D

$$d\bar{e} = /di^y/$$
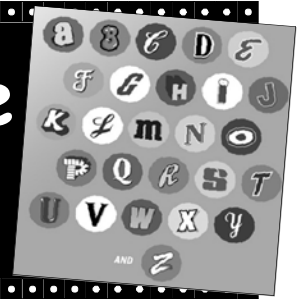
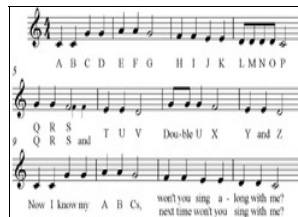# The Names of the Alphabet Letters

Before beginning *phonicſpelling* **instruction, teach, review, or practice the** *names* **of the 26 letters of the English alphabet. Consistently remind participants that each letter name** *contains* **one or more distinct sounds of the language, but it is** *not* **the same as the** *sound(s)* **it spells in print or makes in speech.**

1. *Present the letter names.* In large print on a board or large paper, put the letters of the alphabet in order. Say—or have others say—the name of each letter as you print or write it. Tell and/or repeat each letter name clearly; listeners imitate your (exaggerated but correct) pronunciation. Point to the letters *A* to *Z* and have the group tell their names. Repeat in reverse order *Z* to *A*. Then point to letters in random order; learners name them. Provide additional practice of letters whose names may confuse learners—such as *A* vs. *E* vs. *I*, *B* vs. *V* vs. *F*, *V* vs. *W*, *C* vs. *S*, *K* vs. *Q*, *G* vs. *J*, *L* vs. *R*, etc.

   For practice in *sound awareness*, they can also count the *number of sounds* in a letter name. For instance, there is *one sound* in *ay (A)*, *ee (E)*, *I*, *oh (O)*, and *yoo (U)*. There are 2 or 3 sounds in most other letter names, like *b ee (B)*, *e f (F)*, *ai tch (H)*, *a r (R)*, or *w ie ee (Y)*.

2. *Use a variety of materials.* To ensure that new readers can recognize letters in various *forms* (*upper–* and *lower-case*, *print*, *cursive*, and different *fonts*), repeat *Step 1* with alphabet posters, banners, charts, letter flash cards, handwriting models, worksheets, and so on. If appropriate, have fun with the *Alphabet Song*, from books or websites like *kididdles.com* or *en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphabet_song*.

3. *Do an Alphabet Chain.* Pronounce the name of the first letter of the English alphabet, *A*. Indicate that the next participant is to say the name of the second letter, *B*. The next person tells the third letter, *C,* and so on around the group. Continue the chain until the end of the alphabet, *Z*. If anyone gets stuck or names a letter incorrectly, point to the appropriate letter for that turn. Have the whole group pronounce it. Then repeat *Step 5* with the alphabet in reverse order, *Z* to *A*. Later, perform the chain with every other or every 3rd letter (which has been erased or covered).

4. *Review.* If needed, repeat any of the steps in adapted ways at useful intervals, maybe before a phonics lesson or activity—as a reminder of the distinction between *letter-names* and the sounds they make.

Slow Down or Speed Up?
Multi-Level Pointers

To understand oral spelling and spell aloud, language learners and users at *all* levels of proficiency need to be able to *recognize* and *say the names* of the letters of the alphabet—at least eventually.

Detailed suggestions for teaching and learning the English alphabet appear in Authors & Editors' *Alphabet Answers* (ISBN 978-1-34637-01-2). Learners unfamiliar with the roman writing system may be able to handle only one or a few letters per lesson, perhaps along with handwriting or typing instruction. Those *used to* the letter shapes might need frequent reminders that American-English phonics can vary significantly from the correlations between letters and sounds in *their* languages.

When the English names of the roman letters are *first* taught or reviewed, you can add challenge and perhaps surprise by mentioning—or having eager participants try to say—the *sound(s)* that a letter produces. Can you or they (already) provide examples of sample words that illustrate the complexity of the system?

For example, the letter *a* spells /æ/ in *apple*, /ɔ/ in *cards*, /ɑ/ in *father*, and /eɪ/ in *able*. The letter *c* is pronounced /k/ in *cat* but /s/ in *cell*. The letter *g* can make both the /g/ and /dʒ/ sounds, as in *girl* and *genie*—and so on.

Instructions for *the Names of the Alphabet Letters*

Repeat, say, or read the American-English names of the 26 block-print alphabet letters—as spelled out after an = sign below.

Aa	**Bb**
A = ay	B = b ee

Cc	**Dd**	**Ee**	**Ff**
C = s ee	D = d ee	E = ee	F = e f

Gg	**Hg**	**Ii**	**Jj**
G = j ee	H = ai tch	I = a yee	J = j ay

Kk	**Ll**	**Mm**	**Nn**
K = k ay	L = e l	M = e m	N = e n

Oo	**Pp**	**Qq**	**Rr**
O = oh	P = p ee	Q = k y u	R = a r

Ss	**Tt**	**Uu**	**Vv**
S = e s	T = t ee	U = y oo	V = v ee

Ww	**Xx**	**Yy**	**Zz**
W = d ou b le y oo	X = e k s	Y = w ay ee	Z = z ee

phonicspelling = ˌfɑnɪkˈspɛlɪŋ, Đ = dē or /diʸ/= *The Names of the Alphabet Letters*
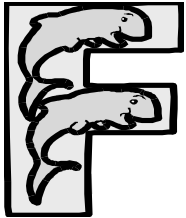
Alphabet Bingo or Letter Lotto
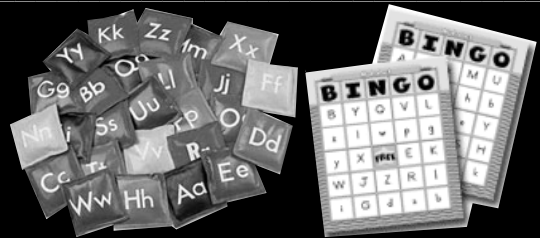
The *Lotto / Bingo* format fits many kinds of language-learning content. To use it to teach, learn, and/or practice the English alphabet, you can purchase, borrow, download, and/or create a letter grid for each potential participant. Each grid should show a different letter of the alphabet in each of the four boxes in each of four rows. There should be a different letter printed on each of 26 large "caller cards." Give each participant or pair a separate grid; either spread out the 26 caller cards or put the shuffled 26-card set face down on a surface.

1. Picking up the caller cards one by one, call out the letters. Players either "X-out" each letter that is called or—so the grids can be reused—place markers (pieces of paper, poker chips, buttons, beans, etc.) on the boxes as they hear those letters. Repeat each letter two or three times. If necessary, show each called letter card and/or point to the letter on the board, an alphabet poster, or a wall chart.

2. The first person to cover a "Bingo line" (all the boxes in a horizontal row, a vertical column, or perhaps diagonally) calls out "Alphabet Bingo." That person is the winner if s/he can read aloud all the marked or covered letters in the line correctly.

3. The winner of each game can 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—and/or players can get new grids for each or every few games.

4. Alternatively, instead of using caller cards, each participant in turn can call out a different letter for all players to mark or cover.

5. Alternatively at another time, instead of *calling out* the letters, write them on the board—one by one in various forms: for example, play one game with upper-case block letters and the next with lower-case letters. Players say the letters aloud while marking or covering them.

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

Slow Down or Speed Up?
Multi-Level Pointers

Here are some ways to make each grid easier for a beginner to use: [a] put larger letters into a 3 by 3 format (three boxes across and three, down) instead of 4 by 4. [b] Instead of placing letters randomly on each grid, choose three letters from *only A to H* for the first column, three from *only I to Q* for the second, and three from *only R to Z* for the third. [c] The letters may be easier to find if they are in alphabetical order in each column.

If they can write, faster learners can create their own *Alphabet Bingo* or *Lotto* grids with these steps: [a] Each person divides a piece of paper into the same number of equal-sized boxes—either 16 (4 across and 4 down), or 25 (5 by 5). The boxes can be created by folding the paper or drawing vertical and horizontal lines. [b] "Dictate" the appropriate number of letters one by one—in any sequence. As you say a letter, each person prints it in one of the boxes on his/her paper— in a random location so that game players don't create identical grids. [c] After a few seconds, print each letter on the chalkboard for participants to compare with their own.

Now use the letter grids to play *Bingo* or *Lotto* games—in suggested and other ways.

ALPHABET ANSWERS: EVERYTHING to Know (Now) about Teaching & Learning the Letters of the Alphabet

Instructions for *Alphabet Bingo or Letter Lotto*

Here are only four possible 16-box letter grids for *Bingo* or *Lotto* games.
The letters are not printed in alphabetical order; even so, only the letters *A* to *G* appear
in the first column; *H* to *N*, in Column 2; *O* to *T*, in Column 3; and *U* to *Z* in Column 4.
Grids of various sizes can contain nine (3 x 3), sixteen (4 x 4) or 25 (5 x 5) boxes each.

Alphabet Bingo / Lotto Grid 1

c	N	Q	x
B	J	r	y
F	M	P	Z
d	k	O	v

Alphabet Bingo / Lotto Grid 2

F	J	q	Z
E	H	p	W
B	N	S	x
d	K	t	Y

Alphabet Bingo / Lotto Grid 3

d	H	S	W
A	L	o	V
c	i	Q	Z
f	j	t	U

Alphabet Bingo / Lotto Grid 4

B	k	P	V
a	N	o	u
e	l	r	w
G	m	s	X

ALPHABET ANSWERS: ACTIVITY F = Alphabet Bingo & Letter Lotto

ALPHABET ANSWERS: EVERYTHING to Know (Now) about . . . the Alphabet.   **Workshop Handout**
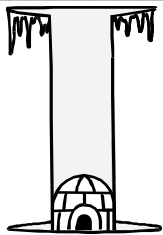
Paired Alphabet-Grid Games

In spite of its commercial board-game, logic-puzzle, electronic, and online forms, the procedures and rules for the classic pencil-and-paper, mock-combat grid game called *Battleship* provides a productive model for engaging, yet educational paired activities. Here's how to prepare the grids and follow the game steps for alphabet practice as well as fun:

1. For each pair of participants, make three different sets of four grids each. [a] Each grid of *Set 1* should contain 89 boxes—9 across by 9 down. Blacken the box in the upper-left corner. In the top boxes of the other eight columns, print capital *A* through *H* in order; letter the eight boxes in the first column with lower-case *a* through *h*. [b] Each grid of *Set 2* requires 100 boxes (10 x 10). Print *I* through *Q* across the top and *i* through *q* in the nine boxes down the left side. [c] Label each of the four grids of *Set 3* (also 10 x 10) *R* through *X* in its top row and *r* through *x* in its first column on the left.
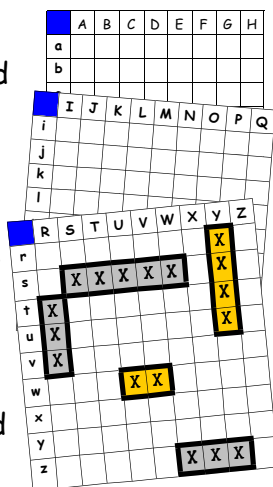
2. Each pair of players receives a set of four identical grids—either *Aa-Hh*, *Ii-Qq*, or *Rr-Zz*. Each competitor gets two of them.

   a. On one 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. As illustrated above on the *Rr* through *Zz* grid, these "strategic locations" can be designated by an *X* in each box and/or a heavy line around all the consecutive boxes of each "ship."

   b. The object of the game is to be the first to "sink five enemy ships." Without looking at his/her opponent's marked grid, each player "shoots at" any target box by naming a capital before a small letter—for instance, *S-s, Y-r, V-y, U-x, X-u,* etc. 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. 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 have been "sunk," that person loses the game.

   c. To practice the *whole* alphabet, each pair uses grids with *different* letters for the next two games, perhaps adding more challenging rules.

ALPHABET ANSWERS: EVERYTHING to Know (Now) about Teaching & Learning the Letters of the Alphabet

Alphabet-Letter Card Decks
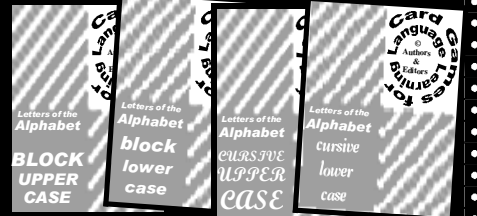
Alphabet-Letter Card Decks not only have many educational uses but also serve as materials for motivating (cooperative and/or competitive) card games. They *do* require advanced preparation—but once created, the card decks can be used again and again. Here are suggestions for making them:

1. The simplest way to start is to obtain blank (lined) index cards or to divide paperboard, pasteboard, or card stock into identical rectangular "playing cards" of a size appropriate to the group.

   On the other hand, if participants are involved in handwriting improvement, it might help to use heavy paper or stock with writing guidelines on it, downloadable in various sizes and formats from websites like *http://www.paperprintout.com/paper/ penmanship* or *http://www.printablepaper.net*. When dividing a page into cards, be sure that each box includes printing or writing guidelines for one—and only one—letter of the alphabet. (On the other side of this page are enlargeable, reproducible card-shaped patterns of this kind.)

A	B	C	D		
G	H	I	J		
		a	b	c	d
e	f	g	h		

2. There are several design possibilities for a full (52-card) deck of *Alphabet-Letter Cards*. [a] For a simple deck, on half the cards print the capital block letters of the alphabet. On the other 26 cards, print the same letters in lower-case form. [b] For a more challenging and versatile 52-card deck, on 13 cards print the first half of the alphabet *A* to *M* as block capitals. Print the same letters in lower-case form on 13 other cards. On the remaining half of the deck write the same letters two more times—first as cursive capitals and then as lower-case cursive. In the same way, make another deck of cards for the second half of the alphabet, the letters *Nn* to *Zz*—for a total of 104 cards. [c] Alternatively, instead of *writing* each letter, you can cut it out in a font of your choice and paste it on a separate card.

3. Cut apart each sequence of 52 cards: keep the deck together with a rubber band or in a container. At first, the cards of each deck can be used as "flash cards" (for letter identification), for alphabetizing, and/or for any of the other previous activities in this book. Later, they'll be ideal for alphabet card learning activities and games.

Slow Down or Speed Up? Multi-Level Pointers

Alphabet-Letter Card Decks of various designs are available from many sources—educational publishers or supply houses, game manufacturers, *Internet* websites, etc. Of various prices or free, some of these contain themes and attractive graphics. Others correlate alphabet letters with the four suits (*black spades and clubs; red hearts and diamonds*) and 13 card faces (*aces and twos through tens; jacks, queens, and kings*) of standard Anglo/ American 52-card decks. They may even include numerical scoring notations. In addition to—or instead of—alphabet-teaching or learning activities, still other letter-card decks are designed for use in phonics or spelling instruction.

Two-sided alphabet cards also have pedagogical uses, though the decks don't lend themselves to the playing of traditional card games. In two-sided decks, two versions of the same letter—both upper- and-lower case, block printing vs. cursive, or contrasting fonts—appear on each card.
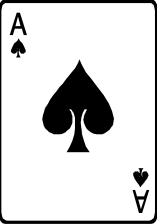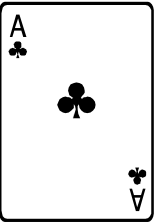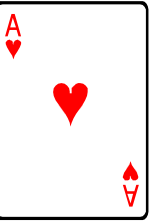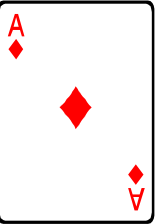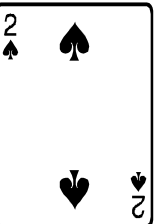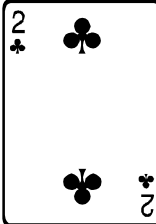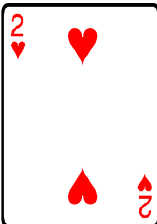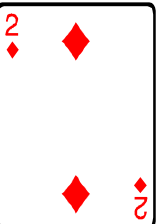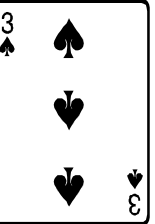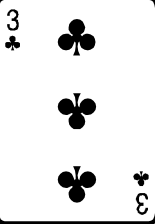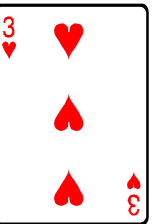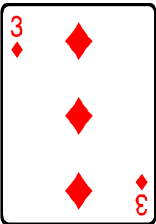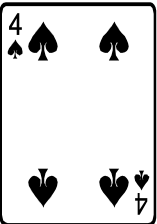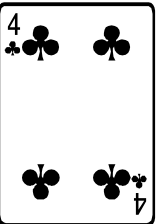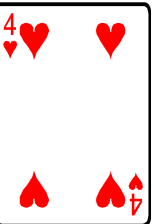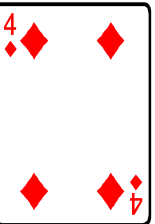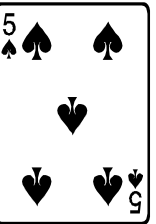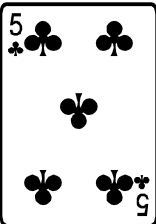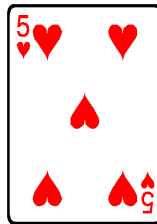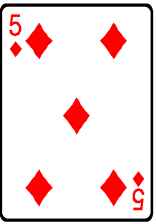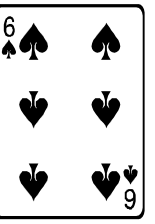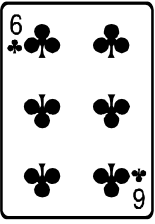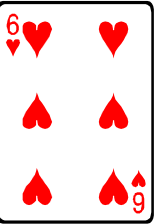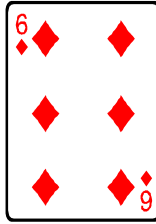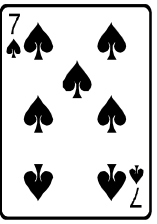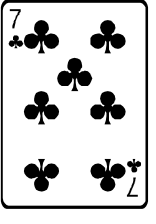
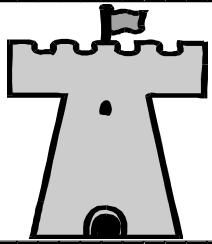Beginners may do best with simply designed cards of the ideal size and shape.

Faster learners may enjoy making card decks of their own— to keep—and/or to make up their own procedures or rules for group activities and card games.

ALPHABET ANSWERS: EVERYTHING to Know (Now) about Teaching & Learning the Letters of the Alphabet

Instructions for *Alphabet-Card Solitaire Games*

To use these "real" playing cards for *Alphabet-Card Solitaire Games*, you can
[a] glue the page on card stock and cut the cards out, and/or [b] photocopy the cards in a larger
size, cut them out, and paste each letter on a separate index card or piece of card stock.

A♠ — **A**	A♣ — **a**	A♥ — *A*	A♦ — *a*	2♠ — **B**	2♣ — **b**
2♥ — *B*	2♦ — *b*	3♠ — **C**	3♣ — **c**	3♥ — *C*	3♦ — *c*
4♠ — **D**	4♣ — **d**	4♥ — *D*	4♦ — *d*	5♠ — **E**	5♣ — **e**
5♥ — *E*	5♦ — *e*	6♠ — **F**	6♣ — **f**	6♥ — *F*	6♦ — *f*
7♠ — **G**	7♣ — **g**				

For a full 52-card deck of 13 four-of-a-kind sets,
combine the cards on this page with
the *G* to *m* (⬚ to ⬚) cards on page 42.

For a 104-card deck of 26 alphabet-card sets
(A-*z* in four forms) and two sets of 52 playing
cards (⬚ to ⬚), add the cards on page 43-44.

ALPHABET ANSWERS: EVERYTHING to Know (Now) about Teaching & Learning the Letters of the Alphabet

by Elaine Kirn-Rubin & Arthur E. Rubin. ESL@2learn-english.com. www.authorsandeditors.net. **11**

Find-, Connect-, & Copy-the-Letters Puzzles

People that enjoy word puzzles are often good at spelling and vocabulary, and *doing* puzzles can improve their facility with language. Nevertheless, learners at *all* levels may benefit from *letter puzzles*—perhaps even before they can read and write above a rudimentary level. Here are four very basic kinds:

1. *Letter Maze.* The object of a paper-and-pencil *maze puzzle* is to draw a line from the *Start* → to the *End* ⊠ of a series of pathways. In a *Letter Maze*, the line should cross *only* the letters that spell an item—perhaps the name of the picture represented by the shape of the maze. Then learners copy *those* letters on the line below.

2. *Letter Dot-to-Dot.* A classic *Connect-the-Dots* puzzle has *numbered* dots to connect to form a line that looks like an object. In a *Letter Dot-to-Dot,* learners connect *lettered* dots—either in alphabetical order or in the order of the given letters, which spell the name of the picture.

3. *Letter Search.* Most people, even non-readers, can do a simple *Word Search Puzzle* for which the "hidden words" are given. Learners need only to locate and circle—and perhaps copy on lines— the relevant letters in the puzzle in order—either from left to right or from top to bottom. Also, there is a kind of *Word Search* in which arrows indicate the letters to copy to spell a word. Whatever their level of language proficiency, learners get practice in manipulating and copying letters to put them in meaningful combinations.

4. *Crosswords.* For most crosswords, puzzle solvers need the ability to figure out vocabulary items from clues and spell them. However, there are also crossword puzzles based *only* on the placement of letters, of which many are given— that learners can do even *before* they read well.
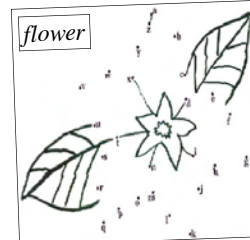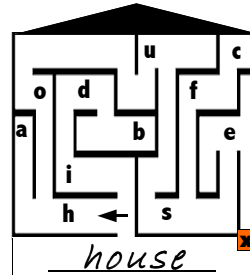
After trying the *letter puzzles* on the next page, participants might want to find others of these and other kinds to solve— for enjoyment as well as for language-skills improvement.

house

flower

Alphabet Letter H Word Search

latch, zone

Put *every* alphabet letter into this grid once.

Many letter-and-word-puzzles can be completed online and/or printed out. Such site*s* may even offer *puzzle generators* to educators that want to input their own letters and words— at an appropriate level for their learners—into printable puzzle form.

On paper, the *Internet,* and/or an electronic game device, advanced (or advancing) learners may want to get and try solving other *Maze, Dot-to-Dot, Word Search,* and *Crossword Puzzles*—and perhaps also *Wordfit (Fill-in Crosswords), Jigwords, Scrambled Word, Acrostic, Rebus, Scrabble,* and/or *Word Ladder Puzzles*— at an appropriate level of challenge.

Doing—and perhaps even creating—letter and word puzzles frequently will help them in vocabulary acquisition, spelling, etc.

# Instructions for *Find-, Connect-, and Copy- the-Letters Puzzles*

Follow the instructions for each of these kinds of *Letter Puzzles*. (Answers are below.)

Letter Mazes: For each picture, draw a line from the arrow ⬆ to the star ✱. Take the shortest path. Don't cross any lines. On the line, copy all the letters you crossed in your path. *What is the name of the picture?*
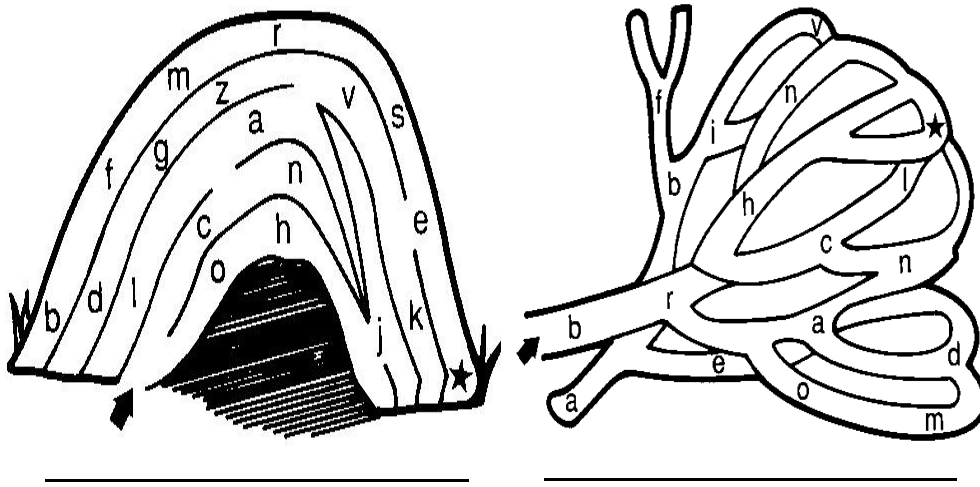
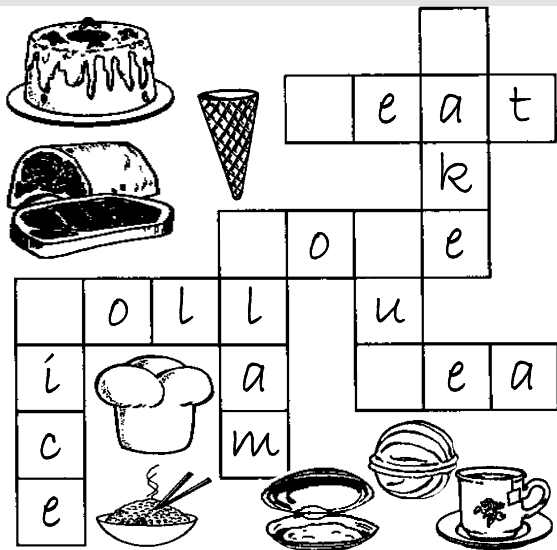**Letter Dot-to-Dot:** Draw a line to connect the letter dots in alphabetical order. *What lower-case letter of the alphabet do you see?*
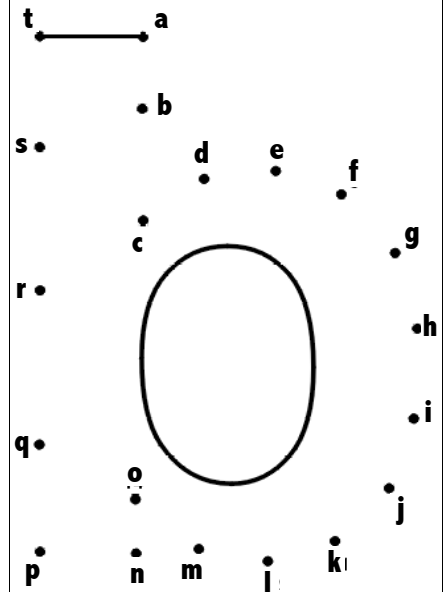
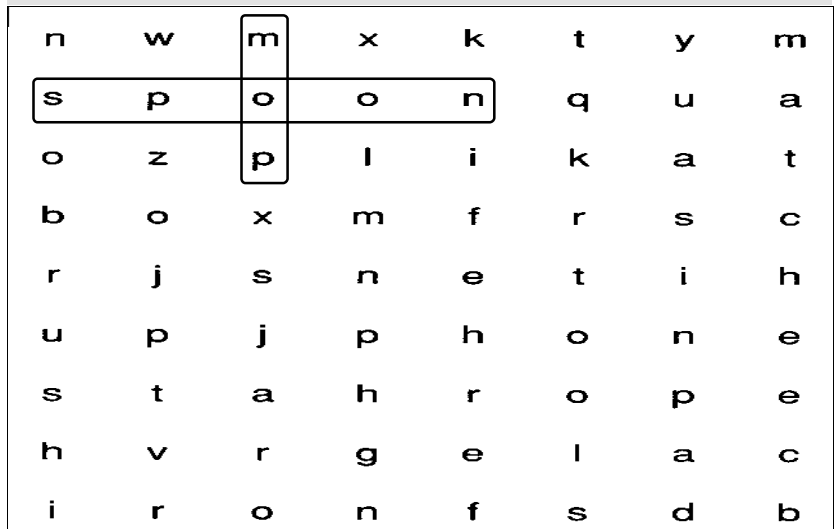**Crossword: Print these letters in the empty boxes of the crossword puzzle:**

c, c, m, n, r, t.
What are the names of the pictures?

Word Search: Box the names of the things.

Across: *spoon, box, net, phone, rope, iron*
Down: *mop, brush, jar, knife, tools, match.*

n	w	m	x	k	t	y	m
s	p	o	o	n	q	u	a
o	z	p	l	i	k	a	t
b	o	x	m	f	r	s	c
r	j	s	n	e	t	i	h
u	p	j	p	h	o	n	e
s	t	a	h	r	o	p	e
h	v	r	g	e	l	a	c
i	r	o	n	f	s	d	b
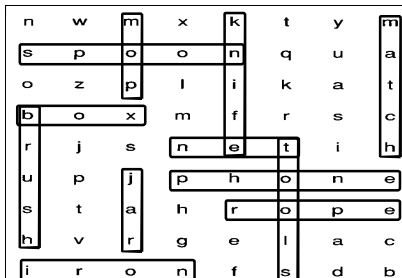
From the *Word Search*, name the pictures.