

# Flashcards Montessori Tactile and Phonics Alphabet



*The activities suggested below are inspired by the Maria Montessori method, promoting learning the alphabet using the senses. Through pictures and letters (sight), sounds pronounced aloud (hearing), frosted ink letters (touch) and a reinterpretation of the "three-period lesson", children develop phonemic consciousness and hone their ability to combine sounds and letters, which are key to learning to read and write.*

## The initial word sounds

Begin with the flashcards of words starting with the red vowels (short vowel sounds). Show the image side to the children and say the name of the object out loud: "apple; egg; insect; octopus; umbrella". Stress and prolong the first letter, pronouncing the words like this: "aaaapple, eeeegg" and so on. After saying each word, ask the children to repeat it, to make them aware of the sound and its position in the mouth. Repeat the names of the objects several times and invite the children to do the same. Afterwards ask the children: "Show me the picture that begins with (the sound of) "a". If the activity was effective, they'll choose the right card on the first try. Then Continue with the other letters asking: "Can you pass me the picture that begins with (the sound of) "e"?" and so on. Please note that the vowels are divided into two groups of two different colors, the red group teaches the short vowel sounds whereas the blue group teaches the long vowel sounds. Repeat the same game with the words starting with consonants (green) followed by those with secondary initial sounds (pink), digraphs (purple) and blended sounds (orange).



apple



egg



insect



octopus



umbrella



ape



eagle



island



orange

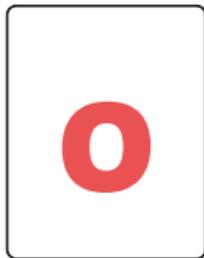


unicorn

Be careful never to pronounce the letters by their names (a - /eɪ/, b - /bi:/, c - /si:/ and so on) but to always use only the corresponding sound. Studies on the subject highly recommend separating the name of the letter from its sound to avoid later reading problems.

## Sounds and letters

On the other side of the cards you will have noticed (the children too) that the letter of the alphabet corresponding to the highlighted sound is sand-papered. Pick up one of the cards that you have already explored with your child/ren, show the side with the picture and say: "Do you remember that in "apple" you hear the sound /æ/? Do you want to see how you spell it? Here you go". You will then turn the card and show it to them, pronouncing the sound and tracing the letter with your finger. You will then encourage them to do the same.



Continue the same game with the other letters of the red and blue sets and, gradually, with the consonant group (green), the secondary sounds like city /'s/, giraffe /dʒ/, and xylophone /'zaɪ/ (pink), digraphs sh, ch, th, wh (purple) and blended letters sn and fr (orange).

b	c	d	f	g	h
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j	k	l	m	n	p
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q	r	s	t	v	w
---	---	---	---	---	---

x	y	z	x	g	c
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sh	ch	th	wh
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sn	fr
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The process is similar for the more challenging sounds. Pronounce the sounds while showing the corresponding letter combinations (sh, ch, th, wh, sn, fr), prolonging the initial sounds like for the other letters. The presentation of these spelling peculiarities have been highly recommended by recent studies; which suggest showing these combined letters to children as a single graphic unit.

### **Let's start reading!**

After having explored the letters together, we can consolidate the learning process by showing the picture side of the cards to the children again. This time have them try to read the words under the images starting from the highlighted letter or letter combination. This global pre-reading exercise comes natural in is a core component of the preschool curriculum and the exercise is conceived in a way that children move from the highlighted letters to the ones following, gradually decoding all the letters forming the word. This process gradually leads to the automatic reading of syllables and letter clusters, activities which will be fully addressed in the first year of primary school.

**Keep on playing with sounds and letters  
with the connected multimedia app. You can download it  
from our website [www.headu.com](http://www.headu.com)**