

Fun With Letterforms: Course overview 2017

Objectives: 1. Familiarize kindergarten children with patterns in the western alphabet; 2. make "letter-making" as fun for children as their own picture-making; 3. encourage swift, flowing, rhythmic handwriting.

Materials: drawing boards for larger paper (at least 11"x17"), crayons, colored pencils, pencils, ballpoint pens, tempera paint and paintbrushes, markers, chalk

Books used in class: "Ed Emberley's ABC," "Graphic Alphabet" by D. Pelletier

12-session course breakdown:

Class 1: Introductions, school/classroom expectations, class systems, seating chart, name game. Each student's name is lightly written on large paper: each student traces over her name, then draws something that starts with the same letter as her own name (reinforces name game). Explain ALPHABET prize system explanation (a letter is earned each time a student does something exceptionally good). Ask: "What is a pattern?" Introduce concept of stretching (simple tai chi).

Class 2: Introduce first four of seven patterns: **down-up** & **up-down** (diagonal zig-zags), **bump** and **swing** (upside-down and normal "U"). Introduce Pattern Song (sung to "Frere Jacques") with metronome (sung slowly to encourage slower, more deliberate writing). Large paper with guidelines drawn on, colored pencils.

Class 3: Continue with four basic patterns: students experiment with variations (superimposed, touching, alternating) on unlined paper while singing Pattern Song. Variations in size, combinations of different patterns on same line encouraged.

Class 4: Capital Letter alphabet group game: which letters are Real and which are Wild? Wild letter flashcard game. Students invent their own Wild letters. (Note: all letters written in simple "monoline" style)

Class 5: Practice capitals with **down-ups/up-downs** (diagonal marks) on large paper: M, N, A, W, V, K, R, X, Y, Z. Outside in chalk: write same. Inside introduce new pattern: **swirl** (series of connected small-letter e's).

Class 6: Review **swirl** with Pattern Song. Write capital letters with **bumps** or **swings** in them: B, C, O, P, R, Q, U. Introduce pattern: **over-and-back** (series of connected small-letter c's, resembles a line of waves).

Class 7: tempera painting on large sheets on tables: discuss guidelines, divide class up, set up a single color at each table. Students choose which capital letter(s) to paint.

Class 8: Letter landscapes: each student is given five capital letters to use in a drawing of her choice. Then the student comes up with five different other letters to use. Patterns are encouraged to be used, too. Introduce new pattern: **flip**.

Class 9: Pattern review: **down-up & up-down, bump and swing, swirl, over-and-back, flip**. Rest of capital letter alphabet is introduced: H, I, L, S, T.

Class 10: Tracing paper: students build their own 26-letter alphabets based on horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines they have drawn upon regular paper. They then write their name or a word in the same shape of the letters in their alphabets.

Class 11: Review **swirl** and **over-and-back**: introduce small letter alphabet beginning with e, c, m, and n.

Class 12: Continue small letter alphabet work with additional letters: help each student learn to make the letters comprising his name.