

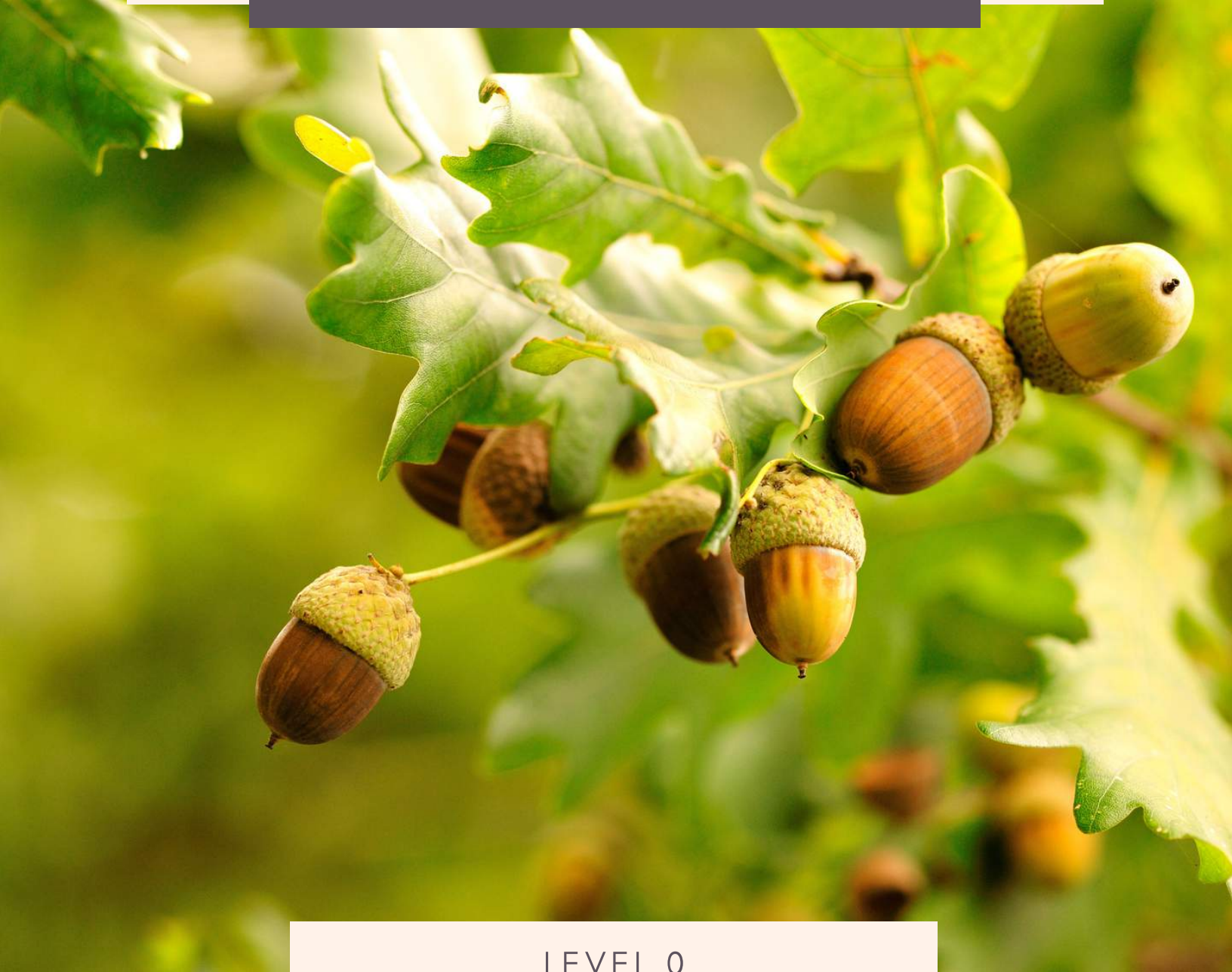
BLOSSOM & ROOT

EARLY ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS // LEVEL 0

A Gentle Beginning

SECOND EDITION

PARENT GUIDE



LEVEL 0

An Introduction to Language Arts and Reading

Blossom & Root

Early Elementary Language Arts,
Level 0

A Gentle Beginning

A Gentle, Hands-On Language Arts Curriculum

For Kindergarten and Early Elementary Learners

Blossom & Root Language Arts Year 0: A Gentle Beginning

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Welcome to a Year of Wonderful Stories

A Gentle Introduction to Reading, Writing, and Literature

Welcome to a beautiful year full of stories! This year, you and your child will share the adventures of Frog and Toad, Little Bear, and Jabari. You will follow Elmer as he rescues the flying dragon from Wild Island. You'll play pretend with Fox, Yasmin, and Penny. You'll explore the themes of friendship, family, and community, and learn what it means to take care of each other.

You'll snuggle together over beloved classic stories and wonderful new ones, too. Your child will begin to learn the process of narration, and reflect on stories with thoughtful journal prompts. They will begin developing reading fluency through hands-on and developmentally-appropriate reading lessons in a gentle and supportive setting.

Take your time, savor the wonder, and make it yours! This curriculum is here to support and inspire you in your early elementary journey with your child. If you ever need anything, please don't hesitate to reach out--I am always happy to help!

– Kristina Garner

kristina@blossomandroot.com

Navigating this Parent Guide

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Pages 6 – 10 | Weeks at a Glance

Pages 11 – 16 | Instructional Resources

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Page 21 | Supplement Suggestions

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Planning & Scheduling

What Does a Week Look Like?: 5 Day per Week Schedule

Every homeschooling family has different schedules, preferences, and needs. Because of this, our curriculum is designed to be flexible and adaptable. We do not present a day-by-day plan for language arts. We present a weekly plan. The week's activities may be scheduled in any order, according to your needs. We recommend spending the first few weeks finding a rhythm that works for you. If you need a little help getting started, here is a template for what a typical week could look like for a 5 Day Per Week schedule:

Day One:

Literature: Read this week's literature selection (or start it)

Writing: Copywork

Reading: Start reading lesson 1

Day Two:

Literature: Continue reading literature for the week (if needed) and complete literature enrichment activity (optional)

Reading: Finish reading lesson 1 (if needed)

Day Three:

Literature: Finish reading literature for the week (if needed)

Writing: Journal prompt

Reading: Start reading lesson 2

Day Four:

Writing: Narration

Reading: Finish reading lesson 2 (if needed)

Day Five:

Literature: Complete another literature enrichment activity (optional)

Catch up on any work that is not yet finished for the week, and / or do supplemental work

If you follow a **4 Day Per Week** schedule, you might choose only one literature enrichment activity per week, and skip Day Five.

If you follow a **3 Day Per Week** schedule, you may condense the reading lessons into one session each, choose only one literature enrichment activity per week, and do the journal prompt on Day Two and the narration prompt on Day Three.

Make It Yours

How to Teach This Curriculum

"You should write because you love the shape of stories and sentences and the creation of different words on a page. Writing comes from reading, and reading is the finest teacher of how to write."

– Annie Proulx

Step One: Exploring Literature

Each week, you will read a book (or a chapter from a book) out loud to your child. Longer selections can be broken up into shorter read-aloud sessions over multiple days. Shorter books and stories can be read multiple times during the week, if you like. If you do a "morning basket" or a "bedtime basket," this is a good time to do the read-aloud. If you are a family that reads many other books in addition to the ones in this curriculum, you may wish to do narration and journaling immediately after a read-aloud session so that your child has the relevant reading fresh in their mind. In this edition, we've also included some suggested enrichment activities you might add to your week. These are all completely optional. You are also free to add your own additional activities to any given week.

Step Two: Copywork

Each week, your child will do a very short copywork lesson. Usually, this will involve one uppercase and one lowercase letter per week. Occasionally, it will be a word. At the end of the year, the copywork lesson is a sentence. The idea behind copywork is for your child to begin developing printing skills and confidence in a gentle and developmentally-appropriate way. These lessons are kept intentionally short. Begin by having them trace the printed example a few times. Next, they will print each letter, word, or sentence one time, using their very best effort.

Step Three: Journaling

Each week, you will read a journal prompt to your child. These prompts are in the student notebook. Begin by reading the prompt to them, then write down their response on the lines or in the space provided, and allow them to illustrate their answer, if they like.

Step Four: Narration

Each week, your child will do a short narration of the read-aloud selection. They can draw a favorite scene from the read-aloud, and then tell you about it, and you can record their words on the lines provided. Alternatively, they can choose to skip the drawing and simply tell you what happened in the story. Since this is likely your child's first introduction to narration, keep your expectations on the gentler side. If they can recount one or two details from the story, that is plenty. They needn't retell the full story at this stage. If they're stuck, you can gently coax them by asking who their favorite character was, or what happened after something else happened, or ask what their favorite part of the story was. The idea is to get them into the habit of processing information / stories you've shared with them, and to begin learning how to communicate it back to you.

Step Five: Reading Lessons

Beyond copywork, journaling, and narration, your child will have multiple reading lessons to complete each week. These lessons will vary from week to week, and there are several types of reading lessons you will use:

- "Letter Sound Review" lessons
- "Building and Reading Words" lessons
- "Word Family" lessons
- "Reading From Literature" lessons (weeks 24 – 36)




Please see the following pages for more information on each type of lesson.

Above all else, remember that this curriculum is meant to be a support and a guide. Please feel free to modify it to suit your child's specific needs!

Required Book List: Kindergarten Language Arts






Second Edition

To Buy or to Borrow: Many of the books are used for one week, which would make them ideal for borrowing from the library, if possible. There are a few exceptions, but even these could be borrowed from the library, depending on how long you are permitted to keep your books. Exceptions include: *My Father's Dragon* (used for 5 weeks), *Winnie the Pooh* or *Heartwood Hotel: A True Home* (used for five weeks), *Little Bear* (used for four weeks), *The Bears on Hemlock Mountain* (used for two weeks), *Pig and Pug* (used for two weeks) and ***Frog and Toad are Friends*** and ***Frog and Toad All Year*** (which are both used throughout the whole year.) Many (but not all) selections should be easy to find used, if you wish to purchase. Many are also available as ebooks or audiobooks and several books can be found on YouTube as read-alouds in a pinch, though we ask that you find one with publisher and / or author permission. If needed, you may also substitute one of our selections for another book of your choosing. You may need to adjust or adapt the journal prompt and suggested activity accordingly.

Week	Required Book(s)
1	<p>We will be focusing on names. Choose one (or several) of the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alma and How She Got Her Name</i> by Juana Martinez-Neal • <i>Your Name is a Song</i> by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow • <i>The Name Jar</i> by Yangsook Choi • <i>Chrysanthemum</i> by Kevin Henkes
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stone Soup</i> by Jon J. Muth (this is the recommended version, but you are welcome to use another version of <i>Stone Soup</i> if you like)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We are Grateful / Otsaliheliga</i> by Traci Sorell
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Corner" from <i>Frog and Toad All Year</i> by Arnold Lobel 
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Ice Cream" from <i>Frog and Toad All Year</i> by Arnold Lobel 
6 – 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My Father's Dragon</i> by Ruth Stiles Gannett
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Sick Day for Amos McGee</i> by Phillip C. Stead 
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Letter" from <i>Frog and Toad are Friends</i> by Arnold Lobel
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Islandborn</i> by Junot Díaz
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Abuela</i> by Arthur Dorros OR <i>A Different Pond</i> by Bao Phi

Required Book List: Kindergarten Language Arts, cont.

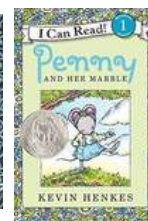
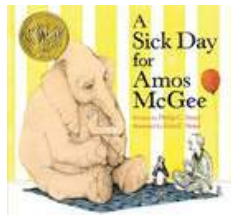
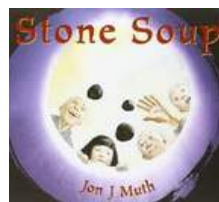
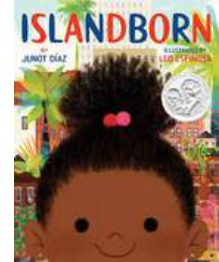
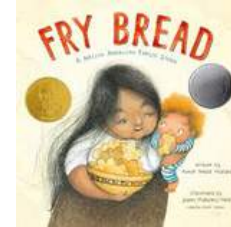
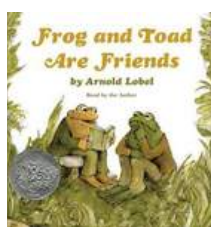
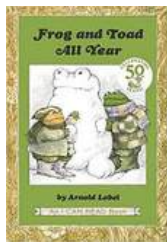
Second Edition

Week	Required Book(s)
15 – 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Winnie the Pooh</i> by A.A. Milne (5 selected stories with an option to extend this unit and read all 10 stories) OR • <i>Heartwood Hotel: A True Home</i> by Kallie George (offered as a more contemporary option)
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Down the Hill" from <i>Frog and Toad All Year</i> by Arnold Lobel 
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Surprise" from <i>Frog and Toad All Year</i> by Arnold Lobel 
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story</i> by Aya Khalil OR • <i>Leila in Saffron</i> by Rukhsanna Guidroz
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story</i> by Kevin Noble Maillard
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bread and Jam for Frances</i> by Russell Hoban
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Jabari Jumps</i> by Gaia Cornwall AND • <i>Penny and Her Marble</i> by Kevin Henkes
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Velveteen Rabbit</i> by Margery Williams (any version) AND • <i>Fox the Tiger</i> by Corey R. Tabor
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Spring" from <i>Frog and Toad are Friends</i> by Arnold Lobel 
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Story" from <i>Frog and Toad are Friends</i> by Arnold Lobel 
29 – 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Little Bear</i> by Else Holmelund Minarik
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yasmin the Superhero</i> by Saadia Faruqi
33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "A Lost Button" from <i>Frog and Toad are Friends</i> by Arnold Lobel 

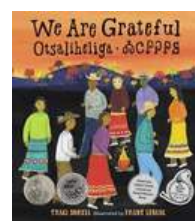
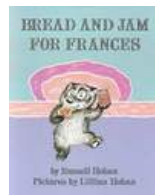
Required Book List: Kindergarten Language Arts, cont.

Second Edition

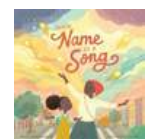
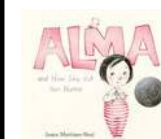
Week	Required Book(s)
34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "A Swim" from <i>Frog and Toad are Friends</i> by Arnold Lobel
35 – 36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Bears on Hemlock Mountain</i> by Alice Dalgliesh AND <i>Pig and Pug</i> by Laura Marchesani and Zenaides A. Medina, Jr.



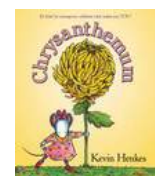
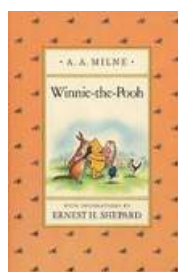
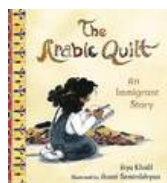
Choose **One**



Choose **One**



Choose **One**



Supplies

The supplies you'll need for this curriculum are:

- Tools for writing (pencils, erasers)
- Tools for drawing and coloring (markers, crayons, colored pencils)
- Scissors
- Letter manipulatives of your choosing (see "The Reading Lessons: An Overview" for more information): letter tiles, letter magnets, wooden letters, rocks with letters painted on them, etc.
- A baggie or an envelope to keep your "Word Family" cards in, once they've been cut out

You will need to look through the optional suggested literature enrichment activities for each week in order to determine which additional supplies you'll need, if you decide to do those. Most of the suggested activities involve very minimal supplies, or supplies most people will already have around their home.

Word Family Cards

The "Word Family" cards are in the back of this parent guide. You may want to print those out on card stock if you want them to be a little sturdier, but this is completely optional. At the end of the Word Family cards, you will find a blank page of cards. This can be used to make your own additional word cards. Please feel free to make several copies of the blank page, if you like.

Week One: Exploring Names

Literature:



Literature Selection(s) to Read To Your Child This Week (choose one or several of the following):

- *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal, *Your Name is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi, and / or *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes



Suggested Literature Enrichment Activities (Optional):

Share stories of the names in your family, or ask friends or neighbors if they have a story behind their name that they'd like to share. | Sing the names of the family, friends, and neighbors you love, or tap them out with your feet. | Help your child to paint a special name sign for their bedroom door, and hang it up.

Language Arts Lessons:



Copywork:

Your child will begin by tracing the uppercase "A" and lowercase "a" provided in the notebook. Next, they will print each letter one time in the empty boxes, concentrating on making their very best letters. If they benefit from a few practice letters first, they may warm up by making the letters in a sand or flour tray, by writing them on a whiteboard or chalkboard a few times, by writing big letters with sidewalk chalk outside and "walking" them, or by making them in the air with a finger first. There is a section at the bottom of the page where they will add words that begin with either the short /a/ or long /ā/ sound. You may wish to do this section during reading lesson number 1 (see below.) They can make drawings, glue or tape pictures (from magazines or printed off the internet), or you can write the words they think of in the provided space.



Journaling:

Read the prompt in the student notebook to your child. Write down your child's response on the lines provided. They may also wish to add a picture.



Narration:

Ask your child to tell you what happened in one of this week's read-alouds and record their words for them on the lines provided. Alternatively, you can ask what their favorite part of the story or who their favorite character was, or help them to recall a specific part of the story. They may also wish to add a picture. This year, try to ease into narration. You do not have to do one every week, and they can be very short. You can even do this through dramatic play, puppet or peg doll play, or short and casual discussions.

Reading Lessons:



Lesson 1: Review Short /a/ and Long /ā/

Talk briefly about the short /a/ and long /ā/ sound together. Mention that when a word uses a long /ā/, it will say its name. Together, come up with several words that start with or contain each sound. Some examples: "apple" and "alligator" for short /a/, "apron" and "cape" for long /ā/. There is a section at the bottom of the copywork page in the student notebook where you can add lists and / or pictures of the words that begin with /a/ or /ā/.



Lesson 2: Ordering Uppercase Letters, Introduce Consonants and Vowels

Help your child to put the uppercase letters in order, from A to Z, using the letter manipulative of your choosing (tiles, magnets, wooden letters, etc.) After they finish, point out the vowels (A, E, I, O, U, and sometimes Y.) Explain that those letters are called vowels, and all of the other letters are called consonants. Explain that almost every single word in the English language contains at least one vowel.

Week Two: Stone Soup

Literature:



Literature Selection(s) to Read To Your Child This Week:

- *Stone Soup* by Jon J. Muth. (We recommend this version, but you may use any version you like.)



Suggested Literature Enrichment Activities (Optional):

Make "stone soup" at home together. Be sure to wash and scrub your stone first! You can choose any soup recipe to follow for this, but we recommend finding one similar to the one in the story. | Make a pinch pot out of play-dough or Model Magic. Model the soup ingredients from the story out of play-dough or modeling beeswax. With your new props, act out the story with your child. | Set up a mud-kitchen at home or create a to-go "mud food truck" kit for trips to the creek, pond, or beach. Include things like pots, pans, spoons, bowls etc. (Second-hand stores are good places to find things for this!) Encourage your child to play "stone soup" with their mud kitchen.

Language Arts Lessons:



Copywork:

Your child will begin by tracing the uppercase "M" and lowercase "m" provided in the notebook. Next, they will print each letter one time in the empty boxes, concentrating on making their very best letters. If they benefit from a few practice letters first, they may warm up by making the letters in a sand or flour tray, by writing them on a whiteboard or chalkboard a few times, by writing big letters with sidewalk chalk outside and "walking" them, or by making them in the air with a finger first. There is a section at the bottom of the page where they will add words that begin with the sound of /m/. You may wish to do this section during reading lesson number 1 (see below.) They can make drawings, glue or tape pictures (from magazines or printed off the internet), or simply have you write down words they think of in the provided space.



Journaling:

Read the prompt in the student notebook to your child. Write down your child's response on the lines provided. They may also wish to add a picture.



Narration:

Ask your child to tell you what happened in this week's read-aloud and record their words for them on the lines provided. Alternatively, you can ask what their favorite part of the story or who their favorite character was, or help them to recall a specific part of the story. They may also wish to add a picture. Remember to spend this year easing into narration. You do not have to do one every week, and they can be very short. You can even do this through dramatic play, puppet or peg doll play, or short and casual discussions.

Reading Lessons:



Lesson 1: Review the Sound of /m/

Talk briefly about the sound of /m/ together. Together, come up with several words that start with, end with, or contain that sound. Some examples: "marble," "messy," "family," and "ram." There is a section at the bottom of the copywork page in the student notebook where you can add lists and / or pictures of the words that begin with /m/.



Lesson 2: Ordering Lowercase Letters, Introduce Consonants and Vowels

Help your child to put the lowercase letters in order, from a to z, using the letter manipulative of your choosing (tiles, magnets, wooden letters, etc.) Next, review vowels and consonants from last week's lesson. Can they remember which letters are vowels?

BLOSSOM & ROOT
EARLY ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE ARTS // LEVEL 0

A Gentle Beginning

STUDENT NOTEBOOK



This book belongs to:

LEVEL 0

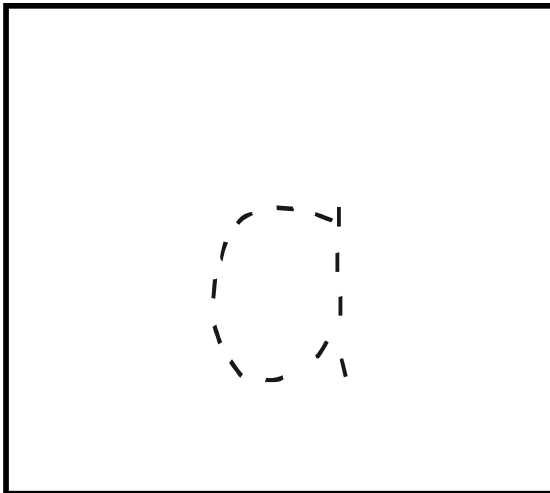
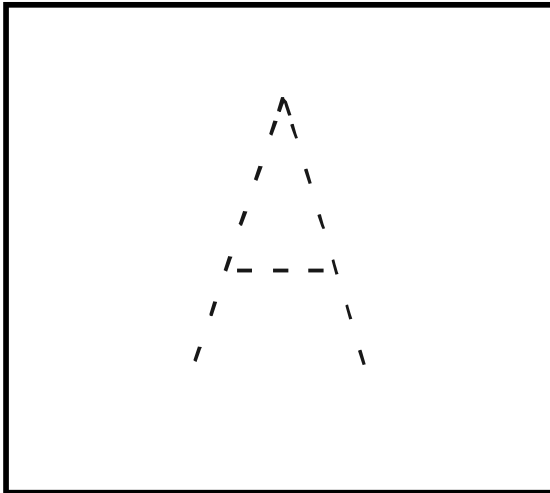
An Introduction to Language Arts and Reading



Exploring Names

Copywork

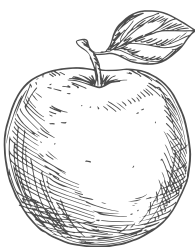
Step 1: Trace



Step 2: Print



More things that start with Aa:





Exploring Names

Journal Entry

This week, explore some of the wonderful names around you. Think of three to five people in your family, neighborhood, or community. With help from a grown-up, find out how to spell their names and write them down at the top of the space above, or have a grown-up write them down for you. Next, make a picture of each person below their name.

If you read *Your Name is a Song*, try singing each person's name like they do in the story, after you write them down.



Exploring Names

Narration

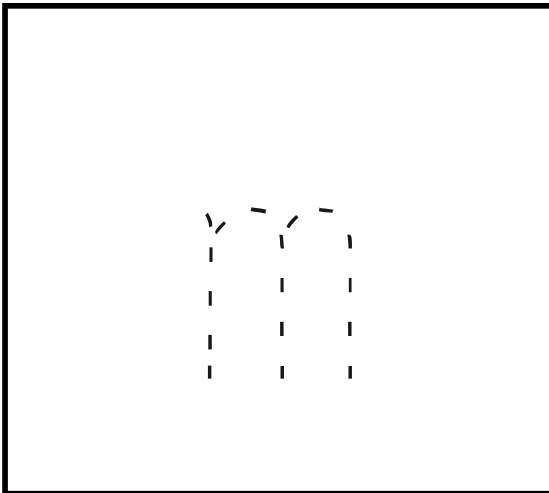
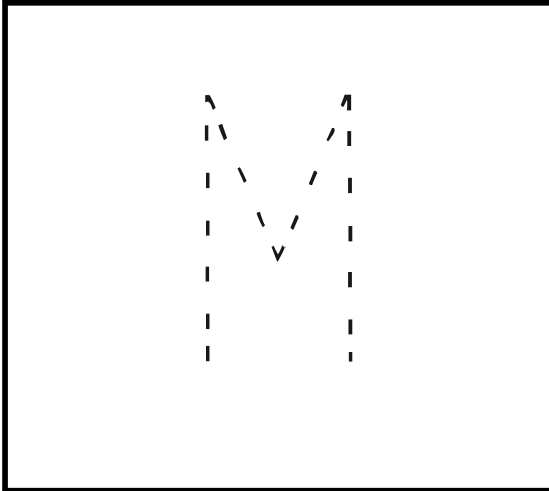
Narration: Ask your child to tell you what happened in the story (or their favorite part of the story) from this week. Transcribe their narration below. Before starting, please read the beginning of the parent guide for tips and modifications.



Stone Soup

Copywork

Step 1: Trace



Step 2: Print



More things that start with Mm:

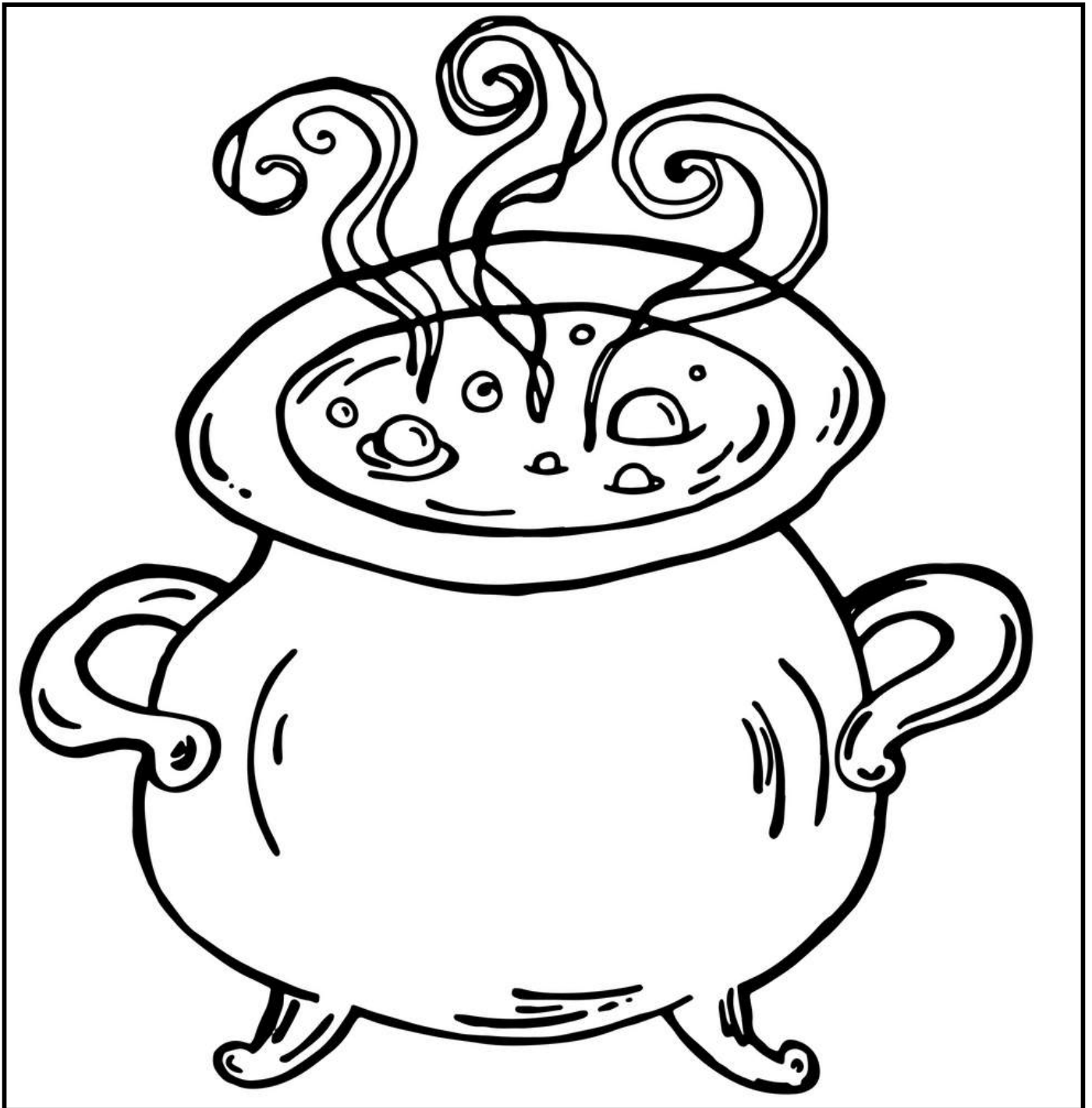




Stone Soup

Journal Entry

What are the ingredients in Stone Soup? Can you remember all of them from this week's story? Draw them in the pot below and ask a grown-up to write the name for each ingredient next to your picture. Next, add a few of your own ingredients that were not in the story. What would you add to make the Stone Soup extra tasty?





Stone Soup

Narration

Narration: Ask your child to tell you what happened in the story (or their favorite part of the story) from this week. Transcribe their narration below. Before starting, please read the beginning of the parent guide for tips and modifications.