

T H E  
H A N D B O O K  
F O R

***First* Letters and Words™**

One of the Building Blocks for Learning™ Series



**First Byte®**

THE WORLD'S LEADER IN SOFTWARE SPEECH TECHNOLOGY



***FIRST LETTERS AND WORDS***<sup>TM</sup>

H A N D B O O K

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# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You have just purchased **First Letters and Words™**, an exciting Early Education skill builder that incorporates synthesized speech to increase children's ability to learn important reading readiness skills. **First Letters and Words** is the second title in **First Byte's® Building Blocks for Learning™ Series**.

Meet **Ted E. Bear** of **First Shapes™** fame. He's a charming, delightful fellow, a talking computer friend who will introduce the children who meet him to the world of letters and words. As he takes them through **First Letters and Words**, the children will play in a rich learning environment in which they recognize alphabet letters and learn a beginning reading vocabulary of nouns. Each activity is designed to increase their readiness for independent reading.

Because of the speech capabilities of Ted E. Bear, children will be able to participate in **First Letters and Words** activities without knowing how to read every instruction. They will find the program easy and fun to use. Their lack of dependence on a grown-up reader will increase their self-confidence as an independent learner. As an added feature, the grown-up Helper will be able to put words into Ted's mouth so that he makes comments designed for each special child working in **First Letters and Words**.

This **Handbook** is a guide for you the Helper. It will give you an overview of the educational objectives of **First Letters and Words**, an introduction to each Learning Module, and enrichment activities that you can use with your child to reinforce and expand on the concepts learned in **First Letters and Words**.



## GETTING STARTED

After reading this **Handbook**, play with **First Letters and Words** yourself. Look at each learning module with your child's skills and interests in mind.

Select the **Helper's Choice** icon (H) in the upper left hand corner of the Main Menu. Enter the reward messages you would like Ted to say in the appropriate Learning Modules.

Help your child get started by giving an introduction to the Main Menu. Assist when necessary, but encourage your child's independent decision making.

## WHAT CAN YOUR CHILD LEARN BY USING *FIRST* LETTERS AND WORDS?

***First Letters and Words*** will help your child be able to . . .

- Identify the upper and lower case letters of the alphabet.
- Locate the alphabet keys on the computer keyboard.
- Associate letters with words that use those letters in the initial position.
- Achieve sight recognition of a 76 word vocabulary of nouns.
- Visually see how each upper and lower case letter of the alphabet would be drawn with paper and pencil.
- Take a written and spoken description and associate it with a familiar animal or object, correctly identifying the word that names it.
- Read short, simple sentences using primary words.

# LEARNING MODULES

## MAGIC LETTER MACHINE

This interactive Learning Module is dedicated to the letters of the **alphabet**. The child presses a letter on the keyboard and that letter is drawn on the screen as if the child were drawing it with a pencil on paper. If the Shift or Caps Lock key is activated the letter pressed will be created as a capital letter. If not, the letter will be displayed in lower case. If the child rapidly presses a series of letter keys, the first one will be considered the actual selection. After the letter is drawn on the screen and the letter name is spoken, it goes into Ted E. Bear's **Magic Letter Machine**. The delightful result is a picture of something that begins with the letter pressed. For example, if the child presses the letter **M**, a picture of a mouse could appear with the sentence "**M is for Mouse**". The sentence will be spoken and the picture and sentence will remain on the screen until the child presses another letter key.

## WHO AM I?

Children love to play guessing games! "**Who Am I?**" is a delightful game that gives children the opportunity to use reading, listening, and problem solving skills to solve a mystery. A short description of a nameless animal or object is displayed in simple sentences on the screen. *"I am small and grey. I love to eat cheese. I hate cats! Who am I?"* Each description is spoken and can be repeated. From the clues given, the child identifies or creates the word for the mystery item.

If the **EASY** level is selected Ted E. Bear supplies the correct name and the child must type the letters on the keyboard to match the displayed word. The letters can be entered in any order.

If the **MEDIUM** level is selected, the child will see three boxes each containing the name of an animal or object. The challenge is to find the correct word box.

If the **HARD** level is selected, the child will only see the correct number of blanks for the mystery item's name. The letters can be entered in any order to make the word. Only correct letters will be accepted.

In all three cases, after the name is correctly identified, the word is spoken, a picture of the mystery item is displayed and the sentence "I AM A MOUSE" (etc.) appears and is spoken. The child will be given five mysteries to solve before the Helper Reward statement is displayed and Ted asks if the child wants to play again.

## CARD CIRCUS

Welcome to Ted E. Bear's Circus! By matching upper and lower case letters of the alphabet children will help clowns juggle, elephants build a tower, and Ted E. Bear walk a tightrope. Here's how **Card Circus** is played. A letter appears, in this example a capital **D**. Children are shown three other letters, one of which is a lower case **d**. When they correctly select this lower case match the clown gets another ball to juggle, another elephant is added to the tower, or Ted moves further along the tightrope. Your Helper reward messages reinforce the learning activity.

## DINOSAUR SURPRISE

Children are fascinated by dinosaurs! In **First Letters and Words**, these prehistoric mysteries become powerful tools for learning body part and color words.\*

Children are presented with an outline drawing of a dinosaur that needs color added. When children select a body part and color box, the dinosaur changes. The children can make his feet red, his neck blue, and his tail orange. The child is the artist making the decisions. As a body part or color is selected the word is spoken. Because of this auditory response, children will begin to recognize these words before they hear them, experimenting less and planning their choices based on their ability to read the key words. When a dinosaur is completed, he can be printed out and children can select a new dinosaur.

- \* On computers that only have non-color monitors, **Dinosaur Surprise** will not teach color words. The children will select a body part word and then an unnamed pattern to "color" the dinosaur.

### *For the Helper . . .* THE HELPER'S CHOICE

**First Letters and Words** allows you, the Helper, to "tailor make" the program for the child using it. By clicking on the **(H) for Helper** on the Main Menu, a number of program controls are at your command. You can change the speech controls, set your own reinforcement messages and make Learning Modules active or inactive.

Your role as a Helper is very important in determining the learning impact of a program like **First Letters and Words**. After you help your children get started, it is important to encourage their independent use of the program. However, also use the learning activities for an opportunity to work and play together.

## EXTRA LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Give your child a variety of opportunities to make letters. It is important to use as many different media as possible. Besides the keyboard experience, encourage your child to make letters with pencil, crayon, paintbrush, clay, sticks, finger paints and even bodies making letter shapes on the rug. Making body letters may require the help of other family members and friends. It takes two people to dot the "i" or cross the "t"!
- Reinforce that each letter has one name but two ways it can be written. On a large piece of paper, on a typewriter, or using a computer program like First Byte's **KidTalk®**, write the capital letter next to the small lower case letter. Let your child see each pair, focusing on the letters needed to write favorite words like names and special animals.
- Because a familiarity with geometric shapes increases a child's ability to write letters, review the basic shapes with your child including, circle, square, oval, triangle, and rectangle. First Byte's reading and math readiness program, **First Shapes**, is a great tool for learning about shapes and experimenting with shapes as building blocks.
- The **Magic Letter Machine** presents several nouns and pictures for each letter of the alphabet. Encourage your child to find or think of other things that begin with a certain letter. These words can be found in books, on signs, on labels, in the newspaper, and even on television shows. Names of family members, pets, and friends are especially interesting to children. You can help by writing these words on paper or on the computer for your child to see.



- In the **Magic Letter Machine** your child sees that each letter is visually unique. Each letter also makes its own sound or sounds. Focus on the way letters sound when they are in the first position in a word using the word list from **First Letters and Words** or any other words your child suggests. For example, call your child's attention to the M sound in "Mouse", "Monster", or "Michael", and the P sound in "Pig", "Pumpkin" or "Penguin".
- There are more mysteries to solve! Think of items around the house, at the park, at the store, or in the neighborhood that would be good candidates for a **Who Am I?** game away from the computer. Start with very familiar objects with simple clues. Let your child think of a mystery animal for you to name. One important clue could be the first letter or sound in the animal or object's name. Write down the names of each item named.
- There are many words children can say but cannot read or write. They enjoy seeing words they use everyday written down. Of course, the most special word of all is the one for their name. Write down words that interest your child in large, easy to see letters. Read the word together and if requested, help your child write each letter.
- Words like GO, STOP, CAT, and even EXIT become familiar to children at a very early age because of television programs like Sesame Street. Use every opportunity to point out those words when they appear on signs and in books and other printed materials. Soon your child will be independently "reading" these words!

- Word plays like "rhyming" increase language experience and prepare children for reading. While sitting together or driving down the highway, take the opportunity to play a rhyming game. Say a word and ask for a word that rhymes. Children love to make up nonsense words. You'll soon learn that "Cat" rhymes with "Schmatt"! Encourage both nonsense and real words as your child explores language.
- Activities that involve children in a multi-media approach to language experience, positively effect the development of reading skills. Take the **Who Am I?** descriptions listed in the back of this Handbook and write one of your child's favorites in big letters at the bottom of a piece of drawing paper. Read the description together and encourage your child to draw a picture of the mystery object or animal. Children will also enjoy drawing an animal and then dictating a description of him that can be written at the bottom.
- Research tells us that children learn to read best through their own writing. Young children can experiment with writing words or simple sentences using their own highly creative spelling. Encourage these early writing activities refraining from making negative comments about misspelled words. Later you can take their work, re-write it for them using correct spelling, and read it together. In addition, most children have stories they would love to tell and see put into written words that they can try to read. Their vocabulary is rich even at a early age and their creative ideas should be encouraged. Learning to read their own stories is more interesting to them than reading adult written, simple, basal reader text that has a very small vocabulary.



- If you don't already own a copy, it would be helpful to purchase First Byte's **KidTalk**. This talking word processor for children of all ages allows you or your child to enter any letters or words and hear them spoken. For the young child it is an ideal tool for learning alphabet letters, and writing simple words or sentences. You can also use **KidTalk** to create stories your child dictates to you. Once created, the story can be displayed and spoken as many times as desired. A printed copy of the story can also be created to read away from the computer.

## **CLUES FOR THE "WHO AM I?" LEARNING MODULE**

### **AIRPLANE**

I am not a bird but I can fly. People can sit inside me and I will take them up in the air! You can find me at the airport. Who am I?

### **APPLE**

I grow on trees. I can be red. I can be green. Kids love to eat me! Sometimes I can be found in a pie. Who am I?

### **BABY**

I am a very little person. I cry and sleep a lot. I love to drink milk from my bottle. Who am I?

### **BALLOON**

You can always find me at birthday parties. I am filled with air. If you don't hold tight to my string I may fly away! Who am I?

### **BIRD**

I use my wings to fly through the air. You can hear me singing in the morning. I love to eat worms. Who am I?

**BUS**

I am big and yellow. Children ride in me. I take them to school. I have many windows and a horn to beep! Who am I?

**CAT**

I love to sit on your lap and purr. I am afraid of dogs. A bowl of milk makes me happy! Who am I?

**CAR**

People drive me to go to the store. I stop for red lights. I go for green lights. You can put bags of food in my trunk. Who am I?

**DOG**

I bark and play with my bone. I love to dig in the dirt. Who am I?

**DUCK**

I swim in the water. I waddle on the grass. My quack-quack tells you I am coming. Who am I?

**EGG**

People eat me for breakfast. I am oval and white. It is easy to break me! Who am I?

**ELEPHANT**

I am very big and grey. I have a long trunk. You can feed me peanuts at the zoo. Who am I?

**FISH**

I live under the water. I can be very small and live in a bowl in your house. I can be very big and live in the ocean. Who am I?

**FLOWER**

I grow in the garden. People like my beautiful colors. Bees visit me in the summer. Who am I?

**FROG**

I am green and slippery. I can hop out of your hand. I can swim in the water. I sing a croaking song. Who am I?

**HAT**

You wear me on your head to stay warm. Ladies wear me to dress up. Clowns wear me at the circus. Who am I?

**HORSE**

You can ride on my back. I can trot and gallop on my four legs. Cowboys ride me to town. Who am I?

**JACKET**

You put me on to go outside on a cold day. You can put your hands in my pockets. You can zip me up to stay warm. Who am I?

**KING**

I wear a crown on my head. I sit on a throne. I can tell everyone what to do. Who am I?

**KITE**

You can buy me at the store. I like a windy day. Hold my string and watch me fly! Don't forget to make me a tail. Who am I?

**LEAF**

I grow from tree branches. I am green in the summer. In the fall I turn brown and fall from the tree. Who am I?

**LEMON**

I am small and yellow. I grow on trees. When you taste me you make a face. You can make juice from me if you add something sweet. Who am I?

**LION**

I am King of the animals. You can see me at the zoo. I have a big mane of hair around my neck. I roar and make a loud noise. Who am I?

**MOON**

You can see me in the night sky. I am round and yellow. Sometimes you can only see part of me. Who am I?

**NEST**

Birds build me in trees to make a home. The bird eggs stay in me until they hatch. Who am I?

**NOSE**

You need me to breathe. I can smell things. I can wiggle and sniff. Who am I?

**ORANGE**

I am the color of pumpkins. I am a fruit that grows on trees. You can peel me and eat me for lunch. You can drink my juice for breakfast. Who am I?

**OWL**

I live in the forest and in the barn. I wake up at night and say "hoot!" I look very wise. Who am I?

**PIG**

I live on the farm. I am fat and pink. I love to sit in the wet, cool mud. I say oink! Who am I?

**PUMPKIN**

I am orange and round. I grow in the garden. On Halloween you can use me to make scary faces. Who am I?

**RABBIT**

I am a small animal. I have tall ears and a fluffy tail. I can hop very fast. I love to eat carrots. Who am I?

**SNAKE**

I am very long. I do not have any arms or legs. I move quietly in the grass. Who am I?

**STAR**

You can see me in the sky at night. I am small and bright. I twinkle and shine. Who am I?

**SUN**

You can see me high in the sky. I make the earth warm. I am round and very bright. Who am I?

**TRAIN**

I can take you for a ride. My wheels run along the tracks. I go very fast from city to city. An engineer drives me. Who am I?

**TURTLE**

I am green. I move very slowly. I can live in the water. I can live on land. I can hide my head in my shell when I am scared. Who am I?

**UMBRELLA**

You need to open me when it rains. I will keep you dry. You hold me in your hand and walk under me. Who am I?

**WHALE**

I am an animal that lives in the sea. I am the biggest animal. My skin is shiny. I breathe air through my blow hole. Who am I?

**YARN**

People use me to make sweaters. Kittens love to play with me. I come in many colors. I feel soft to touch. Who am I?

**ZEBRA**

I have black and white stripes. I look like a funny horse. You can see me at the zoo. Who am I?

## WORD LIST

AIRPLANE  
BABY  
BIRD  
CAR  
CLOWN  
DRUM  
ELEPHANT  
FLOWER  
GIRL  
HELICOPTER  
IGUANA  
JELLYFISH  
KITE  
LION  
MOUSE  
OCTOPUS  
PENGUIN  
QUAIL  
RABBIT  
SNAKE  
TELEPHONE  
UMBRELLA  
VOLCANO  
WHALE  
YAK  
ZIPPER

ALLIGATOR  
BALLOON  
BOY  
CAT  
DOG  
DUCK  
ELF  
FROG  
GORILLA  
HORSE  
INCHWORM  
KANGAROO  
LEAF  
MITTENS  
NEST  
ORANGE  
PIG  
QUEEN  
RAINBOW  
STAR  
TRAIN  
UNICORN  
VULTURE  
WITCH  
YARN

APPLE  
BATHTUB  
BUS  
CLOCK  
DRAGON  
EGG  
FISH  
GIRAFFE  
HAT  
ICE CREAM  
JACKET  
KING  
LEMON  
MOON  
NOSE  
OWL  
PUMPKIN  
QUILT  
ROCKET  
SUN  
TURTLE  
VAN  
WAGON  
XYLOPHONE  
ZEBRA



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