

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second collection of “Letter Getters,” featuring 100 new activities. Ever since we published our first Letter Getter book, we’ve heard the same question over and over again: “When will you do another one?” Well, ask no longer—here it is!

Let me begin by thanking those of you who have been kind enough to tell us about the creative ways you have used the activities in the first book. Some of you have featured them as posters, often displaying several at a time. Others have used them as centers, or as a way of sparking group discussions.

For those of you who are not familiar with “Letter Getters,” here’s how the concept works. First, you’ll find a set-up sentence or sentences and a lively illustration. The idea then is to finish the thought with words that start with the letters that are already provided.

The set-up sentence is, of course, very important. You could ask youngsters to come up with as many sentences as they can that start with the letters a b c. (Aunt Beth called. A baby cries.) But that would be little better than busywork. Providing a structure—and requiring children to work within it—is what turns a relatively simple concept into intellectually rewarding work.

Here are three “Letter Getters” from this book. Try doing them. The answers, if you need them, can be found near the back.

***I spent two hours doing a jigsaw puzzle, and wouldn’t you know it?
I’m missing ... t l p***

***Sometimes I prefer baths to showers—especially when I don’t want
... t g m h w***

***I looked in the cabinet for a glass but couldn’t find one. All
... t g w d***

How did you do? There’s an “aha!” factor as you solve each word puzzle, isn’t there? But entertainment isn’t the only reason to have the book in your educational library. The activities help sharpen several important skills.

Most obviously, “Letter Getters” motivates children to read and write by encouraging them to move around in the language. To be successful, they must select words that are appropriate in the context of a given sentence.

For example, in the third sample activity, it's crucial that children pay close attention to the word "all," isn't it? That one word tells them that the rest of the sentence calls for a plural response, "All the glasses were dirty."

In addition to providing experience with language, "Letter Getters" demands another important skill—deductive reasoning. To use the dirty glasses example again, children must deduce that only clean glasses would be in a cabinet, and that's why all the other ones must be dirty.

By the way, if a student comes up with a different answer that tracks logically and can be defended, that's fine too. In the dirty glass example, a student might answer, "All ten glasses were dirty." Great! That's creative, flexible thinking and it works within the context of the clue.

A few other notes you should keep in mind:

- With only a couple of exceptions, all of the letter clues have been presented without punctuation or capitalization. We'll leave it for you to decide if you want students to include periods and question marks in their answers.

- Some of the answers in this book require responses in the form of contractions. That wasn't the case in our first book.

- We've placed several of the easier activities early in the book, and we suggest that you start with them. Naturally, some children will catch on to the Letter Getter concept faster than others. If a student is having a real problem coming up with a solution—and has really tried—supply one strategic word from the answer and see if that helps. But be careful about helping too quickly. Some of the challenges should take time and effort to solve.

Finally, consider using "Letter Getters" as starting points for other ideas. For example, here are some ways you might extend the first ten activities in the book:

Activity 1: Think of some things a cow might say. Here's one idea: "My favorite colors are brown, black, and white."

Activity 2: If you had a plate of six cookies, ate $2\frac{1}{2}$, then ate one more, then your mother put four more on the plate, how many would be left?

Activity 3: Count your teeth. How many do you have? How many are just coming in? How many permanent teeth do you have?

Activity 4: How many lights are in your house? Which room has the most lights? Which room has the fewest? (Don't forget the basement or garage.)

Activity 5: Think of a good name for a big dog. Think of a funny name for a big dog. Think of a cute name for a fluffy cat. Think of a funny name for a fluffy cat.

Activity 6: Get out your crayons. Make a design that is mostly purple, with a little yellow in it.

Activity 7: Name five foods you really don't like. Name five foods you really do like.

Activity 8: Here are some things that hold other things together. Make a little drawing of each of them: a nail, a paper clip, a button, a zipper.

Activity 9: Draw a car from the side with one door open.

Activity 10: Describe something funny that you've heard or done recently.

I'll leave the other 90 for you ... t d

Enjoy!

Greta Rasmussen