

Concentration

1 or more players

The Deck: Create decks of 12 matching pairs (rhyming pairs, word-to-picture pairs, initial sound pairs, etc.) from the various Starfall decks.

The Deal: Mix the cards and lay them face-down in rows and columns on the table.

The Play: Players take turns turning over two Picture Cards at a time while saying the picture names. If the picture names rhyme, then a match is made. The player picks up the cards and gets another turn. If no match is made, the two cards are turned face-down again, and it is the next player's turn. Continue playing until all pairs are matched.

Objective: The winner is the player with the most pairs.

Linking Cube

Segmenting Game

small-group

Give each child several linking cubes. Say a word, such as "fox." Children repeat the word slowly, then take and link a cube for each sound they hear.

Ask your children to touch each linked cube from left to right and say the corresponding sounds, "/f/, /o/, /x/," then sweep their hand across the cubes as they blend the sound to form the word "fox."

Finally, have your children take apart the linking cubes, "breaking" the word as they say the corresponding phonemes "/f/, /o/, /x/."

If linking cubes are unavailable, substitute buttons, small blocks, small plastic counters, or other math manipulatives.

Simon Says

large-group

The teacher asks a child to perform a series of tasks, beginning each request with “Simon says.” If the teacher does not begin the request with “Simon says,” the child does nothing.

Starfall Speedway Game

2-6 players

Starfall Speedway is a perfect phonics game for children who are learning to read. You can tailor this game to the skill level of your children by choosing different sets of **Skill Cards**. The object of the game is to reach the finish line by successfully identifying letters of the alphabet, identifying letters at the beginning or ending of a word, saying the beginning or ending sound of a word, reading the word, using the word in a sentence, or naming a word that rhymes with it.

1. To play, you need the Speedway game board, spinner, playing pieces, and Skill Cards.
2. Choose a deck of Skill Cards, and place them face-down on the game board.
3. Each player chooses a playing piece and places it near the start arrow. Select a player to go first.
4. The first player spins the spinner and moves his or her playing piece the number of spaces shown on the spinner. Then this player draws a Skill Card from the face-down deck on the board and shows it to the group. The player tries to identify the letter, sound or word. If the player is correct, the other players give him/her the “thumbs up.” If the player cannot identify the letter, sound or word, the other players help him/her to identify it.
5. Place the used card face down on the discard pile on the board.
6. If a player lands on a space with a Starfall character on it, the player gets another turn. If a player draws the “red light” card, they wait one turn. If they draw a “green light” card, they get to take another turn.
7. Play then moves to the next player to the left.
8. The first player to get to the checkered square, or past it, is the winner!

Note: 2 or more players may occupy the same space on the board at the same time.

Starfall Alphabet Avenue Game

2-6 players

Starfall Alphabet Avenue is perfect for players who are just learning letter names and sounds. You can tailor this game to the ability of your children by having them identify the name of the letter, say the sound the letter makes, or name a word that begins with that letter. The object of the game is to be the first to get to Backpack Bear's picnic, correctly responding as you go.

- 1.** To play, you need the Alphabet Avenue game board, spinner, and playing pieces. Skill Cards are not required.
- 2.** Each player chooses a playing piece and places it in the parking lot near the start arrow. Select a player to go first.
- 3.** The first player spins the spinner and then moves his or her playing piece that many spaces. If a player lands on a Starfall character, or on the letter that begins their name, the player gets an extra turn. If the player lands on a letter, he or she then names the letter, makes its sound, or names a word that begins with that letter. If the player is correct, the other players give him/her the "thumbs up." If the player is not correct, the other players help him/her to get a correct answer.
- 4.** Play then moves to the next player on the left.
- 5.** On each player's next turn, they must first identify the letter that they are on before spinning and moving ahead.
- 6.** The first player to get to Backpack Bear's picnic at the end, or past it, is the winner!

Note: 2 or more players may occupy the same space on the board at the same time.

Go Fish

2-5 players

The Deck: Can be played with paired Letter/Letter Cards, Picture/Word Cards, or Word/Word Cards.

The Deal: Cards are dealt clockwise one at a time. If there are two or three players, each receives seven cards. If there are four to five players, each receives five cards. The leftover cards are placed face-down on the table to form the stack.

The Play: The player to the left of the dealer starts by asking any other player for a card to match one of the cards in his or her hand (e.g., "Please give me a /w/."). If the player addressed has the requested card he or she must hand it over. But if that player does not have the requested card, he or she replies, "Go fish!" Then the asker must draw the top card from the stack. If the asker makes a match, he or she places the match face-up on the table and gets another turn. If the asker does not make a match, the turn to ask passes to the left. Suppose a player is left without cards in their hand. That player may, at his or her turn, draw from the stack and ask another player for a card of that letter. But once the stack is gone, any players without cards are out of the game.

Objective: The object of the game is to form pairs (e.g., two w's, two b's). The game concludes when all pairs have been matched. The winner is the player with the most pairs.

Old Maid

2-5 players

The Deck: Play with paired Letter/Letter Cards, Picture/Word Cards, or Word/Word Cards, and one Face-Card featuring a Starfall character.

The Deal: All cards are dealt clockwise one at a time.

The Play: Players look at their cards and discard any pairs face-down in the center of the table. The dealer offers his or her hand, spread face-down, to the player on his or her left, who draws one card. If the card makes a pair with another card in his or her hand, the player discards the pair, then offers his or her hand to the player on his or her left, and so on. If there is no match, the player still offers his or her hand to the player on his or her left.

Objective: Play continues until all cards have been discarded except the Face-Card or the "Old Maid." The holder of this card loses.

Wheel of Reading

Variation of Hangman

large-group

The **Wheel of Reading** game can be introduced as a contest between the class and the teacher. Provide a space on the board to write: Teacher / Class. Use tally marks to indicate if the class won or the teacher won. This can be an ongoing process.

1. Draw a wheel divided into 8 spokes. (Download diagram included in the Supplemental Materials for Unit 3.)
2. Select a word.
3. Draw enough blank lines for each letter contained in the selected word.
4. Have a volunteer guess one letter they think is in the word. If the letter is in the word, write that letter in the appropriate blank space. The child then has one opportunity to guess the word. If the child does not identify the word, call on another child.
5. If the letter guessed is NOT in the word, print that letter in one of the spokes of the wheel, and call on the next child. If a letter is guessed that is already in a spoke, place a checkmark in that spoke. (This helps children to focus on the game and not repeat letters previously guessed.)

The object of the game is for the children to identify the word before all the spokes in the wheel contain a letter. If they succeed the class wins a point. If the word is not identified before all the spokes have a letter then the teacher wins a point. The teacher fills in the remaining letter(s) and asks the class to read the word. You may want to initiate the rule that if children call out the word when it is not their turn, then the teacher automatically wins!

Variations:

1. Have the children “sign” their letter guess to you. Repeat it for the class and then place the letter in the appropriate position in the word or in a spoke.
2. As children progress, have one child choose the word and be the “teacher” for this game.
3. Have your children draw the wheel and lines on their whiteboards and play along with you adding the letters on the wheel and lines during the game.
4. Use this game during transitional times or have children partner and play it together.

ABC Train

small-group

Use all of the upper- or lower-case letters from the **ABC Skill Card deck**. Shuffle the cards, then deal the entire deck one card at a time to all players. Each card will be a car in the ABC Train, but they need to be in the right order! Players look at their cards. The player with the letter "A" places it face-up on the table. The player with the letter "B" places the card next to the "A" card, and so on, until the alphabet is complete. The objective is to work cooperatively to put the alphabet train together as quickly as possible. Everyone wins!

Starfall Play Dough

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
2 cups water
2 tablespoons oil
4 teaspoons cream of tartar
Food coloring as desired

Combine all ingredients and cook on medium heat for three minutes to consistency of mashed potatoes. Turn onto waxed paper to cool. As soon as play dough can be handled, knead it a bit for smoothness. Store in airtight container to lengthen life.

Natural Play Dough

If you prefer not to use commercial food coloring, you can purchase natural food coloring or, less expensively, make your own. Use the above recipe, but replace the food coloring with a few drops of spinach, carrot, or beet juice to color the play dough. You can also use fruit juices, such as blueberry, purple grape, raspberry, or pomegranate. You can add small amounts of spices such as turmeric powder, curry powder, or yellow mustard powder to make yellow or gold play dough. Add these natural colorants to the water for the play dough, boil briefly, and strain if necessary before adding the other play dough ingredients. Make sure you don't end up increasing the amount of liquid to more than 2 cups. Have fun experimenting to create beautiful colors!