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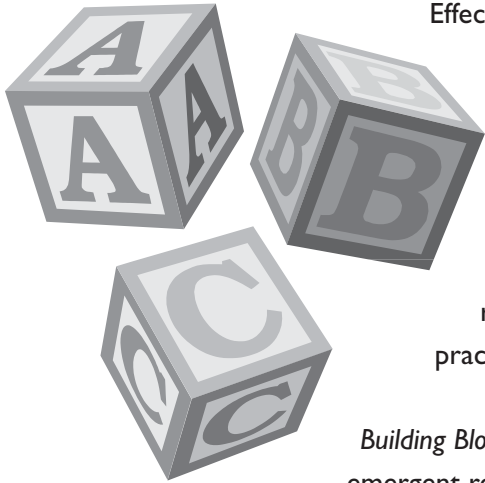
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# Introduction



Effective early childhood educators teach a set of prerequisites for literacy that address how print is organized and presented in books and other printed material. Children who are instructed in these principles, known as concepts of print, are adequately prepared to begin reading in kindergarten or first grade. These concepts are generally taken for granted by an experienced reader, but must be explicitly and repeatedly taught to and practiced by an emergent reader.

*Building Blocks for Beginning Readers* highlights twelve essential skills emergent readers must master before they can fully participate in a formal reading program. This resource explains each concept and provides tips and fun activities for reinforcing each one.

The initial lessons help children reflect on where they find printed language in their world and how it conveys meaning. Children will also examine how a book is organized and how it is successfully navigated from cover to cover.

The subsequent activities encourage children to actively inspect print. Children will differentiate between uppercase and lowercase letters, examine how letters make words, explore how words make sentences, and identify that a sentence begins with an uppercase letter and ends with punctuation. Children will also learn one-to-one correspondence, left-to-right and top-to-bottom orientation as they practice tracking print. Tips for evaluating children's progress and an assessment tool that incorporates the twelve concepts of print are also included in this resource.

Each section of this book features lessons that show you how to introduce, practice, and reinforce all twelve concepts with children. Each lesson includes a bulleted or bolded list of materials and concise directions for easily incorporating these activities into your regular literacy program.

*Building Blocks for Beginning Readers* offers teachers and parents simple yet interesting activities that will help the youngest learner acquire the twelve prerequisites for literacy development. It is never too early to begin teaching children the mechanics and concepts that will guide them as print becomes increasingly more important in their lives.

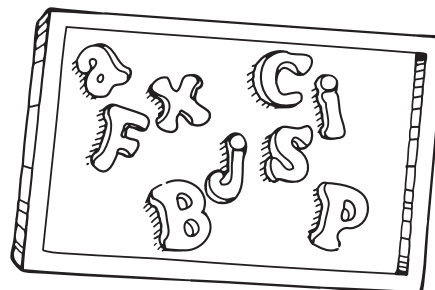
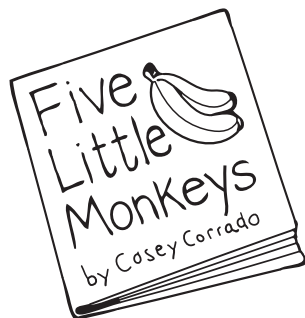


# Concepts of Print

In order to become a fluent reader, a child must demonstrate mastery of the following concepts:

- 1 The reader **recognizes print** in his or her environment.
- 2 The reader can explain the **purposes of print**.
- 3 The reader recognizes the front and back **covers** of a book.
- 4 The reader can identify and define the roles of the book's **author and illustrator**.
- 5 The reader understands that **print conveys meaning**.
- 6 The reader differentiates between **uppercase and lowercase letters**.
- 7 The reader understands that **words are composed of individual letters**.
- 8 The reader recognizes individual **words**.
- 9 The reader **differentiates between first and last**.
- 10 The reader correlates the number of spoken words with the number of printed words on a page, known as **one-to-one correspondence**.
- 11 The reader understands **directionality**, which includes identifying where to begin reading, tracking text from left to right, turning pages from left to right, and “sweeping” from one line of text to the next.
- 12 The reader understands that **a sentence begins with an uppercase letter and ends with punctuation**.

These concepts must be explicitly taught through teacher modeling, and children must have repeated opportunities to practice these skills. Use ongoing assessments to track how children are mastering these skills (see pages 47–48).



# Dear Family,

This is an exciting year for your young learner. He or she will be exploring the skills needed to become a successful reader. Consistent practice at school and at home with the following activities will help your child understand how to become actively involved with printed language:

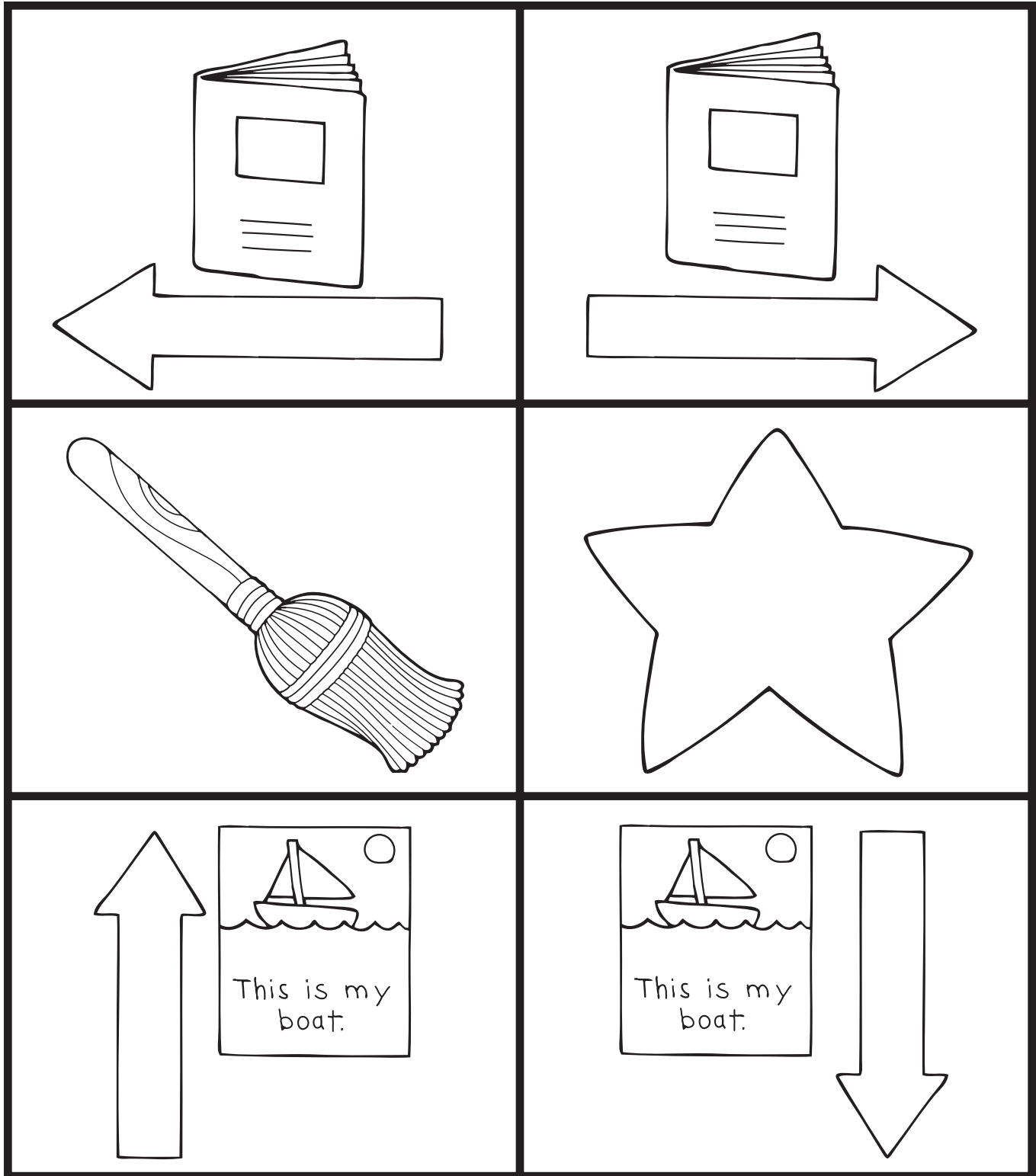
- 1 **Focus on print** in your environment. Children see print on their toys, clothing, and food packages. Discuss characteristics of the print you discover together.
- 2 Discuss with your child why we use printed language. Try involving your child in writing a grocery list or a letter to a friend, pointing out the words *In* and *Out* on the doors to the grocery store, or asking your child to show you the *Exit* sign at his or her favorite restaurant. Highlight for your child other ways you use **printed language in your life**.
- 3 When you read with your child, emphasize that a book has a **front cover and a back cover**.
- 4 Always read the complete title of a book. Also read the names of the **author and illustrator**, and discuss their roles in preparing the book you are about to read.
- 5 Remind children that the words they see in **print mean something**. For example, explain that words might tell a story or record information.
- 6 Have your child practice differentiating between **lowercase and uppercase letters**.
- 7 Review with your child that **words are made up of individual letters**.
- 8 Help your child identify **words he or she commonly sees in print**, such as *the* and *we*.
- 9 Help your child focus on the **beginning sounds and letters of words**. For example, when you read a book about bears, ask your child to name the first letter of *bear*. When *bear* appears in the text, ask your child to point to the word on the page that begins with *b*.
- 10 When sharing a book with your child, **point to each word you read**. This helps your child understand that each word you say corresponds to one word on the page.
- 11 Emphasize for your child that when we read, we turn pages from **left to right**. As you use your finger to point to the words you are reading, remind your child that you are reading from left to right, and that when one line ends, you continue with the first word at the left on the next line.
- 12 Emphasize for your child that a sentence **begins with an uppercase letter and ends with punctuation**.

All of these skills are taken for granted by an experienced reader. These skills will become natural for your child when he or she experiences them repeatedly.

Sincerely,

# Pointers

Copy, color, and cut apart several sets of pictures. Glue each picture to a craft stick to make pointers. Use the pointers in some of the activities in this book.





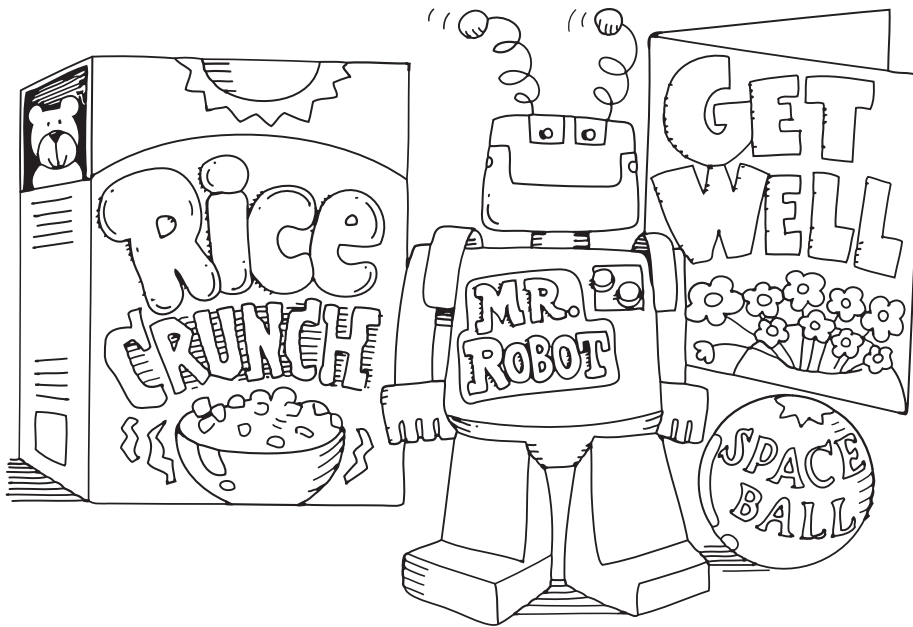
# Recognizing Print

The reader will recognize printed language.

## Introducing THE Concept

Display greeting cards, books, game boards, trading cards, clothing, food packages, toys, and other items that clearly have print on them. Ask children to name other places

they have seen print. Invite children to read any words they can, or ask them to point to and read one of the words on an object.



## practicing THE Concept

Give each child a Recognizing Print reproducible. Tell children to color the pictures that have print on them.



### MATERIALS

- greeting cards
- books
- game boards
- trading cards
- clothing with print
- food packages
- toys



### MATERIALS

- Recognizing Print reproducible (page 9)
- crayons

## Reinforcing THE Concept

- 1 Give children **plastic sunglasses** with the lenses removed, and invite them to “read the room.” Encourage children to use their glasses to help them see print in the classroom.
- 2 Invite children to play a game of I Spy. Identify something in the room that features print, and say *I spy something with print. Listen carefully for your hint.* Describe the object, and encourage children to name it. Play until each child has had an opportunity to name an object.
- 3 Use **scissors** to cut grocery advertisements from the **newspaper**, and scatter them around the room. Give each child a **paper lunch sack**, and invite children to be “word collectors.” Encourage them to collect as many papers with printed words on them as they can find.
- 4 Collect paper **menus** from local restaurants, and place them at a dramatic play center. Invite children to play “Restaurant,” and encourage them to read their menus to each other.
- 5 Collect small, flat **items with environmental print**—such as paper napkins, trading cards, and cereal box tops—and place them in a large, **cardboard box** at a learning center. Invite children to select examples of print from the box and **glue** them to the side of the box. Encourage children to bring in **examples of print from home** and glue them on the box. Over time, have children identify letters and words they know on the box.



# Recognizing Print

Color the pictures that have words printed on them.

