

We Quickly Teach Lowercase Letters Because That is What Young Writers Need... So Then How Do We Teach Capital Letters?

We teach uppercase letters through writing books with the names of classmates, practicing "heart words," playful minilessons, and individual coaching. We teach whole-group minilessons with "lift the pen" capital letters B,D,P,R and E,F,J,T as needed using white boards or paper. We notice book titles have capital letters and sentences always begin with capitals.

Speech bubbles and thought bubbles are useful tools. Nellie Edge Read and Sing Big Books™, Elephant & Piggie books (Mo Willems) and quality literature inspires us.

A	A cat, A dog (Children label early guided drawings)
B	Boo! My Book (Children leave spaces between words) <i>Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear</i>
C	Cat (Notice the titles of books) <i>I Can Read Colors, I Have A Cat</i>
D	Dad I love Dad. Dear ____ Minilesson: Verbalize "down, (lift) half around"
E	YES/NO games The End! the end (Both ways are correct)
F	From_____ Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum... My Book of Friends <i>Five Little Speckled Frogs</i>
G	Go (Quick review with white board: A-G) Minilesson: STOP/GO
H	Hi_____ Happy Birthday! Happy Pig Day! Ha! Ha! <i>I Have A Cat</i>
I	I love, I see, I like, I can, I am (This is the first letter we learn) <i>I Love the Mountains</i>
J	Justin is my friend (A book of names)
K	OK Look at ABC wall cards. (Notice the slight difference: Kk capital K has a sideways v)
L	LOVE/love I LOVE YOU! I love you. La, la, la... (Elephant & Piggie)
M	Mom My Book Moo! (Speech bubbles) <i>The More We Get Together</i>
N	NO! (Read <i>No, David!</i> by David Shannon)
O	OK (Provide speech bubbles) Oooh... (Read Elephant & Piggie Books) <i>The Opposite Song</i>
P	Pop! Piggie (Quick review with white board: A-G then H-P as needed) <i>Playmate</i>
Q	Queen Quiet! (The marriage of Q and U ceremony)
R	Ryan is my friend. (A book of names)
S	STOP/Stop Minilesson on Ss, Cc, Oo, Pp, Ww, Xx, Zz. Discuss size: big S, little s.
T	Thank you. To_____ Today is Monday. <i>Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear</i>
U	Uu Look on ABC Chart - What do you notice? Lowercase u has a straight line down.
V	Vv Minilesson on both capital and lowercase letters that are made the same.
W	Wow! Why? Speech bubbles, practice on white boards: Who? What? Where? When? Why?
X	Put an "X" over the error and keep on writing Xx—notice uppercase/lowercase letters.
Y	YES! (occasionally written in all capital letters) Yes! You're my friend. YES/NO games
Z	Zero the Hero, (Portland) Zoo

Look at children's handwriting: What minilessons would most easily build automaticity with capital letters? Keep practice meaningful and embedded in real writing whenever possible!

Handwriting Matters in Joyful Accelerated Literacy