

# INTRODUCTION

Doing Letter Getters can be a little like eating popcorn. It's hard to stop once you get started. Part of the fun is the curious way the "set-up" sentence or paragraph brings on a very satisfying feeling of accomplishment when a conclusion is reached.

Here's how the concept works. The letters you see at the bottom of each activity represent the first letters of words that finish the sentence. To be successful, students must use the letter clues in a way that is both grammatical and logical. Thus, the activities in Letter Getters foster language development and encourage deductive thinking.

Not only do Letter Getters activities motivate children to read and write, they also encourage them to develop a feeling for the way language is put together. Regarding language development, consider this activity:

***It's not polite to cough without ... c y m***

Obviously, "covering your mouth," not "cover your mouth," is the correct response.

In addition to this kind of experience with the language, rigorous deductive thinking is also essential in solving the word puzzles. For example:

***Look at the mosquito bites on my arm. I really got bitten at the picnic yesterday. Next time, I'll wear a shirt with ... l s***

In this case, the activity presents a problem (getting mosquito bites) that leads to a deduction, or conclusion, (the need for a long-sleeved shirt).

There are several ways the activities can be implemented. They can be used as posters, at learning centers, as bulletin boards or on overheads for whole-class discussion. For your convenience, the graphics are bold enough to be seen from a distance.

Regardless of how the activities are presented, one thing is for sure. You are missing a bet if you don't extend the activities by letting students make up their own Letter Getters. The results might not be perfect, but youngsters will be thinking and writing.

Here are a few examples of Letter Getters written by students. They come from

gifted and talented classes taught by Eileen Berkowitz in the Northeast Independent School District in San Antonio:

***When I want to watch TV and my brother wants to watch something else, w a f (we always fight).***

***After breakfast my mom tells me to g b y t (go brush your teeth).***

***The three most terrifying words to a lazy person are g a j (get a job).***

***The angry teacher looked at Michael and said, "Okay, young man, what is your excuse this time?" m d a m h (My dog ate my homework.)***

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Extensions can also come from the subject matter itself. Since the topics focus on things children already know something about, ancillary activities are easy to invent. Here are examples for extending the first ten activities:

***Activity 1:*** When people are happy, they smile. Think of three ways a dog expresses happiness, Think of three ways a cat expresses happiness.

***Activity 2:*** Draw a picture of your favorite kind of pizza, showing all of the ingredients.

***Activity 3:*** Speaking of reaching, who's the tallest member in your family? The second tallest? What's the tallest animal you've ever seen?

***Activity 4:*** Finish this thought: I remember the time when I lost my first tooth. It was ...

***Activity 5:*** Sunglasses can look very cool. Draw your face. Then draw yourself wearing cool sunglasses.

***Activity 6:*** The word "hiccups" sounds like the sound it expresses. Make up another word for hiccups that is close to the way it sounds. It shouldn't be a real word.

***Activity 7:*** On the subject of being scared ... think of creepy, crawly insects. Which one scares you the most and why?

***Activity 8:*** If you could choose to have 100 one-dollar bills or one \$100 bill, and you wanted to keep from spending the money as long as possible, which would

probably be the better choice? Explain your answer.

**Activity 9:** Draw a picture of your favorite ice-cream sundae or banana split and put a little sign beside every ingredient you used in "building" your dream desert.

**Activity 10:** Think of two words that have the most to do with a beach. Write them.

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We have tried to put the easiest activities first and we suggest you start with them. Of course a Letter Getter that is easy for one child might be hard for another. When a student does get stuck on a particular problem, simply supply a strategic word and see if that helps.

We have presented the letter clues without punctuation or capitalization simply to keep the premise more pure. If you want students to include periods and question marks in their answers, we leave that ...

**u t y**

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy these activities and that your students become enthusiastic Letter Getters!

Greta and Ted Rasmussen