

## LESSON 12

### DISCOVERING THE COORDINATES

#### BRIEF LESSON SUMMARY

- Learning the letters A to H through symbol association, i.e. associating the letters with images and words in the same way as is done in an alphabet book.
- Memorizing the letters A to H using rhymes (letter - symbol reinforcement).
- Learning the letters A to H through physical expression exercises.

**EQUIPMENT:** giant chessboard – name cards and holders – soft toy on a pedestal (Boletus the Gnome) – plasticized cardboard squares (20x20 cm) with letters and images on one side.

#### THE FAIRY TALE

"... The king and queen were away visiting the king's uncle, the Duke of Liechtenstein. Whenever the king and queen were away from the castle, security was increased and everyone had to be able to say to the royal guards exactly where they were in the castle, using letters to describe their positions.

Boletus was left with the responsibility of making sure all the subjects knew how to do this correctly. Classes were held for all the subjects, but lots of people would still make mistakes. Some were so bad they would say they were on letter a, when actually they were on letter h.

Boletus was so worried that he could not even sleep at night. Then suddenly he remembered his teacher used to read him an alphabet rhyme when he was just a little baby Boletus. However, no matter how hard he thought, poor Boletus just could not manage to remember how the rhyme went. He jumped out of bed, ran to the royal computer and started to print pictures of some of the things that he remembered were mentioned in the rhyme. First a picture of an apple, then a butterfly. Suddenly, like magic, it all came back to him..."

**A is for APPLE – a crisp crunchy bite!**

**B is for BUTTERFLY – colour in flight!**

C is for CASTLE - we're safe in a fight!  
A-B-C, that was ea-sy

D is for DIAMOND - so bright and strong!  
E is for ELEPHANT - a nose soooooo long!  
F is for FROG - what a croaky old song!  
D-E-F, phew! not many letters left

G is for GIANT - the biggest by far  
H is for HORSE - more fun than a car  
with a-to-h rhymes we know where we are!

## ACTIVITY 1

### THE ALPHABET RHYME

#### Main instructions for the children

- In pairs, one pair at a time, take one of the 8 cards with letters on them and enter the castle.
- Holding hands, follow the correct path for the letter chosen to the other side of the castle, reciting the appropriate part of the rhyme, e.g. walk along the a-path saying or singing 'A is for apple – a crisp crunchy bite'.
- When you arrive at the other side of the castle, near Boletus, place the card on the ground, outside the castle.
- Return to where you were, passing outside the castle, and sit down.

#### Activity details for the teacher

**NOTE:** THE CHILDREN ENTER THE CHESSBOARD ON THE 1ST RANK (I.E. THE ROW OF SQUARES MARKED BY NUMBER 1), BOLETUS SITS JUST BEYOND THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CHESSBOARD (THE 8<sup>TH</sup> RANK)

- a) The children are seated on the side of the board marked by letters, with Boletus on the opposite side of the chessboard. In no particular order, show them the cards with the pictures and letters: a butterfly, a castle, an apple etc. Ask the kids what they think Boletus had in mind.
- b) Together you discover that the letters and the pictures serve the

purpose of giving names to paths.

- c) Recite or sing a verse at a time and then repeat it with the children so they can memorize them.
- d) The first pair of children take a card, and while reciting or singing their verse and holding hands they follow the path for the letter in question (the children who are not participating can help them with the rhyme - if they still have difficulty, you can help).
- e) When the pair arrive at the other side of the chessboard, they leave the card near the edge of the board, and return to their place.
- f) The second pair starts with another letter.
- g) The activity should be repeated twice so that all the children participate. Only 16 children can do the first turn, one pair per letter.

## ACTIVITY 2

### THE LETTERS ARE US!

#### Main instructions for the children

- 3-4 children enter the board from the side opposite Boletus (1st rank).
- Follow the letter-path that corresponds with the letter-card you are given.
- Do the body movements for the symbol connected to the letter as instructed.
- Go the whole length of the path.
- When you arrive at the other side of the castle (8th rank), and are facing Boletus, put the card on the ground outside the room.
- Return to where you were, passing outside the castle, and sit down.

#### Activity details for the teacher

- a) Groups of 3-4 children line up in front of the A1 square.
- b) Show the group the card with the letter A and its picture.
- c) The children follow the A-path, adopting the characteristics and body movements suggested by you.
- d) When they reach the other side of the board, they return to the group, passing around the chessboard.
- e) The second group starts from the B1 square, and so on until the H-path has been done (one group at a time, doing the physical activity for each letter as instructed).
- f) Repeat the entire activity several times so that each child does at least one

letter (all of them if possible).

**Suggested body movements for Activity Detail C.** As always you should give a demonstration first. Besides making things quicker, when children see a teacher doing something they become less inhibited as well. Practice appropriate sounds they might make (e.g. croaking like a frog, neighing like a horse)

**A IS FOR APPLE.** The children go along the A-path, using the Forward Castle Step. Both arms are held out to the side, straight and parallel to the ground; at the conclusion of each Castle Step, the right arm brings an apple-sized ball (ideally red or green) in front of the mouth, and a big pretend bite is taken out of the 'apple' (stress to the children that they should not touch the ball with their mouths), the left hand comes over and takes the ball and the left arm is extended again. These actions are repeated in reverse. The children can be asked to say 'yum yum' after each bite. (Example instruction: When you cross the castle you eat a delicious apple)

**B IS FOR BUTTERFLY.** The children go along the B-path as follows: on the first square, they spin around inside the square with the arms held out; while taking one step into and out of the square ahead, they mimic the beating wings of a butterfly with their arms; when they stop on the next square, they spin around again. (Example instruction: You are happy-go-lucky like a butterfly!).

**C IS FOR CASTLE.** The children follow the C-path using the Castle Step (check that they are alternating between the right and left foot for the first part of each step). Example instruction: You are soldiers marching across the castle with military precision.

**D IS FOR DIAMOND.** The children follow the D-path as follows: arms are upstretched on either side of the head with the hands closed in fists; kept straight, the arms are lowered on each side of the body while quickly opening and closing the hands with fingers apart and wiggling; on the next step the arms come back up with the same arm, hand and finger movements. (Example instruction: Move your hands and fingers to show the brilliant shine of a diamond!).

**E IS FOR ELEPHANT.** The children follow the E-path in line; they hold hands with flexed torsos slightly inclined forward; the first in the line holds one arm forward, imitating the movement of an elephant's trunk (Example instruction: You are an elephant taking a slow and stately walk waving your trunk in the air...).

**F IS FOR FROG.** The children follow the F-path: they go into a crouching position like a frog before it leaps (legs tucked well under the body directly behind the hands). They hop with legs together quickly throwing their arms up in the air before they return to the ground. (Example instruction: You are croaky young frogs that hop everywhere: hop - croak - hop - croak). You can practice quickly saying words that sound like a frog's croak, e.g. 'knee-deep, knee-deep' or 'red it, red it'.

**G IS FOR GIANT.** The children follow the G-path using long and heavy steps two squares per stride. (example instruction: Do long, long and heavy, heavy steps like you were a giant!).

**H IS FOR HORSE:** The children follow the H-path. They go on all fours outside the chessboard in front of the h square. Quickly they stand on the balls of their feet with bent arms in front of them - their hands closed in tight fists like horses' hooves; they move forward with quick up-and-down steps like a circus horse rearing up on its back legs. They can make occasional neighing sounds (Example instruction: Move like you were a beautiful horse in a circus that goes forward on its back legs (you can neigh if you wish). As you leave the board quickly drop down on all fours Then stand up again and return to your position going around the chessboard.

**CLOSING CHANT: The children form groups of 3, and recite or sing the individual rhymes, with each group doing one letter.**

#### REGARDING THE ALPHABET AND NUMBERS

Through these game activities the teacher can check to what degree the children have understood the relationship between the letters and numbers and take a suitable opportunity to review them together. The children learn and recognise alpha-numeric coordinates better through the use of physical movement in the chessboard space.

## OBSERVATIONS

### DISCOVERING THE COORDINATES

In the same way that we are individual in our feelings, we are also individual in the way we learn things.

Some children respond more to hearing sounds and the spoken word. Others need to see a figure or a symbol to understand an idea. Others learn things through the body

(internalizing muscle-sensation or kinesthetic learning). It is probable that each way is used simultaneously to varying degrees, but we are more aware of one in particular. In this session the teacher can benefit from the use of important stimuli to read the children's learning methods in class.

The class affirms and explores the idea that 'you move'.

One child recounts that while listening to the rhyme he has 'seen' the castle in all its beauty in his mind; another to have 'heard' her arms moving in flight like the wings of a butterfly, and still another to feel like an elephant majestically walking: "I just had to hear what was said to want to be like a big strong elephant pushing through the jungle ... "

Many children realise that sensations from a smell or taste may trigger memories; however, the predominant sense memories are those related to use of the body. Reciting or singing the rhyme with physical movement or small motif association helps the child to fix in their memory what was said.

By dividing the words into rhythmic syllables, the children are better able to scan them and thus remember them. Movement favours a child's natural way of learning and physical expression becomes an entertaining game.

In so doing, information is ingrained in sense memory (e.g. learning the letters and numbers with movement), which will be recalled in class at the appropriate moment.