



Module 4 (Sample)

Language & Phonics Exercises (Part 1)

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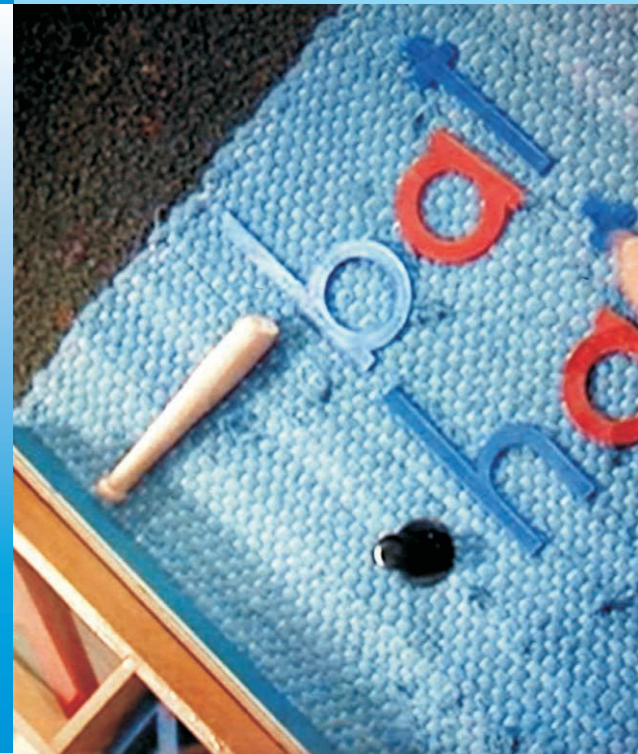
Chapter 6

Identifying Basic Phonemes and Graphemes

(Step 2 of Framework of Teaching Phonics on Page 31)

“The sensitive period is at work like divine command; the child imitates and does not know why; the words penetrate as if drawn by a secret magnetism.”

Her Life and Work, Standing, E.M. (Page. 122)



At this step of Progression in Phonic Framework we begin to introduce the sounds of the alphabet through sandpaper letters and other exercises, and later teach them to identify those sounds in words at the beginning, end and middle of words.



Exercise 1

Sandpaper Letters

“Sandpaper Letters” are alphabets cut out of finest grade sandpaper, pasted on wooden/acrylic boards. They are used to teach the sounds and letters through a multi-sensory approach. The child uses three senses simultaneously... he sees the representation of a letter, hears its sound and traces the way it is written with two fingers of the dominant hand. By tracing the letters with the index and middle finger of the dominant hand in the correct way of writing them, the children get indirectly prepared for writing the letters. Since a motor pattern should be learned correctly the first time, it is very important that the child traces properly formed letters. This will help him develop a good pattern for handwriting, and internalize the association of a letter's sound and its corresponding shape/form.

Points to Remember

- **Always introduce small letters first**, and capitals later. Our aim is to prepare the children for reading as early as possible which can be achieved only through teaching small letters first. Normally, text is

composed of mostly small alphabets, and just a few capitals. Thus, starting with capital letters will just delay the reading process and waste child's precious time. Secondly, it has been noticed that young children find it easier to write small letters than the capital ones, as it is easier for them to draw curves than straight lines. Capital letters can be introduced after the child has developed good understanding of small letters.

- **Always teach the sounds of the alphabets first**, and the names of the letters at a later stage. Learning the sounds first help in starting reading earlier, as the names of the letters do not play any role in reading. Also do not try to teach the names and the sounds simultaneously. Sometimes the child has learned the names of the letters before coming to school. In this case, the teacher must explain to him that each letter has a name and a sound. Because he knows the names, she will only have to teach him the sounds. At no time in the lessons does she use both.
- **Introduce only two to three letters at a time** which are contrasting in shape and contrasting in sound using Three Period Lesson. Once all the letters have been introduced, then the children can work with as many letters as they like at anytime. Moreover, we do not have to follow the sequence in which alphabets are normally written or read i.e. a, b, c, d, etc. It is recommended that you introduce the vowels and the consonants, found in common three lettered words, first and the remaining consonants later.
- **Some experts recommend using simple cursive sandpaper letters right from the beginning.** This way they learn to write the letters separately at first, and later when they are ready to write words, they can join letters without difficulty. At the same time, as these are a simple version of cursive letters, the children do not have difficulty in recognizing the printed letters they will meet in books. In this way, when a child changes from writing the letters individually to connected cursive word writing, the child will only have to extend the pattern of writing he is already using by adding connecting strokes instead of also having to reform the whole letter formation.

Material

Following three sets of English sandpaper letters are used in Montessori classrooms from time to time.

- A set of sandpaper small letters (a to z).



- A set of sandpaper capital letters (A to Z)



- A set of normally sixteen **double sandpaper letters** (commonly called phonograms e.g. ch, sh, oo, oa, etc.), **representing “key” sounds not covered by single letters of the alphabet.** The list of sandpaper phonograms is given in the table below.



16 Sandpaper Phonograms Chart

No.	Phoneme	Key Sound
1.	/qu/	as in quit
2.	/ai/	as in aim
3.	/ee/	as in see
4.	/ie/	as in pie
5.	/oa/	as in oat
6.	/ue/	as in blue
7.	/ou/	as in out
8.	/oy/	as in toy
9.	/er/	as in her
10.	/ar/	as in car
11.	/or/	as in for
12.	/au/	as in haul
13.	/th/	as in bath
14.	/sh/	as in shop
15.	/ch/	as in chin
16.	/oo/	as in hook

The above English Sandpaper letters can be used along with Sandpaper letters of the native language alphabet (in case English is not the first language). The more common forms of alphabet found in text should be introduced first. For example, in Urdu short forms of the alphabet are more common than the full forms, thus they should be introduced first.

Purpose

- Develop a muscular impression of the letter shapes.
- Associate the phonic sounds with the muscular and visual impression of the letter shapes.
- Preparation for reading and writing.

Presentation 1 (Three Period Lesson)

(Note: Full work cycle to be observed)

1. This is an individual exercise. Both the directress and the child should preferably sensitize their fingers.
2. Select two to three sandpaper letters of contrasting shape and sound (e.g. a, b and m), and bring them in a tray to a table.
3. Place the letters to one side of the table, and place the empty tray away, making sure that the space in front of you and the child is vacant.
4. Take one of the letter cards (e.g. “m”) and place it in front.
5. Show the child how to hold the letter steady with the left (non-dominant) hand and then start Three Period Lesson.

First Period

6. Trace the letter with two fingers (*the index and the middle finger*) of the dominant hand from the starting point to the ending point of the letter. Trace slowly and gently *all the while looking at the letter in the correct way of writing it.*



- At reaching the end point of the letter, return to your normal posture, look towards the child and pronounce the sound of the letter clearly.



- Repeat two to three times. Then, pass the letter to the child and invite him to trace the letter.



- Place this letter towards the top of the table and repeat the exercise with the next letter, and so forth.

(Note: The directress may correct the way the child traces the letters by retracing letters for him)

2nd Period

- Place all three sandpaper letters on the table in front of the child.
- Starting with the last sandpaper shown in the 1st period, say, 'Show me _____ (the sound)'.
 12. Encourage the child to trace the letter after he has shown you the letter.



Note: Simply go back to Period 1 if the child commits mistakes without being corrective. Practice this often till the child can clearly associate the sound with the correct letter. Proceed to Third Period only when the child is confident.

3rd Period

13. Take one letter and ask, 'What sound is this?'



14. Encourage the child to trace the letter after he sounds it.

15. At the end say, "Today we have learnt /a/, /s/, /m/".

Note: Second period should be the longest one, as moving on to the third period too quickly may leave the child unable to give the answer, therefore, result in frustration on the part of the child.

Extension 1**Game for Extending 2nd Period**

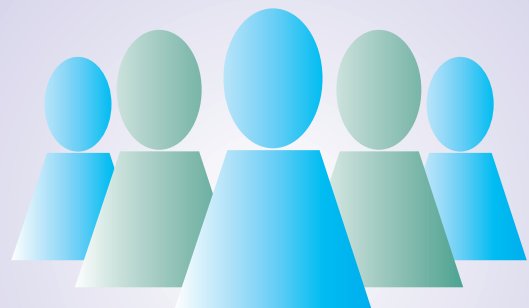
1. Start the presentation as in Presentation 1 but you will now be working with three children.
2. Choose three letters for each child.
3. Place the three letters in front of each child in a row.
4. Ask for who has a letter by its sound: "Who has /a/?"
5. The child who has the letter says "I do." And traces the letter one or more times.
6. Then the letter is passed around to the other two children who trace it and say its name.

7. Then it is given to the directress who places it upside down in front of her.
8. Continue in the same way until all the letters have been traced.
9. Each child puts his three letters back.

Extension 2**Game for 3rd Period**

1. This is also to be done with three children.
2. Choose at least nine letters.
3. Make sure at least one of the children knows all the letters.
4. Place them face up, in no specific order, in front of you but the letters facing the children.
5. Take one letter and pass it to the child who knows all the letters to trace the letter and say its sound.
6. When he has done so... tell him to pass it to the next child to trace and say its sound, and so on.
7. At the end the letter comes back to the directress, who places it upside down and away from the others.
8. Pass on the next letter and continue in the same way until all the letters have been traced.

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Chapter 7

Beginning to Read

(Step 4 to 10 of Framework of Teaching Phonics on page 31)

“The development of language is a mysterious phenomenon. The child takes in the image of a tree and from many such images of trees the concept “tree” is gradually formed. The idea of a tree is as real in the child’s mind as the tree itself is in the real world. The child can carry this idea, “tree”, in the mind and have it available for use in any circumstances. There is still a higher level of awareness that the child must reach. The tree is only a concept in the child’s mind. It needs now to be expressed in reality through sound and symbol. When human beings accomplish this, they can give the gift of their own minds to others.”

(Montessori Today, Lillard, Paula Polk, pg. 18)



Preparatory Exercise

Large Movable Alphabet (LMA)

When the child has learnt the phonetic sounds of the alphabet and has developed the ability to identify them in words, he is ready to build words with the large movable alphabet.

Material Overview

- A large box with 28 compartments, one for each letter of the alphabet, and two extra which can be used for the dots of the 'i's" and "j's".
- The box contains stiff cut-out letters made of plastic.
- The vowels are blue, whereas the consonants are red.



- Script letters are used to accustom the child to print. He does not feel these letters, so the cursive letters need not be used here.

Purpose

This exercise prepares the children to work with Large Movable Alphabet Box, and serves two purposes;

1. Further strengthens child's understanding of letters and their corresponding sounds.
2. Helps children memorize the exact location of alphabets in the box, which improves efficiency in the later

exercises. Those who have worked on computer keyboards or typewriters know that keys just get lost in the beginning and one has to look out real hard at times. However, with the passage of time as we master their use, the fingers begin to press the right keys without conscious efforts. The same is the case with the use of Large Movable Alphabet. If this preliminary exercise is skipped the children may find it difficult to find letters in the box.

Important: This exercise is performed with a group of children, for if one child is unable to find the required sound he/she might grow frustrated, but in a group of children, someone is likely to come across the desired sound, hence the activity will be more fun.

Presentation

(**Note:** Full work cycle to be observed)

1. The directress invites three to four children who are familiar with shapes and sounds of letters.
2. The teacher sets the mat on the floor, she places the large movable alphabet box on the floor somewhere towards the top middle section of the mat – she opens the box, and places the lid under the box.
3. She sits on one side of the mat with the children sitting on the opposite side but facing the material. Ensure that box is easily accessible to all the children.
4. Pronounce the sound of a letter, e.g. /t/ and ask the children to find it, saying “Can you find the sound /t/ for me please?”.
5. Do not encourage any sort of competition.
6. When a child has found the letter, ask him to place it on the mat for everyone to see. While everyone is looking at the letter, say the sound of the letter once again and then ask the child to put it back in the box. Accept other children presenting the same letter after it has been found by someone.
7. Repeat for other letters in the same way.



Important: If there are only one or two children taking the lead in finding the letters, make all the children in the group to take turns in finding and placing letters on the mat.

Exercise 1

Word Building with LMA

Material

- Large Movable Alphabet Box.
- A large green felt mat.
- Set of small objects (placed in a basket/container) with names which are three lettered (CVC) words from the child's every day observation (e.g. cup, bat, hat, jug, etc.). The child should be well familiar with the letters used in the selected words.
- A small notebook for tracing the words. The notebook can be made by stapling together rectangular paper strips of size maximum 5 inches wide by 2.5 inches broad, having 4

horizontal equidistant lines printed in the center. In the beginning the words to be used in the exercise should be already written on the lines (one on a page) in dots, so that the child can easily write over it.

- A sharpened pencil
- Paper boards with clips.

Purpose

- Analysis of phonetic words as a preparation for reading, writing and spelling.
- Identification of the sounds involved in the formation of words.
- Development of skills required for spelling a word (segmentation) and reading a word (blending).

Presentation

(**Note:** Full work cycle to be observed)

1. Place the box and the basket, containing the objects, towards the top left and right of the mat respectively, ensuring that there is ample space in the middle of the mat for the child to work and also that the large movable alphabet box is easily accessible to the child.
2. Take an object from the box (e.g. a bat) and ask the child if he knows its name.
3. If the child identifies correctly proceed to the next step, else, tell him the name of the object



first.

4. Place the object in front of the child towards the top middle section of the mat.
5. Ask the child, "What is the first sound that you hear in the word **b-at**." In the beginning, say the first sound separately and *stress it*, and then say the remaining two sounds normally as **b-at**. This will help the child identify the sound and tell you that it is /b/.
6. If the child is unable to understand, pose the above question again stressing the sound of the first letter even more till the child tells you what sound is it.
7. Ask the child to find the letter in the Large Movable Alphabets that corresponds to the sound, saying, "Can you find ... /b/... from the box and place it next to the object".
8. Allow the child time to find /b/ from the box and place it next to the object (bat).



9. Next ask the child the question, "What sound do you hear after 'b' in the word ... **b-a-t**." Say all the sounds separately *stressing /a/*.

Repeat if necessary till the child figures out that it is /a/.

10. Just wait for an instance to see if the child himself proceeds to pick up letter 'a' from the box, and places it next to 'b', else ask him to find /a/ from the box and put it next to /b/.



11. Finally ask the child, "What sound do you hear at the end of the word ba-**t** . This time stressing on /t/. Repeat if necessary till the child figures out that it is /t/.
12. Ask the child to find the letter in the box and place it next to letter 'a'. This completes the word 'bat' on the mat.
13. Run your finger under the letters as if reading and say "bat".
14. Tell the child that now you will show him how to trace this word. Take the notebook and trace on the word 'bat' with the pencil. (Do this step only if the child is ready for writing).
15. Repeat the exercise for all the remaining objects in the basket.
16. Invite the child to practice on his own using the same or a different set of objects.
17. Instruct the child to trace each word in the word booklet.

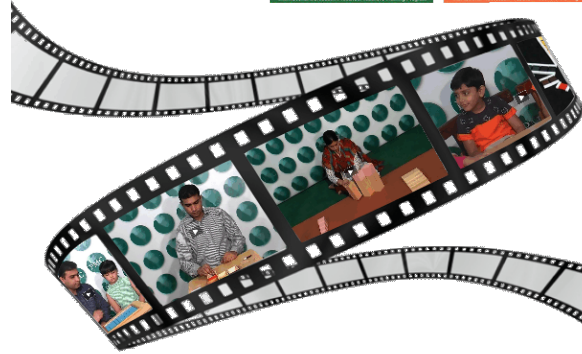
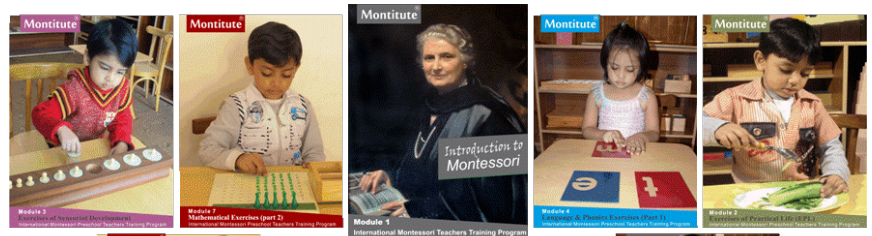
Note: Allow the child to take over at any stage if she understands the exercise, and wants to takeover.



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