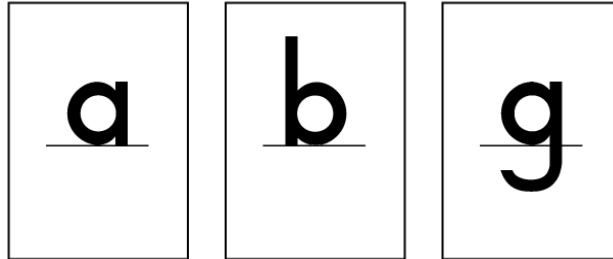


Assembly instructions for *Textured Letters*

1. Print the template sheets. Loosely glue them to the back of
 - a. suede plastic adhesive sheet or adhesive felt
 - b. textured wall paper or other textured paper
 - c. felt or other cloth, e.g. furry or rough
 - d. very fine sandpaper, etc.
2. Print page Underline.pdf on 26 sheets of A4 card at least 200gsm thick. Cut out the letters and stick/glue them on the sheets, one per page, so that they sit on the line. Have an extra sheet for a title page (with directions for “a” on the back. See 5 below.)



3. Find pictures to cut out and stick around each letter. Only use the most common sound for each letter.

E.g., “a” for “apple” not “acorn” or “arm”

“e” for “egg” not “emu”

“i” for “igloo” not “ice-cream”

“o” for “orange” not “ocean” or “orchestra”

“u” for “umbrella” not “uniform”

“c” for “cat” not “circle” or “cheese”

“g” for “girl” not “giraffe”

“s” for “sun” not “shell”

“t” for “tap” or “tree” not “thistle” ...

There are pictures to print for some hard to get letters. Use a strong glue that does not make the paper wrinkle, e.g. a glue stick used by scrap bookers.

4. Put a brightly coloured spot at the starting position (e.g. use very strong glue to attach a sequin, sticker or metallic star, etc.) and mark the directions to move as shown below. Use a permanent, fine black pen.
5. Print Directions.pdf and glue each page facing the appropriate page in your book with strong, non-wrinkling glue. (E.g., glue “b – Top to bottom, up and round” on the back of page “a” and facing page “b”.) These directions are to help parents, grandparents, teachers and teacher aides give consistent verbal cues. Memory aids, rhymes and position on the line are also given. Alternatively, print Underline.pdf on the back of Directions.pdf b to z (and one extra for z) if the card is thick enough. Then you can and glue the letters and pictures directly onto the appropriate pages.
6. If you and your children develop other cues to remember directions, sounds and orientation of letters, use those. E.g.
 - h – It’s a long way down and a little hop back up.
 - k – “In and out” instead of “down, down”.
 - m – The mountain has two humps.
 - p – Drill the post hole into the ground, then come back up the hole to put up the fence.
 - u – “cup” – Make sure you have the cup up the right way to put the water in.
 - w – Looks like wavy water.
7. Punch holes in each A4 sheet and put them in a 2 ring binder or join them with string or elastic to make a book.

Rationale / Instructions

It is important to use **as many senses** and **learning styles as possible** when teaching children to read and write. This helps you discover your child's preferred learning style as well as reinforcing learning with a wide variety of experiences. *Textured Letters* uses the sense of **touch** and the **kinaesthetic** learning style.

A *Textured Letters* book is a useful resource for children to refer to when they are learning to write. They can become increasingly independent in checking the starting point, directions to move and orientation of a letter. It is also helpful for them to see how the letter sits on the line when they use lined paper.

Encourage your child to trace each letter with a finger, starting at the dot and moving in the direction(s) shown. Remind your child "back and round ..." or just say the sound of the letter as you show him or her the directions to trace each letter. Trace the whole circle or the whole stroke in one movement.

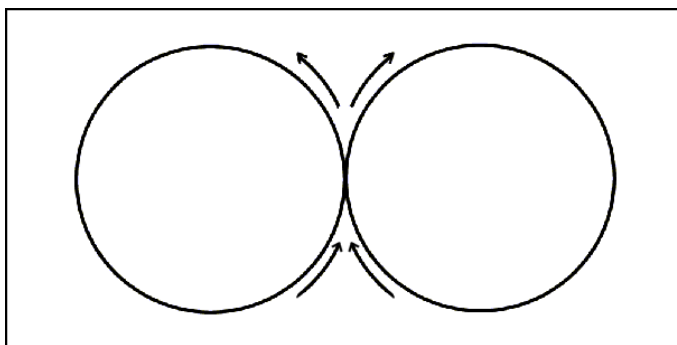
Encourage children to use correct starting points and directions early in the process of learning to write letters, but without dampening their enthusiasm. It is difficult to change habit patterns once they are set.

Starting at the right place and moving in the right direction is helpful in developing an efficient handwriting style later and is useful in helping to overcome b/d/p/q confusion.

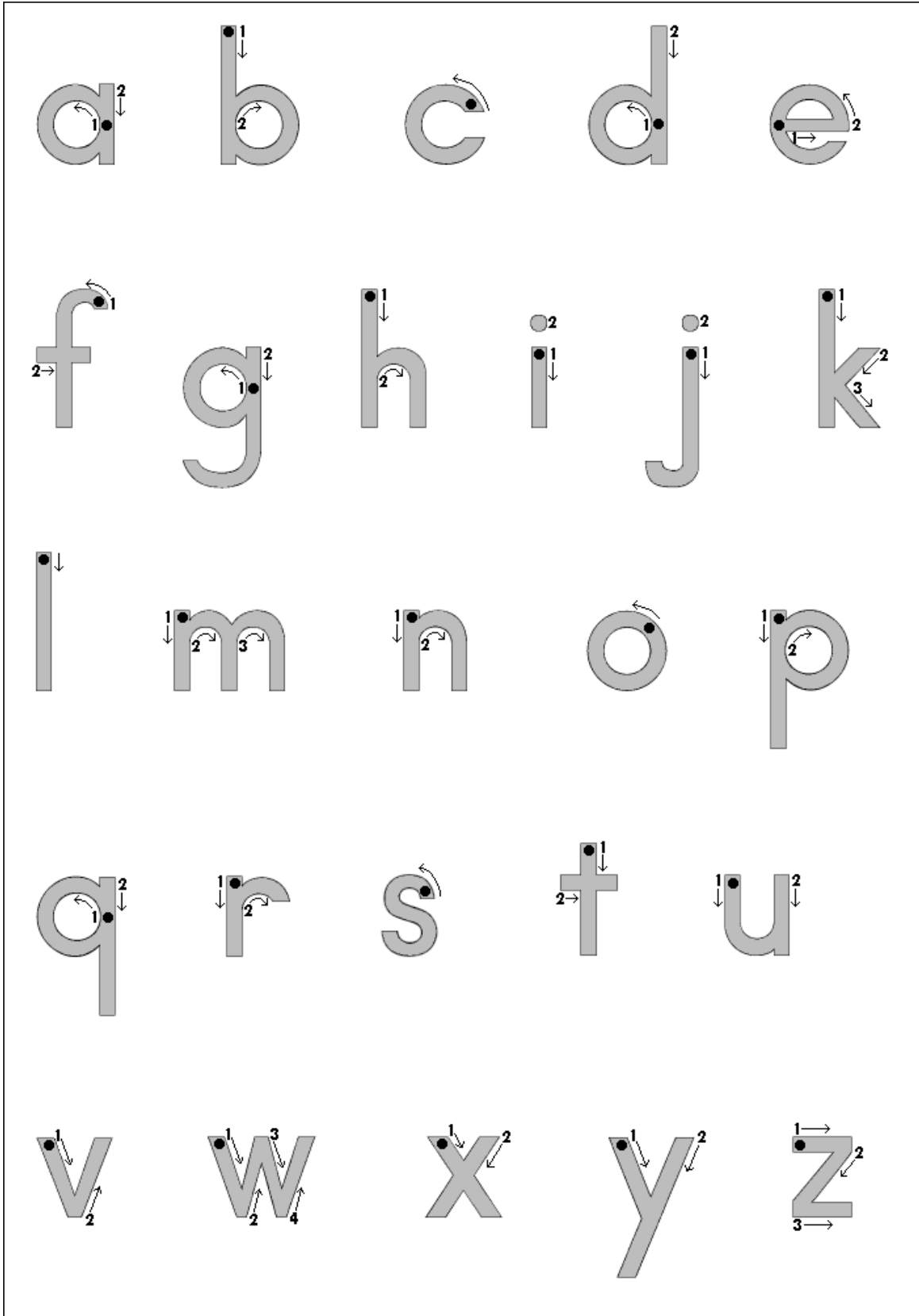
[When reading or writing "a", "b", "d", "g", "p" or "q" (going from left to right), do you meet the "ball" or the "stick" first? Draw that first. Start the circle at the join and go up. If the circle is first, go anticlockwise ("back and round"); if it is second, go clockwise ("up and round"). Always start the stroke at the top.]

Practise making a "racetrack" in the air using large arm movements. Also draw it on paper, with a stick in sand, with finger paint, etc. This reinforces the correct direction for drawing the circles and also gets both sides of the brain working together. Do it eight or ten times continuously. It is essential to move in the directions shown.

A "racetrack".



Once a firm foundation of starting points and directions has been established, "ball and stick" writing can be easily adapted to whatever beginner handwriting style is taught in schools in your area. It is easy to learn to add the slope, with or without a kick, as the whole class learns. However, if dyslexic children experience difficulty with "joined" writing, let them continue with a style with which they are comfortable.



Starting points and directions to mark on the letters in a *Textured Letters* book.