

Curious George Hides Letters!



Introduction: When the children go home at night, George likes to play a little trick with the *morning message* that the teacher writes on the board. He “steals” some of the letters from familiar words in the message, so that the children must figure out what’s missing when they come back in the morning. This can go on for many weeks, focusing first on different letters and later on familiar sight words.

Materials Needed:

- A whiteboard, chalkboard or chart paper
- The appropriate writing tool
- An alphabet chart posted in the room, visible during *morning meeting*

Background Knowledge: Children should be familiar with the Morning Meeting routine: from a whiteboard, chalkboard, or chart paper, read aloud together a brief *morning message* that uses predictable text—for example, “*Good Morning. Today is Monday. Today we will have art.*” They should be working on “reading” the message along with you, with your support and that of the other children’s voices. They should start to recognize the boundaries of words and understand that words are made up of letters. It is helpful (but not necessary) if children have some experience naming the letters of the alphabet and understanding the sounds they make, but this activity supports children at all levels of letter-sound understanding.

Teaching: One morning when you call your children to *morning meeting*, tell them that something has happened. Curious George has played a trick and stolen a letter from some of the words! Start with a consonant that you think many children are familiar with—for example, you may write the morning message without the *Ts* so that it reads, “*Good Morning. _oday is Monday. _oday we will have ar_.*” Try to read the message without the *Ts* so it sounds silly. Ask the children to turn and talk to each other about what might be missing, and why. Call on one child to come up and fill in the missing letters, and then read the message together so that it sounds right. Create a list so that every child has a chance to come up and add the missing letter at some point during the year.

Progression of Lessons: You will want to start this activity by taking away one beginning consonant sound. As your students progress, you can proceed in a variety of ways. You can take away several different consonants, or take away middle or end sounds. When you begin studying vowels, you can take away vowels. As your children study and learn to recognize simple sight words, you can have George hide entire words. You can manipulate the phrasing of your morning messages to provide opportunities for your students to focus on a variety of letters/sounds/sight words.

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