

Really Good Stuff Instructional Guide

Make-A-Word Desktop Pocket Chart™

In this Really Good Stuff® set you'll find:

- Make-A-Word Desktop Chart™
- Letter Cards
- This Really Good Stuff® Instructional Guide

Overview

The Make-A-Word Chart is a place for students to form words in succession from letter cards they can easily see and store right on the same mat. Students working individually and in small groups, with the necessary teacher support, can use the chart for extensive word building activities.



Word Building for Literacy Development

Though the activity is *building* words, the goal is *reading* words. Repetitive manipulation of letter cards helps students understand how sound elements make up words. As this process becomes automatic, students develop a solid foundation for reading.

Use the Make-A-Word Chart to introduce phonemes, or sound parts, by looking at their positions in words. Provide many opportunities for students at the Emergent reading level* to practice recognizing letters and their sounds by seeing and hearing them in isolation and as parts of words. In addition, be sure to give the students opportunities to see and hear patterns repeated through literature, songs, and poems before you begin word building.

When the students are ready, demonstrate building familiar short vowel words. Explore word families using letter substitution. Then move on to consonant blends and making long vowel words by adding silent *e*. Later you can use the Make-A-Word Chart for exploring common vowel chunks and adding inflectional endings. Give students plenty of practice with each word building activity before moving on to the next one.

Management

- Work with individuals or small groups of 3 to 5 students. The Make-A-Word Chart can also be used in a literacy center.
- You may want to choose the letter cards you'll be using in the demonstration or activity ahead of time. Store the remaining letter cards in alphabetical order for quicker access.
- Keep a good pace. Word building is more effective when it takes place on a consistent daily schedule. Students make stronger connections and are better at recognizing patterns when they regularly engage in this work.

From Letter Work to Word Building

All the activities in this guide can be adapted for students at different stages of language development.

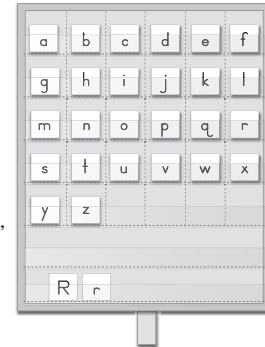
Emergent Level

(*Students are beginning to learn sounds and letters.)

1. Introduce letters in the Make-A-Word Chart.

Prepare children at this first level of literacy development with frequent and varied letter identification activities before you start word building. Use the bottom pockets of the Make-A-Word Chart as a place to look at a letter in isolation, talk about its shape and corresponding sound, and compare its lower and uppercase forms.

Place a letter in the bottom row of the chart and have students name the letter and its sound, and then write the letter, first in the air and then on paper or a dry-erase board. Encourage the students to describe the movement they make when writing the letter. For instance, writing the letter *r* could be described this way: "Down, back up and over, stop."



Display the letters you've practiced on a pocket chart and have the students say the sound and letter name as you point to each card.

2. Hunt for letters.

Practice letter recognition by having the student find letters as you name them.

Select up to four different letters the students have been studying, and take one card or multiple cards for each letter. Lay the cards on the table in front of the student.

As you call out a letter, have the student repeat the letter name and select the letter from the cards on the table. The student places the card in the bottom row of the Word Building Chart. If you provide multiple copies of the letters, have the student choose only one card each time you call out a letter. Name the letters in random order, without naming the same letter twice in a row.

Speed up the pace as the students' letter recognition becomes more automatic.

3. Sort letters.

Of course, picture sorts are an important step when students are learning letter sounds. Use the Make-A-Word Chart to sort letters by focusing on visual characteristics. There are many ways to vary this activity.

Choose a few cards for each of three or four letters that you have already introduced in the Make-A-Word Chart. For example, if you are focusing on vowels, select three *a*'s, three *e*'s and two *o*'s. Have the student sort the letters into the Make-A-Word Chart pocket or onto the table, providing support as necessary.



Encourage the students to verbalize how they know which letters match, even if they're not sure of the letter names: "The letter is just a circle. This one has a line next to the circle."

Other options include matching upper and lower case forms and picking out one letter that does not match the rest.

Wrap up each sort by having the student name each letter and its sound.

ESL Note: Students practice using verbal language by describing the letter shapes.

4. Introduce word building with familiar words.

Demonstrate building a simple, known word, by placing the letters, one at a time, in a bottom row of the Make-A-Word Chart. Explain what you're doing: "I'm putting **c** at the beginning of the word, **a** in the middle of the word, and **t** at the end of the word.../c/ /a/ /t/ makes *cat*."

Allow the student to build the same word right under yours. Next, remove all the letter cards and have the student build the word without following a sample.



Allow time for students to explore word building on their own. Students who need extra support should get repeated practice building words they see written on paper or displayed in a pocket chart.

Early Level

(Students recognize sounds and are beginning to read words.)

1. CVC Pattern: Model and practice letter substitution.

After going over the sounds in a familiar CVC word such as *sat*, have the student(s) watch as you demonstrate changing the beginning sound.

Change *s* to *m* and ask, "What's the new word?"

Encourage the student to point to the beginning, middle and ending sounds while slowly saying the new word: "/m/ /a/ /t/...*mat*." Then repeat the demonstration, replacing the beginning sound card with other consonants to make new words. Then have the student do the replacing, verbalizing how they've made a new word.

Place up to five possible beginning sound cards in front of the student and have him or her make words by placing different letter cards in the beginning sound position, offering support as needed. The student should say each new word.

When a student has had plenty of practice with the first rime (*at*), move on to a different CVC word family.

ESL Note: Emphasize sounding out each part as the student makes a new word.



2. Practice changing the final letter, then the middle letter.

Once the students have had lots of practice changing the beginning sounds in CVC words, move on to changing ending sounds, followed by middle sounds, providing many examples and plenty of support at every step.

3. Explore onsets and rimes.

Review the process of changing the first letter of a word to make new words.

After the review, place cards for a rime (the middle and ending sounds) for a word family, such as *an* for the word family *can, pan, tan* in the Word Building Chart.

Demonstrate filling in an onset (initial sound) to make a new word. Then have students practice making words by adding onsets to rimes.

After practicing filling in the onset, reverse the activity. Provide only the onset, such as *t*, and demonstrate filling in different rimes to make new words (*tap, top, tip, tan, tin, ten, etc.*).

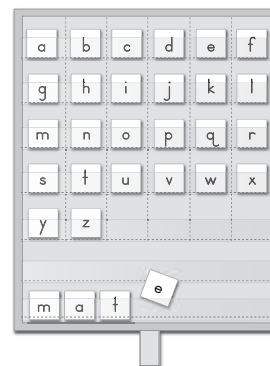
You may also decide to purchase or create rime cards, with middle and ending letters printed together on the same card.



4. CVCe Pattern: Explore long vowels.

Add the silent *e* to common CVC rimes. Model making the short vowel change to a long vowel using silent *e*, slowly sounding out the new word. Have the students practice making silent *e* words.

ESL Note: Emphasize that the students should use complete sentences to verbalize what they're doing. For example: "I used silent *e* to change *mat* to *mate*."



5. CVCC and CCVC Patterns: Explore Blends and Digraphs

Build words using letter combinations. Start with beginning digraphs and blends such as *bl, ch, tr, etc.* When students are ready, build long and short vowel words using ending digraphs and blends such as *nd, st, mb, etc.*

