

# Letter-Sounds Activities

These activities reinforce the correspondence between individual sounds in words (phonemes) and the letter(s) that stand for each sound. Sounds are shown between slashes, such as /o/ for short *o*. Use these activities to strengthen children’s skills, whether they need more support and practice or are ready for a challenge. Activities are appropriate for children in grades K–2.

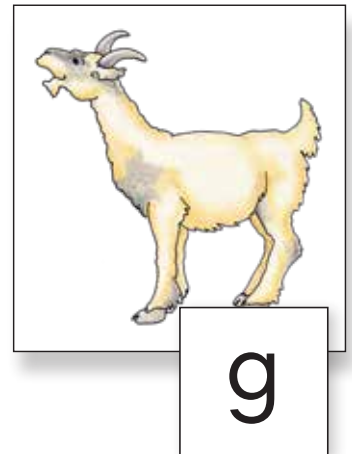
## 1. Reteaching Letter-Sounds Using Pictures

**Purpose:** Identify the beginning sounds and letters of picture names

**Materials:** Pictures, (optional) letter cards

Show a picture whose name begins with the letter-sound you want to reteach, such as *goat* for *g/g/*. Say the picture name (*goat*) and ask children to tell what sound they hear at the beginning of the word. (/g/) Repeat the picture name and the initial letter-sound. (*goat*, /g/) Have children repeat after you. Write or show the letter(s) that represent the initial sound. (*g*) Have children repeat with you several times the picture name and its initial sound and letter. (*goat*, /g/, *g*) Then, one at a time, show other pictures whose names begin with the same sound and spelling. Help children name each picture, identify the initial sound, and tell the letter(s) that stand for that sound. Conclude by asking how the picture names are alike.

**TIP: Pronouncing letter-sounds** When modeling letter-sounds for children, say the sound precisely and don’t add “uh” to the end. For example, the sound /g/ should be said like the end of the word *pig*, not “guh.”



## 2. Reteaching Letter-Sounds Using Words

**Purpose:** Review letter-sound associations

**Materials:** (optional) Letter cards, word cards

Write or show the letter(s) that represent the letter-sound you want to reteach, such as *th*. Have children name the letter(s) and say the sound the letter(s) represent. (*th/th/*) Then say several words that begin or end with the target letter-sound, such as *think*, *bath*, *cloth*, *thanks*. Have children repeat each word you say and tell if they hear the sound at the beginning or end of the word. One at a time, write or show decodable words with the target letter-sound and spelling. Read each word and have children point out the letter(s) in the word that represent the target letter-sound. (*th*) Have children read the words as you point to them in random order.



### 3. Going on a Letter Hunt

**Purpose:** Identify letters that represent given sounds

**Materials:** Words in the classroom, (optional) word cards, (optional) laser or pen light

Say a letter-sound that has been taught, such as /t/ in *tent*. Tell children to look at words displayed in signs, word walls, lists, and other places for the letter(s) that stand for the sound you said. For fun, tape word cards in unusual but visible places. Have children point to or tell you where they found the letter(s). If you have a laser or pen light, tell them to shine it on the letter(s). Then have everyone name the letter(s) and say the sound the letter(s) represent. (t/t/) For this activity, children could point out *t* in a *th* word for the sound /t/. Don't explain the difference unless children have been taught the other sound-spelling.

**Variation** Write or show the letter(s) that stand for one sound. Have children identify objects or pictures in the room whose names contain that sound.

### 4. Using Letter-Sound Boxes

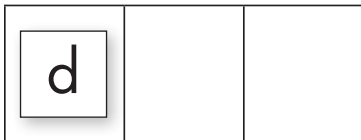
**Purpose:** Identify letter-sounds in various positions in words

**Materials:** Papers showing three connected boxes, letter cards

On a piece of paper, draw three large connected boxes as shown and make a copy for each child. Give each child a card with the letter(s) that stand for a letter-sound you want to reinforce, such as *d/d/*. Then say a word that has that letter-sound at the beginning, middle, or end, such as *dog*, *puddle*, *sad*. Have children place the letter card in one of the boxes to show if the sound for that letter is at the beginning, middle, or end of the word. If needed, repeat the word slowly, emphasizing the letter-sound.

**Variation** If children know more than one spelling for a sound, you can focus on one spelling at a time.

**TIP: Practicing with and without letters** Phonemic awareness activities are oral activities that focus on individual sounds within words without reference to letters. If children are struggling with the concept of letters standing for sounds, give them practice with the Phonemic Awareness Activities. Once children correctly identify individual sounds in words, have them practice connecting sounds to letters.

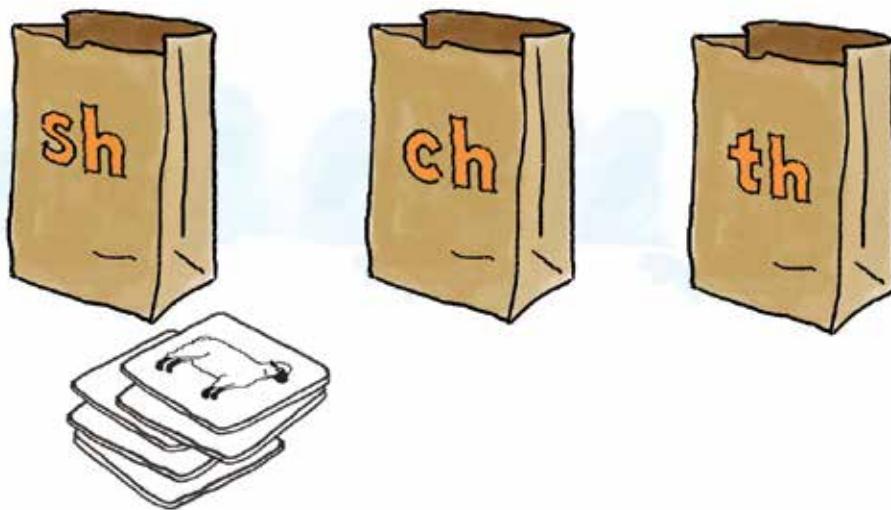


## 5. Sorting Pictures by Letter-Sounds

**Purpose:** *Distinguish between letter-sounds*

**Materials:** *Pictures, paper bags*

Gather sets of pictures whose names begin with the letters and sounds you want to reinforce, such as *c/k/*, *o/o/*, *g/g/* or *sh/sh/*, *ch/ch/*, *th/th/*. On separate paper bags, write the letter(s) that represent each of the sounds. Tape or draw a picture of something whose name begins with the letter(s) written on each paper bag. Mix up the other pictures and have children take turns choosing a picture, naming it, and placing it in the bag that shows the letter(s) that stand for the beginning sound in the picture name. As a child places his card in the bag, have everyone say the picture name, the letter-sound, and the letter(s) that stand for the sound—for example, “*Sheep* begins with /sh/. *Sheep* begins with *sh*.” Conclude by reviewing the pictures in a bag and having children tell how the picture names are alike.



**Variation 1** For a simpler activity, show one bag and have most of the picture names begin with the letter-sound represented on that bag. If children often mix up two letter-sounds, such as *b/b/* and *d/d/*, have them sort for those two letter-sounds. The more letter-sounds children have to sort, the more challenging the activity.

**Variation 2** Have children sort for letter-sounds in other positions. For example, write *n\_\_*, *\_\_n*, *\_\_n* on separate bags. Have children sort pictures whose names have the sound /n/ in the beginning, middle, or end as in *nest*, *pencil*, *train*. You could also have them sort for different sounds at the ends of words. For example, write *\_\_g* and *\_\_d* on separate bags and have them sort for final /g/ or /d/.