

Supplemental Materials

Teaching “Total Recall of the Alphabet”

for

Students Learning to Read, Write, and Spell

with

Blumenfeld’s Alpha-Phonics

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These materials will enable students to develop fluency with the alphabet very quickly. It is widely believed that alphabet identification and writing fluency is a very excellent predictor of student reading and spelling ability.

The use of these materials is very simple, especially when used in conjunction with *Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics*. Here are the steps.

Clarence Barnhart, the dictionary expert and co-author of the *Leonard Bloomfield Let's Read* reading system wrote, "Under no circumstance should you start to teach your child to read until he has the necessary muscular skills to see the small distinctions between letters of the alphabet. You can tell he has the necessary muscular coordination when you notice that he can button his clothes or see and pick up a pin on the floor." (3)

June Brown in her 1981 *Guide to let's read*, says, "Every child I worked with learned to read providing he or she could see a pin on the floor and pick it up, could button clothes, and *had total recall of the alphabet*. No one can read an alphabet language without total recall of the alphabet. "Total recall" means that the student can recite the letters in alphabetical order, can identify them when they are presented in random order, and can print any word when it is pronounced and spelled. These three goals must be met with absolute perfection before the student can become a good reader. Unfortunately, many schools do not insist on total recall. They teach children to recite the letters in alphabetical order, and sometimes they teach them to identify the letters in random order. However, very few schools teach children to print any word when it is pronounced and spelled. The foundation of reading success is total recall of the alphabet." (7)

Concerning dyslexia, June Brown had some interesting comments, "Let's get the facts straight! There is no such thing as dyslexia among children who know the alphabet. Any child who can learn the alphabet is not dyslexic. Therefore, if your child knows the alphabet, can see normally, can button clothes, your child can and will learn to read. "Dyslexia" is a very confusing term. Many educators no longer use it because no one is quite sure what it means. Generally it means that a child can only read with great difficulty, but sometimes it means a child cannot read at all. I have seen many children labeled dyslexic. But every one of them who knew the alphabet learned to read." (12)

Bob Rose in his book *Forget the Bell Curve* maintains that there is strong evidence that kindergarten students who are taught to write the letters of the alphabet at a rate of 40 letter per minute will have no problem learning to read. The Formula for calculating Letters Per Minute (LPM) is: **$LPM = 1560/\text{time-in-seconds}$** . Time refers to the seconds it takes the student to write the alphabet from a to z without copying or prompting. The secret to acquiring this skill is simply daily practice writing the alphabet until the students can write all the letters without copying at a minimum of 40 letters per minute.

When I teach *Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics*, I always make sure my students have “total recall” of the alphabet and can write it fluently in cursive. The entire program of 3,033 different words and 600 sentences is taught via directed cursive handwriting and daily oral spelling. Mr. Blumenfeld and I both prefer and teach cursive first, but manuscript will also work if the parent or teacher is not trained in writing cursive or has a school that forbids it.

Students should learn the names of the letters of the alphabet as they learn to write the alphabet. The names of most of the letters have elements of the sound represented by the letter to be of great assistance to children beginning their first steps in reading. The underlined letters contain at least one of the sounds of the letter in the name: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.

The following have the sound value at the **beginning** of the letter name:

a /ā/, b /b/, c /s/, d /d/, e /ē/, g /j/, i /ī/, j /j/, k /k/, o /ō/, p /p/, r /r/, s /s/, t /t/, z /z/.

The following letters have the sound value at the **end** of the name.

f /f/, l /l/, m /m/, n /n/, s /s/.

This leaves only h, q, w, and y to be learned by associations other than the letter name.

Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics can be order from <http://chalcedon.edu/store/>

Alphabet Poem

a b c d

e f g

h i j k

l m n o p

q r s

t u v

w x y z

ALPHABET POEM

A B C D

E F G

H I J K

L M N O P

Q R S

T U V

W X Y Z

Alphabet Tiles

Lower Case

a	b	c	d	e	f
g	h	i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p	q	r
s	t	u	v	w	x
y	z				

Cut out tiles and use for matching with uppercase letters and for putting in alphabetical order.

ALPHABET TILES

UPPER CASE

A	B	C	D	E	F
G	H	I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X
Y	Z				

Cut out tiles and use for matching with lower letters and for putting in alphabetical order.

Alphabet Poem Test

— — — —

— — —

— — — —

— — — — —

— — —

— — —

— — — —

Alphabet Mastery Exercises

a b c b b c c a b b c a c b a c c a

c a c c b c d e f e f d f e d f e f f

e d f f d e e f f d f g h i g g i i g

k i g h h h i h i g g g i g i h h g g

j k l j j k l l j l k l l j k k j j j k l

k l j m n o m o m o n n n o m n m

o o m o o o n o n m p q r r p q q q

p q p q r r p r p r p r p r p p s t u

s u s t s u t u t t s s s t s u t s u u

u s v w x y z z v w x x w w y z x

w y w y z x y z v v y z y x v x z x

y x w w z x y v.

Alphabet Mastery Exercises

A B C B B C C A B B C A C B A C C A
C A C C B C D E F E F D F E D F E F F
E D F F D E E F F D F G H I G G I I G
K I G H H H I H I G G G I G I H H G G
J K L J J K L L J L K L L J K K J J J K
L K L J M N O M O M O N N N O M N
M O O M O O O N O N M P Q R R P Q
Q Q P Q P Q R R P R P R P R P P S
T U S U S T S U T U T T S S S T S U T
S U U U S V W X Y Z Z V W X X W W
Y Z X W Y W Y Z X Y Z V V Y Z Y X
V X Z X Y X W W Z X Y V.

Alphabet Flashcards for *Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics*

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These Flashcards are designed to help teachers and parents teach the youth of today the high-level reading skills of an effective phonics-first method.

There are only two basic ways to teach reading: from the “sounds” or from the “meaning.” A student that learns to read from the “sounds” using phonics-first, with no admixture of sight-words or whole word guessing, develops high level, dyslexia-free reading abilities. *Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics* is a pure phonics-first method for teaching high levels of reading achievement “from the sounds.”

The **first step in reading** is to know the alphabet well.

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A B C D

E F G

H I J K

L M N O P

Q R S

T U V

W X Y Z

a b c d

e f g

h i j k

l m n o p

q r s

t u v

w x y z