

Two Teaching Versions of the Alphabet

In this manual, we have included two versions of the alphabet. The first version is a simple version. This is the original Sight and Sound Reading alphabet. It contains no pictures. We believe it is best to start teaching the alphabet using this format first. It is easy to highlight the upper case letters because they are up high. Likewise, the lower case letters are down low. Additionally, it is very easy for a beginning reader to see the differences in font for the confusing letters a/a, g/g, l/I, J/J, t/t. Lastly, it is easy to spot the vowels. The consonants are in white, the vowels are in pink. (The letter Y is half white/half pink because it is sometimes a consonant and sometimes a vowel).

Once the beginning reader has trained his/her eye to see the differences between vowels and consonants, the different fonts, and the upper and lower case letters – the fun, colorful, picture filled alphabet can be introduced. The student can start to learn the letter sounds – and the magic of the alphabet – making and reading words.

Begin Teaching Upper Case Letters First?

In this manual, we have decided to teach to the students the concept of upper case letters first. We have decided this because too many students beginning school and lessons have already learned to recognize upper case letters. (We wish more parents and companies would emphasize and teach children to read and recognize lower case letters first. Most letters children read are lower case –upper case letters only start names and sentences!)

After Day 1, we then teach the concept of lower case letters to the students. Many times, this is the first introduction students have at seeing lower case letters. A lot of time should be spent teaching the concept of lower case letters. Ninety percent of the letters we read are lower case, so children need to recognize and understand when to use them.

After introducing the concept of lower case letters, we begin introducing the different variations/fonts found in lower and upper case letters. (The confusing differences in a/a, g/g, l/I, J/J, t/t). It is extremely important to explicitly teach the font differences of these letters. Many beginning readers find this concept very confusing when they come across a word in a book or elsewhere that has a letter that looks like something they have never read before.

Teaching Day One of Upper row, Upper case, Capital letters, Big letters

Before beginning the teaching of this skill, you may want to cover or hide the printed upper case “I” and “J” on your room alphabet until you are ready to teach this skill separately. Recognizing the difference between the printed form and the letters that we write, is a skill that should be taught separately. It is very confusing to beginning readers.

- Teacher, with pointer in hand, says
- "Let's sing the alphabet song. As we sing the song, I will point to the same letters in this top row, the upper row, of our room alphabet." (Point and sing.)
- "Super! Now, let's count how many letters there are in this upper row of the alphabet." (Teacher always uses a pointer, as each letter is counted)
- "Wow, 26 letters! Today, we are only going to talk about these 26 letters on the top row, the upper row. All of these letters on the upper row are sometimes called Upper Case Letters, they are sometimes called Capital Letters, or they are even called Big Letters. I know it seems silly and confusing that these upper case, capital or big letters should have so many names. That is because these upper case letters think they are BIGGER and more important than the other letters on the bottom or LOWER ROW. (Teacher, always point to each upper case letter as you talk about it.)
- "This is the upper case 'A'. It can also be called the capital 'A' or the big 'A'. (Teacher: if you have a child in your room whose name begins with the letter 'A', talk about their name. Write it on the board. Mention that it begins with a capital 'A', upper case 'A' or big 'A'. You can also use the name of our country, 'America', to help emphasize this point.) Because it is a name of someone, or some place, it is very important.

WE ALWAYS USE A CAPITAL, UPPER CASE OR BIG LETTER TO BEGIN A NAME. Keep repeating that all names begin with an upper case, capital letter. (Teacher: point to the upper case letter 'B', or a letter that begins a child's name in your class, and do the same thing. Then, select a child to come up and point to the first letter of their name. Keep repeating this exercise with other children and their name. Always interchange the words capital letter, upper case letter or big letter as you talk about the letters.)