

*My First*  
**LETTERS AND SOUNDS**

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PASSING ON THE FAITH

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# INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARENT/TEACHER

This may very well be the most important academic series of lessons you will ever teach a child. Teaching a child how to read is the introduction to the most substantial part of human learning. It is the first academic requirement for all children who will read the Word of God for themselves. Our intent is to equip you as the parent/teacher to the task.

Keep in mind, most children learn to read well when a parent/teacher commits 15–20 minutes a day in one-on-one instruction for a period of about a year. This dedicated time will be one of the most worthwhile investments you'll ever make into the life of a child. When introducing reading (or any other new academic material) to a child, one-on-one instruction is the most powerful form of learning. Take advantage of it, especially in the homeschool environment.

When we introduce a radical new concept (like reading) to a young child, the teaching method should include a long runway, so to speak. To get the craft off the ground, we would prefer a long, gentle, and gradual progression of content. That is why we have dedicated 62 lessons to introducing the alphabet sounds, and another 30 or more lessons to introducing three-letter words using the short vowel sounds.

This course is written for the Christian family who has been tasked by Jesus to raise up their children in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Thus, we will integrate God into the lessons, as soon as the child learns the short *o* sound. We integrate Scripture into the subject material, as a regular “frontlet” before their eyes (Deut. 6:7). As much as possible, we avoid unedifying or meaningless sentences in the reading. We include references to dad, mom, chores, serving others, feeding animals, sin, and redemption. These simple subjects should self-consciously and consistently represent a Christian worldview.

When reading the sounds of the letters used for the words in this course, avoid using the designated name for the letter. Give your child the sound or phoneme of the letter. Then, as much as possible, attach the sound to a familiar word beginning with that sound, as in:

/ă/ apple

/bŭ/ bear

We have included several competence tests at strategic points in this reading program. Before advancing in the learning process, we want to make sure that the child has mastered the content previously covered. Moving on before the student has mastered the first material would only end in frustration and failure. A few diagnostics are included for the benefit of the parent/teacher with suggestions as to whether the student should move on, or go back and review previous content.

If a child isn't getting it, that's okay. Parents may wish to take a break for a few months and come back to it later. Each child learns at his or her own pace. There is no need to "keep up with the rest of the class," especially when it comes to homeschooling.

Many parents/teachers who face a child who isn't learning as expected become anxious, and the child understands that their parent's/teacher's increased stress is due to them and their failure to know what they are apparently supposed to know. This is stressful for the child and slows them down even further. This curriculum seeks to be accessible and usable for all children including struggling and special needs students. You as the parent/teacher are encouraged to go slower, repeat lessons, and add printed worksheets or more kinesthetic (physically active) extras when a student hits a roadblock.

## Repetition

Repetition is essential when committing the basic phonetic sounds to memory. This helps to form and reinforce automatic neurological pathways for the child connecting sounds, letters, and the meaning of the written language. Children usually learn by auditory means first—this is how they learn to speak. They will learn the phonetic sounds best by repetition and rhyme. Repetition builds confidence on predictability.

If we move too fast and skip over the repetition drills, children will revert to guessing the word or rely entirely upon a “whole word” method of reading. Consider repetition drills on successive days, various modalities (saying it, reading it, writing it), and contexts (flash cards, books, speaking).

But let’s not make it boring for the child. Here are some ideas for making repetition fun:

- tossing a ball or other item back and forth with each repetition
- singing or chanting words
- making rhymes where possible
- forming letters with clay or playdough
- tracing letters with a finger while saying the letters
- moving hands one step higher or lower with each repetition
- clapping to a repetition beat (or jumping, snapping, stamping, bouncing, etc.)
- repeating in a variety of voices such as high-pitched, low-pitched, whisper, scratchy, while holding your nose, with an accent, a funny voice, etc.
- forming the letters with hands or body when learning
- using sign language for letters
- closing their eyes and holding a finger up or tapping the table for each repetition

## Retention

Retention occurs through repetition, review, and application and can only be evaluated over time. Students may appear at first to understand a concept, but then fail to retain it. They may retain the original lesson but be unable to apply the lesson outside of the original example taught. Students are developing an ear to hear the differences in sounds and an ability to identify those sounds. The end goal is not completing the lesson or even the book, but being able to eventually read any random written example. This is the final evaluation. All that comes before this are merely steps toward that goal.

Some students take many small steps while others leap and bound. Review is vital for retention but, like repetition, can become old quickly. If the lesson is viewed like an exercise routine that requires a warm up and a cool down, in a 15-minute lesson, we would review for 1–2 minutes as a warm up (what did we learn yesterday?) and review for 1–2 minutes as a cool down (what did we learn today?). Review is definitively anchored in something that has already been taught.

## Pace

Each child is specially gifted by God with unique abilities and learning styles. Adjust the pace accordingly. There is no wrong pace except that which would hinder learning. Remember to keep the goal of literacy in sight. Celebrate milestones achieved along the way.

## Routine

A steady routine is helpful for most students. This is especially true for these phonics lessons. Choose a specific time of day for phonics. The lessons in this curriculum are arranged with a steady routine in mind.

## Writing

Writing is one way to hone fine motor skills. And it's one more way to review the content. If a child struggles with writing in the workbook, try writing letters in the air with larger movements or tracing the letters in the sand. The parent/teacher might start out the writing lessons without space constraints. Then, gradually reduce the writing space into smaller constraints.

## Attitude

An effective teacher is a thoroughly engaged, enthusiastic, and affirming teacher. The energy and excitement that a parent/teacher brings into the process is vital. There are few tasks more honorable, more valuable, and more beautiful than to introduce a child to reading. These are the basics, the very first academic lessons. Teaching a child to read is empowerment and enablement—the doorway into a lifetime of learning. Most importantly, God would have our children reading His Word, and be well-prepared to teach His Word to their children in the next generation (Deut. 6:7-9; Eph. 6:4).

# COURSE SCHEDULE

Week #	Day #	Lesson #	Topic	✓
Week 1	Day 1	Lesson 1	Letter A	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 2	Letter B	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 3	Letter C	
Week 2	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 4	Letter D	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 5	Letter E	
	Day 5			
Week 3	Day 1	Lesson 6	Review	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 7	Letter F	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 8	Letter G	
Week 4	Day 1	Lesson 9	Letter H	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 10	Letter I	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 11	Letter J	
Week 5	Day 1	Lesson 12	Review	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 13	Letter K	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 14	Letter L	
Week 6	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 15	Letter M	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 16	Letter N	
	Day 5			

Week #	Day #	Lesson #	Topic	✓
Week 7	Day 1	Lesson 17	Letter O	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 18	Review	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 19	Letter P	
Week 8	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 20	Letter Q	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 21	Letter R	
	Day 5			
Week 9	Day 1	Lesson 22	Letter S	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 23	Letter T	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 24	Review	
Week 10	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 25	Letter U	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 26	Letter V	
	Day 5			
Week 11	Day 1	Lesson 27	Letter W	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 28	Review	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 29	Letter X	
Week 12	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 30	Letter Y	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 31	Letter Z	
	Day 5			

Week #	Day #	Lesson #	Topic	✓
Week 13	Day 1	Lesson 32	Review	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 33	Letter D	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 34	Letter T	
Week 14	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 35	Letter O	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 36	Letter I	
	Day 5			
Week 15	Day 1	Lesson 37	Letter C	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 38	Review	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 39	Letter S	
Week 16	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 40	Letter E	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 41	Letter N	
	Day 5			
Week 17	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 42	Letter F	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 43	Letter H	
	Day 5			
Week 18	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 44	Review	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 45	Letter G	
	Day 5			

Week #	Day #	Lesson #	Topic	✓
Week 19	Day 1	Lesson 46	Letter W	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 47	Letter U	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 48	Letter B	
Week 20	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 49	Letter K	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 50	Review	
	Day 5			
Week 21	Day 1	Lesson 51	Letter P	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 52	Letter L	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 53	Letter M	
Week 22	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 54	Letter R	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 55	Letter Q	
	Day 5			
Week 23	Day 1	Lesson 56	Review	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 57	Letter J	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 58	Letter V	
Week 24	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 59	Letter Y	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 60	Letter X	
	Day 5			

Week #	Day #	Lesson #	Topic	✓
Week 25	Day 1	Lesson 61	Letter Z	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 62	Review	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 63	Vowels a, e, i, o, u	
Week 26	Day 1	Lesson 64	Letter A	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 65	Short ä	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 66	Short ä Words	
Week 27	Day 1	Lesson 67	Practice	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 68	Short ä Words	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 69	Three-Letter Short ä Words	
Week 28	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 70	First Sentence	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 71	Short ä Words	
	Day 5			
Week 29	Day 1	Lesson 72	Short ä Sentences	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 73	Short ě	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 74	Short ě Words	
Week 30	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 75	Short ě Sentences	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 76	Short ě Words	
	Day 5			

Week #	Day #	Lesson #	Topic	✓
Week 31	Day 1	Lesson 77	Short ě Sentences	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 78	Short ä Sentences	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 79	Short ĭ	
Week 32	Day 1			
	Day 2	Lesson 80	Three-Letter Short ĭ Words	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 81	Short ĭ Sentences	
	Day 5			
Week 33	Day 1	Lesson 82	Short ĭ Words	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 83	Short ĭ Sentences	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 84	Short ĭ Words and Sentences	
Week 34	Day 1	Lesson 85	Short ǒ	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 86	Three-Letter Short ǒ Words	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 87	Short ǒ Sentences	
Week 35	Day 1	Lesson 88	Short ǒ Words	
	Day 2			
	Day 3	Lesson 89	Short ǒ Words	
	Day 4			
	Day 5	Lesson 90	Short ů	
Week 36	Day 1	Lesson 91	Three-Letter Short ů Words	
	Day 2	Lesson 92	Short ů Sentences	
	Day 3			
	Day 4	Lesson 93	Short ů Words	
	Day 5	Lesson 94	Short ů Words and Sentences	



# LESSON 1



# Aa

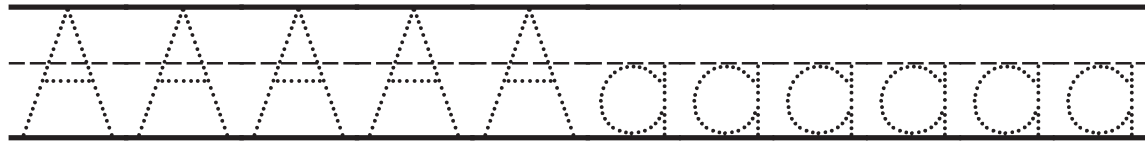
The letter A makes the first sound in the word apple.

[letter] Can you say the letter A? A!

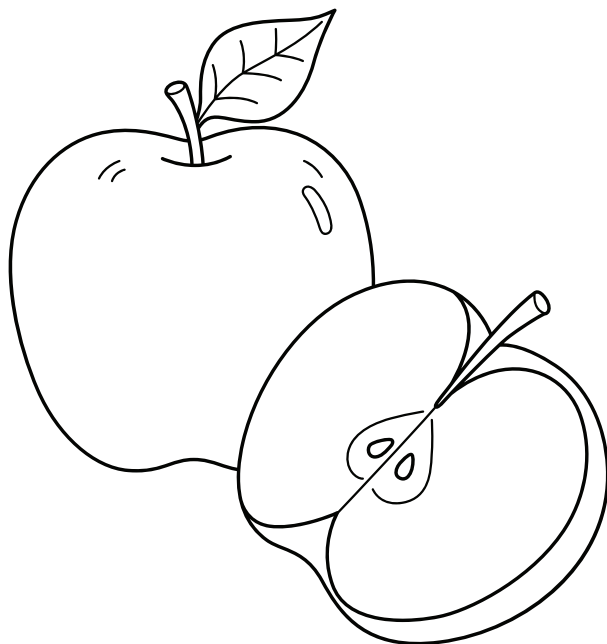
[sound] A says ă . . . ă . . . apple . . . ă . . . ă . . . apple!

A is the first letter in the alphabet.

Practice tracing the **A**'s.

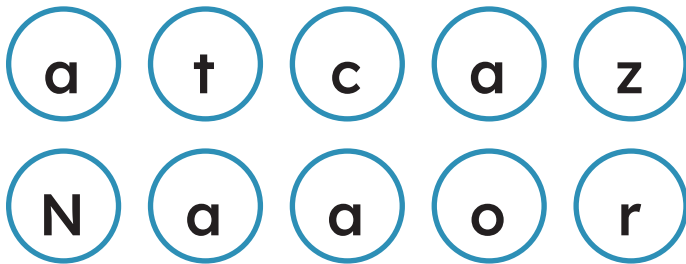


God made apples for us to enjoy! Color the apple.



Now, let's sound out the letter again. A says ă . . . ă . . . apple . . .  
ă . . . ă . . . apple!

Color in the circles that have lowercase **a**'s in them.



Color the uppercase **A**'s to reveal something special!

B	C	D	E	A	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	A	M	A	N	O	P
Q	R	A	S	T	U	A	V	W
X	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B
A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	A
A	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	A
A	Z	C	F	P	L	H	E	A

# LESSON 2



# Bb

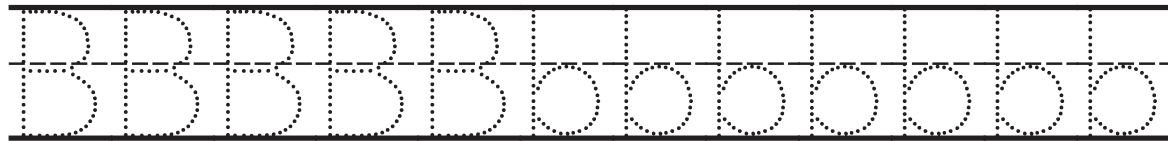
The letter B makes the first sound in the word bear.

[letter] Can you say the letter B? B!

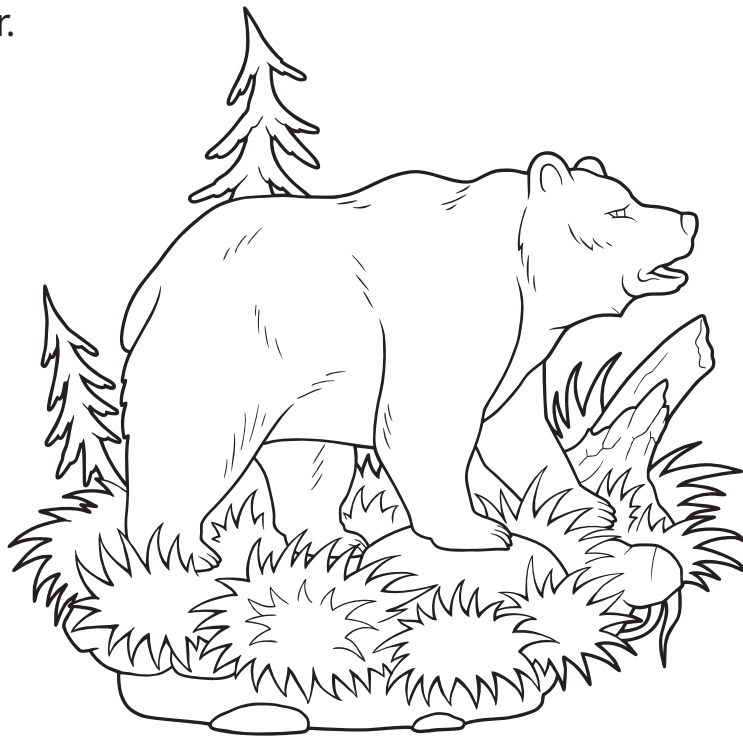
[sound] B says bū . . . bū . . . bear . . . bū . . . bū . . . bear!

God made bears, big and small.

Practice tracing the **B**'s.



Color the bear.



Now, let's sound out the letter again.

B says bŭ . . . bŭ . . . bear . . . bŭ . . . bŭ . . . bear!

Circle the lowercase **b**'s in each line.

<b>l</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>b</b>	<b>o</b>	<b>w</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>s</b>
<b>z</b>	<b>c</b>	<b>b</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>b</b>
<b>b</b>	<b>q</b>	<b>i</b>	<b>k</b>	<b>b</b>

Trace the lines to connect the **B**'s.

**B** ----- **b**

**B** ~~~~~ **b**

**B** ~~~~~ **b**

# 3 LESSON 3

# Cc



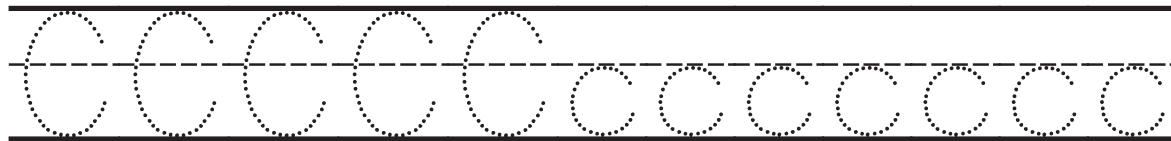
The letter C makes the first sound in the word car.

[letter] Can you say the letter C? C!

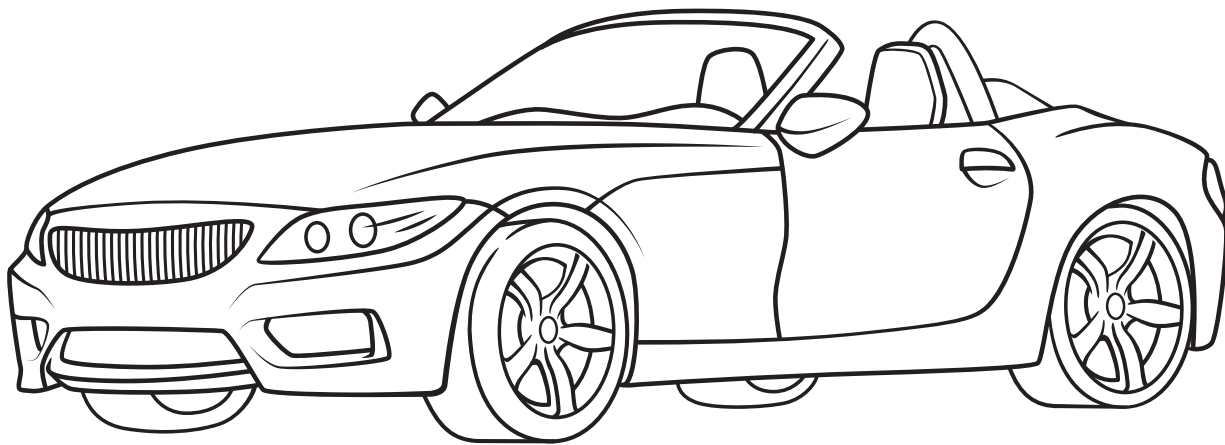
[sound] C says cŭ . . . cŭ . . . car . . . cŭ . . . cŭ . . . car!

Thank God for cars to take us to church.

Practice tracing the **C**'s.

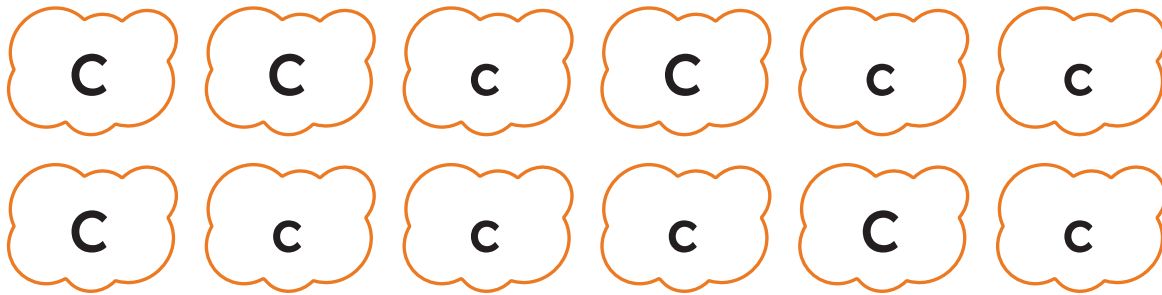


Cars help us go places! Color the car.

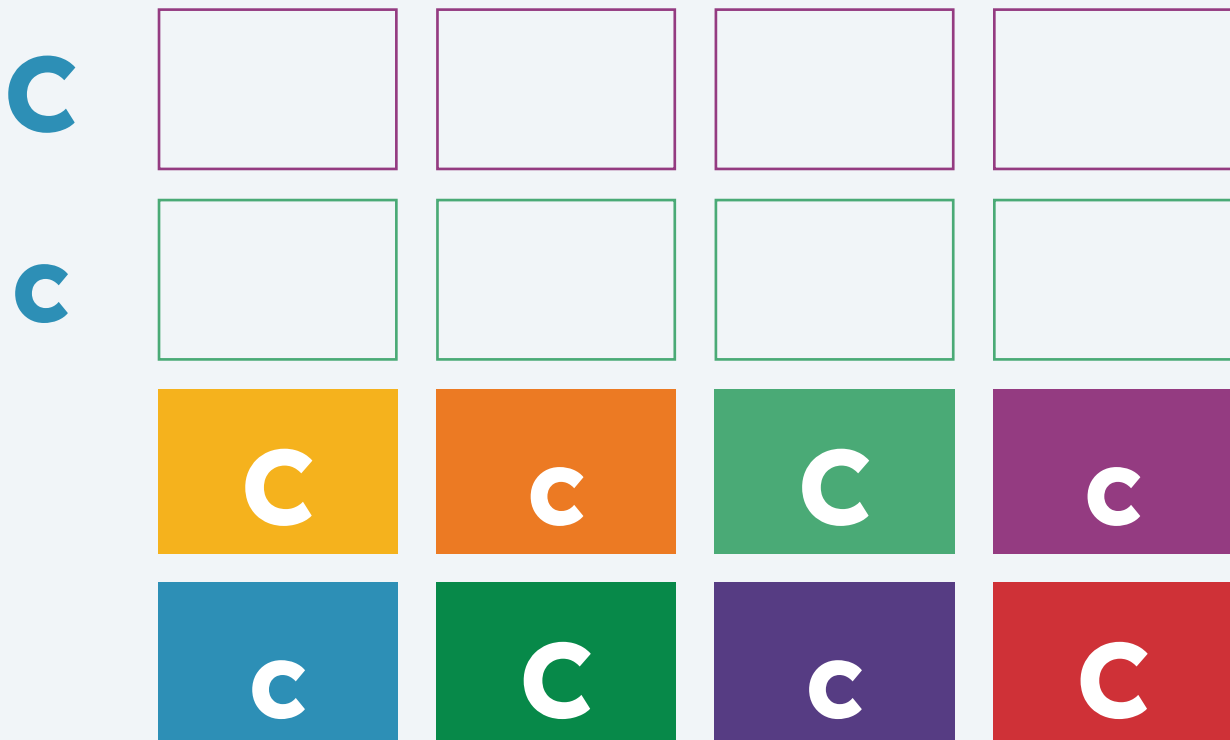


Now, let's sound out the letter again. C says cŭ . . . cŭ . . . car . . .  
cŭ . . . cŭ . . . car!

Color the uppercase **C**'s **blue** and the lowercase **c**'s **yellow**.



Cut out the colored **C** boxes and paste them in their correct box below.



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# Dd



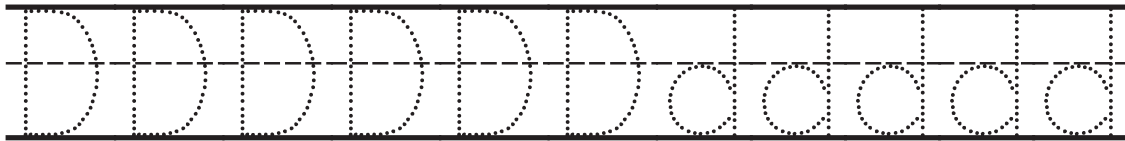
The letter D makes the first sound in the word dog.

[letter] Can you say the letter D? D!

[sound] D says dŭ . . . dŭ . . . dog . . . dŭ . . . dŭ . . . dog!

God made dogs for pets.

Practice tracing the **D**'s.

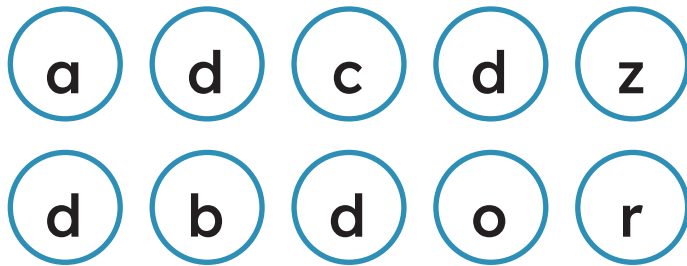


Color the dog.

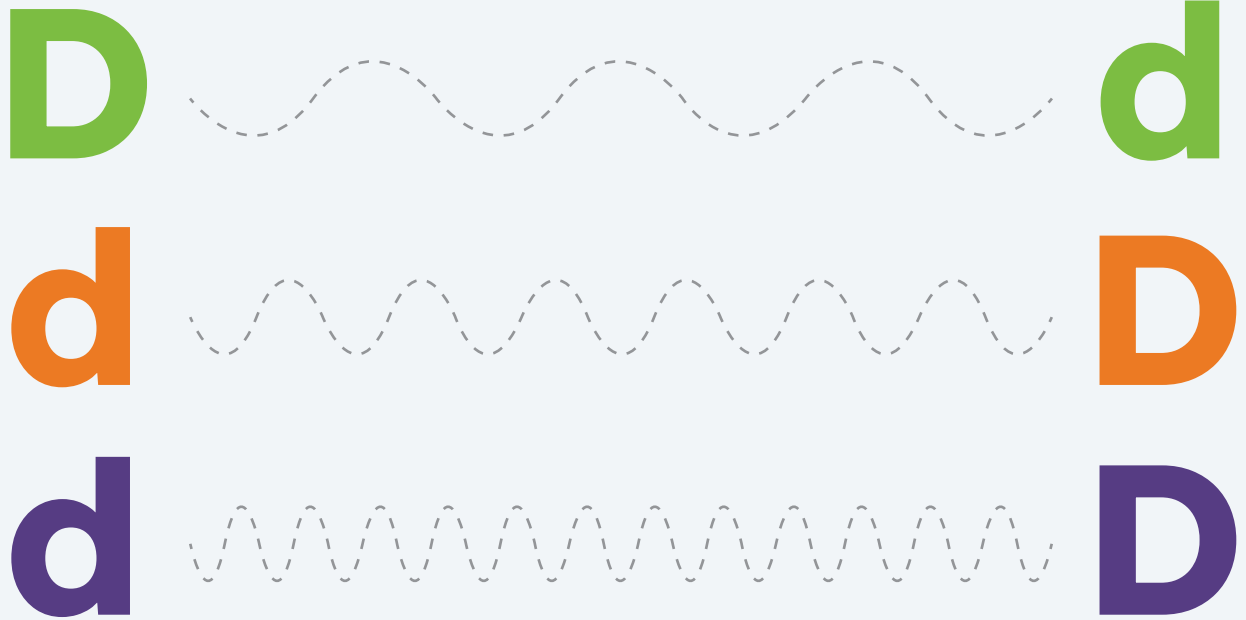


Now, let's sound out the letter again. D says dŭ . . . dŭ . . . dog . . .  
dŭ . . . dŭ . . . dog!

Color in the circles that have lowercase **d**'s in them.



Trace the lines to connect the **D**'s.



# Ee

The letter E makes the first sound in the word elephant.

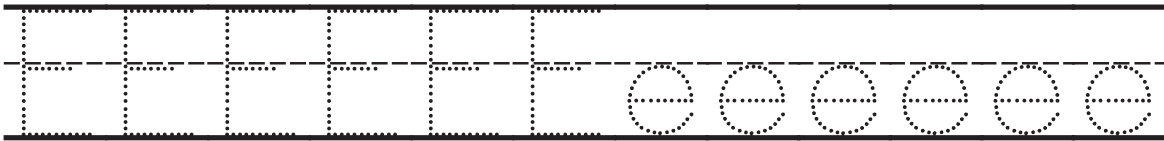
[letter] Can you say the letter E? E!

[sound] E says ě . . . ě . . . elephant . . . ě . . . ě . . . elephant!

Elephants are the biggest land animal.



Practice tracing the **E**'s.

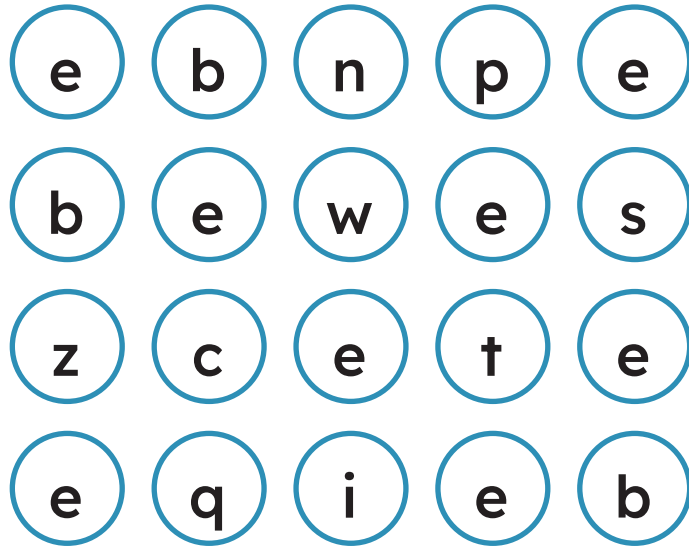


God made elephants! Color the picture.



Now, let's sound out the letter again. E says ě . . . ě . . . elephant . . .  
 ě . . . ě . . . elephant!

Color in the circles that have lowercase **e**'s in each line.



Color the uppercase **E**'s to reveal something special!

B	C	E	E	E	E	E	H	I
J	K	E	E	M	A	N	O	P
X	A	E	E	E	E	E	A	B
A	C	E	E	F	G	H	I	A
A	J	E	E	E	E	E	P	A