



## Daily and Supporting Learning Targets

- Opening A: I can listen to and act out the events in the Letter Story: “a.”
- Work Time A: I can show letter-sound correspondence for “a.” (RF.K.3)
  - I can identify the name of each uppercase letter.
  - I can identify the name of each lowercase letter.
- Work Time B: I can write curved and diagonal lines.

## Ongoing Assessment

- Observe students during Work Time A. Determine whether they can say the sound for the letter “a” correctly.
- Observe students during Work Time B. Determine whether they can make curved lines starting from belly line and diagonal lines starting from the head line.

## Agenda

1. **Opening (5 minutes)**
  - A. Read-aloud: Letter Story: “a”
2. **Work Time (10–15 minutes)**
  - A. Showing the Sound: The Letter “a”
  - B. Handwriting: Curved and Diagonal Lines
3. **Closing and Assessment (2 minutes)**
  - A. Reflecting on Learning
4. **Independent Work Time (40–45 minutes)**

## Teaching Notes

### In advance:

- Preview the Letter Story: “a” to identify parts that can be easily acted out through body language to support student understanding and engagement.
- Gather materials for independent work rotations (see Independent Work Time).

## Vocabulary

### Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

- consonant, letter, vowel, word (L)
- mist, snout, suit of armor, surface, swamp (T)

## Materials

- ☑ Letter Story: “a” wrapped in colorful paper or placed in a decorative container (wrapping and container are optional) (one for teacher use; see Learning Letters Book)
- ☑ Keyword Picture Card: “a” (laminated; one for teacher use)
- ☑ White board marker (one for teacher use; optional)
- ☑ Student Name Cards (from Lesson 1; optional)
- ☑ Handwriting paper (one per student)
- ☑ Handwriting utensil (one per student; optional)

## Opening

### A. Read-aloud: Letter Story: “a”

- (Suggested transition song: “ABC Song,” sung to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”):  
*“A b c d e f g (pause) h i j k l m n o p (pause) q r s (pause) t u v (pause) w x (pause) y and z. These are the letters we use to read and write. (Pause.) Let’s get to know them by sound and by sight.”*
- Begin the read-aloud:
  1. Teacher reminds students that Anak and Watota want to go out into the world. They want to learn new things and communicate (tell about) what they have seen. Today, students will hear about another creature that the children meet. Over the next few days, they will find out how this animal helps them learn about a letter and a sound.
  2. Teacher reads the **Letter Story: “a”** with expression one time through while students listen.
  3. Teacher reads the story again, pausing to use body language and/or commentary to support comprehension, and inviting students to chime in during patterns such as “Little boy, little girl, on your journey today, where did you go? How far away? Little boy, little girl. Come sit beside me and tell of the wonders you happened to see.”
  4. At the end of the story, when Jeffi reveals the picture of the alligator, teacher displays the **Keyword Picture Card: “a.”**

## Meeting Students’ Needs

- Consider inviting students to stand and move in a circle while singing the transition song. Model how they can take a step on each letter. When they sing the lyrics “by sound,” they can cup their hands behind their ears to illustrate careful listening. When singing the lyrics “by sight,” they can make “binoculars” around their eyes with their hands to illustrate careful observing. This helps establish the idea that learning letters involves the shape, name, and sound.
- Using body language and/or commentary while reading the story aloud supports comprehension of new information and vocabulary. For example, when reading about being careful not to trip over the roots, mime stepping carefully.

- Consider inviting students to stand in place and make the movements with you while you read aloud. This not only supports comprehension but also appeals to their sense of wonder and involvement in the journey the children take.

## Work Time

### A. Showing the Sound: The Letter “a”

- (Suggested transition song: “ABC Song,” sung to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”):  
*“A b c d e f g (pause) h i j k l m n o p (pause) q r s (pause) t u v (pause) w x (pause) y and z. These are the letters we use to read and write. (Pause.) Let’s get to know them by sound and by sight.”*
- Begin the Showing the Sound instructional practice:
  1. Teacher says: “The /a/ sound at the beginning of the word ‘alligator’ was shown by this letter hidden in the picture of the alligator.”
  2. Teacher traces an “a” in the image of the alligator with his or her finger or a **whiteboard marker (optional)**.
  3. Teacher writes the word “alligator” on the board and says: “This is the word ‘alligator.’”
  4. Teacher points to the first letter (“a”) and asks:  
*“Do you recognize the shape of this first letter?” (just like the shape of the letter hidden in the picture)*
  5. Teacher says: “This is the letter ‘a,’ and it shows the sound /a/. It is the first letter in the word ‘alligator,’ and it makes the sound /a/ just like the first sound in ‘alligator.’”
  6. Teacher asks:  
*“Do any of you have /a/ as the first sound in your name?” (If a student does, write his or her name on the board under the word “alligator” and draw students’ attention to the fact that the letter “a” shows the /a/ sound in that student’s name, just as it did for the word “alligator.”)*
  7. If time allows, teacher can consider distributing **Student Name Cards (optional)** and asking:  
*“Do any of you have the letter ‘a’ somewhere in your name?”*

### Meeting Students’ Needs

- If step 7 during this Work Time is included, it is likely that many students will have the letter “a” in their name. Consider drawing students’ attention to this. While identifying letters as vowels or consonants isn’t introduced until Lesson 7, noticing the frequency of certain letters in names (such as “a”) helps support instruction of the role played by vowels in words.

### B. Handwriting: Curved and Diagonal Lines

- (Suggested transition song: “I’m a Little Teapot”):  
*“Now we’ll write a letter, line by line. Get your hand ready to start on time. When we write a letter, we start at the top. Pull down until it’s time to stop.”*

- Begin the Handwriting instructional practice:
  1. Teacher writes the lowercase letter “a” on the board and invites students to describe how it looks. (curved lines, a circle with a straight line)
  2. Teacher explains that they will skywrite the curved lines, extending their arms out and making the lines.
  3. Teacher models skywriting curved lines in both directions (left and right): extending the arm and pointing up, and then pulling the arm around and down.
  4. Teacher invites students to practice skywriting curved lines in both directions, emphasizing starting at the top and curving back around and down.
  5. Teacher writes the numeral “1” at the very top of the board and the numeral “2” below it at the very bottom.
  6. Teacher models pointing toward the number “1” and curving down and around to end at the “2.” Teacher does this in both directions.
  7. Teacher invites students to practice skywriting curved lines in both directions, pointing toward the “1” first and curving down and around to end at “2.”
  8. If time allows, consider repeating steps 1–7, observing the lines in the uppercase letter “A” and making diagonal lines.
  9. Teacher distributes **handwriting paper** and **writing utensils (optional)**, inviting the students to notice the image of the mouse.
  10. Teacher invites student to make curved lines on the handwriting paper:
    - Students put the tip of their finger or writing utensil on the belly line.
    - Students pull the tip down and around in a curve toward the left (in the direction of the mouse).
    - Students continue through to the feet line, ending directly below where they began.
  11. Students repeat the process several more times to make curved lines on their handwriting paper with their fingers.
  12. If time allows, teacher invites students to make diagonal lines on the handwriting paper:
    - Students start on the head line and pull back and down to the left (toward the mouse) in a diagonal line.
    - Students repeat several more times.
    - Students go back up to the head line and pull down to the right (away from the mouse) in a diagonal line.
    - Students repeat several more times.

### Meeting Students' Needs

- Placing the numerals “1” and “2” on the board in the manner described in step 5 provides practice with ending the curve directly below the starting point. This builds muscle memory for making curved lines in letters such as “a” and “c.” If you choose to work with diagonal lines in this work time, consider writing “1” in the top right hand corner of the board and “2” in the lower left hand corner and having students point to those numbers while skywriting. Rewrite the numbers in opposite corners to allow for students to practice skywriting diagonal lines going in the other direction.

## Closing and Assessment

### A. Reflecting on Learning

- Before moving to Independent Work Time, consider asking one or both of the following questions:

*“What is a letter?” (Responses will vary. Examples: “It shows a sound,” “It helps write words.”)*

*“What do you know about the letter ‘a’?”*

*“What will you do today during Independent Work Time that allows you and your classmates to be successful?” (Responses will vary. Examples: “use kind language,” “be careful with materials,” “take turns.”)*

## Independent Work Time

*Suggested Plan: This first cycle provides time for students to practice what it means to work independently. A brief introduction is made to materials, and expectations for work habits and social interactions are established.*

*Note: Three suggestions for independent activities are given. Consider using any or all of these. For example, you may want to have all students working on the same activity, or you may want to have two or three activities happening simultaneously for a set time and then rotate students through. By Cycle 2, groups not working with the teacher at a given time should be engaged in purposeful independent rotation work. Refer to the Independent and Small Group Work guidance document (see K–2 Skills Resource Manual) for more details.*

### Book Browsing:

- Students spend time looking at their own individual book(s).

### Word Work:

- Students practice making curved lines using the handwriting paper, starting from the head or belly line and pulling around to the left and/or to the right.
- Additional Supporting Materials:
  - Handwriting paper (one per student)
  - Pencils (one per student)

### Responding to Text:

- Students draw a picture representing the Letter Story: “a.” They should include some details from the story and try to show the “a” hidden in the shape of the alligator.
- The pictures can be displayed in the classroom alongside the picture of the alligator used in the whole group lesson.
- Additional Supporting Materials:
  - Blank paper (one per student)
  - Drawing materials