Alphabet Arc Activities

An alphabet arc is a tool to use with students to build alphabet knowledge. Alphabet knowledge refers to a student's ability to identify and name the letters of the alphabet.

Researchers have determined a number of reasons why alphabet knowledge is critical. They include:
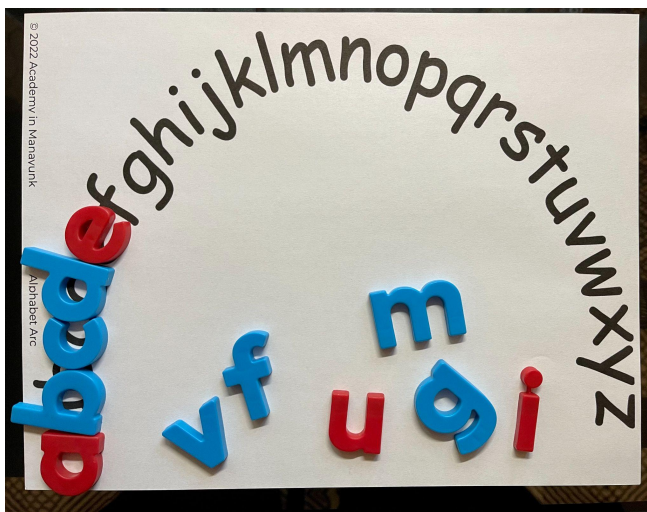
- A letter name serves as a file folder for all the properties of a letter because it is the one stable characteristic of a letter. Other characteristics of letters including sound, shape, and feel can vary.

- It can serve as a springboard to learning letter-sound correspondences as many letter names have their associated sound embedded in the letter name. Say B, for example, and notice that the first sound produced when saying the letter name is /b/.

- Letter name knowledge predicts reading achievement. "Research shows and has consistently shown for decades that letter-name knowledge is one of the most powerful predictors of learning to read and of later reading achievement." J. Birsh & S. Carreker (Eds.) *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills* (4th ed.) (2018) pg. 175.

- Letter name knowledge must also be fast. "Letter-naming speed has been identified as the single largest predictor of word-reading ability for first-grade students." J. Birsh & S. Carreker (Eds.) *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills* (4th ed.) (2018) page 177.

Materials: Alphabet matching arc, alphabet sequencing arc, letter manipulatives

1) Letter Matching and Naming with an Alphabet Matching Arc

This activity is completed with both uppercase and then lowercase letters. Teachers instruct students to orally name a letter as they match it to the corresponding printed letter on the arc in alphabetical order.
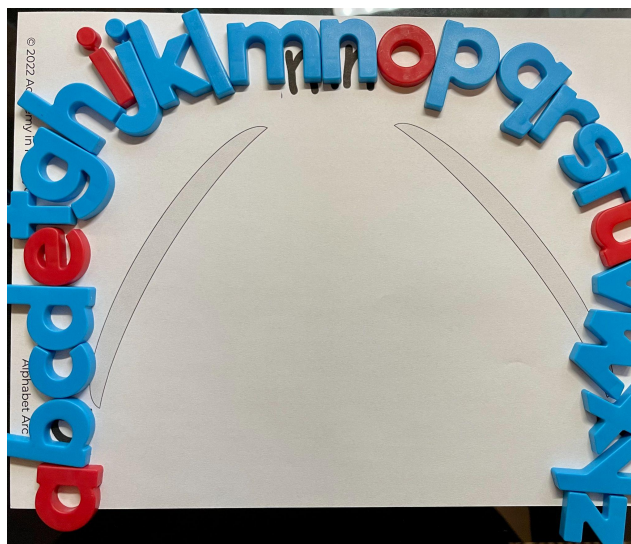
- Students learn that letters are found in the words we read and write.
- Students discover that the alphabet is made of 26 letters, and are prompted to say, "There are 26 letters in the alphabet."

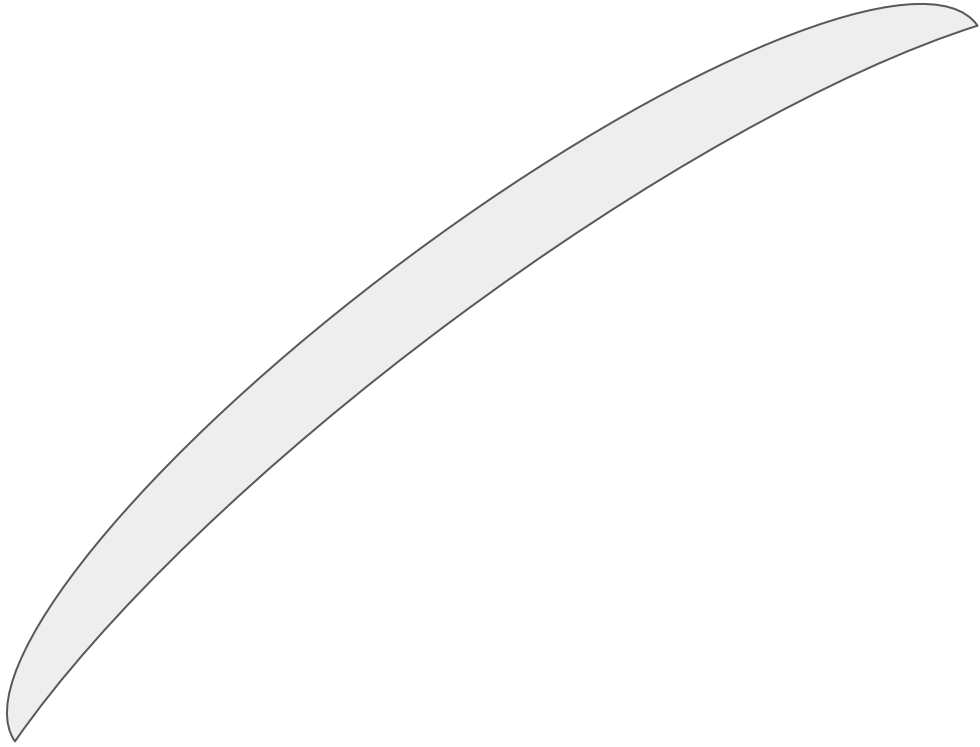## 2) Letter Naming and Sequencing with an Alphabet Sequencing Arc

This activity is completed after students can name all letters and match them correctly in alphabetical order.

- Students place *a* at the start since it is the initial letter in the alphabet
- Students place *z* at the end since it is the final letter
- Students place *m* and *n* in the exact middle of the alphabet.
- With these letters in place, they recall from memory the remaining letters in the alphabet and place the letter manipulatives in alphabetical order.
- Students may need to reference an alphabet letter strip until they become proficient in completing the alphabet sequencing arc correctly.
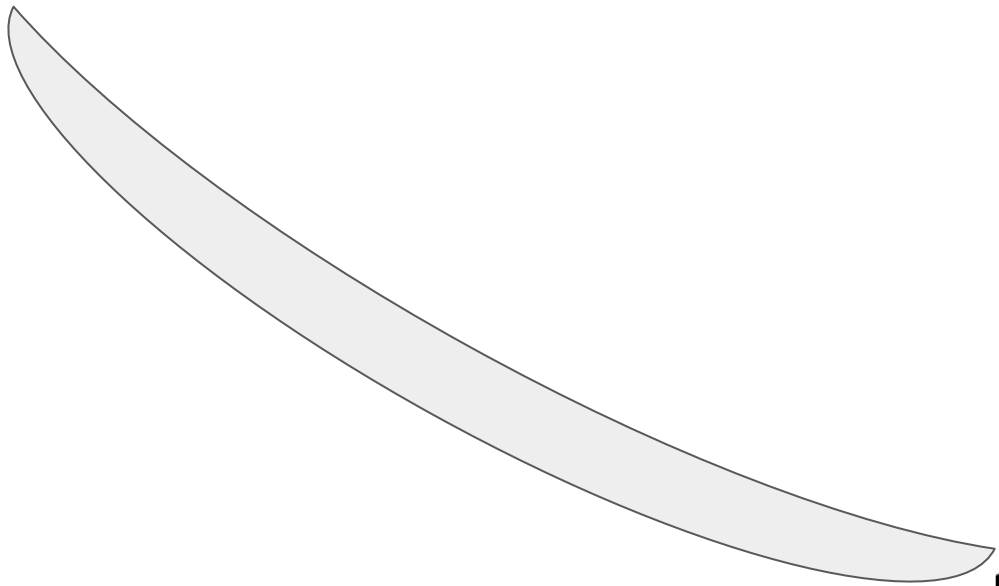
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Z

m

v