

CONTENTS

- Introduction, 3
Letter Profiles, 4
Family Affair, 9
Think Small, 10
Connections, 11
An Alphabet You've Never Met, 12
Letter Perfect, 16
A Big Challenge, 17
Survival Letters, 18
Anyone for Doubles? 19
Acronyms, 20
Do This, Do That! 21
Alphabatics, 22
The Case of the Missing
 Vowels, 23
Alphabetability! 24
Alphabet Carpentry, 25
Things and Things, 26
Lost Letters, 28
Quick Changes, 29
Lphabet Hallenge, 30
A-Maze-ing, 32
Tsrif Eman-First Name, 33
Chew a Letter, 34
How Far Around an R? 35
Spaghetti Spree, 36
Long Letter List, 38
Superstory, 39
Thinking Up and Down, 40
Build a Sentence, 41
Alphabits, 42
Letterheads, 44
VIP Initials, 45
Write a Picture, 46
Jazz It Up, 47
Alphabet Art, 48
Capital Critters, 50
Puppet Parade, 52
Letter Charades, 55

INTRODUCTION

This is not a safe little ABC book.

The OPQ letters in the title have been used for a reason—to signal to the teacher that what lies ahead is often unorthodox, offbeat and original.

Educational value is not sacrificed in the process, however. The ideas in this book go out in vigorous directions, approaching learning in a multitude of ways.

A few general comments: All the projects revolve around manuscript letters, but do not assume the book is for pre-cursive students. Far from it! The activities are designed to appeal to children in middle and upper primary school, with the manuscript alphabet serving as the starting point for this intellectual and visual play.

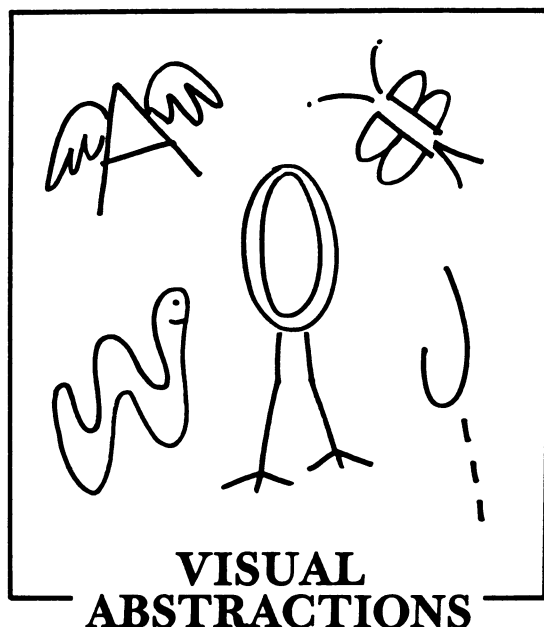
The projects are constructed specifically for use at learning centres, and it is recommended you do not turn the ideas into worksheets. Children are burdened enough with work in this form! Instead, follow the suggested formats and keep the preparations simple. In most cases, cardboard and markers are all that's called for.

These activities have been carefully designed to allow children to work them truly independently, but this doesn't push the teacher out of the picture. Your enthusiasm and feedback are important. Since most of the ideas are challenging and fun, your reactions to completed work should also be fun.

If you are using a Multiple Intelligences approach to teaching and learning you'll find that the focus in these activities is mostly on visual/spatial and linguistic intelligences. Therefore, the activities can be used with children's strength areas or to help students improve their visual/spatial and linguistic intelligences.

In short, this book is about the alphabet, but to a much greater extent, it is about thinking.

Happy times among the OPQ's!



LETTER PROFILES

Here is an activity that is certain to capture children's imagination and to produce some sound analytical thinking at the same time.

Simply write each of these 26 verses on a separate note card and place them at a centre. Make certain they are not in alphabetical order, but thoroughly shuffled. Also, have a copy of the alphabet in capital letters on display. Then instruct children to guess each letter based upon the characteristics suggested in the verses.

There are other possibilities. The verses would make an excellent script for a short dramatic program, with each child portraying a letter of the alphabet. You might instruct children to ham it up a bit, making appropriate gestures based on the content of the rhymes. It would also be possible to create a full set of alphabet puppets using cardboard, aluminium foil, sticks, etc. and to present a show in which the puppets use the verses to describe themselves. (You'll find some alphabet puppets in the final section of this book, by the way.)

The verses are presented here in jumbled fashion—just as they should be presented to children. After you have had the fun of solving these riddles for yourself, check your answers against those presented on page 8.

I'm the mountain letter—
A camel with two humps.
I'm the only letter
With so many bumps.

You don't see me often,
But then when you do—
You'll find me together
With my friend, the U.

This answer is easy—
It's not a big deal.
Think of the shape
Of a ball or a wheel.

I'm almost a circle.
I've a line that goes in.
No one will ever
Think that I'm thin.

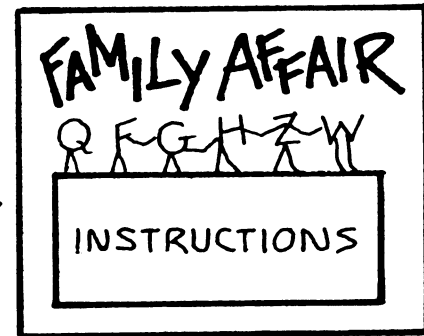
I look like a letter
Taking a walk.
Without my help
You couldn't spell talk.

Think of an ear
On the side of a head—
A straight and a curved
Line that have been wed.

My right side's curved—
My left side's straight.
At making honey
I am just great.

O
D
G
Q
M
B
K

FAMILY AFFAIR



To students:

Pretend that all the letters below are really different families. Then answer the questions on your own paper.

XOOzb

XOll

XO

Oo

XOpyj

zXOzz

XsOig

fgaXOb

1. Which letters—capital or small—are probably the grown-ups in each family?
2. Which family has triplets?
3. Which family probably lives in the largest house?
4. Which children have gone to the river and are dangling their feet in the water?
5. Which family has twin boys on the basketball team?
6. Which family consists of a mother and daughter?
7. Which family has the grandmother living in it?
8. Which family has no children?

To teacher:

The first question is designed to lead them with an iron hand into the abstraction. After that, they're on their own.

The answers are: 1—capital; 2—zXOzz; 3—fgaXOb; 4—XOpyj; 5—XOll; 6—Oo; 7—XOOzb; 8—XO.