

# ***Foundational Phonics***

## ***Letter Mastery***

### ***Book One***

*a first course in letter mastery  
for excellence in reading*

***By Ariel Gunther Mount***

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*Inspired by*

*Florence Akin’s Word Mastery, published 1913.*

*Foundational Phonics Word Mastery, third edition*

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## Before You Begin This Book

Simple ear, tongue, and eye training exercises are something you can do with your child before beginning this book to help set him up for success. To become a confident reader, a child must know how to:

- ❧ Hear and pronounce the sounds in words (ear and tongue training).
- ❧ Identify the letters and the individual sounds they make (eye training).
- ❧ Understand how to form words with those letters (word building).



### Ear Training

The purpose of this exercise is to help your child start hearing letter sounds in the words he speaks every day. Ideally, ear training should begin before any letters or letter sounds are taught formally. This helps him to understand that words are actually made up of many different sounds blended together.

To begin, tell your child that you are going to play a little game, and explain that he should listen very carefully to what you say, and try not to talk. Start by giving him simple tasks like, “Tap your “head,” but say the words phonetically. Example: “T-a-p your h-ea-d.” Letter sounds (not letter names) should be spoken individually and vowel blends should also be spoken just as you would say them in a word. For example in the word “h-ea-d,” you should say the sounds “h-ě-d” because “ea” is pronounced “ě” in head.” The same applies to blends like “sk,” “sl,” “cl,” etc. Say them as they sound, even if a particular letter does not make that sound by itself. Don’t worry, an explanation of long vowel sounds, blends and more complex concepts will be taught in Book Two, when the child has reached the Word Mastery level. More examples:

“Please bring me a b-o-x” or “Show me something r-e-d.”  
“t-a-p on your d-e-sk,” “cl-a-p your h-an-ds,”  
“r-u-n to the d-oo-r,” “h-o-p to the w-in-dow,” etc.

As your child catches on, add in more and more words. This does not have to be a structured “game.” After he is comfortable with the idea, you can use this game throughout the day for everyday tasks.

***Remember to keep it fun!*** Learning to hear the different sounds in a word will give your child a great advantage when he starts sounding out words on his own. In a few days, he should be able to say almost any word that can be sounded. This should be practiced as often as you can, but not to the point where it becomes a chore. Once your child is comfortable in ear training, you are ready to move on to tongue training.



### Tongue Training

Start by saying a word phonetically (as you did in ear training), then have your child identify the first sound he hears in a word, then the last sound. Make sure he articulates the sound correctly. Some children may have a natural inclination to voice a breathy or voiceless sound, such as saying “huh” instead of “h.” Be sure to correct him if he does. Show him a few objects and say their names phonetically.

Example: “h-a-t,” “p-e-n,” “b-oo-k,” “f-a-n,” “b-a-t,” “m-o-p,” etc. Show him a picture and ask him to slowly (phonetically) say the name of each thing that he sees. After a few days of practice, offer him a sound and have him see how many different words he can think of that begin with that sound. Continue working on this throughout the school year. **Ideally, ear and tongue training should be practiced for at least one week before beginning this book. You should feel confident that your child can easily recognize and say the different sounds in the words he hears.**

## Eye Training

Eye training will begin in Chapter One, when your child learns that the sounds he can now hear and say have symbols (letters) that represent them. Once he discovers this sound/symbol connection, a world of possibilities will open up to him. This book will give him all the tools he needs to confidently begin transforming letters into meaningful words. The main focus of this book is to assist in the mastery of basic consonant and short vowel sounds. Introducing long vowel sounds and more complex concepts all at the same time can cause great confusion for many learners. This gentle approach gives children the ability to focus on one concept at a time, allowing them to quickly gain success. After completing this book, your child should be ready to move on to Book Two, where those long vowel sounds, blends, and more complex concepts will be introduced and mastered in the same gentle, step-by-step method.

## Fostering a Love for Learning

Many parents who are beginning the process of home education feel the burden of expectations for what learning should look like. They often come into it thinking that learning at home should look pretty similar to traditional classroom learning. What they don't always realize is that homeschooling is supposed to be different. It allows for an individualized approach to teaching and learning outside of the one-size-fits-all model. Homeschooling gives parents the unique ability to cater to their child's specific needs and learning style because they know their child better than anyone else.

Many parents grapple with an overwhelming sense that if they don't do "school" just right they could permanently ruin their child's education. One of the biggest ways a parent can help their child succeed is to let go of regimented classroom model expectations and make learning a way of life. Take time to enjoy the journey. Stop and smell the roses, literally! Then sketch the roses and dissect them and turn them into the science project for the day! Routines can be very helpful, but don't get so distracted by the schedule that you miss the point. Turn those interruptions into opportunities and "setbacks" into teaching moments. This curriculum was designed to help parents gently usher their children into a love for learning. Helping children become confident readers sets them on the path to becoming lifelong learners which gives them the ability to teach themselves almost anything.

## How to Use This Book

### Lesson Plans

There are twenty-six chapters in this book, each one focusing on a letter of the alphabet. There is no required schedule for this. Lessons should be done consistently and often but paced with your individual child's needs and abilities in mind. This could look like one or two pages a day for some children or several pages per day for others. Try covering a couple pages a day, or plan specific days and times, and cover as many pages as you can in that allotted time. The best rule of thumb is to go at whatever pace your child is most comfortable with. You should try to do lessons often enough that he doesn't forget what he has learned, but not so fast that he becomes overwhelmed. If your child is struggling to recall previous concepts, slow down the pace and look for more ways to reinforce lessons before moving on. Remember, the goal is not to win a race, but to help your child become a confident reader. ***Most importantly, remember to keep it fun!***

## **A Multi-Sensory Approach**

This program uses a multi-sensory approach. In simple terms, the idea is to build strong pathways in the child's brain by presenting information in several formats that utilize multiple senses (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, olfactory, and taste). It has been scientifically proven that children who struggle with dyslexia can often overcome their challenges by using a multi-sensory approach. Activities that have been particularly helpful to these children are writing letters or words in the air or sand. Keep this in mind as you proceed through the program and look for ways to add more multi-sensory reinforcements that will work best for your specific child.

### **Flash Cards**

Flashcards are an important tool that can really help reinforce what a child has learned. A simple flashcard practice before and/or after each lesson can help your child memorize and solidify new letters quickly for easy recall the next time he encounters them. This is especially important for a reader who is struggling to remember previous letters. Aim to practice them, at least, at the beginning of each lesson, but it certainly will not hurt to practice them more. If your child is able to easily remember all the letters and their sounds without the flashcards, feel free to proceed without them.

An easy way to keep track of them is to put them in small “zipper” baggies or envelopes. Tape two baggies or envelopes to the inside cover of this book, in such a way that you are still able to open them. Keep the cards that have been mastered in the first bag and the new cards in the second one. This will help keep all the cards organized and contained in one easy place.

### **Word Building**

Use the spaces at the end of each lesson, starting in lesson three, to build words with your flashcards. Encourage your child to sound out not only the words he has learned but also other words he knows. When he builds a word with letters ask him, “Does that sound like a word you know?” If he has not made a real word, praise him for his effort and help him to find letters that will make a real word. Once your child gains confidence in this exercise, start building short sentences.

### **Practical Suggestions**

Multi-sensory exercises are prompted throughout this program where children are asked to read, write, speak, draw, listen, find, etc. If your child needs extra reinforcements, try adding in some of the ideas below:

- Write letters in the air.
- Write letters in sand.
- Finger spell letters and words in American Sign Language.
- Stamp letters on paper.
- Build letters and words out of play dough, pipe cleaners, etc.
- Search for and circle letters in magazines, books, or junk mail!
- Hunt for items that make a letter sound around the house or wherever you go throughout the day.
- Make a letter or word collage.
- Make a letter of the week craft.
- Read interesting stories and practice eye, ear, tongue, and eye training.

# *Chapter*

# *Eight*

## Chapter 8

This is the letter **T**



**T t**

- Look around you. How many things can you find or think of that begin with the “**t**” sound?
- Practice this letter and add it to your flash cards.

Say all the letter sounds you know:

**m, a, n, r, f, s, e, t**

### Mouth Gymnastics

“Can you say this with me?”

**Ten tiny  
turtles tickle  
Triston's toes while  
tasting tomatoes.**

### American Sign Language

“Can you sign this with me?”



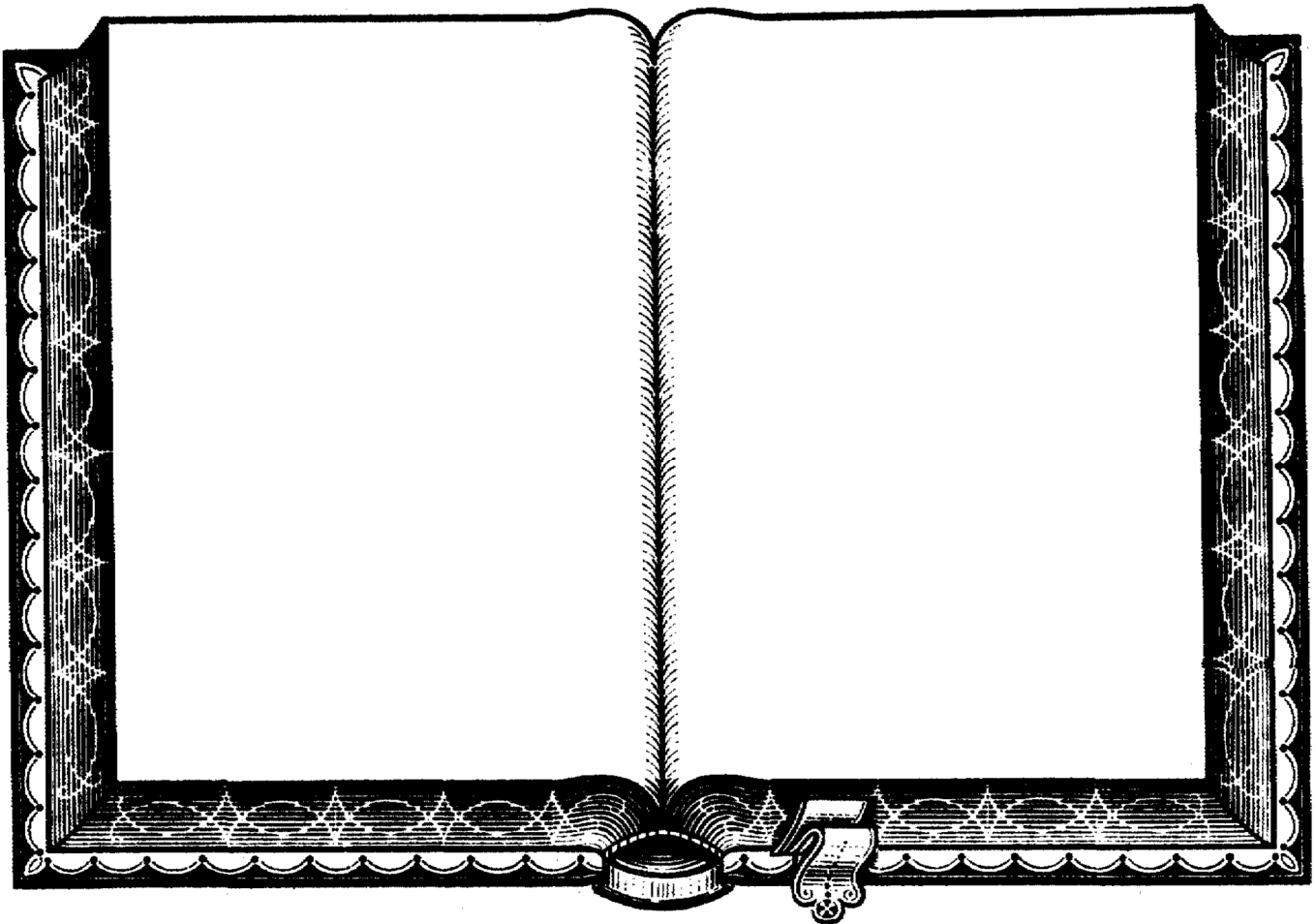


## Chapter 8

# T t

*Listen to your teacher read a story about something with the “t” sound in it. Draw some pictures from the story:*

**Story:** \_\_\_\_\_



### ***Optional Story Ideas:***

*A Tree Is Nice* by Janice May Udry

*Town Mouse, Country Mouse* by Libby Walden

*One Tiny Turtle* by Nicola Davies

*Trees* by Tony Johnston and Tiffany Bozic

*The Tiger Who Came to Tea* by Judith Kerr

*Big Truck and Little Truck* by Jan Carr

*The Little Train* by Lois Lenski

### ***Optional extra activities for this letter:***

✓Write it in sand.

✓Stamp it or mold it in clay.

✓Make a “Letter of the Week” craft or poster.

✓Point out this letter wherever you see.

## Chapter 8

How many *T*'s can you find?

Say the sound each time you circle one.

*Tt*

→ l a v r t T

→ z t q T u t

→ o e t y w n

→ T d t T m j

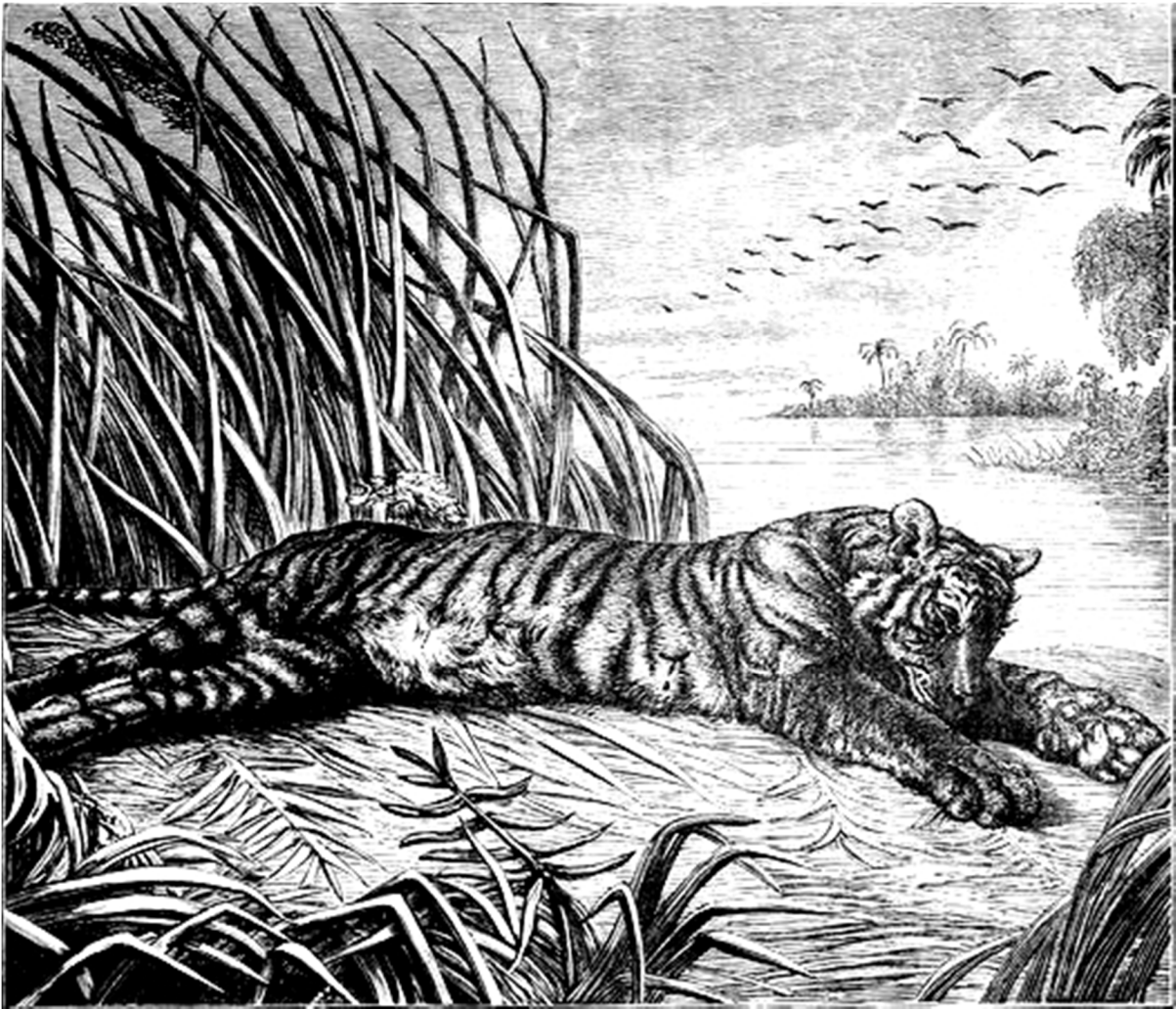
→ T h b T g c

→ i p x f k s

## Chapter 8

# Tt

*Study the picture. Can you find anything that begins with the “t” sound?*



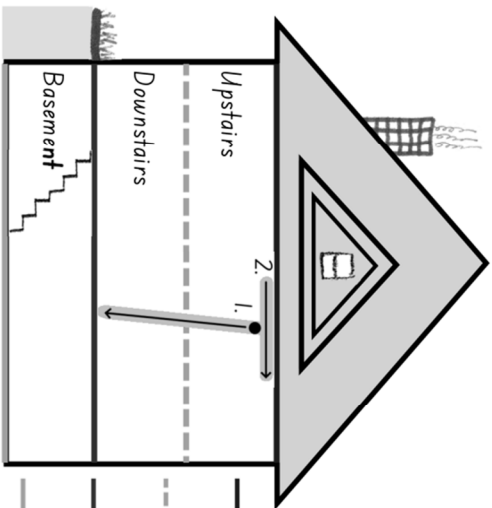
*(tiger, toes, tail, trees)*

# Chapter 8



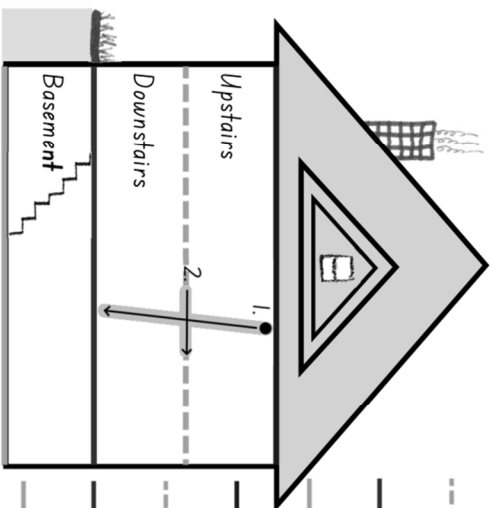
Trace and practice the letter **T**.

Say the sound each time you write the letter.



Tracing practice lines for uppercase T. The first line shows a dashed 'T' with numbered arrows indicating stroke order. The following lines are blank for practice, each starting with a dot on the top line.

Can you write an  
**uppercase T**  
all by yourself? \_\_\_\_\_



Tracing practice lines for lowercase t. The first line shows a dashed 't' with numbered arrows indicating stroke order. The following lines are blank for practice, each starting with a dot on the middle dashed line.

Can you write a  
**lowercase t**  
all by yourself? \_\_\_\_\_



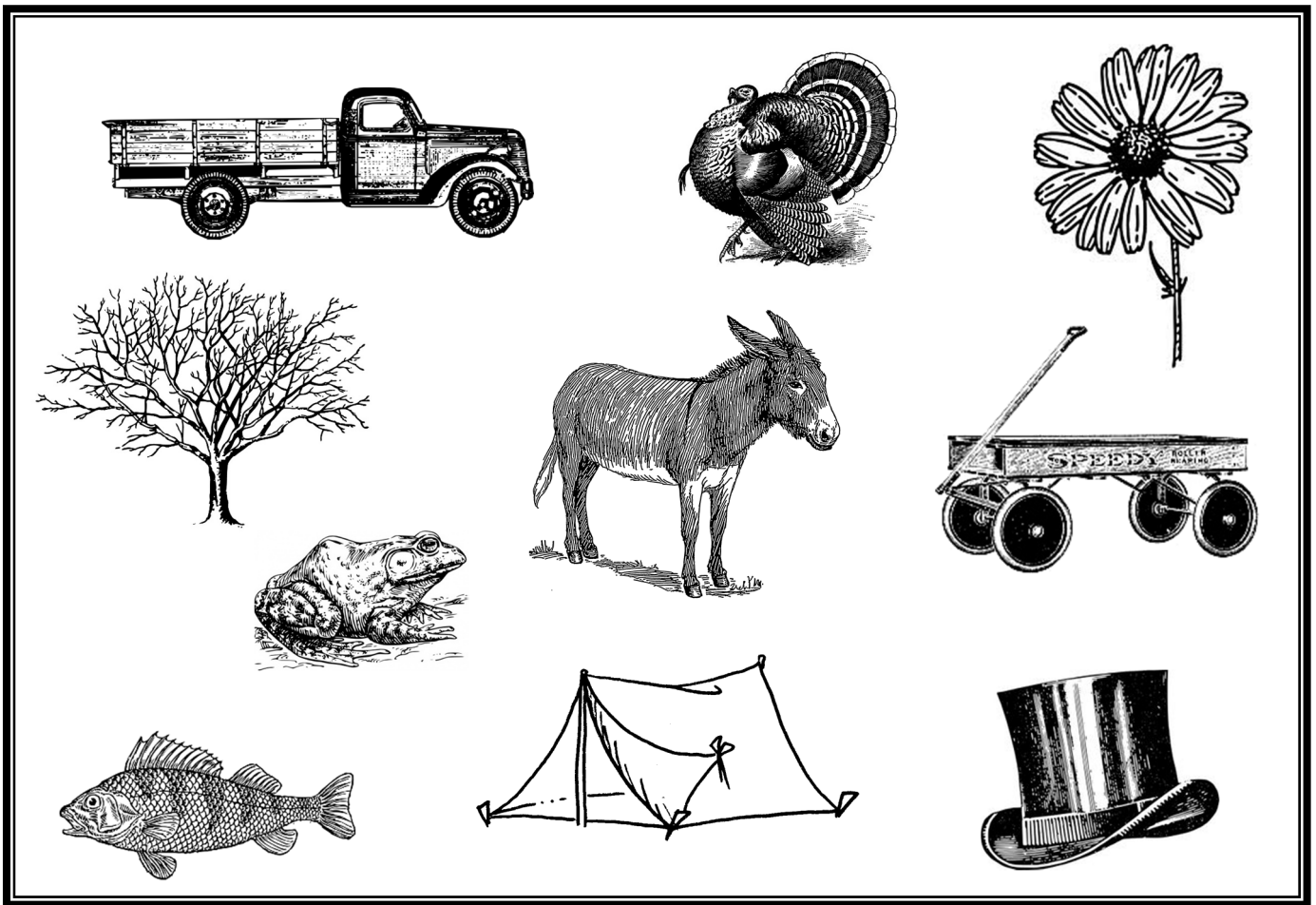
Are you holding your  
pencil correctly?  
Don't forget  
your bird beak!

Tracing practice lines for uppercase T. The first line shows a dashed 'T' with numbered arrows indicating stroke order. The following lines are blank for practice, each starting with a dot on the top line.

## Chapter 8

# Tt

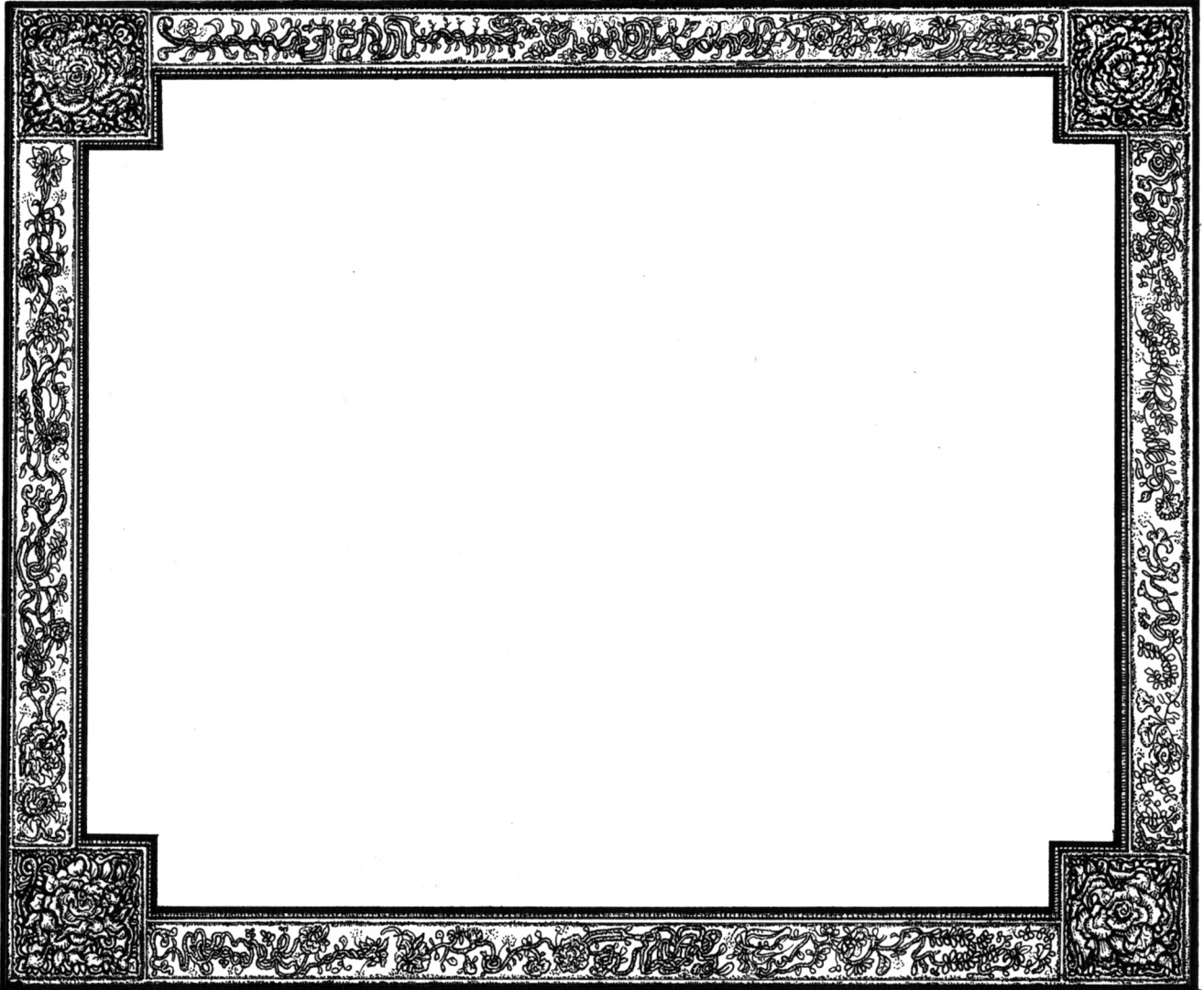
Say the name of each picture. Listen for the “t” sound.  
Color or circle all the pictures that begin with the “t” sound.



(truck, turkey, tree, toad, tent)

## Chapter 8

*Draw a picture of something that begins with the “t” sound.*



*What is it?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Tt*

## Chapter 8

T t

Use your finger and quickly drive your reading train down the track.  
Remember to say the sound of each letter until you have reached the next one.  
Don't stop! Keep going! Push the sounds together!



ten

tan

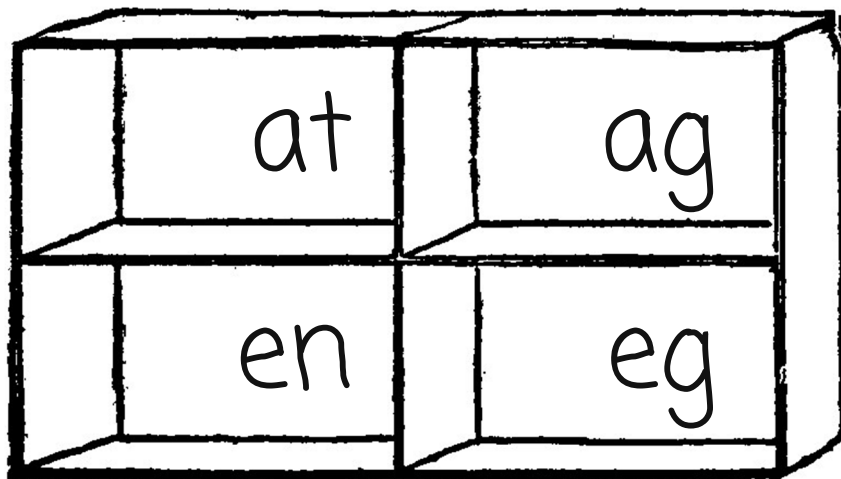
fat

rat

set

met

Can you build some words from the sounds you already know?  
Add a letter to each box to build a word.



m n r f s t

## Chapter 8

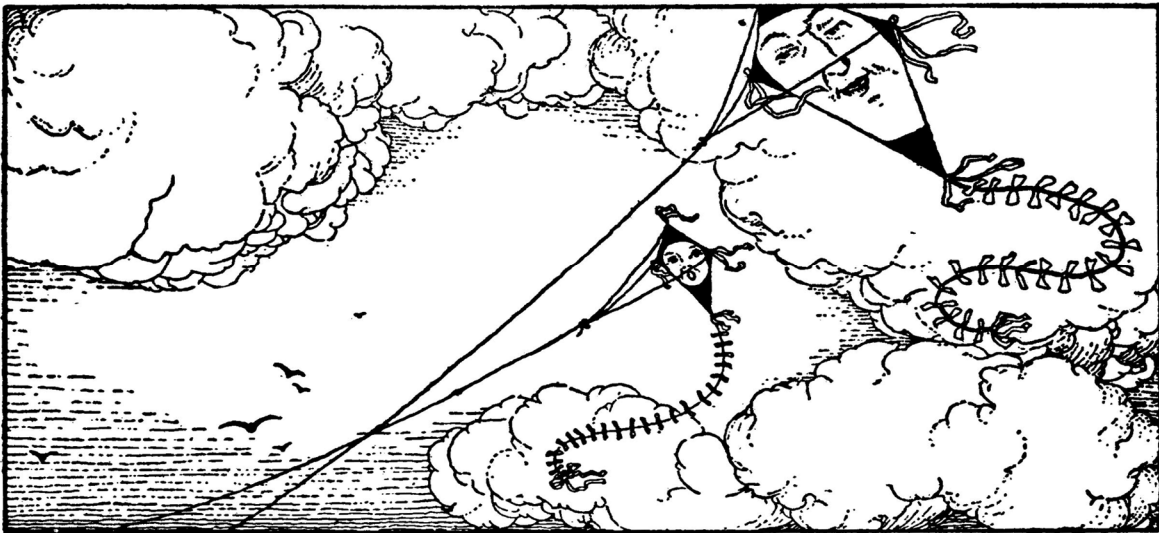
# T t

*Listen as your teacher reads the story.*

*Tap the book or clap your hands every time you hear the “t” sound.*

*Circle all the words you hear that begin with that sound.*

### HOW THE LITTLE KITE LEARNED TO FLY



"I never can do it," the little kite said,  
As he looked at the others high over his head;  
"I know I should fall if I tried to fly."

"Try," said the big kite; "only try!  
Or I fear you never will learn at all."

But the little kite said, "I'm afraid I'll fall." →



## ❧Chapter 8❧

# T t

The big kite nodded: "Ah well, goodbye;  
I'm off" and he rose toward the tranquil sky.  
Then the little kite's paper stirred at the sight,  
And trembling he shook himself free for flight.  
First whirling and frightened, then braver grown,  
Up, up he rose through the air alone,  
Till the big kite looking down could see  
The little one rising steadily.

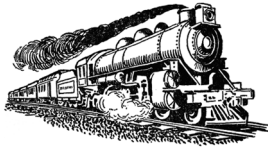
Then how the little kite thrilled with pride,  
As he sailed with the big kite side by side!  
While far below he could see the ground,  
And the boys like small spots moving round.  
They rested high in the quiet air,  
And only the birds and the clouds were there.  
"Oh, how happy I am!" the little kite cried,  
"And all because I was brave, and tried."

Author Unknown

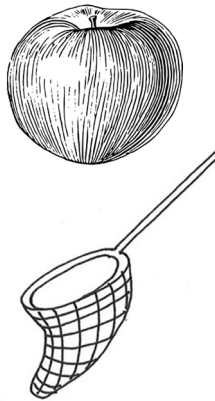
## Chapter 8

# Tt

*Name the pictures. Draw a line to match the beginning sound with the letter.*



T

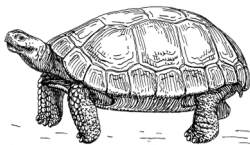


M



T

R



N



A

❧Chapter 8❧

Tt



Mat and Nat set ā net.

## ❧Chapter 8❧

*How many words can you build and read with your flash cards?*

*Can you tell a story?*



| \_\_\_\_\_ || \_\_\_\_\_ || \_\_\_\_\_ |

*Does this sound like a word you know?*