

Letter Matching



LANGUAGE ARTS
GRADE LEVEL **EARLY**
CHILDHOOD – PRE K

COMPLETION TIME
• 20 minutes



MATERIALS

FOR STUDENT:

(one per student unless otherwise noted)

- FloraCraft® Make It: Fun® Foam Blocks, cut from large Foam Block (see "FOR TEACHER") to 3" x 3" x 1" thick (mama animal) OR 2" x 2" x 1" thick (baby animal)
- 3" square OR 2" square cut from cardstock or heavyweight paper, choice of suggested colors: Pink, lavender, mint green, turquoise, orange, yellow (one color per mama and baby animal – if making more than six pair, more colors of cardstock will be needed.)
- Glue stick
- Paper plate
- Small zip-loc bag (to hold parts)

FOR TEACHER:

- FloraCraft® Make It: Fun® Foam Block, 15/16" x 11 15/16" x 17 15/16" (approx. 12" x 18" x 1")
- Mama and baby animal stickers, cutouts, etc. Photo model uses images from Blackleaf Studios www.etsy.com/shop/blackleafdesign
- Copy paper (for letters)
- Serrated knife
- Paper trimmer
- Small scissors
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Computer / printer / Internet
- Cutting mat or stack of newspapers
- Paper towels

OBJECTIVES

Students learn:

- Uppercase and lowercase letters
- Mother and baby animals
- Listening and following step by step instructions
- Use of fine motor skills and afterwards, play

STANDARDS

- Recognize and name uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter sounds (beginning letters)
- Compare big with small, mother and baby
- Classify by size and sort color and shape

TEACHER PREPARATION

Note: Read through all instructions first. Decide if each student will assemble a mama or a baby or both, so that you know how many blocks will be needed. If desired, before cutting apart any paper pieces, laminate fronts (only) for greater durability. It is suggested that you show your finished project samples only when you want to explain something, or students tend to work ahead by seeing and copying.

[1] Use ruler and pencil to measure and make small marks as ruler guides for 3" and 2" squares on foam block. (Pencil will show on foam if you go over the mark a couple of times. However it's not necessary to draw the entire line – just measure and mark in a couple of places as a guide for placing the ruler.) Then, on cutting mat or newspapers, use serrated knife against edge of ruler score all lines first. Then go over lines with several passes of the knife for each cut.

[2] Locate mama and baby animals, no larger than 3" square and 2" square, respectively. If purchasing on line, print out images. Use small scissors to roughly cut close to animals to separate and eliminate excess paper. Then neatly cut along animal outlines.

[3] Select suitable font for upper and lower case letters. (Note: Photo model uses Arial, 120 point.) Type the first letter of each animal name in upper and lower case, far enough apart that there's room to trim each letter to approx. 1 ¼" square or 1 ½" square. Use paper trimmer to cut out letters.

[4] Use paper trimmer to cut 3" square and 2" square from each paper color (for animal backgrounds). Then repeat to make colored backgrounds for each pair of letters.

[5] Before students arrive place one foam block and two appropriately-sized, different colored, paper squares onto paper plate. Set plate and glue stick at each student's place.

LESSON INTRODUCTION

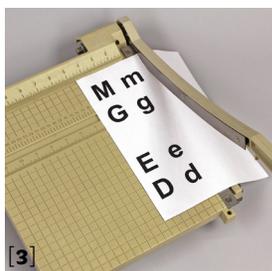
- Discuss having sung the alphabet song and looking at letters. Explain that there are uppercase letters that are big and lowercase letters that are small. Also mention talking about mama and baby animals. Include that the names of the animals start with letters. Explain that they will be making big blocks of the mamas and small blocks of the babies.
- Explain that they should follow along, one step at a time and that each student will be making a block(s), but all doing it together.



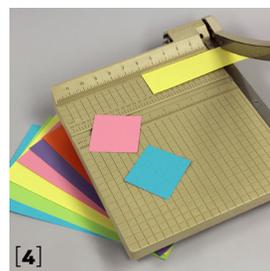
[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]



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INSTRUCTIONS

[1] Ask students to keep all pieces close to their paper plates. Demonstrate and have students remove glue stick cap and rotate bottom to raise glue a little (about 1/4" but no higher or it can break off). Then show them how to use one hand to hold foam block on surface of plate, while holding glue stick with the other hand. Press glue stick onto the foam surface. Encourage them to press fairly hard so that glue goes into porous foam and then builds up on surface. Remind them to be sure glue goes all the way out to the outside of the block but doesn't get on the block sides.



(Note: After students have done it, you or your helpers may want to quickly run glue stick around edges, since that's where separation most easily occurs.)

[2] Instruct students to set one colored paper square onto foam block, with edges "aligned" (lining up). Have paper towels ready for any messy blocks, plates or fingers.



[3] (Note: Replace any messy plates, so that when students apply glue to other side, the paper won't become gluey from the plate surface.) Have students turn their blocks over to the other side and repeat process with other colored paper square.

[4] Explain that next they will be applying glue to the back of the letter that you're going to give them. Demonstrate how to set their foam block over to the side and turn over the big or small letter (whichever you will be giving them) onto the paper plate. Reinforce that the letter must be down. Demonstrate applying glue to the white paper. Then have students apply glue, but without attaching yet.



[5] Demonstrate to students how to carefully pick up glued paper by the edges and hold over middle of foam block to center it. Show them how the lines of the foam block and the lines of the paper are "parallel" (straight with each other). Have students pick up paper letter and center onto foam block.



[6] Repeat process with animal image, on other side, being sure to have students check that the letter and animal are both right side up.



[7] As students are finishing, if you intend to eventually send foam blocks home with students, go to each student and lightly write their name (small) on the animal side of the block (so the letters don't confuse them on the letter side.) If you are keeping the blocks for the classroom use, names are not necessary. Depending on time, students can play mixing and matching foam blocks. Later, use plastic bags for taking home.

MODIFICATIONS

To simplify project:

- Make both fronts and backs the same colors so that the mama, baby and both upper and lower case letters are all the same color.
- Have animals and letters already mounted on the colored squares so that students are not gluing the small pieces.
- Work in small groups with a helper in each group, with students taking turns gluing so that one can hold the foam while another applies glue and a third sets paper pieces in place.

To expand project:

- Draw a more general line around each animal and have students cut out animals.
- Find animals to represent every letter in the alphabet and let students each make a mama and baby, selecting their own colored background papers. (Note: Animals can be hand drawn, or be real photographs found on line and printed to size.)
- Make jumbo blocks using thicker foam blocks and large bulletin board animals, die cuts or photos.

For multiple ages:

- Younger and older students work side-by-side, each making a different size animal.
- Have older students research on line for more animals and design blocks that younger students can make.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Use concept for a science unit, including basic facts about animals on back.
- To display, join them with toothpicks inserted into the edges to build height. (May need to toothpick-connect to a foam base for stability.)
- Design other themes for learning blocks, using the foam block / varying size concept.
- Allow students to check out to take home to practice.



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TIPS

- Keep blade perpendicular to table so that foam edges are straight. Score lightly first and then press more firmly to cut deeper with several passes of the knife.
- If desired, trim about 1/8" out from edges of animals to leave a thin white border so that animals show up well (and so that thin parts are a bit wider and less likely to tear when students glue them.)
- Have extras of all paper parts.
- If concerned about thin tails tearing off as students apply glue stick, have them wait to apply to tails until after the body is glued onto foam block. Then students can hold glue stick under tail, gently press tail into glue and press in place. If any tear off, just realign and press in place.
- Because there are quite a few instructions that the students need to follow, perhaps you'll want to wait until they've finished making the foam blocks to discuss the upper and lower case letters and their relationship to the mama and baby animals and their size relationship to each other. Discussing it all at the same time could be overwhelming.

REFERENCES

My First Book of Lowercase Letters by Kumon
My First Book of Uppercase Letters by Kumon
Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too? by Eric Carle
Baby Animals by Marfe Ferguson Delano (National Geographic Kids)