



ELA Skills Brush-Up with Kids Academy: Getting Ready for Kindergarten

www.kidsacademy.mobi

Written by Lori Toney, English teacher, educational writer and mother of three school children

Entering kindergarten is an exciting milestone for both families and kids. Because it is seen as the first official year of formal schooling, the transition may seem a bit daunting. Even for children who attended preschool, kindergarten will feel different due to an increased focus on academics rather than just exploration and play. While preschoolers generally prepare through songs, read-alouds, and learning basic soft skills to manage behavior, there are specific early literacy skills they can strengthen to help them feel more confident and prepared.

The summer before kindergarten is the best time to brush up on some of the most important skills your child will need to be successful during this foundational first year. The following guide highlights key language and literacy areas to work on and includes activity ideas and helpful resources from Kids Academy!

1. Listening and Speaking

Kindergarteners are expected to follow 2-3 step directions and hold basic conversations with adults and peers. They should be able to speak in complete sentences and retell stories that were read aloud. While these skills may seem basic, they are necessary for young learners to build reading comprehension and writing skills in the future.

One of the best ways to practice is by reading with your child, and talking to them about the story before, during, and afterwards to deepen understanding.

Kids Academy offers [several classic storybook videos](#) that read the story aloud while the book pages are shown on the screen. Before watching and listening, ask children what they already know about the story to activate their prior knowledge. For example, many have already seen Disney's Cinderella, or have even been to Disney World or Disney Land. Striking up a conversation helps them engage in a back-and-forth conversation in complete sentences, while making meaningful connections to what they're about to read.

[Video: Narrated Fairytale: Cinderella](#)



While watching, stop the video a few times to ask questions about what they have seen or heard. Follow up afterwards by asking how this version of Cinderella is similar or different to another version they are familiar with. If they have never seen or heard of Cinderella before, ask them to compare it to any other fairy tale they are familiar with to continue the conversation. Be sure to check out each video in our classic bedtime story collection!

2. Print Awareness

By the time they enter school, children should be well acquainted with books. They will be expected to hold books correctly, turn pages from front to back, read words from left to right, and understand that books have covers, titles, and authors.

[Worksheet: Book Bingo](#)

Book Bingo

Check the pictures that show kids who are holding their book the right way.

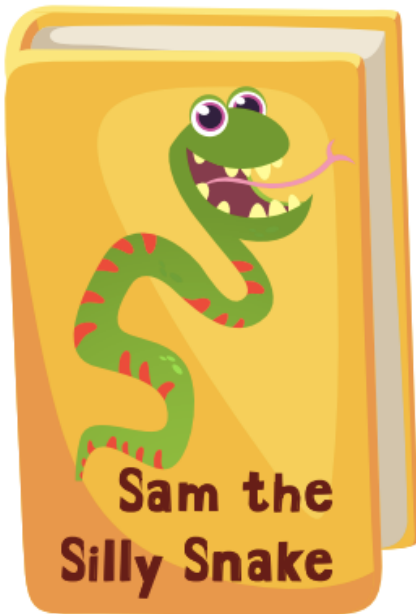


Worksheet: Find the Title!



FIND THE TITLE!

Look at the pictures of books below. Put a check next to the books that have titles.



1 2 3 4 5 6

 Find the **front cover** of a book.

[Confirm](#)

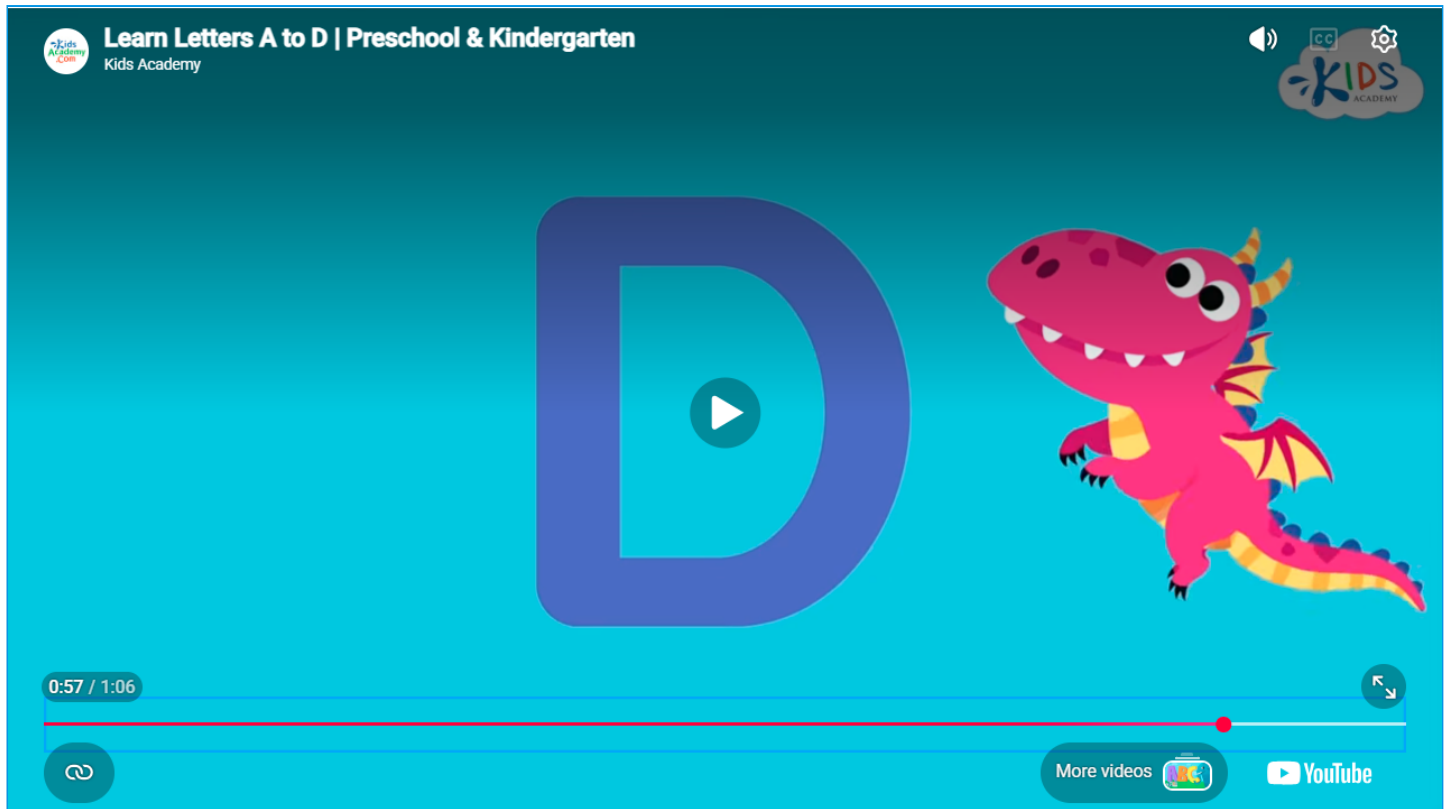
In addition to using the worksheets and [quiz](#) above, be sure to explore a variety of books with your preschooler this summer. Dig out the old board books he or she liked as a toddler and have a conversation about what they notice now about the title, author, and how many words are on each page. Go to the library and pick out different types of books; even if you don't end up reading them together, kids learn about how different books look, feel, list information, or organize chapters.

3. Letter Recognition and Early Phonics Skills

Chances are that your child has been learning their ABC's since toddlerhood! Even so, kindergarteners must understand that printed letters are associated with specific sounds and that a grouping of letters makes up a word. Even their name can be spelled with letters, which is yet another important milestone!

In addition to identifying, tracing, and writing letters, students start to build phonological awareness by attaching meaning to them. They can do this by exploring letter sounds in groups, instead of all at once. Use the video below to learn letters A-D with examples of the words that begin with that letter and sound.

Video: Letters A-D



Reinforce the same skill using an interactive quiz by Kids Academy.

Quiz: Initial Letter Sounds and Sounding Out Words



1 2 3 4 5



Say the name of the picture on the left.
Choose the pictures whose names have the
same beginning sound.



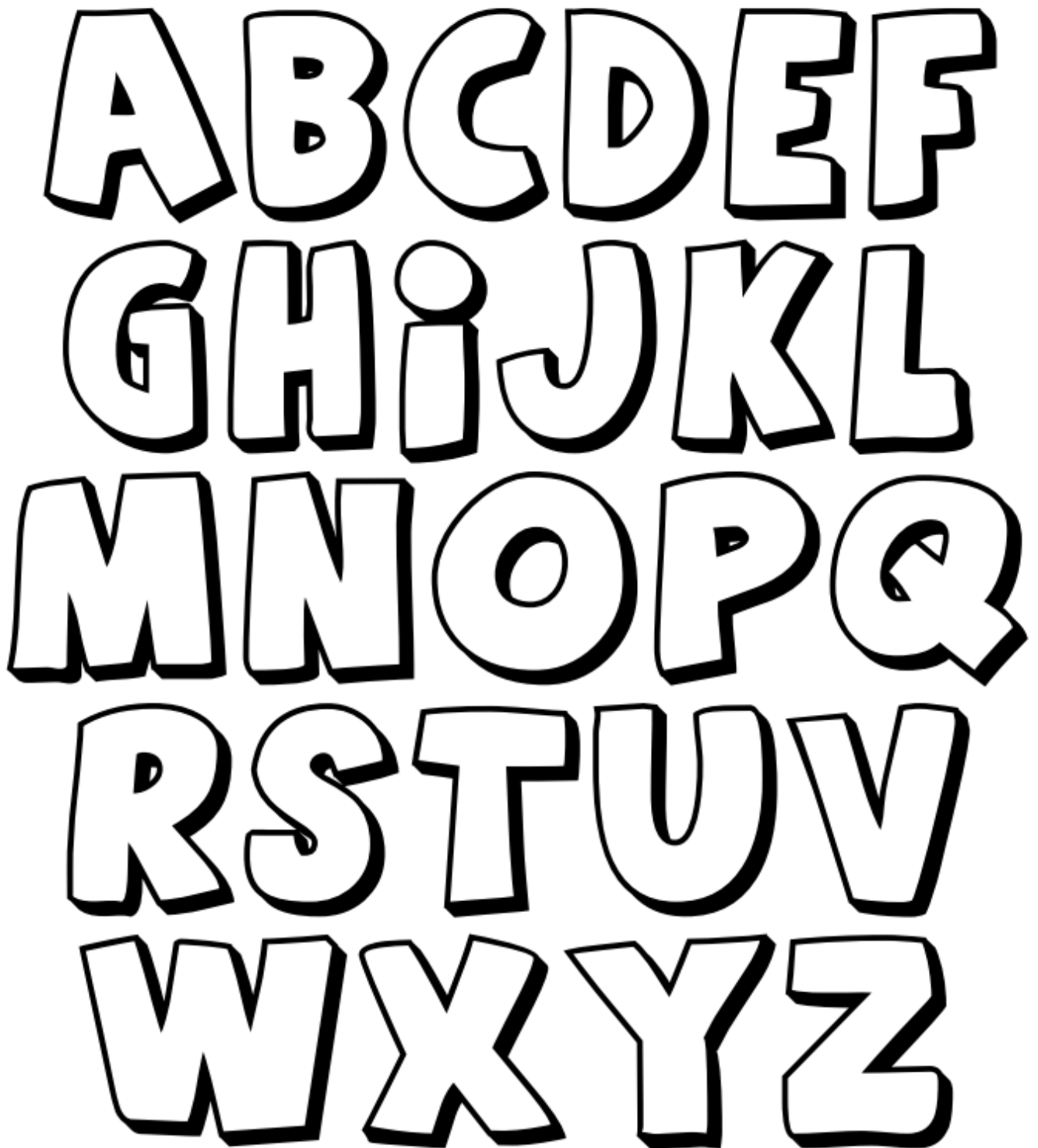
Confirm

Spelling one's own name is an important kindergarten milestone. Think about it—how else will the teacher know whose paper it is? Once kids get the hang of letters and sounds, they can learn the letters that make up their own name so they can proudly display it on their work.

[Worksheet: My Colorful Name](#)

My Colorful Name

Find the letters of your name and color them.
Color the first letter of your name red.



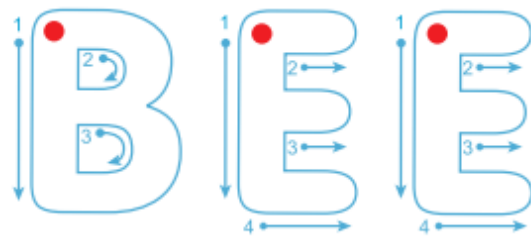
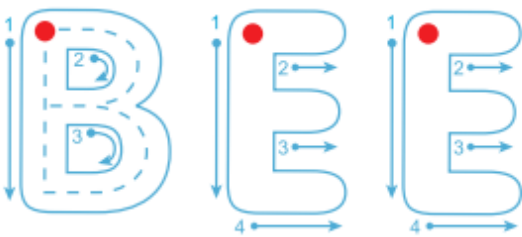
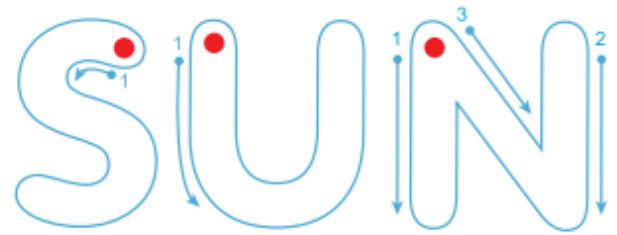
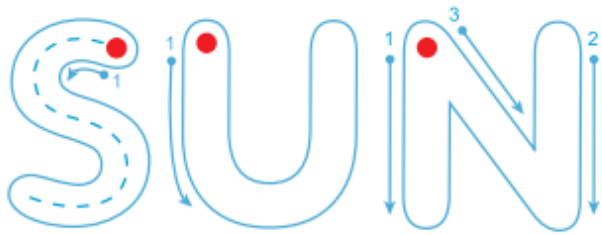
4. Writing Readiness

You can think of reading and writing as two sides of the same coin; they are always taught alongside one another! While students are learning letter recognition and sounds, they are also learning to write them. Writing, however, takes some additional skills to master; children must develop the hand-eye coordination and pencil grip to maintain legible handwriting. In preschool, this was taught through artistic expression by drawing lines and curves, or even when coloring.

This summer, encourage your little learner to take some time to practice tracing letters and words. Be sure to find worksheets that provide instructions on pencil strokes to ensure proper letter formation.

[Worksheet: Spelling 'Sun' and 'Bee'](#)

► Trace and write the letters while saying each word.



Entering kindergarten is an exciting first step in your child's literacy journey! It's also important to remember that every kid enters the classroom with different strengths and experiences, and this summer doesn't need to be nerve-wracking for you or your learner. The most important thing to do between now and the first day of school is to read together, have meaningful conversations, and introduce learning videos, games, and simple worksheets to give your rising kindergartener some light practice to help him or her feel confident and ready for the year ahead.

