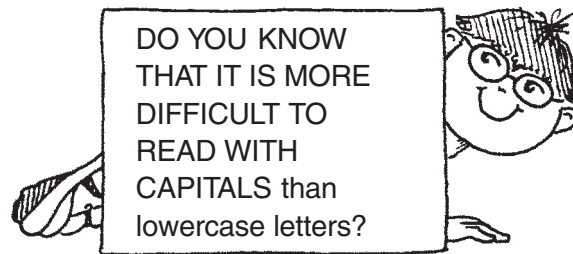
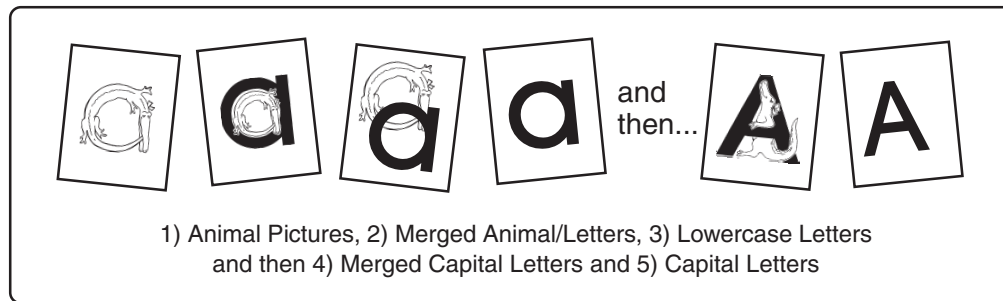


Chapter 8

Capital Letters and Letter Names



The Sequence of Presentation



Merged Capital Letter Cards (Set #3)

Because we feel capital letters should be taught in conjunction with sentence structure, we choose to teach the capital letters **after** teaching the lowercase letters and sounds, and after developing sound blending skills. However, you may teach the capital letters before sound blending if you choose. It is important that your child understand for what capital letters are used: the beginning of a sentence and the beginning of an important name.



NOTE

Only when the Lowercase Letter Shapes, Letter Sounds and Signals have been completely mastered, is it time to teach the Capital Letters. This may be just the opposite of how you were taught as a child. After years of working with children of all ages and abilities, we have found that recognizing the Shapes of the Lowercase Letters and knowing the Sounds was far more crucial to reading and spelling than were the Capitals and Letter Names. Capital Letters are important later for reading text and writing sentences. (Capitals are used only 5% of the time on any given page, at the beginning of sentences, titles and for proper names.)

In this Kit, you have already discovered another set of Cards (Set #3, blue borders). Because Zoo-phonics recommends keeping a strong association with the Animals, show her/him the *Merged Capitals* and then the *Capital Letters*. (They are on the reverse side of each other.) The *Merged Capital Letters* will bridge the gap between the Animals on the *Lowercase Letters* and the *Capital Letters*. It will take no time at all — as you play games with your child — to teach this skill. You can teach the letter names at this time also!

What is important to know is that we only use capital letters 5% of the time in reading and writing. Until your child needs to read or write a sentence or a name, there is really no reason to teach capital letters.

When you taught your child the *Lowercase Letters*, you taught the Shape of the Letter through the Animal Shape, the Sound through the Animal Name (“Missy Mouse,” for example) and a Body Signal that corresponded to the Animal to lock it into memory. In teaching *Merged Capital Letters*, we use the same Animals, the Capital Letters and the Signals. But, guess what? We teach a special Signal for capital letters. We give a Salute first (Captain Capital!), and then Signal the Animal Letter. *Whatever sound the letter makes in the word, that is the sound of the capital letter, same as lowercase letters.* This is a good opportunity to teach the Letter Names at the same time. Letter names identify the letters.



NOTE

When you read text, consonants with Capital Letters (example: “B-E-D”) have the same sounds as Lowercase Letters. Vowels, on the other hand, have two basic sounds (short sound = “Ann”; long sound = “Abe”).

Let's try Signaling a capital letter: Salute, and then Signal "Allie Alligator." That's the Capital Letter, "A"! When you Signal a Capital Letter, you can either call out its Sound ("A" as in Ann or "A" as in April). Try the whole alphabet.

And the Secret is.....

The secret is to know when your child is ready. Only introduce the *Merged Capital Letter Cards* when you know your child has thoroughly learned the Lowercase Shapes, Sounds and Signals of **every letter in the alphabet**, and is successful in playing the "Make It Say Game" and Sound Blending with Lowercase Letters.

Sequence: When matching, the following sequence may be used when introducing *Merged Capital Letters* and, finally, the *Capital Letters*:

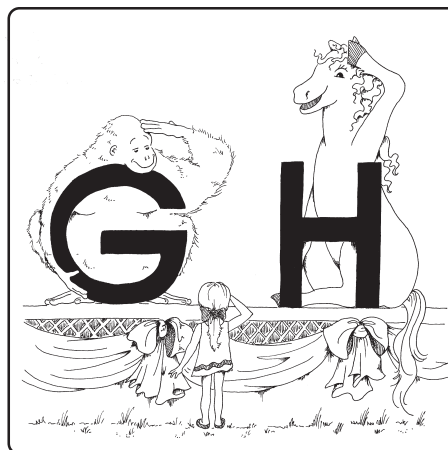
- 1) *Merged Capital Letter Cards* to *Merged Lowercase Animal/Letter Cards*.
- 2) *Merged Capital Letter Cards* to *Lowercase Letter Cards*
- 3) *Capital Letter Cards* to *Merged Capital Letter Cards*. (For this step in the sequence, you will need to make a copy of the plain *Capital Letters* Cards.)
- 4) *Capital Letter Cards* (no Animals) to *Lowercase Letter Cards* (no Animals).

Following this sequence for each activity will insure success. Don't forget to Signal the capital letters!

Activities

Discuss the Purpose for Capital Letters

First, show the difference between the lowercase letters and the capital letters. Not only do most of them have different shapes, but they DO different things. Explain that capital letters are used to begin a sentence and an important name of someone or something. Show examples of family names. Pick up a book and show how capital letters are used at the beginning of sentences.



Ask your child why s/he thinks capital letters are important. Explain that a sentence tells a whole thought. Now show her/him how capital letters are used in different names of people, places, organizations, etc. You can see that your child needs to be at a level of understanding for any of this to make sense! You can also see where we often teach toddlers and preschoolers useless information that often confuses her/him on the more important concepts.

Capital Letters in Important Names

Name all the important names in the household, including the pets. Write the names on paper so s/he can see the capital letters. Show the *Merged Capital Letter Cards* that match the capitals in the names. This is a meaningful way of teaching capital letters. When your child understands this, show her/him names of stores (K-Mart, WalMart, Taco Bell, McDonald's, etc.) Look at menus, the phone book, maps, newspapers, etc. Show that the names of mountains, rivers, oceans, organizations, etc., all start with capital letters. Point to road and street signs. Signal each time. *Don't forget to Salute first!*

Learn the "Alphabet Song" Together

(sung to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

Display the *Merged Capital Letter Cards*, "a - z." Give one salute to cover all the letters, and then sing the "Alphabet Song" as you Signal each letter in turn.

"A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y and Z. Each letter has Sound and Name. Come on now and play our game."

Say, "Show me the Signal for a Capital Letter"

Hold up each *Merged Capital Letter Card* and talk about details of the Animals and the Letters, and invite your child's comments. Then say, "Show me the Signal for this Capital Letter."

Match Merged Capital Animal/Letter to the Animal Picture

Lay out the *Animal Picture Cards*, "a - z." Lay out the *Merged Capital Letter Cards* in sequence also. Ask your child to Salute, give the Animal/Letter Signal, and say the Letter Name simultaneously. Hand the *Merged Capital Letter Card* to your child to place on the correct *Animal Letter Card*. Continue through the alphabet.

Don't Forget To Use the *Animal Alphabet Capital Letter Grids*.

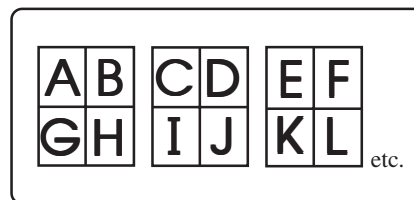
When playing a Matching Game or Bingo with either *Merged Capital* or *Capital Letter Cards*, the caller can either use the letter name “A,” or the short letter sound “a” (for example). The child gives the Signal, gives the letter Sound, and puts a counter on the correct square. Remember that the capital letter vowels make both sounds – short and long.

Use the Read and Spell with Zoo-phonics CD-ROM

Don’t forget that the *Read and Spell with Zoo-phonics*® CD-ROM teaches Capital Letters also. It is a playful way to learn a new concept! Go to the “Shipwreck Fishpond” and the “Zoo Train Mix Up” to learn about capital letters. In the “Shipwreck Fishpond” the Capitaliphone is a very exciting machine. It is colorful and makes great noises as it transforms lowercase letters into capital letters! Always Signal!

Capital Letter Cards ***(No Animals - Set#3, Reverse Side)***

When you feel it is time for your child to learn the capital letters without the Animals, show her/him the reverse side of the *Merged Capital Letter Cards*. Try the following activities:



Activities

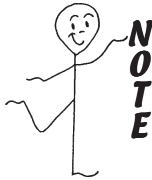
For some of these activities, you will need the *Capital Letter Cards* which you have made or copied (see “Sequence,” No. 3, Page 79).

Match Capital Letters to Merged Capital Letters – In Sequence

Have available the *Merged Capital Letter Grid Pieces*, “a – z.” Hand the *Capital Letter Cards* to your child, one at a time, in sequence, to be matched to the *Merged Capital Letter Grid Pieces*. S/he will give a Salute, and give the **sound** of the letter (“A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” “E,” etc.) simultaneously with the Signal. Now do it again, and practice the letter names.

Match Capital Letters to Merged Capital Letters – Out Of Sequence

When your child has mastered the activity above, repeat it, but this time hand out the *Capital Letter Cards* out of sequence (remember you need a copy of the plain capital letters) to match to the displayed *Merged Capital Letter Cards*. Always Signal!



N : In this final step, your child will move from Merged Capital Letters to Capital
O : Letters, still keeping the association between the Zoo-phonics Animals,
T :
E : using the same Body Signals.

Make “Magic”!

Make a magic worksheet for your child. It’s really simple. On a piece of white construction paper, with white crayon, **randomly** (and neatly) write all the Lowercase Letters and their Capital counterparts. Spread them evenly around the paper. Now give your child some watercolors, a paintbrush and some water. The letters will appear as s/he paints completely over the white paper with watercolors. When the paint is dry, s/he is to use a black crayon to connect the Capital Letters to the Lowercase Letters. (Don’t forget, you can try this with lowercase letters, words, and special “I love you” messages.) Try this activity often! It’s magic!

Ask, “How many Capital Letters are on the Page?”

Copy a page of a favorite book. If the print is small, enlarge the text. Have the child circle, count how many Capital Letters are on the page and write the number on the bottom. When this task is completed, discuss why the Capital Letters were used. Was it the name of someone? Was it the beginning of a sentence? Was it the name of a town? A month? An organization? (If you don’t have access to a copy machine, just point to the capital letters.)

Have a Capital Ball!

Stand or sit across from your child. Toss or roll the ball to your child as you call out the Letter Name, “A.” The child “catches” the ball, Salutes and gives the Signal and Name for the letter “A” before sending the ball back to you, calling out the Letter Name “B,” to which **you** respond with Salute, Signal and Name for the letter “B.” Continue through the alphabet.

Sing the “A-B-C” Song Again Together

Hold up each *Merged Capital Letter Card*, one at a time, **in sequence**. Sing the “A-B-C” Song together as the child Signals. (Don’t forget the capital letter Signal: Salute!) Now, sing the “A-B-C” Song again. This time, hold up the *Capital Letter Cards*.

And Don’t Forget the Grids!

Spell VC/CVC names such as “tom” using all lowercase letters pulled from the Base Grid. From a small envelope containing *Capital Letter Grid Pieces*, substitute a Capital “T” for the lowercase “t” which you return to the Base grid. Give Sound and Signal. There are lots of CVC names: Ed, Rob, Ben, Bob, Dan, Ken, Kit, Jen, Tim, Tom, Don, Sam, Jan, Ted, Ned, Gil, Meg, Pat, Jed, Lin, Len, Peg, etc.