

Plasticine Letters

Level: A1.1

Age: 4-8

Organization: Individual, whole class

Aims: To make letters of the alphabet out of plasticine; to identify the shapes of letters from touch; to memorize the shapes of letters; to develop motor skills.

Language focus: letters of the alphabet

Materials: *Essential:* a strip of plasticine for each child, a blindfold / *Optional:* alphabet flashcards or frieze

Procedure

1. Write the alphabet in large letters on the board or display the alphabet flashcards or frieze.
2. Children say the alphabet with you.
3. Demonstrate how to make letters out of plasticine by rolling it into a strip and making the shape of a letter.
4. Give out plasticine to each child.
5. Ask the children to use the plasticine to make the shape of any letter of their choice or, for example, a letter which is included in their first name. Encourage the children to use the letters on the board, alphabet frieze or flashcards as a guide.
6. When the children are ready, get them to trace over their plasticine letter with their fingers in the same way that the letter is written and to say the letter.
7. They can also repeat the procedure with other letters made by their friends.
8. Collect all the plasticine letters and arrange them in a row on your desk.
9. Ask individual children to the front of the class in turn. Blindfold them and ask them to try and identify one or two of the letters by touch alone.
10. If appropriate, get the rest of the class to clap and say, e.g. *Fantastic!* If they do this correctly.

Comments and Suggestions

- With younger children, it may be more appropriate to give them an outline shape of a letter on paper or card and ask them to stick bits of plasticine onto the shape of the letter instead.
- Older children can also use plasticine to make whole words. In this case the activity can be used for revision, e.g. *Make one of the clothes words we learnt last week, or as a part of a unit of work, e.g. Make a word for one food you like in blue plasticine and one food you don't like in red plasticine.* Children can then read each other's words.
- Through using plasticine children are encouraged to attend closely to the shape of individual letters. As well as developing motor skills and hand-eye coordination, the activity makes forming letters and words both memorable and enjoyable.