

Alphabet-Letter Paired Grids

Tear-Off Pad, World Writing Systems

Why use Alphabet-Letter Paired (Spelling) Grids?

The *Alphabet-Letter Paired Grid* format is particularly suited for the teaching and learning of *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.

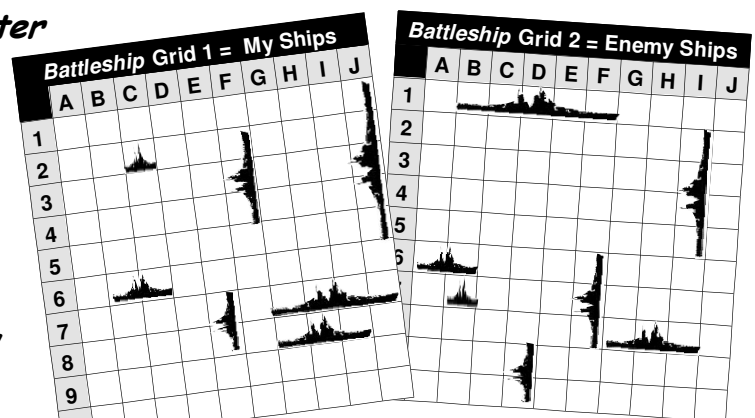
There are several reasons for using *Alphabet-Letter Paired Grid* materials to practice the names of the letters-symbols of newly encountered writing systems:

- ♦ Paired (dyad) activities motivate! They provide a welcome change of pace from the perceived demands of whole-class instruction. They encourage (non-threatening) social interaction.
- ♦ Cooperative and competitive activities engage learners in ways that solitary assignments don't. They are multi-sensory, require cognitive effort to participate, and relieve the pressure of trying to memorize seemingly complex design-elements from printed text alone.
- ♦ *Alphabet-Letter Paired Grid* activities provide natural practice in listening comprehension, visual perception or discrimination of letter forms, pronunciation of letter names, spatial symbol relationships, sequencing, and other useful pre-reading and general learning skills.
- ♦ *Paired Grids* can be multi-purpose and multi-level—suited to or adaptable for use in learning groups of any size and at various proficiency levels. For instance, after participants have mastered letter *names*, grids can be used for spelling and vocabulary practice.

What are Alphabet-Letter Paired (Spelling) Grids?

The concept of *Alphabet-Letter Paired Grids* comes from the procedures of a strategic pad-and-pencil guessing game called *Battleship(s)*, invented in the early 1900s.

Typically, the original game is played by two competitors on four square grids, each consisting of ten rows of boxes—lettered *A* through *J*, by ten columns—numbered *1* through *10*. The same grid design is used every time.



The classic strategy *Game of Battleship(s)* is still played worldwide—with paper and pencil, on commercially produced game boards, electronically, in puzzle or computerized form, and/or online.

In contrast, to provide systematic practice in *alphabet letters only*, both the columns and the rows of *World Alphabet-Letter Paired Grids* are lettered instead of numbered. Depending on their purpose, participants' language-proficiency, and the time available for games and activities, the *Grids* may contain any number of square boxes, perhaps from 25 (5 columns by 5 rows) to 900 (30 columns by 30 rows).

Grids may contain any combination of letters from any one of the *alphabetic writing systems* of the world. In the simplest design, the letters printed across the top (in alphabetical order from right to left or from left to right, depending on the direction in which the language is read), are exactly the same as those from top to bottom along the (right or left) side.

To get more efficient pedagogical use out of a set of *Alphabet-Letter Paired Grids*, one form of the letters (such as *upper-case* or *block print*) could be printed across the top with the corresponding form (*lower-case* or *cursive*) down the side. Then game players can practice recognition or discrimination of more than one letter form at the same time.

Large *Alphabet Grids* with many boxes are easier to work with if their letters are printed or written on all four sides—along both the top *and* bottom, on the right *as well as* the left. In such cases, each *Grid* could display *four* forms of each included letter of the targeted alphabet (if they exist), such as upper- and lower-case, print *and* cursive, basic *and* variant.

Even *more* efficient in pedagogical design might be *Alphabet-Letter Grids* with *different* letters printed horizontally and vertically. For example, the first half of the Roman alphabet could appear horizontally, with the block letters *Aa* to *Mm* across the top and the cursive letters *Aa* to *Mm* along the bottom. The second half could run vertically, *Nn* to *Zz* down the left side and *Nn* to *Zz* down the right. Then users could practice all four forms of all the letters of an entire alphabet during the same activity or game.

Each of these 36-box *Paired Hebrew Alphabet* grids contains 6 letters, א to ה, from the beginning of the *abjad* (consonant alphabet). The letters printed from right to left above the columns are exactly the same as those printed from top to bottom on the right side.

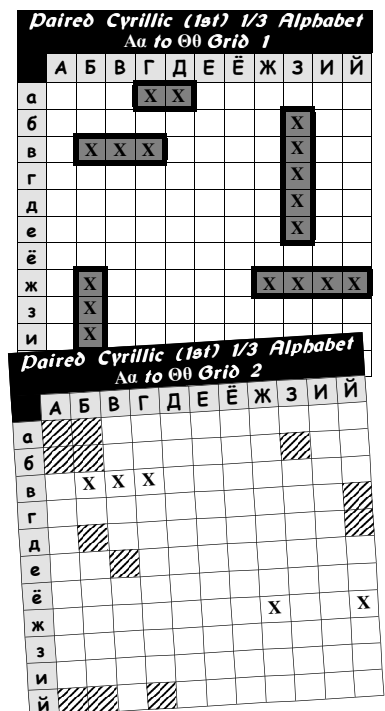
Each of these 64-box *Paired Greek Alphabet* grids contains 8 letters, Αα to Θθ, from the beginning of the alphabet. The letters printed from left to right above the 8 columns are upper-case; those printed from top to bottom to the left of the 8 rows are the lower-case forms of the same letters.

This 169-box *Paired Roman Alphabet Grid* displays the first half of the alphabet—the letters *Aa* through *Mm*. The 13 *upper-case* letters appear horizontally, *manuscript* (block letters) along the top and *cursive* along the bottom. The 13 *lower-case* forms are printed vertically—*manuscript* on the left and *cursive* on the right.

How Might We Use Alphabet-Letter Paired (Spelling) Grids—Effectively for Educational Purposes?

In spite of its commercial board-game, logic-puzzle, electronic, and online forms, the classic pencil-and-paper, mock-combat grid game called *Battleship(s)* provides a productive model for engaging, yet educational paired activities. Here's how to make use of the *Alphabet-Letter Paired Grids* in this *Tear-Off Pad* to practice the names and order of the letter-symbols of a chosen (target) world alphabet.

- According to their educational goals, proficiency in the target writing system, interests, and time available, each pair of competitors chooses or receives a set of four identical grids—such as *Paired Greek Alphabet Aa to Θθ Grids*, *PAIRED HEBREW ALPHABET א to ט GRIDS*, *Paired Arabic (1st Third) Alphabet Grids تا o*, or whatever best fits the purposes of the activity or class. Each person gets two grids on one page. (If the papers are 2-sided, the grids on the other side can be used for a second game.)
 - Together, participants might want to review (the pronunciation of) the names of the letters of the grids, noting the forms (*basic or variant, print or cursive, upper-case or lower-case, etc.*) they appear in.
 - They can also take note of the *direction* in which the target language is read—and *where* the various letter-symbol forms appear on the grids—along the top and/or bottom, and on the left and/or right.
- On *Grid 1* of his/her two grids, “each combatant secretly positions five battleships.” The longest “ship” should cover *five (5)* adjacent boxes in a row or column; the next largest, *four (4)* boxes across or down; the next two, *three (3)* boxes each; and the smallest, *two (2)* boxes. (No ship boxes may overlap.) As illustrated on the *Cyrillic Aa through Йй* grid to the right, these “strategic locations” can be designated by an *X* in each box, by shading, and/or by a heavy line around all the consecutive boxes of each “ship.”
- The object of the game is to be the first to “sink five (5) enemy ships.” Without looking at his/her opponent’s marked grid, each player “shoots at” any target box by announcing its two coordinates—the name of a letter-symbol displayed horizontally across the top (and bottom), followed by the name of a letter-symbol printed down the side(s). For instance, for a *Cyrillic Grid*, s/he might say *Б-д (Beh-deh)*, *Г-б (Geh-beh)*, *Ж-й Zheh-ye*, *Е-з (Yeh-zeh)*, *А-и (Ah-ee)*, *В-ë (Veh-yo)*, ...
- According to the positioning of his/her “ships,” the “defender” must announce whether *that* letter combination was “a hit” or “a miss.” To plan strategy, the “attacker” notes this information by marking the relevant boxes on his/her empty grid. For instance, s/he might shade in the boxes that are *not* hits and put X’s in those that are.
- Play passes to the other person, who “takes a shot” in the same way. Then each player takes a turn for the next—and all following—rounds. When all the boxes of a ship have been hit, that ship is sunk. When all of one player’s ships are “sunk,” that person loses the game.
- For review, both players can get additional letter-naming practice by repeating the coordinates of their hits, (sunk) ships, and/or misses.



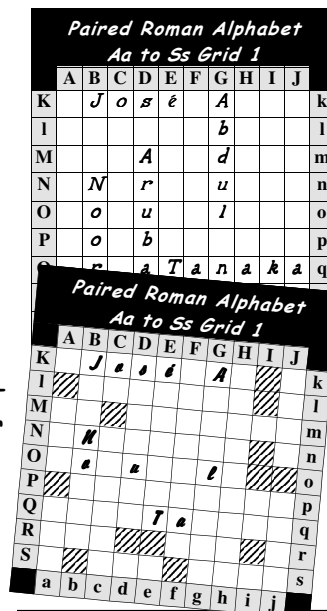
In the above sample, a *Paired Cyrillic Alphabet-Grid* game in progress, the first player has filled in 17 boxes to represent 5 “ships” of various lengths. As shown on the second player’s *Grid 2*, s/he has correctly “hit” (guessed) 5 boxes so far. The striped boxes indicate his/her 12 incorrect guesses—and the letter-naming practice s/he has had.

As soon as participants can recognize and have mastered the names of the letter-symbols in part or all of a targeted writing system, they can use another set of identical grids (perhaps those on the backs of the same pages) not only for review but also for spelling and vocabulary practice—in the same or a different language.

- Rather than "positioning ships," competitors can print one or more 5-letter, 4-letter, 3-letter, and/or 2-letter names or words in adjacent grid boxes—or any other agreed-upon information with any predetermined number of letters.
- When a player makes a "hit" by correctly naming the letter coordinates of a filled-in box, his/her opponent must tell the letters s/he wrote in that space. The other person puts these letters in the appropriate boxes of his/her second grid.
- Whoever first guesses and records all the letters of his/her opponent's grids wins—if s/he can read the words.

To continue practicing recognizing and/or writing the letters of a target alphabet, more proficient language-learners can begin a lesson or activity by making their own *Paired World-Alphabet Grids*:

- Each learning group or pair of competitors chooses a target alphabet to practice. Using a piece of pre-printed grid paper, each person cuts out or outlines the designated number of boxes—perhaps 49 (7 x 7), 100 (10 x 10), 144 (12 x 12), etc.
- Participants agree on which letter-symbols (which part of the alphabet) to practice in which forms. They print these across the top (and bottom) of their grids and down one (or both) side(s). The horizontal letters may be the same as or different from those printed from top to bottom, but *parallel* sequences of alphabet symbols (top and bottom, left and right) *must* be the same.
- Once their *Paired Alphabet-Letter Grids* are prepared, their creators can use them as they choose—for *Battleship* games, for *Spelling* activities, or . . . ?



In the above sample, a *Paired Roman Alphabet Spelling-Grid* game in progress, the first player has filled in the parts of his name and his city and country of origin in adjacent horizontal and vertical boxes. As shown on the second player's *Grid 2*, s/he has correctly guessed and noted 11 letters so far.

What's in this Alphabet-Letter Paired-Grid Tear-Off Pad?

These are the disposable or reusable *Alphabet-Letter Paired (Spelling) Grids, World Alphabets*, in this *Tear-Off Pad*:

- pages 9 to 32 = *The Hebrew Consonant Alphabet*: 12 pairs (24) of 81-box *Paired Grids* = 8 each for 3 thirds of the alphabet on pp. 9-20; 8 pairs (16) of 169-box *Grids* = 8 each for 2 halves, both print and cursive letters, on pp. 21-28; 2 pairs (4) of 169-box *Grids* = 4 for the whole alphabet on pp. 29-32.
- pages 33 to 48 = *The Arabic Alphabet*: 12 pairs (24) of 81-box *Paired Grids* = 8 each for 3 thirds of the alphabet on pp. 33-44; 2 pairs (4) of 196-box *Grids* = 4 for the whole alphabet on pp. 45-48.
- pages 49 to 64 = *The Greek Alphabet*: 12 pairs (24) of 64-box *Paired Grids* = 8 each for 3 thirds of the alphabet on pp. 49-60; 2 pairs (4) of 144-box *Grids* = 4 for the whole alphabet on pp. 61-64.
- pages 65 to 80 = *The Cyrillic Alphabet*: 12 pairs (24) of 121--box *Paired Grids* = 8 each for 3 thirds of the alphabet on pp. 65-76; 4 pairs (8) of 289- and 256-box *Grids* = 4 for the 1st and 4 for the 2nd half of the alphabet on pp. 77-84; 2 pairs (4) of 272-box (17 x 16) whole-alphabet *Grids* on pp. 85-88.
- pages 87 to 98 = *The Korean Hangul Alphabet*: 4 pairs of 196- and 100-box *Paired Grids* = 8 each for consonants, vowels on pp. 89-96; 2 pairs of 240-box *Grids* = 4 for the whole alphabet on pp. 97-100.