# Letter Rhymes

#### An Alphabet Book to Teach the Sounds of Letters

**Third Edition** 

J. Jeanne Wherrett

First Edition, 1998, 2008, 2013-21 Second Edition (version 2) with letters to trace, 2021 Third Edition, © J. Jeanne Wherrett, 2022-24 All rights reserved.

> "There is a balm in Gilead ..." (African-American spiritual)

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*Letter Rhymes* is designed to empower parents, to help them lay a firm foundation for their children to learn to read successfully\*.

Parents, grandparents, friends, older siblings, etc. can

- Help children identify the initial sound in words (<u>phonemic</u> <u>awareness</u>) just find the pictures on each page.
- Extend children's <u>vocabulary</u>, and general knowledge, through interesting conversations and researching together to find answers to their questions just talk about the pictures.
- Learn the most common sound of each letter, as opposed to its name or the many possible sounds (introductory <u>phonics</u>).

It is multisensory:

- Trace the letter start at the dot, follow the arrows.
- Make the shape of the letter with hands or body "Can you find the picture or pictures of the child doing this? Can you do it? Can Grandpa do it? At least one is impossible, even if you have a twin!"

The aim is to help children learn the key skills above in an interesting and engaging way, so that they can be successful when they come to learn to read.

It is important when you read the rhymes to say the sound of the letter, **<u>not</u> <u>its name</u>**.

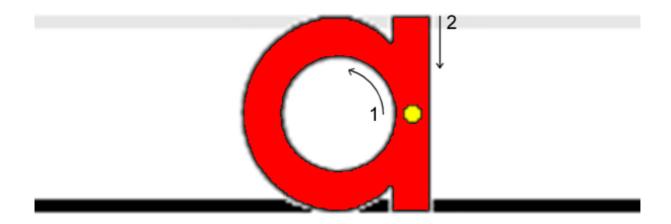
E.g., /a/ (not "ay") is for apple ... /mmmm/ (not "em") is for mountain ...

Make sounds long wherever possible - /mmm.../ not /muh/; /nnn.../ not /nuh/; /fff.../ not /fuh/; /vvv.../ not /vuh/; /lll.../ not /luh/; /rrr.../ not /ruh/; /sss.../ not /suh/; /zzz.../ not /zuh/.

If children already know the name of a letter, just say something like, "That's good. That's the name of the letter. Do you remember its sound?"

Most importantly, go at your child's pace and follow their interests. If they are enjoying it, they will be learning. Keep sessions short. Try to stop just before they lose interest. Don't make it too formal, just have fun together.

<sup>\*</sup> Dr Ken Rowe, Committee Chair of The National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy conducted in Australia in 2005, listed five features of a successful reading program - <u>phonemic awareness</u> (the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in oral language), <u>phonics</u> (the relationships between letters and sounds), fluency, <u>vocabulary</u> and text comprehension. He also stressed the importance of parents reading to their children, especially during the formative preschool years



### "Back and round, top and down."

Can your child find these words starting with an /a/ sound?

a (apple / bite the apple), abseil, acrobats, ambulance, anchor, antlers, ants, arrows (two sorts of arrows), astronaut, avocados, axe (US ax)













**C** is for apple all round and fat.

On the stem on the side

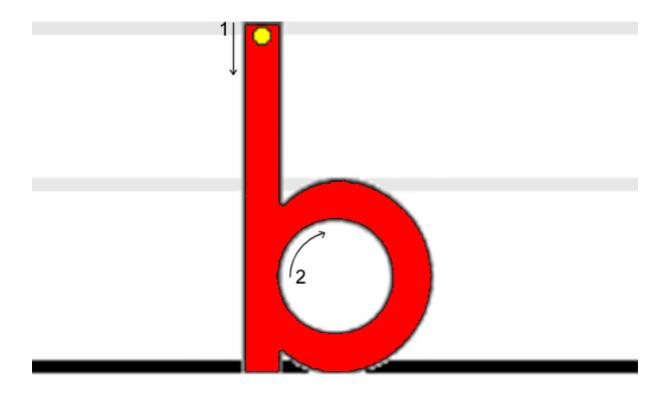
you can hang your hat.







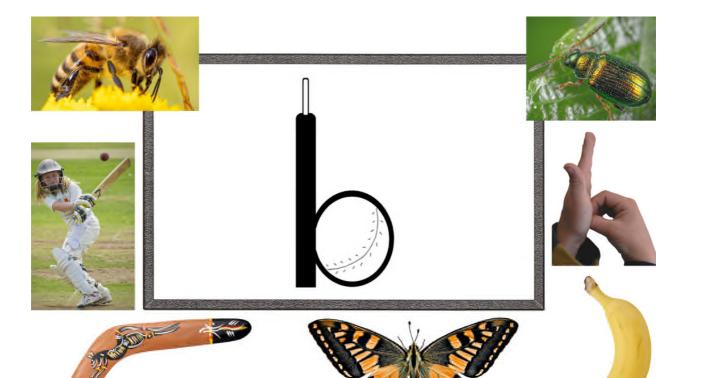




### "Top to bottom, up and round."

Can your child find these words starting with a /b/ sound?

b, balloon, banana, bat, bat and ball, bear with cubs, bee, beetle, bird, boy on bike/bicycle, boomerang, bucket, butterfly





**b** is for bounce,

bat and ball.

The bat comes first

as you bash your ball.

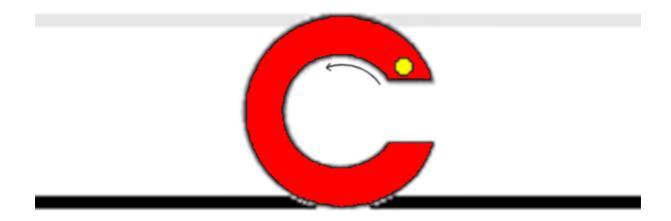












### "Back and round."

Can your child find these words starting with a /k/ sound ("c" for cat)?

c (stroke the cat / curly /k/), camel and calf, candles, car and caravan, carrots, cat, caterpillar, clock, clouds, clown, cogs, crab, cricket, crocodile, cub





# **C** is for cat

curled comfortably here.

## That cat can catch mice



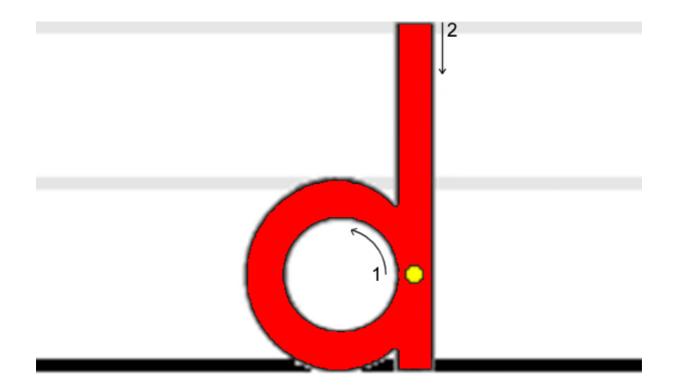












### "Back and round, top and down."

Can your child find these words starting with a /d/ sound?

d (Bang the drum with your drumstick.), Dalmatian dog, dancers, dice, didgeridoo, dinosaur, doll, dolphins, donkeys, dragon, dragonfly, duckling, ducks









First comes the drum



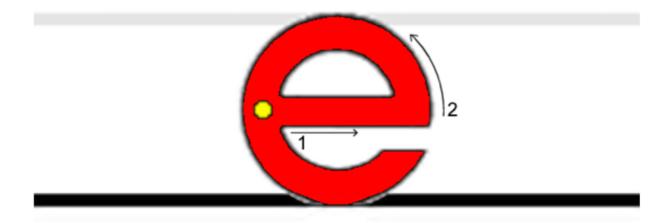
and then the stick.







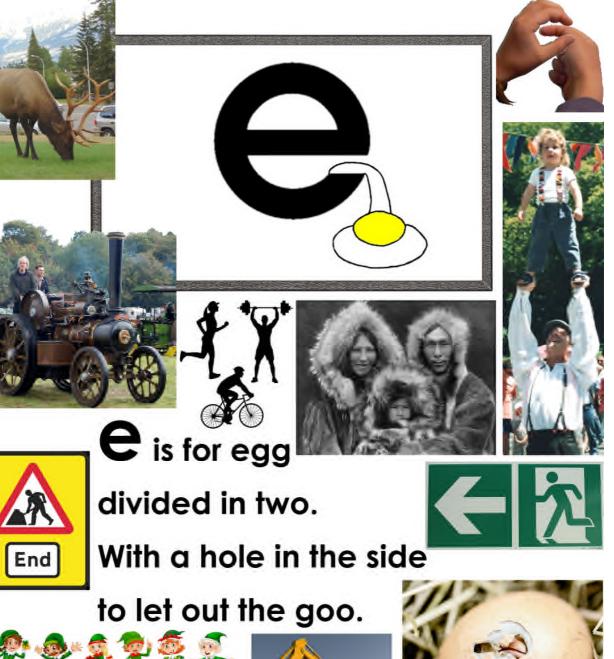




### "Left to right, back and round."

Can your child find these words starting with an /e/ sound?

e, echidna, egg hatching, elephant with calf, elbow, elk, elves, end road work sign, engine (steam traction engine), entertainers, Eskimos (but, nowadays we usually say Inuit), excavator, exercise, exit sign





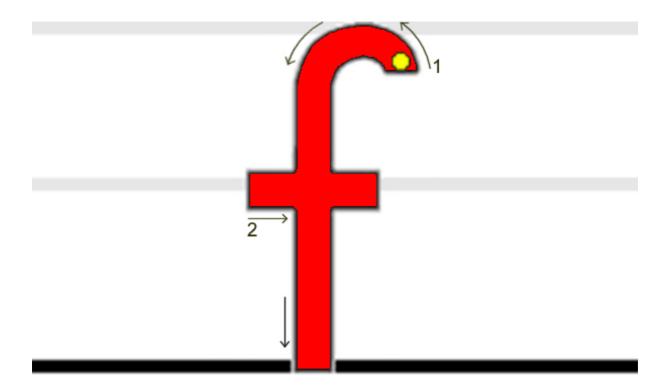








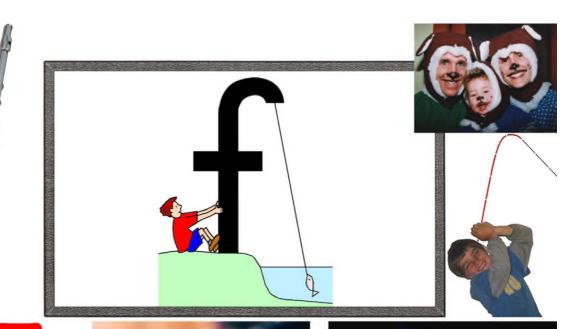




### "Back, round and down, across."

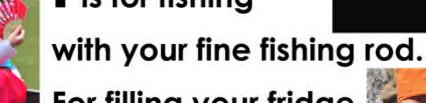
Can your child find these words starting with a /ffff/ sound?

f (The fishing rod bends when you catch a big fish.), fan, feathers, feet, fire, fire trucks and fire fighters, fish, five, flowers, flute, frog, funny faces





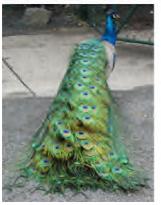




For filling your fridge

# catch lots of cod.

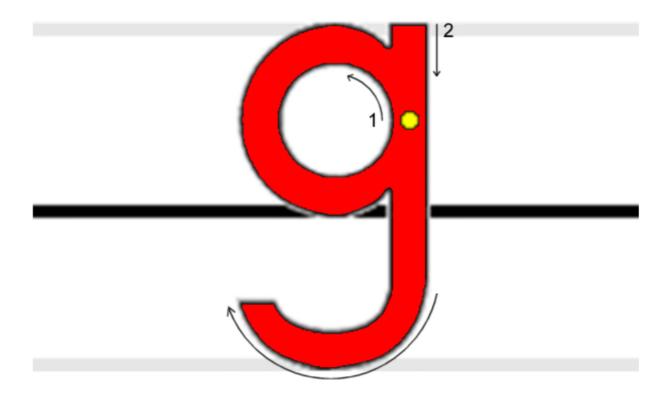








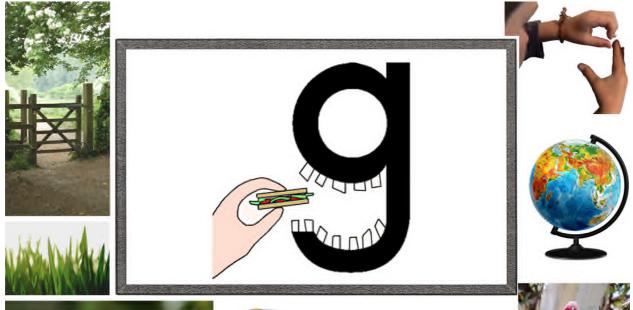




### "Back and round, down and round."

Can your child find these words starting with a /g/ sound?

g, galahs, garden, gate, girl with guineapig, glider, globe, greedy goat gobbles grapes, green grass, goose, gorilla, grasshopper, guitar







**g** is for gobble, goat and "good grief".

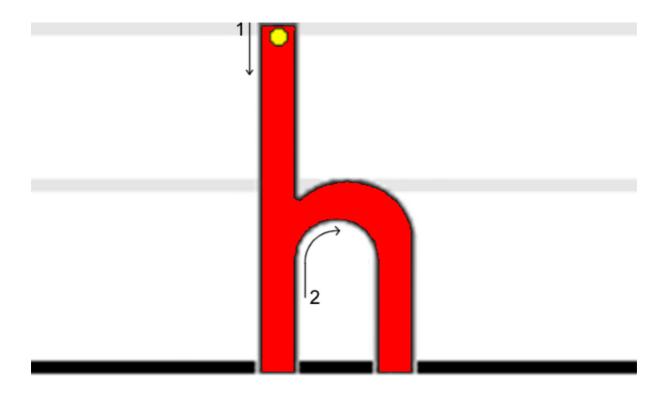
My goat ate your grapes. 🎆

He's not really a thief.





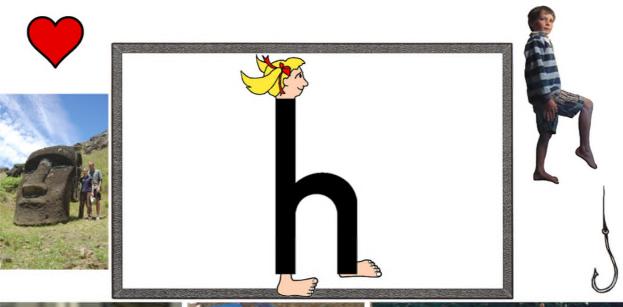




### "Top to bottom, up and over."

Can your child find these words starting with a /h/ sound?

h (hop), hands/handshake, hang glider, harp, hat, head (Easter Island), heart, helicopter, hives, hook, horses, huskies, hydrofoil







# is for hop





### Henrietta hates shoes



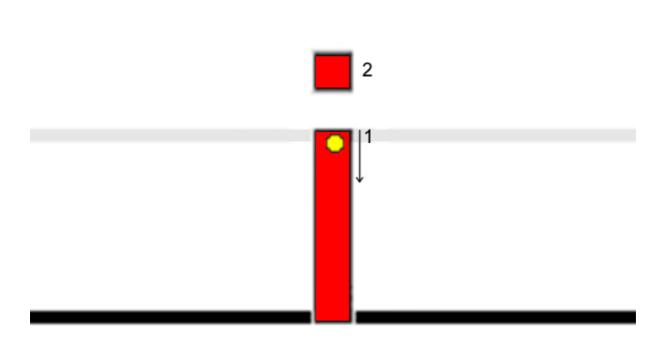
### so she often must hop.











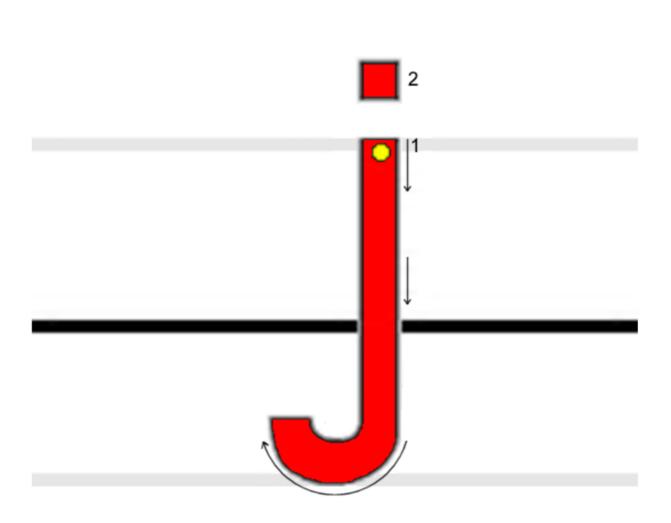
### "Top to bottom, then the dot."

Can your child find these words starting with an /i/ sound?

i (Remember the dot.) igloo, iguana, ill, inches, India, Indian\* (Native American/Indigenous) chief, infant, ink, insects (ant, bee, butterfly, dragonfly, fly, ladybird/lady beetle/US ladybug, praying mantis), inside (a tent)

 $\ast$  "/i/ for Indian, an American Indian chief, or ..." (Preferred terms nowadays vary.)



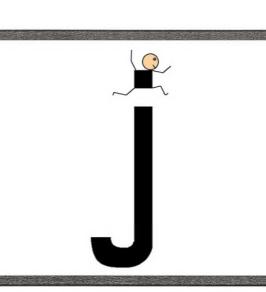


### "Down and round, then the dot."

Can your child find these words starting with a /j/ sound?

j, jacket, jar of jam, jeep, jelly babies, jelly beans, jellyfish, jet, jigsaw, joey, joker, jug, juggle/juggler, juice, jump











is for jump

right over the letter.

**Even James and Jiemba** 

# couldn't do better.





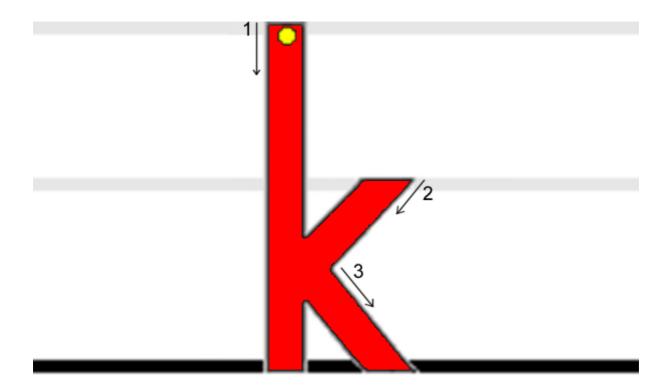








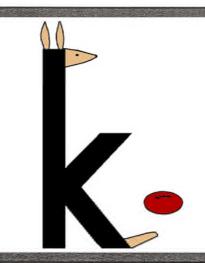




#### "Down, down, down."

Can your child find these words starting with a /k/ sound (kicking kangaroo)? k (kicking /k/), kangaroos, karate, kayaks, key, kick, king, kite, kitten, kiwi, kiwi fruit, koalas, kookaburras













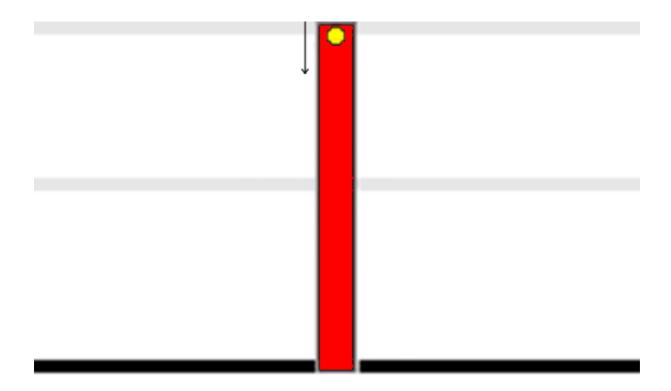
K is for kangaroo who loves to kick. I think he'd be good

for your team to pick.





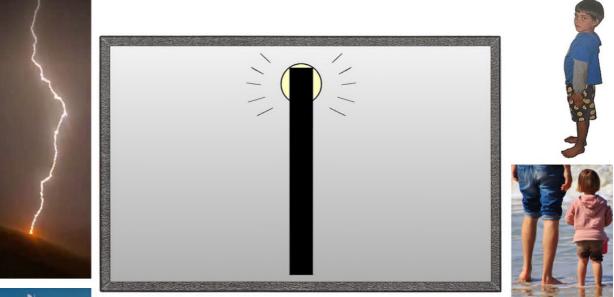




"Top to bottom."

Can your child find these words starting with an /IIIII/ sound?

l (like a tall, thin lamppost), ladybird (or lady beetle, US ladybug), lake, lambs, legs, lighthouse, lightning, lion, lips, lizard, lyrebird







is for lamppost

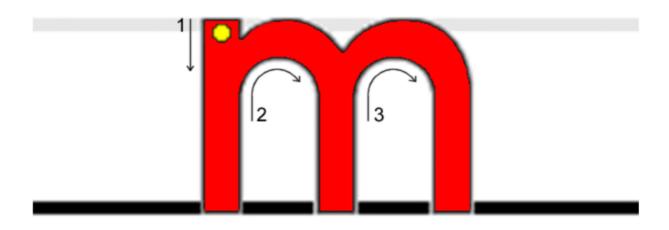
tall and thin.



The light at the bottom) can be rather dim.



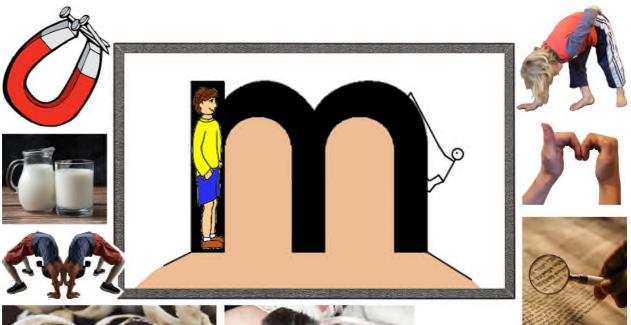




### "Top to bottom, up and over, up and over."

Can your child find these words starting with an /mmmm/ sound?

m, magnet, magnifying glass, masks, match, microscope, milk, moon, mountain (Cradle Mountain, Tasmania), mouse, mushrooms











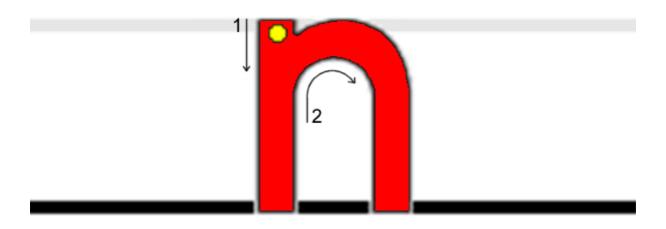


which is mighty to climb. "Mmmm..." says the man, "Will I make it this time?"







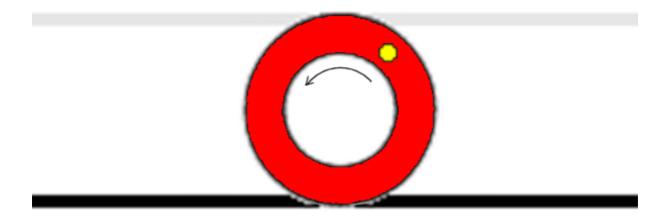


### "Top to bottom, up and over."

Can your child find these words starting with an /nnnn/ sound?

n (noise), nail, nativity set, neck, needle, nest, net, nib, nine, nose, notes (music notes), numbat, numbers, nuts



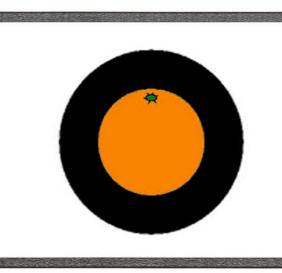


### "Back and round."

Can your child find these words starting with an /o/ sound?

o (Can you change the /o/ into an orange?), observatory, octagon (stop sign), octopus, olives and olive oil, opera house, oranges, origami, Oscar the octopus, ostrich with chicks, otters, oxen













O is for orange and octopus too.

observing you.



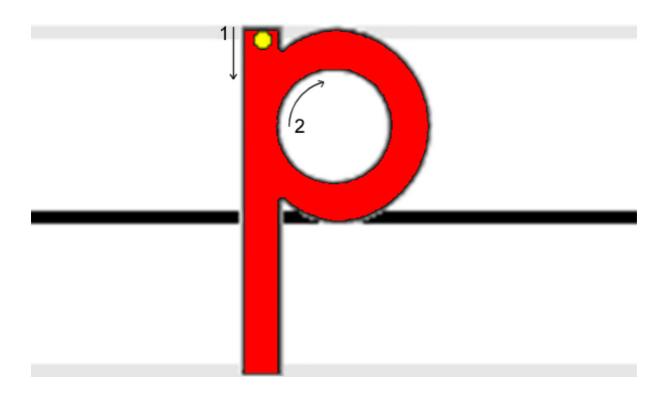










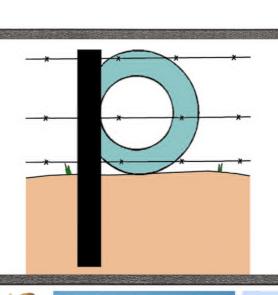


### "Top to bottom, up and round."

Can your child find these words starting with a /p/ sound?

p, panda, parachutes, peacock, peas, pelican, penguin with chick, piano, pig and piglet, pineapple, plane and pilot (?), planets, platypus















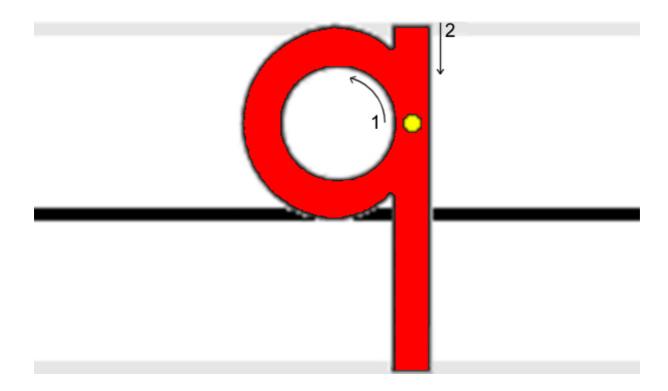


dug deep in the ground. The post must come first

or your fence will fall down.





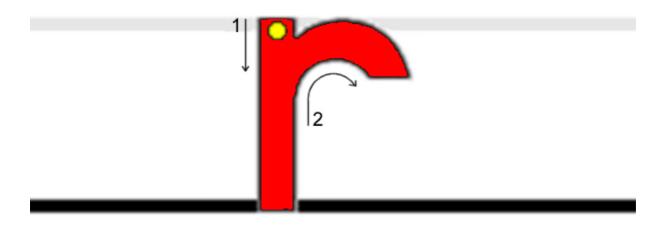


### "Back and round, top and down."

Can your child find these words starting with a /kw/ sound (qu words)?

q (Can you make the "qu" quack like a duck?), quack, quail, quarter, quartet, queen, question mark, quiet, quill, quilt, quiver, quoll

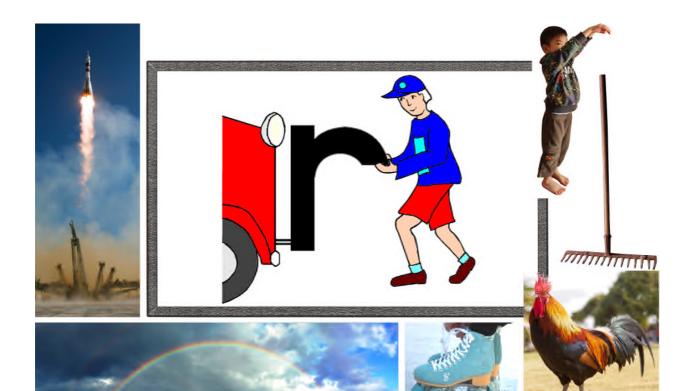




#### "Top to bottom, up and over."

Can your child find these words starting with a /rrrr/ sound?

r, rabbit, rainbow, rake, rat, reindeer, rhinoceros and calf, ring, robot, rocket, roller skates, rooster, rose





**I** is for ring, riddle and right.

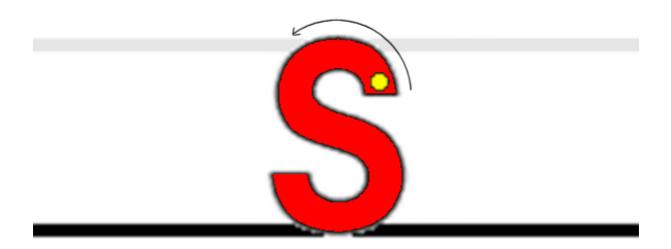
"Rrrr" says the old car

as it tries to start. 🥌





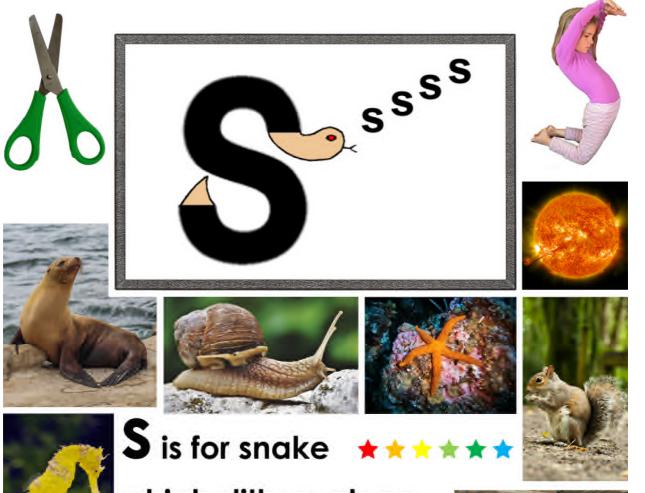




#### "Back and round."

Can your child find these words starting with a /ssss/ sound?

s, scissors, seahorse, seal, snail, snake, snowman, squirrel, stable, starfish, stars, sun, swans with cygnets





which slithers along.

"Sssss" says the snake

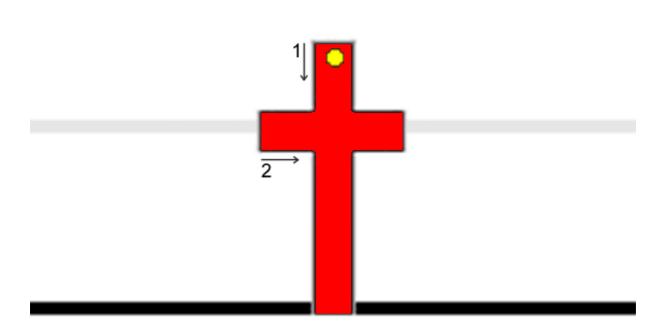
as he sings his song.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*





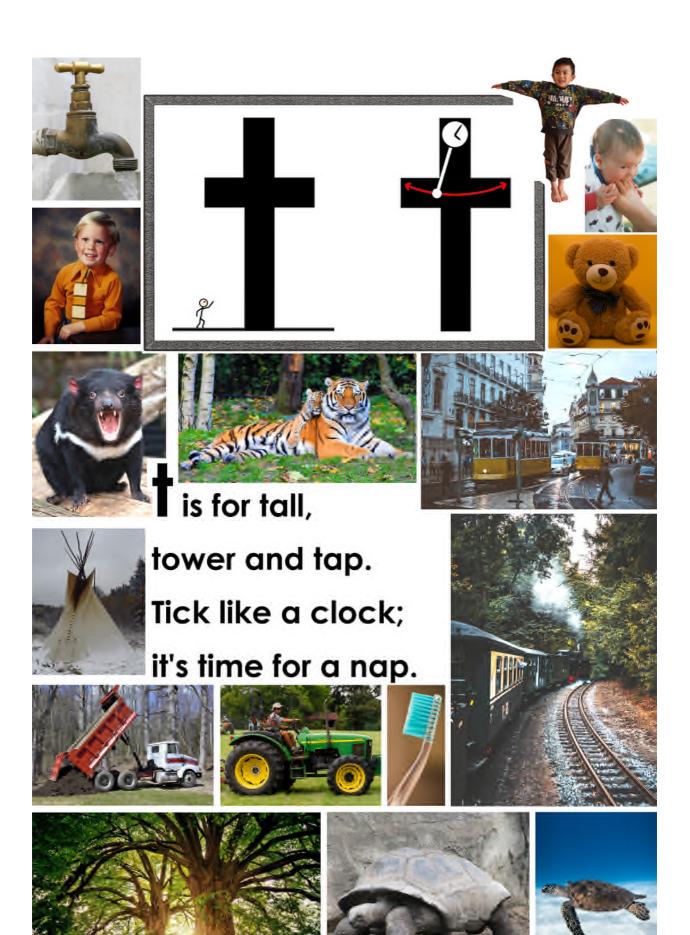


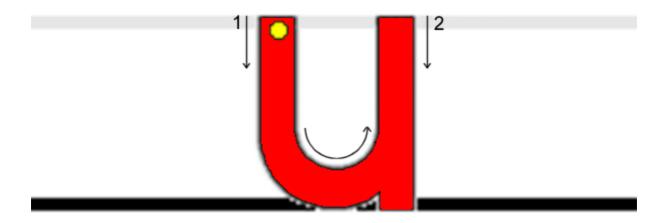


#### "Down, across."

Can your child find these words starting with a /t/ sound?

t, tap, Tasmanian devil, teddy/teddy bear, tepee/tent, Tim with tie, tiger with cub, tip truck (US dump truck), toes, toothbrush, tortoise, tractor, train, tram, trees, turtle



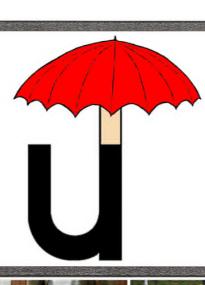


#### "Down, round, up, down."

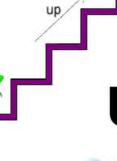
Can your child find these words starting with an /u/ sound?

u, udder (milking a goat), ugly, ultralight, umbrella, umpire, under, underwater, unhappy, unusual friends, up, upside down











## U is for umbrella

which goes up in the rain.

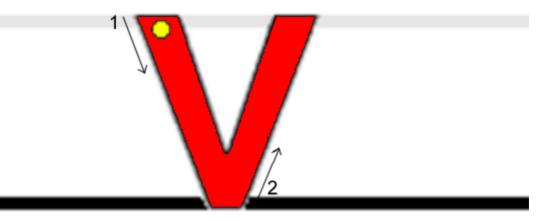


If you're not under an umbrella

## what a pain!



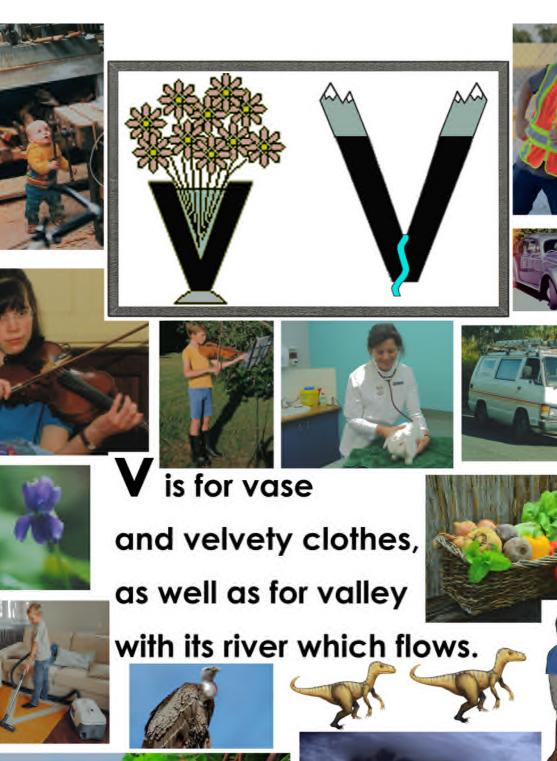




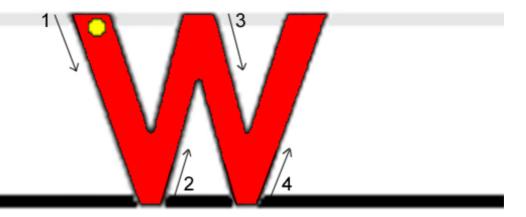
#### "Down, up."

Can your child find these words starting with a /vvvv/ sound?

v (valley), vacuum cleaner, van, vegetables, Velociraptors, vest, vet, vice, vines in a vineyard, viola, violet, violin, volcano, Volkswagen, vulture







#### "Down, up, down, up."

Can your child find these words starting with a /w/ sound?

w, wallaby (with joey), walruses, wasp, watermelon, wave, web, whale, wheelchair race, windmill, window, windsurfer, wings, wombats (one with joey), worms

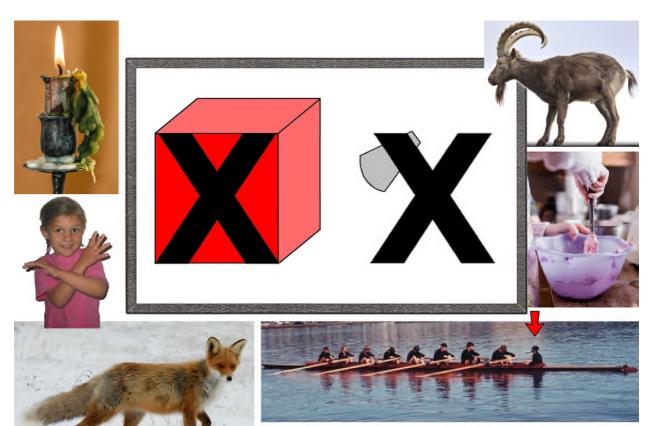




"Down, down."

Can your child find these words that include a /ks/ sound (x)?

x (Chop with your axe.), box, cox, fix, fox, ibex, mix, sax (saxophone), six, Tyrannosaurus rex, oxen/ox cart, wax, X-ray



# **X** is in box,







in fox and in six,

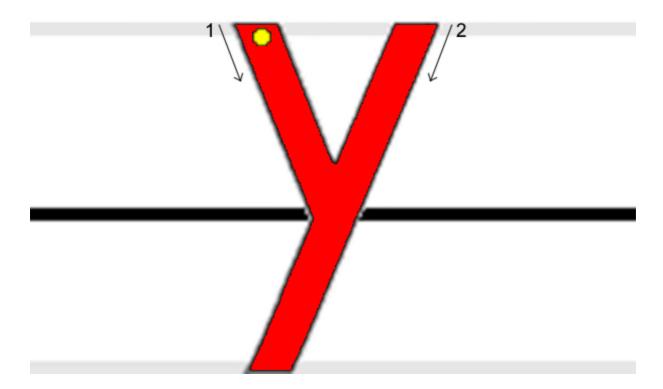
and in axe which we chop,

## our wood to fix.





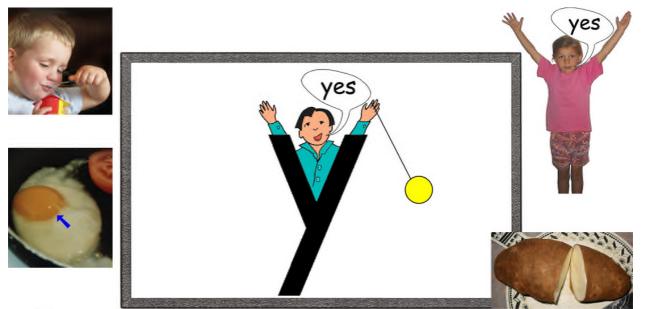




"Down, down."

Can your child find these words starting with a /y/ sound?

y (Yell, "yes!"), yabby, yacht, yak, yam, yawn, year, yellow paint, yell/yes, yoghurt/yum, yoke, yolk, yoyo, yurt







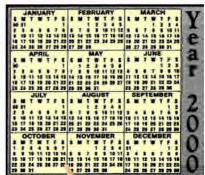
**Y** is for "yes"



as your yellow yoyo

which you yell out loud

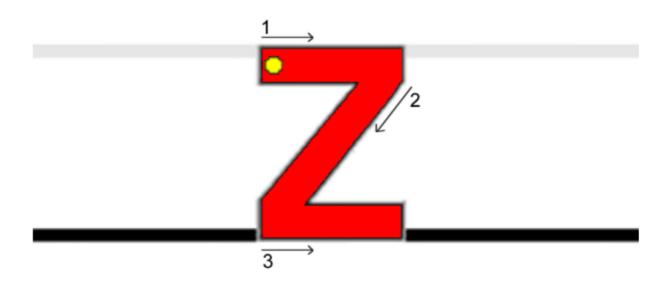
loops to the ground.











#### "Across, down, across."

Can your child find these words starting with a /zzzz/ sound?

z, zebra and foal, zero, zigzag, zip (US zipper), zither, Zodiac, zoo, zoom lens





Zzzzz' says the bee

as it zooms away.

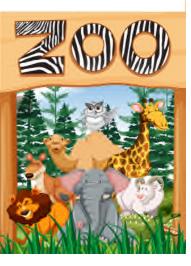
"Zzzzz" says Grandpa



as he sleeps all day.







Acknowledgements

Many photos or graphics are by or of members of the Wherrett or Sands families, including J. Jeanne Wherrett - cat, cogs, donkey (cart), dragon, entertainers, feathers, five, girl with guineapig, greedy goat gobbles grapes, goose, ink, India (modified from an old atlas in approx. 2004), jelly beans, jelly babies, jigsaw, jug, joker, kangaroos, kayaks, lighthouse, masks, microscope, mouse, nine, numbers, Opera House, Oscar the octopus, quarter, question mark, ring, stable, toes, ugly, unhappy, unusual friends, up, van, vet, vice, viola, violet, fix, six, yam, yawn, year, yell/yes, yolk, yurt, zero, all letter shapes.

Arthur Wherrett – car and caravan, hydrofoil, snowman, udder, Volkswagen, cox.

Kristy Wherrett-Sands - ants, nose, nuts, quilt, upside down.

Mark Sands - elephants (calf drinking from mother, Hanover Adventure Zoo, Germany), funny faces, juggle, plane and pilot, snake.

AHM Wherrett – hat, underwater.

Tim Wherrett – elk, head at Easter Island.

Spida Jacobson – lightning.

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