Section 3
Some Literacy Activities

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3.1 Introduction

The 36 literacy activities described in this Section are organized according to nine different categories:

Puzzle Activities	Scripted Calls	**Flashcard Activities**
Word Find Puzzles	Taking Phone Messages	Flashcard Drills
Crossword Puzzles	**Time Concept Activities**	Alphabetical Order
Television Activities	Monthly Calendar Sheets	Alphabet Match
Television Listings	Time Templates	Alphabet Memory Match
Script / Dialogue Writing	Timer Time	Wild Card!
Closed Captioning	**Newspaper Activities**	**Vocabulary Activities**
Televised Sports	Headliners	Dolch Word Charts
Photograph Activities	Cutlines	Key Survival Words
Photo Stories	Ad Decoding	Sign Vocabulary
Graffiti Boards	Article Match-Ups	Idiom Fun
Picture Scaffolds	**Playing Card Activities**	"Sense" Word Lists
Collage Stories	Card Sorting	Radial Trees
Telephone Activities	Match-Up Card Game	Overhead Hangman
Phone Book	Clock Solitaire	Word Bank

3.2   Puzzle Activities

PUZZLE ACTIVITIES

Puzzles can be an effective tool to teach and reinforce literacy skills, particularly letter and word recognition. Learning doesn't feel so much like work! Puzzles can be sent home with learners to work on their own time, reinforcing skills taught during tutoring sessions.

Activity: Word Find Puzzles

Word find puzzles can be created using simple graph paper or through interactive web sites. Puzzles are most effective when they utilize word lists that are relevant to learners, such as new vocabulary they have encountered. Commercial crossword puzzles often have themes. The tutor can choose an appropriate puzzle to supplement learning of a new topic area.

Two examples of word find puzzles are provided in Section 10.

Activity: Crossword Puzzles

Crossword puzzles are another fun way for learners to interact with new vocabulary. They can be commercial or tutor-created. If the clues are too difficult, the learner can be provided with a word list alone.

An example of such a crossword puzzle is provided in Section 10.

3.3   Television Activities

TELEVISION ACTIVITIES

Adults with limited literacy skills watch more television than those with higher skills, primarily because television is their main source of information. Television can be the basis of the following literacy activities:

Activity: Television Listings

The weekly television listings can be used together with learners to develop some of their skills:

AFTERNOON

12:00

[13] [2] Le Midi 85289
[4] [3] Popular Mechanics for
Rock concert. (EI) 16635
[7] Acorn: The Nature Nut W
ers and people. 54189
[8] [9] [10] [9] Farm Gate 570!
[10] Plugged in & Telefieds 91
[11] [12] [5] [5] Rhythmic Gymn
Koop Cup. From Toronto. (Tape
min.) 23276 90924 54740
[16] RV Today 504059
[18] CNN.dot.com Travel Webs
478295
[19] Competition Firefighters fr
around North America test their
643566
[20] Secret World of Monster
Why mammoth trucks are high-
investments. 212566
[21] Gaslight Gourmet Lamb.
[22] Alvin and the Chipmunks
364547
[23] Antiques Roadshow A sti
and a Commonnwealth tankard
1654 turn up. 1135547

- ■ **Time telling** (air times)
- ■ **Using charts** (program schedule)
- ■ **Reading** (program summaries)
- ■ **Number recognition** (channels)
- ■ **Making choices** (what to watch)
- ■ **Time management** (when to watch)
- ■ **Developing interests** (types of shows, topics, or themes)

Advice:

After reading a summary of a television program, the learner and tutor can further discuss what they can expect from the show. A list can be made. After watching, these expectations can be examined.

Although learner choice is paramount, the learner can be encouraged to choose television programs that may stimulate follow-up reading. Examples are dramatizations of written works and nature shows. Viewing a show based on a written work can build comprehension levels prior to tackling the text itself.

After viewing a show (or videotape), the tutor and learner can discuss the ideas or scenarios that were presented. Based on these discussions, the learner may want to create her own summary for a show, in the style of the television listings.

Different types of programs found in the television listings can be placed in categories, such as sports, movies, news, comedies, drama, and so forth. Full-hour and half-hour programs can be listed.

Activity: Script / Dialogue Writing

Learners can be shown a short video segment with the sound off. They can be instructed to view the segment without speaking, and to observe as much as possible. Together, the learner and tutor (or a larger group) can try to recall what they remember seeing. The ideas can be recorded on paper.

The tape can be replayed, pausing where necessary. The learning pair or group can write a story based on what they see, which may include creating dialogue for characters on the screen.

Advantages:

Memory: This activity challenges and potentially develops learners' memory skills.

Creativity: Learners are creating stories and dialogue, based on what they see and on what they would say in the situations.

Flexibility: This activity can be usefully undertaken in pairs, threes, fours, or larger groups. Televisions and VCRs are usually available, whereas computers, for example, may not be.

Activity: Closed Captioning

A television that is capable of displaying closed captioning (CC) can be used as a literacy tool. A closed-captioned television program displays text on the screen, corresponding to the words being spoken. The learner / viewer is able to hear the correct pronunciation of words as she reads them, while the pictures reinforce comprehension.

Regularly televised closed-captioned programs may run too fast to benefit learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities. Instead, a captioned videocassette (or a taped program with subtitles) can be used. The screen can be paused at regular intervals so that the tutor and leaner can focus on text at a manageable pace.

Advice:

It will be helpful for comprehension to watch a video segment several times before tackling the on-screen text.

The tutor should preview videos to check content and technical quality. Is the pace of captioning too fast for the learner? Is there too much dialogue in the scene? Are captions readable?

When using this technique, the learner should choose the topics of the videos to study to ensure they are interested in what is being watched and read.

Adapted from:
George H. Maginnis. *Captioned Video Cassettes: A Source of Reading Material.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association. Anaheim, CA, May 3-7, 1987.

Activity: Televised Sports

Televised sports present learners with an interesting opportunity to learn numbers. A basketball, hockey, or baseball game can be videotaped, and this tape can form the basis for instruction. Some ideas:

Viewing: The learner and tutor can watch a taped match, and the tutor can point out and say the numbers on players' uniforms as they appear on the screen. Recognition and pronunciation are emphasized.

Copying: The VCR can be paused, allowing the learner to copy a player's number onto a sheet of paper. Emphasis is on the shapes of numbers and drawing them accurately.

Homework: The adult learner can name numbers and write them down when watching team sports at home. The tutor may want to tape the same game, so that the student's list of numbers can be reviewed with the tutor. The learner's family or others in their home environment can help by arranging viewing times and providing writing materials. Independent learning is emphasized.

Scorekeeping: When watching sports, the tutor and learner can focus on the score when it is flashed on the screen. Counting and simple mathematics can be taught in addition to number recognition.
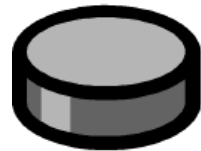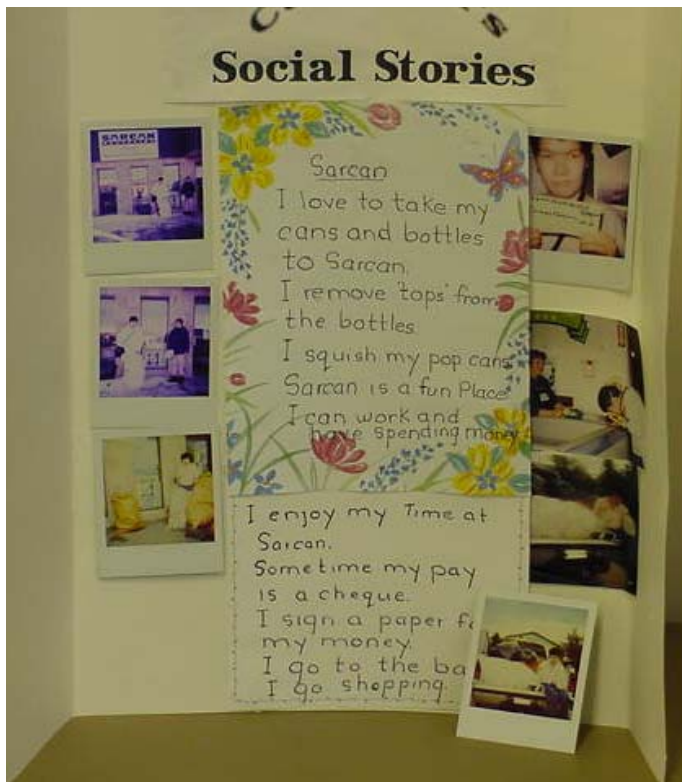
3.4 Photograph Activities

PHOTOGRAPH ACTIVITIES

Photographs can be central to successful literacy exercises for learners with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

Activity: Photo Stories

A photo story display about visiting a SARCAN depot, created by Carmen Campeau from Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan. Carmen herself is featured in the photographs on the display.
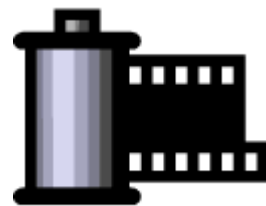
Steps in creating a photo story:

Select a Topic: The learner and tutor can decide together on what to take photographs of. Photo stories are most effective when they document an aspect of a learner's everyday life. Topics can be the workplace, hobbies, family, and so on.

Take Photographs: The tutor can take photographs of the learner engaged in one of his regular routines. Each aspect of that routine should be documented with a single photograph. Pictures with action in them are usually easier to describe. A Polaroid or digital camera, if available, can speed up the process, in comparison to having pictures developed.

Sort Photographs: Once developed, the pictures can be sorted and placed into the correct order. The best photographs can be chosen. Only 8-12 pictures should be used, so that they can be easily displayed.

Develop Text: The learner and tutor can work together to develop text for each picture. Alternatively, a descriptive paragraph or two can be written.

Create a Display: The pictures can be arranged and pasted on a piece of cardboard or heavy coloured paper. The text, including a title, can then be written on the display, using coloured markers. The photo story can otherwise be put in book form, by pasting it in a scrapbook or placing it in a photo album.

A good example of a photo story is:

Darren Crawford and Angele Hubert. *The Challenges of Literacy and Employment.* With *Facilitator's Notes* by Susan Devins and Maureen Sanders. Edmonton, AB: PROSPECTS Literacy Association, 1995. [http://www.nald.ca/clr/challeng/cover.htm]

It was written by students and focuses on the experiences of two adult literacy students with intellectual disabilities, who work as sorters at the Edmonton Recycling Society.

Activity: Graffiti Boards

Here is an example of a graffiti board on the topic of litter:

Litter: Garbage everywhere!

"Put trash in its place…
….the garbage can!"

What do you have to say? Write any thoughts on this board!

Steps in creating a graffiti board:

Select a Canvas: Begin by selecting a "canvas" for the graffiti board. It can be a white board, chalkboard, sheet of poster board, and so on.

Select a Topic: Now select a topic that learners would be interested in commenting on. For example, you could choose the topic of "speaking for myself."

Select a Title and Subtitle: Choose an appropriate title that captures the theme. "Having a Voice" is an example. If you wish, a subtitle (such as "Being Listened To") can be added. Write titles on the top of the canvas.

Select Photographs: Appropriate photographs can be taped or pasted onto the canvas. Pictures should capture the theme. Pictures will serve as prompts for the learners to think more of the topic and what they may want to say about it.

Add a Brief Phrase: In addition to the title(s) and pictures, you can add a brief phrase on the canvas that will act as a thematic prompt. An example is "My Opinions Matter!" A "provocative" statement may encourage more responses.

Add Instructions: A phrase encouraging learners to write their opinions can be added. An example is "What do you have to say? Write any thoughts on this board!"

Leave Space: There should be lots of room for people to add their comments, sign their names, draw a sketch and so on.

Display the Board: The graffiti board should be placed on a wall in an accessible area, so that people will see it. It should be placed low enough so that someone using a wheelchair can reach. Otherwise, it can be taped on a tabletop. A coloured marker on a string can be added.

Activity: Picture Scaffolds

By considering and answering the following list of questions, the learner is assisted in composing a text based on a photograph or illustration.

Guided Questions to Scaffold Composition of a Text Based on a Photo

- ? Who is this photo of?

- ? When was the photo taken?

- ? Who are the people in the photo?

- ? What are you doing in the photo?

- ? How is everyone dressed in the photo?

- ? Who took the photo?

- ? Why was the photo taken?

- ? Why do you like the photo?

Advice:

➡ The learner and tutor should examine the photograph and discuss the questions together. Then the learner (or tutor) can write down the responses.

➡ Photographs that include the learner work best for this activity. Interest and comprehension will be higher than "anonymous" photographs.

➡ The photo and story can be displayed for all to enjoy!

Quoted from:

Karen B. Moni & Anne Jobling, "LATCH-ON: A Program to Develop Literacy in Young Adults with Down Syndrome," in *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (September 2000), p. 44.

"I worked really hard and I got a lot of congratulations from the people on my team. They had never seen me play like that, and neither had I! I made three goals during the tournament and I had never ever made a hockey goal before that. I think that having all the fans there and playing against different people really pumped me up. We made lots of friends and met a lot of people from different countries. In fact, we won the team from Germany and then we became really good friends with them. At the end we switched jerseys with them and then got a huge team photo with them."

Bill Marsh, Special Olympian (Floor Hockey)
"USA Hockey 'Dream Team' Earns Gold," in *Training Times: News from Special Olympics Alaska (Special Edition),* **2001, p. 5.**

Activity: Collage Stories

In this activity, learners can illustrate stories they've written using pictures cut out from newspapers and magazines. The pictures can be arranged on a large sheet of construction paper, and the title and text can then be written.

Alternatively, learners can choose pictures that interest them, and then craft a fitting story.

See the *Newspaper Activities* section for more activities involving photographs.

3.5 Telephone Activities

TELEPHONE ACTIVITIES

Activity: Phone Book

Using the phone book is an important functional literacy skill. The phone book can be used to help teach specific skills:

➡️ Alphabetical Order (Names)

➡️ Number Recognition (Phone Numbers, Pages)

➡️ Community Awareness (Different Businesses, etc.)

➡️ Emergency Numbers (Fire, Police Services, etc.)

➡️ Reading Advertising (Yellow Pages)

➡️ Reading Addresses (White Pages)

➡️ Using a Map (Local, Provincial)

➡️ Numerical Order (Page Numbering)

➡️ Getting Connected (Instruction Pages)

➡️ Bill Payments (Telephone Company Bills)

CITY   **FLORISTS—FURNACES 151**

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No Charge ....Dial 1- 800-461-3233

Flowers Direct Services (International & Worldwide
Delivery) All Major Credit Cards Accepted Corp
No Charge ....Dial 1- 800-667-2837
Flowers Your Way (International & Worldwide

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237 4th St NE 842-5432

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HOME INC
    DUANE DIONNE - ASSISTANT MANAGER
604 Government Rd S .... Weyburn 842-6662

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Estevac Furnace Cleaning
614A 1st St............................. Estevan 634-8011
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Expert Vac Services .... Estevan 634-2522
    (See advertisement following page)
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Royal Touch Carpet & Upholstery Care
No Charge ....Dial 1- 877-453-2707
    (See advertisement this page)

ESTE VAC FURNACE CLEANING

Activity: Scripted Calls

The learner and tutor can practice making telephone calls to various people and professionals in the community. For example, they may want to rehearse how to deal with a telemarketer or how to make a doctor's appointment. A list of questions to ask or things to talk about can be worked on together prior to practicing the telephone call itself.

A regular unplugged telephone can be used for this activity. The tutor and learner can take turns being the caller and the answerer. A telephone keypad sheet is included in Section 10 for learners to practice with.
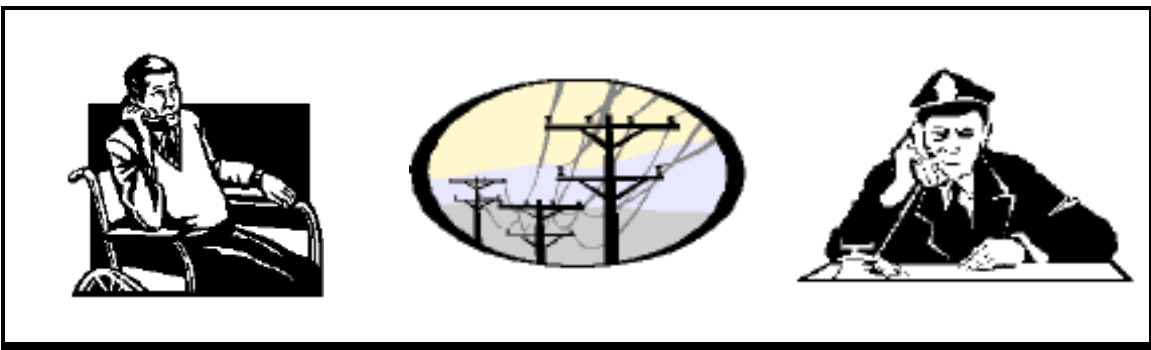
Activity: Taking Phone Messages

Taking telephone messages is an important functional literacy skill. The learner and tutor can take turns being callers and message takers for this activity.

This activity can use blank notepaper or a prepared form. A telephone message worksheet is included in Section 10.

3.6   Time Concept Activities

TIME CONCEPT ACTIVITIES

Activity: Monthly Calendar Sheets

A monthly calendar sheet can be used for each learner. The kind with large squares for each day works best. Upcoming events, individual schedules, birthdays, the weather and so on can be recorded on the calendar. New vocabulary can be jotted down on the calendar, too. Stickers of graphics can be pasted on appropriate dates.
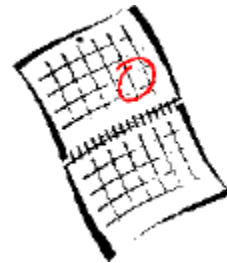
Skills that can be taught:

- **Calendar Vocabulary** (days, week, weekend, month, year)
- **Abbreviations** (Sun, Mon, Tue, Mar, Dec, etc.)
- **Number Recognition** (1-31, year)
- **Counting** (1-31, counting by days, weeks, months)
- **Time Sequence/Ordinal Numbers** (first, second, yesterday, tomorrow, etc.)
- **Understanding Diagrams** ("reading" the calendar, locating dates, etc.)
- **Key Dates** (pay day, weekends, work days, holidays, etc.)

Some Ideas:

💡 The calendar should be clearly displayed.

💡 The learner could have a smaller version of the calendar for home use and practice.

💡 Daily oral practice (date, days of week, months of year, ordinal numbers, numbers, etc.) can be effective.

💡 The days of the week, numbers (1-31), and month names can be placed on cards. The learner can put them in the correct order. The correct date can be made using a card from each stack.

Jan   Feb   Mar   Apr
May   Jun   Jul   Aug
Sept   Oct   Nov   Dec

A "Calendar Worksheet" is provided in Section 10. It can be photocopied and filled in each month. It can also be used as the basis for calendar exercises. For example, the learner can fill in the numbers on the calendar grid. Alternatively, the tutor can fill in only a few numbers, so that the learner can fill in the blanks.

A "Daytime Schedule Worksheet" is also provided in Section 10. It can be used for planning activities during a particular day.

Source:

Catherine Janossy, *A Needs Survey & Program Description: Program Delivery for the Developmentally Challenged Adult in Grey, Bruce and The Georgina Triangle.* Walkerton, ON: The Walkerton & District Literacy Council, pp. 49-50.

Frances Shannon. *Teaching Basic Workplace Literacy Skills to Employees with Intellectual Disabilities: A Practical Guide to Assessment and Teaching Strategies.* Orange, New South Wales, Australia: Western Institute of TAFE, Orange College, 1995.

Activity: Time Templates

Several of the master sheets in Section 10 focus on telling time. They can be photocopied for use with learners. For the sake of those learners having vision difficulties, the templates can be enlarged.

Descriptions:

➡ **Clock Face Worksheet:** Twelve blank clock faces are provided. The clock hands can be drawn, and the time can be written underneath. An event that occurs at a particular time can be written as well.

➡ **Digital Clock Worksheet:** Fifteen digital clock faces are provided. Segments of the digital number "8" can be darkened to reveal the desired number. The corresponding time (or event) can also be written beneath the digital clock face.

➡ **Event Flashcards:** Cutting out and pasting the blank clock faces and the event pictures on either side of blank index or recipe cards can create twelve flashcards to use with learners. The hands of the clocks can be filled in, depending on when the learner has lunch, begins work, goes to bed, etc. The tutor can show the learner the time on the clock face, and ask what the learner does at that time. Or, the tutor can show the event picture, and ask the learner when it happens.

➡ **Time Practice Flashcards:** Eight flashcards can be created that will help teach learners how to tell time. On one side are different times, shown on a clock face that includes numbers for both hours and minutes. On the other side, the corresponding times are written in numerical form and in the correct spoken form.

➡ **Before and After Flashcards:** The four flashcards can be used to illustrate simple time order. On one side, "before" pictures are given, and on the other side, "after" pictures are given.

➡ **Ordinal Time Flashcards:** These two sets of four flashcards can be used to teach ordinal sequence. A series of pictures illustrate first, second, third, and last.

Activity: Timer Time

In order to help learners better grasp what seconds, minutes and hours represent, their everyday activities can be timed using either a:

➡ Game Timer   ➡ Stopwatch   ➡ Clock   ➡ Kitchen Timer

The tutor or learner can do the timing. Time-related questions can be asked:

➡ How many minutes does it take to eat lunch?

➡ How many times can we walk around the building in 20 minutes?

➡ How many seconds was that last television commercial?

The "Time Tracker Worksheet" provided in Section 10 can be used for this activity.
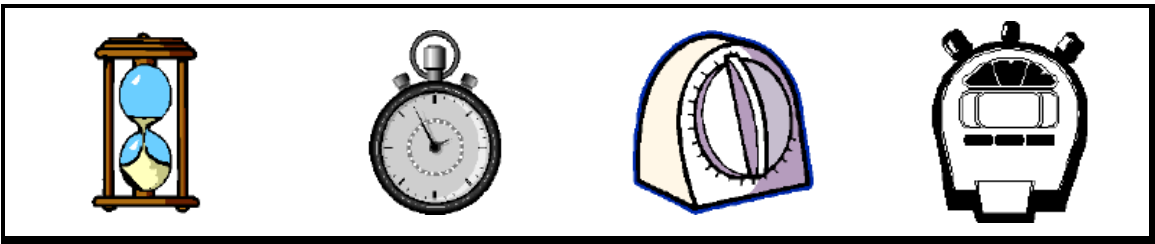
3.7 Newspaper Activities

NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES

Activity: Headliners

The learner and tutor can read newspaper story headlines, and try to guess the subject and details. After this, the story can be read, and the accuracy of the headlines can be discussed.
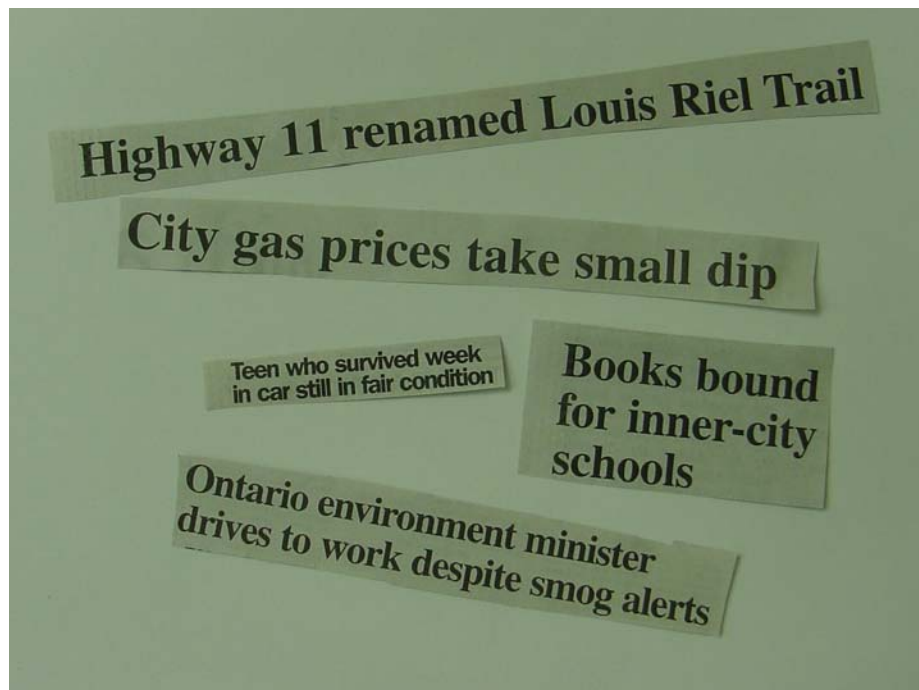
Activity: Cutlines

Clip the captions from some newspaper photographs and ask the learner to match them.

"Man Throws Away Glasses After Surgery"

"Cell Phones Banned on Provincial Highways"

Designer Reveals New Look at Toronto Show"

"Canadian in Space for Latest Shuttle Mission"

Alternatively, new captions in newspaper style can be written for pictures.

Super Chicken: Local Hen Sets Record for Egg Laying
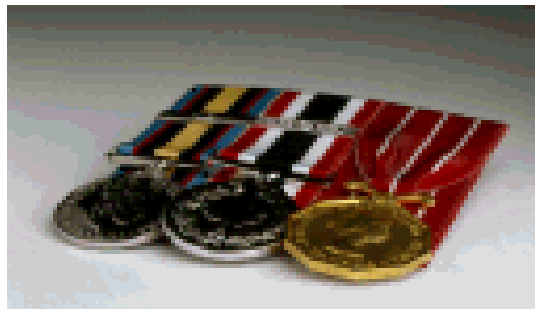
SARCAN Wins: The Three Medals Presented to SARCAN Recycling for Waste Reduction

Activity: Ad Decoding

Learners and tutors can work together to translate the advertising shorthand found in classified ads into full sentences. This is an important functional literacy skill.

BR:	Bedroom
BSMT:	Basement
N/S:	Non Smoking
F/S:	Fridge and Stove
W/D:	Washer and Dryer
N/P:	No Pets
APPLS:	Appliances

Activity: Article Match-Ups

Clip four or five stories out of the newspaper. Cut out the headlines, too. The stories can then be matched with the correct headlines.

The news stories can also be cut into paragraphs for the learner to reassemble in logical order. News writing is like an inverted pyramid, with the most important information at the very top. As such, the learner should try to correctly identify the first paragraph.

3.8 Playing Card Activities

PLAYING CARD ACTIVITIES

Activity: Card Sorting

The ability to distinguish between shapes, colours, and numbers are important pre-literacy skills. A learner can sort a deck of cards in various ways to practice these skills. The cards themselves can be counted (1-52).

Colour:

Red Cards or
Black Cards

Symbol:

Diamonds, Hearts,
Spades, or Clubs

Face Value:

Ace, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Joker
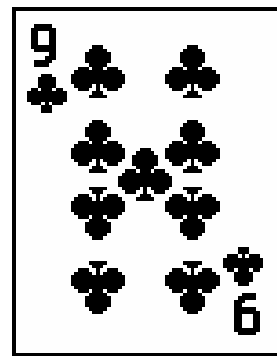
Activity: Match-Up Card Game

The 26 cards (13 pairs) are placed face down in this pattern.

Two cards are flipped over at a time.
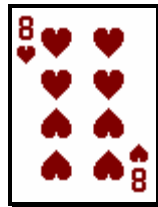
When a match pair is found, the cards are removed.

If there is not a match, the cards are flipped back over.

This activity promotes the use of memory skills.

This activity encourages number and symbol recognition.

Activity: Clock Solitaire

12

11

1

10

2

9

Centre

3

8

4

7

5

6
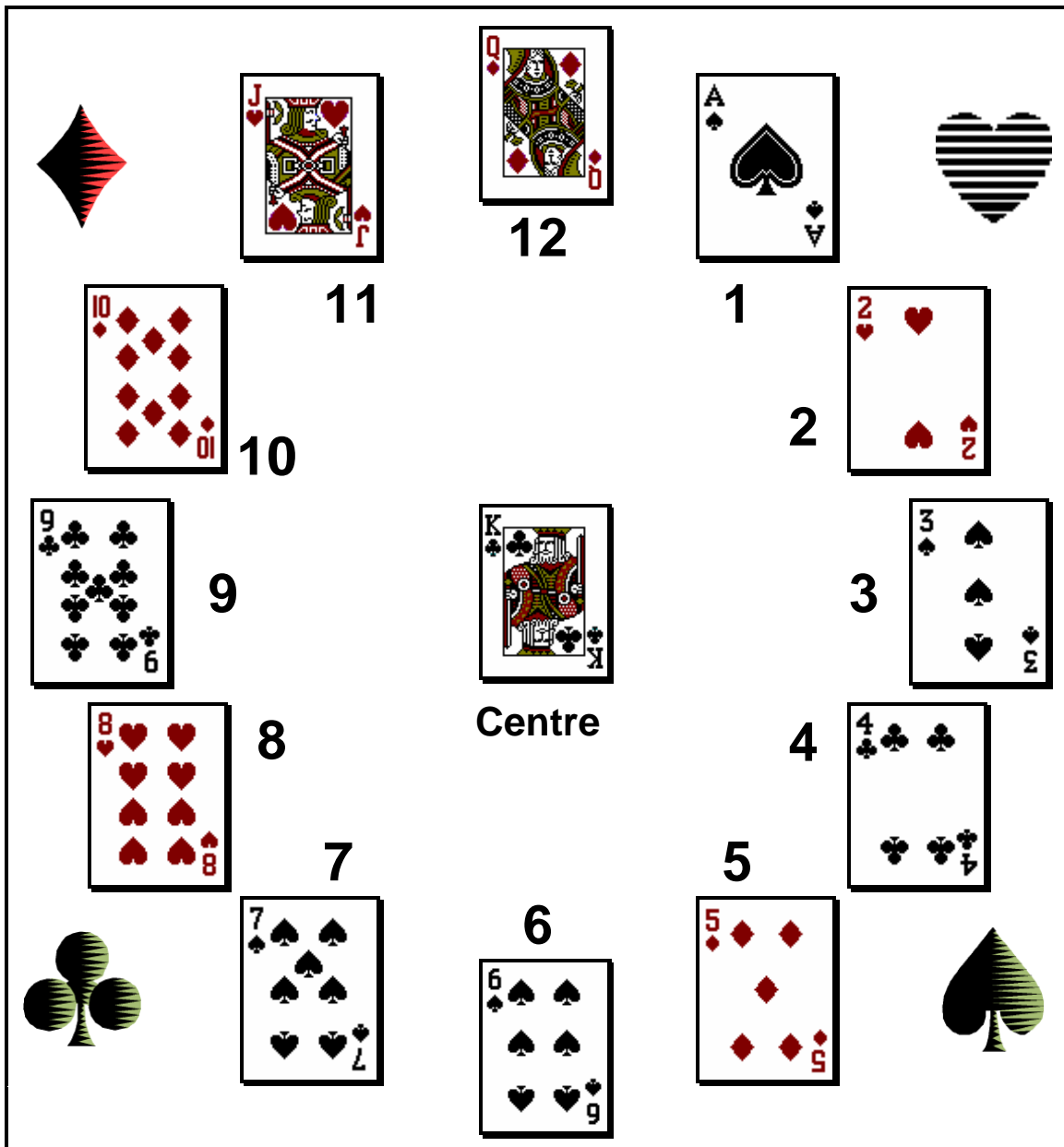
For this activity, the learner can use one or more well-shuffled decks of playing cards. When a card is drawn from the pile, it can be placed on the corresponding part of the clock face. Queens represent 12 O'Clock, Jacks represent 11 O'Clock, and Kings are placed in the centre.

3.9   Flashcard Activities

FLASHCARD ACTIVITIES

A set of alphabet flashcard templates is provided in Section 10. They can be photocopied and then pasted on cards. The tutor and learner may want to make their own set of flashcards, using pictures (and even letters) cut out from newspapers or magazines. The flashcards can be used to play games that can reinforce literacy skills. Here are descriptions of a few of them:

Activity: Flashcard Drills

The tutor can hold up a flashcard, and the learner can say the correct letter name, or make the correct sound, or say another word that begins with that letter, etc. Every time the learner is correct, she is given the flashcard. At the end of the game, the number of correct flashcards can be counted. The learner can try and break the high score the next time the game is played.

Activity: Alphabetical Order

The set of 26 flashcards can be mixed up, so that the learner can put them into the correct order. To make this activity more difficult, the learner can be asked to put only a few randomly chosen flashcards into alphabetical order.

A single sheet "Alphabet Chart" is included in Section 10. Learners can use it to learn alphabetical order as well. The pictures will serve as clues to what the letter is and the sound(s) it makes. The charts can be photocopied and given to learners or pasted on a wall of the learning area.

Activity: Alphabet Match

This activity requires two sets of alphabet flashcards. One set can be placed on the table with the picture side up. The other set can be placed with the letter side up. The learner can then match the pictures with the letters they represent. As each pair is matched, it can be removed from the table. Alternatively, both sets can have the letter side up, and the letter pairs can be matched.

Activity: Alphabet Memory Match

This activity requires two sets of flashcards with the letter on one side, but with the other side blank. Pairs of letters can be mixed together, and then be placed face down in a square grid. Begin with a 3x3 grid. As the learner's skills increase, the grid can be made larger. The learner can flip two cards, and if the letters match, the pair can be removed. If the letters do not match, the cards must be flipped back. To make the game easier, three cards can be turned over per turn. If there is a pair, it is removed and the third card is turned back over. To make this game more interesting, the learner can be asked to say two words that start with the letter of found pairs. This activity can be played similarly with a deck of playing cards, as described elsewhere in Section 3.

Activity: Wild Card!

The same two sets of flashcards as the previous activity can be used. Pairs of cards plus a single "wild card" will be shuffled and dealt to the players. Removing a single "X" (or another letter) can create the wild card. This activity will work with two or more players. When it is a player's turn, he will remove one card from the player next to him. Then he will discard any pairs he collects. The goal is to discard all of one's cards while avoiding being the one left with the "wild card." This activity will help teach letter identification.

3.10 Vocabulary Activities

VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

Activity: Dolch Word Charts

E.W. Dolch compiled lists of the most commonly found words in reading materials, and organized them according to reading level. Dolch words should be taught as sight words (so that they are recognized instantly) since many cannot be sounded out easily.

Dolch word charts are provided in Section 10 of this *Handbook*.

The words can be taught using the charts, or the words can be placed on index cards to make flashcards. It is always best to use the word in a sentence, too.
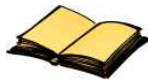
Activity: Key Survival Words

Survival words are relevant to learners. They have meaning for the learners in terms of their everyday lives and experiences. Key survival words can be:

- First and Last Names
- Months of the Year
- Days of the Week
- Hazard Signs
- Math Symbols

- Street Signs
- Place Names
- Store Signs
- Caution Signs
- Survival Phrases

It will be helpful to practice survival vocabulary in context. Vocabulary can be taught and learned in various categories, which may assist with comprehension:

➡ Renting an Apartment	➡ Taking the Bus
➡ Ordering a Meal / Menu	➡ Talking with Sales Staff
➡ Visiting the Doctor / Dentist	➡ Telling Time
➡ Grocery Shopping	➡ Asking for Directions
➡ Various Hobbies	➡ Social Conversation
➡ Job Interviews	➡ Health
➡ Banking	➡ Cooking
➡ Politeness	➡ Greetings / Farewells
➡ Introductions	➡ Workplace Vocabulary
➡ Computers	

"Key survival words are printed on flash cards; either on paper cut to size or on index cards. We review these cards every class. The time varies. Sometimes we spend only a few minutes; other times we spend 15 or 20 minutes going through them.

We developed a contest in the class. It went like this. For every word that the learners read correctly, it belonged to them. For every word they did not get, it belonged to me. Sometimes I let them see the cards they missed so that they could try to read them correctly. At the end, they counted both piles. The team with the highest score won.

At the end of the program, I took each learner individually, and had them read the cards to me while I kept track of the correctly read words."

Debbie Baker
A Plain Language Guide in Reading, Writing and Math. **Kentville, NS: Partners in Employment Outreach (Spring 1998), p. 2.6.**

Activity: Idiom Fun

Idioms are phrases that convey meaning beyond the literal words used to express them. Learning idioms can be fun, and can add colour and expressiveness to any learner's vocabulary and writing.

Some examples appear below:

|		
Time Will Tell	**Eyeing it Up**	**Par for the Course**
Rock Solid	**Lightning Fast**	**On Track**
Out of this World	**Fishing for Answers**	**Paving the Way**

Activity: Sign Vocabulary

Traffic signs, street signs and other signs display vocabulary that is worth learning. A walkabout with learners will allow the tutor to teach sign vocabulary in the environments where they apply.

Some examples appear below:
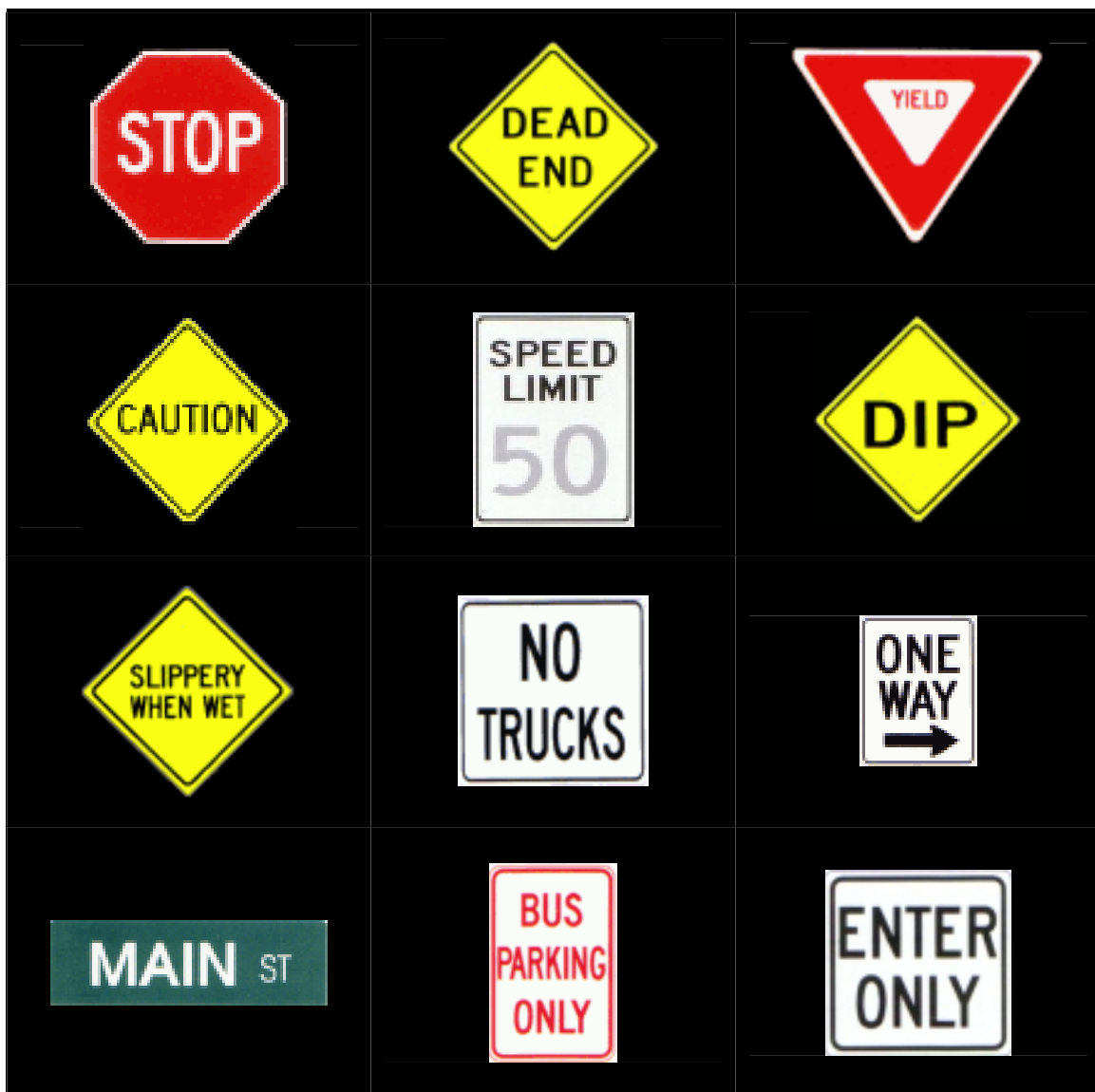
There are many other signs that can teach community or survival vocabulary:

Bus Stop	**Enter**	**Ladies**
Caution	**Exit**	**Men**
Closed	**Fire Alarm**	**No Smoking**
Cold	**Fire Exit**	**Open**
Danger	**First Aid**	**Out**
Do Not Enter	**Flammable**	**Poison**
Down	**Gentlemen**	**Stop**
Elevator	**Hospital**	**Telephone**
Emergency	**Hot**	**Up**
Emergency Exit	**In**	**Women**

Source:
Pinellas County Schools. *Bridging the Gap: Workplace Literacy for Developmentally Disabled Adults.* Boca Raton, FL: Florida Adult and Community Education Network (ACENET), 1991, p. 18.

Activity: "Sense" Word Lists

The learner(s) or tutor can pick a topic, such as *summer*, *the zoo*, *eating in a restaurant*, *riding the bus*, and so on. The learner(s) can contribute descriptive words or phrases according to the topic. Four "sense" categories can be written along the top of a piece of paper or on a chalkboard, and the descriptive vocabulary can be written under the appropriate one(s).

Here is an example for the topic of: Babies.

| Babies			
Look	**Feel**	**Smell**	**Sound**
Cute	Soft	Powdery	Laughs
Pudgy	Heavy	Poopy	Cooing
Smiles	Tired	Fresh	Crying
Small	Sleepy	Good	Yells

Additional categories may be chosen, too.

See Section 10 for a reproducible worksheet for this activity.

Activity: Radial Trees

A radial tree is a circular diagram that starts in the centre and expands outward, as in the diagrams below. Vocabulary words can be placed in the circles according to rules that the learner and tutor make up.
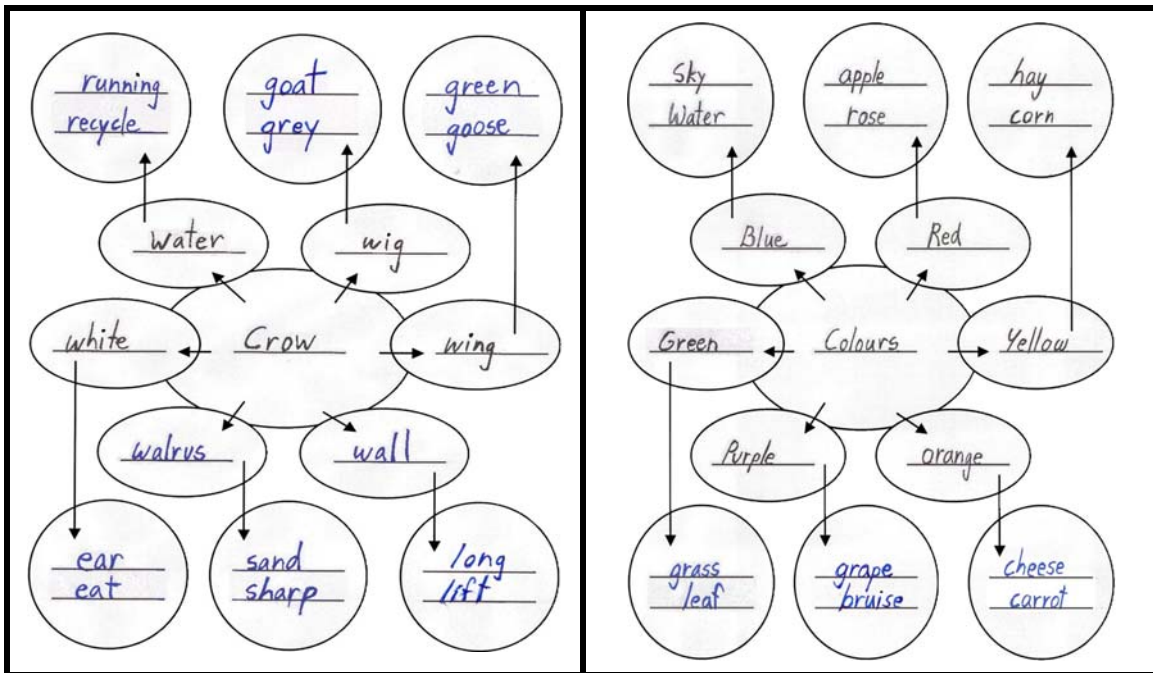
Variations:

➡ **Last Word Links:** A word is placed in the centre circle. The next six words begin with the last letter of the centre word. The pattern continues for the next six word circles, where two words can be written beginning with the last letter.

➡ **Category Connections:** A topic word can be placed in the centre circle. Examples are *colours*, *seasons*, *pets*, *foods*, and so on. Six words related to the topic word can then be filled in. Finally, two words related to each of those six words can be filled in.

A radial tree template is provided in Section 10 of this *Handbook*.

Activity: Overhead Hangman

The traditional game of Hangman can be a fun vocabulary-building exercise for learners. A "Mystery Word" is chosen, and learners have a fixed number of guesses to pick letters that appear in the word. If the learner can fill in enough of the letter blanks before running out of turns, she may be able to solve the "Mystery Word" and earn a point.

A template for this activity, shown on the right, appears in Section 10 of this *Handbook*.

The template can be photocopied onto a blank overhead transparency, and the game can be played with a group of learners. The "Mystery Word" letters can be written in with non-permanent overhead markers. Pennies can be used to cover the appropriate squares on the template:

➡ For the "Mystery Word," the unused blanks can be covered before starting the game. If the word is *boat*, as in the example, three spaces will be covered.

➡ After each "Guess," a number can be covered. If you want the game to be harder, you can cover the later guess numbers prior to starting play.

➡ The "Used Letters" can be covered as the learner chooses them.

➡ For each win, a number in the "Words Solved" section can be covered.

The game can also be played on paper, using a pencil to write the chosen letters. The letters can be erased for the next game. Scrabble® tiles can be used to cover spaces and fill in the letter blanks in the "Mystery Word."

Activity: Word Bank

A photocopier-ready "Word Bank Worksheet" is provided in Section 10. New vocabulary words can be written into the first blank. The second blank is for indicating where the word was heard or seen – this makes it easier to discuss the word in the same context it will likely be used. Checkboxes are provided to allow the learner (or tutor) to monitor his or her ability to say the word, say its letters, spell the word aloud, and write the word down.
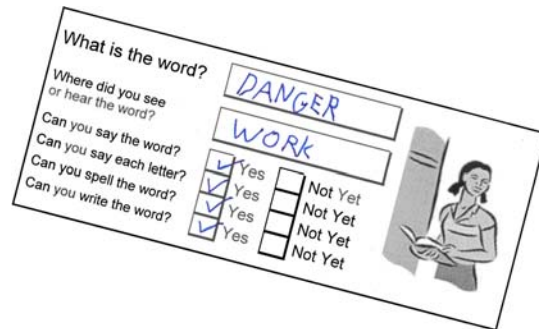
More Ideas:

➡ The words in the word bank can be used in other literacy activities, such as search-a-word or crossword puzzles.

➡ The individual word blanks can be cut out from the worksheet. This will make it easier to count how many new words the learner has added to her vocabulary. Progress can be measured in a very tangible way.

➡ The cut out word blanks can also be used like flashcards for vocabulary drills.

➡ Since the cut out word blanks are in the shape of paper money, they could be stored in a "Word Wallet," to emphasize the "bank" theme. New words are valuable!

"The first hour began with **"The News"**. Class participants talked about their experiences during the week, what they might be looking forward to, who had a birthday, etc. This gave us clues to current interests that might be capitalized on in class and – followed by the **deep breathing** – prepare the way for concentration.

A monthly **calendar** sheet, the kind with open blocks for each day of the month, was used for each student to record upcoming events, individual schedules, the weather, birthdays, and even new words that came up in "The News," as appropriate.

Each week there was a **spelling dictation**, a real favourite with the class. Those who were just learning initial consonants wrote only the first letter and those more advanced the whole word. Those who were at a more basic level copied from the blackboard spontaneously when corrections were being done.

Early **stories** centred around feelings and were illustrated by cartoon. This provided opportunity for some to identify and learn facial expressions that they might have misunderstood or misinterpreted. …

Short drills on alphabet, counting, counting by 2, 5, 10, 20, etc. were used, frequently interspersed throughout the night. This gave a chance to change the pace, to test skills, and to provide overlearning, so necessary for retention.

Money was a subject of interest and need. In one semester we used it exclusively to teach basic math skills. And in the second year of our program we taught the use of the calculator in doing basic operations, particularly as in regards to money.

Learning to tell time was important to many of the students.

The last part of each session was devoted to the **AUTOSKILL Reading Program**."

Catherine Janossy
A Needs Survey & Program Description: Program Delivery for the Developmentally Challenged Adult in Grey, Bruce and The Georgina Triangle. **Walkerton, ON: The Walkerton & District Literacy Council, pp. 49-50.**

"Projects worked on during the first 3 months included: individual books, using family pictures, story telling, or catalogue pictures of things each person would like to purchase. The words in turn become spelling exercises, word identification (through use of a letter game), and practised on the computer.

Students that were physically incapable of writing were able to print the words on the computer, these were printed and cut out, and the student would paste them into their books.

Flash cards were developed with survival words, which were again, turned into games and computer work.

An existing program of building blocks, on the computer, was very helpful in assisting with word, colour, and object identification. It would have been really beneficial to have had other computer programs that would build on these skills and were geared for the beginner.

Some students were able to incorporate their sign language into the letter game, word recognition, and computer learning, thus building on existing skills.

During the months of March through June students were involved in individual projects, some of which included selecting a topic, getting pictures to demonstrate activities, and developing a story line, and then putting it together in book form. All students had fun with this and this still remains one of their favourite projects.

Others used the series of "pictures without words," and a story was developed and printed in the captions.

In the case of 2 people with special needs, the use of pictures to indicate the activity was used with the appropriate word and signed word."

Shirley Hollingshead
Catherine Janossy, *A Needs Survey & Program Description: Program Delivery for the Developmentally Channelled Adult in Grey, Bruce and The Georgina Triangle*. Walkerton, ON: The Walkerton & District Literacy Council, p. 57-58.

"Different learning materials can easily be made at home. Picture cards, made from magazine pictures of people engaged in the activity to be learned, are good visual aids. Video and/or audiotapes can be very effective. Many students enjoy seeing themselves on video, or hearing their own voices on a tape. These tapes can help the students assess their own progress, notice mistakes and reinforce a job well done. Models for practicing a skill can also be collected. An old clock to practice telling time, a set of plastic plates, forks, spoons and knives for table setting and an old telephone for practicing telephone dialling skills are all examples of excellent teaching materials that can be found around the home. It is best to use actual items, whenever possible, when teaching new tasks. It can be very difficult for students to learn on a 'toy' model or an abstract paper drawing of something and then be able to transfer that to real life situations."

Kathleen Donohue & Patricia O'Haire
The Parent as Teacher: A Practical Guide for Parents of Developmentally Disabled Adults. **Boca Raton, FL: Florida Adult and Comuunity Education Network (ACENET), 1991.**

Jerry has been a Program Participant at Multiworks Corporation in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan since August 2000 and attends a Day Program and Shop Work Programs daily.

Jerry has displayed artistic talent for many years and uses this talent to portray important aspects of his life.