



# Alphabet Knowledge

## Abstract

This toolkit focuses on alphabetic knowledge and the importance of the alphabetic principle. Strategies for developing an alphabetic principle are provided as well as picture books that can be used in the classroom.

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## Alphabet Knowledge- Why is it Important?

Alphabet knowledge is a student's ability to know and name letters and sounds for each letter. This is the first step in learning letter-sound relationships. Research indicates that it is more effective to teach both letter names and letter sounds simultaneously (Piasta et al., 2010). Studies also indicate that alphabetic knowledge is more effective when taught explicitly (e.g., the teacher shows the letters and then provides the corresponding name and sound). Finally, studies show that practices such as "letter of the week" are inefficient when teaching the alphabet (Nueman, 2006).

Alphabet knowledge is important because young students' alphabet knowledge is a significant predictor of reading and spelling skills (Georgiou et al., 2012; National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). It is also an indicator of future reading difficulties (Piasta et al., 2012).

## The Alphabetic Principle

The alphabetic principle is the understanding of a predictable relationship between written letters/letter patterns and spoken sounds.


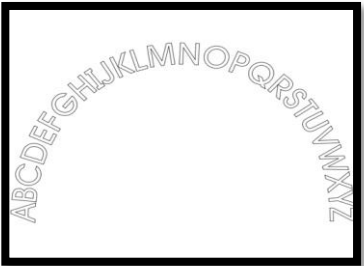
## Different Types of Alphabetic Knowledge

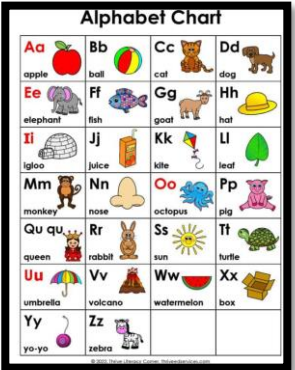
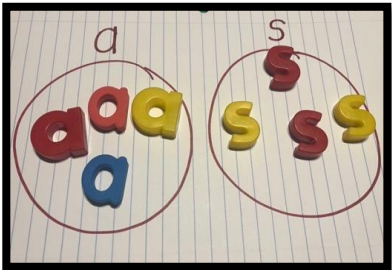
There are different types of alphabetic knowledge. Here are the different types of letter knowledge:

- Point to letters
- Name letters
- Say letter sounds
- Write letters
- Understand the alphabetic principle

It is simply not enough for students to be able to name the letters. The use of and application of letter knowledge is also important. Teaching both letter names and letter sounds is the most effective way to teach letters (Piasta et al., 2010; Roberts, 2021).

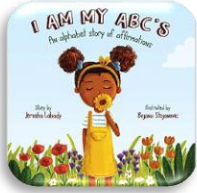


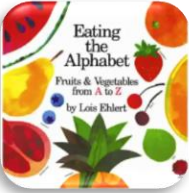
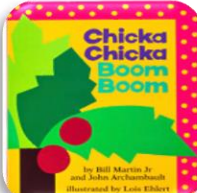
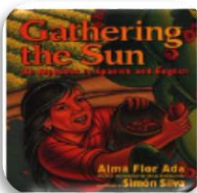
## Instructional Routines for Teaching Alphabet Knowledge

| Instructional Strategy  | How to Implement  | Materials Needed   |
|---|---|--|
| Alphabet Books  | Alphabet books are books that can be a powerful tool for children as they are learning about letters. As students read these books, they can point to pictures and say the letter names, they can also match letter tiles or letter cards to the letters in the book. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alphabet Books</li> <li>Letter Tiles</li> </ul>   |
| Letters In my Name/ Name Puzzles<br> | Names are a powerful resource for learning. Make a cutout of the student's name. Help the student to notice the letters in their name. Students can also be asked to name the letters in their names.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Envelopes</li> <li>Manila folders for cutting out names</li> </ul>  |
| Alphabet Arc<br>                    | An alphabet arc is a great way to practice students echoing the sounds of the corresponding word or picture and then putting the corresponding grapheme (letter).   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Printed Alphabet Arc</li> <li>Small uppercase letters or letter tiles</li> <li>Container (for letters)</li> <li><a href="#">Digital Option for An Alphabet Arc</a></li> </ul> |

| Instructional Strategy   | How to Implement   | Materials Needed  |
|--|--|---|
| <p>ABC Charts</p>       | <p>ABC charts are a helpful tool to keep in the classroom. These charts are usually paired with a picture, and they help students connect letters to sounds.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alphabet Chart</li> <li>Resource: <a href="#">Tips for Analyzing your ABC chart</a></li> </ul> |
| <p>Letter Sorting</p>  | <p>Have students sort letters so that they can begin to differentiate between the different shapes of letters. You can begin by sorting two letters, sorting letters in my name/not in my name, uppercase/lowercase letters.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sorting mat</li> <li>Magnetic letters or letter tiles</li> </ul>                               |
| <p>Multisensory Activities for Developing Alphabet Knowledge</p>   | <p>Have students go on an alphabet walk. Teach an action to go with each letter. Use multi-sensory materials such as shaving cream to help students practice writing letters.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shaving cream</li> <li>sand</li> <li>tactile letters</li> </ul>                                |

## Children's Alphabet Books

Alphabet books provide students an opportunity to hear, see, and read the alphabet in a variety of contexts. They also build students' oral language, vocabulary, and word knowledge.

| Name of Book/Author  | Description   | Book  |
|--|---|---|
| <p>I am my ABC's: An Alphabet Story of Affirmations!<br/>By: Jerusha Labady</p>                      | <p>This is a simple book that follows the pattern, "I am ____". This book only includes ABCS, but it also can serve as an affirming self-esteem book for children.</p>  |    |
| <p>A is for Awesome! 23 Iconic Women Who Changed the World<br/>By: Eva Chen &amp; Derek Desierto</p> | <p>This engaging children's book uses the alphabet to introduce young readers to 23 iconic women who changed the world, inspiring while reinforcing literacy. Each page celebrates a female role model's significant contribution to her field.</p>   |    |
| <p>A is for Activist<br/>By: Innosanto Nagara</p>  | <p>A dynamic ABC book that uses rhymes and colorful illustrations to introduce children to social justice and protest. Each letter of the alphabet represents a different aspect of activism or social justice, giving young readers an understanding of concepts like environmental justice, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, and more.</p> |   |
| <p>Eating the Alphabet: Fruits &amp; Vegetables from A to Z<br/>By: Lois Ehlert</p>                  | <p>This children's book introduces the letters of the alphabet through beautifully illustrated fruits and vegetables. It's a great way to promote healthy eating habits while teaching the alphabet. It also includes a glossary with interesting facts about each fruit or vegetable.</p>  |  |
| <p>Chicka Chicka Boom Boom<br/>By: Bill Martin Jr.</p>   | <p>This is a lively and entertaining book in which the letters of the alphabet race each other to the top of a coconut tree. The rhythmic, rhyming text and the bold, colorful illustrations create a fun, engaging experience for young readers learning the alphabet.</p>   |  |
| <p>Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English<br/>By: Alma Flor Ada</p>                   | <p>This bilingual book offers a vibrant journey through the Spanish alphabet, introducing young readers to the beauty of Hispanic culture and nature while enhancing their bilingual literacy. Each letter introduces a word in Spanish and English, accompanied by a short, poetic description.</p>                                    |  |

## Helpful Resources to Learn More About the Alphabetic Principle

| Resource  | Description  |
|---|--|
| <a href="#">Reading Rockets Article- “Alphabetic Principle”</a>   | <p>This short article describes what the alphabetic principle is and provides an overview of a plan for instruction for teaching the alphabetic principle.</p>   |
| <a href="#">Early Literacy: Print Awareness, Phonological Awareness, and Alphabet Knowledge Video Course, Time to Complete: 2.5 Hours</a> | <p>This comprehensive course offered by Cox Campus explores key aspects of early literacy, including print awareness, phonological awareness, and alphabet knowledge. It provides educators with strategies and resources to nurture these fundamental skills, essential for a child's reading development.</p>  |
| <a href="#">Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction Video Course, Time to Complete: 2 Hours</a>                                       | <p>Co-developed with Dr. Deborah Glaser, this course provides a comprehensive understanding of effective phonics instruction. Participants will learn about the essentials of an effective phonics program, gain a foundational understanding of English orthography, and understand the role of various instructional elements in phonics education. This course is an essential tool in addressing literacy challenges and promoting reading proficiency among students.</p>                   |
| <a href="#">Resource Document: Alphabet Knowledge Teaching Aid</a>  | <p>A concise, one-page resource that outlines fundamental alphabet skills and provides practical tips for planning and implementing alphabet teaching activities. Ideal for educators seeking guidance on how to effectively impart alphabet knowledge to young learners.</p>  |
| <a href="#">Cox Campus: Activities for Teaching Alphabet Knowledge</a>  | <p>This resource provides an array of engaging activities designed to build letter recognition and naming skills in preschool and pre-K children. It includes activities for both large and small groups, as well as one-on-one practice, making it versatile for various teaching scenarios. The resource also points educators towards free video lessons for toddlers and preschoolers, offering weeks of stories, enrichment activities, and songs to supplement the learning experience</p> |



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