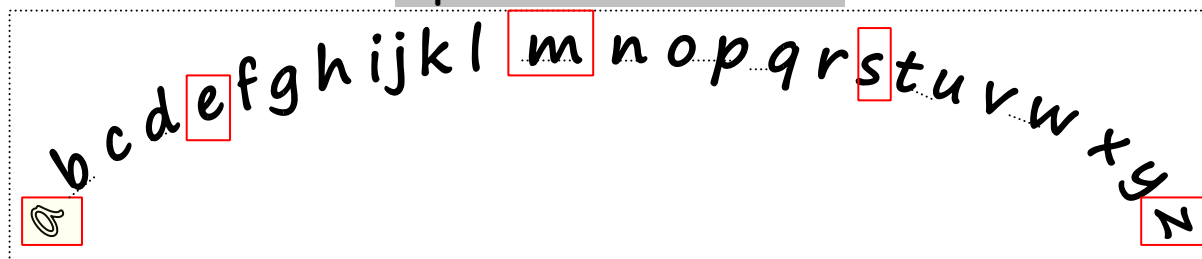


Ideas for Games to play to support Literacy Skills

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Alphabet Rainbow Games



These games can be adapted to suit all abilities and help improve Alphabetical Order, Dictionary Skills and Spelling.

Teaching the alphabet in quartiles, (that is the 4 sections of an English dictionary not mathematical quarters), helps to lessen the memory load when searching for words, speeds up the sequencing process and enables learners to focus on learning each part of the sequence in a manageable chunk.

So when looking up a word, users can go straight to that section, not trail through the whole alphabet and dictionary from A.

English dictionary quartiles need to be learnt, they are A-E E-M M-S S-Z (see the red boxed letters in the arc above)

A mnemonic like **All Elephants Must Squirt** or **All Envelopes Must Seal** may help learn the key quartile letters, (most pupils know Z is the last letter).

Try opening a standard English dictionary in the middle and it will usually be the **M** section , then split the **A-M** section in half and you get to **E** etc). It is really important and useful to demonstrate the purpose of the quartiles to your pupils! These dictionaries have colour coded quartiles to help.

The Jolly Phonics Dictionary. (jollylearning.co.uk)

Oxford Children's Coloured Dictionary (global.oup.com/education)

To play these games you will need wooden or magnetic alphabet letters in an arc or on playing type cards . Ideally start with lower case letters as that is how words are usually written. Mark up with an **orientation line** any letter cards those could be easily reversed or inverted, for example:

b d p q n u m w



Readymade Alphabet cards, to print on card, are often freely available from various online literacy resources. Be mindful that whilst some look attractive the font may not be very Dyslexia friendly! Try abcteach.com and TES resources for Sassoon Font or similar alphabet cards.

Early games

Start these games by laying out the quartile markers. Begin with M in the middle the A, E S and Z with spaces in between.

Use the remaining letters to take turns to play the following games. Letters or cards can be shared or put in a box or bag.

Activity 1

Practise putting them out in a rainbow arc setting out the quartile markers first. (see above)

Practise sorting the letters quickly into each section - e.g. just the ones between **e** and **m**, just a general sort to start with in a pile, as this helps identify quickly in which section to locate specific letters ; then do the same activity laying the letters in the section in the correct sequence. The winner is the first person to complete their letter section correctly.

Activity 2

Set the whole alphabet arc out. Ask the pupil to cover their eyes or look away, whilst 2/3 letters are removed . How fast can they tell you what's missing. Make this harder by closing the gaps left behind. Keep replacing and changing the letters removed. The middle two quartiles are the hardest.

Activity 3

Practise using these skills to quickly find sections of the dictionary. E .g " how fast can you get to the **o** section etc., which section will I find the word **orange**

These games are more advanced.

Game 1.

Set out quartile markers A E M S and Z as described above. Share out the remaining letter cards between players. Take it in turns to lay one letter card. Players can place their letter card down anywhere in the arc in the correct sequence **provided it is being**

laid next to another letter already there. e.g. if **r s t** are already laid in the arc then a player with a **q** or a **u** can lay those letters down.

If a player has letters that can't be laid they have to wait till their next turn. (For older and more confident players, this can get very strategic as they hold back any key letters to try and stop others winning!)

Play continues until the whole alphabet is complete and the winner is the first player to use up all their letters. This game is like the card game Racing Demon and can be done at speed.

Game 2 for spellings

Set out the alphabet arc. Remove the **vowels** and lay them in a vertical row under the arc. (see below)

bcd fgh jklmn pqrst vwxyz
 e
 i o
 u

Take turns to add letters to the vowels to create words .E.g. sh **e** lf

Shelf uses 4 consonants so would score 4 . Keep going until all options have been exhausted. The winner is the person with highest score. A variation is to have two alphabets and each player works on their own in a limited time e.g. 5 mins. The winner is the player who has used the most consonants. Another variation is to have an extra set of vowels to use under the rainbow.

Arcs on the Interactive Whiteboard

For teachers with access to interactive whiteboards or the software equivalent on their laptops, it is worth creating a permanent alphabet rainbow page that can be used over and over again . It saves time and allows all the colour and fonts to be exactly as required. For alphabet arc sorts a single letter arc will suffice. For general class spelling activities, **infinity letter options** are useful (i.e. when any letter is used there is always another one remaining in the arc) .

This also allows for double and repeated letters and vowel combinations when required.

It then becomes a standard spelling resource that the whole class can use when trying to spell words and that the teacher can see from anywhere in the classroom.

Another useful resource is Smart Kids (smartkids.co.uk) who sell readymade rainbow arc mats with magnetic tactile letters to use with them.