

English activities

Spelling/vocabulary

Have letters written on paper. Say a word and they must go and get each letter 1 at a time in order. If there are 2 or more children take it in turns to get a letter.

Countdown – Give them 9 letters. How many words can they make? What's the longest word they can think of? They can only use the letter once, you could have 2 of the same letter though as part of your 9.

If you are out for a walk look at the last 3 letters on a car reg. Can you think of any words with those letters in? e.g. **LMC** – you could say **camel**. Can they think of a phrase with each word starting with those 3 letters e.g. **Lions Moving Carefully**.

Play I spy. For a challenge play it but for something that is a certain number of letters. E.g. "I spy with my little eye something that is 4 letters.

Hangman – words or sentences. You could focus on the common exception words.

Pairs – write words on pieces of paper. Each word needs to have a 'partner' with the same spelling pattern, e.g. should and could, old and cold... Turn them all over so they're face down and turn 2 over at a time. If they find 2 with the same spelling pattern then they keep them.

Letter hunt – write a letter and a number 1-26 on a piece of paper/post-it (for each letter of the alphabet) and put them up around the house/garden. Write down on a piece of paper a code. It could spell out a word or sentence. E.g. if 5=s 7=h 16=a 13=l then the code for 'shall' would be 5, 7, 16, 13, 13. (**The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog** uses all of the letters of the alphabet)

Bingo – Pick 6 words from a list of 12. Write them in each space on a 2x3 grid. Say a word and if they have it cross it off. Who can get a line first? Full house first?

Say a word and everyone needs to write as many words as possible that rhyme with that word. E.g. say 'could' and you could write down 'would, wood, should, mud'. Who can think of the most?

Unscramble the letters – children are given anagrams and need to work out the word. They could have a specific theme e.g. animals, objects in the house, flowers... You could start off easy e.g. act =cat, ogd = dog... then use longer words e.g. darlzi, neptelah

Scategories – pick different categories then a letter. You have to think of something for each category starting with that letter e.g. if your categories are animals, girls names, boys names, something you find in the kitchen and sport, and your letter is 'b' you could write bear, Bella, Bobby, bowl and basketball. Get 1 point if you have the same answer as someone else and 2 points if nobody says the same.

Alphabet search. Pick a space (a room, downstairs, the garden...) for children to go around and write something down beginning with every letter of the alphabet. If you are going on a walk you could also do this and it gets children really looking at what is around them. Alternatively you could use a picture.

Take it in turns going through the alphabet saying something for each letter for a chosen category (e.g. 'ant, bee, cat, dog, elephant'). Make sure the same person doesn't always start so they have different letters each time.

Pick a category e.g. food. Take it in turns to say a word beginning with 'a'. If you can't think of any more, move on to 'b'. The aim is to stay on each letter for as long as possible e.g. apple, avocado, almond...

Play Scrabble – good for maths as well.

Get your child to pick an object from your house/garden and describe it to you, one clue at a time, but they can't use rhyming words as clues, or parts of the word e.g. if it was a toaster they couldn't say it makes toast or say it rhymes with 'boaster'.

Say a word such as 'tree' and the next person has to say a word linked to that e.g. bark. The next person says a word linked to 'bark' e.g. dog. You're not allowed to repeat any words anyone has said.

Can they find anything in the house/garden that has 3 letters (e.g. dog) 4 letters (e.g. bowl) 5 letters (e.g. table)...

Give them a word and a time limit. How many words can they think of related to that word? E.g. fish – water, sea, shark, bowl, chips, fins, scales

Complete the word – say the 1st half of a compound word (2 words joined together) and ask them to guess the rest of the word e.g. arm – could be armband, armchair... You could also give them words on pieces of paper and get them to pair them up e.g. arm, chair, no, body, any, thing (You could discuss how some work with more than one – e.g. it could be 'nobody' or 'nothing').

Give the children a list of adjectives and ask your child to find something that you could use the adjective to describe e.g. smooth – mug, wooden – table, transparent – window

Write down a 4 letter word and the next person has to change only one letter to make a new word e.g. thin, then, when... You can't repeat any words. If you want an extra challenge you could say that they can't change the letter the person before them changed e.g. if you said 'till', then the next person changed the 2nd letter so the word was 'tell', you couldn't change the 2nd letter if you were the next person.

Pick words to write on each other's back with your finger. Can they guess which word was written? Can you work out what they wrote on your back?

If you have a paintbrush you could mix some mud and water and they could paint mud words on your patio, wood, or paper.

Sensory – you could use shaving foam/sand/mud/ and get the children to write a word in using their finger or a stick.

Write some words with a letter missing in each one. Can they work out the missing letter? E.g. wh_, s_ould, pushi_g, hap_iness... Discuss if there are any where you could have more than one option e.g. wh_ could be why or who.

Write a word pyramid. Start with a 3 letter word then add a letter to make a 4 letter word. Then a 5 letter word. You could give them some of the letters and they have to work out the missing letter e.g. cat, c_at, c_a_t, c_a_t_ (cat, chat, chart, charts)

Choose a word and take it in turns to write the next letter. E.g. you=red them=blue smile.

If you have connect 4 you could write letters/put stickers with letters on each counter. Take it in turns to put a counter into the grid. Who can spell a word first?

Battleships – you can get free grids on the internet or you could draw them. Instead of placing boats on your grid for your partner to guess the position of, you write 5 words. When your partner guesses a word that has a letter in you tell them that letter so they can write it on their guessing grid. This should help them to know where the rest of the letters in the word are on the grid. Challenge – use words which all have 2 letters the same so it's harder to guess which word it is.

Writing

Keep a diary of what you have been up to each day. You could include pictures and something new you have found out each day.

Draw a picture of your favourite activity that day and write a sentence. Try to use a conjunction such as 'and' or 'because'.

Instructions – imagine an alien wants to know how to do something - pick something you like doing or something you have done e.g. how to do a handstand, how to make toast, how to look after a dog...

Writing a story - Write down 6 different options for a character, a setting and an object. Roll a dice, look at the list to find out who your character is. E.g. 1. Princess 2. Wolf 3. Pirate 4. Granny 5. Teacher 6. Mouse. If you rolled a 4 you would have to write a story about a granny. Repeat for the setting and object. Then write a story including those things.

Would you rather? – Give children a question with 2 options e.g. Would you rather live on a houseboat or in a log cabin? Would you rather be a bird or a squirrel? Etc. They have to write down their answer giving a reason why.

Be the teacher – give children a sentence/paragraph with some mistakes in and they have to be the teacher. You could miss out punctuation, spell words incorrectly, add a full stop in the wrong place, repeat some of the words, miss out words... You could write a sentence in chalk outside on your patio. They could use a paintbrush with water on to trace over the letters/punctuation that are wrong and use the chalk to make the corrections.

Write a simple sentence for each person e.g. *The cat was on the mat.* Each person has to add an adjective (describing word). E.g. *The lazy cat was on the mat.* Pass the paper to the next person. They add a verb e.g. *The lazy cat was sleeping on the mat.* Pass it on. Add an adverb (describing the verb) e.g. *The lazy cat was sleeping peacefully on the mat.* Extend the sentence using a conjunction (joining word) e.g. *The lazy cat was sleeping peacefully on the mat when suddenly there was a loud noise.* Alternatively you could all have the same starting sentence and you could compare your end sentence.

Give your child a list of 5/10 words. Can they write a short piece of writing including those 10 words? What's the least amount of words they could use to include all of them. E.g. banana, cat, house, luckily, grey. They could write: The **grey cat** walked through the **house** and nearly slipped on a **banana** but **luckily** he saw it just in time.

Give your child a number and they have to write a sentence with that many words in. E.g. if you give them the number 7 they could write: *The white rabbit hopped over the log.* Challenge them to write a few sentences or a paragraph including a larger number of words such as 53. *The white rabbit hopped over the log on his way to see his friend Alice. It was her birthday and she was having a party. Rabbit couldn't wait for the chocolate cake and all*

of the games. Last year he won pass the parcel and got a bunch of carrots which were delicious.

Write a letter or card to a friend or family member you can't see at the moment. What have you been doing? Are there any questions you want to know answers to? E.g. Have you been enjoying the sun in your garden?

If there is anything you would like to do at the moment but can't, write it down on a piece of paper and put it in a jar. It will make a great to-do list when you are able to do them and help you appreciate the little things.

Take it in turns to say a word to create a story – this could be said or written. Person 1 = blue, person 2 = red **Once upon a time there was an evil princess.** Alternatively you could alternate sentences. **Once upon a time there was an evil princess. She had green, curly hair and a big, pointy nose.**

If you have any old magazines or newspapers you could get children to make a specific sentence or a sentence of their own by cutting out words from headings/sub-headings. You could extend this to them 'writing' a paragraph or a story. They could also use words from food packaging such as cardboard boxes.

If your child is into sport they could pick a cancelled fixture and write a report making up the result. Who won? Who scored? Did anyone get sent off? What did the managers say? Who was man of the match? How many people went? What was the weather like? How does it affect their position in the table?

You could paint some pictures on pebbles/draw pictures on paper/cut out a picture from a newspaper or magazine. Get them to pick one and write something about it. It could be a descriptive piece of writing focusing on adjectives, a list using commas (I can see a man and girl walking, trees swaying in the wind, a dog chasing a stick and an old wooden bench) or a story.

Pick a character from a book, magazine or tv programme and create a WANTED! poster. They will need to draw the picture and write a description so people know who they're looking for. E.g. *Have you seen this girl? She broke in to our house and ate our porridge, broke Baby Bear's chair and slept in our beds. What a cheeky girl! She has curly golden hair with a pink bow in it and she was wearing a long purple dress. You will have to be fast to catch her as she is as quick as a cheetah. If you have any information we will give you a reward of £100. Please help us.*

Reading

If you have a magazine or newspaper you could give your child a list of words to find and underline or highlight.

Write some words on the floor and children have to jump on the word and say it. You could say 1 word and they jump on it. Then add another word and they have to jump on them in that order. Keep adding a word so eventually they have to remember the order for every word. E.g. 1st they jump on should, then they have to jump on should then children. Next they have to jump on should, children and people.

Write words on a wall/fence/patio with chalk. Say one of the words and the children have to use a water gun to shoot at the word that's been said. Alternatively if you have a toy gun that fires foam bullets you could have paper with words on inside your house and they have to try and hit the word.

Write words on the floor and say a word they have to try and hit with a ball. You could start with the words that are closest first and get further and further away.

Write a book review – what did you like? Dislike? Summarise the story. Who were the characters? Would you recommend it? Why? Give it a score out of 10.

Sight word hopscotch – Write words on the patio with chalk in a hopscotch formation and the children have to say the words as they jump in each square.

If you're out for a walk and see somebody you don't know make up a life story about them. Where are they going/have they been? Do they look happy/sad/angry? Why? Do they live on their own? If they had a secret superpower what do you think it would be? This helps with their prediction and inference skills.

Write some words on bottles that you have. Children use a hoop (if you have a paper plate you could make one) and they have to say the words they manage to throw the hoop on to/ have to try and get it on a word you say.

If you're out exercising how many different things can you read? E.g. road signs, street signs, shop names, car number plates, the side of a lorry...

Try and read something every day – it could be a book/comic/website/recipe/instructions for a game.