Helping Handwriting SHINE

Home activities booklet



# The importance of handwriting

Nearly every subject your child will do at Primary and Secondary school will involve writing – taking notes and writing down ideas. However, this is a difficult activity: some children quickly learn to write but other children struggle to make writing an automatic process. This means that they concentrate more on *how* to write, and focus much less on *what* to write. This stops the child from performing as well as they are able to.

However, all children can get better at writing with practice. The games and activities in this booklet have been designed to make this practice as effective and fun as possible, and are all things you can do easily with your child at home.

There are a few simple rules in order to make this help as simple as possible:

1. **Little-and-often**

Practice for ten minutes, a few times a week has shown to be more effective than doing a longer session only once a week. It also stops this child getting bored!

One of the easiest ways to do this is to treat the activities as ‘warm-ups’ for any other homework they may have.

1. **Different types of practice**

If you practice a single activity (for example, writing the letter ‘a’) many times, you will get much better at that activity. However, this won’t help you much if the activity changes too much (for example, writing the letter ‘z’). The best thing to do is try and practice the same ‘pen-skills’ in as many different ways as possible.

There are ten different activities in this booklet. Try and mix them up as much as possible! Also feel free to make up your own activities – anything involving using a pen to write or draw is going to be good practice!

1. **Thinking about writing**

One of the best things that a child can be taught is to get them to think about their own performance. We use a ‘show-plan-check’ model to do this:

**Show**

Show your child exactly what you want them to do in the task. Say out-loud each part of what you are doing. For example: first show them how to draw the letter with numbered arrows. Show the order and direction of each line.

**Plan**

This involves getting your child to start planning what they need to do. Get them to repeat out –loud the steps they need to do to complete the task.

Your child then performs the activity.

**Check**

At first, it should be you who checks whether your child has done the activity correctly, but then try and get them to start checking it themselves. If they haven’t done it correctly (for example, drawing a ‘b’ as a ‘d’), try to get them to realise this themselves, and tell you what they will do differently next time in order to remember. **Show** them how to do the task again, concentrating on what they said they needed to do.

1. **Praise**

You should praise your child as much as possible, but try and make this praise really specific to the task. For example: ‘You drew that shape really slowly and carefully that time, well done!’, rather than ‘That was really good, well done!’

## 

The activities

## The activities

Start each activity with the following questions:

* What did we do last time?
* What do you think you did well at?
* What did you find most difficult?
* How could you improve on that this time?

### Make sure your child is sitting comfortably before you begin!

There are ten activities you can do with your child. You should always start on the ‘easy’ level for each activity, but if they can do this easily, move to ‘medium’ and then ‘hard’ This book is meant for children of all ages and abilities, so don’t worry if your child can only do the ‘easy’ tasks – they will still be getting great practice!

The tasks are:

1. Shapes
2. Dot-to-dot
3. Lines
4. Crosses
5. Circles
6. Alphabet
7. Squares
8. Shading
9. Food necklaces
10. Paper folding

#### Activity 1: Shapes

You will need: plain paper, pen

**Easy:** Draw some easy shapes (e.g. circle, square, triangle). When showing your child how to draw them, concentrate on the starting position and where the corners go. Cover a full page with them.

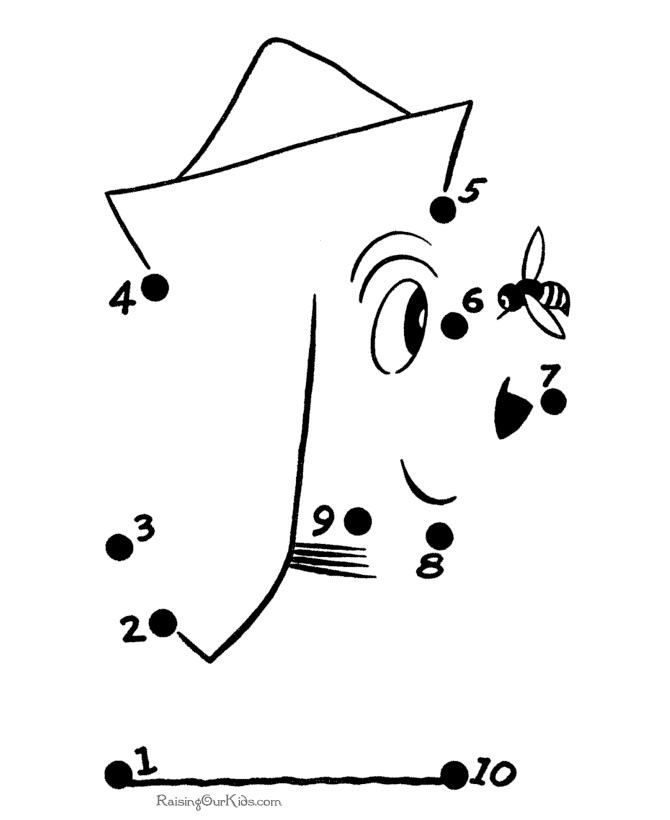
**Medium:** Draw the same shapes in different sizes or in a fixed order. Get your child to cover the page in this pattern. Take it slowly – they should focus on drawing the shapes accurately, not quickly.

**Hard:** Draw as many of the repeating patterns as they can in one minute. How fast can they draw them whilst still being accurate? If they are mixing up the patterns or not drawing the shapes right, get them to slow down a bit. The idea is to get them to understand their own limits.

#### Activity 2: Dot-to-dot

You will need: pen, dot-to-dot template paper (pages 18-20), or download your own dot-to-dot shapes from the internet

**Easy:** Use the easy shape templates. Get your child to join up the numbers (or letters) in order to create the image. Get them to point to the next dot they will be drawing to before they start drawing each line.



**Medium:** Do the easy shapes as quickly as they can. How fast can they go without making a mistake?

**Hard:** Use the harder shape templates – how fast can they go?

**Activity 3: Lines**

You will need: Lined paper (large) (pages 21-22), pen

**Easy:** You will be provided with lined paper to help your child draw simple lines. Try to ensure you child uses finger spaces to separate their lines as this will help them when writing. Firstly get your child to draw straight lines and then ask your child to slant the lines to the left and then to the right.

**Medium:** Now ask your child to draw crosses on the line. Try and make sure the crosses meet on the line.

**Hard:** Get them to draw as many crosses on the line in one minute as they can. Make sure they are still crossing on the line, even when going quickly!

**Activity 4: Crosses**

You will need: target paper (Large targets: pages 23-24; small targets: pages 25-26), pen

**Easy:** Get your child to draw crosses through the middle of each target. Crosses must go through the little circle, but not through the bigger circle.



**Medium:** Use the smaller target paper

**Hard**: How many can they do (accurately) in two minutes? If they are getting lots incorrect, get them to slow down a bit until they are getting most of them correct.

**Activity 5: Circles**

You will need: dotted paper (pages 27 - 29), pen

**Easy:** Ask your child to draw circles around the dots provided on the dotted paper. Ask your child to alternate the size of the circles, from large circles to making them smaller and more precise.

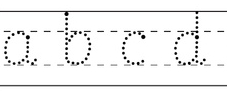
**Medium:** Ask your child to draw individual circles freely anywhere on a blank piece of paper. Ask them to alternate the size.

**Hard:** Combine the circle drawing skills to draw a snowman similar to the one below. This will allow the child to use various different sizes of circles. How many can they draw in two minutes?

**Activity 6: Alphabet**

You will need: alphabet sheet (page 30), pen

**Easy:** Place the alphabet in front of your child and ask them to trace over the letters



**Medium:** Get them to write the alphabet in lower-case, from memory, in their best handwriting. Which letters need the most work? Remember: show, plan, check

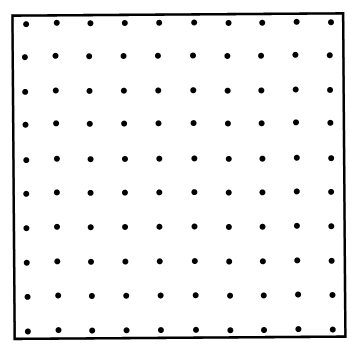
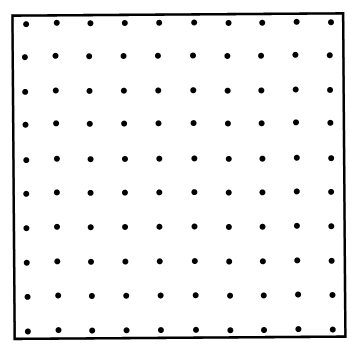
**Hard:**

Ask your child to write the alphabet out in their neatest handwriting for 2minutes, ensure they are not copying from anything. Focus on those letters they find most difficult.

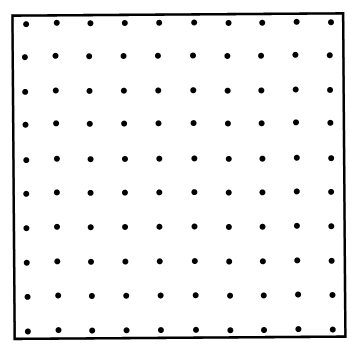
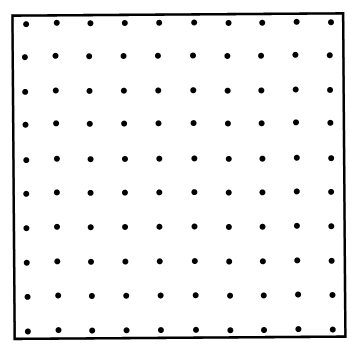
**Activity 7: Squares**

You will need: dot paper (pages 27-29), pen

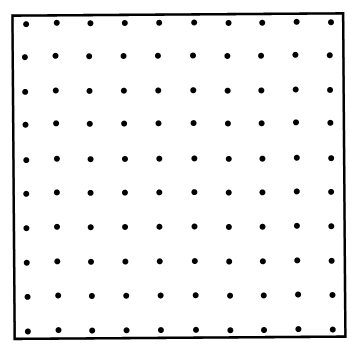
**Easy:** Using the dotted paper, get your child to connect the dots using lines to make squares. Ask them to vary the size of the squares. Once this is achieved, ask them to make rectangular shapes too.



**Medium:** Once your child has understood how to create the square and rectangle shapes, ask them to use lines to create letters. Suitable letters include L, T, H, F, I



**Hard:** Ask your child to create a house picture using squares. They can use different size squares to make windows, doors, and a roof.



**Activity 8: Shading**

You will need: Colouring paper (shapes) (page 30-31), colouring paper (pictures) (page 32), pencil

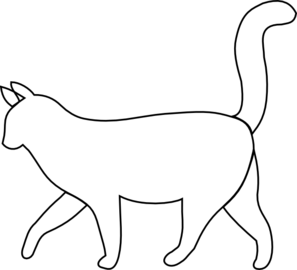
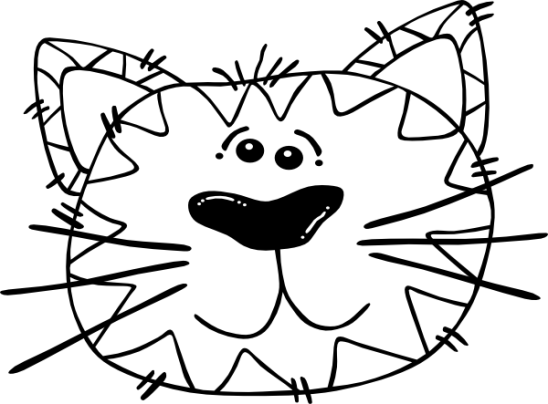
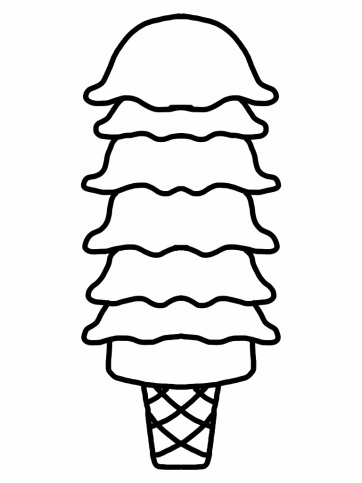
**Easy:** Ask your child tocolour in the shapes **soft** by pressing lightly and then **hard** by pressing down harder when colouring.

**Soft**

**Hard**

**Medium:** Ask your child toalternate between colouring in hard and soft.

**Hard:** Colour in the pictures with soft and hard shading techniques. Try to colour half soft and half hard.



**Activity 9: Necklaces**

You will need: string, beads or food that can be threaded, for example pasta with holes in it (penne, macaroni), breakfast loop cereal

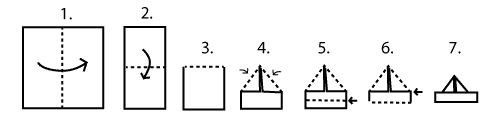
**Easy:** Work with your child to make necklaces out of large shapes with a circle in the middle, such as pasta. Ask your child to put the pasta onto a string/shoelace. Keep repeating this until you have filled up the string/shoelace and it resembles a necklace.

**Medium:** To help support your child working with smaller items, use smaller shapes such as small beads or breakfast loops and ask your child to thread these through a strong/shoelace until it resembles a necklace.

**Hard:** Ask your child to make a necklace as fast as possible using smaller beads. Perhaps give the child two minutes to make as many necklaces as possible.

**Activity 10: Paper folding**

You will need: Plain or coloured square paper, safety scissors

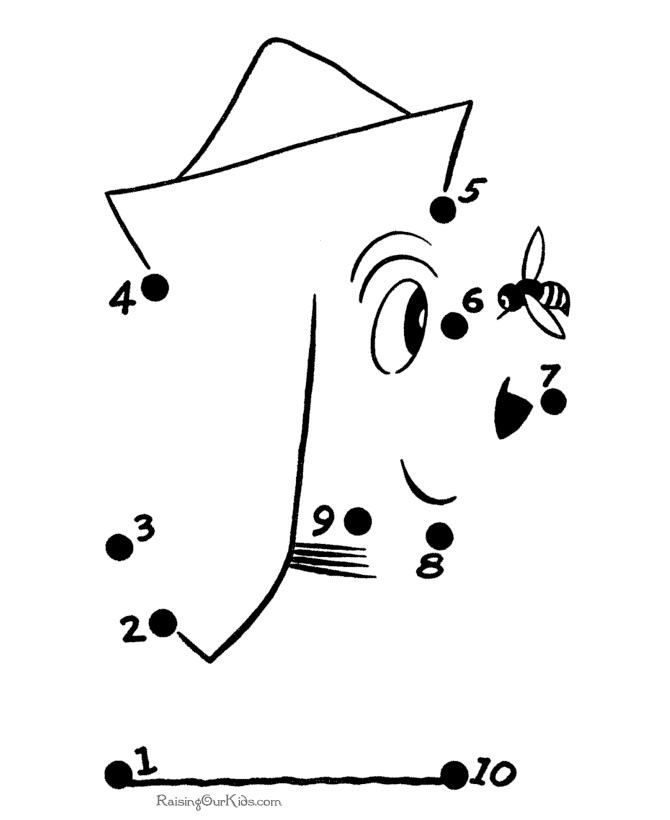
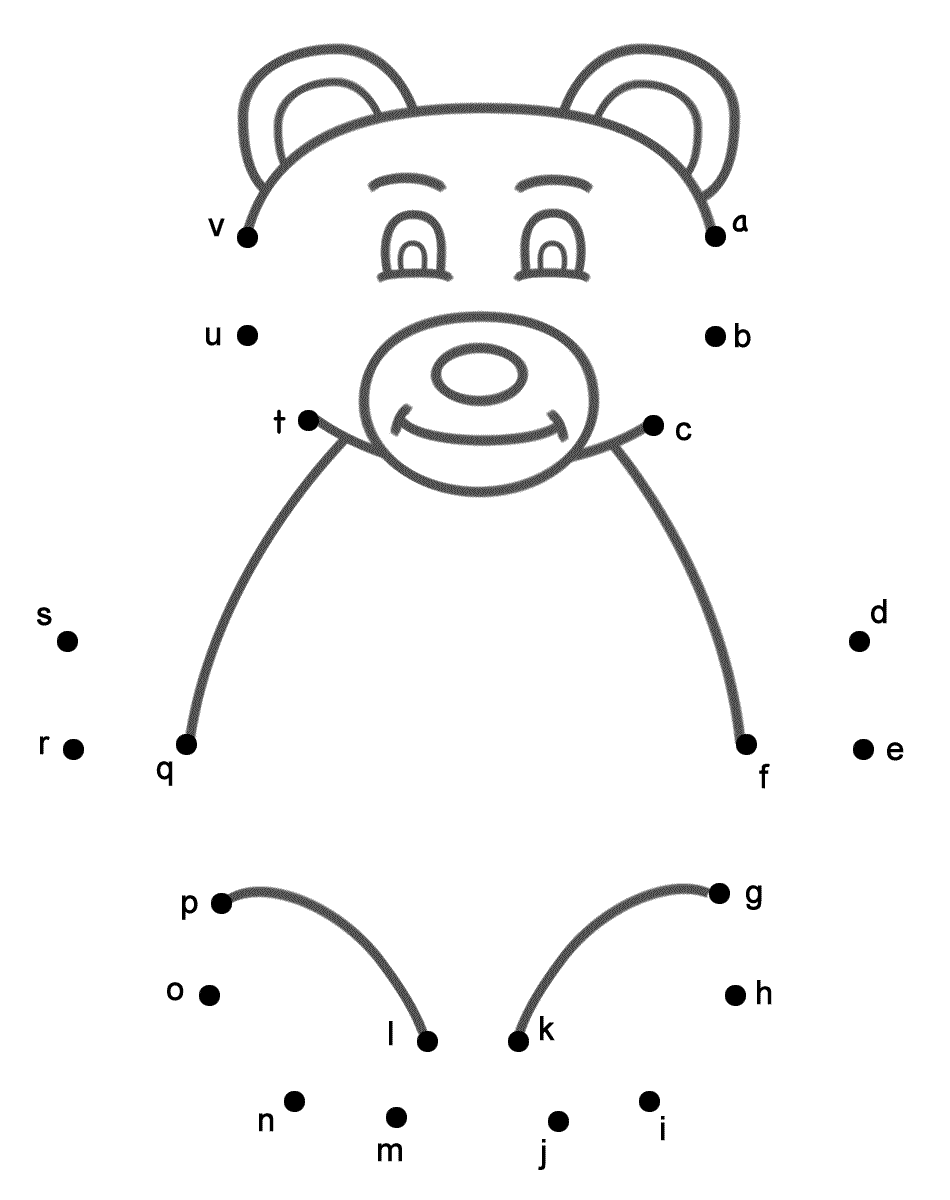
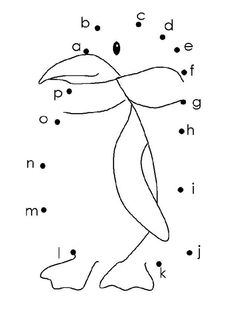
**Easy:** Ask your child to fold a piece of paper in half. Try to ensure the paper is neatly folded and the corners match up. From here, work with your child to copy simple models for example, the paper hat (see below).

**Medium:** Copy some more complex models. You can look up lots of origami patterns on the internet.

**Hard:** Add in a time element. For example, give your child two minutes to make as many paper hats as possible.

Activity resources

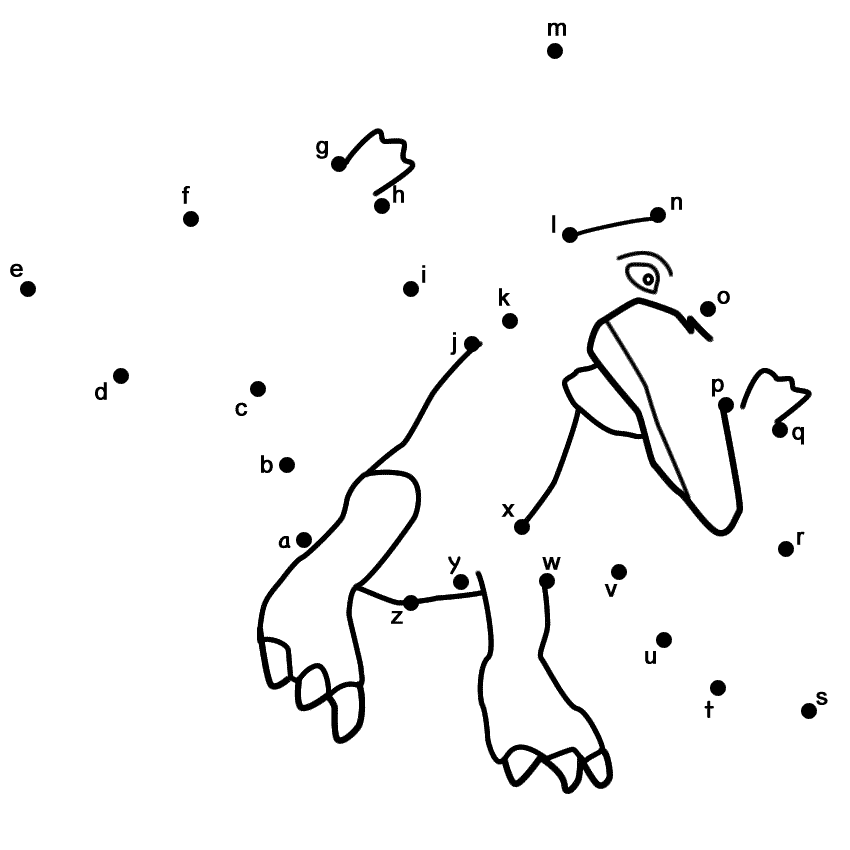
**Dot-to-dot paper**

**Easy**



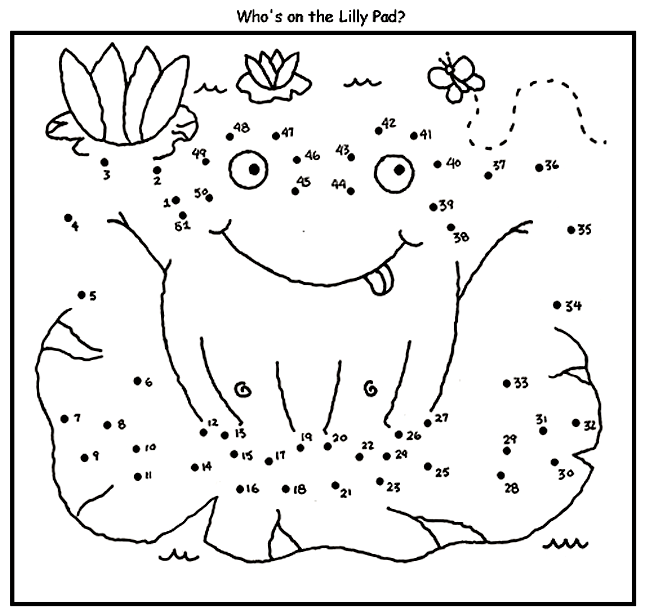
**Dot-to-dot paper**

**Hard (1)**



**Dot-to-dot paper**

**Hard (2)**



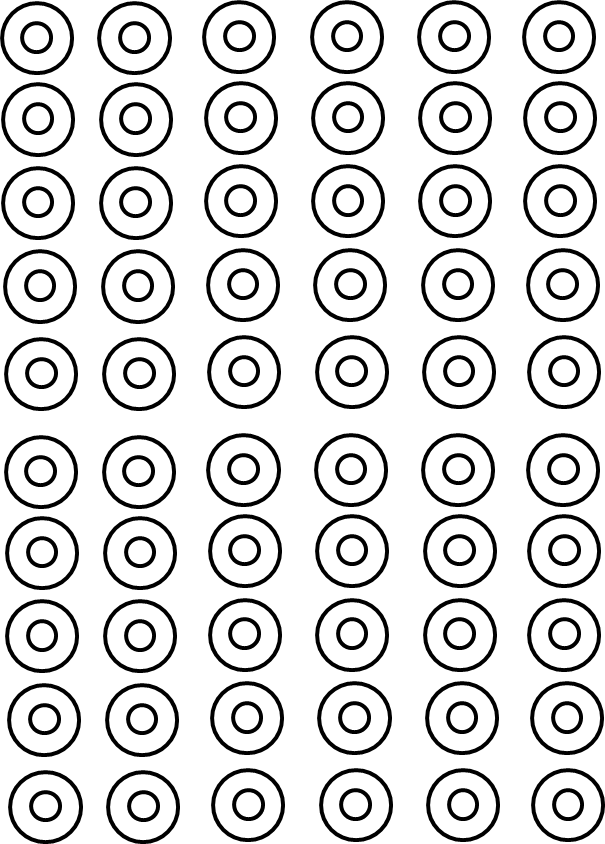
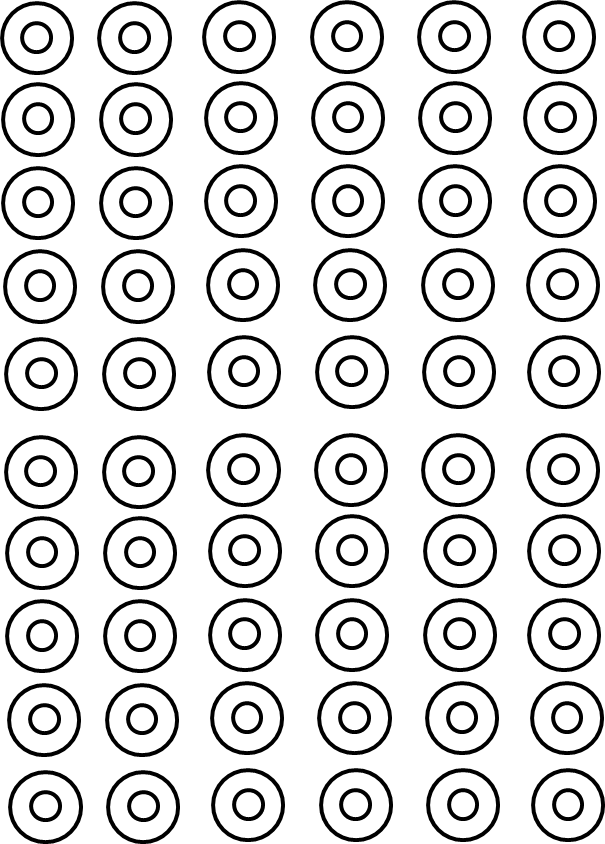
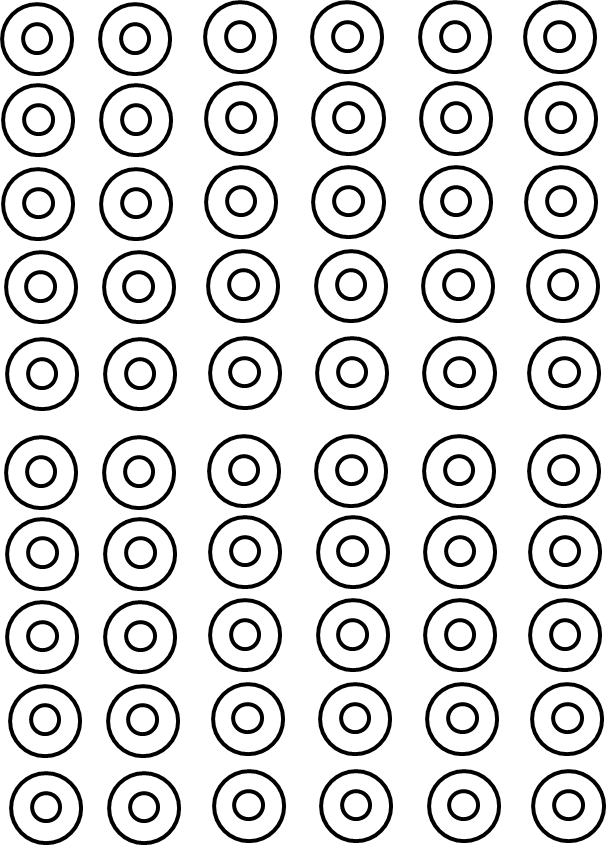
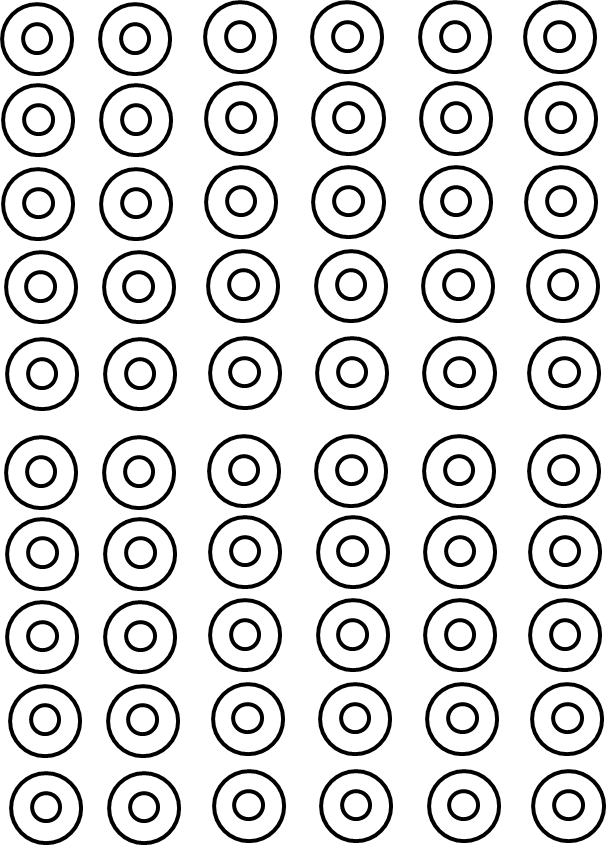
**Lined paper**

**Lined paper**

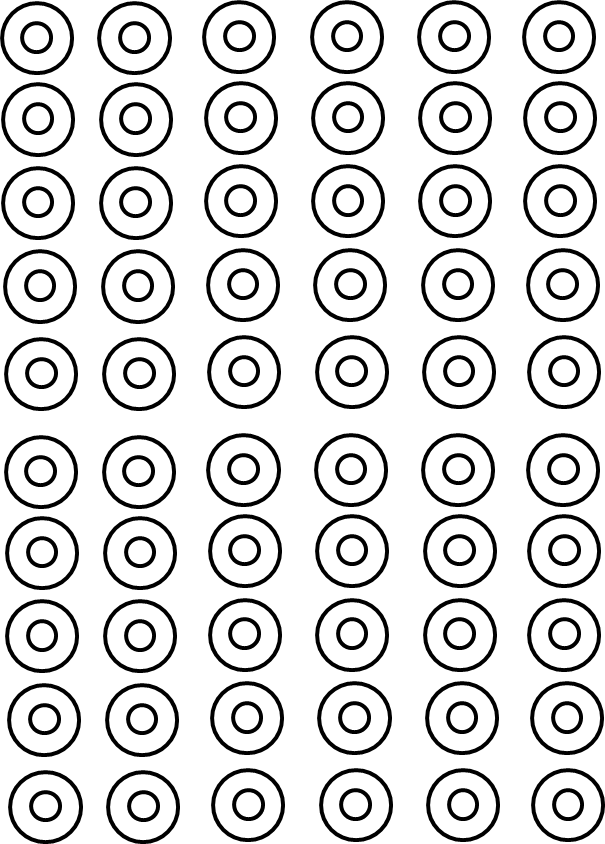
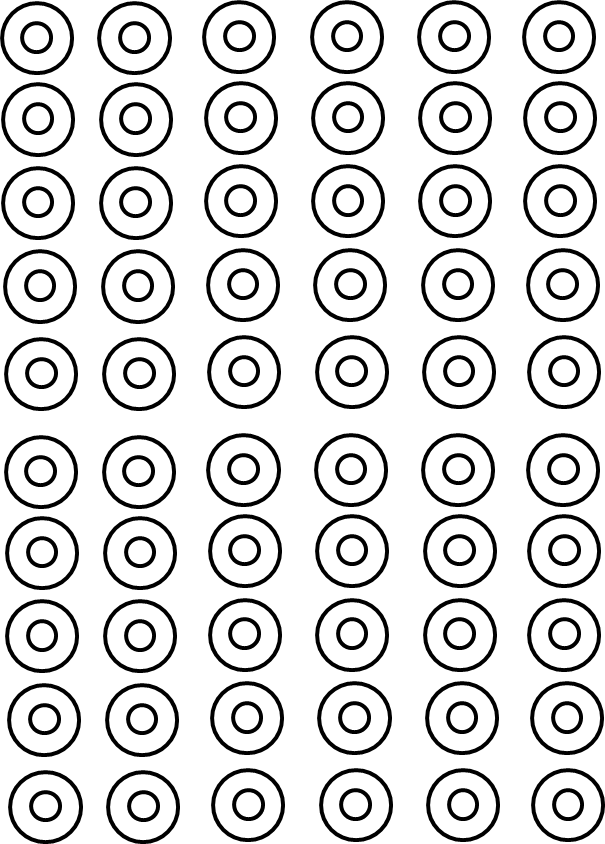
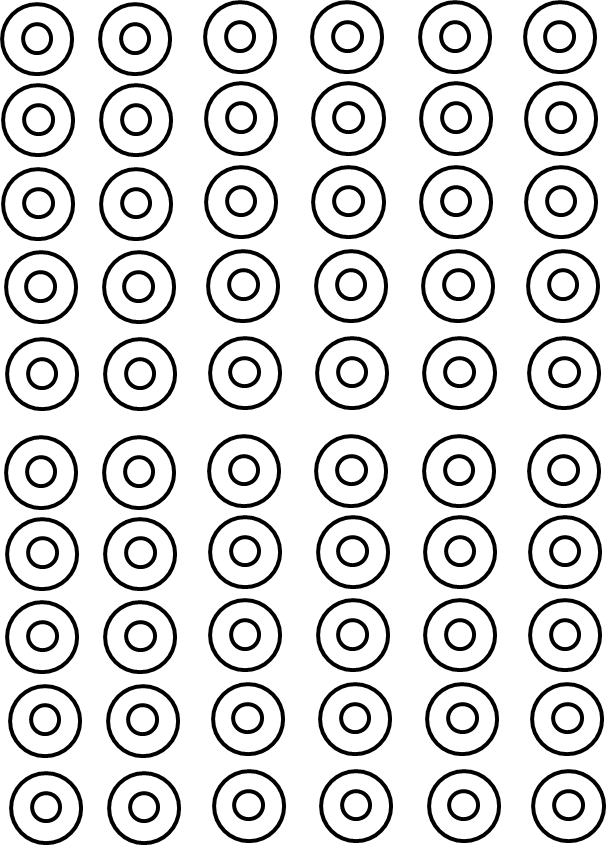
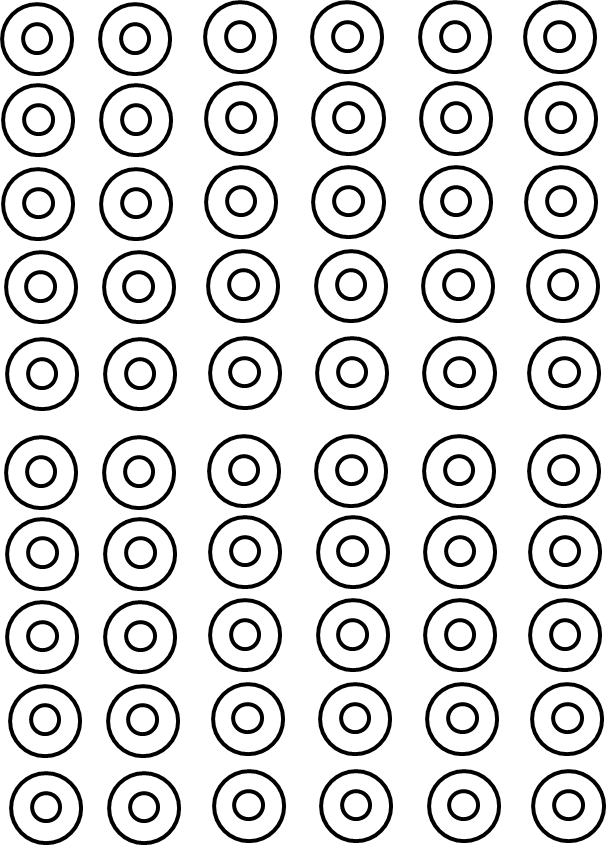
**Target paper (large)**

**Target paper (large)**

**Target paper (small)**



**Target paper (small)**



**Dot paper**

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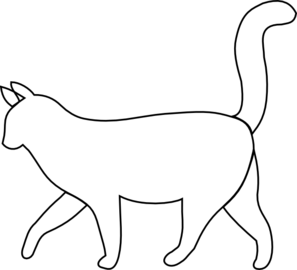
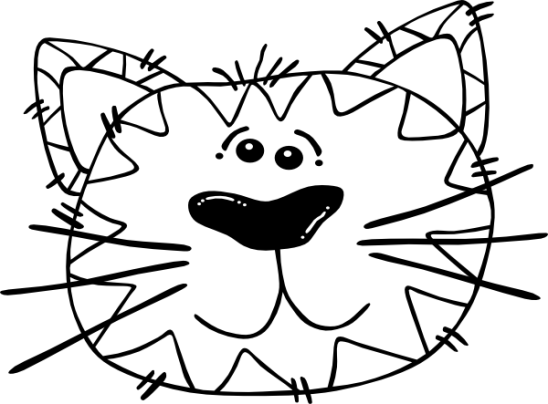
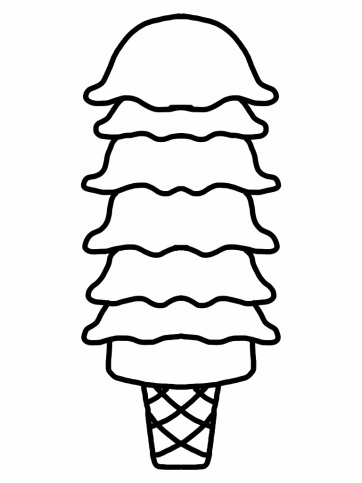
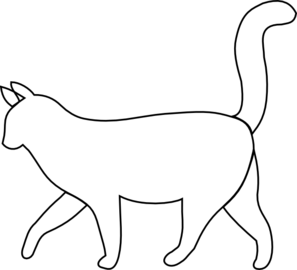
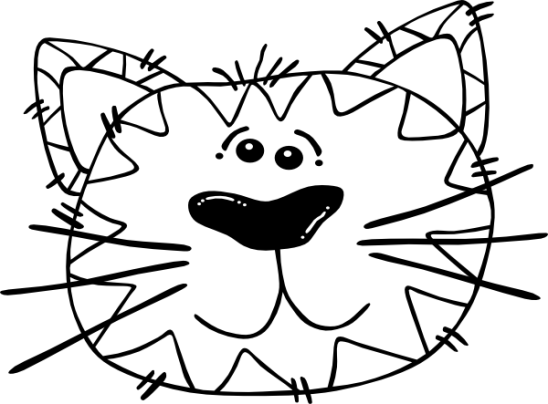
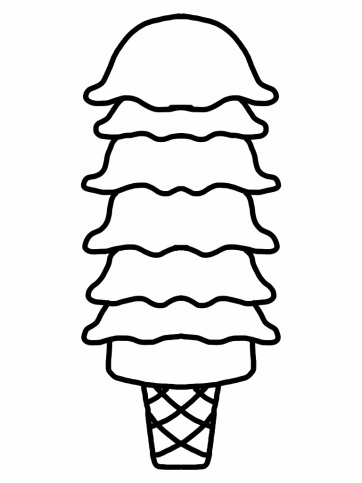
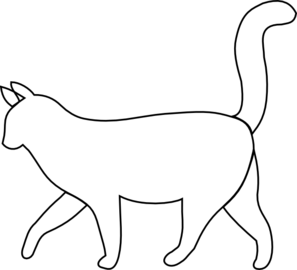
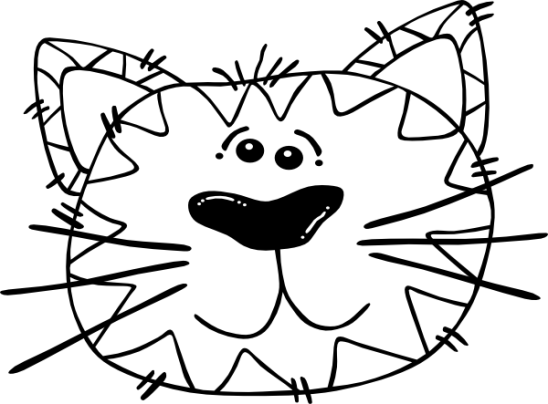
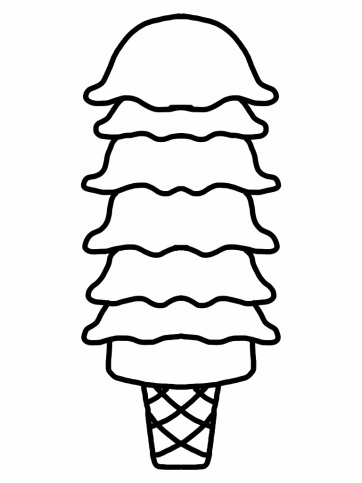
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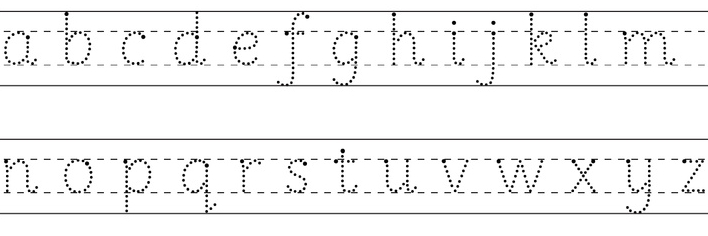
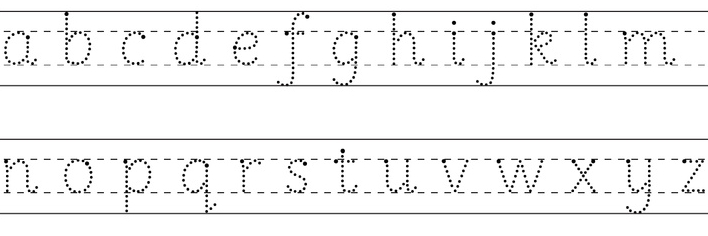
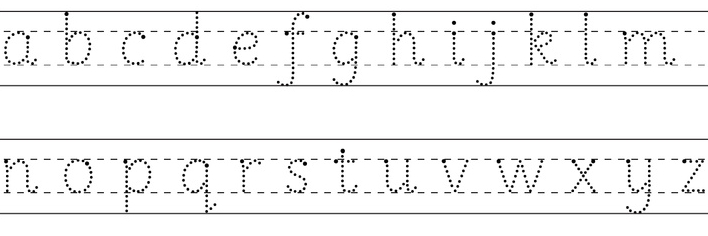
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**Colouring paper (shapes)**

**Colouring paper (shapes)**

**Colouring paper (pictures)**



**Alphabet**

