

Lesson 2: Day 2

Getting Started

✂ Materials

- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils* (Activity 3 - optional)
- ✓ pencil
- ✓ large die-cut letter A (kit)
- ✓ small apple stickers (kit)

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 online (web links for suggested websites are provided) 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.

Brittanica Kids

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/7816/

Alaska Kids

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/1752/

Activity 2: Uppercase Letter Writing and Sound Practice

As you introduce the formation of a 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.

Research shows that many children are not developmentally ready to practice true paper-and-pencil handwriting until around the age of 5, although some may be ready before this while 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. For more information on pencil grip, refer to the Activity Extension.

Option 1

Give your child the "Uppercase A" handwriting page. Show her how to make the uppercase *A* by starting at the top and drawing a diagonal line to the left, starting back at the top again and drawing a diagonal to the right, and then drawing a line through the middle. Assist her as necessary. Review the sound of the letter *A* as she works.

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 her to start at the top and work down, forming the left side first and then the right side, followed by the cross line from left to right, just as if she were writing the letter.

Activity Extension

Pencil Grip

www.movingbeyondthepage.com/link/7817/

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.

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. In each unit, Option 2 of the letter writing activities 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 she is resistant, it is a great idea to focus on these activities until she 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, playdough sculpting, or 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 she 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 her to think about what she learned about musk oxen. As she 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

