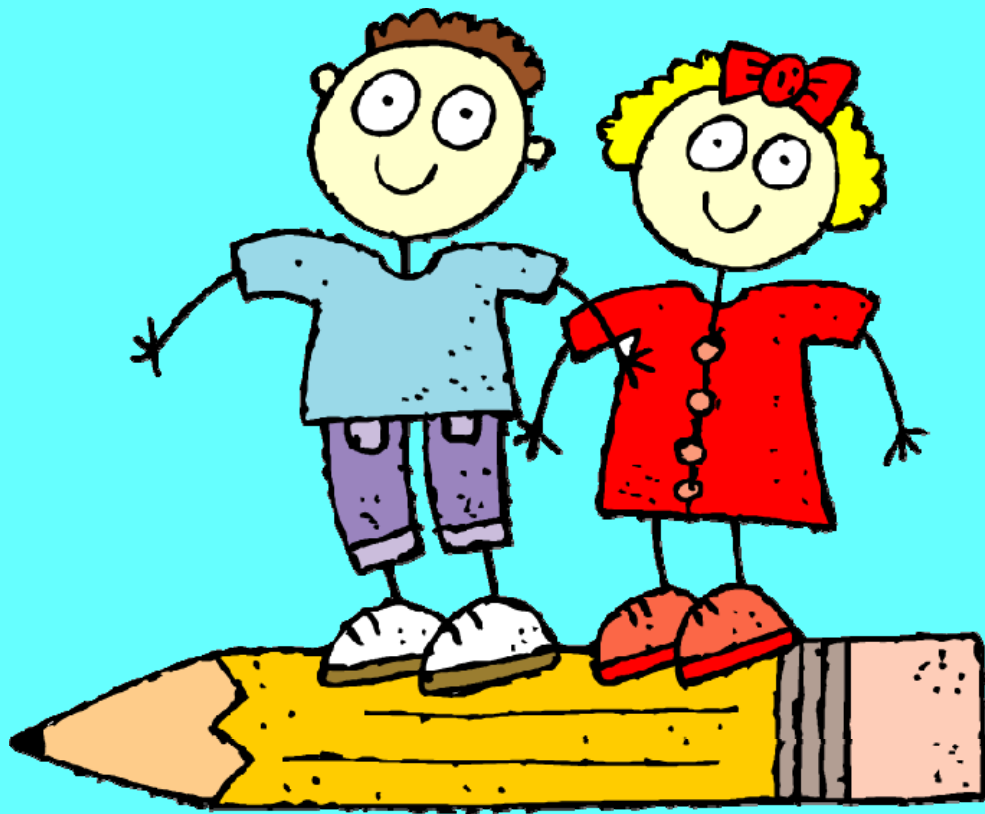


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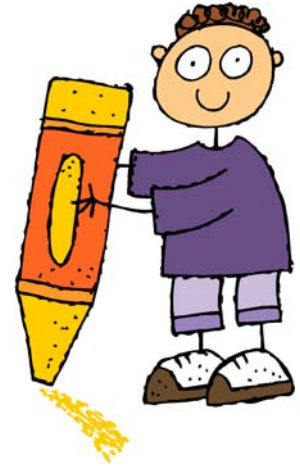


CENTRES



Centre Organization

"I have a chart with a picture of each centre at the top. We do sand and water together, play house and blocks together, the art centre with table and easel, science, computers, reading and listening, writing, table games and manipulatives. There is a number beside the picture that tells how many children are allowed at that centre."



"We have developmental centres every afternoon. Each week there are 5 centres that stay the same. The children choose which one they want to go to daily and can only visit one a day. By Friday all the children have enjoyed all five centres. They are: math (hands on math), art, listening/computer, creative play, and what we call the 'group' centre. I have an aide who works with the other centres and I use this time to work with a group at their level - either enrichment or remedial work. Each centre usually has 4 to 5 children and lasts approximately 45 minutes. They look forward to this each day knowing that they will get to go to each one by the end of the week. I have a chart and they get to put a sticker by their name showing which centre they have chosen each day."

"I have two centre times. What I call 'choice time' is always the children's choice. At 'centre time' I have parent volunteers come in and work a structured centre with a small group of kids such as science, writing, math, etc. This allows me to do reading with each group of children. At choice time the kids know that they will be able to choose activities they would like to do."

"My centres each have tasks for high, medium, and low students. We read *The Three Bears* and talk about finding a job that is 'just right' for them. Not too easy, not too hard, but just right."

"My students work with partners or independently. At the beginning of the year we went over the rules.

1. The just right rule
2. Stay at your assigned centre
3. Ask your partner first if you have a question
4. Clean up your centre

I assigned every centre at first so they could learn the tasks for each. Now they can choose their centre, but only two children are allowed at each. Sometimes I may remove a centre for a time or add a new one. I like centres that run by themselves. A real must is sharing time. We all sit down and share what they accomplished at the centre. Those that were reading or don't have a product, share words with us. They love this part and it reinforces the tasks - they are not allowed to share if they don't stay on task. I do my guided reading groups at this time and don't have an aide so it is a must that they stay on task!"

"If you plan what the other kids are doing while you teach 'Guided Reading' with something that they can do independently and train them by modelling the expectations they will surprise you. My children read with a partner, do word sorts, white boards, magnetic letters, word wall practice, poetry, or finish up other work.

"I introduce centres one at a time. This way each child knows the expectations I have about the purpose of the centre, and I teach them how to use the materials. In the beginning I limit the amount of centre materials. For example, at the writing centre I begin with only paper, pencils and wax crayons. Markers, fancy paper, etc., are added one at a time at a later date. I give the students a few exercises that they all must do first and then they can choose a centre activity. Some days I just do centres if I feel my slow workers are not getting enough choice time."

Learning centres are areas focused on different activities. An area will have one focus, but many activities may be offered at various levels. They can be portable (contained in a tray or box) or stationary.

Learning centres should not be an extra task to be done when other assignments are completed, but should be available to everyone. They give teachers time to work with small groups of students or assess and observe. The students must be trained to work independently and co-operate with one another.

When creating learning centres, teachers need to think about what the objective for each centre will be. Students should be working on things that are meaningful, not just busy work. The teacher needs to model each centre so the children understand the procedures and behaviour.

What centres will you have?

- Are all of them required or are some optional?
- How often will the centres be changed?
- What are the expectations? Are the children allowed to work together? Are they allowed to talk? What happens if they choose not to follow directions?
- How many students will be allowed at each centre?

Explain where each centre is and what occurs at each centre. Take a great deal of time explaining and modelling expectations and rules. Teachers should introduce each activity/new material and make sure that the students understand how to use it before they place it in the centre. Start with just a few centres and gradually increase the number offered.

Teach mini-lessons at the start of the year and as they are needed. Some topics to include are:

- How to use the equipment/materials
- How to share materials
- How to take turns
- How to use the management board
- How to solve a problem
- Where to go for help
- How to put things away
- How to switch to the next centre

"I have four main centers - Reading, Writing, Thinking and Creating - with choices of activities in each. I have four tables which give me four groups of 5 or 6 kids. I rotate table groups through the four centers on Monday through Thursday and leave Friday open for Free Choice. We have about 20 or 25 minutes a day for this. Depending on the week, I might have up to five choices at a center. And if there is something that is a must for everyone to do, I might only have one 'choice'. At first, I start with fewer choices. A lot of the center ideas I use are great because I don't have to change them every week. Also, the centers have to stay the same for a week for everyone to have them." You will likely find that 15 minutes is a good rotation time. Put the students into flexible groups to go to

I have a chart that where my kids go to see what they can do if they finish. The groups have colour names. I place things on the chart that the groups are capable of doing.

I have a little lamp, and when it is turned on, they know that there is to be no talking. Sometimes I play classical music very low in the background to help calm the room, and at the same time have some 'noise' that is pleasant for them. They like to hear it, so it is encouraging for them to keep the tone of the room quiet. I call it 'thinking music'."

"These centers are the staple of my Literacy Centre Time. The students work with partners or independently. At the beginning of the year we went over the rules.

1. The just right rule
2. Stay at your assigned centre
3. Ask your partner first (if you have a question)
4. Clean up your centre.

I assigned every centre at first so they could learn the tasks for each. Now they can choose their centre, but only two maximum at each.

I try to add new centres often.

A real must is sharing time. We all sit down and share our centre. Everyone is invited to share and those that were reading or don't have a product, share words with us. They love this part and it reinforces the tasks - they are not allowed to share if they don't stay on task. I do my guided reading groups at this time and don't have an aide so it is a must that they stay on task!"



"I have a class that struggles with working independently. Their response to anything and everything presented was 'I need help!'. In December I started a routine that seems to have helped. When they are doing co-operative group work - such as centres - I won't come over to help for just one hand raised. They have to talk within the group and decide that no one knows the answer to the question. Then they all raise their hands and I will help. Everything else is the same - I walk around - spot check things, encourage, etc. But I won't stop for one raised hand, I just say 'I can't see one hand, you need to talk to your group.' It really seemed to be a confidence builder when they realized that they could do more of their work on their own with a little help from their friends! There is a big difference in centre time - it is so much calmer and I'm not running around trying to keep everyone going. Until this point, I haven't been able to do small groups during centre time because they were so dependent on me."

Centre Rules

- Do your best
- Read and follow all directions
- Use your inside voice
- Keep all pieces together
- Clean up after each use
- Ask other students before asking an adult

What do the students do while you teach small groups? Having literacy centres is one possible answer. Some teachers find centres difficult to manage. It is difficult to know what each student has accomplished at a centre and without supervision some students will not produce work of value. Centres can be noisy at a time when you need quiet to teach a group lesson. That being said, the teachers who model and practice the expectations at each centre before letting the children use it can find centres valuable.

the centres.

I use these three rules:

Use a whisper voice. Co-operate with others at your centre. Do your job at the centre.

In each centre there are specific tasks to do. The children must know exactly what is expected and the sequence of the tasks. Model your expectations.

Keeping Track of Work

There are many methods of keeping track of student work. Students can sign in and out of centres that they have visited. Students may turn in work in a number of ways. Some examples are a storage tray in the room where students turn in all of their completed work (may have sub-folders/baskets), collect products at each station, and giving each child a folder in which to keep all of their centre work.

Assessment

Teachers may assess their students' learning by observing both process and product. Some children will become careless if there is little checking. Computer games often provide scores, mark written work, have self-checking procedures, observations, etc. Discuss the product with the children frequently.

Group Time

When centres are done for the day, teachers may want to have the class join together as a group to discuss centres. This allows students to reflect about the day and what they have learned. Some questions to focus on include:

- What did I do at centres today?
- What did I have fun doing at centres today?
- What didn't I like about centres today?
- What did I do to help myself become a better reader today?
- What did I do to help myself become a better writer today?
- What do I think we should change about centres?
- How did I solve a problem at centres today?
- How did I help someone else solve a problem at centres today?



Student Directed Centres

Students may have a chart for each week. Some centres must be completed and some are the student's choice. Students work on their own time and are not required to move to the next centre if they need a bit more time. It is important to consider how many students can be at each centre without it becoming too crowded. After they have completed each centre, they colour or mark in the corresponding box on their chart. Teachers may require the students complete a certain number of centres each day. After students have completed the mandatory centres they may work at choice centres.

Teacher Directed

Teachers divide the class into small groups of students. The teacher may decide to group students with similar levels or with varying levels. Teachers usually provide a management board with the names of students and what they are to do each day with their group.

Teachers many use many different types of management boards. Boards can have hooks to hang names, velcro spots or magnetic placements. You can also use pocket charts and rotation wheels. Students must know where they are supposed to be, when they should be there, and what they should do while they are there.

Storage

If you have enough space you can keep centres at their designated areas. Keeping permanent centre areas saves time, but it does take up a lot of space. A centre can also be simply a labelled tray or box that the children take to specified desks or a table.

Designing and making materials takes up a great deal of time. Try to make the materials work with many different activities and centres. Game boards can be used in multiple centres. Volunteers and students can help make the materials as well. A benefit of making your own is that you can customize them to fit your needs - but making these can be very time consuming. Teacher stores now have game boards and many centre activities. These are expensive, but save time and effort.

Kindergarten Literacy Centres

1. Puzzles - alphabet puzzles and word puzzles.
2. Alpha -bears - I found these at a teacher store - upper and lower case alphabets on flat little bears. It contains task cards and students at all levels can find an appropriate task.
3. Alphabet stamps - upper and lower case - 1 inch grid paper for sequencing. Word families to copy. Student names to copy. Strips of paper to stamp words and sentences.
4. Magnetic letters and magnetic boards. I make a name card for each student with name and picture and add a magnetic strip to the back. Word cards and name cards are always available - also alphabet strips are placed in all centers.
5. Magnetic Linking Letters - with task cards and cookie sheet boards.
6. Writing Center - all kinds of old stationary and writing tools - a stapler is a must.
7. Read the Room - 'Reading Glasses' and dowels made to look like pencils. These students can read the room (everything is labelled), read our reading wall (familiar stories are pocket charted and sentence strips can be manipulated), big books are available for single or partner reading.
8. Write the Room - writing instruments and clipboards for walking around room and using environmental print.
9. Puppet Theater - stick puppets and copies of known books.



10. Shopping - laminated on sentence strips and bound into books - pictures of food, toys, clothing, etc. All pictures are clearly labelled. Writing utensils and list paper - small memo books, list type of paper (long strips of lined paper). This is one of my most popular centres.

11. The matching game- a sentence strip has a word and a picture of what that word represents, rubber alphabet letters, real objects to match words. Students can match letters, words, pictures, or all three.

12. Library - library centre is open for reading. Books are put into tubs. The tubs are labeled and a sticker is placed on the label. All of the books have a corresponding sticker. They place the book back in the correct tub.

13. Listening Centre - books and tapes - If I don't have a tape for a big book or familiar book I make one."

More Kindergarten Literacy Centres

There are many ways of using centres in the Kindergarten classroom. Some teachers allow the students to choose where they want to go and others have the students rotate through the centres so everyone gets a turn on each. All agree that the children must stay at the one centre for a certain length of time and must produce some 'work' at that centre.

Centres need to be taught. Add them gradually, teaching the proper procedures at each - the expected behaviour, the use of the materials, the expected outcomes, etc. Then, each student must clean up and put back all the materials at the centre when the time is up, and this needs specific training.

Word Centre

Alphabet magnet or felt letters or letter tiles - build names, sight words from cards or the word wall.

Alphabet Centre

Have alphabet books in the centre and the students put tile or magnetic letters in alphabetical order - they can use the books if they want to or if they do not know the sequence.

Nursery Rhyme Centre

Have a pocket chart with the nursery rhyme and envelopes with the poem cut into the words. Put the words in the correct order. Have books of nursery rhymes in the centre.

Sound Match

Match the letters with a picture. Use a set of cards that have the letter on the back of the picture so the children can self-correct. There are beginning sound match cards you can purchase.

Puzzle Centre

Have wooden puzzles with the alphabet to put together. Other puzzles can be in the centre - words or names can be cut apart into puzzle shapes.



Overhead Centre

Practice printing letters on transparencies - after the correct formation has been taught.

Poem Centre

After teaching a poem, cut a copy apart into lines, phrases or words - depending on the level of the students. Put the poem back together in a pocket chart. Have a copy of the poem so it can be checked. Have large copies of all the poems taught so far and pointers and the students can read the poems to each other as if they are a teacher.



Read the Room

Have a box of interesting dollar store magic items - funny glasses, magic wands, masks, finger puppets, binoculars, magnifying glasses, etc., to help them read the words.

Write the Room

Provide clip boards, paper and attached pencils. The children go around the room and write any words that they are able to read. Fancy pencils or glitter pens make this more interesting!

Playdough

Provide playdough or plasticine. Have a rolling pin and alphabet cookie cutters. Words that are being taught can be on cards for the students to make.

They could also form words by making small rolls with the hands and then making letters with these.

Big Book Centre

After you have taught big books, leave them in a centre with a pointer for the students to read.

Real Reading Centre

After you have taught simple books and the students can read them or have memorized them, put them in a real reading centre. A few comfy cushions and a cozy corner make this a popular centre.

Letter Match

Match upper and lower case letters. Alphabet books can be in this centre, too.

Computer Centre

Have suitable educational software that is simple to use.

The Reading Centre

The children can read emergent readers, teacher-made books and class-made books.

Story Telling Centre

After a fairy tale or other familiar story is told in class, provide flannel characters and story items for re-telling. Creative story telling can be done with a variety of characters. A puppet theatre can also be used for creative story telling.

Rhyme Matching

Have pictures of rhyming words that are to be matched - cat/bat, wig/pig, etc.

Making Words

Make words with tiles, stamps, letters cut from newspapers or magazines, beads, etc. Words can be copied from sight word cards or words from poems, etc.

Making Alphabet Books

Have letter and picture stamps and little books made up.

Making Sentences

Have word cards and the students can glue them to make a sentence.

The Writing Centre

Provide interesting writing tools and paper and let the students write letters, words and sentences if they can.

Library Centre

Here the students are free to explore books that are above their reading level but interest them. The books can be fiction or non-fiction. If you are doing a theme this is the place where the associated books can be found and explored.

Sequencing

Have sets of 4 pictures of activities or happenings that are in sequence. The student must put the pictures in order and then tell the story to another child.

Blending

This is a good exercise for later in the year. Have cards with a short vowel that the students put in the middle, and then consonant cards that they pick out of a box to put in front and after the vowel. See if they can make any sensible words!



Centres for Grade One and Two

Alphabet Centres

Alphabet Cards (I cut the pictures apart from my ABC strip, posted the strip below my chalkboard, and attached Velcro to the wall and the pictures, so that they can be removed, mixed up, and matched to the right letter.)

Puzzles - alphabet puzzles and word puzzles.

Chicka-chicka-boom-boom: draw or paint a coconut tree on a cookie sheet (make sure the sheet will hold magnetic letters - some will not). Add magnetic letters and a copy of the book Chicka-chicka-boom-boom.

Picture-letter-word: This is very good for the beginning of the school year or for students who have had very little literacy experience. Divide a piece of poster board into 3 parts. Label the 1st one Picture and glue a picture from a magazine in that section, the next is labeled Letter, and the last Word. You can use pictures from magazines and newspapers, letters generated by computer, and pictures from your clip art gallery. The low level students will sort, the medium level will say the letters and the high children will read the words.

ABC Centre - Have cookie sheets and magnetic letters (lower case). The children can make their names, word wall words and other words that they can spell. This can be changed to alphabet stamps and stamp pads with paper.

Feeling Letters - For the tactile learners; use salt, sand, playdough, pudding in baggies, clay, flannel, sandpaper, carpet scraps.

Alphabuilders: Straight, curved, and half circle parts are used to make letters.

Letter Sort - sort alphabet tiles on a two part graph - letters in my name/not in my name, curves, straight, tails/ no tails, etc.

Alphabet Sorting: Put the letters in the correct alphabet order.

Matching: Match initial consonants and pictures.

- Put letters in ABC order
- Sort letters with different fonts
- Match capital and lower case letters
- Students sort objects into ABC order. Example: book, crayon, dictionary, pencil.

Make an ABC book on a certain subject.



Finger Paint Bags: put a dab of finger paint in a freezer bag and students write letters with their fingers on the bag's surface.

ABC Path Game: game board with different letters, students pick up a card and go to that letter.

Letter Sort: This center needs alphabet tiles and a two column graph printed on construction paper and laminated. Mark the graph with simple choices: for example, on one side print 'in my name', and on the other side print 'not in my name'. Then students take a handful of letters and sort.

Word Centres

Magnetic linking letters - with task cards and cookie sheets.

Match: synonyms or antonyms Match compound words, abbreviations, contractions, homophones



Find Words - Locate and copy words with a certain characteristic from a story (example: contraction, end in -ing).

Illustrate compound words. Write the word and then draw 2 illustrations (one for each part of the word).

Digging in the Dictionary: word, page #, guide words, definition, sentence (simple dictionary)

Alphabet stamps - upper and lower case - put out a 1 inch grid paper for sequencing, there are word families to copy, students' names to copy and strips of paper to stamp words and sentences.

Putting it back together - Cut a familiar poem into separate words and provide an original copy. The children put the words in the correct order.

Word Study: There can be word/alphabet books, newspaper word making (cut out letters to make words from word wall), stamping word wall or spelling words, using word cards and sorting them by number of letters or vowel sound, flashcards of cvc words, flip cards that practice onset and rime to make words, word wheels, old worksheets, etc.

I'm Mixed Up - Take mixed up sentences from familiar stories and write them on sentence strips. Students put the sentences back into the correct order.

Read vocabulary cards with a partner.

BANG! - Cover an empty Pringles Can with plain paper (it's the perfect size for small hands to reach into without peeking). Fill it with small cards that are labelled with sight words. Also add 4-5 extra cards that are labelled 'BANG!' The students take turns drawing a card. If they can read the word they keep it. If they draw a Bang! card they must return all of their previous cards to the can, but keep out the Bang card. Eventually all cards get drawn and the one with the most words is the winner.

Overhead centre - Have a small container of letters and the children write as many words they can make. There is also a mystery word that uses all of the letters.

Some sorting choices: letters that have curves and letters that are all straight, letters that have tails and letters that do not, capital and lower case, etc.

Name Game: this center has several activities using student names. Make labels with the students names. I add a small picture copied from class photos.

Activity 1: draw two large circles on construction paper (laminated). Label them Girls -Boys. Mine have faces that look like a boy or girl. Children look at names and sort for girls and boys.

Activity 2: Syllables: Laminate a piece of poster board that has been divided into sections (approx. 4 or 5). In each section lace a picture of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 clapping hands. Students say and clap the syllables in the name and sort according to claps.

e.g. Mi-chael is a two clap name and goes into the 2 box.

Activity 3 - on a piece of poster board draw 26 squares and label with letters of the alphabet. I labeled each rectangle with stickers and a variety of fonts. Students sort the names according to first letter.

Activity 4 - sorting names by number of letters: on poster board make a grid of rectangles. In the 1st write 1, the next 2 etc. (I have some very long names -12 letters so my grids went from 3 to 12.) Students then take the name labels and count the number of letters in the word and place in correct rectangle.

Word Shake - Use an empty egg carton and write blends, endings, etc., in each compartment. Place a bean, counter or penny in the carton. The students shake the carton, open it and see where the bean has landed. Then they list all of the words that they can using the blend, ending, etc. This can be used for tons of other games. The kids love it and it costs nothing!

Word Sorts - You can classify long or short vowels, initial consonants, prefixes, or nouns and verbs, from a collection of words or pictures. The possibilities are endless.

And More!

- Laminate word searches that may be written on with a water soluble marker.
- Use reading workbooks to work on skills or use to make folder games.
- Illustrate words such as cat, dog, bus.
- Alphabet books. Groups make alphabet books by making a page per letter and drawing or clipping pictures and pasting to a page.
- See and do activities.
- Sight word games.
- Sight word bingo
- Use stamps to make words.
- Cloze sentences using the overhead.
- Use play dough to make sight words or other words.
- Put picture cards and letters to make the word in a ziplock bag - then students unscramble.



A Flash Card Centre - Make packs of words that the children have been taught in sight reading or in phonics. Make sure that one child in the group is able to check to make sure the answers are correct.

Felt board: I have stories and letters for the children to use and explore. Alphabet sequencing, creating words and names, sorting letters, sequencing stories, retelling stories etc. Give them the materials and they will find a purpose.

Pocket chart activities: I have picture/word cards with rhyming words. They love to sort for the rhyme. Some will sort by picture and others will read the words.

Write letters/words using sandpaper

Organize the words on the word wall (take them down and then put them back where they belong)

Missing Letter: Write words using a variety of materials and take one letter out. Have a friend figure out what letter is missing.

"One of my favourite Grade One centres is a simple matching game. I have the digital pictures of the students, print them onto tag and laminate them, and I have a name card for every student. They match the pictures to the name cards. It's a favourite - they still pull it out at the end of the year, but then they see how quickly they can do it."

Reading Centres

Big Books - big books can be read individually or with a partner. Students choose big book stories to read - ones you have previously taught. Have them build the story using sentence strips or words. The children read familiar big books together. They can use a pointer and ask one another questions as a teacher would.

Reading Centre - The children will have books at their reading level in a tub. They know what tub is suitable for their reading level. This corner is set up for comfort and the children like to sit on big pillows or in the rocking chair. The children may read silently by themselves or with a buddy, providing they are on task." Have books that you have previously read in Guided Reading, class-made books and books on the current theme or the author you are studying.

Partner Reading: Students choose a book at their reading level to read with a partner.

Reading the Room: Students may choose pointers, magic wands, fancy glasses, flashlights, etc., and read the walls of the classroom. They may read the calendar, poems, word wall, charts and other print that may be in the classroom.

Theme Library: As you do each new theme, season, science unit, have a bookshelf in the room that is full of related books.

Tape-a-Story: Students can tape themselves reading.

Magazine Centre: Students choose magazines to look through and read.

Pocket Chart: Students may use letter cards, word cards, and sentence. Build poems and stories.



Reading Games (Instant Word Bingo or Tic Tac Toe, phonics board games, etc.)

Poetry Centre: book of previously taught poems to read, cut and paste this week's poem into poetry notebook, big book of rhymes, copies of nursery rhymes, print a poem, finding rhyming words, etc.

Puppet Theatre - stick puppets and copies of known books. Have a collection of puppets and a small theater. In the beginning it tends to be strictly play, later they are responsible for writing scripts, etc...

Read books and magazines to a stuffed animal.

Poem Centre - After poems have been taught in guided reading, cut them apart and have the children reassemble them in a pocket chart. This can also be done by cutting apart a page with the poem and cutting and pasting it back in the correct order. Depending on the levels, this can be done by line or word.

Read the Room - We read the room with beginning/ending sounds, find words that begin or end with certain sounds, blends, digraphs, vowels, compound words, plural words, silent e words. You can relate this to any skill that you are teaching. They can count how many times they find a new vocabulary word (s) in the room, or find verbs, nouns, things you wear, things you play with, things you eat, transportation, names, etc.

Reader's Theatre - students were assigned parts of simple plays. This works best if a parent or aide is available, but can work well as long as you model your expectations and help the students choose parts. At first my students would bicker about which parts they wanted. I solved this by writing a character on a bookmark and placing it in each book. They randomly selected books and whichever character name was on the bookmark was the one they played.

Partner Reading - this centre is always after the guided reading meeting. Students work together on guided reading strategies or word work assignment (from our guided reading lesson) then they partner-read familiar material such as shared reading poetry; former guided reading books; etc. Remember this may take a lot of modeling to be done well.

Tape-A-Story - I have blank tapes so the child can tape themselves reading.

Puppet Centre -

Buddy or paired reading - Find a quiet place in the room to read with a partner. **Pocket Chart** - You can place a variety of activities here. Try recreating a poem from cut up sentence strips. Don't forget this is a great place to practice close sentences. (The ___ can run fast.)



Writing Centres

Write the Room - The children take a clipboard and pen or pencil and go around the classroom printing words that they see.

Book Making Centre - This is a favourite! A large collection of materials are needed, paper, pencils, felt pens, stapler,... to create student made books.

Write a new ending to a story.

Make a story map

Writing Station - children respond to stories as assigned or write their own stories or reports.

Writers' Workshop Folder - (work on something in progress)

Write in your journal.

Typewriter - (I have an old manual typewriter - they love it!)

Stamp a story.

Write a Letter - (We have mailboxes that we use often.)

Illustrate a poem and add a final stanza.

Write a Book about... - (I add post-it tape with a topic from the current theme.)

Morning Message - (Students write a morning message on the easel board similar to the ones we do daily.)

Story Cards - (Starters based on the current theme in a basket on the writing shelf.)

Spin a Story - (Similar to story starters, but you actually spin for the character, setting and action and add details.)

After a story has been read students may complete a journal entry using 'What I Read / What I Think of What I Read'.

Build a sentence: kids choose sentence parts out of a bag and put them together to make a silly sentence which is copied onto a sentence strip and illustrated.

Students may correct sentences by adding editing marks later in the year.

Computer generated stories.



Make an alphabet book and illustrate.

Writing Centre - It can begin with markers, crayons, and white paper. You can update it weekly by adding new materials. There are lots of writing materials, such as: thank you cards, blank books, individual chalkboards, crayons/markers/dry erase, lined paper, stamps, word family word lists, pictures to inspire writing, etc.

Sense Writing - Make a poster with See? Hear? Smell? Taste? and Feel? written on it. Write places on sentence strips. The students will pull a place card and answer in complete sentences each of the sense questions. Example for a place: zoo, beach, grocery store, etc.

Write a Book: Have book forms with lines and spaces for pictures.

Word Processing: Use the computer to write a story.

Post Office: Students write letters to their friends and family and put in a mailbox.

Magnet Board (I got Magnet Poetry for kids and organized them into alphabetical sections on a file cabinet.



Listening Centres

Listen to directions on a tape to complete a skill sheet or complete another task (draw a monster with one head, two ears. . .)

Listen to a story (without a book to see) and illustrate one scene or the beginning, middle, ending scene.

Listen and recall a sequences of letters, numbers, or words.

Listen to the beginning of a story only. Finish the story with your own words or pictures.

Listen to a story and follow along with your book.

I have two books on tape (or CD), spelling lists on tape to take a practice test, and a phonemic awareness activity.

I have stories on tape. The children are taught to use the tape recorder and to follow the tape in books that accompany the tapes. If time permits, the children can illustrate the story. I invested in five individual headsets so each student listened to his/her own book. It wasn't expensive and decreased management issues.

Listening Reports - students chose and filled out a book report form on the story to which they listened at the listening station. This way I knew they were actually listening to the story.

Read-Along Centre. Place a collection of books and tapes for them to read along with. Try using a listening log. The student writes an entry in his personal log or a class log. He/she enters date, book and a short review.

"I include letter writing in my writing centre. I teach students the friendly letter format; any letters going out of the room must be proofed by me. I have lots of coloured envelopes and I bought a mailbox at Home Depot. I also have spelling stations. These are various activities to allow the students to practice their assigned words. These include using magic slates to write their words, small chalkboards, small dry erase boards, painting their words, typing them on the computer, letter stencils, making word searches and then trading papers with someone. I also bought folders and attached them to the side of each student's desk with Velcro. They keep their guided reading books in there to practice when they have extra time. This is in addition to the paired reading they do. I recently bought *Word Matters*, by Pinnell and Fountas, for more ideas."

Write the Walls - This is very much like reading the walls but this time you have more structure. The teacher assigns things to look for; words that have a certain vowel, endings, initial consonants, verbs, nouns... The students have a clipboard and paper to write down their discoveries.

Spelling Centres

Magnetic letters/words and magnetic boards: Students manipulate letters to spell names, words, or sentences.

Name/Word sort: sort into boys names/ girls names, by number of syllables, by beginning letter, by number of letters, by number of vowels, etc.



Rainbow Writing/Spelling: Students write words/letters in words in different colours.

Post the week's word wall words on a half sheet of chart paper, and the students write them 3 times each with coloured markers or coloured pencils."

Magazine/Newspaper Search: Students search for particular letters or words in magazines or newspapers. Cut and glue the letters/words on another piece of paper.

Word Families:: Students use fold-overs to create new words in the same family.

Building Words: Put out the letter tiles of the letters the students have learned and they build words using phonics. Then print the words on a sheet of paper.

"One literacy center that I have used all year, and just love, is this one: I created a spelling counter, in which the student walks along a counter and learns how to spell and use a word in a sentence. I post the new spelling word for the day; then they take the written letters I have made on poster board and recreate the word in a pocket chart; then they move to the magnetic letters and they have to make it again; then they write it on a white board; next they stamp out the word; and lastly they have to use the word in a sentence."

Spelling/Making Words Activities - Write spelling words using letter stamps, shaving cream, magnetic letters, stencils, gel pens on black paper, "magic erase" boards, pasta, cereal, clay/play dough, water (example- Q-tip on a chalkboard), a typewriter, glow in the dark materials, water-colours, by finding the words in a magazine or newspaper, cutting and gluing them, pipe cleaners, toothpicks, Wikki Stix

Sort words (number of letters, number of syllables, initial sound, ending sound, vowel pattern, part of speech)

Illustrate words

Do a word hunt (hunt for particular words, word families or words by number of letters, number of syllables, initial sound, ending sound, vowel pattern, part of speech)

Salt/Sand Box Spelling: Pour some salt into a box top. Student write the words with their fingers in the salt.

And lots more!

- Make word searches with the spelling words.
- Write a short story using the spelling words.
- Rainbow words: Trace spelling words over and over using different colours.
- Have students roll a die and then they have to write their word that many times
- Find the value of your spelling word (A=1, B=2, C=3, etc.)
- Complete a teacher created crossword puzzle or word find
- Disappearing words: Example: happy, happ_, hap_, ha_, h_ _ _ _
- Reappearing words: Example- _ _ _ _ _ , k _ _ _ _ , ki _ _ _ , kit _ _ , kitt_, kitte_, kitten
- Coloured vowels and consonants: write the words with the vowels having one colour and the consonants another.
- Word Shapes: Outline your words using graph paper (hanging letters, middle letters, tall letters).
- Find high frequency words in the newspaper and highlight.
- Make a flip chart to make words: Example- ill with b, d, h, j, k, m, p, s, t, w to flip to make new words.
- Cut up sentences and put them back together. Each sentence has its own envelope.
- Supply endings to words. Students have to give the first letter or letters. Examples: _ump, _ _ing, _at
- Egg Carton Spelling: Write spelling words in an empty egg carton (one in each egg hole). Put a small object such as a bean in it. Students take turns shaking the closed container, opening it, and having the other student spell the word.
- Magnetic words - supply a metal tray and letters with magnetic tape on the back. You can also have family endings - _at, for example, and the children use the magnetic letters to change the words.



Printing Centres

In the 'olden' days the children learned to print well early in the grade one year, and then did reading exercises copied from the chalkboard. You likely did these when you were a child! Now these are out of fashion, and in some ways this is a pity. Children in most classes do not get enough printing practice and therefore their printing does not become automatic. Like reading, printing takes a lot of practice to become fluent. Then we expect them to do creative writing, and the physical chore of printing when they are not fluent too often holds the children back from being creative and printing more than a small amount. Children need to be taught to print neatly and with the correct spacing.

The printing exercise needs to have a purpose - a cloze exercise, matching, correcting capital letters and punctuation in sentences, etc. Use words that are in the reading for that day so the children are reviewing the vocabulary at the same time. The children can read their printed work to a partner when it is completed.

This is a quiet useful activity for the children to be doing while you teach one or more groups.

Handwriting Centre - Great place to practice handwriting previously taught. Try using laminated sheets, fancy paper and pens...

Other Centres

Social Studies/Science Centre: maps, magnets, plants, non-fiction books on our current topics, sequencing life cycle pictures, magnifying glass, science collections, etc.

Personal Information

- You can provide laminated tag with the headings:

Name
Age
Phone Number
Address
City, Province
Postal Code



Have a file with a copy of the information for each child so they can check their answers.

Computer Centre: I pick an educational game each day for this centre, or have the children do some writing on the simple word-processing program.

Computer: I have Reader Rabbit, Dr. Seuss, and a couple of more literacy activities to explore on the computer.

Choose computer programs that are easy to use and teach simple skills in an interesting way. Depending on whether your kids used computers in Kindergarten - they may need practice using the mouse. Interactive books on disc such as "Grandma and Me" (an oldie but goodie) will improve mouse skills and teach computer use. Use headsets so others will not be disturbed.

Computers - Set up something for them to do; a search, webquest, research if you are on-line, or a math or reading game.

Keyboarding: Learn where the letters are on the keyboard and practice typing. Practice typing names and words.



Audio-Visual Centres:

Listening Centre: Students choose books and matching tapes to listen to stories using a tape recorder and headphones. Listen to directions given on a tape to complete a worksheet after listening to a story.

Computer Centre: Students work on the computer with games that teach phonics, spelling or reading.

Overhead: Students use clear lettered tiles, water-based pens, and other materials to practice stories, letters, names and words on the overhead projector.

Math Centres

Patterns/ Sorting - Have boxes of foam shapes, sea shells, buttons, etc. Students make patterns or sort them.

Counting - Write numbers on stickers and glue into the bottom of egg cartons. Place a bag with small objects with the carton. Students can read number and count that many objects into egg cups.

Playdough - Make numbers from playdough.

Pocket chart - have number cards for students to sequence in the pocket chart.

Macaroni patterns - strips of paper, glue, coloured macaroni. Students create patterns. To make this more difficult - have student create half the pattern and then exchange with partner.

Number Writing - Wipe off number cards for number writing practice with dry erase pens, individual chalk boards, number cards or strips, paper, etc.

Magnetic numbers - sequencing on magnetic board.

Number books - have students complete each page with the number of objects designated for the week.

Other Centres

Art Area - The centre has many different paper, crayons, scissors, glue, etc. Use a variety of materials to illustrate stories that have been read.

Painting - The easel can be set up for painting. Model painting procedures.

Sand Table - This could be water, rice, beans, packing peanuts or soil during the course of the year.

Block Area - The blocks can be changed to different ones throughout the year.

Role Playing - This can change depending on interest: housekeeping, fire station, pumpkin patch, store, etc.

A Make-It Centre - Lego, plasticene, magnets, or a 'take-it-apart' centre.

Other Centres:

Science Observation: Students examine objects or displays and then draw and record what they see.

Fine Motor Centre: Have activities to improve fine motor skills: colouring books, dot to dot, write on chalkboard, nuts and bolts, use stencils or trace simple pictures, use Lite-Brite, lacing or stringing beads.