

Day 1

Getting Started

Materials

- ✓ *A is for Musk Ox* by Erin Cabatingan

Facts and Definitions

- ✓ **Vocabulary Word:** herd - a large group of animals that live together
- ✓ **Sight Word:** you

? Big Ideas

- ✓ What is the function of the alphabet?
- ✓ Why is there a standard order for numbers and letters?
- ✓ How does an animal's design aid in its survival?

⦿ Skills

- ✓ With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text. (LA)
- ✓ Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text. (LA)
- ✓ Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality. (M)
- ✓ When counting objects, say the number names in the standard order, pairing each object with one and only one number name
- ✓ and each number name with one and only one object. (M)
- ✓ Compare characteristics of animals that make them alike and different from other animals and nonliving things. (S)
- ✓ Compare characteristics of living and nonliving things in terms of their: structure, growth, changes, movement, and basic needs. (S)
- ✓ Use globes and maps to locate land and water features. (SS)
- ✓ Identify physical features (mountains, hills, rivers, lakes, roads, etc.). (SS)

Reading and Questions

Show your child the front cover of the book and ask him to point to the title of the book. Explain that the title of a book is usually the words with the largest letters on the cover of the book. The title often tells the reader what the book might be about.

Next ask your child to point to the author and illustrators names. Ask her what an author does (writes books) and what a story illustrator does (draws the pictures for books). Read the book through in one sitting.

After reading the book ask your child the following questions.

1. What two animals talk in the story?
 - The zebra and the musk ox.
2. Why do you think we have the alphabet?
 - It is the way we communicate written messages.
3. What letter was your favorite in the book? Why?
 - Answers will vary.

Activities

Activity 1: Counting the Letters of the Alphabet

Ask your child to count the letter cards that are in the stack. Provide assistance as needed. Discuss that there are 26 letters in the alphabet. If your child cannot count to 20 practice this aloud a few times. As your child counts, hold up the accompanying number card.

Activity 2: Ordering Alphabet Cards

Look at the alphabet cards with your child. Encourage him to put the letters in order from A to Z. He can use the book if he forgets the order. Discuss that the alphabet has a certain order for the letters called alphabetical order. This order helps people organize information.

Optional Extension

If your child is able, encourage him to place a number card beneath each letter. He will not have a number card for the final 6 letters of the alphabet. Discuss that both letters and numbers have a specific order. This order provides a standard way for all people to communicate information.

Day 2

Materials

-  "Uppercase A"
- ✓ glue
- ✓ large die-cut letter A
- ✓ small apple stickers

Review

Ask your child to say or sing the letters of the alphabet in order. Ask your child to practice counting to 20 aloud.

Activities

Activity 1: Meeting Musk Oxen

Read about musk oxen on-line and discuss how the information you share with your child compares with what the musk ox in the story says about his species. Discuss where the musk oxen live, what they eat, how people use them, and what threats they face in the wild. Discuss the vocabulary word for the week, "herd." Explain that musk oxen live in herds and that a herd is a large group of animals that live together.

National Geographic

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/musk-ox/>

This link is available online through IdeaShare at www.movingbeyondthepage.com/ideas.

Alaska Kids

<http://www.alaskakids.org/index?section=Cool-Critters&page=Featured-Critters&cat=Big-Mammals&viewpost=2&ContentId=2622>

This link is available online through IdeaShare at www.movingbeyondthepage.com/ideas.

Activity 2: Uppercase Letter Writing and Sound Practice

As you introduce the formation of each letter each week, you'll also practice the sound the letter typically makes in words. Many letters can make multiple sounds, but you can focus on the most common sound. As you talk about the letter "a," tell your child that A can make several sounds, but its most common sound is "a" as in apple. As you work on the writing practice, repeat this sound and have your child repeat the sound multiple times.

Option 1

Give your child the handwriting page for the letter A.

Note: If your child is not able to write the letter without the help of dots, you can add the dots for the remaining two rows or guide your child's hand to assist in forming the letter correctly.

Option 2

Give your child the large die-cut of the letter A, and the small apple stickers. Have your child apply the apple stickers to the letter A in a single line. Encourage him to start at the top and work down, just as if he was writing the letter.

Note:

Research shows that many children are not developmentally ready to practice true paper-and-pencil handwriting until around the age of 5, though some may be ready before this and some may be ready later. Each week you will have two options for practicing letter formation with your child. Option 1 is traditional handwriting practice. If you choose this option, pay careful attention to your child's pencil grip and letter formation. Pencil grip will develop as your child develops.

Pencil Grip

<http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/pencil-grasp-development.html>

This link gives helpful information about how to assess your child's pencil grip. Your child should always form letters from top to bottom and left to right.

This link is available online through IdeaShare at www.movingbeyondthepage.com/ideas.

There are many ways to prepare for writing letters without holding a pencil. These activities are important for building strength and coordination in the hand muscles as well as practicing visual-motor coordination. Option 2 will give you some specific ideas for activities to use to help your child build skills necessary for handwriting. If handwriting is frustrating for your child or if he is resistant, it is a great idea to focus on these activities until he is ready for handwriting.

In addition, here are some general ideas for pre-writing activities that you can use throughout the year.

- ✓ Fill a shallow pan with rice and ask your child to make letters and/or pictures in the rice.
- ✓ Cut pieces of yarn to form the different parts of letters and ask your child to make the letter using the yarn pieces.
- ✓ Spray shaving cream or spread pudding on a cookie sheet and have your child trace letters in the squishy material.
- ✓ Cut block letters out of sandpaper and have your child gently trace the letter with her finger on the sandpaper.
- ✓ Use any kind of interesting material: pasta pieces, pipe cleaners, cereal pieces, blocks, etc to have your child make pictures and letters.
- ✓ Squirt bottles are magic! The motor skills necessary to make them spray works those hand muscles in important ways. Just let your child enjoy spraying outside or in the bathtub.
- ✓ Have your child use tongs to pick up pieces (cotton balls, puff balls, beads) and move them from one bowl to another.
- ✓ Any kind of coloring, drawing, play-doh and painting is also supportive of writing skills. Maybe you can provide your child with a novel art material from time to time: sidewalk chalk or chalk pastels, glittery paint or squeeze bottles of glue. All of those preschool-type "crafty" materials are not just for fun and mess-making; they are truly building your child's readiness to tackle handwriting when he is ready!
- ✓ Encourage your child to help in the kitchen. Pizza cutters and cutting soft things with a dull knife are excellent activities.

Activity 3: Acting Like a Musk Ox

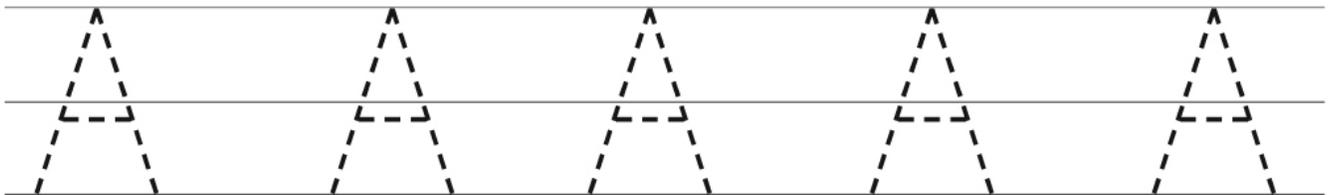
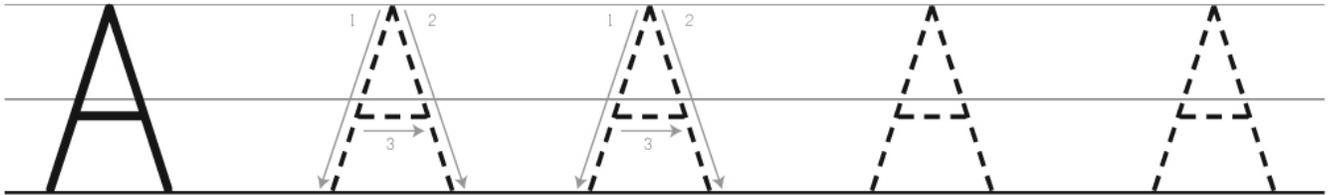
Ask your child to "act" like a musk ox. Encourage him to think about what he learned about musk ox. As he is acting, guess what your little musk ox is doing!

Optional Extension

Ask your child to draw a picture of a musk ox.



Uppercase A



Day 3

Materials

-  "Lowercase A"
- ✓ *A is for Musk Ox* by Erin Cabatingan
- ✓ brown yarn
- ✓ glue

Review

Ask your child to say or sing the letters of the alphabet in order. Ask your child to practice counting to 20 aloud. Ask your child what a "herd" is.

Reading and Questions

Today when you read the book, ask your child to find the word that is marked out for each letter and substituted with "musk ox". Encourage him to point to the first letter of each word and to say the letter aloud. Read each marked out word and see if he can find the picture of that item in the accompanying illustration. For example, on the page C is for clown, there is a clown in the window who is shivering. When you get to the letter "H" in the book, focus on the word "herd." Ask your child what herd means. He may explain that it means to hear something. Explain that this is the vocabulary word for the book that heard/herd has two meanings. Read the definition of herd (found at the beginning of the lesson) and discuss why it is the right word for the context of the book.

This reading did not have any questions.

Activities

Activity 1: Sight Word

Show your child the card with the sight word "you." Tell your child what it says and then practice saying it together.

Look at the first page of the book together. Move your finger under the words as you read, "Hey! Hey you!" and so on. Encourage your child to say the word "you" with you. Then read the first two pages of the book, this time having your child say the word "you" by herself when you come to that word. Assist her as needed.

Activity 2: Lowercase Letter Writing and Sound Practice

Option 1

Give your child the Lowercase Letter A writing page to complete. Remember to review the short "a" sound as in apple, and have your child repeat this sound as he forms his letters.

Note

If your child is not able to write the letter without the help of dots, you can add the dots for the remaining two rows or guide your child's hand to assist in forming the letter correctly.

Option 2

Point out to your child that the lowercase a is a circle with a stick on the side. Have her make a big circle in the air with her finger and then add the stick. Then follow the same procedure as with the uppercase A. Draw four large lowercase "a" letters on a piece of white paper. Have your child trace them with glue and lay a piece to make the circle and then a small piece for the stick.

Activity 3: Counting and Number Recognition

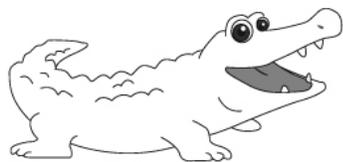
Review the numbers on the number cards with your child. On one side of each card there are corresponding dots. Have your child count the dots on each side and then flip the card to read the matching number. It is fine if your child is not able to complete this activity independently. Provide assistance as needed. This skill will be practiced many times over the course of the curriculum.

Activity 4: Letters and Sounds

Review the alphabet cards and the sounds each letter makes. Use the cards like flashcards. Hold them up randomly and ask your child to name the letter and say the sound that the letter makes.

Note

It is okay if your child does not master letter sounds this week. He will continue to work on letter sounds over the course of the year.



alligator

Lowercase a

Tracing guide for lowercase 'a' with stroke order arrows and numbers 1-4. The first 'a' is solid, the second is dashed with stroke order arrows and numbers 1-4. The third and fourth are dashed for tracing.

Five dashed lowercase 'a's for tracing on a set of three horizontal lines.

Five dots on a set of three horizontal lines, intended for independent writing practice.

Five dots on a set of three horizontal lines, intended for independent writing practice.

Day 4

✂ Materials

-  "Musk Ox"
-  "Letter Sounds 'A' (Page 1)"
-  "Letter Sounds 'A' (Page 2)"
- ✓ brown yarn
- ✓ cotton balls
- ✓ glue
- ✓ scissors

Review

Ask your child to say or sing the letters of the alphabet in order. Ask your child to practice counting to 20 aloud. Ask your child what a "herd" is. Review the most common sound of the letter "a." Review the sight word card "you."

Activities

Activity 1: Musk Ox Habitats

Look at the world map. Point out the continents on the map. Then explain that the musk oxen are found in very cold places on the planet. Explain to your child that the top and bottom parts of the earth are the coldest parts. Point out Canada, Greenland, and Alaska on the map and explain that these are some areas where musk oxen can be found. Explain that musk oxen are able to survive in very cold climates because of their thick fur. Discuss what the environment is like in these tundra regions. Find pictures on-line to share with your child.

Picture of a Musk Ox

<http://tundraprobs.blogspot.com/2010/11/threats-to-health-of-tundra.html>

This link is available online through IdeaShare at www.movingbeyondthepage.com/ideas.

Google Images

<http://images.google.com>

You can search for additional images on Google by searching for "musk ox."

This link is available online through IdeaShare at www.movingbeyondthepage.com/ideas.

National Geographic

<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/photos/tundra-landscapes/>

This link is available online through IdeaShare at www.movingbeyondthepage.com/ideas.

Activity 2: Making a Musk Ox

Encourage your child to color the face of the musk ox dark brown. Then tear about ¼ of the cotton ball off to make the tuft of white hair. Ask your child to glue this on the top of the musk ox's head. Cut the brown yarn in 6 inch strips. Ask your child to glue the yarn on the musk ox. Encourage him to put a strip of glue across the back of the musk ox. Then he can put the ends of the yarn pieces across the musk ox's back. Encourage him to glue on as many strands of "hair" on as he can fit so that the musk ox has thick hair to keep him warm!

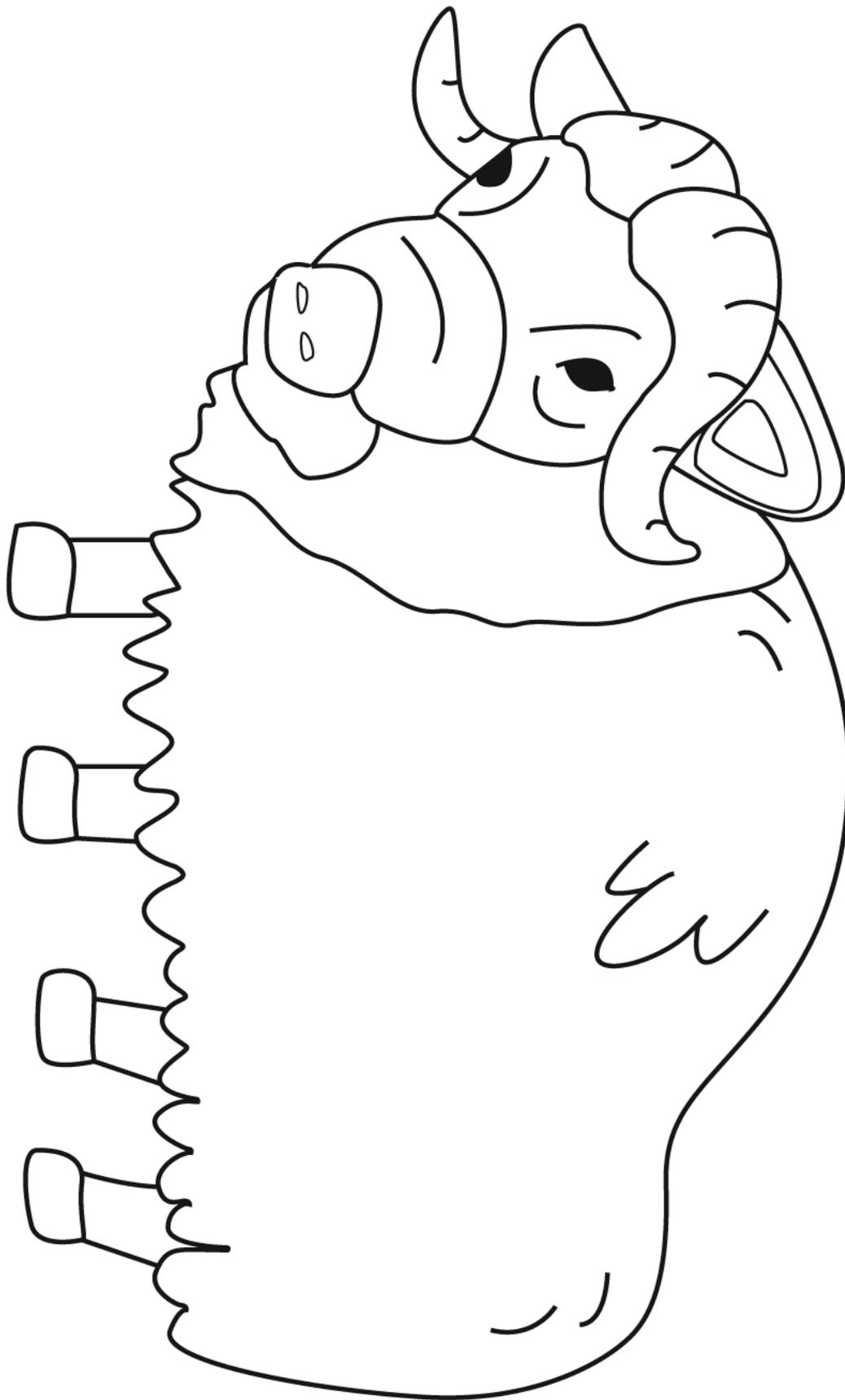
Activity 3: Letter Sounds - A

Give your child the Letter Sounds page. On the top half of the page she will circle the correct beginning letter for each picture.

Then practice writing the letter OR have your child watch you form the letters. Since your child may not know how to write any letter except a, provide assistance as needed. It may help to draw dots that she can connect to make the letter, as shown below.

Note:

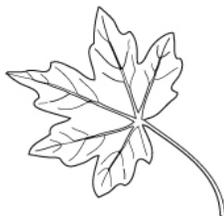
Learning to use scissors is a very important skill that helps greatly in strengthening the muscles in the hand and learning to control those muscles. Children will be encouraged to cut and paste often so that they are strengthening the muscles and learning the muscle control they need for writing.



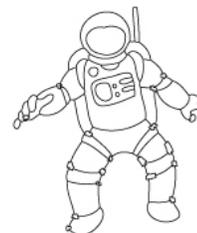
Letter Sounds: A



A B C



B L A



H A I



H A I



A B C



H I A

Letter Sounds: A

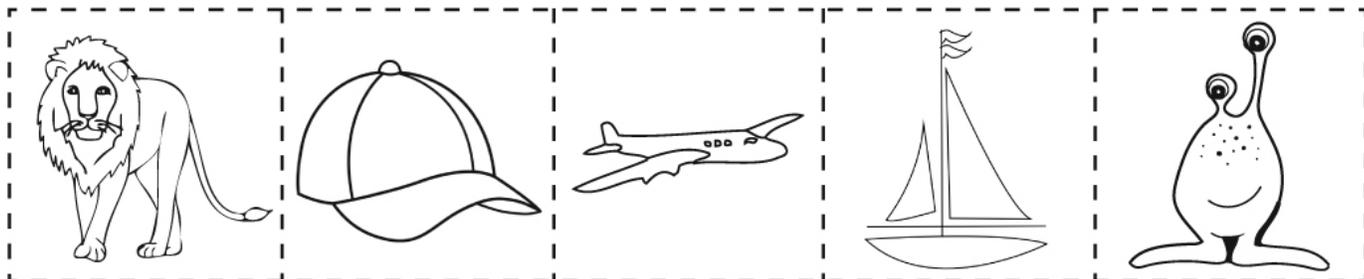
b

a

h

a

l



Day 5

Materials

-  "Number Writing 1, 2, 3"
- ✓ 10 apple die-cuts
- ✓ composition book
- ✓ several books to read to your child

Review

Ask your child to say or sing the letters of the alphabet in order. Ask your child to practice counting to 20 aloud. Ask your child what a "herd" is. Review the names of the continents on the world map. Review the sound of the letter "a" and the sight card "you".

Activities

Activity 1: Number Recognition and Writing

We want children to begin associating the quantity of numbers with the word and the symbol for each number. For this activity, lay out the number cards in order from 1-10. Show your child 1 apple. Have her tell you how many there are and then find the number card that shows that number. Repeat with 2 and 3 apples. Then mix the number cards up so they are out of order and repeat the activity. Then have your child choose the number of objects to show you and you pick the number card. Your child can "check" your work to see if you chose the right number!

Optional Extension:

Use up to 10 objects if your child is familiar with the numbers 1-3.

Option 1

For this page, your child will practice writing ones, twos, and threes. Provide assistance as needed.

Option 2

For children who are not yet able to trace numbers with a pencil, provide string the student can use to form the numbers or ask them to trace the numbers on a cookie sheet with shaving cream.

Activity 2: Reading Workshop

Each Friday your child will participate in a reading and writing workshop. Often you will be asked to teach a mini-lesson on a specific reading skill that your child will then apply as he interacts with text.

For this mini-lesson discuss that the words on a page are read from left to right. Read the first few pages from the book and use your fingers to follow the words as you read, drawing attention to the fact that words are read from left to right. Find a couple of other books and read the first couple of pages and explain that this "rule" applies to all books.

Next, encourage your child to use his finger and "trace" across the words on the page from left to right, moving down the lines. Encourage your child to spend some time with the book independently, practicing tracing the words from left to right. He can also spend time exploring the illustrations in the book. Once your child has spent 5-8 minutes with the book independently, ask your child if he liked the book and why or why not. Ask him if he would recommend it to a friend and why or why not.

Optional Extension

Ask your child to draw a face that shows how he felt after you first read the book aloud. Ask him to describe the face and what emotion(s) it represents.

Activity 3: Writing Workshop

Each Friday, your child will participate in writing workshop. This is a time for your child to "write" as freely and as independently as possible and will also be a time to practice dictating creative stories and ideas that you will record.

Your child will have his own journal and each Friday you will write the date across the top of the page. This journal will help you see your child's writing progress as the year progresses. Some Fridays he may use one page in the journal and on others he may use a 2-page spread. Many children will start off just writing random lines on the page or confusing chicken scratch, but as a child's writing skills develop, the writing will become more recognizable.

For today's writing workshop, open up to the first 2-page spread of the composition book. On the first page ask your child to draw a picture of a musk ox and then write about him on the lines provided. If your child says, "but I don't know how to write," encourage him to just "pretend" to write and put his thoughts on the page. Explain that it is okay if he doesn't make all the letters correctly. Maybe he only knows how to write a few words and can use those to write about the musk ox.

On the second page, ask your child to tell a story. The story can be about a musk ox, it can be about something that happened during the week, or it can be from the child's imagination. If your child needs more "direction" encourage him to tell a story about a musk ox. Once your child is finished, reread what he dictated, then encourage him to draw a picture to accompany the story. Explain that his picture should relate to the story in some way, in the same way that an illustrator's pictures enhance the author's words.

Number Writing: 1, 2, 3

1 1 1 1 1 1

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2 2 2 2 2 2

• • • • • •

3 3 3 3 3 3

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