

# **The Teaching of Reading & Spelling Starting from Square One**



**The Only Handwriting/Keyboarding Curriculum that  
Teaches Reading & Spelling  
AS the Alphabet is being Taught with  
All Decodable Words.**

**by  
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# Unit 1: Mastering the A, B, C and D

Unit Objectives See pp. 305-307

## Unit 1, Lesson 1 Letter A "AY" Word ("uh")

**Set your timer for 15 minutes. When it dings, stop. Do something else. Return to the lesson later on during the day. Please never do more than four 15-minute sessions during one day.**

At your dry erase board where you have your alphabet strip which could look like this show the letter A:

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	Z
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	z

Well, the alphabet strip should look almost like this. However, each letter should be covered. The reason is simple. You want your students to keep focused on what they are learning. You do not want them to react to the alphabet strips the way they do to wallpaper. So now, you just uncover the letters A and a.





This strip happens to be D'Nealian® but it could just as well be Getty-Dubay Italic, Barchowsky Fluent Hand (BFH), Abeka, Peterson, Palmer or whatever handwriting system you intend to teach. As our D'Nealian® font may not be one of your fonts, you can always change it to the manuscript or cursive font you wish to teach. The important thing to do WHEN you first start to teach is to cover ALL the Letters except the letter A so that it looks like this:

A																									
a																									

The name of this letter is "AY." What is the name of this letter? (Get a good loud response of "AY!")

Now, when this letter (whose name is "AY") is all by itself, it is a word. Does anybody know what this word is? If the student you call on answers, "AY," tell the student that his answer was a good guess, but wrong. Tell him it is "uh."

You can then hold up pictures that you have made and put on cards that might look like this:

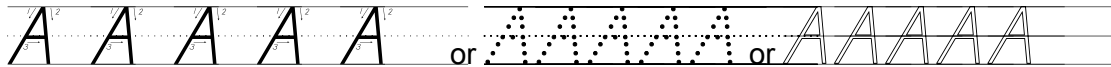
			
<b>A book</b>	<b>A hat</b>	<b>A ladder</b>	<b>A mouse</b>

You can print on the back of the card the word so that you know what the students should be reading. You might ask your students to answer the questions and hold up the appropriate card.

What is this? They should answer "This is a book." Or you can have them fill in the response when you ask, "Would you like to read \_\_\_\_\_?" Please point out that if they say "AY" book, it means that one book is all they would like to read. When we say "AY" instead of "uh" the meaning of the word does change.

## The name of the letter is "AY." The word is "uh."

You can now have your students practice writing the letter A. It might be wise to have paper especially made so the students can connect the dots or go between the dotted lines or trace the letter. The exercise should look something like this:



1. Writing the Manuscript Letter, Upper Case and Lower Case. You may use the scripted directions or use your own. You're the teacher. You know your students.. Use the directions for making the letters according to the method you are using.

You can use fonts from <http://www.educationalfontware.com/> and find links to all the major publishers of handwriting systems. You might also want to check out the Pencil Pete's animated illustrations of how to make a letter at: <http://www.jjmdesigns.com/> Your kids just might love them.

### 2. Keep the accent on legibility.

If, for example, you decide to use D'Nealian® and your student finds it difficult to make the start of a "monkey tail" or "hook" at the end of a letter, don't make a scene. Just have it end straight down at the line just as Getty-Dubay does it. If you or your student don't like the Capital Q in the system you're using because it looks too much like the number 2, don't use it. There is no law that says if you teach Palmer that you can't slip in a letter formation from Getty-Dubay Italic, Peterson, or D'Nealian® or any other recognized system of handwriting.

Make sure that your students are all holding their pencils correctly and making the correct strokes to make the letter A. If, because the student has a physical deformity or disability, a student cannot hold the pencil properly, you might want your student to use Don Thurber's glass cutter pencil grip. The pencil lies between the index and middle finger with the thumb going underneath.

The following are the directions for the "AVKO" manuscript which is very close to D'Nealian®.

"Start at the top. Slant back down to the bottom. Lift and go back to the top where you started and then slant forward a little and go to the bottom. Lift and go to the middle of your first line. Go straight to the right and stop when you get to your second line."

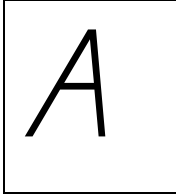
If you are working with very beginning students, you might want to read from Dr. Seuss's ABC book, which goes: "BIG A , little a, What begins with A? Aunt Annie's alligator A a a." If you're working with older students who need to improve their handwriting, don't even think about doing that.

You are the teacher, do what you know works the best. What we are doing is providing you with a scientific ordering of the teaching of the letters and providing 100% decodable words available as the lessons progress.

You can also have your students practice a letter connecting search in which they circle or highlight all the Big A's (Upper Case A's or Capital A's) and/or draw a line through all the other

letters. The search and destroy mission should not have too many letters. For this unit we suggest just using ABCD. The letters can be in different fonts such as those found on page 294.

When you are working one to one and have a portable dry erase board, you might want to make the letter for a small student very large like this:



**The square represents an 8½ x 11 inch dry erase board.**

Remember you can whatever handwriting font you choose. For a source of all major handwriting fonts go to <http://www.educationalfontware.com/> and find links to all the major publishers of handwriting systems.

Have the student trace over it with a different color dry erase pen. Work for doing it smoothly and rapidly. When the student has the large upper case **A** and the lower case **a** down pat, reduce the size a little and have the student trace over a slightly smaller large **A** and **a**. Continue tracing until it is done smoothly and rapidly. Then keep reducing the size until it becomes the normal size for the printed A and a.

*A a*

If you would like to have computer animation and have your student see what it looks like to make the letter a, you might want to check out several different websites that you can reach from (here we go again giving free publicity) <http://www.educationalfontware.com/>.

## Unit 1, Lesson 2 Letter B

Its name is "BEE." The sound this letter makes is the sound that you hear at the beginning and ending of **Bob**, **bib**, and **Babe**. Or "buh"

**Set your timer for 15 minutes. When it dings, stop. Do something else. Return to the lesson later on during the day. Please never do more than 4 15-minute handwriting sessions during one day. This notice will not be repeated. ☺**

Please note that we know that a large percentage of teachers of phonics and phonemic awareness are against the concept of adding the vowel called schwa ("uh") to a consonant to give its sound. If you can follow their advice and do it, fine. If you don't understand how to teach a consonant without adding the "uh" sound, don't worry too much about it. Chances are that your student will learn how to smooth out the "buh" "ruh" "a" "tuh" into brat, anyway. And for those who are appalled by this method, please remember that we **don't** advocate it. The way we present words (such as *at*, *bat*, *at rat*, *brat*) avoids the problem of adding non-existent schwa sounds into the words.

At your dry erase board where you have your alphabet strips you should uncover the letters B and b so that it looks something like this:

A	B																					
a	b																					
A	B																					
a	b																					

The name of this letter is "BEE." What is the name of this letter? (Get a good loud response of "BEE!")

Its sound is what you hear at the beginning and ending of Bob. Everybody say, "Bob."

Notice how you form your lips before you say Bob. Say, Bob. Say "Bee." Point to the letter B and ask, "What is the name of this letter?"

Then ask, "What is its sound?" If any student says, "BEE," gently correct the student. You're almost right. Its name is "BEE," but its sound is the first sound of the word BEE or BEN or Bob or Boy. Or you can just say "Buh."

Now, when we put this letter (whose name is "BEE") in front of the letters A and A, we get a word. Does anybody know what this word is? It's BAA as in "Baa, baa Black Sheep, Have you any wool?"

You can then hold up word cards that you have made and have them read "bah."

<i>baa</i>	<b>baa</b>	<b>Baa</b>	<i>baa</i>	<i>baa</i>
------------	------------	------------	------------	------------

<i>BAA</i>	<i>Baa</i>	<i>Baa</i>	<i>BAA</i>	<i>baa</i>
------------	------------	------------	------------	------------

If you make your own alphabet cards with at least five of each letter, you might want to have your students sort the letter cards by fonts. Having all five of each together like this:

*aaaaa AAAAA aaaaa AAAAA aaaaa AAAAA aaaaa AAAAA*  
*bbbbbb BBBBBB bbbbb BBBBB bbbbb BBBBB bbbbb BBBBB*

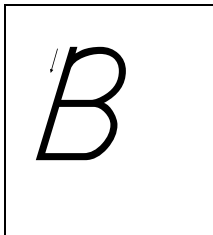
You can now have your students practice writing the upper case (capital or Big B). It might be wise to have paper especially made so the students can connect the dots or go between the dotted lines or trace the letter. The exercise should look something like this:

*B B B B* or *B B B B* or *B B B B*

Make sure that your students are all holding their pencils correctly and making the correct strokes to make the letter B following either these directions or the directions of the handwriting system you are teaching.

"Start at the top. Slant back down to the bottom. Come right back up to almost where you started. Then curve right up to the top and curve back around to the middle of your main line. Then back out and curve down and around to the bottom of your main line."

When you are working one to one and have a portable dry erase board, you might want to make the letters B and b for a student very large like this: Remember the first B is to be the size of this sheet of paper.



Have the student trace over it with a different color dry erase pen. Work for doing it smoothly and rapidly. When the student has the large upper case and lower case b's down pat, reduce the size of the letters a little and have the student trace over them

*B b*

and continue tracing until it is done smoothly and rapidly. Then keep reducing the size until it becomes the normal size for a printed B and b.

*B b*

Now have your students do at least one line of BAA, Baa, and baa.

If you want to have your students learn cursive while they are learning manuscript, we have no objection. If you don't, that is no problem either for us, but we do recommend that you show your students how the words and letters they are learning look in the different cursive fonts. Whether or not they ever learn to write cursive, they certainly will be expected to read notes and letters written by a variety of friends, relatives, employers, and fellow employees in a wide, wide variety of styles of cursive. And, no, we are not getting a kickback from [www.educationalfontware.com](http://www.educationalfontware.com)

## Keyboarding (Optional):

**General instructions on pp. 311-314 Set your timer for 15 minutes. When it dings, stop. Do something else. Return to the lesson later on during the day. Please never do more than 4 15-minute keyboarding sessions during one day. This notice will not be repeated.**

**Decodable Sentences** for Reading, Copying, Dictation, and/or Keyboarding: None available yet, but just you wait. They start with the next lesson:



**Unit 1, Lesson 3 Letter C** Its name is "SEE." Its sound is usually the sound you hear at the beginning of words like CAT, COW, CUT, COME, and CASE. (or "kuh") At your dry erase board where you have your alphabet strips uncover the letters C. It should look like this:

A	B	C																	
a	b	c																	
A	B	C																	
a	b	c																	

Point to the letter C and ask if anybody knows what its name is. The hands should go flying up and the students will probably know it's a "SEE."

Tell them that the NAME of the letter is "SEE." In small words its sound is either hard like the first sound that you hear in cat, cup, coffee, coke or cute or its sound could be soft as is the first sound in cent, city, circle and circus. When the letter c is in front of the letter a, it almost always is hard as in cab, cat, car, call, calf, can, cap, etc. Or, I guess you could say its sound is "kuh" when it's a hard c.

Now, we can make a new word. Let's see. In little words the letter a in front of the letter b is always what we call a short a. This is the first sound that you hear in the words **at**, **Ann**, **as**, and **ant**.

Write the letters ab on the dry erase board in red (or whatever is your favorite color to write with).

And how do we pronounce these two letters when they are at the end of a word?

Try to get all your students to cry out "AB."

Now, if we put our new letter C that has the "kuh" sound, what do we have?

Put the letter **c** in front of the **ab** to get **cab** on the dry erase board.

Now, put an upper case letter A in front of cab to get "A cab." Now what do we have? The students should all shout out "'uh' cab!" If anyone shouts out "'AY' cab!" remind them that they are right with the name of the letter, but not with what the word is. The name of the letter is "AY" but when it is a word it is "uh."

You can then hold up different cards reading "a cab."