



Stellar Home Language

Supporting early language and literacy teaching in Grade R

Teacher's Guide for a two-week cycle

Second Edition 2018

DEAR TEACHER

Wordworks is a non-profit organisation established in 2005 to support early language and literacy development. The Stellar programme was designed by Wordworks to support Grade R teachers in their important role as teachers of language and emergent literacy. We focus on Grade R because evidence shows that strong early language and literacy skills support all later learning.

Early language and literacy development

In order to learn to read and write, children need to have opportunities to build their competence and understanding in two key areas:

- language skills (listening, speaking, vocabulary and comprehension)
- code-related skills (phonological awareness and letter–sound knowledge).

Children also need many opportunities to see how reading and writing work, and for these processes to be modelled by teachers. They need to read and enjoy books and use drawing and early writing to share their ideas.

Our programme

Stellar provides theoretical and practical ideas to help you build a language-rich classroom that supports early literacy development. The programme has been developed and revised in response to feedback from Grade R teachers and trainers. Stellar aligns with CAPS requirements.

Stellar classroom materials

This *Teacher's Guide* is one of a set of guides for the teaching of Home Language, each 'starring' a new story! Each *Teacher's Guide* contains a two-week programme of integrated activities for teaching Home Language to your Grade R class every day.

A *Teacher's Guide for parent meetings* assists you to guide parents to support language learning at home.

Stellar training

For teachers training to use the Stellar programme, there is a set of *Teacher Workbooks* that takes you through the different elements of the programme while deepening your understanding about why each element is important.

Your stories

We know that teachers are creative about using whatever is available to them. We encourage you to adapt the activities in this guide to suit your context and the resources available to you. As you become familiar with the two-week framework in the Stellar programme, you will be able to use your own story books and oral stories as a basis for teaching language and emergent literacy.

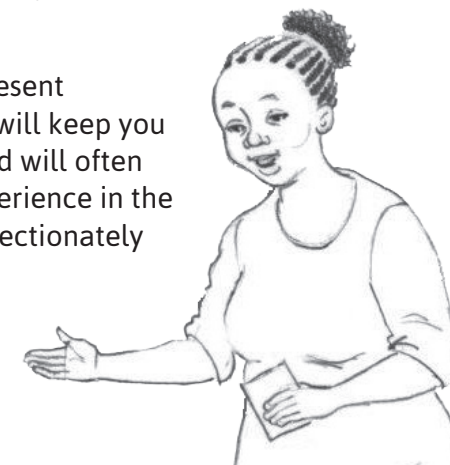
Meet Stella

You will see that there is a teacher present throughout this *Teacher's Guide*. She will keep you company on your learning journey and will often give advice based on her years of experience in the Grade R classroom. Teachers have affectionately come to call her Stella!

We hope you enjoy using this programme. You will be giving your Grade R learners the best possible gift – and we know you will enjoy learning with them!

Our best wishes,

Stella and the Wordworks Team



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Introduction to Stellar

How to use this book

Two-week planner: Week 1		
ACTIVITY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
SHOW AND TELL	Enjoy a few shows and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few shows and tell presentations.
WHOLE CLASS LETTERS AND SOUNDS ACTIVITIES	Tell the story for the first time (Introducing a letter from the story (I))	Forming the letter (multisensory activities)
WHOLE CLASS STORY-BASED ACTIVITIES	Storytelling and building vocabulary	Storytelling and singing
ROTATION GROUP ACTIVITIES	Group 1 Practising the letter (I) Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher guided) Group 3 Independent reading Group 4 Letter puzzles and games Group 5 Creative play (art and construction)	Group 1 Creative play (art and construction) Group 2 Practising the letter (I) Group 3 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher guided) Group 4 Independent reading Group 5 Letter puzzles and games
STORY TIME	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.

Each *Stellar Teacher's Guide* stars one story, which you will find on page 8, together with a verse, a song or poem and a vocabulary list. Refer to this story at the front of the book whenever you need to.

Be sure to tell the story at the very beginning of the two-week cycle, before you do any of the activities.

As you prepare for teaching a two-week cycle, start with the Two-week planner (page 12). It maps out all the activities you will do, every day, for two weeks.

If you follow the planner, you will be covering everything you need for good Home Language teaching in line with CAPS.

Children will have a balance of whole class and small group activities, some of which they do independently; others are teacher-led.

The activities have been divided into three sections, each with its own introduction:

- 1 Letters and sounds activities
- 2 Story-based activities
- 3 Rotation group activities

Find your way easily by looking at the section names at the top and bottom of each page.

We give you two kinds of **Resources** at the end of the book: teacher resources and photocopyable resources for the children. The footer text tells you where to use each resource.

Building up a toolkit

You will need to build up your own toolkit of resources over time to teach the Stellar programme. Some of these resources relate to the story in each guide. We have started you off with puppets, sequence pictures and a Big Book in each Story Pack, as well as a template to make little books. We know that as a creative teacher you will plan ahead to make and collect other resources to support the Stellar story. Children will enjoy props during storytelling and costumes for fantasy play, and you will need scrap materials for art and construction activities. Remember how important it is for children to see printed materials connected to the story: look out for picture books, shopping flyers and magazines for your book corner and posters for your walls.

You will always need colourful crayons, paints and paintbrushes, scissors and glue, and paper for children to draw on. You can make simple sand trays, white boards and play dough (recipe and method on page 52). This guide provides templates to make your own puzzles, game boards and letter cards as well as a few activity pages for you to photocopy for your children. If you cannot make photocopies, feel free to adapt the activity or to use the other options given to you in the guide.

We suggest that you make sure everything is set up before you start lessons, so you can make the most of your lesson time.

Assessment

Assessment in Grade R is informal, which means it is particularly important for you to remain aware of each child's language and literacy strengths, challenges and progress, as well as their levels of confidence and enjoyment throughout Home Language lessons. We encourage you to keep notes about each child and jot down significant learning events, challenges being experienced at the time, together with any ideas you have for how you might respond. In addition to daily observations, there are many assessment opportunities built into the Stellar two-week cycle which give you the opportunity to focus on individual children's progress.

These include:

- rotation group activities: you will spend focused time with individual children as you support their drawing and emergent writing.
- paper-based activities: children will produce their own paper-based work in the *Rainbow letter* activity, the *Read and do* activities, and the second sequence picture activity (called *More sequencing pictures*).

It is vitally important that children never feel that you are assessing them or their work. Young children find it almost impossible to learn in an environment where they feel frightened, anxious or insecure. Your job is to build their confidence together with their skills and knowledge so they can show you their very best work.

Language learning opportunities throughout the day

The Stellar programme gives structured activities for different parts of the day. However, we know that language learning happens all day in classrooms where teachers are responsive to children and allow rich to-and-fro conversations. It is so important for you to be responsive to what interests your children. Transition times, show and tell, snack times and morning ring all provide excellent opportunities to build language through questions, comments and conversations. On the next page, we give ideas for how you can maximise language learning during two much-loved Grade R activities – *Show and tell* and *Story time*.



Show and tell

Show and tell is a much-loved part of the daily programme in Grade R. Children bring something from home to share with their class: it can be anything from a photograph of a family member to a story book to an autumn leaf newly fallen. It is important that this does not become a time for children to show off new possessions like clothes or expensive toys.

STEPS

- 1 Children sit in a circle with you. (This can be the whole class, or a small group depending on how you structure this activity.)
- 2 Begin: "Aren't we lucky! Three children have brought something for Show and Tell today. Let's sit quietly and listen attentively."
- 3 Ask each child to tell the group about what they have brought.
- 4 Affirm the child's choice of object. For example: "I love picking up shells; they remind me of summer!"
- 5 Listen actively to the child speaking. Make eye contact.
- 6 Repeat and then elaborate on what they say about their object.
- 7 Draw them out by asking specific questions and listen carefully to their answers. Ask if anyone else has a question.
- 8 Once all the children have spoken about their object, do a quick memory and comprehension quiz:
 - Who told us about ... ?
 - Where did ... get her ... ?
 - Someone in the group explained why ... Can you remember the reason?



Rules for Show and tell:

- Take turns to talk.
- Look at the person speaking.
- Listen carefully to what each person is saying and think about it.

Story time: Reading aloud for enjoyment

The Stellar programme is story-based. We have written simple stories and adapted folk tales as the basis for learning activities over two weeks.

It is also important for children to hear stories for pure enjoyment. There needs to be time in the day when children are read stories with rich language and beautiful illustrations, with no expectations or activities. We want children to truly 'be in the moment' – to become absorbed in a story and to experience the magic of books.

We propose that reading aloud happens at the end of every day. You will need to plan ahead to line up a selection of storybooks that you and the children will love. See our website for some recommendations.

STEPS

Before reading

- 1 Show children the cover of the book. Ask them to predict what the story will be about.
- 2 Take a picture walk through the book, looking at the pictures and predicting the story. (If the story has a delightful surprise, you may want to skip the picture walk or stop half way through!)
- 3 Link the story to the children's own knowledge and experience.
- 4 Introduce a few key words from the story.
- 5 Read the title of the story and the name of the author and illustrator.

During reading

- 1 Read with expression, using different voices for different characters.
- 2 Keep eye contact with the children.
- 3 Use dramatic pauses to make the story exciting.
- 4 Show the children the pictures as you read each page.
- 5 Keep the children involved by asking them, "What do you think will happen now?"
- 6 Enjoy the experience of sharing the story with your children!

After reading

- 1 Simply enjoy the magic of a shared story.
- 2 Discuss which character or part of the story they liked the most.

Supporting multilingualism

It is likely that the children in your class speak a wealth of different languages at home. This means that some children's mother tongue is different from the Home Language chosen by the school. Although Stellar is a Home Language programme, we know that all children benefit from rich multilingual teaching spaces. Wherever possible, we encourage you to allow children to use their own language with peers, while they are building confidence using the new language of the classroom. Early in the school year, children who speak more than one language can be invited to assist with translating your instructions and children's responses. The voices of young children should never be silenced because they are not yet able to speak the language of the classroom. A second language should always build on the first, rather than replace it.

Although you will introduce the Stellar story in the language of instruction at the school, second language learners will benefit from hearing the same story in their own language. If you don't feel confident telling the story in this way, you could invite a parent to tell the story to the class in their language. Translations of the stories are free to download from the Wordworks website.

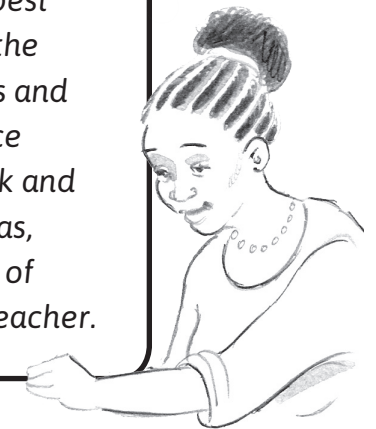
In some of the Stellar activities, we encourage you to work with words from more than one language. This gives you the opportunity to talk with your children about our multilingual world. It also allows you to acknowledge the contribution of children who bring language diversity to your classroom – give them a chance to shine! We encourage you to have fun with words from the story, and build your own knowledge of other languages. Try to introduce some vocabulary words from the Stellar stories in different languages to ensure comprehension for those learning a second language, and to broaden the knowledge base of your monolingual children.

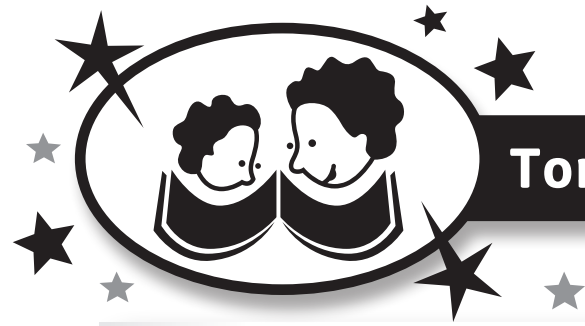
Parents

It's very important for parents to be involved in their children's learning, particularly when children are young. When parents are positive about what happens at school, this helps children hold two very important parts of their world together – the home part and the school part. When parents pay attention to their children talking and reading, writing and drawing, then children will believe these activities are valued and important.

The *Stellar Teacher's Guide for parent meetings* has been developed to help you get parents interested in your Grade R classroom, especially with your implementation of the Stellar Home Language programme. Even if you never organise parent meetings, there are many simple ways to encourage parental involvement in children's learning. Look out for the suggestions to send little books home for children to read to their parents, possibilities for parents to assist with storytelling and games in the classroom, and the ever-important idea that parents talk and read with their children!

Research has shown that one of the best measures of quality in classrooms is the level of interaction between teachers and children. Make your classroom a place where children are encouraged to ask and answer questions and share their ideas, and where they are given the benefit of meaningful conversation with their teacher.





Tortoise and his shell

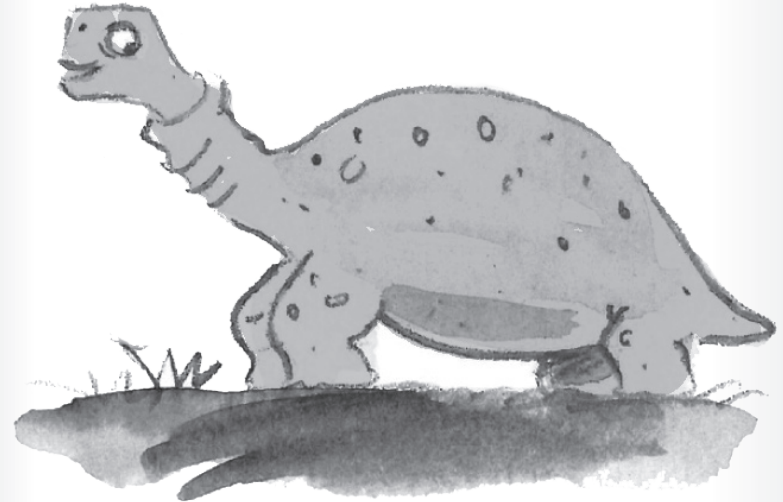
Two eyes to see

Two eyes to see,
Two ears to hear,
Two legs to walk and run;
Here are my hands –
Give yours to me –
Time for stories everyone!

Once there was a tortoise and he lived by himself in the veld. Every day he watched all the other animals running fast, and he felt unhappy because he was so slow. Tortoise was sad because he could not run fast like the other animals. He could only walk very slowly.



Tortoise thought for a while and then he said, "I can't run fast because my shell is too heavy. I think I will crawl out of my shell, and then I will be able to run fast. So, Tortoise crawled out of his shell. He ran off, calling, "Look at me! Look at me! Now I can run fast!" He was very happy.





But, what do you think happened? Tortoise was running down the path when he bumped into a scary dog. Tortoise got a big fright! He stopped, turned around and ran away as fast as he could. What do you think Tortoise was thinking? Yes, he thought the dog was going to chase him. And the dog did chase after him, barking like this as he went, “Woof-woof-woof!” Tortoise was very frightened. He ran off the path and hid behind a big rock. The dog did not see Tortoise hiding, and ran on.

When the dog had gone, Tortoise came out from behind the rock and started running again. But it was not long before Tortoise heard a noise. He looked up and there was an eagle. What do you think the eagle was thinking? Yes, the eagle wanted to eat Tortoise. Again, Tortoise ran away as fast as he could. He saw a tree with a hole in it, and he quickly ran into the hole. Tortoise waited for the eagle to fly away, then he came out of the hole.





Tortoise was not very happy. Why wasn't he happy? Tortoise was unhappy because he was frightened. He had no shell to hide in. Soon it started to rain and it was cold. Tortoise got very wet and he shivered. He did not like it. Now he was very, very unhappy. So, what do you think he did?



Yes, he crawled back into his strong, warm shell. He said, "I don't care if I can't run fast. I am a tortoise. I like being warm. I like being safe. I am happy to be me!"

And to this day, tortoises cannot take off their shells.

And that is the end of the story.

VOCABULARY LIST

tortoise; shell; veld; dog; bird; tree; rock; light; big; fright; chase; noise; hide; hold; rain; run; walk; fly; bark; slow; fast; heavy; sad; unhappy; frighten; scared; happy; shiver; cold; crawl

Tortoise song

To the tune of "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands..."



I'm a tort-oise and I want to run so fast; [clap! clap!] I'm a
4 tort-oise and I want to run so fast! [clap! clap!] If I take off my shell, I can
7 do ve ry well; I'm a tort-oise and I want to run so fast. [clap! clap!]

I'm a tortoise and I want to run so fast;
[clap! clap!]

I'm a tortoise and I want to run so fast!
[clap! clap!]

If I take off my shell,
I can do very well;

I'm a tortoise and I want to run so fast.
[clap! clap!]

Oh dear! Oh dear! The dog is chasing
me! [clap! clap!]

Oh dear! Oh dear! The eagle's chasing
me! [clap! clap!]

Now it's raining and I'm wet,
And I'm not at my home yet;

So, I think I'll put my shell back onto
me. [clap! clap!]



I'm a tortoise and I'm happy to be me.
[clap! clap!]

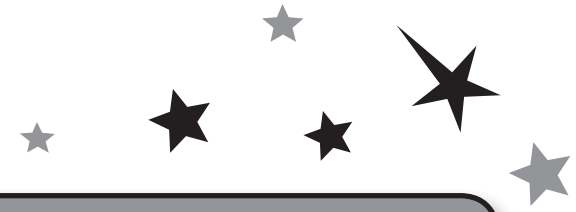
I'm a tortoise and I'm happy to be me.
[clap! clap!]

I'm a tortoise, can't you see?
And my shell's protecting me;

I'm a tortoise and I'm happy to be me!
[clap! clap!]

Two-week planner: Week 1

ACTIVITY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
SHOW AND TELL	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
WHOLE CLASS LETTERS AND SOUNDS ACTIVITIES	Tell the story for the first time. Introducing a letter from the story (t)	Forming the letter (multisensory activities)
WHOLE CLASS STORY-BASED ACTIVITIES	Storytelling and building vocabulary	Storytelling and singing
ROTATION GROUP ACTIVITIES	Group 1 Practising the letter (t)	Group 1 Creative play (Art and construction)
	Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 2 Practising the letter (t)
	Group 3 Independent reading	Group 3 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)
	Group 4 Letter puzzles and games	Group 4 Independent reading
	Group 5 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 5 Letter puzzles and games
STORY TIME	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.



WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
Letter boxes	Listening for beginning and end sounds	Blending and segmenting (syllables)
Storytelling and role play	Sequencing pictures	Shared writing and reading
Group 1 Letter puzzles and games	Group 1 Independent reading	Group 1 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)
Group 2 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 2 Letter puzzles and games	Group 2 Independent reading
Group 3 Practising the letter (t)	Group 3 Creative play (Art and construction)	Group 3 Letter puzzles and games
Group 4 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 4 Practising the letter (t)	Group 4 Creative play (Art and construction)
Group 5 Independent reading	Group 5 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 5 Practising the letter (t)
Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.

Two-week planner: Week 2

ACTIVITY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
SHOW AND TELL	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
WHOLE CLASS LETTERS AND SOUNDS ACTIVITIES	Introducing a letter from the story (d)	Forming the letter (multisensory activities)
WHOLE CLASS STORY-BASED ACTIVITIES	More sequencing pictures	Shared reading: Big Book
ROTATION GROUP ACTIVITIES	Group 1 Practising the letter (d)	Group 1 Creative play (Fantasy play)
	Group 2 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 2 Practising the letter (d)
	Group 3 Independent reading	Group 3 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)
	Group 4 Letter puzzles and games	Group 4 Independent reading
	Group 5 Creative play (Fantasy play)	Group 5 Letter puzzles and games
STORY TIME	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.



WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.	Enjoy a few show and tell presentations.
Letter boxes	Listening for beginning and end sounds	Blending and segmenting (syllables)
Read and do	Shared writing and reading	Listen and do
Group 1 Letter puzzles and games	Group 1 Independent reading	Group 1 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)
Group 2 Creative play (Fantasy play)	Group 2 Letter puzzles and games	Group 2 Independent reading
Group 3 Practising the letter (d)	Group 3 Creative play (Fantasy play)	Group 3 Letter puzzles and games
Group 4 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 4 Practising the letter (d)	Group 4 Creative play (Fantasy play)
Group 5 Independent reading	Group 5 Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)	Group 5 Practising the letter (d)
Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.	Read a new book aloud every day.



Introduction to letters and sounds activities

The world of letters and sounds

We know from research that children who know something about letters and the sounds they make are likely to learn to read and write more easily than children who have limited letter–sound knowledge. However, we are not suggesting that children in Grade R should be taught about letters in a formal way. The Stellar programme includes many fun, age-appropriate ways to build children’s knowledge of letters.

We don’t believe Grade R children should be drilled or chant the alphabet, copy letters from a board or practise writing letters between lines or on paper with a pencil. In the Stellar programme, children learn how to form letters through big movements and through experiences that involve all of their senses. We know that children learn best when something has meaning to them, so we take care to link letters and sounds to stories – and to new words, pictures and objects. Children learn about language while building their knowledge of letters.

In addition to learning about the relationships between letters and sounds, research has shown that it is vital for children to become aware of sounds in spoken language (phonological awareness). If children don’t learn to pay attention to sounds in spoken language, they might know what they want to write, but not be able to hear the sounds in words in order to write them. The letters and sounds section of the Stellar programme includes many oral activities that help children to develop this awareness.

We have included multilingual lists of words from the story in an activity to develop children’s ability to break words up into syllables, and to blend syllables to make words. Research tells us that young children who learn to pay attention to sounds in words in one language can transfer this skill to another language. Most importantly, children come to know that there is so much to learn about

words from all languages – and so much fun to be had while playing with words!

Spending time on these activities will take Grade R children on a journey of exploration into the world of letters and sounds, which will ensure that they are well-prepared to meet the demands of the Grade 1 curriculum.

Teaching letters and sounds

The Stellar programme focuses on a new letter every week. The letters that have been selected for each story are different for each language because they are linked to words in the story. It is ideal to introduce a new letter by linking it to words from a familiar story, but if you must teach letters in a different order, you can still make use of the ideas for teaching letters in the Stellar Programme.

Plan for the letters and sounds activities to take approximately 15 minutes every day. We have given you activities to use from Monday to Friday. The Week 1 activities are repeated in Week 2, with a focus on a new letter. The whole class usually does these activities together at the beginning of the daily programme. However, you can focus on letters and sounds at any time in your everyday routine, particularly during outdoor play and transition times (lining up outside the toilet; preparing for lunch time and so on). Use opportunities to point out letters in the environment and ask children what letters they see around them. This helps children to see how we use letters as clues to read things around us.



Resources to make for the letters and sounds activities

Play dough mats

Put copies of the letter templates in the **Resources** into plastic sleeves. Children can use the printed letter as a guide when forming play dough letters. Play dough mats can also be downloaded and printed from websites such as www.sparklebox.co.uk.

Whiteboards

Insert a piece of cardboard or paper into a plastic sleeve. Children can use a whiteboard marker to practise 'writing' big letters. These can be cleaned easily with a cloth or tissue.

A set of letter boxes

Fill empty ice-cream containers with objects (or pictures of objects) that start with a specific sound. For example, the **g** box will contain objects whose names begin with the sound /g/.

Use the word lists to help you choose items for the boxes. Label each letter box using the letter templates. It is best to trace letters onto a sensory material like felt, sandpaper or corrugated cardboard. Cut out the letter and stick it onto the lid of the letter box. Stick a smaller letter on the side of the box so that you can easily identify the box you need when the letter boxes are stacked on a shelf.



*It is not necessary to make a letter box for every letter of the alphabet. Finding appropriate objects for the letters **q**, **x**, **y** and **z** can be difficult and children will learn these letters as they encounter them in print when they are learning to read. Very few words begin with vowels in English, and vowels make different sounds in different words, so letter boxes are not a good way to introduce vowels.*



MONDAY

Introducing a letter from the story

Letter–sound knowledge: Children learn about two new letters linked to words from the story. In Week 1, the focus letter is **t**, and in Week 2, the focus letter **d**.

YOU WILL NEED

Tortoise and his shell story on page 8; big alphabet chart; board

Tell the story of *Tortoise and his shell* on page 8.

**STEPS***Listening for sounds*

- 1 Ask the children to sit on the mat and listen carefully to you. Say these words from the story: “*tortoise, turned, tree, tried.*” Ask the children where they have heard the words before.
- 2 Say to the children: “*Can you hear what sound these words start with: t-t-tortoise, t-t-tree, t-t-tried? Yes, you are right, they start with the sound /t/. Listen carefully, here are some more words that start with /t/: table, telephone, time, tomato, torch, tiger, teeth.*” (Emphasise the beginning sound as you say these words, for example: t-t-table, t-t-telephone.)

Saying the sound

- 1 Say the sound /t/ clearly and tell the children to watch your mouth carefully as you make the sound.
- 2 Ask the children to say the sound /t/: **t-t-t-t-t**. Make this fun: say it softly, loudly, to the wall, to the ceiling and to each other. Make sure the children are saying the sound of the letter and not the letter name **t** (‘tee’).
- 3 Teach the children an action associated with the sound. For example: the children can walk on tippy-toes, saying “**t-t-t-t**”.

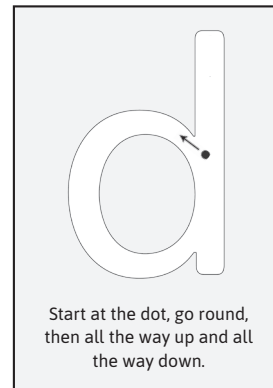
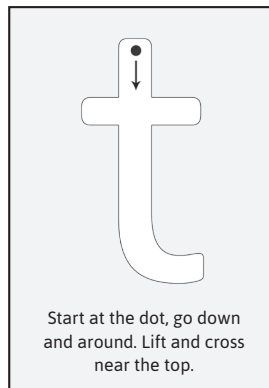
Thinking of words beginning with the sound

- 1 Ask the children if anyone’s name starts with /t/ or if they can think of any other words that start with the sound /t/.



Forming the letter

- 1 Ask the children if they know how to write a letter that makes the sound /t/.
- 2 Show the children how to form the letter t. Write a large letter on the board as you say: "Start at the dot, go down and around. Lift and cross near the top."
- 3 Let the children practise the letter formation in the air, on the carpet, on their hands and so on.



Linking the letter to the alphabet chart

- 1 If you have an alphabet chart in your class, show the children the letter t on the alphabet chart. Explain that this letter also has a name: 'tee'. This will help them to link the sounds they are learning with the letter names and the alphabet song.

These activity steps focus on the letter **t** and should be used in Week 1.

In Week 2, follow the same steps but focus on the letter **d**.

- Emphasise the words from the story that start with the sound /**d**/: dog, day, down, do, don't.
- Other /**d**/ words: dance, daughter, dolphin, donkey, duck, dirt, daisy, diamond.
- When you form **d** with the children say: "Start at the dot, go round, then all the way up and all the way down."
- Teach the children an action associated with the sound. They can dance to the rhythm: "d-d-d-d".
- If you have an alphabet chart in your class, show the children the letter **d** on the alphabet chart. Explain that this letter also has a name: 'dee'.



Letter–sound knowledge: Children learn to form the focus letters using different materials which give them a rich sensory experience.

STEPS

- 1 Begin by modelling how to write the focus letter: ask the children if they can remember words that start with the focus letter. (Remember to say the sound the letter makes (/t/) and not the name of the letter ('tee').)
- 2 Show the children how to form the letter. Write a large letter on the board or in the air. Say the following as you model forming the letter **t** in Week 1: "Start at the dot, go down and around. Lift and cross near the top." In Week 2, say the following as you show the children how to form the letter **d**: "Start at the dot, go round, then all the way up and all the way down."
- 3 Let the children practise the letter formation in the air, on the carpet, on each other's backs or on their hands.
- 4 Once you have modelled how to write the letter, choose from the following activities to give children the experience of forming these letters using big movements and as many of their senses as possible.

In Week 1, the focus letter is **t**.

In Week 2, the focus letter is **d**.



Chalk letters

YOU WILL NEED

A large piece of chalk

STEPS

- 1 Go outside and give each child a piece of large chalk.
- 2 Ask the children to write a letter in chalk on the bricks/wall/paving.
- 3 Encourage the children to say the sound the letter makes as they write the letter.





Water letters

YOU WILL NEED

Water; paintbrushes

STEPS

- 1 Go outside and give each child a container with water and a paintbrush.
- 2 Ask the children to paint a letter many times in water on the bricks/wall/paving.
- 3 Encourage the children to say the sound the letter makes as they write the letter.

Once children can hear sounds in spoken words (such as the /t/ sound at the start of the word tree), they need to learn that the sound /t/ is written as a letter that looks like this: t. They need to understand the link between the sound they hear and a letter they see in print. Today's activities link the oral practice of a new sound to how the corresponding letter looks and feels.



Sand letters

YOU WILL NEED

Sand trays; sand or a sandy area outside

STEPS

- 1 Divide the children into small groups and give each group a sand tray. Alternatively, take the children outside to a sandy area.
- 2 Ask the children to write a letter in the sand with their finger or a small twig.
- 3 Encourage the children to say the sound the letter makes as they write the letter.





Play dough letters

YOU WILL NEED

Play dough (recipe on page 52); play dough mats

STEPS

- 1 Give each child a ball of play dough. Ask the children to roll the play dough into long sausage shapes.
- 2 Put copies of the letter templates in a plastic sleeve. Show the children how to form a letter out of play dough using the printed letter as a guide.
- 3 Encourage the children to make their own letter and trace over the play dough letter with their finger while saying the sound the letter makes.



Whiteboard letters

YOU WILL NEED

Whiteboards; marker pens; pieces of cloth

STEPS

- 1 Give each child a whiteboard and let them write the letter while saying the sound the letter makes.
- 2 The children can repeat this many times. At the beginning of the activity, encourage them to write letters that take up the whole page. Once they feel confident, they can try writing smaller letters.

Formal handwriting practice is part of the Grade 1 curriculum; it is not appropriate for Grade R learners. However, it is important that children are taught how to form letters correctly. You can do this in a relaxed and fun way by using these creative, multisensory activities and encouraging children to write letters as big as they can.



LETTERS AND SOUNDS

WEDNESDAY Letter boxes

Letter–sound knowledge: The children build their knowledge of the focus letters by linking them to the beginning sounds of the names of objects.

YOU WILL NEED

Small mirror; two letter boxes (see page 17) containing objects or pictures of the objects that start with the following letters:

Week 1 t: toothpaste; toothbrush; tissues; torch; teapot; tennis ball; tennis racket; toilet roll; tortoise; turtle; table; TV; teddy; tape measure; teeth; truck; telephone; tomato sauce; trumpet; takkies; towel; tiger; toothpicks

Week 2 d: dummy; dinosaur; dustpan; drums; donkey; dolls; dog; dice; doughnut

STEPS

Naming objects

- 1 Ask the children to sit on the mat and let them hold the objects or pictures of objects and pass them around.
- 2 Ask questions about the objects: “Have you seen one of these? What do we use this for?”

Listening for beginning sounds

- 1 Say to the children: “Listen to this word: t-t-torch. Can you hear what sound ‘torch’ starts with? What is the first sound of the word?”

- 2 Encourage the children to emphasise the beginning sound when they say a word.

Linking the sound with a letter

- 1 Once the children have practised the new sound, then show them the letter on the letter box and say: “This is how we write **t**.” Let the children trace over the letter on the lid with their fingers.

Working with more than one letter

- 1 Now, combine objects from two or more letter boxes and spread them on the floor or table.
- 2 Ask children to find objects that start with one of the sounds. For example: “Eddie, can you find something that starts with the sound /t/?” The child must name the object, say the beginning sound and place the object in the correct box.
- 3 You can also give each child an object and then say one of the sounds. Ask all those children who have an object starting with that sound to come forward and put the object in the correct letter box.

Phonological awareness: Children learn to hear and identify beginning and end sounds in words.

What's the odd sound you hear?

Use only four of the words from the grey box at a time in the activity. Go back to the same sound as often as you need to, using different combinations of words to keep it interesting.



Begin today's listening activity by saying: "Let's close our eyes and be quiet for a few minutes while we listen carefully to the sounds around us."

/s/: soap; sweet; swim; supper; surprise, sand, stick, swing

/r/: rain; run; red; rose; ring; radio; rice; rhinoceros

/b/: banana; breakfast; beautiful; brave; big; beetle; bucket; bell

/c/: candle; cucumber; clothes; cabbage; cream; carrot; carpet

/m/: monkey; man; meat; moon; mushroom; moth; music; mouse

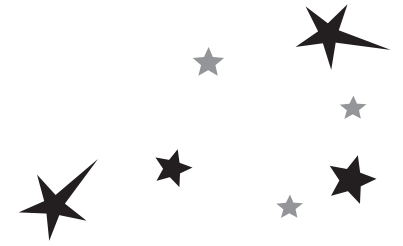
/p/: paper; party; pasta; peanuts; pear; pets; pig; puppy

/n/: nail; night; nine; no; new; name; necklace; nurse

/f/: fridge; funny; finger; family; feathers; fast; fantastic; fire

/t/: table; telephone; time; tomato; torch; tiger; teeth; tie

/d/: dance; daughter; dolphin; donkey; duck; dirt; daisy; diamond



STEPS

- 1 Ask the children to sit quietly on the carpet and cup their ears with their hands to listen carefully. Explain that you are going to say four words and when you have finished saying all the words, the children can put their hands up if they know what sound they heard at the *beginning* of all the words.
Teacher and children: *"Listen, listen, loud and clear, what's the **first** sound that you hear?"*
Teacher: *"Soap, sweet, swim, supper"*
Teacher and children: *"Tell me, tell me, what do you hear?"*
Children: */s/*
- 2 Once children have identified the beginning sound of the words, say the sound slowly and clearly while emphasising the movement of your mouth. Let the children watch you carefully and copy your mouth movements as you pronounce the sound. If possible, let them look in a mirror, watching their mouths as they say the sound.
- 3 If children are finding this activity easy, you can make it more difficult by introducing an 'odd one out'. Children must clap when they hear a word that starts with a different sound to the other words.
Teacher: *"Now, which word is the odd one out?"*
For example: soap, sweet, finger, supper or candle, cream, carrot cabbage (children clap when they hear 'finger' or 'cream')



FRIDAY

Blending and segmenting (syllables and CVC)

Phonological awareness: Children learn to blend syllables to make words and segment words into syllables.

*In Week 1 play **Jumping frog (multisyllabic)** using words. If you believe your class needs more practice with this, repeat this activity in Week 2. It is very important that you don't move onto **Jumping frog (CVC words)** until your children are confident with multisyllabic words.*



Jumping frog (multisyllabic words)

YOU WILL NEED

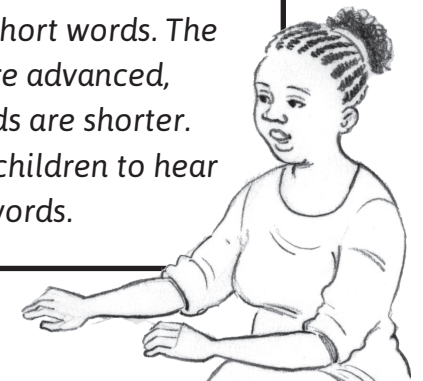
Multisyllabic words relating to the story: animal; tortoise; eagle; heavy; frightened; happy; unhappy; running; thinking; shivered

STEPS

- 1 Ask the children to sit on the mat and choose one child to be a 'frog'.
- 2 Say one of the words from the list and model how to break it into syllables. For example, for animal: say clearly **a | ni | mal**.
- 3 Ask the 'frog' to jump for each of the syllables: **a** (one jump) **ni** (one jump) **mal** (one jump).

- 4 Ask the children to put the syllables together to say a word: **a | ni | mal** = animal.
- 5 Ask the 'frog' to hop again. This time the children will clap each time the 'frog' jumps. Then the class will say the word together.
- 6 Let the children take turns to listen to each of the ten words from the list above and break it into syllables. The 'frog' must hop the syllables while the class claps.

Once children can break up words into syllables with ease, they can begin activities that focus on individual sounds in short words. The skills needed are more advanced, even though the words are shorter. It can be difficult for children to hear each sound in short words.





This activity can be done in any language, as the activity focuses on children learning the skill of breaking words into syllables. To help promote multilingualism and affirm children's home languages, try this activity with a few of these multisyllabic words. Ask children to help with your pronunciation if needed.

Xhosa: iqokobhe (shell); imvula (rain); ukuthubeleza (crawl); idlelo (veld); ukubhabha (fly); ingxolo (noise); ngokucothayo (slow); ngokukhawuleza (faster); ukungcangcazela (shiver); zimela (hide)

Afrikaans: skilpad (tortoise); arend (eagle); alleen (alone); vinnig (quick); hardloop (run); hartseer (sad); bewe (tremble); vreeslik (terrible); ongelukkig (unhappy); lawaai (noise)

If the children in your class speak other languages, ask them to give you a word from the story in their language.



Jumping frog (CVC words)

YOU WILL NEED

Pictures or objects for CVC words (for example: bus, pen, dog)

STEPS

- 1 Hold up a picture card/object and ask the children to name it. For example: "It is a cat."
- 2 Sound it out slowly for the children /c/ → /a/ → /t/.
- 3 Let the children sound the word out slowly, saying each sound in the word.
- 4 Ask the 'frog' to jump for each of the sounds in the word.
- 5 Ask the children to put the sounds together and say the whole word. For example: "/c/ → /a/ → /t/ says 'cat'."
- 6 Let the children have a turn to choose a picture card and say the sounds as the 'frog' jumps for each sound.



Introduction to story-based activities

Moving from oral to written language

Storytelling (Monday, Week 1)

Stellar is a story-based programme that takes children on a journey from spoken to written language. The children's first encounter with the story is when they hear the story being told by their teacher with puppets to make the characters come alive. Although you will have the printed version of the story, please understand that it is a script to guide you, rather than a text to be read to the children. It is important that you speak directly to the children as you tell them the story, rather than focusing on the printed words.

Singing and role play (Tuesday and Wednesday, Week 1)

After hearing the story being told, children will have a chance to sing a song related to the story. Songs are a wonderful way to develop language skills and some children find it easier to remember new language through melody, rhythm and rhyme. After singing, children participate in role playing the story as it is narrated. This gives them a chance to participate in the telling of the story in an active way and use the words and phrases of the different characters. It also requires them to think about the story sequence – what happens next.

Story sequencing (Thursday, Week 1; Monday, Week 2)

Once children have heard the story being told, and participated in singing and acting out the story, they have an opportunity to think carefully about the events in the story and to sequence these in the correct order. Telling a story in the correct sequence is a very important skill, and something that can be challenging for young children. When children understand that stories are made up of sequenced events, they are able to plan their own stories to have a beginning, middle and end. They learn to ask themselves, "What do I want to happen next?"

The sequencing of the events in the story is first led by you as the teacher, as you guide children's conversations about how the story started and what came next. At first you work with big colourful pictures in the whole class. Later on, the children are encouraged to sequence the events more independently. This provides a useful assessment opportunity.

Writing inspired by the story (Friday, Week 1)

Building on the oral telling of the story, the singing, role play and sequencing of events, children have a chance to discuss their ideas related to something in the story, and then see how these ideas can be written down. This activity begins with rich discussions and sharing of ideas, with contributions from as many children as possible. As you model the writing process, using the children's words and ideas, they see that what we say can be written down. This will give them the confidence to start trying to write themselves – even if they begin with scribbles and made-up letters!

Shared reading (Friday, Week 1; Tuesday, Week 2)

Shared writing provides an ideal text for shared reading as the text contains ideas and words that are very familiar to the children. It is important to take the time to read over the text you have written together, pointing to each word as you read so that children start noticing how our speech is made up of different words, with spaces between each word.



In addition to reading the texts they have co-written with you, children will have another opportunity to see how reading works when you read the Big Book in the second week. Here they will encounter the same, familiar story but in print form. When you read the Big Book to them they will see how words on a page link with the words you say. The story in the Big Book is a simplified version, so that children feel confident to try to 'read' it themselves. This gives them the experience of being a reader – even if they are just reciting the words in the book from memory.

Read and do (Wednesday, Week 2)

While shared reading activities are teacher-led, children benefit from trying to 'read' and make sense of text themselves. The Read and do activity gives children a chance to read pictures and symbols and follow what the symbols tell them to do. This provides another assessment opportunity.

Listening (Friday, Week 2)

The two-week cycle of story-based activities ends with a whole class listening activity to support the development of children's ability to pay attention, follow instructions and understand what they hear.

Using story-based activities to build vocabulary

Some teachers have initially been concerned that it may become boring for children if the activities for two weeks are based on one story. However, teachers have repeatedly reported the benefit of having so many ways for children to engage with new language. We know that in order to learn new vocabulary and make it their own, children need to hear and use words often and in different contexts. Children often understand words before they have the confidence to use them, so it is important that we do not move on to another theme or story before they have had the chance to develop a deep and lasting knowledge of new words.

Although children will learn new language and word meanings through all of the activities in the Stellar programme, we have selected new words from each story for you to focus on. These are listed on the last page of the story section under the heading Vocabulary list. The list includes a combination of common, everyday words and more difficult words. As a teacher, you know your children best, so choose to focus on words that are appropriate for the children in your class. Be especially aware of what will be helpful for children who are learning in a second language, and remember to extend children whose basic vocabulary is strong.

When you are working through the activities with the children, remember to draw their attention to the words you have introduced. Ask them what they know about these words, and how they say a particular word in their own language. Build on children's natural curiosity by encouraging an interest in word meanings in your class. This is one of the most important building blocks for comprehension.



Children hear *Tortoise and his shell* while learning new vocabulary.

YOU WILL NEED

- Puppets and props: Tortoise and his shell; dog; eagle; a rock; a tree
- Objects or picture cards for a few words from the vocabulary list
- Story, rhyme and vocabulary list on pages 8–11.



It can be difficult for children to grasp abstract concepts like feelings. Teachers can help children understand and manage these feelings by naming them. For example: "You look sad. Is something worrying you?"

STEPS

Before you tell the story

- 1 Say the rhyme ***Two eyes to see*** with the children, to focus the class on the story to come.
- 2 Introduce the story to the children: "*The title of our story is **Tortoise and his shell.***"

- 3 Relate the story to the children's lives: ask if anyone has seen a tortoise. Talk about tortoises and explain that a tortoise has a hard shell on its back and moves slowly. Show the children pictures of tortoises.
- 4 Introduce the characters, for example: "*This is Tortoise. This is a dog and this is an eagle. The animals live in the veld. In the veld, there are trees and rocks.*" Ask the children to say good morning to the animals.
- 5 Introduce two or three new words from the vocabulary list: "*Before we begin, I want to tell you the meanings of some new words which we will find in the story.*"
 - Discuss what each word means, using simple words.
 - Where possible, show children an object or a picture to illustrate what the word means.
 - Ask children who speak different languages at home to say the word in their own language.

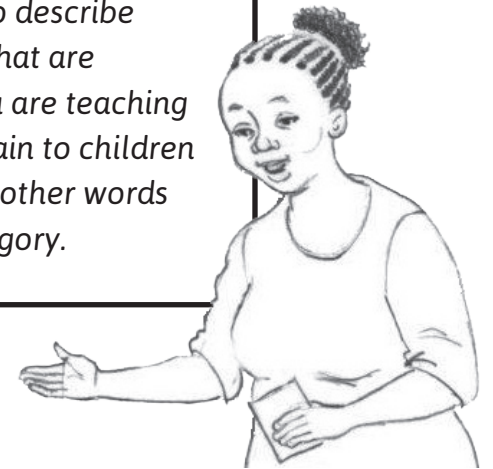
While you tell the story

- 1 Make sure you tell the story in a lively way to keep the children's attention. Do actions, use props and tell the story in different voices.
- 2 Ask children to predict what happens next in the story and involve them through open-ended questions, such as: "How would you feel if you were Tortoise and the eagle was flying over you?"
- 3 Emphasise new vocabulary. Give short explanations if you feel it will help the children to understand the story. Ask if anyone can remember the meaning of a new word.

After you tell the story

- 1 Ask questions to check and consolidate children's understanding, such as: "What did Tortoise do when he saw the eagle?" Praise and elaborate on even the simplest answers. For example: "Yes, that's right. Tortoise was very frightened of the eagle. He thought it might swoop down and eat him up! So he ran and he hid in a hole in a tree."
- 2 Ask open-ended questions to stimulate discussion: "In the end, why was Tortoise happy to crawl back into his shell?"
- 3 Consolidate new vocabulary from the story by asking questions about a word, for example: "What is a ... ? Can you point to a ... ? What is a ... used for?"
- 4 Talk about the category the new words belong to, for example: 'opposites' and 'feeling words'.

It is helpful for children to learn new words in categories (such as words to describe feelings; words that are opposites). If you are teaching new words, explain to children how they link to other words in the same category.



TUESDAY Storytelling and singing

Children learn the language of the story by listening to the story again and singing a song related to the story.

YOU WILL NEED

Words and music for the song **Tortoise song** (page 11)

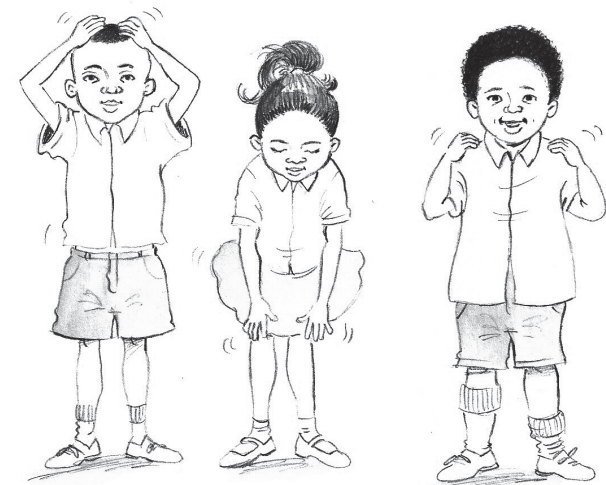


One clever teacher asked the children to wear their backpacks for their shells when they were being tortoises.

Doing actions while singing the songs helps children remember the words. It also helps them to develop gross and fine motor skills, co-ordination and awareness of their body in space.

STEPS

- 1 Re-tell the story using the puppets. Ask questions as you tell the story. Encourage the children to predict what will happen next.
- 2 Sing the song to the children.
- 3 Teach the song in small parts – it may be difficult for the children to remember all the words at once.
- 4 Teach the children the actions for the song.



WEDNESDAY Storytelling and role play

Children take on different roles and use the story language themselves while the story is narrated.

YOU WILL NEED

Puppets; cloth/material for the tortoise's shell and dog's fur; feathers for the eagle; an object to use as a rock; any other items that will make the story real



You may find your 'quieter' children become more confident during role-play activities. Ensure that their attempts to participate and speak up are supported and encouraged.

STEPS

- 1 Sing **Tortoise song** (page 11).
- 2 Choose three children to play the characters in the story (Tortoise; dog; eagle).
- 3 Talk about each character in the story. Tell the children who they are going to be in the role play.
- 4 Ask the children for ideas for props that can be used to tell the story.
- 5 Start the story like this: *"Once upon a time there was a little tortoise. Tortoise lived in the veld by himself. Tortoise was sad because he was so slow."* The child acting as Tortoise pretends to be walking slowly around the veld.
- 6 Continue telling the story in this way. The children will do the actions to match the narrator's words.
- 7 The rest of the class watches the role play.
- 8 Now, if you think your children are ready, organise the class into groups of four (one child is the narrator). Help the children decide who is going to play each character and the narrator.
- 9 Let the children have time to practise the role play as a small group.
- 10 If there is time, let some of the groups present their role play to the class.

THURSDAY Sequencing pictures

Children learn that stories are made up of a sequence of events by re-telling the story using pictures.



Jumble up the pictures and try to tell the story in this sequence – the children will find it very funny! The silly story will help to make the correct sequence obvious and meaningful for them.

YOU WILL NEED

Big sequence pictures in the Story Pack



STEPS

- 1 Sing the **Tortoise song**.
- 2 Choose one of the sequence pictures and hold it up.
- 3 Ask the children what they see and talk about the picture in detail.
- 4 Once you have discussed each picture, stick it on the board so the children can see it. Make sure the pictures are not in sequence at this stage of the activity.
- 5 After talking about all the pictures, ask the children: "Are the pictures in the correct order?"

- 6 Ask the children to point out the picture for the beginning of the story.
- 7 Work together to rearrange the sequence of the pictures so the story makes sense.
- 8 Keep the children actively involved in this process. Ask questions like: "What happened next? Who can remember the next part of the story?"
- 9 When the pictures are in the correct order, invite a few children to retell the story in the correct sequence.
- 10 If you have extra time, muddle up the order again and repeat the activity.

These are useful questions to ask about each picture:

- "**Who** can you see?" (characters)
- "**What** is he/she/it **doing**?" (verbs and actions)
- "**What** else can you see?" (looking again)
- "**Where** is the...?" (naming places/ position)
- "**Why** do you think...?" (creative thinking, expressing opinions)



FRIDAY

Shared writing and reading

Children learn how their words and ideas can be recorded as you model the writing of lists.

YOU WILL NEED

An A4 blank page for each child; crayons; pictures of animals and objects that move at different speeds; books



Prepare the A4 page for each child before the lesson. Draw a line down the centre of the page. In neat, clear handwriting, write the words 'fast' and 'slow' at the top of each column. Remember to write the words in lower case.

STEPS

- 1 Talk about the difference between fast and slow. Show the children pictures of animals and objects that move at different speeds.
- 2 Let the children do activities quickly or slowly in the classroom/outside. For example: walk slowly; run fast; crawl slowly; spin fast.
- 3 Ask the children to think about things that are fast and slow.
- 4 Write 'fast' and 'slow' on the board.
- 5 Make a list of the children's ideas in two columns on the board: one for fast objects and one for slow objects.
- 6 Read the list together.
- 7 Talk about the dividing line on the children's page and link it to the list you wrote on the board.
- 8 Ask the children to read with you as you point to the words 'fast' and 'slow'.
- 9 Say the sound /f/ and ask the children to point to the letter f on their page. Say the sound /s/ and ask the children to find the letter s on the page.
- 10 Tell the children they are going to draw pictures of things that move fast on one side of the page under the word 'fast' and things that move slowly on the other side, under the word 'slow'.
- 11 Encourage the children to 'write' a word for each of their pictures, using pretend or invented spelling. Or you can write the words as the children explain their drawings to you. (You may want to remove your list from the board as you don't want the children copying.)

Children consolidate their own story knowledge by sequencing pictures more independently.



Photocopy a little book for each child before the lesson.
Fold all the little books in advance.

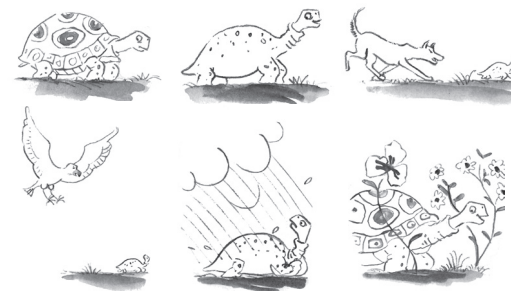
YOU WILL NEED

- Big sequence pictures in the Story Pack
- A black and white photocopy of small sequence pictures for each child (page 56); additional white paper for each child; scissors; glue
- Photocopied and folded little book for each child (page 57)
- Set up the tables beforehand with a set of black and white pictures for each child and enough pairs of scissors and glue for all the children to use.

STEPS

On the mat

- 1 Begin with the children sitting on the mat. Choose children to stand in front of the class, each holding one of the colour sequence pictures. Make sure that the pictures are not in the correct order.
- 2 Ask the children if the pictures are in the right order. Ask them to point out the picture which should be at the beginning of the story.
- 3 Together as a group, move the children that are holding the pictures until the story makes sense. Ask questions such as: "What happened next? Who can remember the next part of the story?"
- 4 Once you have sequenced the story using the colour pictures, children will need to move to their tables and sit in small groups.



At their tables

- 1** Ask the children to cut out the black and white pictures, arrange them in the correct order and then glue them on a blank page. Walk around the class and assist where necessary. This activity is useful for assessing the children's ability to put the main events of the story in the correct order.
- 2** Once children have completed their sequence pictures, give each child a little book. Encourage them to look at the cover and read the title of the story with them.
- 3** Take the children on a picture walk through the little book, helping them to notice that the pictures in the book are the same as the sequence pictures.
- 4** If there is time, children should 'read' their little book to a partner in the class.
- 5** Encourage the children to take the books home to read with their families.



Many parents have noticed that the little books create opportunities for talking and having fun with their children. Books can help families to bond!



After the children have pasted the sequence pictures into their books in the correct order, encourage them to 'write' a word or sentence for one or more of the pictures.



TUESDAY Shared reading: Big Book

Children learn about reading a familiar story in print as you model the reading process.



It is best to talk about the different parts of a book at the beginning or end of the story. It is important to keep the flow of the story without constant interruptions, so that the children can comprehend the storyline and enjoy the process.

YOU WILL NEED

Tortoise and his shell Big Book



STEPS

- 1 Say the rhyme **Two eyes to see** (page 8) with the children, to focus the class on the story to come.
- 2 Encourage the children to look at the cover picture and talk about what they recognise.
- 3 Read the title of the story to the class. Point to each word as you read. Read it again and ask the children to read with you.
- 4 Take the children on a picture walk through the book, discussing the pictures in detail.
- 5 Allow the children to ask questions about the story and make connections to the language and experiences from the week before.
- 6 Point out the page numbers as you go and talk about what number will come next.
- 7 When you have 'walked' through the whole book, go back to the beginning and read the title again.
- 8 Turn the pages and read each sentence in a clear, steady and natural voice.
- 9 Point to each word as you read.
- 10 Point out any letters the children may know and reinforce the focus letters for this story.
- 11 Read the book again and encourage the children to 'read' with you.

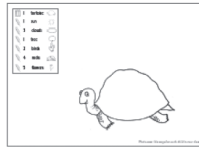
WEEK 2 STORY-BASED

WEDNESDAY Read and do

Children learn to interpret written and picture cues and follow instructions.

YOU WILL NEED

An activity page photocopied per child (page 58);
coloured crayons/pencils



Remember, it is not important how or where on the paper the children choose to draw. Each child will interpret the text differently. The children's choices will give you insight into their thinking and development.

STEPS

- 1 Tell the children to look at the list on the activity page and to talk about what they see (numbers, pictures and words).
- 2 Ask the children to look at the first line and 'read' what it says. Then read each of the lines together.
- 3 Tell the children they are now going to do a fun activity called 'read and do'. They must read each line and do what it says using the blank space on the page.

- 4 Read the first line together again. Tell the children to draw and colour in a tortoise but don't tell them where to draw the tortoise.
- 5 Ask if any of the children can 'read' what to do next on the list; they must draw a sun.
- 6 Continue in this way with each of the instructions.
- 7 Now read each of the instructions again and say to the children: "Have you drawn and coloured in one tortoise? If you have, then tick that on your list."
- 8 Continue checking and ticking each instruction until the end of the list.

Children's interest in reading is encouraged and developed when they have many encounters with print daily. This activity encourages children to interact with print independently by using picture clues, numbers and some of the letters in words.



WEEK 2 STORY-BASED

THURSDAY

Shared writing and reading

Children learn how their words and ideas can be recorded as you model the writing of sentences.

YOU WILL NEED

Pieces of paper with your name and the children's names written down the left-hand side of the page; a thick black marker

STEPS

- 1 Begin by talking about the tortoise from the story. In the beginning of the story, Tortoise didn't want his shell, but at the end of the story he realised that his shell was very useful and made him unique and special. He was proud of his shell.
- 2 Talk about something that makes you special and unique. (Think of physical characteristics such as long or curly hair, being short or tall, talents such as being able to play sport or sing well and personality characteristics such as being a brave or a kind person).
- 3 Now point to the names of children written on the paper. Begin with your name and ask the children what they think makes you special. Write down their words and read to the class, for example: *"Miss de Vries is very funny and kind and she makes us happy."*
- 4 Now look at the next name on the list. Ask the children whose name it is: hopefully each child will be able to identify their own name. Ask the children in the class to think of things that make each child special.

- 5 Make a sentence with the words the children give you and write it next to each child's name. Add your own words to ensure that each child feels their special qualities are acknowledged. Read each sentence back to the class, pointing to each word.
- 6 Stick the list on the wall. Children will soon be 'reading' the words that other children chose to describe them.



WEEK 2 STORY-BASED

FRIDAY Listen and do

Children learn to listen carefully and follow verbal instructions.



Set the tone for these listening activities by saying the following while the children do the actions: "Before we start listening, let's get ready: Shake out all your jiggles; rub your ear lobes to wake up your ears; then rest your hands in your lap."

STEPS

- 1 Settle all the children on the mat and ask them to sit very quietly.
- 2 Choose one child and say: "I want you to close your eyes and listen very carefully."
- 3 Choose another child to hide somewhere in the room and make an animal noise, repeating it regularly. The rest of the children must keep very quiet.
- 4 Explain to the child with their eyes closed that they must ask: "Where are you?" The animal-child must reply by making an animal noise.
- 5 The child sitting with eyes closed must identify where the animal noise is by pointing, then saying the name of the animal.
- 6 Now say to the children: "In the story about the tortoise, do you remember how Tortoise tried to hide from the eagle? Can you hide under your table? Now, climb out. Can you stand up and see how tall you can be?"

- 7 Now say: "Can you do this?":
 - "Stand on your left foot."
 - "Put your hands on your head."
 - "Touch your toes."
 - "Put your hands over your ears."
 - "Click your fingers."
 - "Stand on your toes."
 - "Put your hands on your hips."
- 8 Say to the children: "Now I am going to say some things; you must listen carefully and only do the actions that you can do. Some of them are impossible!"
 - "Fold your arms."
 - "Balance on one foot."
 - "Wink your toes."
 - "Stomp your feet."
 - "Balance on one ear."
 - "Turn your head."
 - "Blink your eyes."
 - "Clap your hands."
 - "Stamp your cheeks."
 - "Click your fingers."
 - "Put your hands on your hips."

Introduction to rotation group activities

Helping children to work independently and in groups

There are five group activities for each story. These activities are repeated in the second week, with some new activities added in Week 2.

Before beginning the activities, talk to the whole class about what they will do in each activity. The children might find it difficult to work independently and manage themselves initially, but as they become familiar with each other, the classroom rules and the activities, you will find they need less guidance.

The importance of rules

Negotiate some rules for rotation group activities. Allowing the children to come up with some suggestions will help them to take pride in the rules. Make sure the rules are clearly displayed and include drawings next to the written words as a reminder to children.

Here are some suggestions:

Rules for Fantasy play area

- Share and take turns
- Don't push or pull each other
- Clean hands
- Take good care of our dress-up clothes and props
- Don't hurt each other's feelings
- Talk in quiet voices
- Tidy up after playing

Rotating the activities

Children will do a different activity each day, so by the end of the week they will have done all five activities. Plan carefully and prepare everything in advance.

You may choose to begin the year with all the children doing the same activity on one day, and then another activity on the next day. This will reduce your daily preparation and allow you to give instructions to all the children at the same time.

However, as soon as you feel your class is ready, we advise that you rotate the groups between activities, with each group doing a different activity on a day.

Our two-week planner (page 12) shows how each group does all the activities in a week.

*Four of the groups will be busy with activities that need less teacher guidance so that you can focus on the group that is doing **Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)**. Therefore you will be able to interact meaningfully with each of the groups in a week, giving you an opportunity to connect with the children and assess their individual progress.*





Overview of the activities

Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)

Focus your time on the group doing this activity as this group is likely to need the most support. You might need to help children decide what they want to draw, and guide them with prompts without telling them how to draw! Talk with them about their drawings and encourage them to 'write' something themselves or tell you what to write on their behalf.

Display the pictures at the children's eye level around the classroom. Don't choose only the most advanced work to display. It is important to affirm every child's work throughout the year. Once all the children have done this activity, you could bind all the drawings together to make a class book which the children can 'read'.

Creative play

Art and construction (Week 1)

Encourage children to talk with each other about what they are making and how it links to the story. You can give the children freedom with a wide range of materials or you can structure the activity by providing selected materials.

Fantasy play (Week 2)

Fantasy play can be noisy, but remember that when children play in this way, they have to negotiate roles and explain what they are doing. They also learn about representation - that one thing can stand for another. This will help them to understand that the writing on a page stands for the words we speak.

Some children might find it difficult to negotiate with others for roles and the sequence of events as they play. Try spending time with them guiding their play and interacting with children who are shy to join in.

Letter puzzles and games

Set up the puzzles and games before the lesson. The children might find it difficult to play the games independently at the beginning of the year. You may want to play one game with the whole class a few times before setting it up as a small group rotation activity. You may like to invite some parents to help manage the game activity.

Practising the letter

Children need regular practice to become confident with the letters of the alphabet. This activity gives children the practice they need to form letters correctly and connect a letter to the sound it makes and to objects that begin with that sound. Begin by setting up one activity for the group. As the year progresses and children become familiar with the activities, you can set up more than one activity.

Independent reading

Choose different types of storybooks, picture books, magazines, shopping brochures, picture dictionaries, atlases, non-fiction and recipe books for the children to 'read'. Include reading material that reflects the different languages and cultures in your class. Include content that connects with the theme of the story. Include copies of the Big Book, little books and sequence pictures. If you are able to spend some time with this group during rotation activities, you might try sitting next to a child and saying, "That looks like a lovely book. Can you read some of it to me?"

ACTIVITY

Drawing and emergent writing (teacher-guided)

Children learn to record their ideas through drawing and emergent writing, as you write what they say about their drawings.

YOU WILL NEED

A blank A4 page for each child; crayons

Week 1: My favourite part of the story

STEPS

- 1 Write *Tortoise and his shell* at the top of each child's page before the lesson. Ask the children to point to the words as you read them together.
- 2 Ask the children to think about the story and discuss the part that they like best. Give some suggestions. For example: "Did you like the part when Tortoise crawled out of his shell?" Encourage the children to draw their favourite part of the story.
- 3 Ask the children if they would like to write something about their picture. Make a comment or ask a question about the drawing, such as: "I like the patterns on Tortoise's shell – lovely attention to detail!"
- 4 If they would like you to write for them, keep them involved by asking them to say the words slowly as you write them down. Here is a teacher 'thinking aloud' as she writes the child's sentence: "Tortoise ... crawled ... back ... into... his ... What word did you want to say next? Shell. I am going to write shell."

Children might write letters backwards or upside down. Don't correct their writing. They will practise the correct formation in other activities. Some children may become aware that they are not writing 'correctly' and may refuse to write at all. This may happen when they have developed a good understanding of letters and sounds but cannot yet use conventional ('grown-up') spelling. This is an important phase in writing development. Support the child by writing some words for them and encouraging them to write words that they can sound out or words that they know how to spell. Soon they will be writing again with more independence.



- 5 Write exactly what the child tells you, word for word. Remember to write neatly and clearly.
- 6 When you have finished writing, encourage the child to read the sentence with you. Point to each word as you read and acknowledge their efforts.

Week 2: My own idea

STEPS

- 1 Write *I am happy to be me!* at the top of each child's blank page before the lesson.
- 2 Ask the children to point to the words of the title as you read them together.
- 3 Remind the children that Tortoise climbed out of his shell because he wanted to run faster, but by the end of the story he climbed back into his shell again; he was happy to be a tortoise. He didn't care that he could not run fast. Ask the children: "What do you like about being you? Draw a picture of yourself."
- 4 Ask the children if they would like to write something about their picture. Make a comment or ask a question about the drawing, such as: "What do you like best about being so lovely and tall?" or "I like to see you have written a **t** for tall!"
- 5 If they would like you to write for them, keep them involved by asking them to say the words slowly as you write them down. Here is a teacher 'thinking aloud' as she writes the child's sentence: "I... am... so tall... my pants... are too... short."
- 6 Write exactly what the child tells you, word for word. Remember to write neatly and clearly.
- 7 When you have finished writing, encourage the child to read the sentence with you. Point to each word as you read and acknowledge their efforts.

Here's another idea linked to the story: write **My future home** on the children's pages. Follow the steps for Week 2, but ask your class to draw the home they would like to live in one day: tortoise carries his home on his back; children must draw their imaginary home.



ACTIVITY Creative play

Children build on the story language and theme through pretend play and art and construction activities.

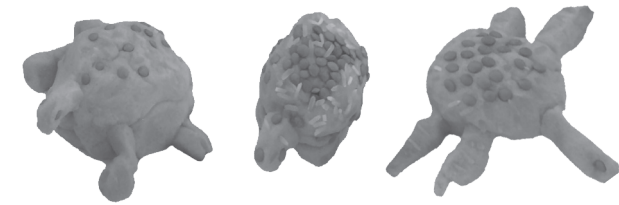
YOU WILL NEED

Play dough (recipe on page 52); beans/coloured lentils

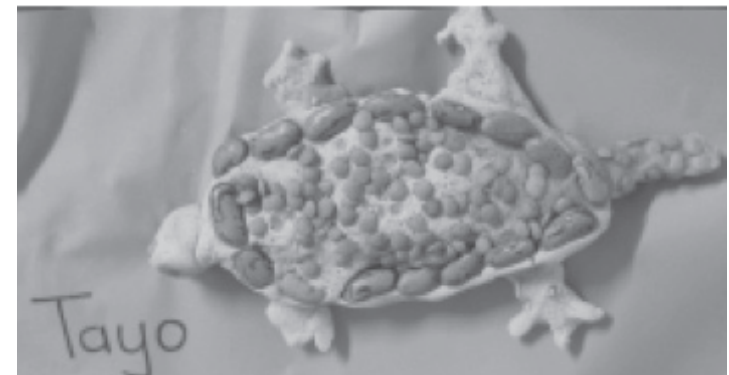
Week 1: Art and construction

STEPS

- 1 Tell the children to look carefully at everything that has been set out on the table and talk about the objects they can see.
- 2 Give each child a ball of play dough. Explain to the children that they are going to make a play dough tortoise.
- 3 Tell them that they can make the tortoise any way they want to.
- 4 Explain that they can use the beans/lentils on the table to decorate the tortoise.
- 5 When the children have finished making their tortoises, they must put them in the sun to dry.
- 6 Create time for the children to talk about their tortoises in pairs.
- 7 Display the tortoises around the classroom when they are complete.
- 8 The children can take their tortoise home once it is dry.



Some children who have difficulty with organisation and/or starting a task may become playful and disruptive. Help the children to think about the shape of the tortoise and give them a starting point. Once they get started they tend to become more confident and focused. Try not to direct the whole activity. The children must create their own tortoise.



Week 2: Fantasy play

STEPS

- 1 Ask the group leader to take the group to the fantasy corner and to settle down quickly.
- 2 Ask the children to tell you the rules of the fantasy corner.
- 3 Ask the children what new props they see in the fantasy corner. Talk about Tortoise who carries his house on his back because he lives inside his shell. Ask questions to begin a discussion: *“Where did Baby Bird live? In a nest! Where do people live? We live in houses – big houses, small houses, round houses, square houses, tall houses, short houses – all kinds of houses.”*
- 4 Ask the children what game they think they could play with the props. If they need support, suggest: *“How about playing **house-house**?”*
- 5 Tell the children they can play altogether or in smaller groups. If the children follow your idea, you could begin their play like this: *“Here we are at Sam’s house. It is a bit messy inside – you may have to tidy up a bit! I hope everyone will help you!”* Encourage them to go into their house and start to play.
- 6 Visit the corner at least once to observe and encourage the children’s game. For example, if appropriate to their game, pretend to be a neighbour arriving at the house. Knock on the ‘door’ and see if they invite you in for a cup of tea. Or ask if you can please borrow a cup of milk as you forgot to go to the shop.

YOU WILL NEED

The following props: some large blankets, sheets or cloths pulled over chairs and tables to make a ‘house’. Inside the imaginary house, put a pile of things: pretend kitchen utensils (e.g. plastic cutlery, recycled containers and pots); pretend food (plastic fruit or vegetables, empty food boxes or packets); a pillow; blanket and a doll.



ACTIVITY Letter puzzles and games

Children consolidate their letter–sound knowledge as they do puzzles and play games.

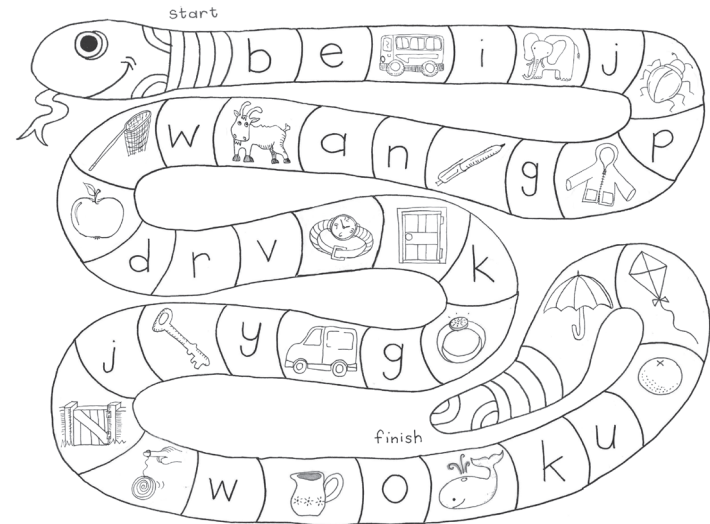
Letter snake game

YOU WILL NEED

Two letter snake game boards (A3 size if possible, page 59); two large dice

STEPS

- 1 Place the large game board on the carpet with two to three children seated around it.
- 2 Explain the rules to the children:
 - Children begin by putting their counters on the snake’s head.
 - Children take turns to throw the die and move the counter the correct number of spaces.
 - If they land on a letter, they must say the sound and move their counter forward to a picture that starts with that letter.
 - The first child to reach the end of the snake is the winner and the game is over.
- 3 Once children have played this game a few times, you can introduce a new rule: if they land on a picture, they must name the picture, say the beginning sound and then move back to the corresponding letter.



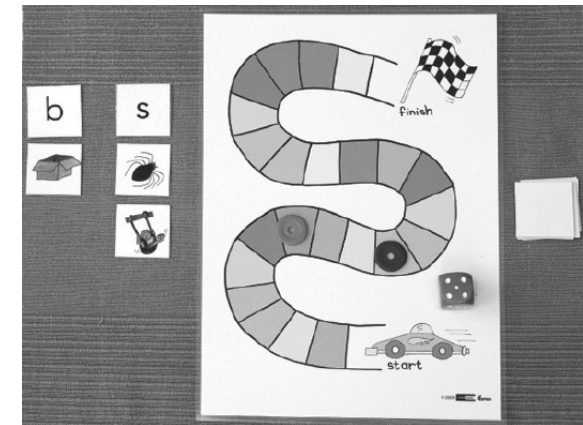
Racing car game

YOU WILL NEED

Two racing car game boards (A3 if possible; page 60); two sets of letter and picture cards (printed on A3 if possible; pages 62–64); two dice and counters

STEPS

- 1 Place the game board on the carpet with two to three children seated around it.
- 2 Put the picture cards in a pile, facing downwards. Put the letter cards face up so that the children can see them.
- 3 Explain the rules to the children:
 - Each child has a turn to throw the die and move the counter the correct number of spaces.
 - After moving the counter, the child picks up a picture card from the pile, names the picture and says the beginning sound.
 - The child then puts the picture card next to the correct letter card.
 - The game is over when the first child reaches the flag and is the winner.



ACTIVITY Practising the letter

Children work independently to practise the formation of the focus letters and draw objects that start with the focus sounds.

YOU WILL NEED

An A4 blank page folded into a little book for each child (see page 53); a letter card for each child in the group; coloured pencils or crayons (six to eight different colours)

Little letter books

STEPS

- 1 Point to the letter t on the letter card and say: "Do you remember this letter? It makes the sound /t/ like in t-t-tortoise, t-t-tree.
- 2 Give each child a pre-folded little book (blank) and tell them they are going to make their own little letter book. Ask them to write the letter t on the front cover of their little book.
- 3 Encourage them to say the sound /t/ again. Ask the children to draw things that start with /t/ on each page in the book.
- 4 If there is time, ask the children to give you the name for each picture, and write the word on each page.
- 5 When the children are finished, let them sit in pairs and 'read' the books to each other.
- 6 Ask the children to take their little book home to 'read' to their families.

If you think your learners will benefit from doing the Rainbow letters activity again, we suggest they do it before they make their little book. Photocopy the activity on page 54 or write the letter as large as possible on a piece of paper. The activity steps focus on the letter **t** and should be used in Week 1. In Week 2, follow the same steps, but focus on the letter **d** and the sound /d/ like in d-d-dog, d-d-day and d-d-down.



ACTIVITY Independent reading

Children learn to read independently and enjoy books and other printed material.

STEPS

- 1 Lead the group to the book corner and settle them down quickly.
- 2 Read the rules for the book corner to the children
- 3 Show the children what is new in the book corner this week. Ask them: *“Why do you think I have chosen these books/magazines/leaflets?”*
- 4 Spend a few minutes motivating and helping children to choose something they would like to read.
- 5 Visit the corner at least once to observe and encourage the children’s reading.



You could also put the **Tortoise and his shell** Big Book and sequence cards in the book corner. Some children will value the opportunity to read and retell the familiar story.



Resources

How to make play dough

YOU WILL NEED

2 cups flour; 1 cup salt; 2 cups water; 2 dessert spoons oil; 4 teaspoons cream of tartar (available at supermarkets and chemists); food colouring

STEPS

- 1 Mix all ingredients and cook over heat until the dough comes away from the sides of the pot.
- 2 Store in an airtight container once it has cooled.



Show the children how to warm up the play dough by squeezing it in their hands. This is a good exercise for the children's hand muscles. Divide the play dough into enough plastic bags so that each child has a ball to work with. Children roll the play dough into a ball at the end of each activity. Pack it away in the bag to keep it fresh.



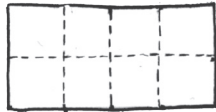
How to make a little book

YOU WILL NEED

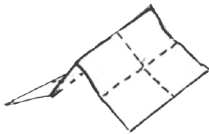
Photocopy of the little book for this story

STEPS

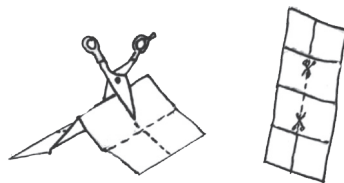
1 Fold an A4 page into eight pieces. Unfold.



2 Fold the page in half.

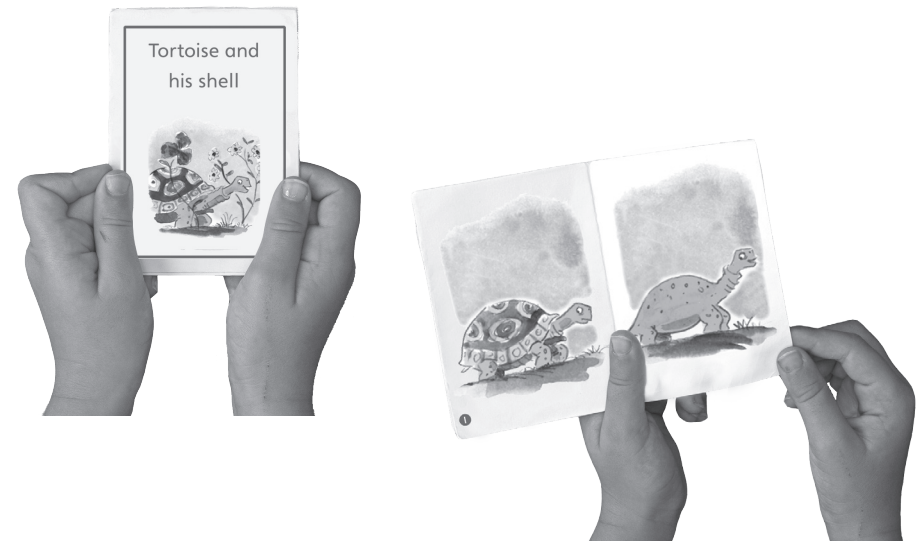
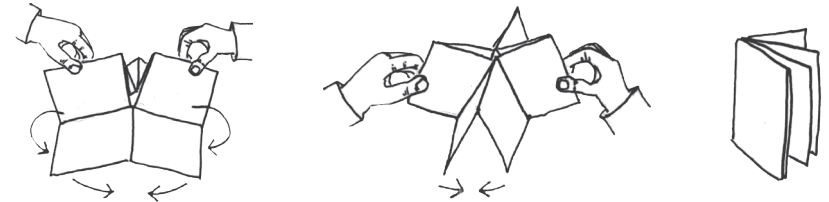


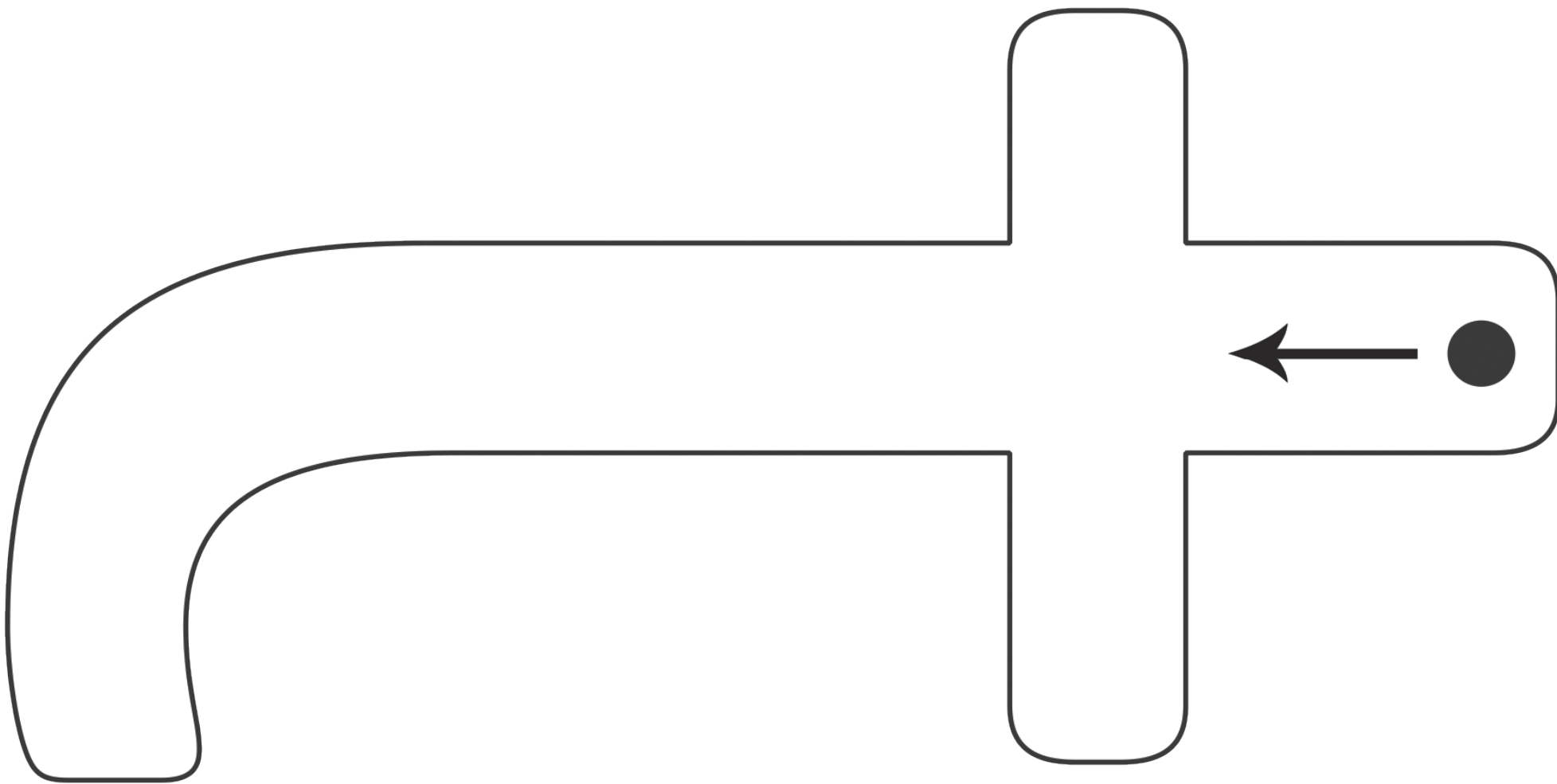
3 Cut on the middle fold.

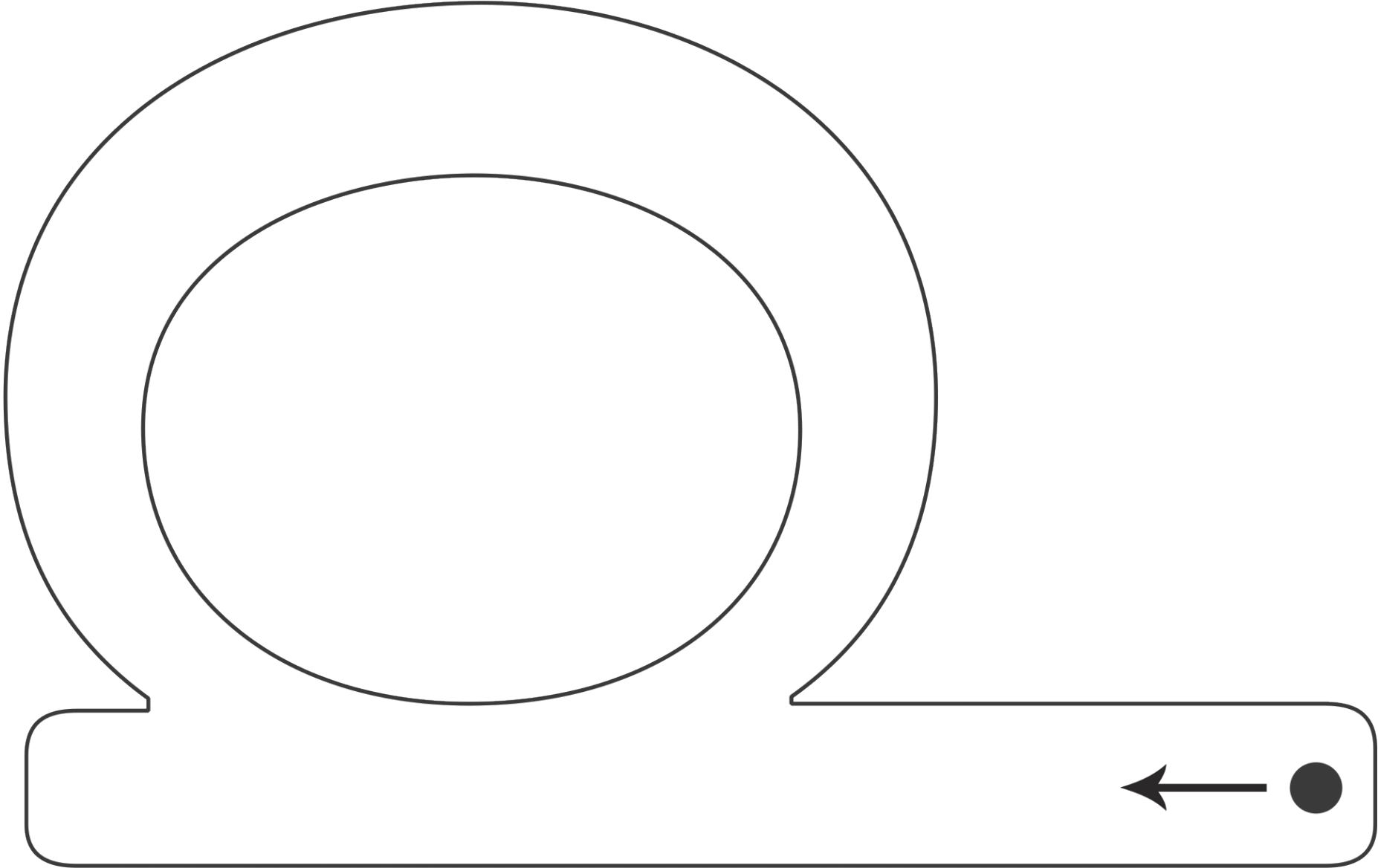


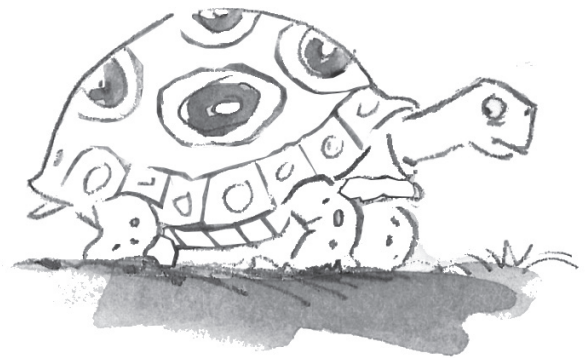
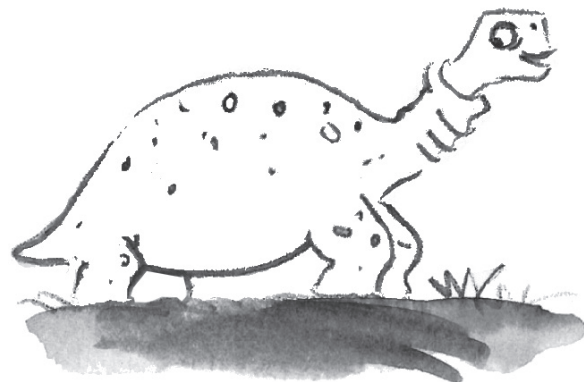
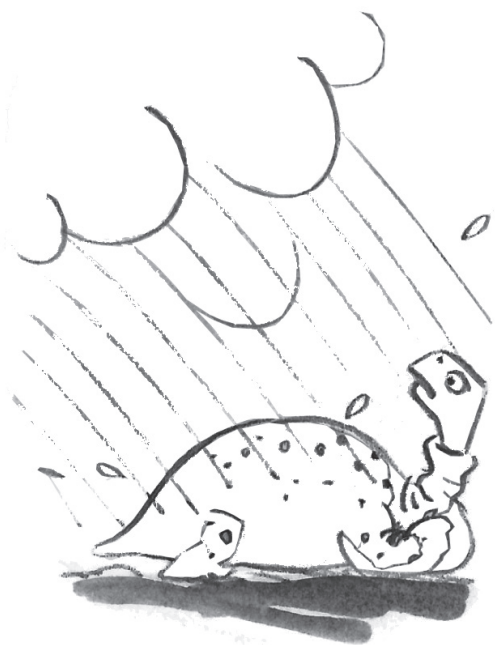
4 Hold the page between your finger and your thumb on both sides.

5 Bring your hands down and together.





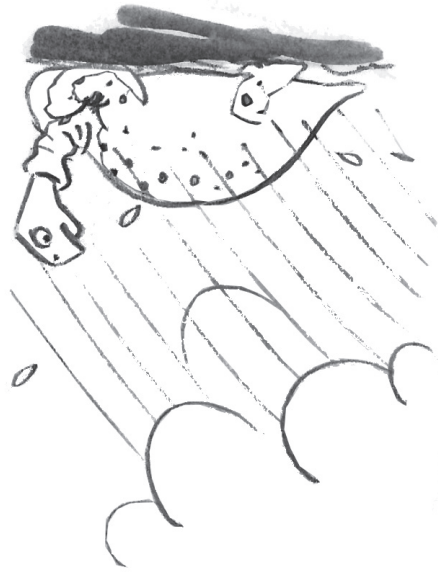




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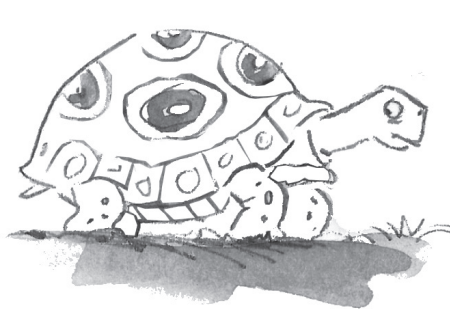
This book belongs to:

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Tortoise and his shell

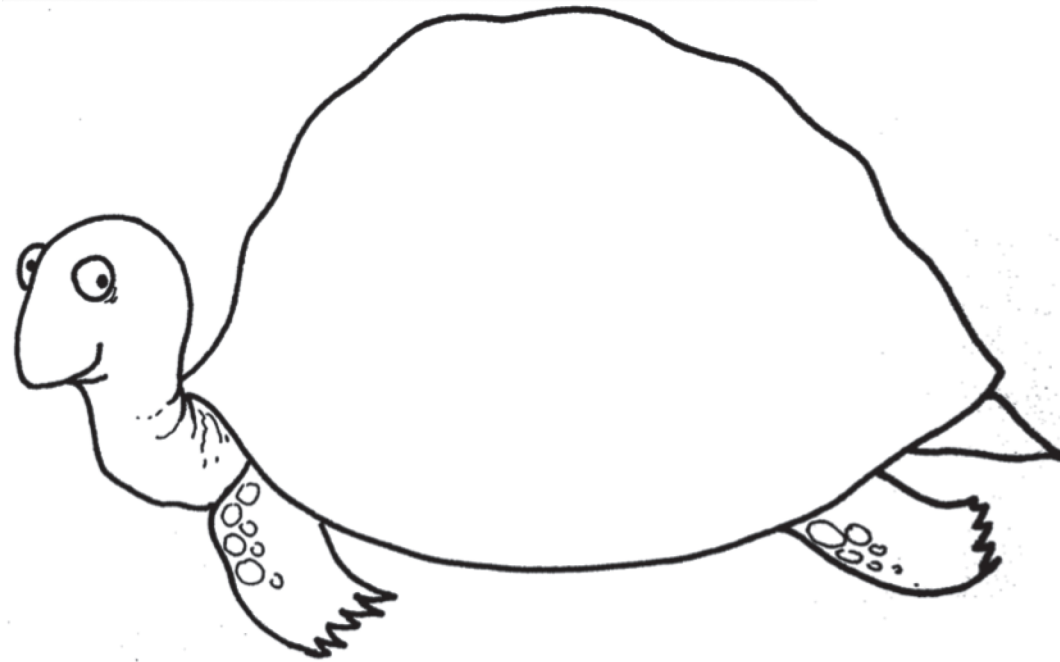
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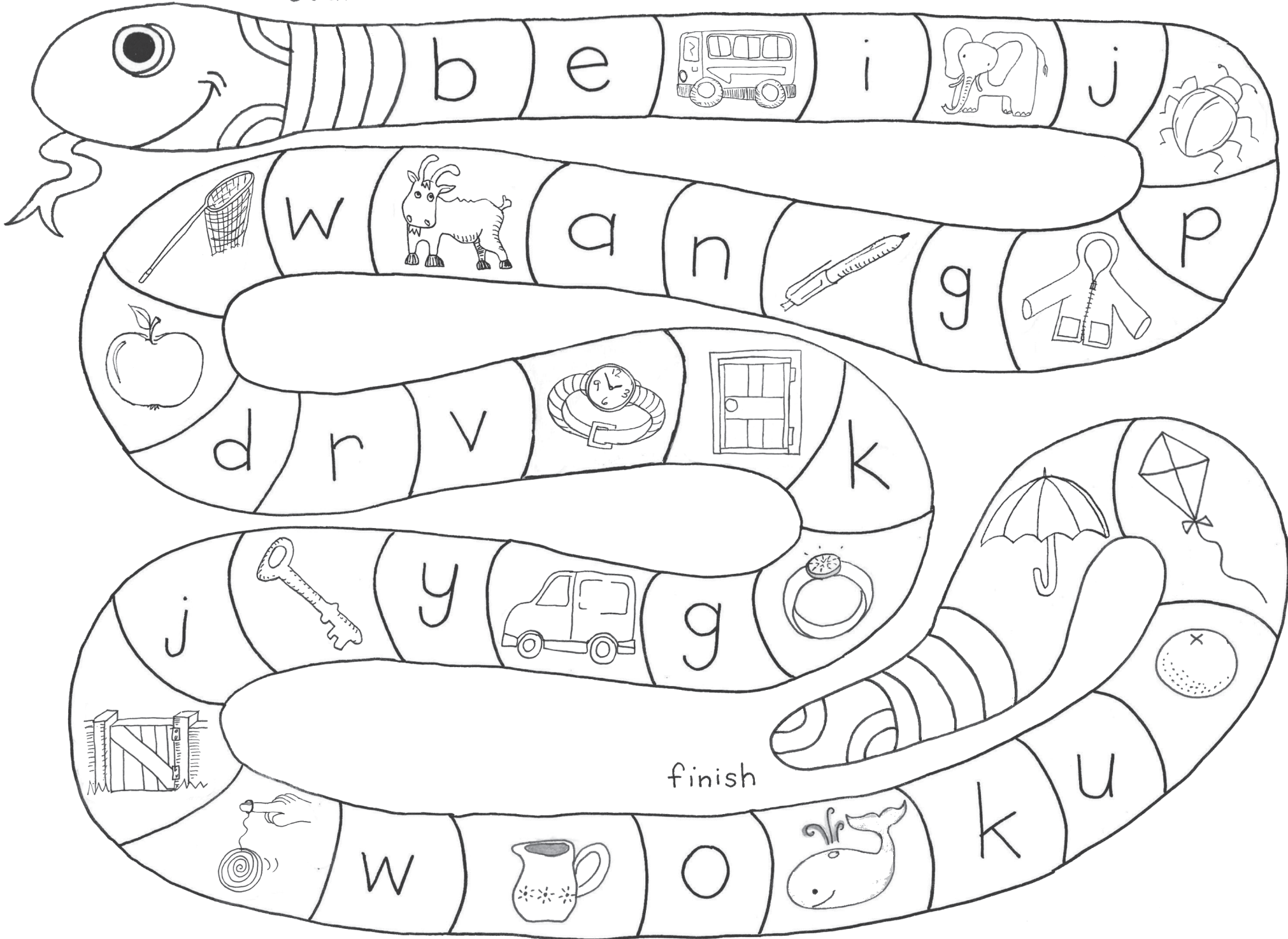
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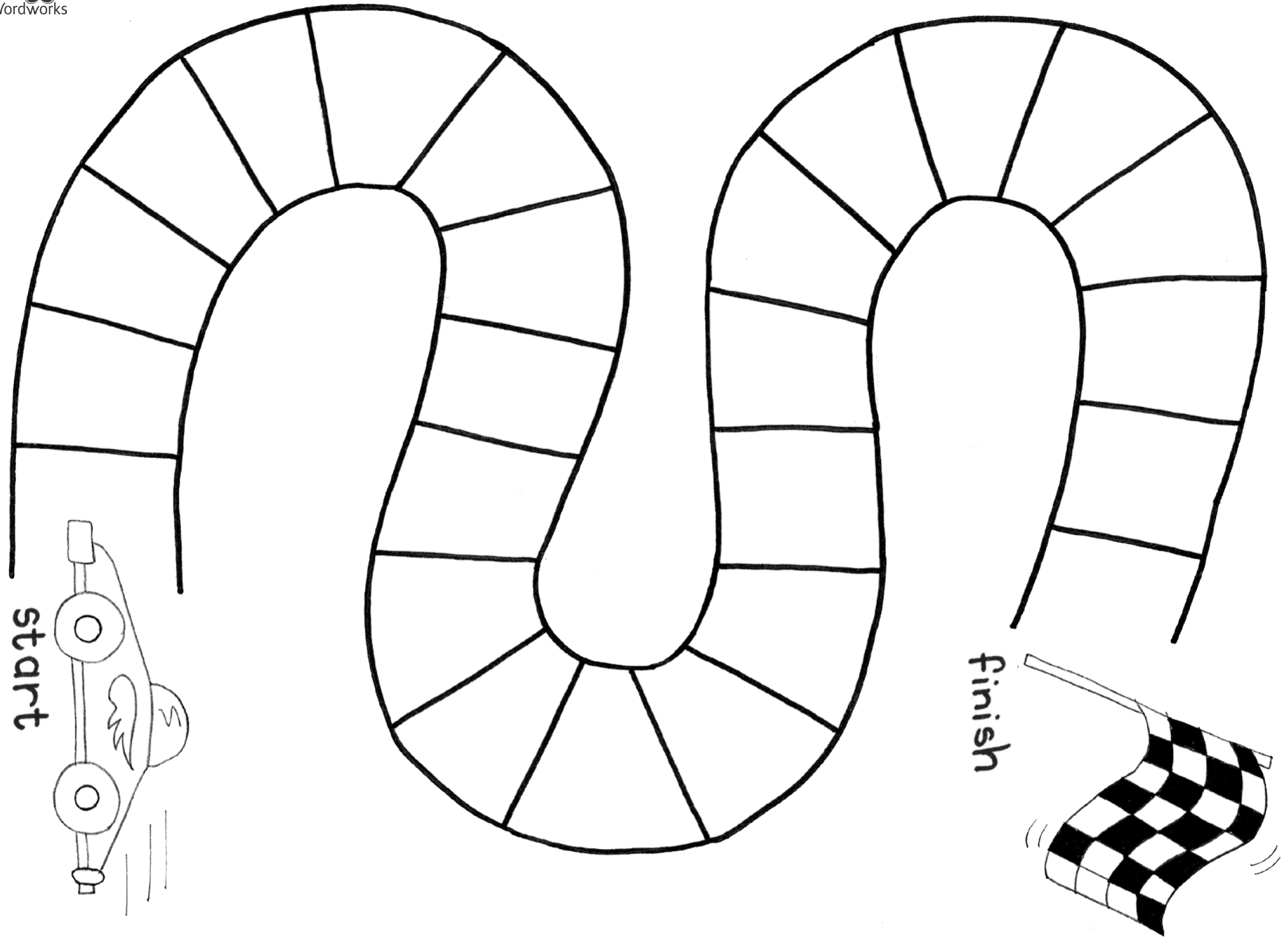


	1	tortoise	
	1	sun	
	3	clouds	
	1	tree	
	2	birds	
	4	rocks	
	5	flowers	



start

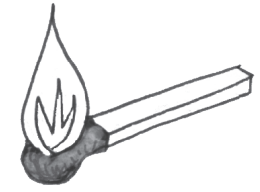
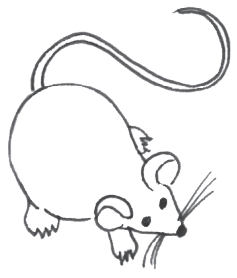




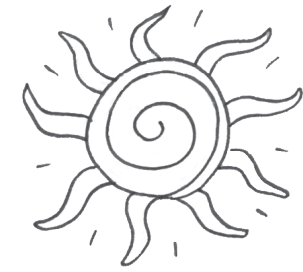
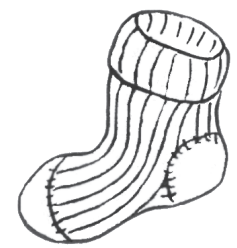
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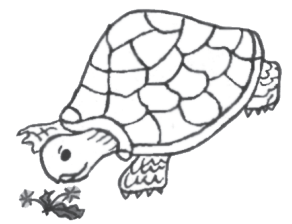
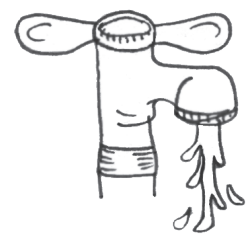
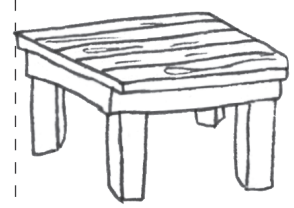
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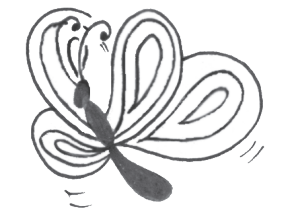
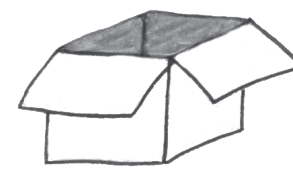
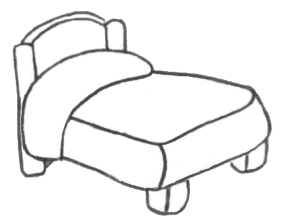
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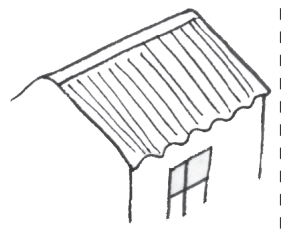
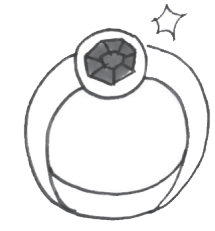
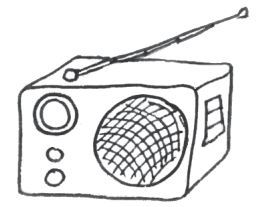
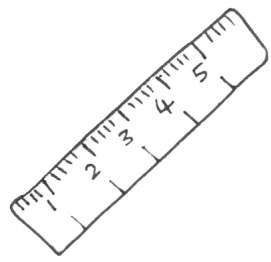


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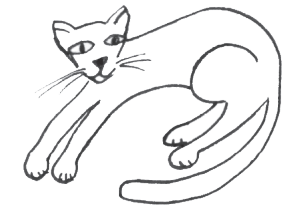
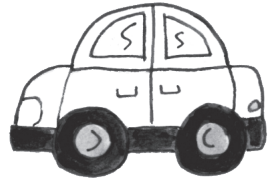




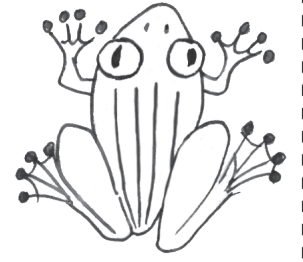
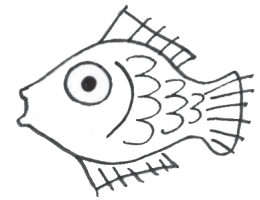
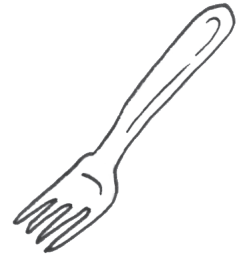
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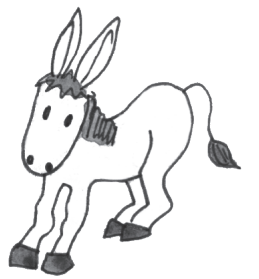
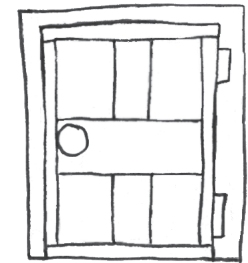
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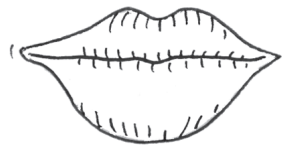


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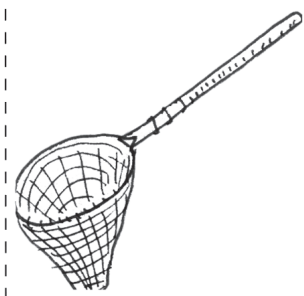
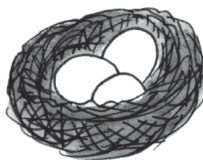




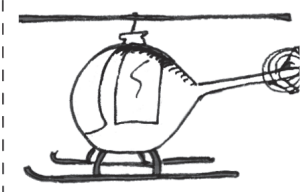
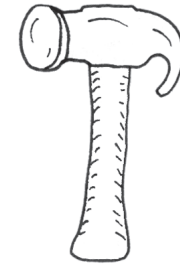
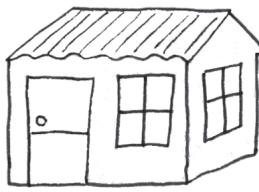
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