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ABC Fluency Timed Test

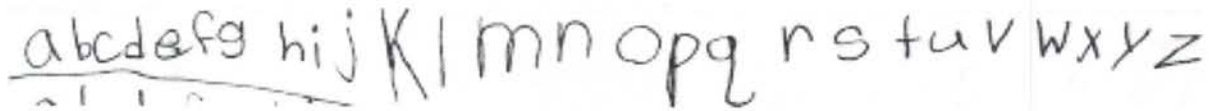
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ABC Fluency

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ABC Fluency (Quick Letter Writing) Research and Practice: Kindergartners Can Learn to Recall and Efficiently Print 40 Letters Per Minute

Kindergarten teachers in a study from the University of Washington found that children who could recall (with no ABC sample visible) and print letters of the alphabet (first lower case, then upper case) at 40 letters per minute were all very successful with first-grade reading and writing tasks.

In fact, there were virtually no reading failures among such children and **normal functioning kindergarten children can all reach this level if they are properly taught.** *“Children who write the alphabet at over 40 letters per minute can always name randomly presented letters at least at that rate too.”*

Use this powerful mental retrieval exercise in January, or after most children already have mastery of the alphabetic principle and fluency writing their name and several high-frequency words. (Fluency is speed and accuracy.) Prepare children for a “brain exercise.”*

- **Make sure the children all know the traditional ABC song and chant** so the letter sequence is already held in long-term memory.
- **I introduce this by first doing a mental rehearsal with the whole class** gathered on the floor in front of me. We talk about how we exercise our arms and legs: *“Now we get to exercise our brain too!” I ask the children to slowly visualize, verbalize, and finger write in the air along with me: a, b, c...z.”*
- We practice immediately stopping at the bell sound. Then the children are excused to tables to do the 1-minute brain exercise (also called a “timed ABC write”) exactly as we have already mentally practiced it. Children put their name on their paper and wait until they hear, *“ABC: Start now!”*

- **Use a timer** (or bell) to signal “*Stop writing and put the pencil down.*” Ask the children to draw a line across the paper under their first ABC exercise. Pause and challenge them to do one more 60-second “brain exercise.” “See if you can remember the letters even more quickly!”
- **Carefully monitor that the children are all building on success** and understanding what is expected of them. Make sure this activity starts and continues as a positive experience.
- **Stress that once they finish a-z, they can quickly start over with ABC again.**
- Tell the children to write the letters as accurately and as quickly as possible. **No erasing.** Just keep going.
- **Keep track of the correct number of letters printed.**
- **You will gain some surprising insights into children's alphabetic knowledge and handwriting skills.**
- **Date the papers and record progress.**

*Do not do this activity with the entire class if you know it will create frustration and defeat for some of the children. Provide an alternative activity for these children until they are ready to join the others and build on success.

For children who are ready for this activity, it is challenging and fun. We have even seen children choose to practice this on their own (using a timer of course!) during their activity time.