

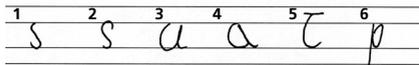
# Letters 's', 'a', 't', 'p'

## Objective

To learn formation of the letters 's', 'a', 't' and 'p'.

## Background knowledge

Children need good fine motor control and visual perception for all these letters. The following examples are common mistakes with explanations of why the error has occurred.



### Up, backwards and around shapes

**'s' (1):** It has been started at 12, not 1 o'clock; the bottom does not travel through to sit vertically underneath the top producing a letter that leans backwards.

**'s' (2):** The circle is too large at the top, leaving no room for the bottom to sit on the writing line; it ends as soon as it hits the writing line and is not curled backwards.

**'a' (3):** It has been started at 12, not 1 o'clock and is open at the top.

**'a' (4):** It has been started at 12, not 1 o'clock. It has been closed at the top but the vertical line required to close it has to be angled backwards to reach 12 (rather than 1) o'clock.

### Straight down shapes

**'t' (5):** It has been drawn with a curved line, not a straight line; it has been crossed too high.

### Down, up and over shapes

**p (6):** The top curve is spiky, not rounded (check fine motor strength). The bottom curve is also spiky, rather than rounded.

See page 13 for a sample alphabet for left-handers. Up, backwards and around shapes and down, up and over shapes have flattened tops reducing push across the page. The thumb and index finger have more of a pulling-down motion with less far to stretch around for curves and bumps.

## Activities

Before you conduct a handwriting lesson, remind yourself of correct letter formation (CD-ROM) and good handwriting practice (Introduction).

All of the photocopiable sheets follow a similar pattern: first the children trace the large letter with their finger, then draw over the letters with a pencil and draw their own from the dot. There is then a picture-based activity before the children write the letter without guidelines to establish their own writing size. The children should complete the smiley face at the bottom of each page to show how they think they have done.

### ● Photocopiable page 47 'Up, backwards and around 's''

Make sure the top and the bottom of the 's' touch the top body and writing line.

### ● Photocopiable page 48 'Up, backwards and around 'a''

When forming the letter, make sure the children touch the top body and writing lines with the top and bottom of their 'a'. Remember left-handers may find it easier to flatten the top of the letter.

### ● Photocopiable page 49 'Straight down 't''

Remind the children that 't' starts halfway between the top body and head lines.

### ● Photocopiable page 50 'Down, up and over 'p''

Make sure the children trace over their original line as they come back up.

### ● Photocopiable page 51 'Letter consolidation – 's', 'a', 't', 'p''

Use this page to consolidate the learning of this section.

## Further ideas

● **Walk around the school:** Recognise and trace letters on signs and in environments.

## What's on the CD-ROM

On the CD-ROM you will find:

- Animation for each letter formation.
- Animated letter stories.
- All of the photocopiable sheets.