

Letters and Numbers *Starter Kit*

Sandpaper-style letter cards to print and finish at home, cutting stencils, loose letters for building words, I spy sound cards, number cards and counters from 0 to 10, a sounds tracker and a one-page guide.

A companion to **The Everyday Montessori Preschooler**, 3 to 6 years.
Five minutes at a time. No worksheets needed.



Sounds first, *names later*

Letter sounds	What the letter says. "Sss" for s. This is what your child needs to read and spell, so Montessori starts here.
Letter names	What the letter is called. "Ess" for s. Useful, and the alphabet song is fine, but names don't help with sounding out words.
Sight words	Common words that don't follow the rules, like "the," "said" or "was." Montessori calls them "puzzle words" and introduces them after children can sound out simple words.
Lowercase first	Almost everything we read is lowercase. Capital letters come once lowercase is solid.

THE ORDER MONTESSORI CLASSROOMS FOLLOW

- 1 **Rich spoken language**, from birth. Conversation, stories, songs, books read aloud every day.
- 2 **Playing with sounds**, from about 3. Rhymes, I spy, clapping syllables. No letters needed.
- 3 **Sandpaper letters**, from about 3½. Trace with two fingers while saying the sound.
- 4 **Building words** with loose letters, from about 4. C-a-t, by sound.
- 5 **Writing**, from about 4½, then **reading**, from about 5.

THE THREE STEPS OF A LETTER LESSON

- 1 "This is mmm." Trace it, say it, let your child trace and say it.
- 2 Later, with two or three letters on the table. "Show me mmm."
- 3 Later still. "What's this one?" Only move on when the first step is easy.

Ages are approximate. The order matters more than the timing. If letters still don't stick after lots of playful practice, or your child struggles to hear rhymes and sounds, mention it to the teacher or your pediatrician.

Sandpaper letters *at home*

The letter cards in this kit are colored the classroom way, blue for vowels and pink for consonants. They work printed as they are, for tracing and games. To make them feel like real sandpaper letters, add texture.

OPTION 1 · REAL SANDPAPER (STURDIEST)

- 1 Print the letter cards on thick cardstock, or glue them onto cardboard.
- 2 Print the stencil pages. The letters are reversed on purpose. Cut out one gray letter, lay it on the back of a sheet of fine sandpaper, and trace around it.
- 3 Cut the sandpaper letter out and glue it exactly over the printed letter. Let it dry under a heavy book.

OPTION 2 · GLUE AND SAND (FASTEST)

- 1 Print the cards on cardstock.
- 2 Paint glue over the printed letter, sprinkle with fine sand or salt, shake off the extra and let it dry flat.

LOOSE LETTERS

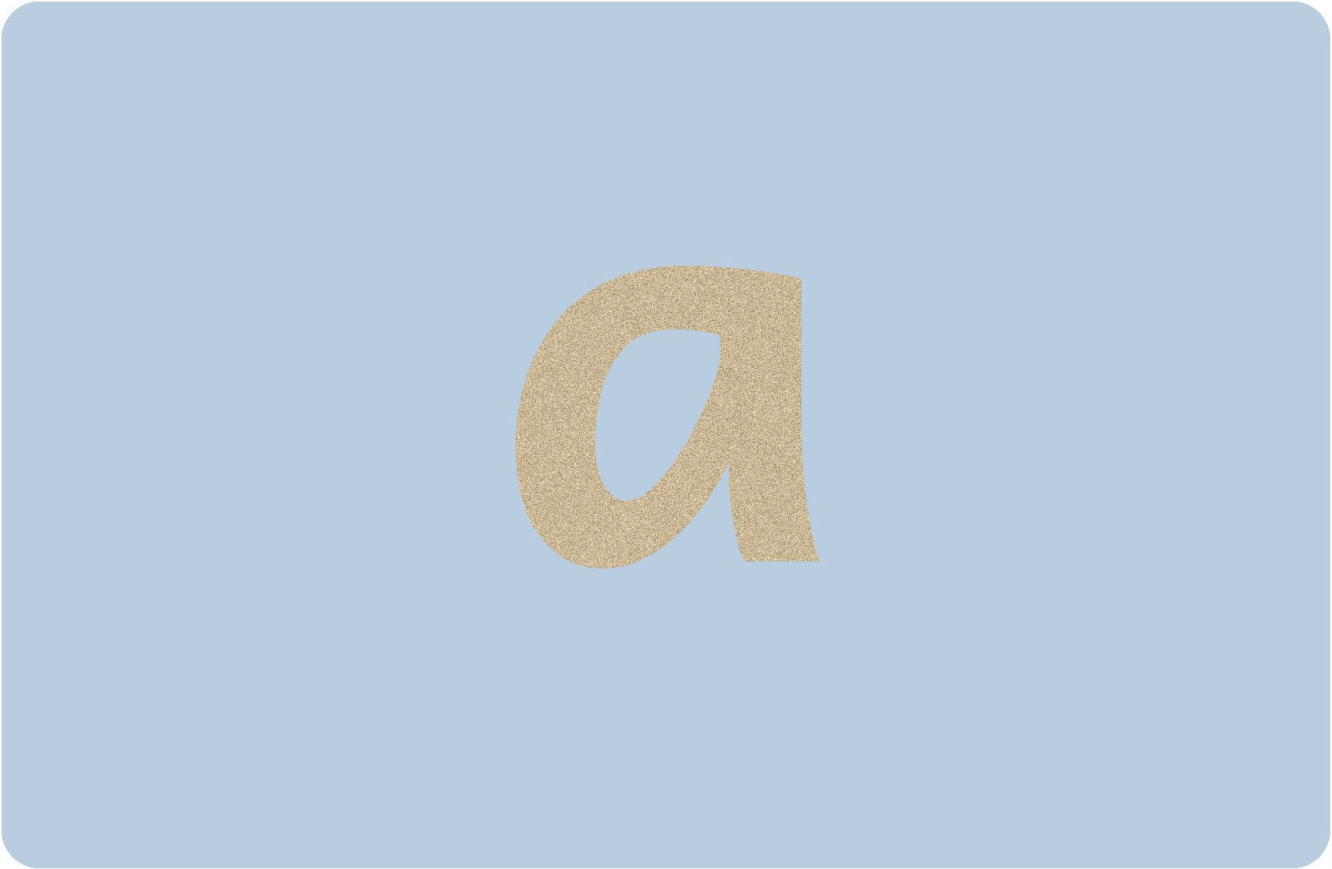
The loose letter pages are a paper version of the Montessori moveable alphabet, red for consonants and blue for vowels. Cut them out, keep them in an egg carton or a tackle box, and let your child build words by sound. Pig, sun, cup. Don't correct the spelling.

HOW TO PRESENT A LETTER

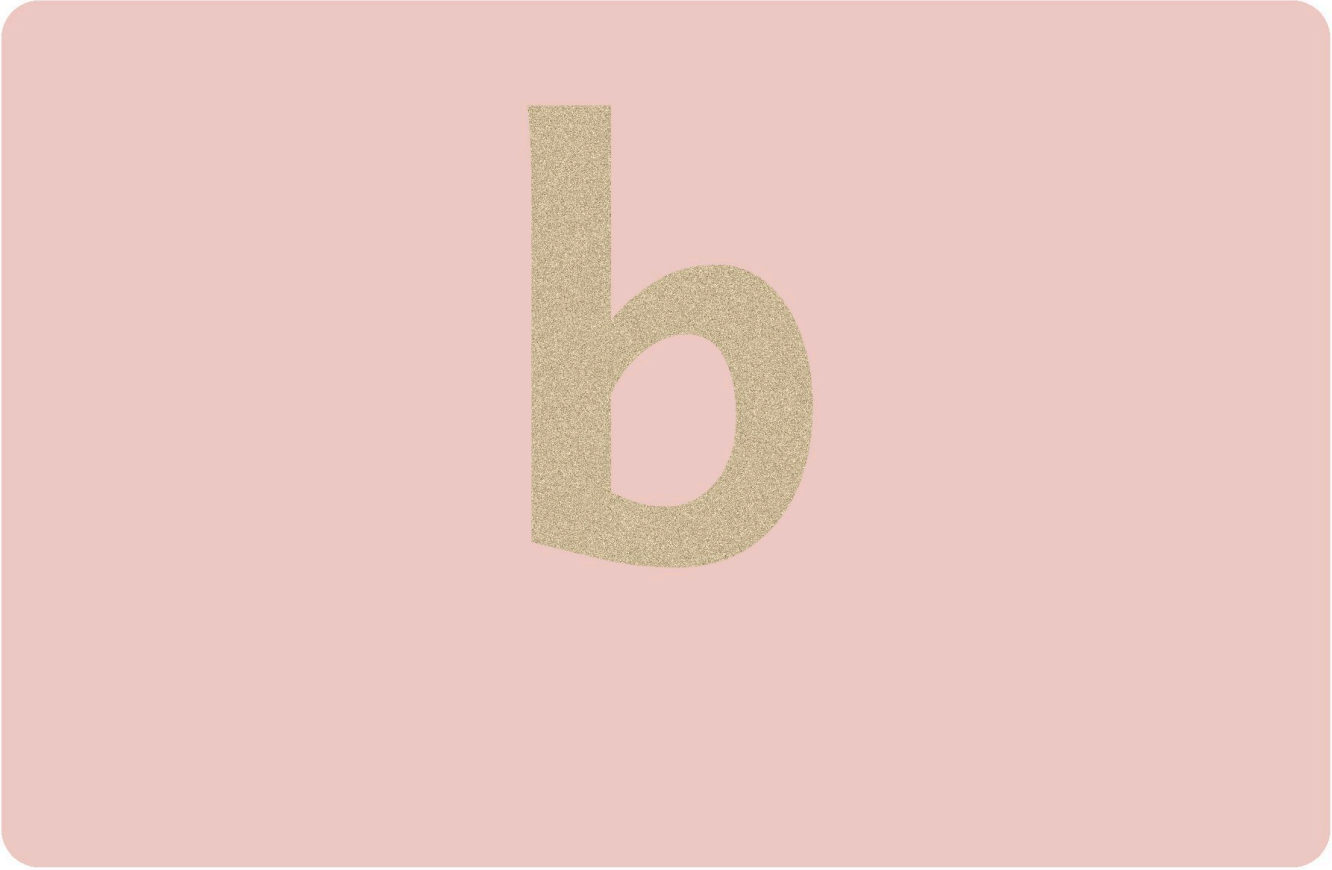
Sit beside your child. Trace slowly with your index and middle fingers together, in the direction the letter is written, and say the sound, not the name. Start with letters that are easy to tell apart and common in your child's name, like m, s, a, t. Two or three new letters a week is plenty.

SAFETY

Cutting sandpaper and handling glue are grown-up jobs. Stay close during the salt or sand tray, and keep small craft supplies away from younger siblings.



a



b

c

d

e

f

g

h

i

j

k

l

m

n

o

p

q

r

s

t

u

v

W

X

y

z

a

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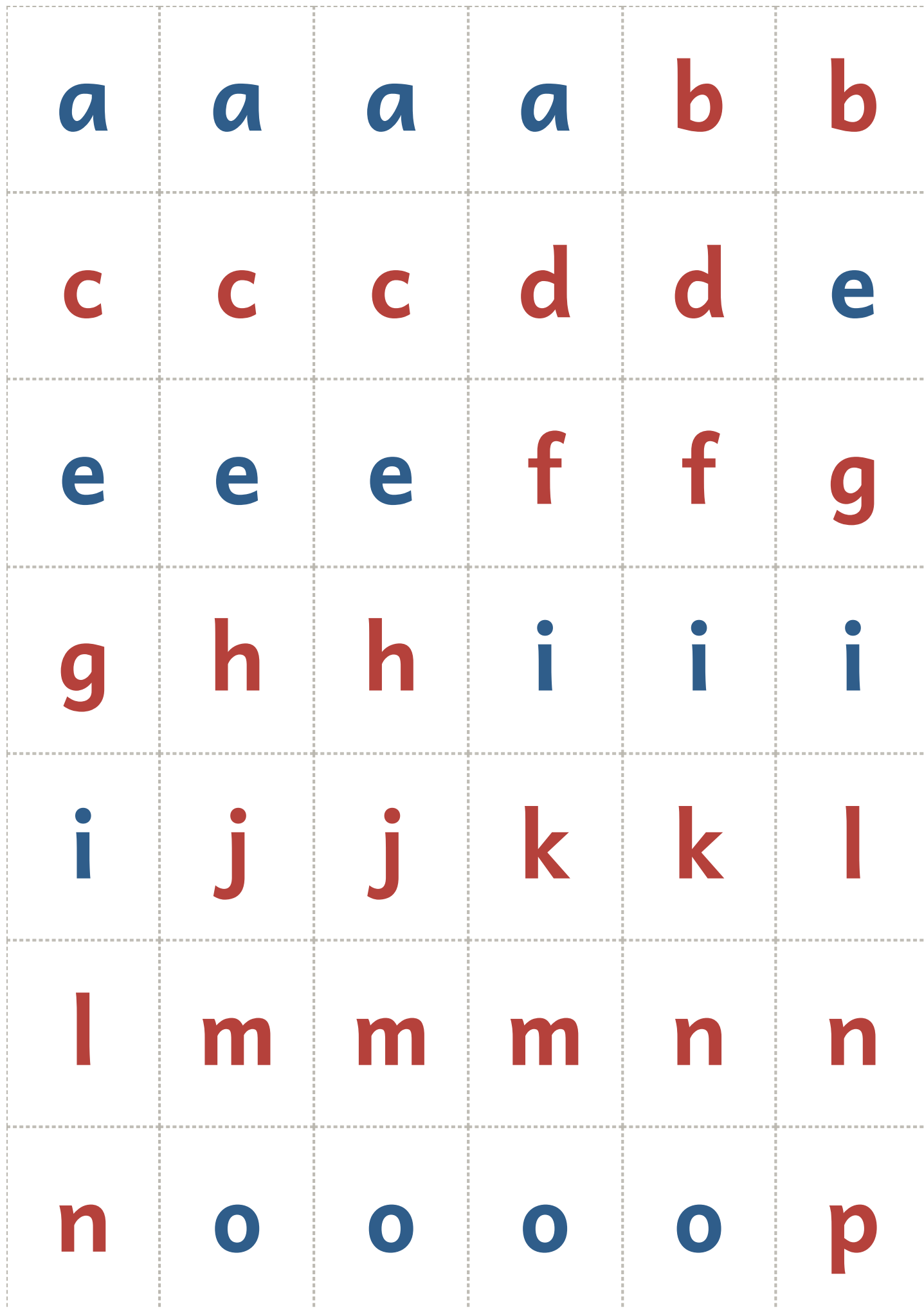
v

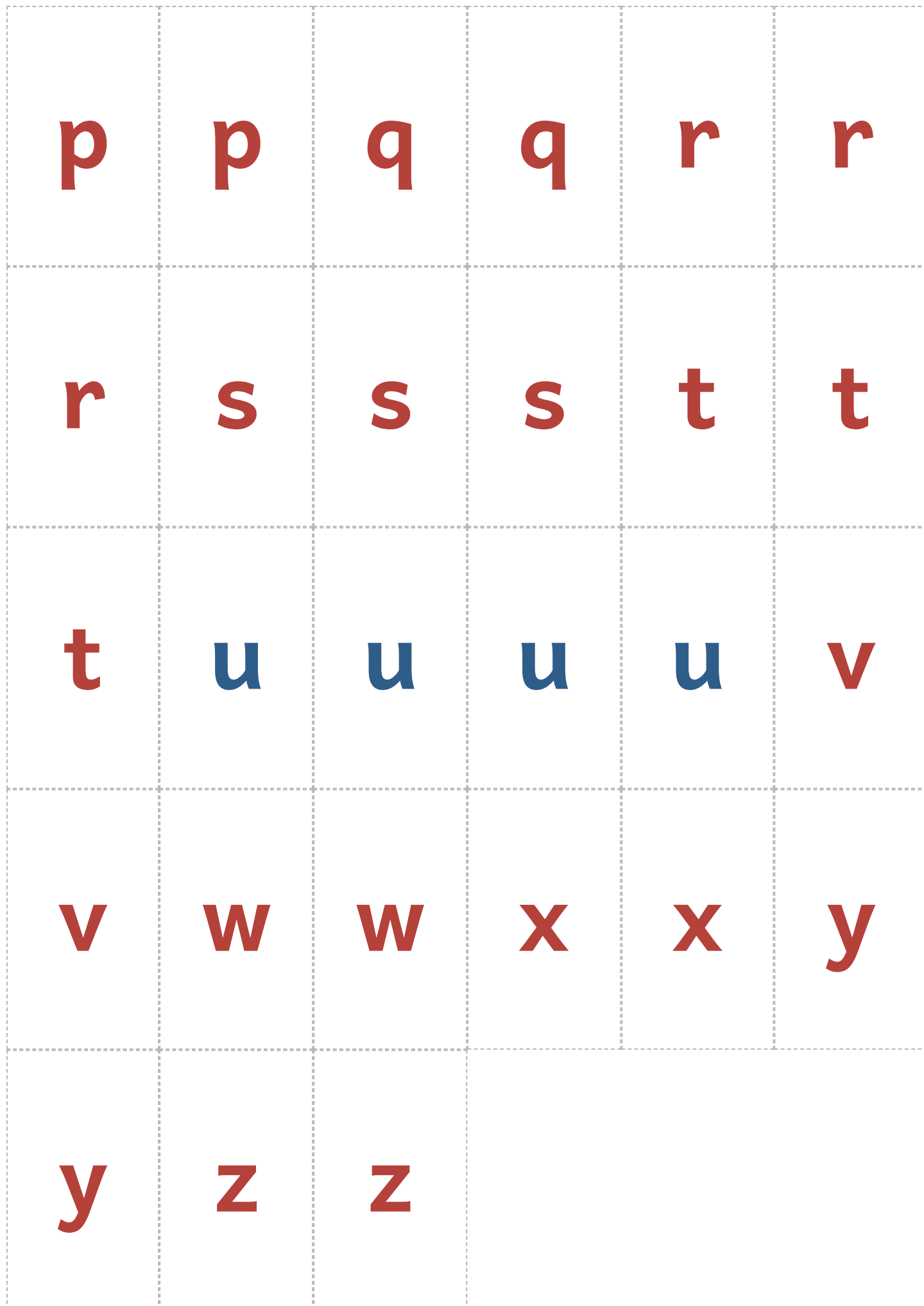
w

x

v

z





m

"I spy something that starts with mmm."

LOOK FOR

milk, mug, mitten, mirror, map

s

"I spy something that starts with sss."

LOOK FOR

sock, spoon, sun, sofa, soap

a

"I spy something that starts with a, as in apple."

LOOK FOR

apple, ant, alligator, astronaut

t

"I spy something that starts with t."

LOOK FOR

table, towel, toothbrush, tiger, toe

p

"I spy something that starts with p."

LOOK FOR

pan, pencil, pillow, pear, plate

i

"I spy something that starts with i, as in insect."

LOOK FOR

insect, igloo, inch, itch

n

"I spy something that starts with nnn."

LOOK FOR

nose, napkin, nail, nest, nut

c

"I spy something that starts with c, as in cat."

LOOK FOR

cup, car, carrot, coat, cookie

o

"I spy something that starts with o, as in octopus."

LOOK FOR

octopus, olive, otter, on, off

d

"I spy something that starts with d."

LOOK FOR

door, dog, duck, dish, doll

g

"I spy something that starts with g, as in goat."

LOOK FOR

goat, gate, glove, gift, garlic

h

"I spy something that starts with h."

LOOK FOR

hat, hand, hair, hook, house

e

"I spy something that starts with e, as in egg."

LOOK FOR

egg, elbow, elephant, envelope

r

"I spy something that starts with rrr."

LOOK FOR

rug, rock, rabbit, ribbon, robot

f

"I spy something that starts with fff."

LOOK FOR

fork, foot, fish, fan, flower

b

"I spy something that starts with b."

LOOK FOR

ball, book, bowl, banana, bed

l

"I spy something that starts with ll."

LOOK FOR

lamp, leaf, lemon, lid, leg

u

"I spy something that starts with u, as in umbrella."

LOOK FOR

umbrella, up, under, umpire

w

"I spy something that starts with w."

LOOK FOR

window, water, watch, wagon, wool

j

"I spy something that starts with j."

LOOK FOR

jar, jacket, jam, juice, jump

k

"I spy something that starts with k."

LOOK FOR

key, kite, kettle, kitten, king

v

"I spy something that starts with vv."

LOOK FOR

van, vase, violin, vest, vegetable

y

"I spy something that starts with y, as in yellow."

LOOK FOR

yogurt, yarn, yo-yo, yellow, yawn

z

"I spy something that starts with zzz."

LOOK FOR

zipper, zebra, zoo, zero, zigzag

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

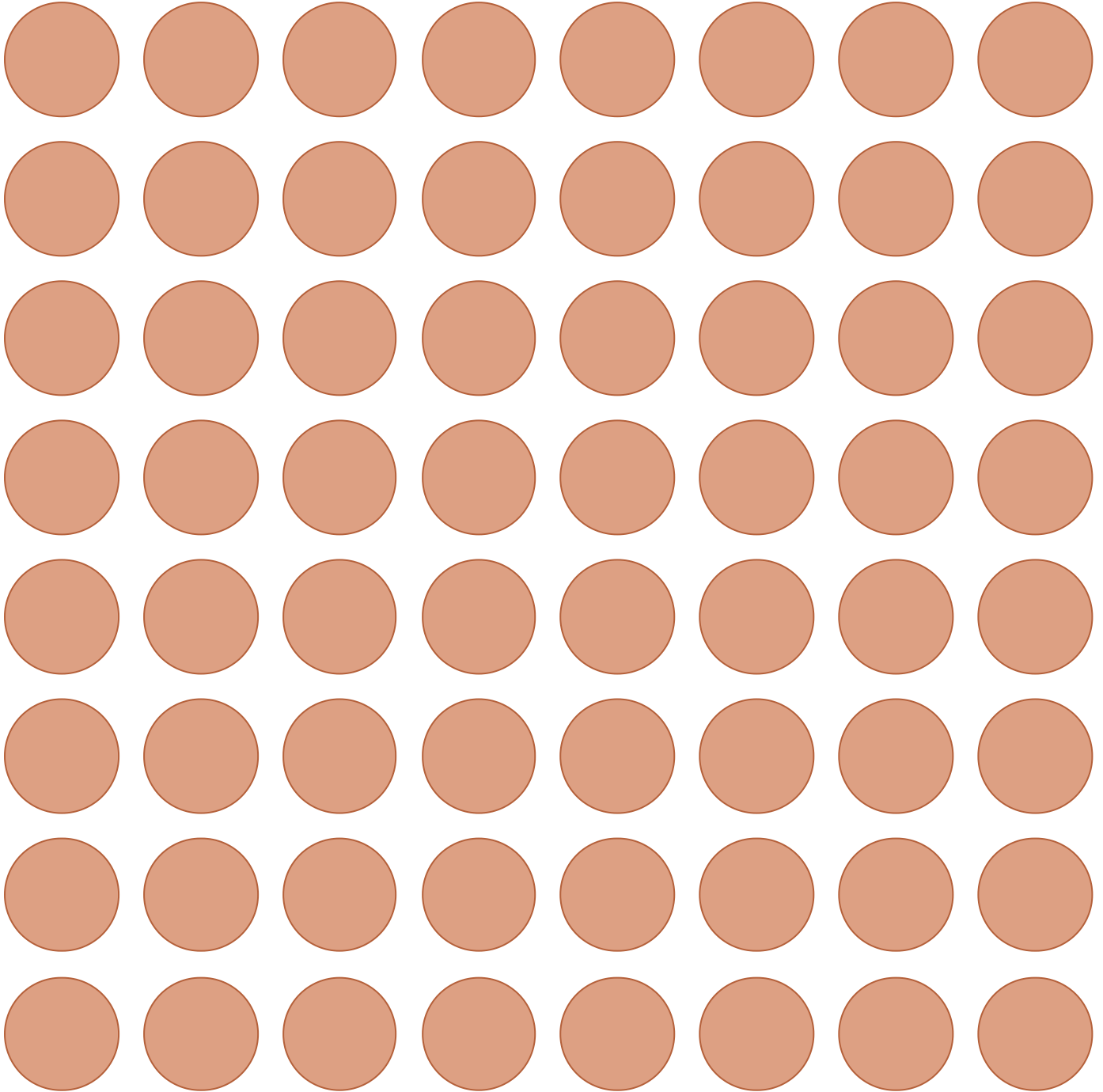
8

9

10

Counters *to cut out*

Lay the number cards from 1 to 10 in a row. Your child puts the right number of counters under each, in pairs, two by two. Some numbers have one counter left over without a partner. Those are the odd numbers. Buttons or dried beans work just as well, for children past the mouthing stage.



The sounds *we know*

Shade the first circle when your child can show you the letter ("Show me mmm"), the second when they can tell you its sound ("What's this one?"), and the third when they hear it at the start of a word in I spy.

a ○○○	b ○○○	c ○○○	d ○○○	e ○○○	f ○○○
g ○○○	h ○○○	i ○○○	j ○○○	k ○○○	l ○○○
m ○○○	n ○○○	o ○○○	p ○○○	q ○○○	r ○○○
s ○○○	t ○○○	u ○○○	v ○○○	w ○○○	x ○○○
y ○○○	z ○○○				

FROM THE BOOK

Module 5 has the full path to reading and numbers, fifteen five-minute games, and the signs that mean it's worth asking for help.