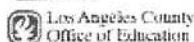


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# Making Words: Cardboard Letters

## The Task

Making Words is an active, hands-on manipulative activity in which children discover sound-letter relationships and learn how to look for patterns in words. They also learn that changing just one letter or even the sequence of the letters changes the whole word. As the teacher spells words at the pocket chart, students play along at their desks.

## Materials Needed:

- List of words to sort for patterns (in, is, it, sit, set, net, nets, kit, kits, kite, kites, Kit, sent, ten, tent, tents, kitten)
- Words printed on individual index cards
- Pocket chart
- Cardboard letters: **e i k n s t t** (See [student handout](#) below)

Duplicate, mount, and cut apart one set per child and one large set for the pocket chart.

## Procedure

1. Use the word list (or make up your own letters and words)
  - (a) words that you can sort for the pattern(s) you want to emphasize
  - (b) little words and big words so that the lesson is a multilevel lesson
  - (c) words that can be made with the same letters in different places (e.g., *ten*, *net*) so children are reminded that when spelling words, the order of the letter is crucial
  - (d) a proper name or two to remind them where we use capital letters
  - (e) words that most of the students have in their listening vocabularies.
2. Write all the words on index cards and order them from shortest to longest.
3. Place your set of large letter cards in a pocket chart.
4. Make sure every child has a set of cardboard letters.
5. Hold up and name the letters on the large letter cards, and have the children hold up their matching small letter cards.

6. Write the numeral 2 (or 3, if there are no two-letter words in your lesson) on the board. Tell them to take two letters and make the first word. Use the word in a sentence after you say it.
  7. Have a child who has the first word made correctly make the same word with the large letter cards in the pocket chart. Encourage anyone who did not make the word correctly at first to fix the word when they see it made correctly.
  8. Continue having them make words, erasing and changing the number on the board to indicate the number of letters needed. Use the words in simple sentences to make sure the children understand their meanings. Remember to cue them as to whether they are just changing one letter, changing letters around, or taking all their letters out to make a word from scratch. Cue them when the word you want them to make is a proper name, and send a child who has started that name with a capital letter to make the word with the big letters.
  9. Before telling them the last word, ask "Has anyone figured out what word we can make with all our letters?" If so, congratulate them and have one of them make it with the big letters. If not, say something like, "I love it when I can stump you. Use all your letters and make **"kitten."**
  10. Once all the words have been made, take the index cards on which you have written the words, and place them one at a time (in the same order children made them) in the pocket chart. Have children say and spell the words with you as you do this. Use these words for sorting and pointing out patterns. Pick a word and point out a particular spelling pattern, and ask children to find the others with that same pattern. Line these words up so that the pattern is visible.
  11. To get maximum transfer to reading and writing, have the children use the patterns they have sorted to spell a few new words that you say.
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## Cardboard Letters