

# English Made Easy: Foundation Book 1

## Notes for parents

This book is designed to help your child learn early reading skills by focusing on the different sounds of each of the letters in the alphabet. This method of teaching reading is called *phonics*. The naming, matching and writing activities will encourage your child to learn the names of each letter, as well as the different sounds each letter makes and how it is written on the page. By completing the pages of this book, your child will discover that print carries meaning and that reading and writing are both fun and interesting skills to learn.

The second part of the book is designed to help your child develop the early skills that are needed when learning to write small letters. The fun writing activities group letters together in “families” according to similarities in their shape and formation, rather than follow alphabetical order. By tracing and drawing lines and writing letter shapes, children will develop the correct formation of letters, which is the basis for good handwriting in the future.

### Content

By working through this book, your child will learn:

- to write the letters of the alphabet as small letters;
- to match the small letters with their corresponding capital letters;
- to put letters in alphabetical order;
- to match the initial letters of words to letter sounds;
- to recognise the sounds of the five vowels when in the middle of words;
- to develop eye-and-hand coordination;
- to practise handwriting skills;
- to write from left to right on the page;
- to understand that letters go together to create words;
- to develop an awareness of simple spelling.

In the second part of this book your child will learn:

- to develop fine muscle control of his or her hand and fingers;
- to make fluent marks on paper;
- to develop eye-and-hand coordination;
- to write from left to right, starting at the top of the page;
- to draw the basic patterns that form letters;
- to write lower-case letters in the correct way;
- to write letters with flicks in preparation for joining up letters later on;
- to recognise letter shapes and learn their names;
- to understand that letters go together to create words;
- to recognise words and understand that spaces are needed between words for them to make sense.

## How to help your child with the alphabet

One fun and simple way of helping your child to memorise the names of letters and to remember alphabetical order is to sing the letters of the alphabet together. In addition to learning letter names, it is just as important that you familiarise your child with the different sounds that each letter makes.

Always pronounce the letters with short sounds. For example, say “b” and not “ber”; say “h” like a panting sound and not “her”. By introducing your child to these short letter sounds, you are laying the foundations for accurate word building and spelling at a later stage. If long sounds are used, it can present difficulties when your child begins to read new words. For example, if you say the letters *c – a – t* with short sounds, it is possible to sound out the word correctly; however, if you say the same letters with long sounds, “cer” – “aa” – “ter”, your child will not be able to produce the word *cat*.

Practise letter names and sounds with your child in the course of your daily routine. However, when your child is just starting to learn letter sounds, it is important to keep the words simple and the initial letter sounds very obvious. Try to avoid words that start with letter blends (combined sounds such as *sh*, *th*, and *br*). You can help make some letters more memorable if you link them to familiar things. For example, you could say that the letter *s* sounds like the hissed “sss” of a snake and also that the letter *s* looks similar to the shape of snake.

Once your child is familiar with the basic letter sounds, you can then extend his or her vocabulary and experience by introducing words with letter blends. An enjoyable way of doing this is to play a game of “I spy”.

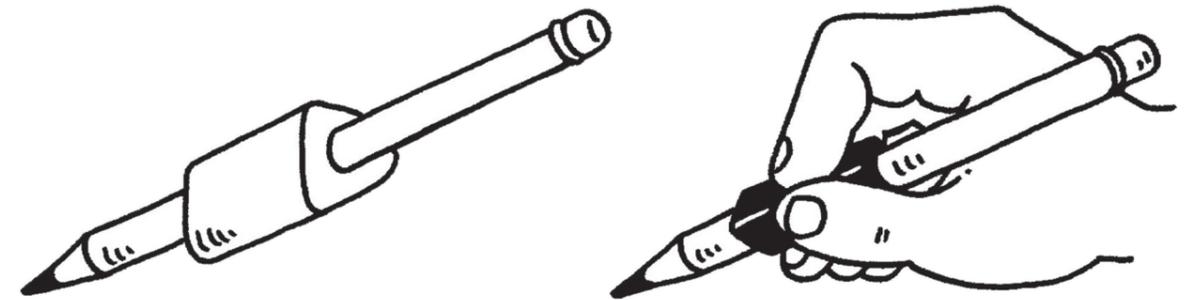
## How to help your child with writing

In the course of everyday life, it is important that your child sees both you and other adults writing for a purpose. Encourage your child to join in this activity whenever you can, and praise his or her achievements. Even though your child’s early writing attempts may look like scribbles, he or she can share in the writing of a shopping list, sign a greeting card or write a note to grandparents. All of these valuable writing opportunities will help your child to develop an understanding of the power of the written word.

Before your child begins writing in this book, play writing games without using a pencil. At bath time, encourage him or her to use a finger to draw patterns in the bubbles or on a steamed-up mirror or window. When outdoors, draw shapes in the sand on the beach or in the sandpit. These activities will help your child to develop fluent, continuous movements in preparation for using a pencil.

## Holding a pencil

When drawing and writing, help your child to hold the pencil correctly. The position is the same for both right- and left-handed children. If you are not sure which is your child’s dominant hand, observe your child closely when playing. Whichever hand he or she uses to feed teddy, wind up toys or pick up small things is likely to be the dominant hand. Alternatively, you could place a cardboard tube in front of your child and ask him or her to look through it as if it were a telescope. Your child will probably pick it up with the dominant hand and place it to the dominant eye. Sometimes the dominant eye and hand will not be on the same side, but this doesn’t usually present problems for a child when developing early literacy skills.



## Pencil grip

Your child should pick up the pencil in the dominant hand and hold it between the thumb and first finger. The second finger goes beneath the pencil to support it. Make sure that the pencil is not gripped too tightly and not held too close to the tip. It should rest at an angle of 45 degrees between the first finger and the thumb. If your child has problems, it can help if you make a grip for the pencil. Mould a small piece of plasticine into a three-sided pyramid, and push the pencil through the middle – this will encourage your child to place his or her fingers correctly.

## Writing materials

Your child should have a pencil that is sharpened, but not too pointed. A soft lead pencil (2B) is preferable for the writing activities. If the pencil is too hard, your child’s writing may be difficult to see on the page, which could lead to frustration. As each activity involves colouring pictures, your child will need a range of colouring pencils and felt-tip pens or textas – not the type that bleed through paper, as they will spoil subsequent pages. Avoid crayons, as these are likely to be too thick for accurately colouring the pictures, which could lead your child to become frustrated with his or her achievements.

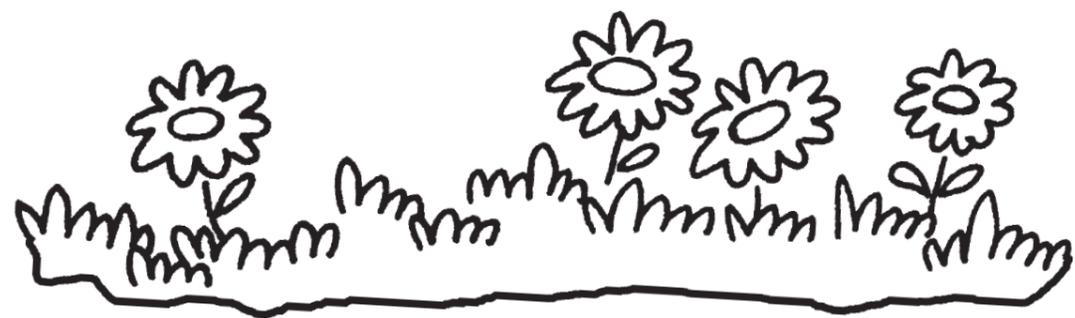
### Getting the most from the activities

Always work through the book in page order. The contents have been carefully planned to take your child through a progression of early reading and writing skills. If you miss a stage, you will be jumping ahead to a more difficult concept or activity. If your child is struggling with the activities, don't worry. He or she may not be ready for this book or may only be able to do the first few activities. If this happens, leave this book for a while, but continue to share and talk about books with your child. Later on, return to this book, recapping any pages he or she may have already completed.

Working through the activities in this book should be an enjoyable shared experience for both you and your child, so choose a moment when you have time to concentrate and your child is not too tired or hungry. Read the instructions aloud, making sure that your child understands what he or she is expected to do for each activity.

Don't spend too long on each activity session – it's better to keep it short and fun, and to let your child get a feel for the reading skills involved. Celebrate your child's success, and build his or her confidence by giving plenty of praise and encouragement along the way.

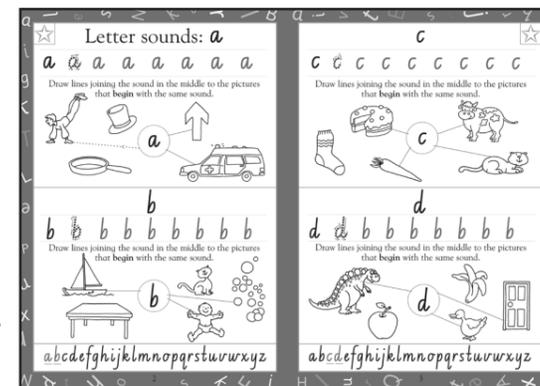
If your child has enjoyed a particular activity or is having some difficulty with it, try doing some additional practice on scrap paper. You may find it helpful to have some extra paper to hand before you start your activity sessions. When your child has completed the book, continue to provide plenty of opportunities for him or her to practise writing.



## Page-by-page notes

### Pages 2, 3, 4 and 5 – Letter sounds: a, b, c, d, e, f, g and h

These activities introduce the letters *a* to *h*. There are several exercises on each page. First, name each new letter and its sound. Then, ask your child to practise writing the letter by first tracing over the dots and then copying the letter several times. Next, say together the name of each picture out loud. Emphasise the sound at the beginning of each word. Ask your child to draw a line to link the featured letter with each picture that begins with the same initial letter sound. Finally, complete the letters of the alphabet at the bottom of the page by filling in the missing letters. Make sure that the two letters are written in the correct order. Reinforce the letter order by saying the alphabet through each time.



### Pages 6 and 7 – Odd one out and Missing letters

These activities provide revision exercises featuring the group of letters from the previous four pages. On page 6, ask your child to look at the letter in the box on the left. Say together the sound, and then name the pictures in the row. Your child should then draw a ring around the picture that doesn't begin with this letter sound. On page 7, words are introduced to enable your child to gain some experience of looking at how words are constructed. Say together the name of each picture. Ask your child to identify the initial letter sound and then complete the word by writing down the missing initial letter.

### Pages 8, 9, 10 and 11 – Letters sounds: i, j, k, l, m, n, o and p

These activities introduce the letters *i* to *p*. The exercises follow the same pattern as pages 2 to 5. First, name each new letter and its sound. Next, ask your child to practise writing the small letter. Then, say together the name of each picture out loud. Ask your child to draw a line to link the featured letter with each picture that begins with the same initial letter sound. Finally, complete the letters of the alphabet at the bottom of the page by filling in the missing letters.

### Pages 12 and 13 – Odd one out and Missing letters

These activities provide revision exercises featuring the letters from the previous four pages. On page 12, ask your child to look at the letter in the box on the left. Say together the sound, and then name the pictures in the row. Your child should then draw a ring around the picture that doesn't begin with this letter sound. On page 13, say together the name of each picture. Encourage your child to identify the initial letter sound and then complete the word by writing down the missing initial letter.

**Pages 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 – Letter sounds: q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y and z**

These activities introduce the remainder of the letters of the alphabet, from *q* to *z*.

The exercises follow the same pattern as previous pages. First, name each new letter and its sound. Next, ask your child to practise writing the small letter by first tracing over the dots and then copying the letter several times. For the next exercise, say together the name of each picture. Ask your child to draw a line to link the featured letter with each picture that begins with the same initial letter sound. Page 17 features the letter *x*, which does not occur very often as an initial letter. In this exercise, your child should link the letter with those pictures that have the *x* sound somewhere in the word – not just at the beginning. Finally, he or she should complete the letters of the alphabet at the bottom of the page by filling in the missing letters.

**Page 19 – Odd one out**

This revision page features letters from the previous five pages. Ask your child to look at the letter in the box on the left. Say together the sound, and then name the pictures in that row. Your child should then ring the picture that doesn't begin with this letter sound. (Note that the letter *q* also includes *u*. Explain that *q* is never written by itself, it is always followed by *u*. One way to help your child to remember this is to say that *q* stands for queen and the *u* is a friend, who is always there to carry the crown.) Then say together the name of each picture. Ask your child to identify the initial letter sound (or the last letter sound in the case of *x*) and then complete the word by writing down the missing letter.

**Pages 20 and 21 – Small letters and capitals**

The task is to match up the letter pairs and to practise letter recognition of both small letters and their capitals. These letter pairs don't always look the same, but they do make the same sound. Say together the sound that each letter makes, and then ask your child to draw a line between each small letter and its capital letter.

**Pages 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 – Vowel sounds: a, e, i, o and u**

These activities help children to identify vowel sounds when they occur in the middle of words. First say the vowel sound. Then name the pictures (say together each word clearly). Encourage your child to listen carefully to identify whether or not the featured vowel sound is in each word. If it is, ask your child to draw a line linking the picture to the vowel. The second exercise on each page requires your child to write the featured vowel in the middle of words. Help your child by first naming each of the pictures and then spelling out the words using their short letter sounds.



**Page 27 – A story**

On this page, ask your child to fill in the missing letters to complete the words in this fun story. Use the picture clues to help sound out the missing letters from the beginning, the middle or the end of the words. Read the story bit by bit with your child as he or she works through the activity. Once it is finished, read through the whole story together.

**Pages 28 and 29 – Puzzle pages**

In each of these activities, first ask your child to write over the dotted letters and then use the picture clues to complete the words in the simple crosswords. Name the pictures to help your child work out the missing letters in each word.

**Pages 30, 31 and 32 – Play I spy**

These three pages feature picture scenes that include many familiar objects beginning with specific letter sounds. Your child should find and name as many objects as possible for each of the listed letters, count them up and then write the total number in the box. Your child can also include abstract words, such as *under* or *wet*, if he or she wishes. To help with counting, either keep a tally for your child or write the initial letters lightly on the objects as they are found. These activities will be easier to tackle if your child completes the counting task before colouring the picture.

**Pages 34 and 35 – Drawing curvy lines and Drawing straight lines**

These activities encourage your child to create fluent lines on the page. Your child should keep an even pressure and try not to take the pencil off the page until he or she has completed a scribble pattern.

**Pages 36 and 37 – Moving left to right**

These activities help your child to practise pencil movement from left to right. Before using a pencil, encourage your child to trace the path with a finger. The aim is for your child to draw a continuous line from left to right and to get used to the feeling of moving across the page.

**Pages 38 and 39 – Moving left to right**

Some children may find these activities easier than drawing straight lines from left to right. Your child should practise first by tracing the different paths with a finger. Talk about the pictures and patterns he or she is making.



### Pages 40 and 41 – Practising circles and Practising straight lines

On page 40, your child should practise forming an anticlockwise circle, which will give him or her confidence when creating rounded letter shapes. Your child may find it quite natural to draw a circle, but it is important that he or she begins on the big dot and follows the arrow around in an anti-clockwise direction. On page 41, your child is introduced to drawing vertical lines in a downward direction, which is an important aspect of letter formation. It might help to practise both these movements with a finger and then on some paper before tackling the activities on the page.

### Pages 42, 43, 44 and 45 – Practising wavy lines, Practising curvy lines and Practising curves

On these pages, your child should join the dots, starting with the big dot, to form wavy or curvy lines. Encourage your child to practise a fluid movement and to keep the pencil moving. Talk about the shapes and patterns that your child is creating. These pictures are also fun for your child to colour and complete.

### Pages 46 and 47 – Creating patterns

These patterns are found in letter shapes, and they also reinforce left-to-right pencil movement. Trace the patterns first with a finger or practise on some scrap paper. Don't forget to praise your child's efforts and celebrate his or her achievements.

### Pages 48 to 61 – Writing letters

Children should develop the skill of writing letters in several stages:

- 1 Begin by tracing the letter shape with a finger.
- 2 Write over the letter shape on the page. Begin with the big dot and follow the direction of the arrow(s).
- 3 Copy the letter by writing between the set of lines.

When writing the letters, call each one by its name, stressing to your child that it is the name of the letter. This part of the book concentrates on letter formation and not the phonetic sound of each letter. Always describe and talk about the movement being made as each letter is formed. You can describe each letter movement as outlined on the following pages or create your own description to suit your child.

### Pages 48 and 49 – Writing letters: c and o and Writing letters: a and d

c – start at the top, and then go halfway around;  
o – start at the top, and then go all the way around;  
a – start at the top, go all the way around, then down and flick;  
d – start on the dot, go all the way around, up and down and flick.  
Some letters, such as *a* and *d*, have flicks. These are included to help with joining up letters, which is tackled at a later stage.

### Pages 50 and 51 – Writing letters: g and q and Writing letters: e and s

g – start at the top, go all the way around, then down and around;  
q – start at the top, go all the way around, then down and flick;  
e – start at the dot, go across, then up, and then halfway around;  
s – go around and back again.

### Pages 52 and 53 – Writing letters: p and b and Writing letters: l and j

These letters are created in one continuous movement without lifting the pencil (apart from the dot).

p – go from top to bottom, bottom to top, and all the way around;  
b – go from top to bottom, up and all the way around;  
l – go from top to bottom and flick;  
j – go from top to bottom, down and around, and then add a dot.

### Pages 54 and 55 – Writing letters: i and t and Writing letters: k and f

i – go top to bottom, flick, and then add a dot;  
t – go top to bottom, flick, and then go across;  
k – go top to bottom, up and around, in then out, and then flick;  
f – go around and all the way down, and then across.

### Pages 56 and 57 – Writing letters: r and n and Writing letters: h and m

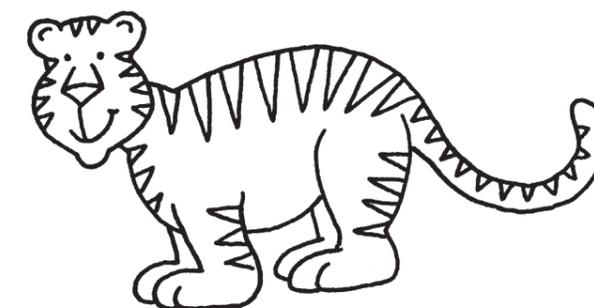
These letters are made in one continuous movement.

r – go top to bottom, up, and then just over the top;  
n – go top to bottom, up and over, and then flick;  
h – go top to bottom, up and over, and then flick;  
m – go top to bottom, up and over, up and over, and flick.

### Pages 58 and 59 – Writing letters: u and y and Writing letters: v and w

Once again, these letters are made in one continuous movements without the pencil leaving the page.

u – go down and around, up and down, and flick;  
y – go down and around, up and down, and around;  
v – go down and up;  
w – go down and up, down and up.



**Pages 60 and 61 – Writing letters: x and z and The alphabet**

x – go across and down, and across and down; z – go across, then down and across, then back across. The letter z should be made in one continuous movement.

On page 61, the 26 letters are presented in alphabetical order. This provides more writing practice for your child. The letters are written on the sets of lines to help children with the proportions of the different letters, especially the tall ones and those with tails.

**Pages 62 and 63 – Write your name and Write sentences**

Help your child to identify the letters in his or her name and copy them onto the page.

If you want to add a capital letter at the beginning of the name, explain to your child that capital letters are written in a different way from small letters.

On page 63, your child can practise copying some whole words put together in short sentences. Talk about the letter shapes and point out how letters are put together in groups to make words. When copying words, it is important to leave a space in between them. Ask your child to place a finger from the non-writing hand at the end of each word. He or she can then start to write the next word after the finger, creating an adequate space between words.

**Page 64 – Practise sentences**

This last activity features all the letters of the alphabet in a funny sentence for your child to copy. There is also a large, fun picture to colour.

