

Considerations for choosing key concepts for letter of the week ...

Sound considerations:

- Teach the sound that the letter most commonly represents, e.g., for the letter 'g' choose 'goat', not 'giraffe'; for the letter 'c' choose 'carrot', not 'circle'.
- Avoid blends as young children have difficulty isolating initial consonants.
- For vowels, use the short vowel, e.g., for the letter 'a' – choose 'apple', not 'ape'. The short vowels are as follows:
 - ~ a as in apple
 - ~ e as in egg
 - ~ i as in itch
 - ~ o as in orange
 - ~ u as in ugly

Word Frequency considerations

- Choose words/concepts that the students will be exposed to frequently and that we're trying to teach them in their communication – e.g., "more", "finish", "yes", "no", "want", "help".

Experience considerations

- Choose words/concepts that the students can relate to as much as possible, either things that they experience frequently or that you can support them to directly experience using resources like props or media.

Motivation considerations

- Choose words/concepts that the students may be particularly motivated by, e.g., their names or the names of people close to them. Remember that names can sometimes cause confusion, however, e.g., the name Cherie (pronounced with a 'sh' at the beginning) would be very confusing for children learning the letter 'c'.

What about topic-specific vocabulary?

- I would use topic vocabulary to create alphabet books that the students can read with you and also independently, e.g., if the topic is “Roles and Responsibilities” you could create alphabet books for:
 - Occupations – check out for an extensive ABC list for occupations
<http://www.actionalphabet.com/alphabetoccupations.html>
 - Jobs at home, e.g., C is for Cooking, G is for Gardening, V is for vacuuming.
 - Being a good brother / sister, e.g., C is for Caring, H is for helping, L is for laughing.

Other ideas

- You could also create alphabet books for key events across the term, e.g., Daffodil Day/Spring: D is for Daffodils, L is for Lambs, S is for Sun.
- You could create alphabet books for personal interests – alphabet books about TV shows, music, animals, vehicles, etc.

Consider making these books in Tarheel Reader so that others in school and around the world can share these with their students 😊