

Alphabet-Letter Bingo & Lotto

Tear-Off Pad, World Writing Systems

Why play Alphabet-Letter Bingo or Lotto?

The *Bingo/Lotto* format fits many kinds of language-education content. It is particularly suited for *alphabetic writing systems*. Its game design can work well with almost *any* world-language alphabet, such as *Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Korean Hangul, Hindi, Thai, ASL (American Sign Language Finger Spelling),* or the *IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet)*. It can even be used to practice the symbols of newly invented, fictional, and specially constructed scripts.

There are several reasons for using *Bingo/Lotto* materials to teach and learn new language material—especially the names (and later also the sounds) of the letter-symbols or other elements of newly encountered writing systems:

- ♦ Whether they are played alone, in pairs, or in larger groups, games motivate! They provide a welcome change of pace from the perceived tedium of printed text & lecture.
- ♦ Cooperative and competitive activities engage learners in ways that solitary assignments don't. They are multi-sensory, require cognitive effort in attempts to win or succeed, and relieve the pressure of trying to memorize seemingly complex design elements from printed pages.
- ♦ *Bingo* games provide natural listening comprehension practice as well as pronunciation models; *Lotto* activities help in the visual perception of images and designs that may seem similar.

For the major alphabets of the world, you may be able to purchase, borrow, download, and/or create materials for *Bingo/Lotto* activities and games.

What are Alphabet Letter-Bingo or Lotto Grids?

In contrast to traditional *Bingo Cards* of 5 x 5 numbered boxes, *Letter Bingo Grids* display different symbols of their target writing systems. In each round of *Alphabet Bingo* or *Lotto*, each player, pair, or small team receives at least one distinct *Letter Bingo Grid*—unique in the characters it includes (if possible) and in their arrangement in rows and columns. Here are sample grids, based on writing systems with at least 24 distinct letters or symbols.



24-Letter Greek Alphabet Bingo/Lotto Grid	25-Box Cyrillic Alphabet Bingo/Lotto Grid	24-Letter Hangul Alphabet Bingo/Lotto Grid	25-Box Thai Alphabet Bingo/Lotto Grid
Ε Ψ Ι Χ Γ	г й у л ц	ㄹ ㅅ ㅈ ㅊ ㅋ	ก ข ฃ ฉ ฆ
Ω Α Υ Ε Π	м я ъ п ч	ㅍ ㅊ ㅊ ㅡ ㅣ	จ ฉ ฅ ฬ ฎ
Λ Φ <small>Greek Alphabet Α α to Ω ω</small> Θ Μ	с ф а н ю	ㅍ ㅊ <small>Korean Hangul 24 Symbols ㄱ to ㅌ</small> ㅊ ㅊ	ช ฌ ฎ ฏ ฑ
Z O P B Σ	б ё з и т	ㄴ ㅌ ㅍ ㅎ ㅈ	ฉ ฅ ฝ ฬ ฎ
N K T H Δ	о к д ш ж	ㅊ ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅈ	ฐ ฑ ฒ ณ ศ

Most writing systems of the world contain at least twenty-four (24) distinct letter-symbols or character elements. If participants are on their way to becoming literate in a target alphabet, therefore, the quickest way to practice letter recognition and discrimination in isolation is with 25-box (5 x 5) *Alphabet-Letter Grids*, containing five horizontal rows by five vertical columns. The middle box can be a *Free Space*, which *Bingo* or *Lotto* players do not have to cover in order to win. If *only* 24 letters exist in the language, a 25-box (5 x 5) grid *requires* a *Free Space*.

Here are some other possible alternatives that might be considered in the design of a set of *Alphabet Grids*:

- ♦ Should the letter-symbols be placed in random order on each grid—or should the first column display only the *first* fifth of the letters; the second column, the *second* fifth; and so on to the end of the alphabet? (In regard to letter placement, the *first* column could be furthest to the left *or* to the right, depending on the direction in which the language is read.)
- ♦ Should each symbol or character with a distinct use or meaning in written language occupy a separate box? Or should there be only as many boxes as there are “true” letters in that alphabet—in which case their variants will appear in the same boxes as their basic forms? (Some examples are the Hebrew letter groups כּכך, שש, מם, נן, תת.)
- ♦ Should each set of grids, along with its matching *Caller Cards*, display only *one* letter form—like *lower-case* or *upper-case* in *either block print or cursive*? Alternatively—for practice in comparing or associating shapes—should each box contain two forms, like *upper- and lower- case*, or *manuscript (block print) and cursive letters*—or perhaps all four forms?

The answers to these and related questions will depend on the pedagogical purpose(s) of using *Alphabet Letter-Bingo* or *Lotto* materials, participants' learning styles and language-proficiency levels, the time available for activities and games, and other situational factors.

Even before learners use *Alphabet-Letter Grids* for “competitive play,” they can look over the materials, work together to identify the *kinds* of symbols and distinguish the letters, practice the pronunciation of the letter names, and so on. The corresponding *Caller Cards* can be used as *Flash Cards* for similar purposes.

م	ف	ص	خ	ث
و	ق	ظ	ذ	ا
ن	ل	ع	س	ب
ي	ك	ش	ر	ج
ه	غ	ض	د	ت

With 28 distinct letters in the Arabic *abjad* (mostly consonant alphabet), a *Free Space* is optional in a 25-box (5 x 5) grid.

ש	ע	ל	ט	ב
ק	פ	נ	ח	ג
ר	ס	HEBREW ALPHABET 32 Symbols 22 to 27	ט	ה
ת	צ	מ	ז	א
ז	א	מ	י	נ

Although there are only 22 letters in the Hebrew *abjad*, there are also 5 variants with dots (◌◌) and 5 forms that occur only at the ends of words—for a total of 32 recognizable printed symbols. In the *Hebrew Alphabet* grids in this *Tear-Off Pad*, these 10 additional forms are in shaded or striped boxes.

Εε	Ψψ	Ιι	Χχ	Γγ
Ωω	Αα	Υυ	Ξξ	Ππ
Λλ	Φφ	Greek Alphabet Αα to Ωω	Θθ	Μμ
Ζζ	Οο	Ρρ	Ββ	Σσς
Νν	Κκ	Ττ	Ηη	Δδ

Гг	Йй	Уу	Лл	Цц
Мм	Яя	Бб	Пп	Чч
Сс	Фф	Аа	Нн	Юю
Бб	Ёё	Зз	Ии	Тт
Оо	Кк	Дд	Шш	Жж

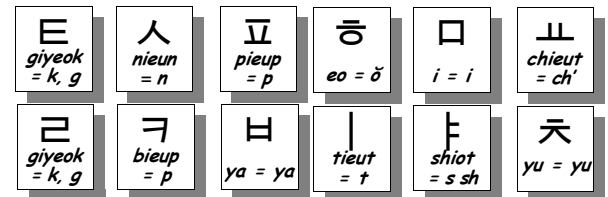
These two *Grids* show two letter forms per box: *upper- vs. lower-case* in the *Greek* alphabet and *print vs. cursive* in *Cyrillic*.

What are Alphabet-Letter Caller or Matching Cards?

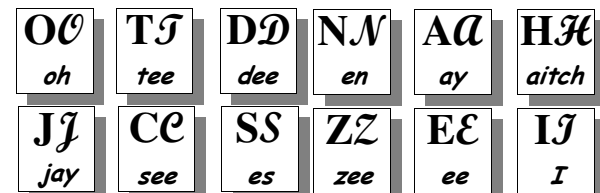
For each alphabetic writing system (Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Roman, Cyrillic, Korean, etc.) to learn, there should also be a collection of separate large *Caller* or *Matching Cards* with a different alphabet symbol printed or written on each. The purpose of each card face is to display one or more forms (basic or variant, upper- or lower-case, and/or manuscript or cursive) of a distinct letter-symbol or element of that writing system.

To help the caller say the letter names clearly, it may help to have their phonetic or English-alphabet pronunciation printed on the cards. For alphabets other than the Roman, there might also be *transliterations* of the letters—their approximate sound-producing equivalents in English.

For each round of *Bingo/Lotto* games, use only those *Caller* or *Matching Cards* with letters that actually appear on the set of *Bingo/Lotto* Grids to be used for play. The *Card* symbols may or may not look exactly like the forms of the same characters on the grids.



Above: These randomly arranged *Caller* or *Matching Cards* for the Korean *Hangul* alphabet display only *one* letter-element form each. That's because there don't seem to be any upper- vs. lower-case or manuscript vs. cursive forms to contrast. At the bottom of each card in Roman letters is the pronunciation of the name of each element in English and its approximate sound-equivalent (transliteration).



Above: As one possible option, these shuffled *Caller* or *Matching Cards* display *only* capital letters of the Roman alphabet. *Bingo* or *Lotto* players may benefit from matching these forms to lower-case letters.

How Do We Play Alphabet Letter-Bingo or Lotto?

To play *Alphabet-Letter Bingo*, give each player, pair, or team a separate grid; spread out the relevant *Caller Cards* face down on a surface or put them in a stack or container. Here are suggested steps for any *Alphabet-Letter Bingo* game:

1. Pick up the caller cards one by one and call out the names of their letters clearly. Players either "X-out" each letter that is called or—so the grids can be reused—place markers (paper scraps, chips, buttons, beans, etc.) on the boxes as they hear those letters. If necessary, repeat each letter two or three times, show each *Caller Card*, and/or point to the called letter on a board, poster, or chart.
2. The first person to mark or cover a "Bingo line" (all boxes in a horizontal row, vertical column, or diagonal) calls out "Bingo!" That person wins if s/he can correctly tell the names of all the marked or covered letters in the line that have truly been called. The winner of each game could be the caller for the next game. So that everyone has an equal chance to win with his/her grid, the unused caller cards from each game can be used first for the next one—or players can get new grids every few games.
3. Alternatively, instead of using *Caller Cards*, each participant in turn could call out the name of a different symbol—presumably one from his/her own grid—for all players to mark or cover on theirs. (This variation involves some "game strategy.") To avoid repetition, players can keep track of the called characters by jotting them down or crossing them out on their own copy of (half) the writing system.
5. Alternatively at another time, instead of *calling out* the letters, you can write them on a board or screen—one by one in various forms. Players name the symbols aloud while marking or covering them on their grids.

To continue practicing the use of an alphabet, more proficient language-learners can begin a lesson or activity by making their own *Alphabet Letter-Bingo/Lotto* grids:

1. Each person divides a piece of paper or cardboard into the designated number of boxes—9, 16, or 25. To do so, s/he folds the paper or draws lines to create 3, 4, or 5 columns by 3, 4, or 5 rows.
2. One by one, "dictate" the letters of (half) the alphabet either in (reverse) alphabetical order or in random order. So that all the *Alphabet-Letter Bingo/Lotto* grids differ from one another, everyone places the dictated letters in random locations in their boxes—not in the given order. Do participants want to put the first third or quarter or fifth of the given letters in the first column, the second grouping in the second column, etc.? If not, they simply print or write each letter in *any* box on their grids. If grids contain fewer boxes than the number of relevant alphabet symbols, however, they will have to omit the appropriate number. Once their *Alphabet-Letter Bingo/Lotto Grids* are prepared, their creators can use them as they choose—such as to play alphabet games in suggested or other ways.

How does the game of *Alphabet-Letter Lotto* differ from *Bingo*? In *Bingo*, players mark or cover items as they are called out; in *Lotto*, they draw one *Matching Card* at a time from a face-down set, placing it face up on their appropriate grid-box if there is a match (the same letter or its variant in another writing style or font). If several people are playing *Lotto* together, there should be several alphabet-letter sets to draw from, perhaps printed in various fonts or kinds of writing.

Most often, users of a set of *Alphabet* materials for a specific language will use the separate letter displays as flash cards for symbol recognition or as *Caller* or *Matching Cards* for *Bingo* or *Lotto* games that serve as learning aids for *that* writing system. On the other hand, use of a variety of materials from *different world writing systems* will promote visual-perception skills (focus, discrimination, tracking, and memory), awareness of likenesses and differences in line figures, and cross-cultural realizations. These activities are challenging, fun, and different from the usual.

What's in this *Alphabet Letter-Bingo/Lotto Tear-Off Pad*?

Specifically, this *Tear-Off Pad* offers these disposable or reusable items:

- ♦ pages 7 to 16 = *The Hebrew Abjad (Consonant Alphabet)*: 32 *Caller* or *Matching Cards* and eight 25-box *Hebrew Alphabet-Letter Bingo/Lotto Grids* [1] to [8]. All 32 symbols א to ת, based on the 22 consonant letters, appear in separate boxes in the five columns, arranged from right to left.
- ♦ pages 17 to 26 = *The Arabic Abjad (mostly Consonant Alphabet)*: 28 *Caller* or *Matching Cards* and eight 25-box *Arabic Alphabet-Letter/Lotto Grids* [1] to [8]. All 28 symbols ا to ق are isolated cursive letter forms, arranged in five columns from right to left.
- ♦ pages 27 to 36 = *The Greek Alphabet*: 24 *Caller* or *Matching Cards* and eight 25-box *Greek Alphabet-Letter/Lotto Grids* [1] to [8]: All 24 letters Αα to Ωω appear in upper- and lower-case forms.
- ♦ pages 37 to 46 = *The Russian Cyrillic Alphabet*: 33 *Caller* or *Matching Cards* and eight 25-box *Cyrillic Alphabet Bingo / Lotto Grids* [1] to [8]. All 33 letters Аа to Яя appear in upper- and lower-case forms.
- ♦ pages 47 to 56 = *The Korean Hangul Alphabet*: 24 *Caller* or *Matching Cards* and eight 25-box *Korean Alphabet Bingo / Lotto Grids* [1] to [8]. All 24 letters ㄱ to ㅣ appear as isolated elements.