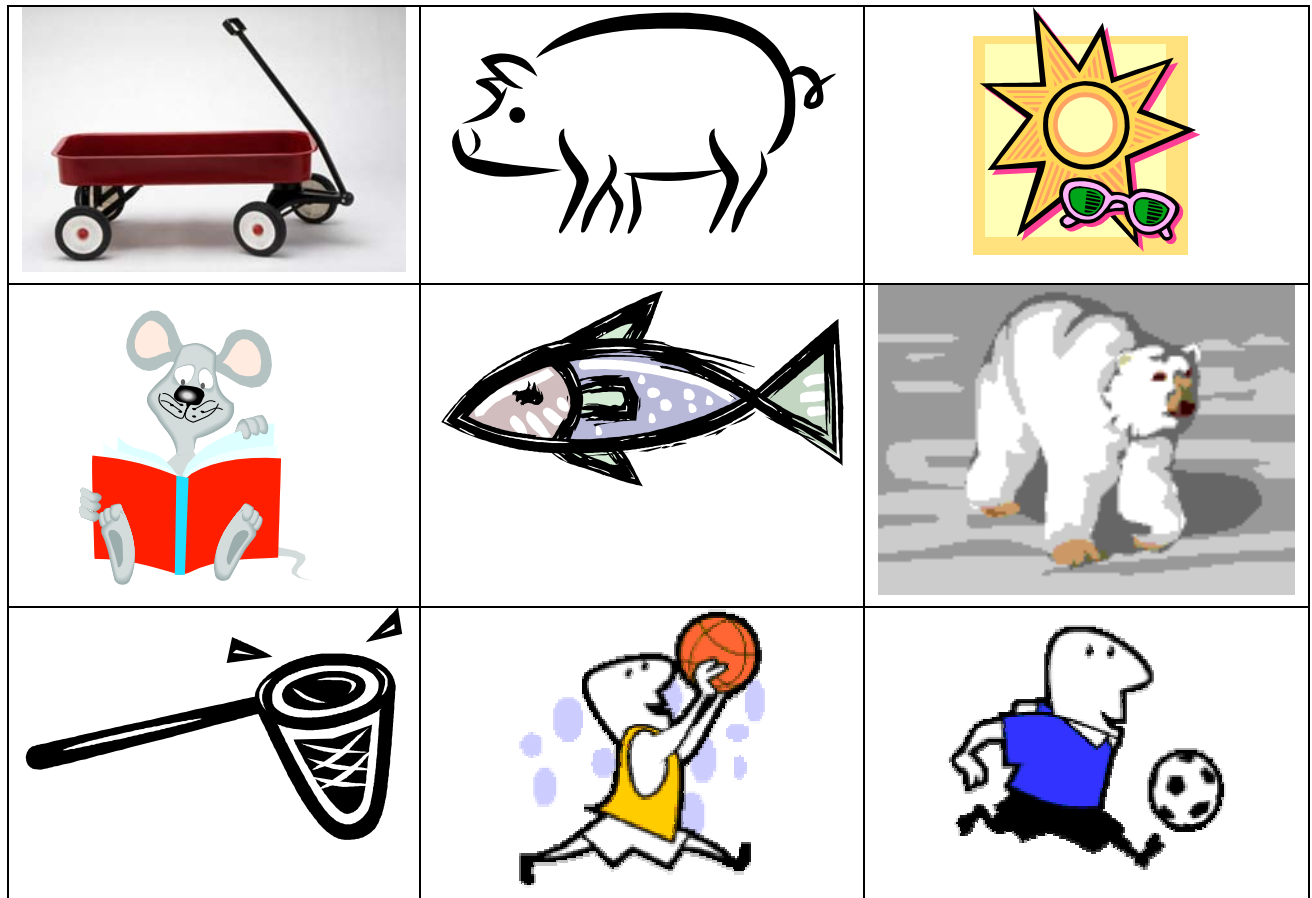


Session Three: Language Experience

Toss a Sound

Make a poster board with different pictures with different sounds.

Example:



Make a poster board with magazine pictures or draw the pictures. Make sure each picture starts with a different letter. Ask your learner to toss a bean bag onto the board and identify the first letter of the picture. Ask them to say another word that begins with the same sound. Make similar games to reinforce colours, shapes, letters, and numbers.



Locomotion Letters

This fun activity helps children learn the alphabet. Make letter cards with an action for each letter. Hold up each card and do the action. Ask learners to say the letter and the word and do the action too. Children learn through moving. Associating sounds with verbs and movements helps them learn.

Examples:

- A – act (extend arms in dramatic fashion)
- B – bounce (pretend to bounce a ball)
- C – cut (pretend to cut with your finger)
- D – drive (pretend you are driving)
- E – eat (pretend to feed yourself)
- F – fly (flap arms as if flying)
- G – gallop (gallop like a horse)
- H – hop (hop on one foot)
- I – itch (scratch yourself)
- J – Jump (jump up and down)
- K – kiss (make a kissing sound)
- L – leap (leap in the air)
- M – march (march in place)
- N – nod (nod head)
- O – open (open eyes wide)
- P – push (extend arms and push)
- Q – quiet (put finger on lip)
- R – roll (roll on the ground)



Session Three: Language Experience

S – sit (sit down)

T – tickle (tickle yourself or someone else)

U – understand (scratch head)

V – vibrate (jiggle all over)

W – walk (walk in place)

X – x-ray (pretend to x-ray hand)

Y – yawn (pretend to yawn)

Z – zoom (brush hands swiftly together)

Adaptation

Ask your learner to think of their own words and actions for each letter.

Alphabet Strip

What you need:

- Long strip of paper
- Scissors
- Markers



Directions:

This activity is for young children. Cut out a long strip of paper and properly print each letter of the alphabet in upper and lower cases. Pick a word and point to the letters on the strip as you spell the word out loud.

This activity is from *50 Fun Ways to Improve Reading*, which was created as part of the [Bridges to Reading](#) kit, developed by [Schwab Learning](#).



Session Three: Language Experience



Closing

Time 10 minutes

Handouts 14

Session Review

Review the session with participants. Ask participants to show their games and activities they made. Ask them to explain how they plan to use language experience with their learner.

Review plans for next week

- Cloze exercises
- Sight words
- Word families
- Word walls

Evaluation

Ask participants to fill out the evaluation. Tell them it helps you plan the next session

Door prize and free books

Draw for the door prize after everyone completes the evaluation form. Give out free books.





14 Family Tutoring - Session Evaluation

Session # ____ Topic: _____

1. What did you think of the topic we talked about in this session?



Excellent



Pretty
good



Needs a little
work



Not so hot



Should be
canned

2. What did you like most about the session?

3. What did you like least about the session?

4. What could we do to improve this session for next time?

5. Other comments



Session Three: Language Experience

