

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) helps lessen the load when searching for words and enables learners to focus on learning each part.

English dictionary quartiles are A-E E-M M-S S-Z (try opening the dictionary in the middle and it will be the M section , then split the A-M section in half and you get to E etc)

To play these games you will need alphabet letters in an arc or cards . Ideally start with lower case letters. Mark up with an orientation line any letters that could be reversed , for example:

b d p q n u m w

Share the letters out then take turns to:

Early games

Practise putting them out in a rainbow arc setting out the quartile markers first .

Practise sorting the letters quickly into each section - e.g.. just the ones between e and m

The winner is the first person to use up their letters.

Set the whole alphabet out . Child covers eyes 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.

Practise using these skills to quickly finding sections of the dictionary. E .g " how fast can you get to the o section etc.

Game 1.

Set out quartile markers A E M S Z. Place remaining letter cards in a pile or in a bag.

Take it in turns to take a letter card from pile or bag .

Try to lay that letter down in the sequence but it must be laid down next to another letter already there.

If it can't be laid the user keeps it until it can be laid .(for older players this can get strategic!)

Play continues till the whole alphabet is complete and the winner is the first player to use all their letters .

Game 2 for spellings

Set out the alphabet arc. Remove the vowels and lay them in a vertical row under the arc.

Take turns to add letters to the vowels to create words

E.g sh e lf

This uses 4 consonants so would score 4 . Keep going until all options have been exhausted .

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. Winner is the player who has used the most consonants.

Another variation is to have an extra set of vowels to use in the rainbow .

Syllable Games

Long words are best learnt in smaller chunks or syllables . Remind children to listen to syllables and tap them out or use the chin rule . (place a hand under the chin. The chin goes down for each syllable- try it for Saturday)

Remind them that many long words are made up of smaller ones they may already know.

Eg carpet car pet. dragon drag on

Remind them that every syllable must have at least one vowel or a y (substituting for a vowel sound)

E.g ba by. my Cat er pil lar

Where there is a double letter , syllables are usually splitting them. E.g mum / my hap / pin / ess

To play the games below, create a pack of longer words to be learnt or to practise. E.g high frequency words like **January** or technical vocabulary like **electrical separate**

Game 1

Place the cards face down on the table . Take turns to choose a card. Read it and say the syllables .

E.g January Jan /u / a /ry. 4 points

For each syllable score a point. For spelling, cover the word and try and spell it a syllable at a time .

(use plastic letters or a whiteboard) score a point for each correct syllable .

For reading just score syllables read. If the word cannot be read , say the word and replace it on the table face down.

When all cards have been used count up scores to see who has won.

Game 2

Use a board game like Ludo or Snakes and Ladders that usually requires a dice and counting places.

Instead of the dice use the word cards face down in a pile . Players take turns to select a card, read it , count the syllables and move that number on the board . (Then spell it if for spelling and reading) Move further on for each syllable correctly spelt . Replace cards to bottom of the pack. Winner as in normal play who completes the board first.

Words within words

Write out or build with letters , long word spellings. Take turns to write down as many little words that can be seen in the larger one.

E.g. **Dragon.** Drag rag ago on (without swapping the sequence of the letters.)

using only those letters how many other words can they build.

Long word jig saws

Use long strips of card or paper to write out spellings , then chop them up into syllables or chunks

Eg. Sat ur day Sup pose

Mix up two or three words and ask your child to see how fast he/she can rebuild them.

For younger children cut the words using diagonal cuts so each word is self corrective.

Adapt a board game

Replace *throwing a dice* for any board games (e.g. Snakes and Ladders or Ludo), with a pack of word cards with words to learn for reading and spelling. Limit the pack to 15 - 20 max so they are repeated (i.e. when used the card goes to the bottom of the pile.) Include some words already known for encouragement.

Put numbers from 1- 6 randomly on the cards to replace dice numbers.

Place the pile of numbered cards face down .Take it in turns to either take a card and read or cover and spell (writing or using plastic letters etc). If correct move the number of spaces indicated on the card and place at bottom of the pile. If incorrect the adult reads the card or corrects the spelling and no move is made. If almost right allow move of one place. Keep going until the board game is finished . Many of the words will have come around again. When adults are playing too their spelling can be checked by the children. |To make it more challenging have a separate pile of tricky words for adults to spell!

Noughts and Crosses can be adapted by allowing a turn each time a word is read /spelt correctly.