

# Language for 5-Year-Olds

## Labeling

Materials: Small cards or strips of paper and a pencil.

See my gallery of Montessori language label pictures [here](#) (password is: LabelLabel).



## Presentation

1. "Today we are going to find out the name of things and write them down. Everything has a name. What is your name?" Child says name. "If I did not know your name I could only call out 'Hey you.' So every person and everything has a name.
2. Point to table. "What is this?" Child answers 'table.' "What does table start with?" Child answers 't.' "I will write table, t-a-b-l-e" (sound out the letters/sounds). Tape it or place it on table.
3. Write window, sounding out the word as you write 'w-i-n-d-ow.' Ask child to place it by window.

4. "What is the thing we use to wash our hands?" Child answers 'sink.' Write it down and sound it out as you write. Ask child to place it by sink.

5. Ask child, "What would you like me to label."

6. When game is finished, child brings labels and puts them back in basket. Another time child can read the label herself and then place around house or classroom.

Direct aim: Labeling of things (noun).

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## **DICTION**

Material: Paper and Pencil.

Presentation:

1. Dictate some simple three letter words, at first staying with one vowel for the middle sound. Say "Cat." "What does 'cat' start with?" Child: "c." "What is the next sound?" Child: "a." "What is the last sound in 'cat'?" Child: "t." The child should be writing these on his own sheet of paper or chalkboard. "When you are done look at me, then I will write it for you on the blackboard." Child then compares words to see if she spelled it correctly. Then go onto the next word, like 'mat'.

3. Another day, use words with a different vowel (bed, Ted, egg). As the child progresses and masters each vowel, you can mix up words using two vowels (mat, egg, sat, bed), then another week three, etc. Then you can do four letter words.

Progression:

1. cat mat map nap tap gap rap sap sag gas ram rag fan

2. pig dig fig mix fix tin fin bin rig big

3. bus nut but rut run sun gun gum fun bun

4. pot mop got dot fox fog rot not jog

5. get jet let met net bet bed wet leg

Control of Error: Blackboard

Indirect and Direct Aim: Writing.

Age: 5 and up.

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## DICTION WITH THE PHONOGRAMS

REVIEW: Phonograms are first taught with the **green sand paper phonogram tablets** (sixteen double letter combinations in print: er, ee, ar, ou, oo, ai, or, ue, ie, au, oa, sh, ch, oy, th, qu), but you can make your own on cardstock or index cards and give a three-period lesson. The child can also practice writing them.

Next the child can spell phonogram words with the **small moveable alphabet**, making the phonogram sounds RED (and or BLUE) and the other letters BLACK. You take the "c" and the "h" and say their names at this point (or use their sounds) and push them together: *Together the "c" and the "h" make the sound "ch."* Ask the child to spell words that begin with "ch", like "chat." The "c" and "h" are RED and the "a" and the "t" are BLUE or BLACK. (The words are built with black letters and the phonogram is highlighted in red or blue letters. In my training, we did not use black MA letters nor did we use them in our classroom. We used a red and blue small moveable alphabet and the phonogram sound was always RED and the other letters were always BLUE.) Sorry for the confusion! You will use whatever colored letters are in your material that you make or buy.

**Small moveable alphabet:** Many Montessori suppliers carry the *small* moveable alphabet (the small movable alphabet has letters in **all one color** so you need two sets in two different colors--this is different than the usual Movable Alphabet, which has **larger** letters and all vowels are blue and all consonants are pink/red). These small sets range in price from \$14 (without box) to over \$40 (with box) in either blue, red, or black letters. You may decide to make your own. I have not found any free downloads, yet.

There is a \$4 version from Montessori Spanish [here](#). Buy them at Kid Advance, USA; or at Montessori Outlet, USA...or any Montessori supplier. Remember you need two sets! I recommend one in blue and one in red.

**Dictation comes next**, a few days or weeks later. The child can use a pencil, or colored pencils or markers (blue for the phonogram sound!), to write the words.

**Material:** Children, adult at the blackboard, **phonogram booklets** or lists (you can buy them or make your own).

### Tips:

- 1) The phonogram booklets are also called "Digraph Booklets" and you can find out how to make them on page 112-113 of *Teaching Montessori in the Home* by Hainstock (find it on Amazon.com) as well as a detailed lesson.
- 2) In Gettman's *Basic Montessori* (find it on Amazon.com) they are referred to as "Reading Folders" on page 153-155 with a detailed description and lesson.

3) You can find a free download of digraphs [here](#) (under Word Lists to the right of the web page). The print is in red and black. Use them as cards or cut them up to make **phonogram booklets**.

Give words with phonograms, (sh, ch, th, wh, oy, or, ar, etc.) first four then five letter words, etc.; first only one phonogram (words with "sh" for example) at a time, then two at a time (words with "oy" and "sh" for example), then three, etc. Use contrasting phonogram sounds. This could be over a two or three month period... Child should get 80% of the dictated words correct before you move on (to another phonogram sound).

Presentation:

1. Adult says, "I'm going to give you words with the 'oy' sound and you write them down." Say the word slowly, in sounds: 'b-oy' (first 'b' then 'oy'). The children write the words on their paper and afterwards you write the words on the blackboard as a control of error. Let the children read back their words to you and say them out loud.

2. One day you can do 'oy' words first, then another day 'oi' words, then another day mix them up. Do the same with other sounds.

3. Children can dictate to each other from the **phonogram booklets** to repeat sounds.

Control of Error: Blackboard and booklets.

Indirect Aim: Reading Exercise.

Direct Aim: Use of Combination sounds in writing.

Age: 5 1/2 and up.

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### **Reading Introduction** an excerpt from **COSMIC EDUCATION** by Ursula Thrush

Reading opens the child to every thing that has happened to the universe. The individual who can read can educate himself besides, it's just a delight to read. The images through which these words create can be transported into other times, into other worlds. Yet these days, reading has become a problem. The reason is not that they are less intelligent than they used to be but that teachers who are not profoundly prepared are being placed in charge of classrooms which overwhelm them. They do not enjoy what they're doing. In order to teach anything, one has to consider three main points:

1. The child to be taught
2. The subject to be taught
3. The technique which will combine the first two considerations

In teaching children, we are dealing with beings who have a tripart (three part) nature. They have body, mind, and spirit. The unity of this tripart nature has to be kept in tack. The needs of all three parts must be filled. If here is to be harmonious development, first look at the child to be taught.

You need to know the child and her needs if you want to teach her anything. You need to ask yourself, "In what stage of development is this child? What are the needs of that particular stage? Because, although the subject matter may be the same, the technique of teaching to children with different stages of development is very different indeed. Next we have to observe whether the child is at the same stage of development of her tripart nature, that is, we must assess the child.

1. Is she physically coordinated?
2. Are there any lost stitches or missing foundations in her self-directedness or independence?
3. Is she happy or troubled?
4. Is she well adapted, at peace within herself?

Next we need to look at the subject to be taught. We need to know all its component parts and again assess whether or not the child has mastered them all. Lastly, in order to enthuse or interest some one in a subject you yourself have to be enthusiastic and interested in it. So assess yourself and your attitude. Remember, the child who is still in the absorbent state of mind absorbs your attitudes.

To enthuse children for reading, you really have to know what reading is. Reading is the ability to communicate with another person without speaking. Reading is the translation of symbols with which another has expressed her thoughts and feelings. Reading is to share the thoughts, ideas and experiences of someone who might have been dead for 2000 years and we accomplish all this with the help of twenty-six little signs.

There are several levels to reading. First comes the mechanical part which is to recognize the symbol, translate it into sounds and then to connect those sounds into a word. This is not comprehensive reading. Comprehensive reading has a second part which is interpretive reading. We need to understand the sentiment, the feeling, and the ideas the person has written about. The third point of

comprehensive reading is the appreciation of the beauty of the syntax, the style, the arrangement of words, sentences, and paragraphs. We have to keep the unity of these three parts of reading in mind. The simple words of three letters which enable the child to read should be extended to longer words and phrases which makes her understand the definitions of the cultural subjects but then immediately keep in mind to read to the child and have available to him books of good literature. Indirect preparation for good language.

Where to begin

In reading readiness, we start with writing. In writing the child expresses the known quantity that is her own thought with the help of symbols. Reading is the reverse process. Here the child takes somebody else's symbols, translates them into sounds which then are connected to make words and sense.

The child will let you know when she is ready to read. After she has been writing for a while, she will start to read her writing back, at least, try or try to read a word on a poster, signs, etc. Sometimes they just start singing? signing? letters. That's when you embark on your reading program.

First comes the object box. It is called the doorway to reading.

Second comes the reading tablets/cards (short vowels).

Third comes the Phonogram booklets.

Fourth the sight words or puzzle words.

Five, the classified reading cards of the cultural subjects.

Sixth, all the grammar games.

Seventh, the sentence analysis.

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## **The Object Box**

### **Material**

An attractive box containing objects, phonetic three letter objects like bus, man, hat, pig, box, nut, web, representing each of the short vowels. (A spinning top was always a favorite!) pencil, paper (strips are good or index cards).

### **Presentation**

1. "This is the object box. Peek in!" Open box. "Let me see if you know the things I have in here: what is this?" Child answers correctly, put in a pile at the top of the table/rug or back in box. Child answers incorrectly, say correct name then put back in box. Try again later to see if child remembers. Do the same for all of the objects.

"Now you know all of these objects."

2. "Now I am going to let you know/tell you what I want/which object I want you to give me without talking to you! Watch . . . "

3. Then you write very slowly and precisely in lower case the first letter of the first object--it's a fan (place it in front of the child). "What does this say/do you remember this sound/letter?" If child is correct, make the next letter, if incorrect, say, "Is this an 'f' or a 'p' (you wrote 'f'). If child is still incorrect, reconsider going back to moveable alphabet and SP letters.

Next letter, "What is this?" Child says "a." Next letter is "n." Child says "n."  
"Let's say all the letters together fast: 'f-a-n.' Faster: 'f-a-n,' etc. Child should eventually say "fan" as one word. Put the fan next to the written word/paper.

4. Take out next object (it's best you take out the objects in case they choose one you know they don't know). Another time, they can choose the objects.

"What does this say?" (you wrote "j"). Same as above.

We have here the essence of reading. The transmission of thought through symbols. Children usually love it. This is a one-on-one exercise that you do alone with one child. Eventually an older child can do it with a younger child.

Age: 4 1/2 to 5

Objects are nice to have but you can always cut out pictures from a magazine and glue to index cards as a substitute.

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## **LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT – READING STAGE**

### **Exercise: READING TABLETS**

Material: Wooden box with compartments containing wooden tablets with pictures of phonetic objects with name written under each object (you can buy them at a Montessori supplier online). In a smaller compartment are name tablets corresponding with the pictures. These are color coded. The words on the three letter 'a' sounds are yellow, the 'e' sound is in green, the 'o' is in brown, the 'i' sound is in red, the long 'o' is in blue, the long 'i' is in light blue, etc.

If you want to make your own, make TWO SETS of phonetic cards, five of each vowel, on index cards (or card stock cut up). One set has the picture on the top with the word written below in lower case and color coded ('a' sounds are yellow, the 'e' sound is in green, the 'o' is in brown, the 'i' sound is in red, the long 'o' is in blue, the long 'i' is in light blue); and the second set has just the word color coded.

You can buy phonetic cards on ebay, but buy two of everything, so you have two sets, and cut out the words on the second set, to match to the pictures (the first set).

You can also cut up old phonetic work books and make your sets of phonetic cards that way.

#### Presentation 1.

1. Bring out the 'a' sound tablets. Show the pictures to the child. "Do you know what this is?" If he says no, you say, "It is a pan." "Do you know what this is?" "hat" "Yes, it is a hat." Place them in a horizontal line.

2. "Look, this is a name tablet. Can you find a picture with the name under it?" "What does it start with?" "o" "Let's look for it. Is it this one?" "No." "Is it this one?" "Yes." "O.K., let's put it right here."

3. Continue down the line until all the names are matched with the proper picture.

**Note:** You can do one vowel sound only, and the next day (or the next week), introduce a second vowel sound, so that you and the child are working with one vowel sound at a time, with only the tablets (or home-made cards) of that vowel sound.

#### Presentation 2.

1. Following the same procedure work through the long vowel sounds.

#### Progression:

Use a ruler turned around so the numbers/measurements do not show, and cover the bottom of the first set of phonetic cards (with the pictures). Child reads the second set of cards, one at a time, and matches it to the cards tucked under the ruler.

1. **Bring out the stand (or ruler).** "All right, now I am going to put these pictures in the stand so you can not see the word written under it."

2. "So what does the first word say? "m a n" "Is there a picture to match" "Yes." Place name tablet under the matching picture. "So what does this word say?" "c a t" "What does that mean?" "cat" "Do you have a picture of a cat here?" "No." So, put it aside.

Control of Error: Word hidden stand.

Indirect Aim: Reading.

Direct Aim: Individual work at the process of reading.

Age: 4 to 4 ½ and up.

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### **Puzzle Words in a Nutshell**

Puzzle words (or funny words or sight words) are words found in your child's reading material, such as phonetic readers, that can't be sounded out phonetically. They are taught with flash cards: one puzzle word is written or printed on an index card or card stock.

**First lesson:** you show five simple puzzle word cards to the child, one at a time, and try to sound them out. They will sound "funny". So you then tell the child, "That is a funny word! We cannot sound it out! We have to read it and remember it, and then practice reading them each day."

**Second lesson:** the child takes out the puzzle word cards (up to twenty cards but not at first, build them up as the child learns them starting with five word cards!) and reads them to you or sits next to you so you can hear.

**Third lesson:** the child writes down the puzzle words on paper or makes her own cards, and to make it fun let the child use markers and then after all the puzzle words are written down, she can color and decorate the page or cards!

**Preparing puzzle word cards:** the best way to make a puzzle word activity is to go through all of your child's readers and write down all the puzzle words on cards. And before your child goes to the next level or book in her readers, she needs to learn the puzzle words (in that book or series).

A faster way to do this without making cards is to sit down with the child when she starts a new reader and skip to all the puzzle words together and read them outloud, first, then go back to page one and have her begin reading; or tell her to wait until she can read the puzzle words independently before she can read the whole book.

Below is a list from Montessori Materials.

<http://www.montessorimaterials.org/Language/sightwordlistDolch.pdf>

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