

Kids
Handwrite™



RESOURCE MATERIAL



Lowercase Letter Formation



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Section 5 – LOWERCASE LETTER FORMATION

1. *The Italic Advantage*

The advantage of the Italic script is that the printed and cursive versions use the same letter shapes. Adding simple and natural connections between the lowercase letters is all there is to transition from printing to cursive writing.

Students must be taught and practice the basic lowercase Italic letter shapes correctly from day one to benefit from learning the Italic script.

2. *Teaching Sequence*

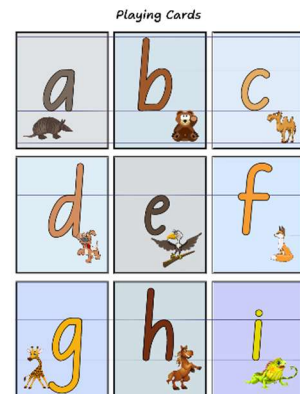
Lowercase letters are taught by letter formation groups or family groups rather than in alphabetical order. The formation groups used in this Resource are based on their common shape and are as follows:

Group	Letters	Shape
Group 1	<i>l i j f t</i>	Vertical line
Group 2	<i>h r n m b p</i>	The b-Shape/n-Shape
Group 3	<i>a d g q u y</i>	The a-Shape/u-Shape
Group 4	<i>o e c s</i>	o-shape/oval
Group 5	<i>k v w x z</i>	Diagonal lines

3. *Lowercase Letter Recognition – Playing Cards*

The first step is the ability to recognize and name the lowercase letters. Students can recognize and name letters by picking them from an array of printed, plastic, foam or magnetic letters.

The Resource includes three lowercase “playing cards” pages to help students identify and name the lowercase letters. These pages are intended to be printed and the cards cut-out. The pages can be printed on cardstock or printed on paper and laminated.



4. *Lowercase Letter Builder*

Before anyone can print, they must visualize what they are printing. As with any drawing, the first step is to break the object into its basic shapes, which is the purpose of the Lowercase Letter Builder. The Lowercase Letter Builder includes:

- one page of coloured letter shapes; and
- five Letter Builder Guide Sheets.

The students start by building the lowercase letters on the Guide Sheets. Once students know the lowercase letters, they can practice making them without the Guide Sheets.

The Lowercase Letter Shapes

To the right is the page of the lowercase letter shapes with enough shapes to build each letter, one at a time (other than **o**, **c**, **e** and **s**). Print this page on cardstock and cut out each of the letter shapes.

Each student doing the activity should have at least two sets of these shapes (other than **o**, **c**, **e** and **s**). This will allow the students to build more than one letter at a time, allowing them to see the similarities and differences between them.

The letters **o**, **c**, **e** and **s** show that these four letters are drawn in the same oval framework.

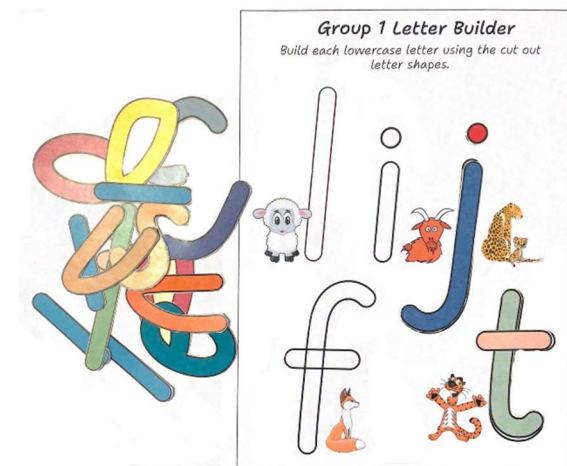
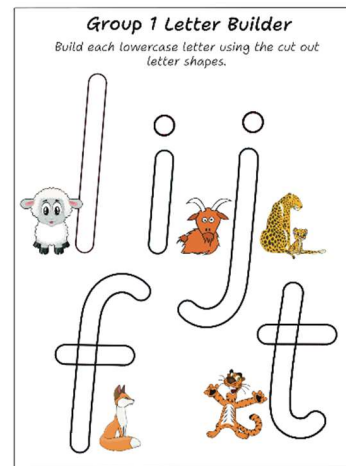


The Letter Builder Guide Sheets

The lowercase letters are organized on the Guide Sheets by letter “formation” group rather than in alphabetical order.

The students find each letter part from the pile and match it to the lowercase letter on the guide sheets provided. With practice, they can build the lowercase letters without the guide sheet.

Below is a photo of the cut-out letter shapes and a copy of the guide sheet for Group 1 showing the construction of the “j” and “t.”



5. *Single Strokes and Traceback*

Unlike ball and stick printing, there is no pencil lift between drawing the body of the letter and its stem, ascender or descender.

With one-stroke letters, the students must master tracing back on the same line to complete these lowercase letters. No loops or double lines can appear on italic stems, descenders or ascenders. The traceback length depends on the letter. Students need to practice tracing back (up and down) on a drawn line to have letters without any loops or double lines.

Whenever students print their lowercase letters, they must watch their return (either up or down the stem, ascender or descender) to ensure they trace over the previous line and do not create a double line.

6. *Finger Tracing – Lowercase Letters*

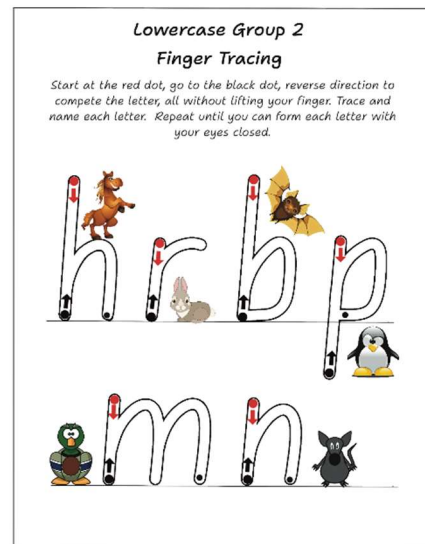
Finger tracing shapes on paper, in the air, or on the table in sand (or other pliable material) is a great way to learn lowercase italic letters. Learning the letters is reinforced when the students name each letter aloud while finger tracing.

There is a finger tracing page for each lowercase Formation Group. Here is a copy of the finger tracing page for Lowercase Group 2.

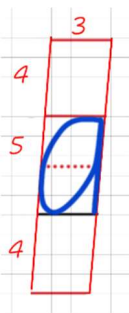
The red dots signify the starting point, and the red arrows represent the movement direction when printing the letter based on these shapes.

The black dot and arrow represent the return direction (traceback) needed to complete the letterform.

Students should be able to trace each letter without the guide sheets before they start printing the letters.



7. *Lowercase Proportions (Shape)*



The body of Italic lowercase letters fits within a rectangle.

The top line is where the ascenders stop (except for “t”, which is shorter), the middle two lines define the bottom (Baseline) and top (Waist Line) of the body of the lowercase letter (the x-Height), and the bottom line is where the descenders stop.

The proportion of the body of the lowercase letters in the Resource (the part without any ascenders or descenders) is 3:5, meaning the width of the

lowercase letter body is 3/5th as wide as it is high. Three lowercase letters are, however, narrower (*i*, *j*, and *l*), and two are wider (*m* and *w*).

The ascenders and descenders in the Resource are 4/5^{ths} the height of the body of the letter (x-height), except the letter “*t*” which is shorter than the other ascenders.

- ascenders reach up and touch the invisible ascender line;
- ascenders do not touch the baseline of the line above;
- descenders reach down and touch the invisible descender line; and
- descenders do not touch the Waist Line of the line below.

The grids on the exercises mentioned below and the height of the lowercase letters (either with or without ascenders and descenders) depict the geometric shape of the letters (width and height) and have nothing to do with how the letters would appear on lined paper.

8. Lowercase Letter Groups

a) Group 1 Letter Shapes – Vertical and Horizontal Lines

The Group 1 letters are *i, f, l, j* and *t*. Once students can:

- recognize these letters by sight;
- finger trace the letters; and
- draw horizontal, vertical and curved lines

they are ready to start printing these letters using the Lowercase Worksheets.

b) Groups 2, 3 and 4 – Curved letters

The Group 2, 3 and 4 letters are:

Group 2	<i>h r n m b p</i>	The b-Shape/n-Shape
Group 3	<i>a d g q u y</i>	The a-Shape/u-Shape
Group 4	<i>o e c s</i>	o-shape/oval

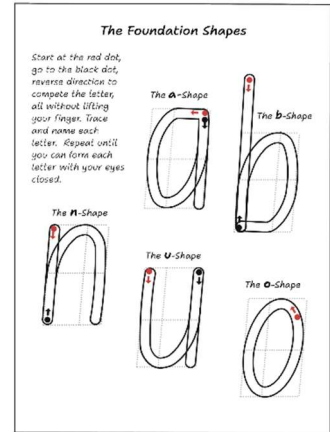
The secret to learning the Italic lowercase letters is mastering the ***b, n, a, u,*** and ***o* shapes**. These shapes, however, are not intuitive, and specific instruction and practice are needed. Students must practice the:

- ***b***-Shape and ***n***-Shape before doing the **Group 2** worksheets;
- the ***a***-Shape and ***u***-Shape before doing the **Group 3** worksheets; and
- the ***o***-Shape before doing the **Group 4** worksheets.

(i) Finger Tracing the Curved Letters

Finger tracing shapes on paper is a great way to learn the basic lowercase italic letter shapes. This sheet contains an outline of the lowercase foundation shapes.

The red dots signify the starting point, and the red arrows represent the direction to trace. The black dots and arrows represent the traceback along the stem to continue the shape. These shapes are made in one stroke. No lifting of the finger (or pencil).



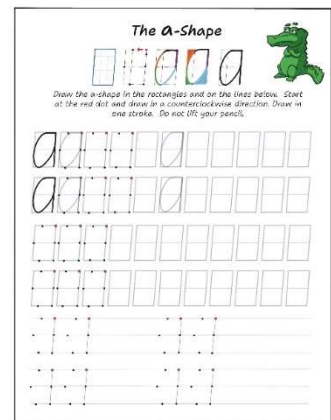
(ii) Letter Shape Practice Pages

The foundation shapes in the Italic lowercase letters are the:

- b-Shape** – found in **b** and **p**
- n-Shape** – found in **n, m, h** and **r**
- a-Shape** – found in **a, d, g** and **q**
- u-Shape** – found in **u** and **y**
- o-Shape** – defines the shape of **c, e, o** and **s**

The Resource includes activity pages for each foundation shape which:

- provide a visual of the line segments and the triangle shapes created within the rectangle when the foundation shape is drawn correctly;
- have rows with rectangles and lines to practice drawing the foundation shapes.



Students are ready to start printing these letters using the lowercase worksheets when they:

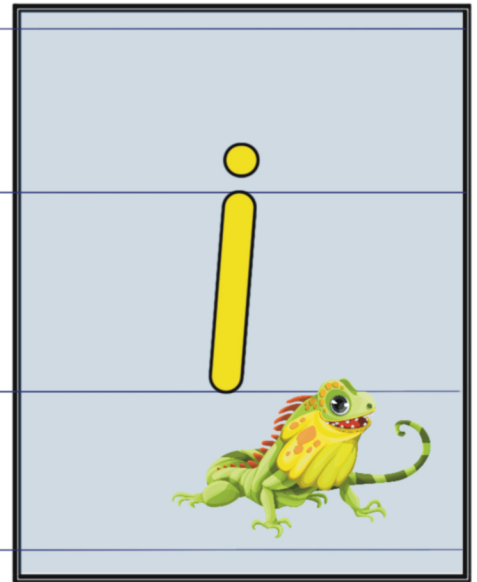
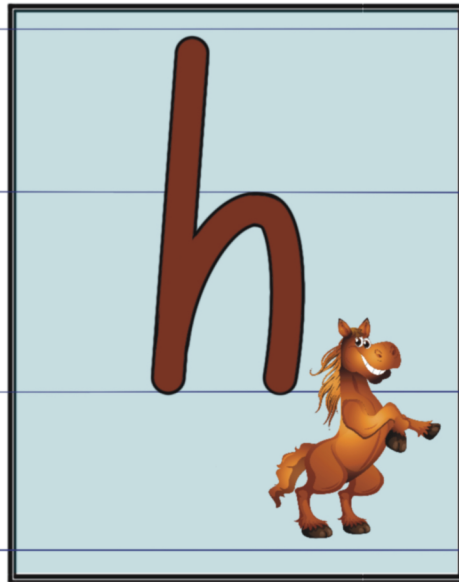
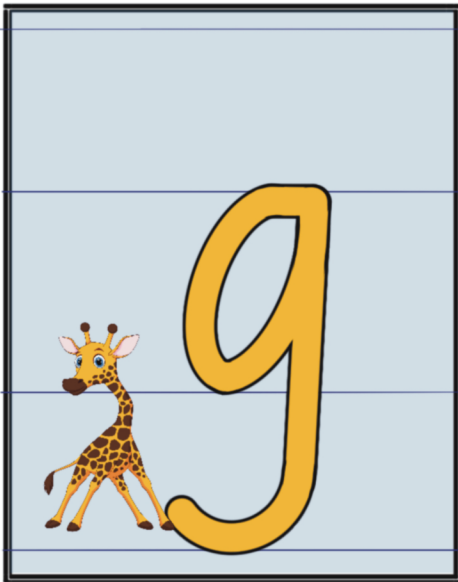
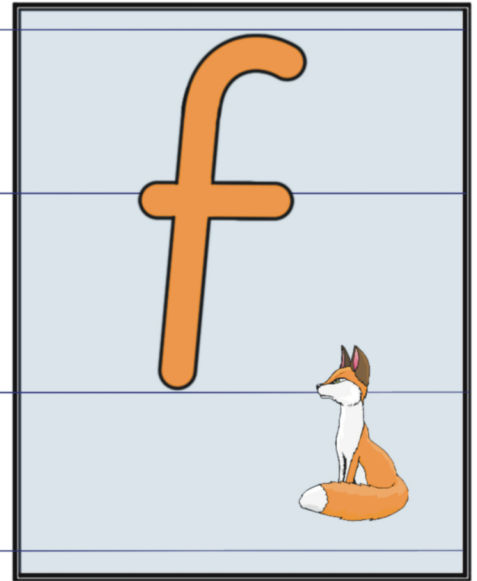
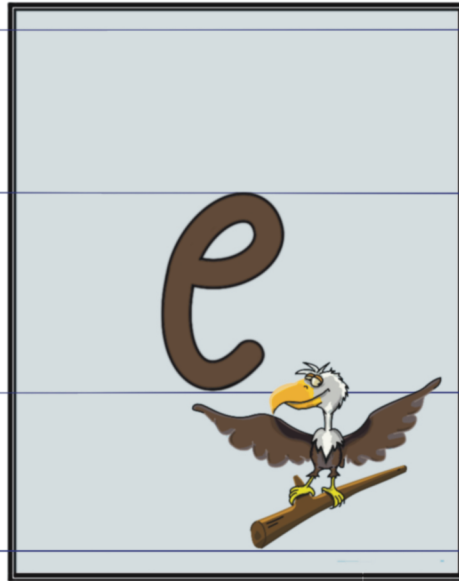
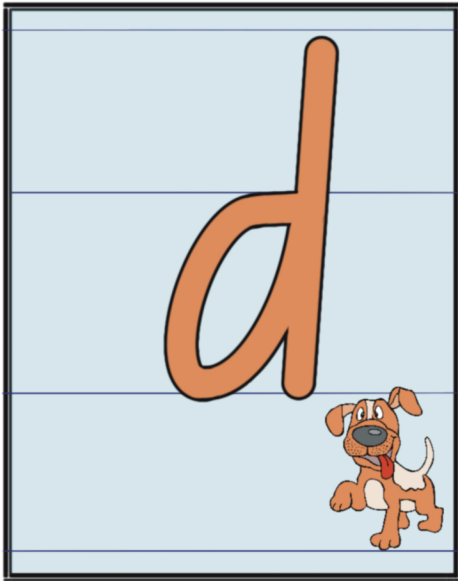
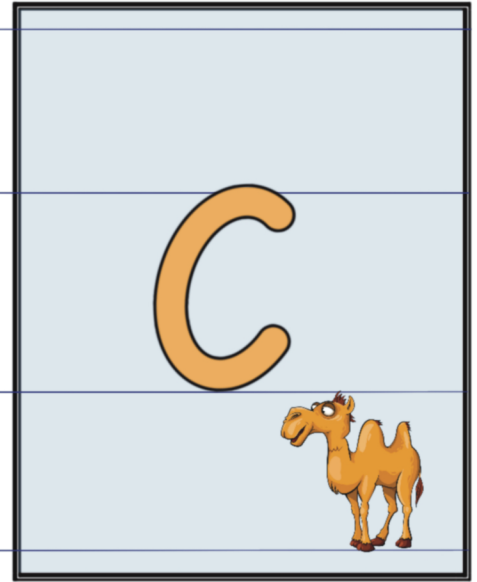
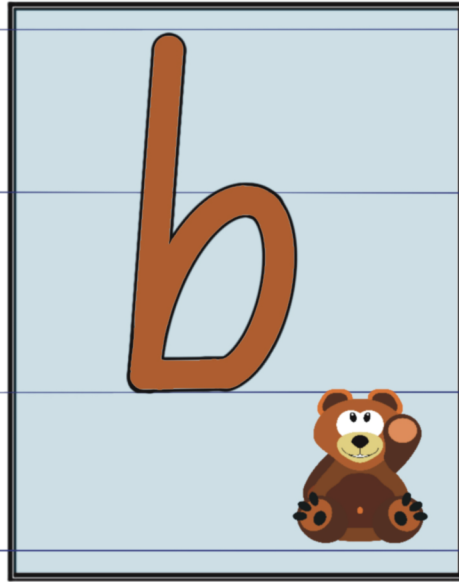
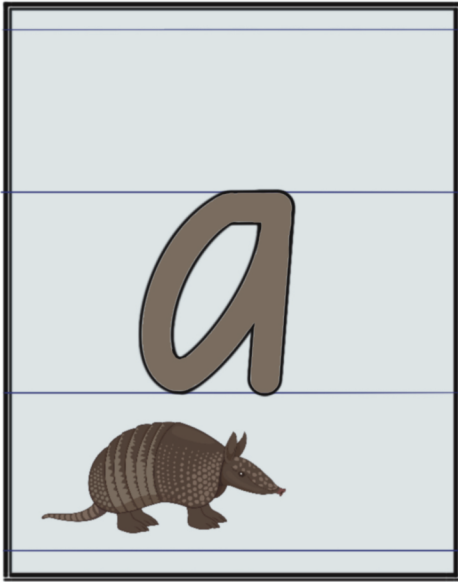
- recognize these letters by sight,
- finger trace the letters; and
- draw the **a, b, n, u** and **o** shapes,

c) Group 5 Letter Shapes – Diagonal Lines

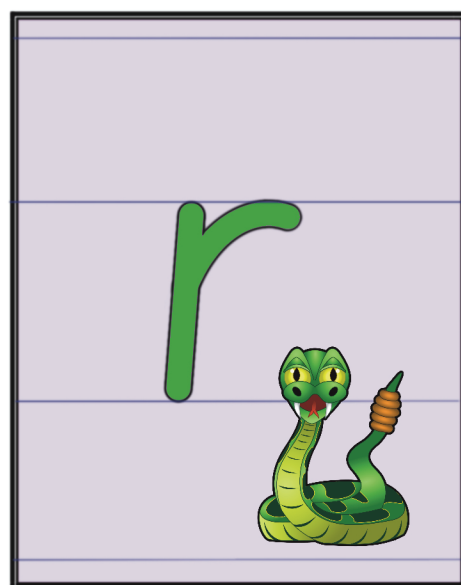
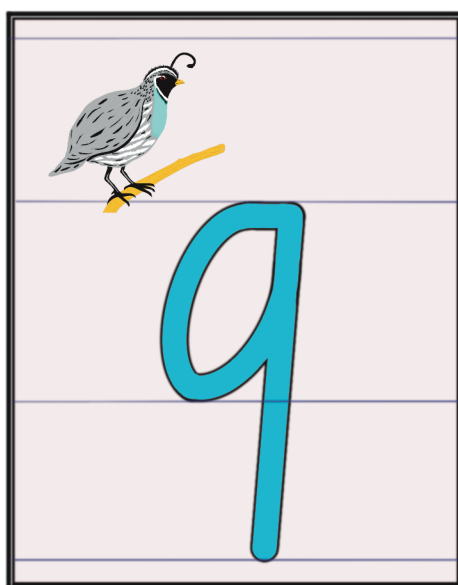
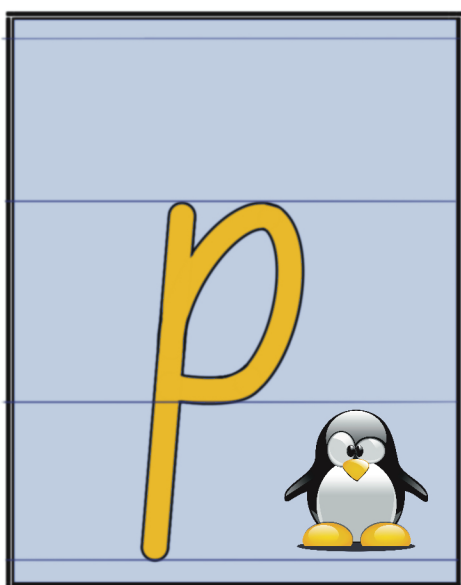
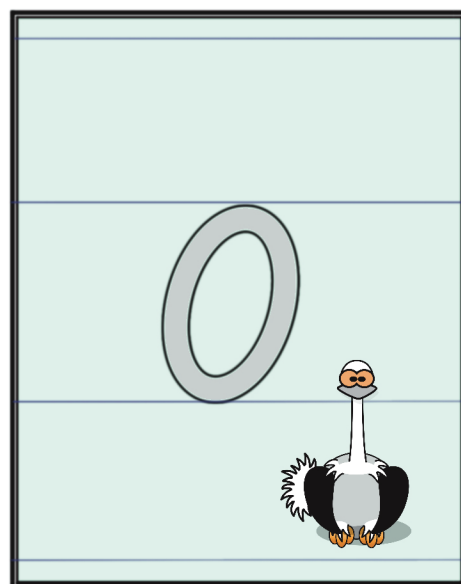
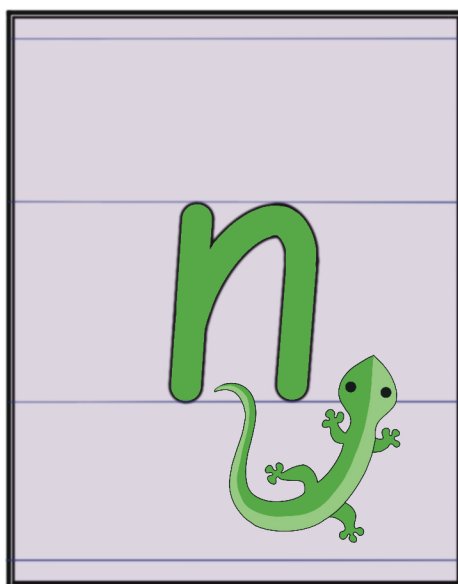
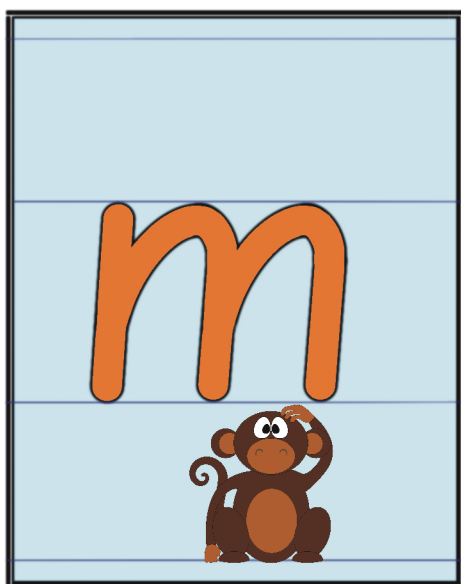
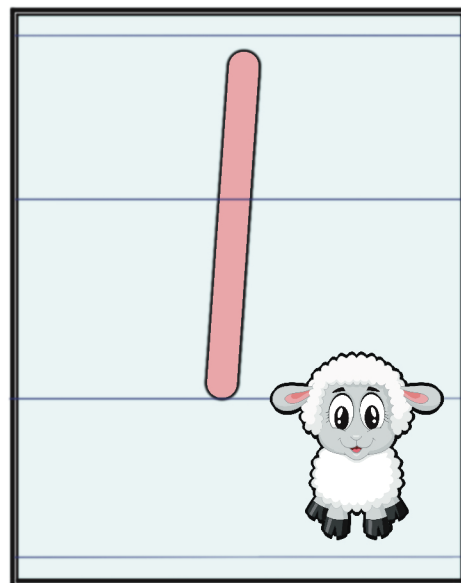
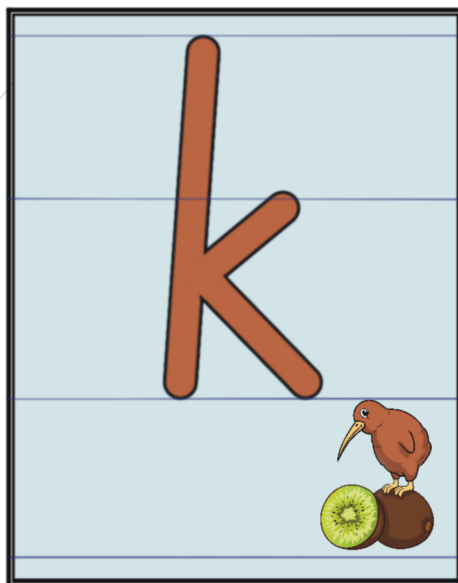
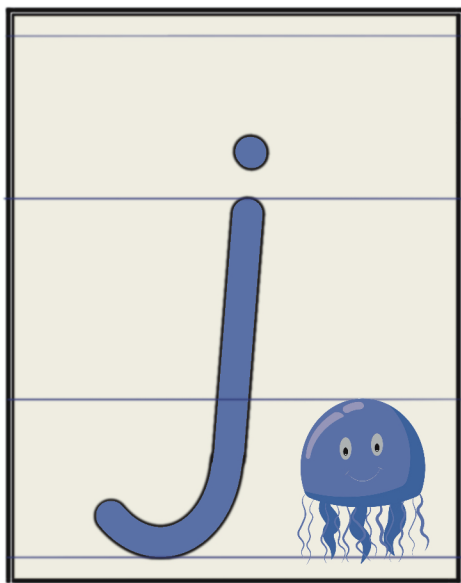
The Group 5 letters are **k, v, w, x** and **z**. Students are ready to print these letters once they can:

- recognize these letters by sight,
- finger trace the letters; and
- draw diagonal lines in every direction.

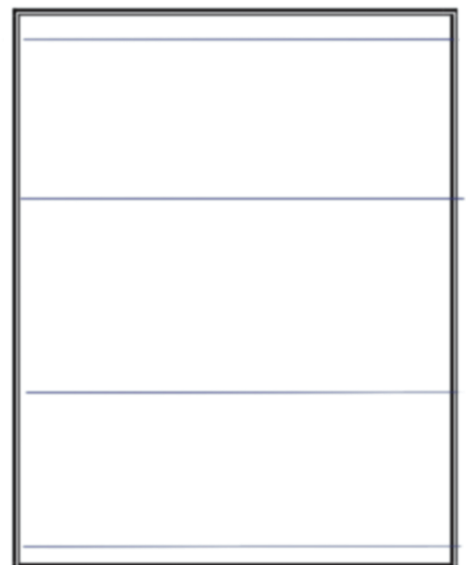
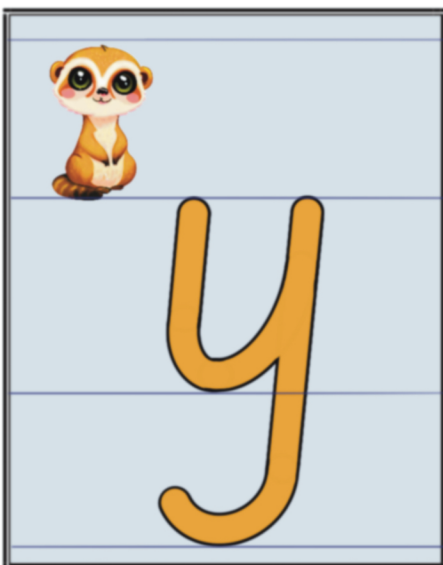
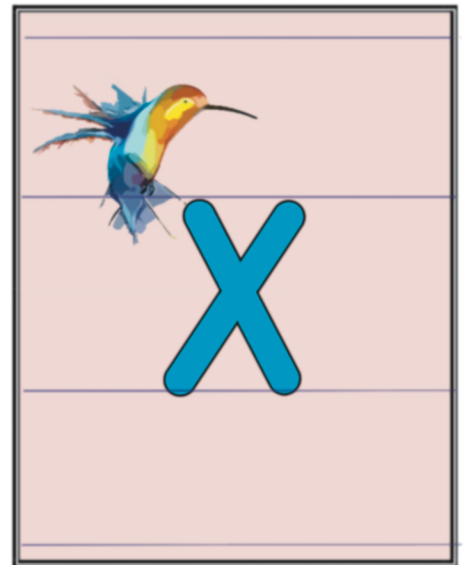
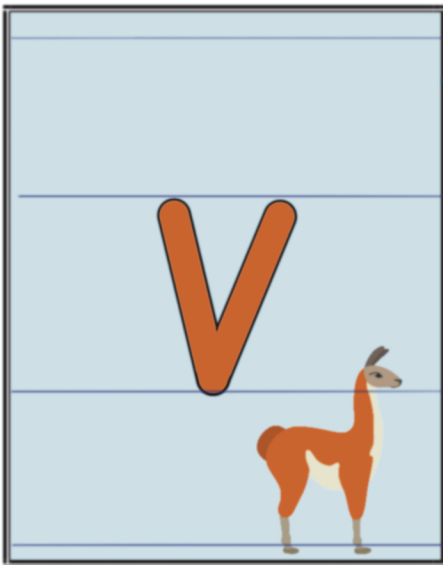
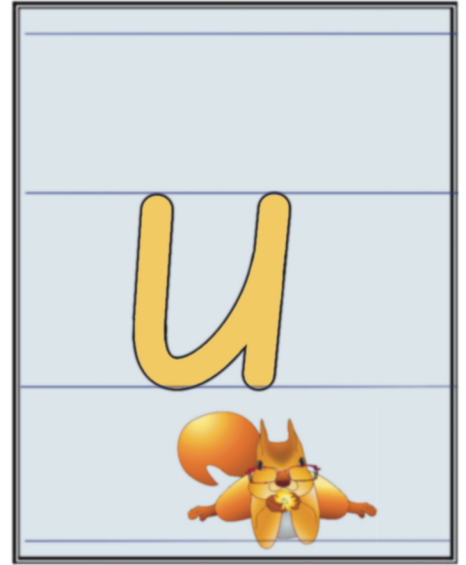
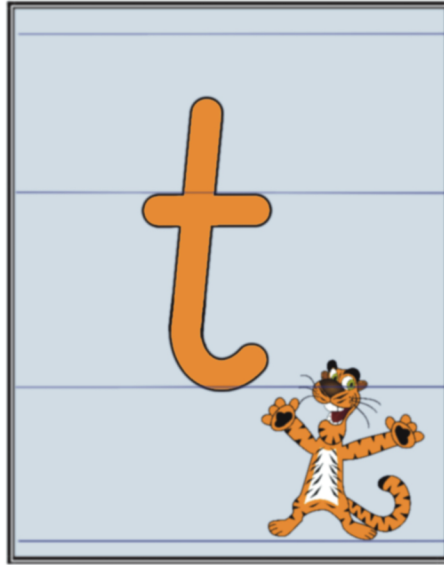
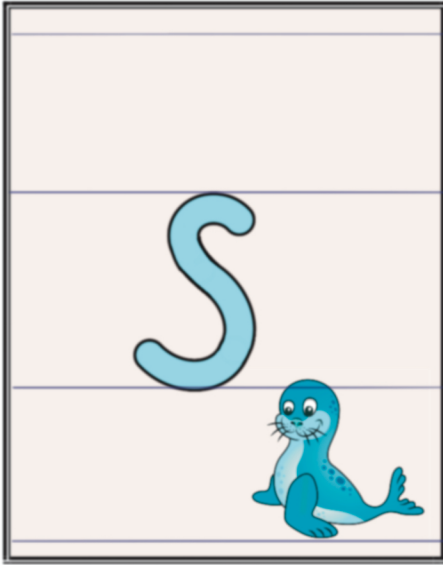
Playing Cards



Playing Cards

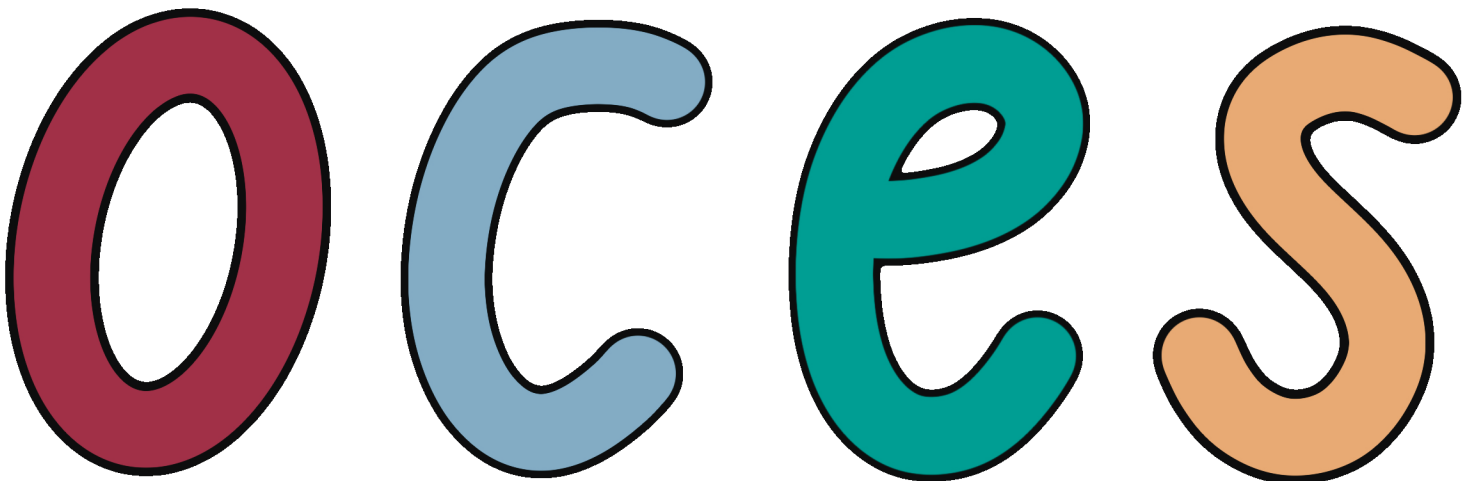
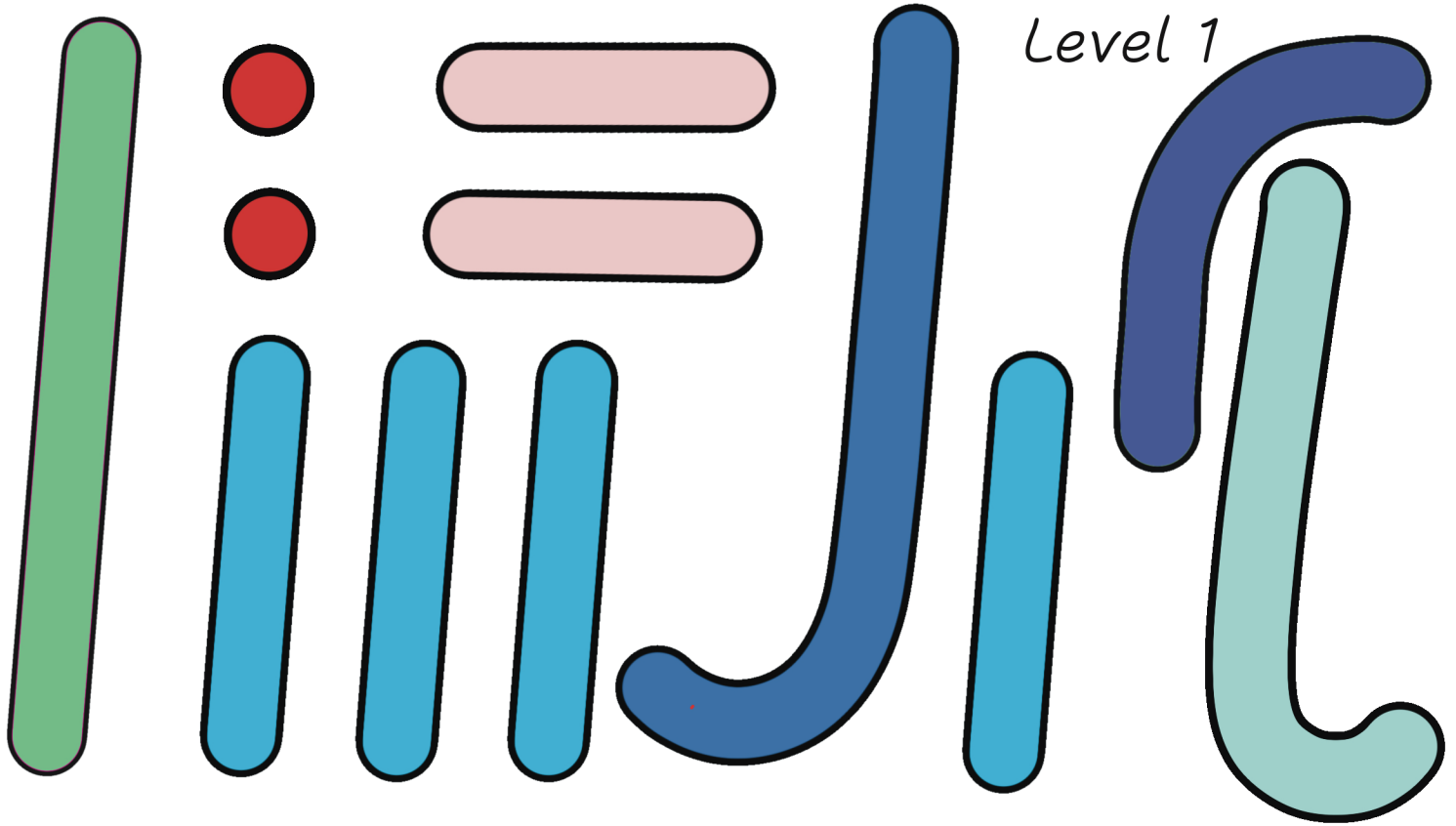


Playing Cards



Lowercase Letter Shapes to cut out and combine!

Level 1



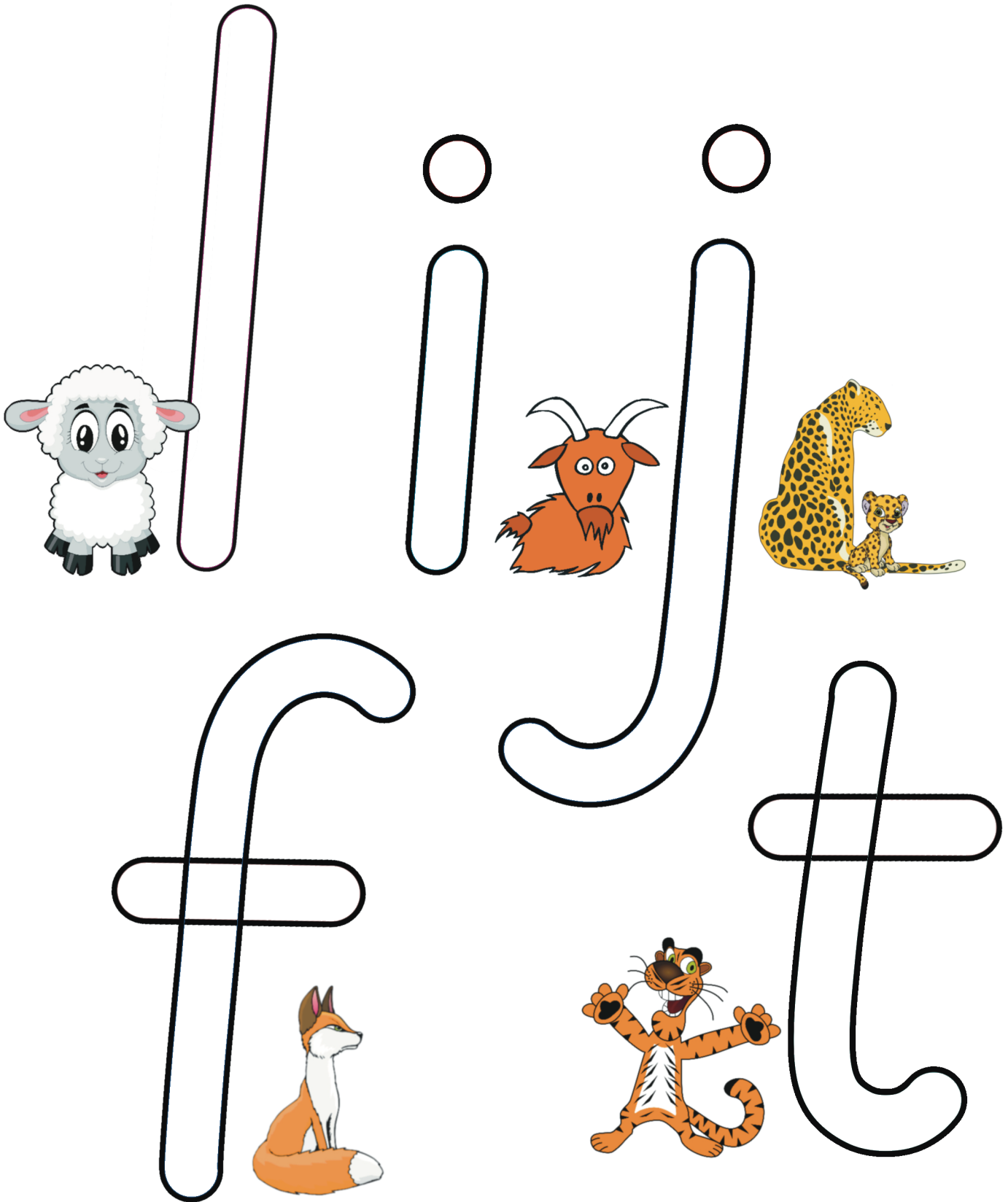
Lowercase Letter Shapes to cut out and combine!

Level 2



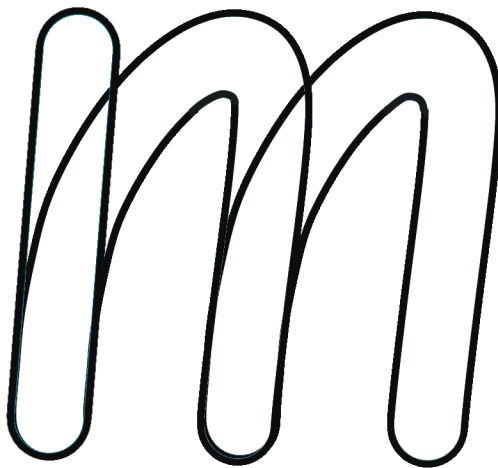
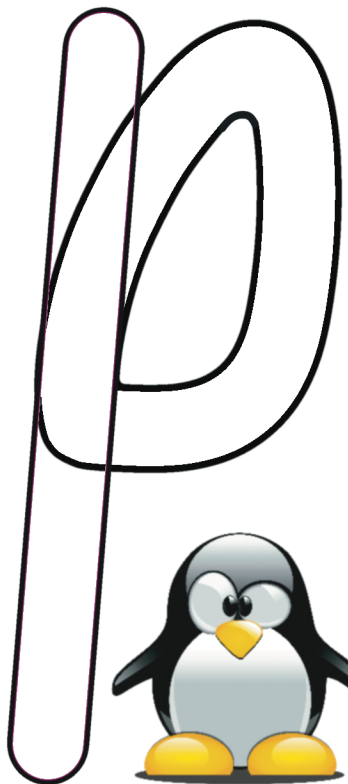
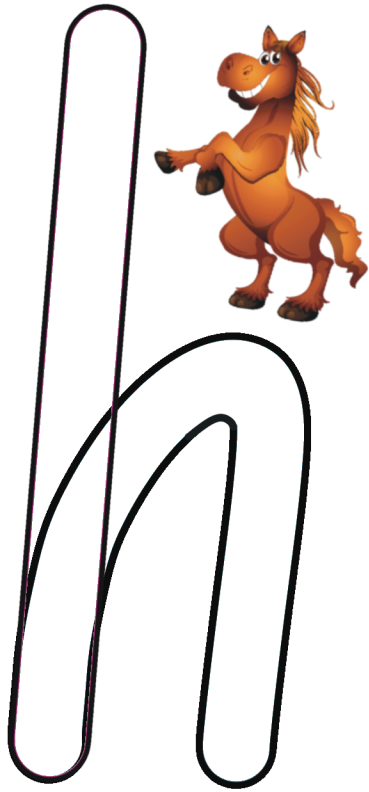
Group 1 Letter Builder

Build each lowercase letter using the cut out letter shapes.



Group 2 Letter Builder

Build each lowercase letter using the cut out letter shapes.



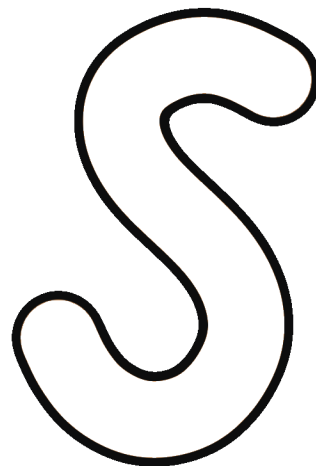
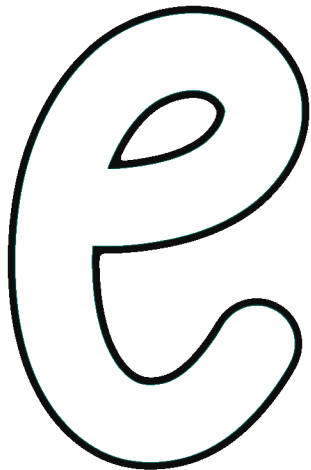
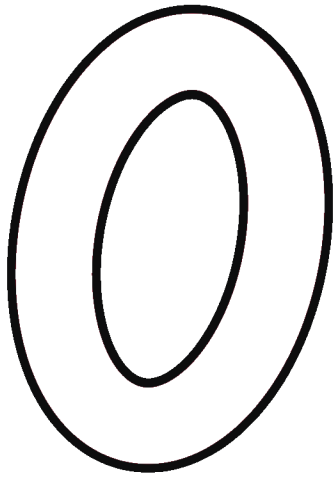
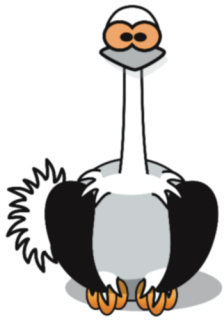
Group 3 Letter Builder

Build each lowercase letter using the cut letter shapes.



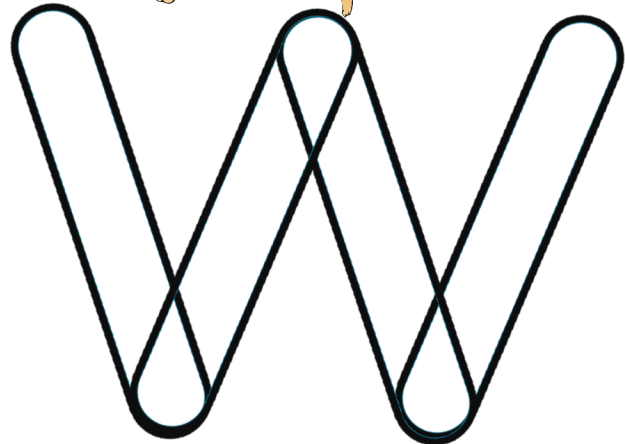
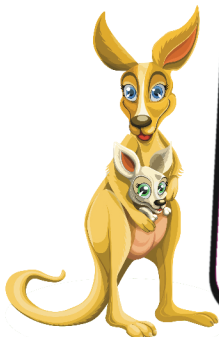
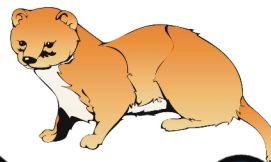
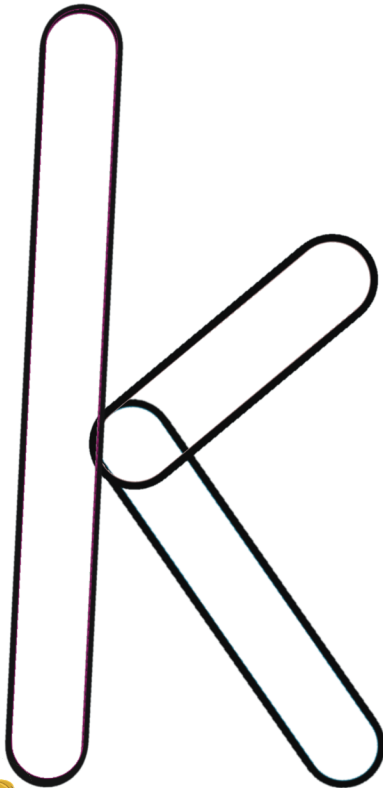
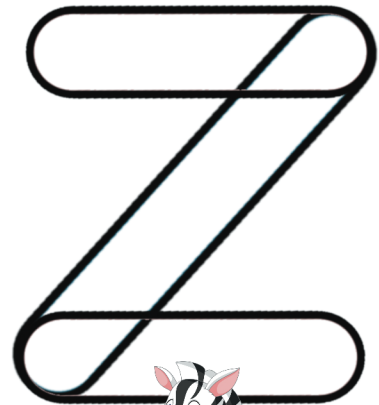
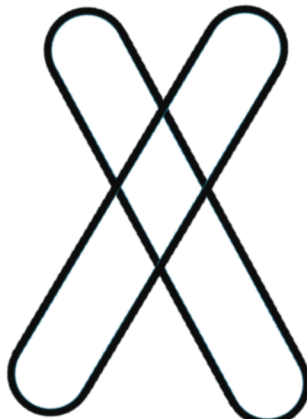
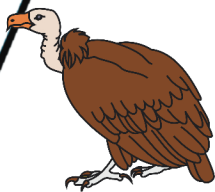
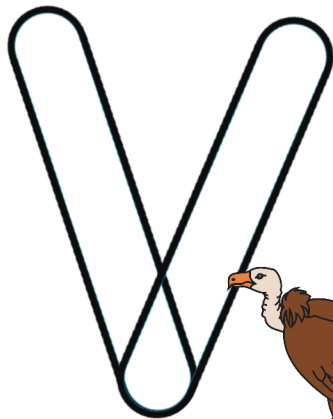
Group 4 Letter Builder

Build each lowercase letter using the cut out letter shapes.



Group 5 Letter Builder

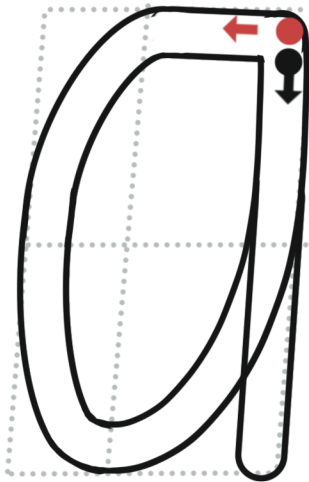
Build each lowercase letter using the cut out letter shapes.



The Foundation Shapes

Start at the red dot, go to the black dot, reverse direction to complete the letter, all without lifting your finger. Trace and name each letter. Repeat until you can form each letter with your eyes closed.

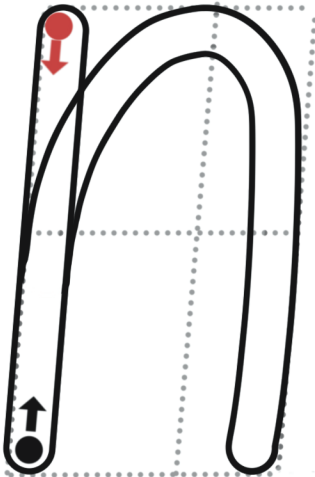
The **a**-Shape



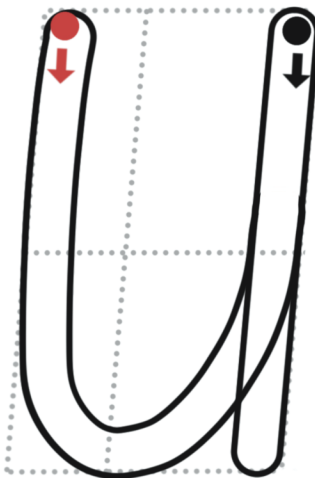
The **b**-Shape



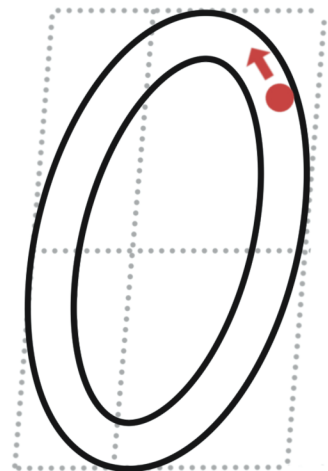
The **n**-Shape



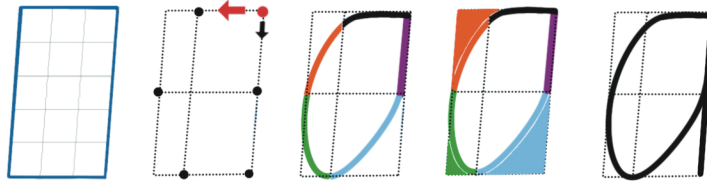
The **u**-Shape



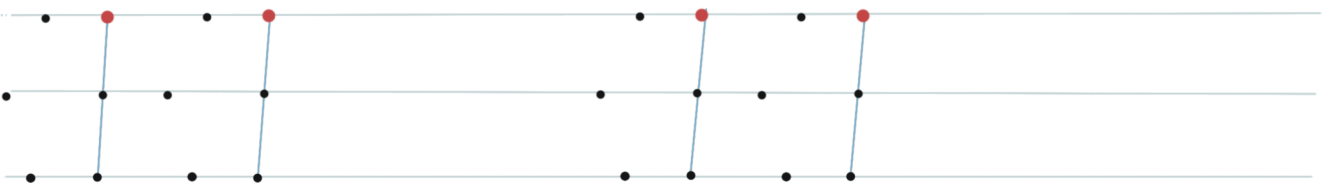
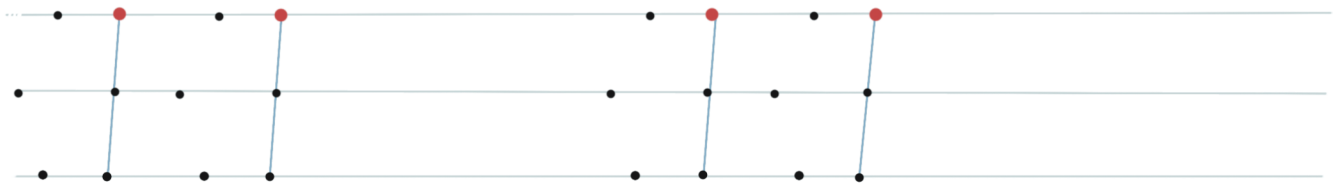
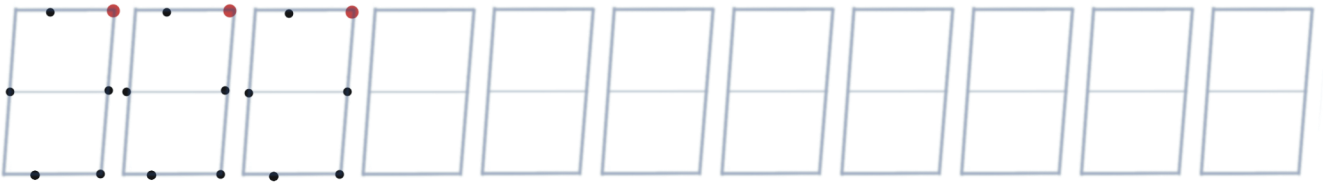
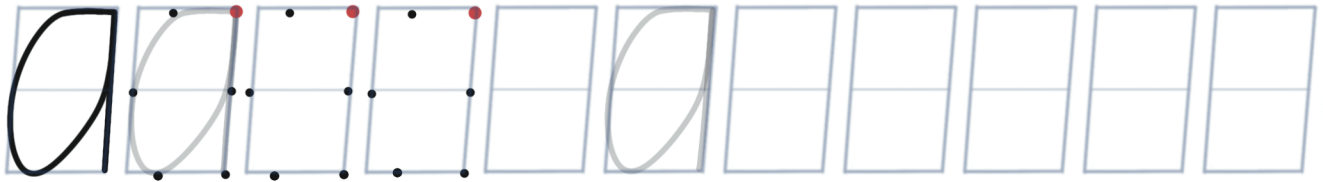
The **o**-Shape



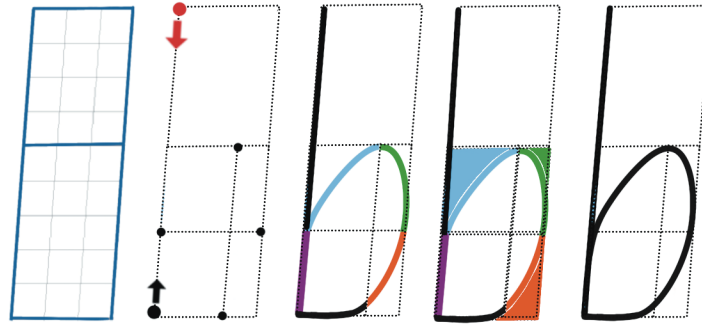
The a-Shape



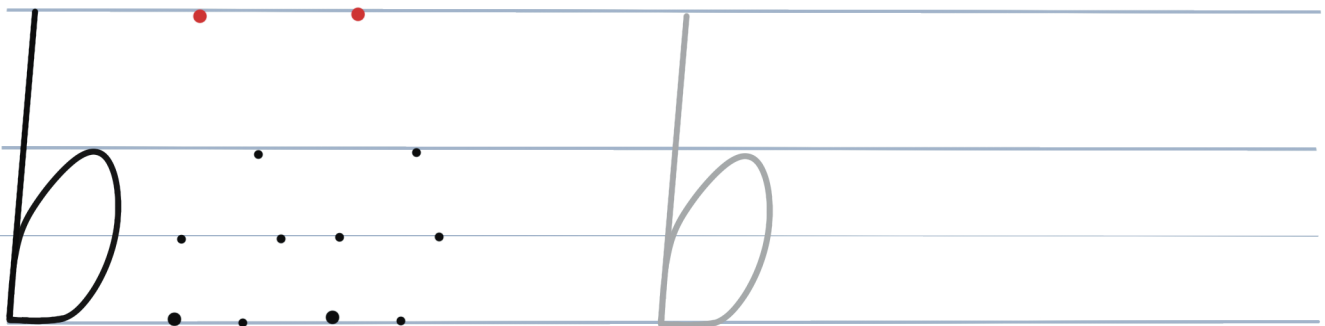
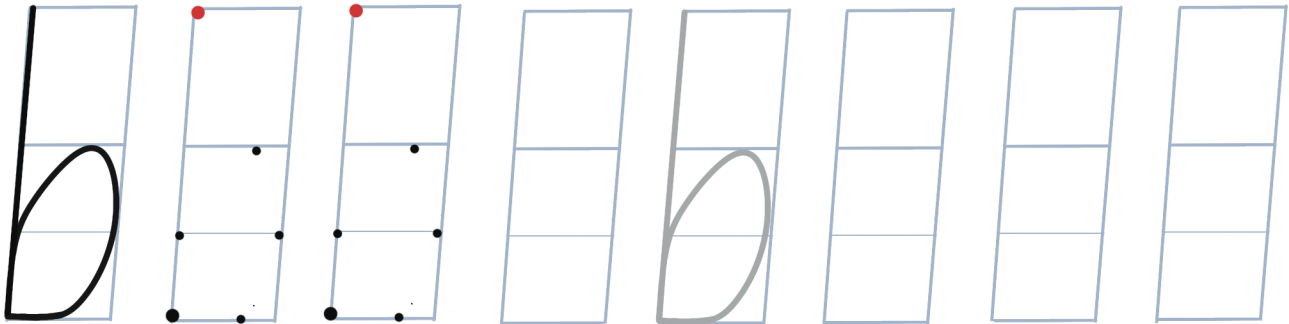
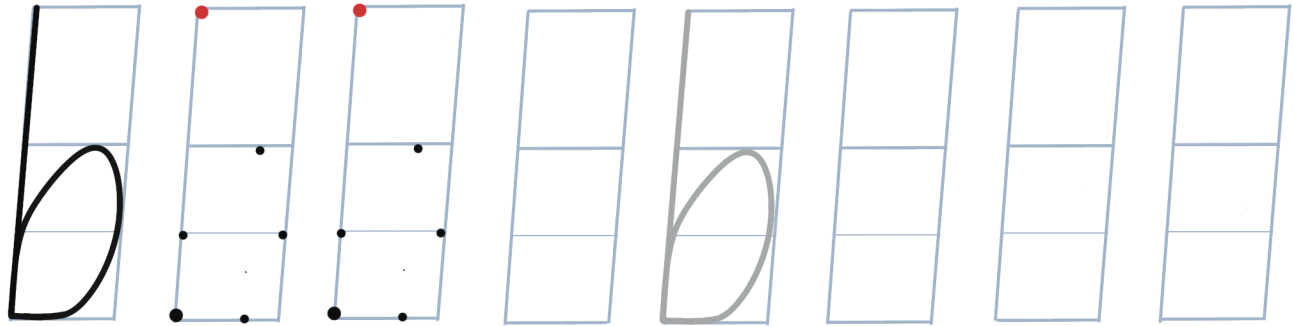
Draw the a-shape in the rectangles and on the lines below. Start at the red dot and draw in a counterclockwise direction. Draw in one stroke. Do not lift your pencil.



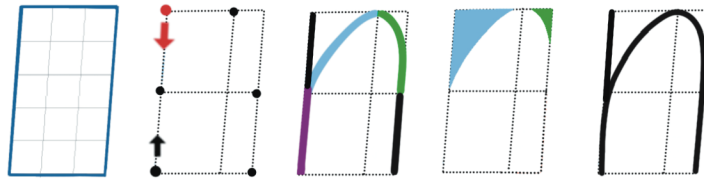
The b-shape



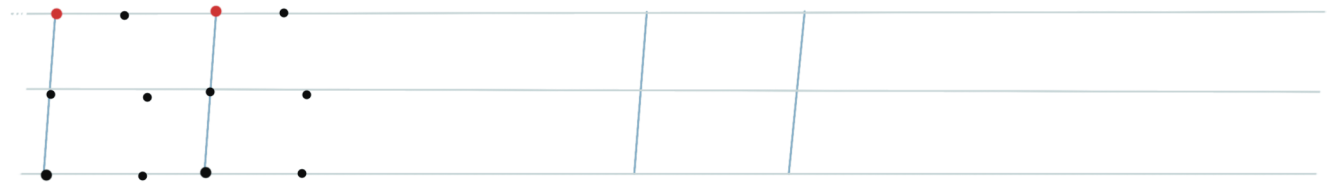
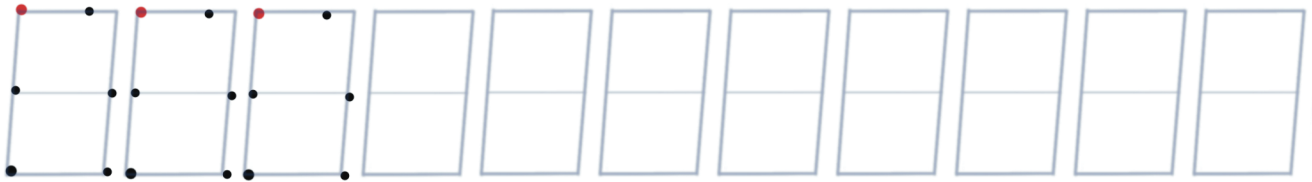
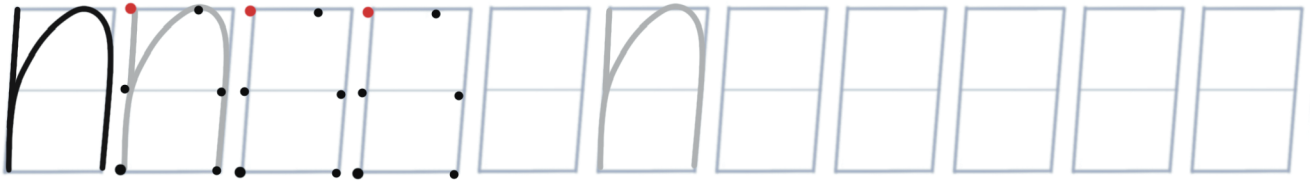
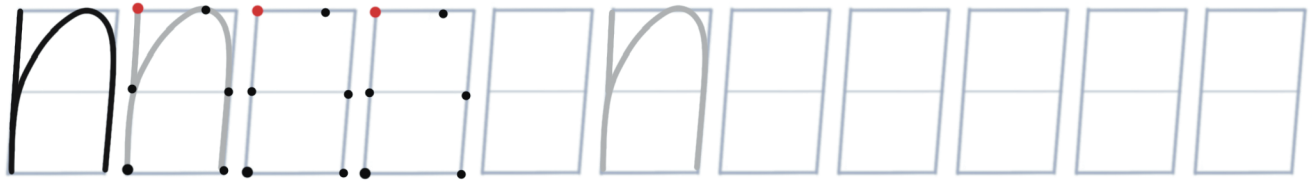
Draw the b-shape in the rectangles and on the lines below. Start at the red dot and draw in a clockwise direction. Draw in one stroke. Do not lift your pencil.



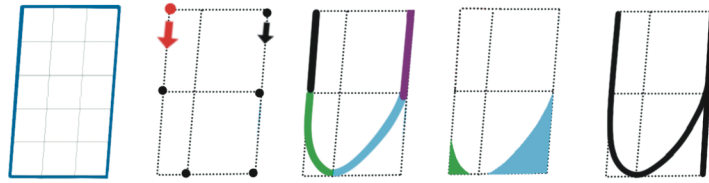
The n-Shape



Draw the n-shape in the rectangles and on the lines below. Start at the red dot and draw in a clockwise direction. Draw in one stroke. Do not lift your pencil.



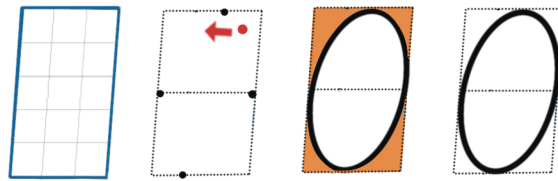
The U-Shape



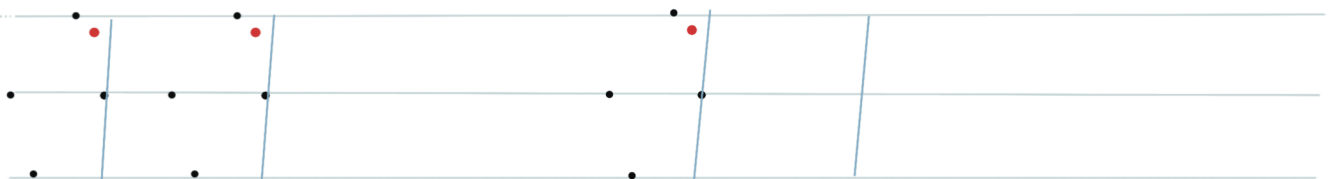
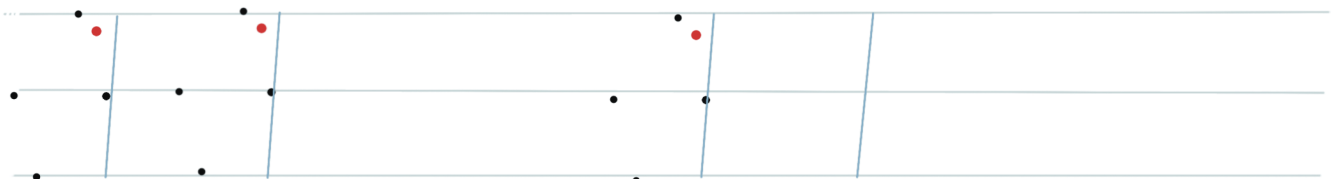
Draw the u-shape in the rectangles and on the lines below. Start at the red dot and draw in a counterclockwise direction. Draw in one stroke. Do not lift your pencil.



The O-Shape



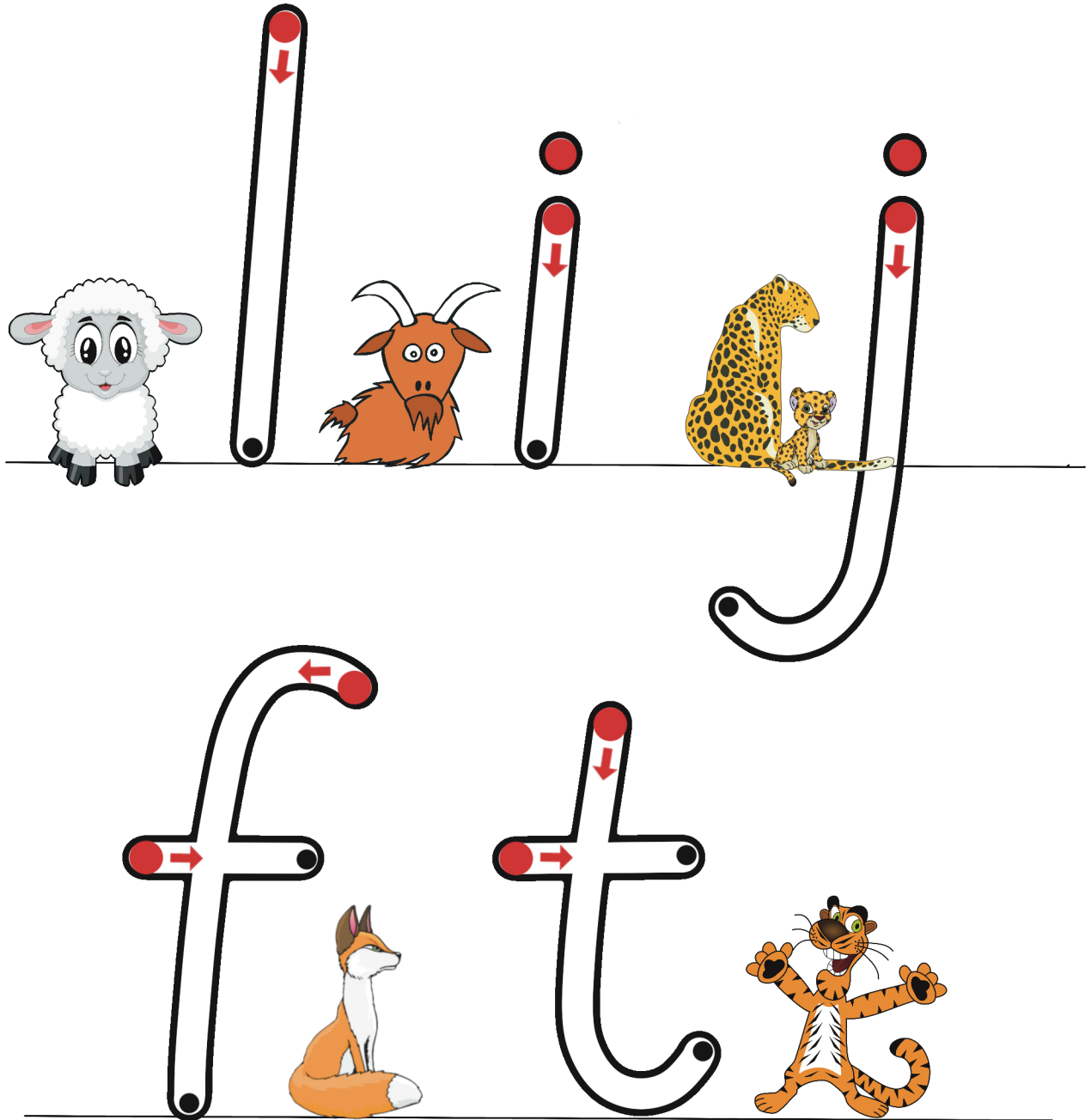
Draw the a-shape in the rectangles and on the lines below.
Start at the red dot and draw in a counterclockwise direction.
Draw in one stroke. Do not lift your pencil.



Lowercase Group 1

Finger Tracing

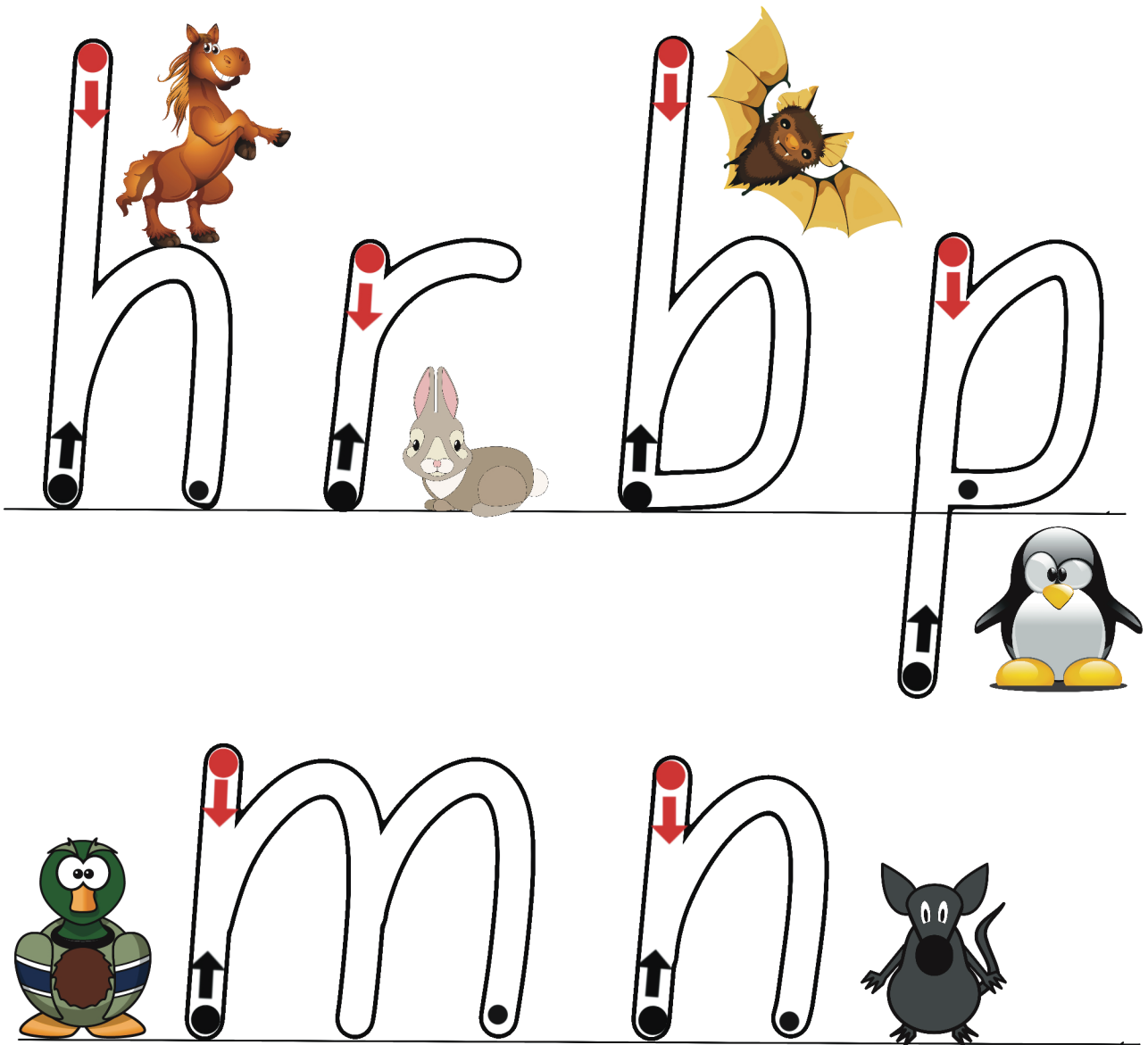
Start at the red dot and go to the black dot. Finger trace down first and then do the top dot or cross bar. Name each letter. Repeat until you can form each letter with your eyes closed



Lowercase Group 2

Finger Tracing

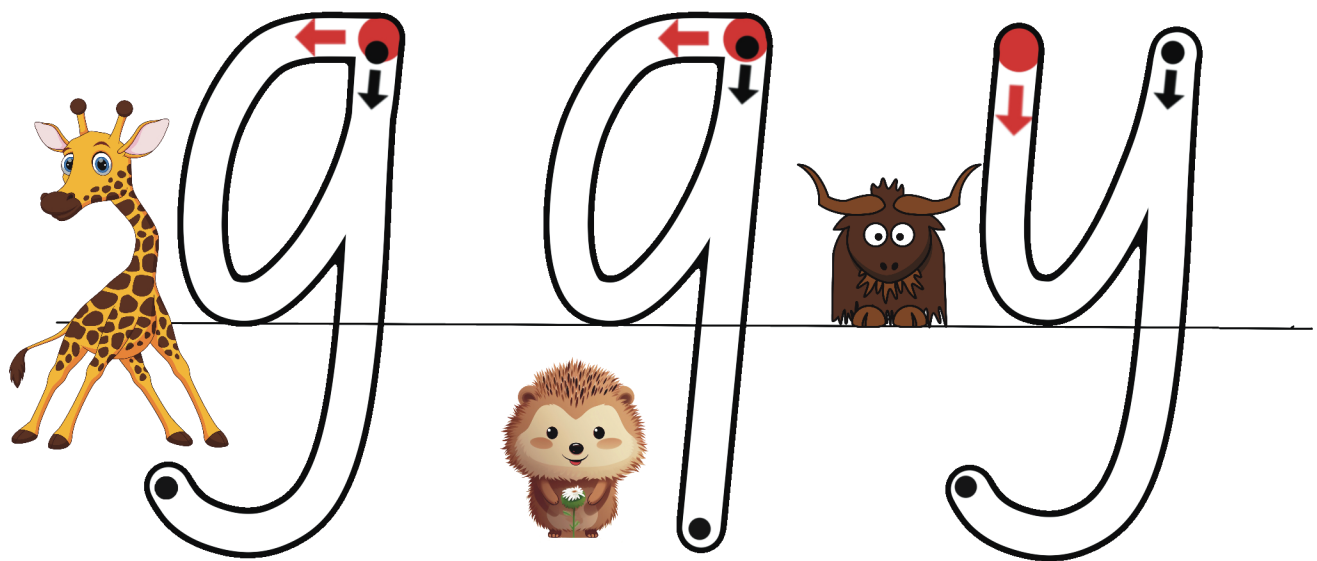
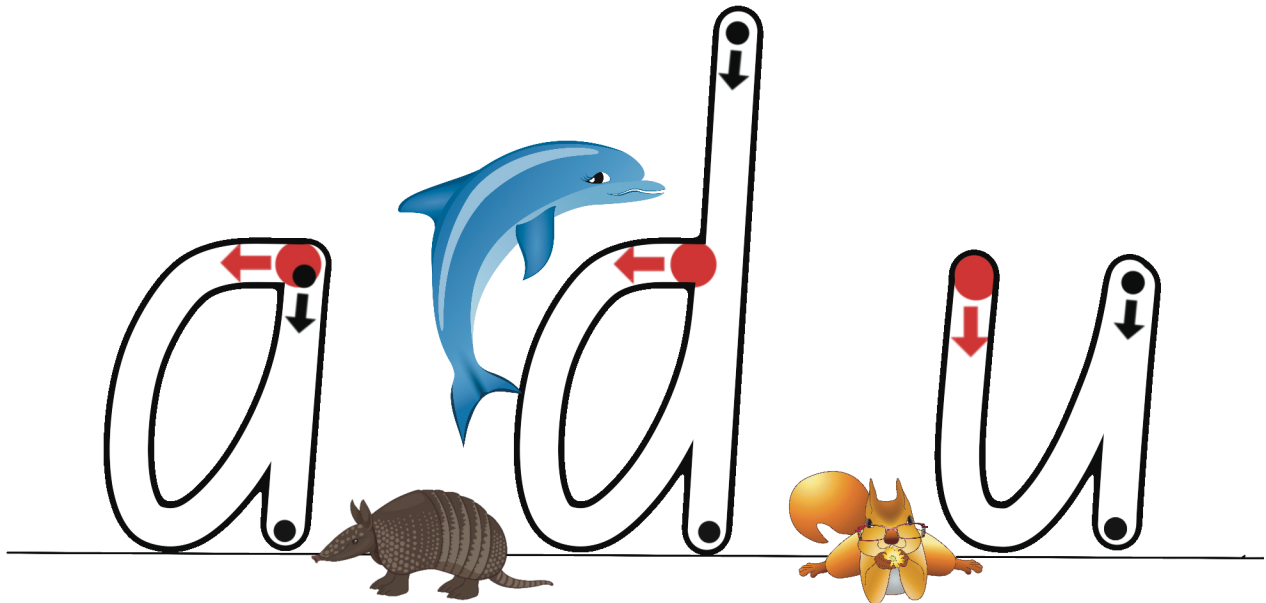
Start at the red dot, go to the black dot, reverse direction to complete the letter, all without lifting your finger. Trace and name each letter. Repeat until you can form each letter with your eyes closed.



Lowercase Group 3

Finger Tracing

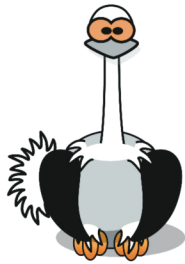
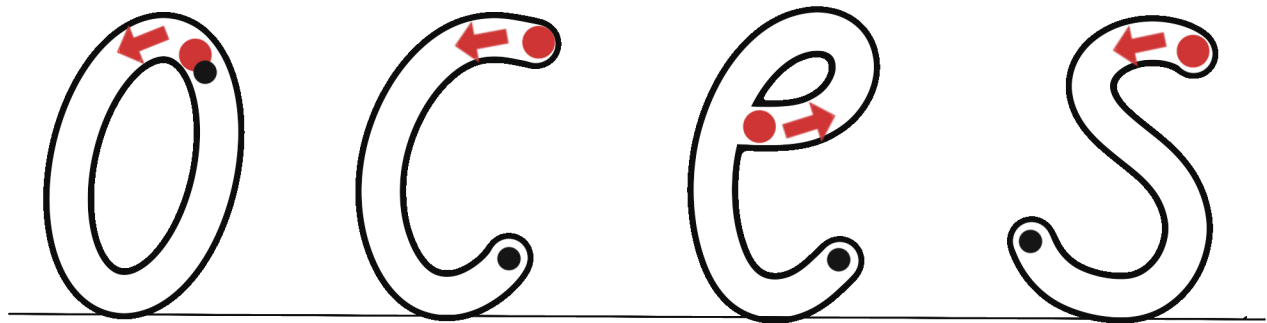
Start at the red dot, go to the black dot, reverse direction to complete the letter, all without lifting your finger. Trace and name each letter. Repeat until you can form each letter with your eyes closed.



Lowercase Group 4

Finger Tracing

Starting on the red dot, go to the black dot without lifting your finger. Trace and name each letter. Repeat until you can form each letter with your eyes closed.



Lowercase Group 5

Finger Tracing

Start at the red dot, go to the black dot to complete each stroke, only lifting your finger to go to the second red dot. Trace and name each letter. Repeat until you can form each letter with your eyes closed.

