

# Chapter 4 Online Resources

## Independent Literacy Centers that Support Learning in Text Levels A and B

**A** child working on text Levels A and B is gaining control of directionality, one-to-one voice-to-print matching, learning high frequency words, building automaticity naming letters, and learning the sounds letters make. Your literacy center choices should support this learning and provide engaging independent practice. The following are a few more suggestions to add to your literacy centers to help these particular literacy learners.

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### LETTERS AND SOUND CENTER

#### Magnetic Letters

Magnetic letters come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. They are made from different materials, usually plastic and foam. These qualities alone make them an engaging learning tool. When you first put magnetic letters out, we suggest just letting your children explore with them. Take the opportunity to observe what children choose to do with them. Do they sort them, match them, stack them, put them in ABC order, make their name, make words? Allowing children to explore their own ideas first makes room for the independent, focused work of matching (exact matches, uppercase to lowercase), sorting (uppercase/lowercase, colors, circle/lines, to name a few), and eventually building (words and sentences). See Figure 4.1.

#### Roll and Record (Figure 4.2)

We explained this game in Chapter 3 as an activity to do during Pre-A lessons. Now you can move the activity to literacy centers. Children LOVE this game and tend to choose it over and over and over. For independent practice, we like to group the lowercase letters together according to how they are made. As you begin writing a letter, think about the first stroke your pencil makes. We make one die for each of the following:

- “around” letters (c, o, a, d, g, s)
- short “down” letters (i, r, n, m, u)

2 Intentional from the Start: Guiding Emergent Readers in Small Groups

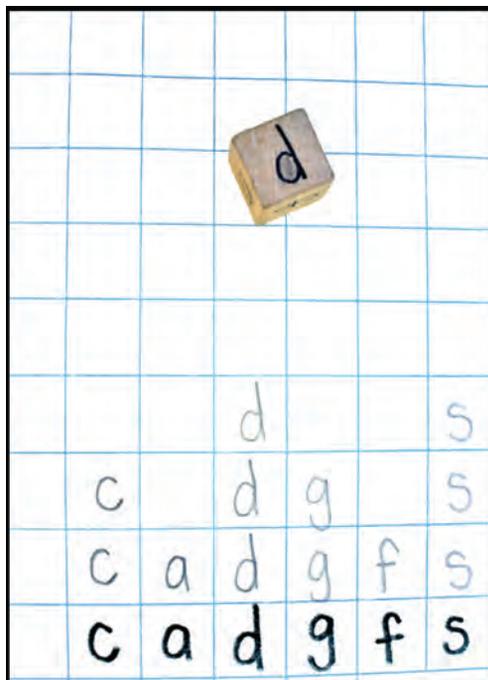


**FIGURE 4.1**

*This is an example set of letters we put out in our Letter Center.*

- tall “down” letters (l, t, h, b, k, f)
- “slant” letters (v, w, y, x)
- “slide” letters and letters with “tails” (e, z, j, p, q)

Students set up their own recording sheet on 1-by-1-inch grid paper and roll one of these dice at a time (Figure 4.2). They’ll create one column or row for each letter on the die. Students roll the die, name the letter, write it, and roll again. They play the game until all the squares are filled up. Depending on time, children can play another round, choosing a different die.



**FIGURE 4.2**

*Roll and Record With “around” Letters*

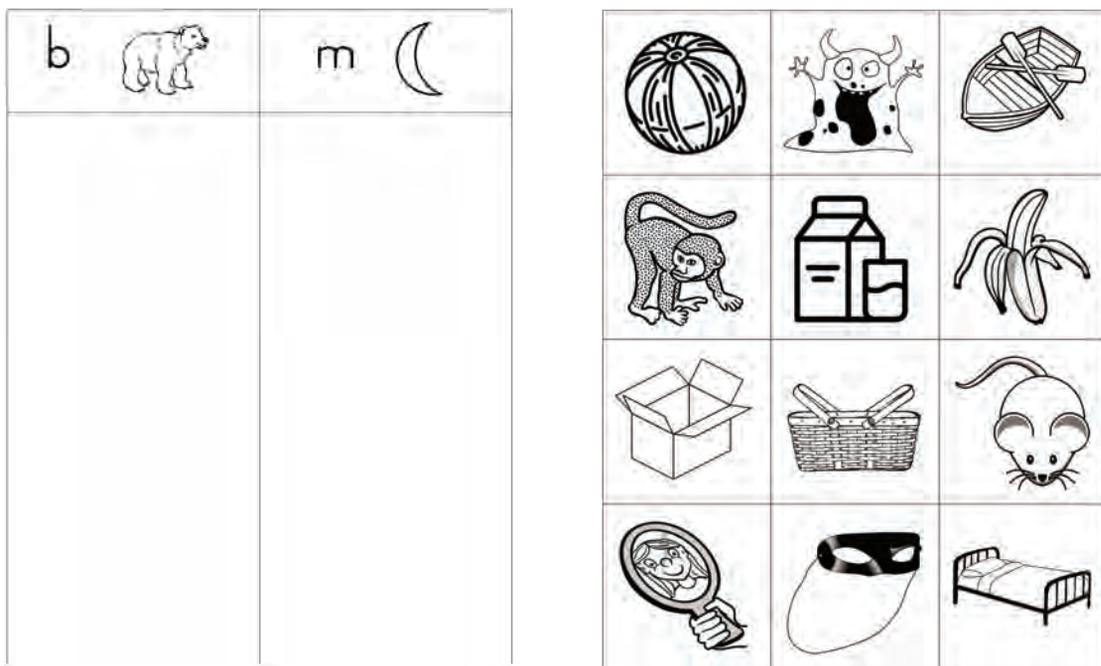
## Picture Sorts (Beginning Sounds)

As children continue to learn the sound each letter makes, picture sorts give additional practice for them to say, isolate, hear, and link the initial sounds in words. We recommend beginning by comparing two initial consonants that have very distinct and different sounds, such as /m/ and /s/ or /b/ and /m/. The student's job is to say the picture word, isolate the initial sound, and sort the picture accordingly. This sorting activity can be completed in a pocket chart and reused (Figure 4.3), or each child can sort and glue their own set of pictures (Figure 4.4).



**FIGURE 4.3**

*Children have sorted /m/ and /s/ pictures in a pocket chart.*



**FIGURE 4.4**

*This is an example of an individual student picture sort for /b/ and /m/. Students cut the pictures apart, sort them according to the initial sound and glue them under the appropriate picture cue taken from the class ABC chart.*

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## WORD CENTER

### Word Puzzles

As you introduce high frequency words, they can be made into word puzzles (Figure 4.5) just like the name puzzles introduced in Chapter 3. Students can practice putting the word together, using a model, and writing the word (Figure 4.5). By the end of the year, your collection of word puzzles will be pretty large.



**FIGURE 4.5**  
*Each high frequency word learned, goes into its own baggie for independent practice.*

### Name Card Sorting

This is another one of those activities that children return to again and again. They will sort name cards into two columns, names that have a certain letter and names that don't. Children set up their paper into two columns. At the top of one column they write the first letter of their own name and at the top of the other they write the first letter of their name with the red "no" symbol on top of it. Then children use the name cards and sort them according to names that have that letter or names that don't (Figure 4.6). As the year progresses, other letters can be written at the top of the columns to create new sorts or high frequency words can be sorted too.

**FIGURE 4.6**

*Children have sorted friends' names according to if the name has an Ll or no Ll.*

## Handwriting Practice

We believe it is important to teach handwriting. We also believe the practice is more meaningful when it is connected to whole word learning. We are not big proponents of worksheets unless there is a clear purpose. We create handwriting sheets (see Figure 4.7) that give children the opportunity to practice writing words correctly in isolation and then again within a text that can be read. We provide tracing models that show children how to form the letters as well as empty boxes so children can give it a go on their own. The word space is confined so children can attend to the size of their letters and words. On the flip side, the high frequency word is embedded within text children can read independently.

m y

my	my	my
my	my	
my		
my		

*my (front)*

<u>my</u> mom	
<u>my</u> dad	
___ brother	
___ sister	
___ family	

*my (back)*

see

see	see	see
see	see	
see		
see		

*see (front)*

I <u>see</u> my dad.	
I <u>see</u> is my mom.	
I <u>see</u> is my sister.	
I <u>see</u> is my brother.	
I <u>see</u> is my family.	

*see (back)*

**FIGURE 4.7**

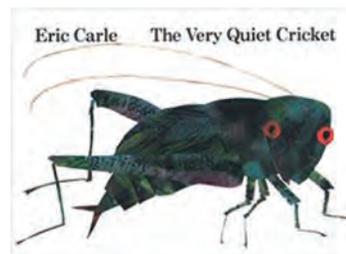
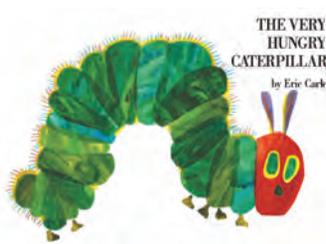
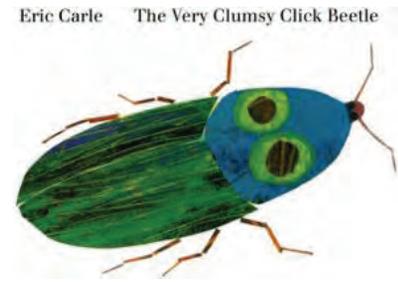
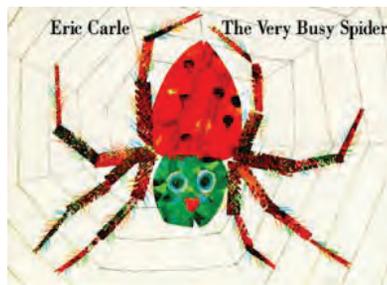
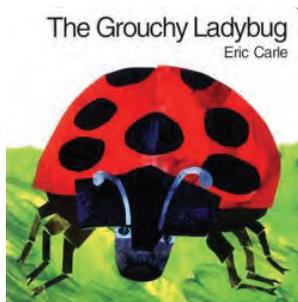
## WRITING CENTER

At this level our writing center continues to be very open ended, with lots of student choice of materials and themed vocabulary cards. Our expectations begin to change as children learn new high frequency words. Here, we begin to expect them to draw *and* write. Children working with text levels A and B usually begin by labeling with one word (table, mom, square), progress to labeling with an article (the table, my mom, a square), and then to writing simple sentences (I see my mom.).

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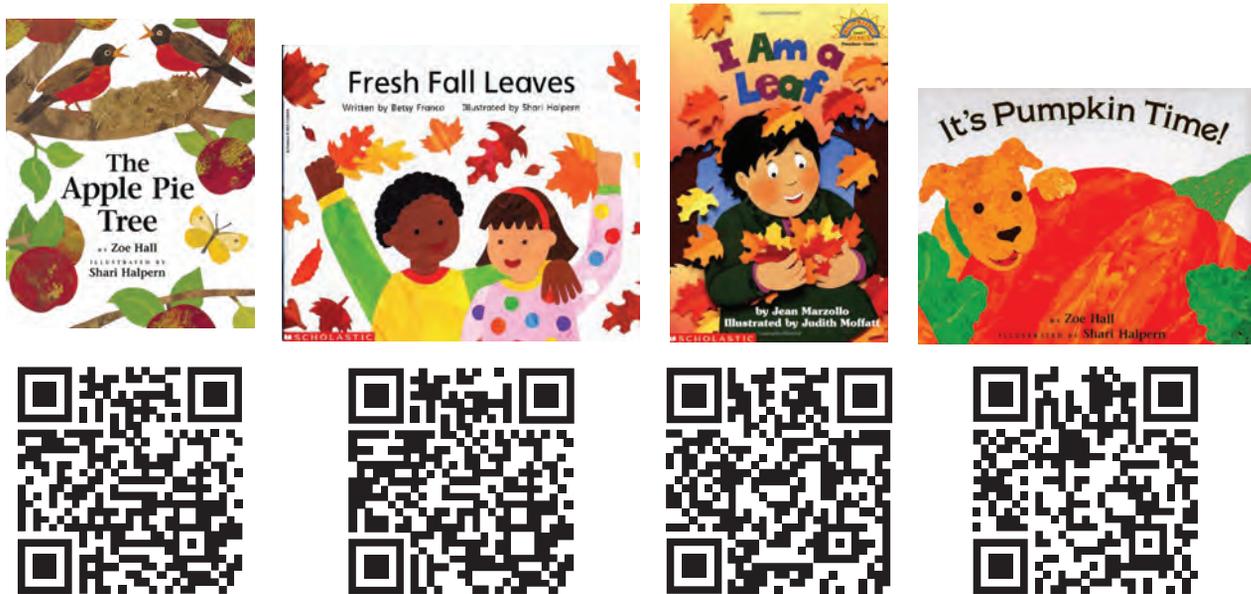
## LISTENING CENTER

We continue to use QR codes that lead to wonderfully read books on YouTube. We change the titles weekly to keep students engaged. As you create QR codes, be mindful of opportunities to create text sets. Think about creating QR codes that lead to an author study (Figure 4.8) (Peter Reynolds, Eric Carle, Mo Willems, David Shannon) or a topic study (Figure 4.9) (fall, animals, holidays, sports). These studies provide valuable learning opportunities beyond the class read aloud.



**FIGURE 4.8**

*These are examples of QR codes for an author study.*



**FIGURE 4.9**  
 These are examples of QR codes for a fall topic study.

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## READING CENTER

We want children to become lovers of books and eventually lovers of reading. We encourage this by offering a wide variety of books and other opportunities in our reading center. One opportunity is story retelling. Every child is a storyteller and can orally tell you the story of a small life moment with great detail. These stories are important for children to share. However, retelling can be a difficult task for them when it comes to sharing someone else’s story. Retelling requires students to listen, comprehend, and sequence events in some manner. In the reading center we put out books and materials to encourage and facilitate retelling. These materials may be but are not limited to pictures, props, and puppets (Figures 4.10 and 4.11). For instance, for the story *The Mitten* (Figure 4.12), we might put out a mitten and animals to stuff inside as props for students to use when retelling the story.





**FIGURE 4.12**  
*The Mitten Retelling Materials*