

Back to School

• Storytime •

by | Kimberly Faurot

Grades:
K-2

Draw-and-Tell Story

Draw the story while telling it! *Monkey Face* by Frank Asch (Parents Magazine Press, 1977) is a great title to use for this activity (or consider Asch's *Bread and Honey* [Parents Magazine Press, 1981]; the same story featuring a bear instead of a monkey).

Monkey draws a picture of his mother at school. He draws a round monkey head, little monkey eyes and ears, a little monkey mouth and a little monkey nose and neck. I typically write his mom's "name" on the bottom of the paper in large letters: "M-O-M, Mom." Monkey brings the picture home from school, and shows it to a succession of his animal friends as he walks home: "A picture of my M-O-M, Mom!" Each animal suggests a slight change to the original drawing (Owl thinks the eyes are too small; Rabbit thinks she needs bigger ears, Alligator thinks the mouth should be larger; Elephant

is sure the nose should be bigger; Lion is concerned that she has no mane; and Giraffe is sure that the neck should be longer), which Monkey obligingly makes. When Monkey arrives home at last and presents

the wild conglomerate drawing to his Mother as "a picture of you," she loves it "just the way it is," and "[hangs] it on the refrigerator for everyone to see."

This story is an absolute classic, despite its long out-of-print status. If you don't have access to a copy, consider inter-library loan or purchasing it through an online out-of-print book service such as abebooks.com, alibris.com, bibliofind.com, bookfinder.com, or half.com.



Additional Books and Resources about School

Around the World: Who's Been Here? by Lindsay Barrett George. Greenwillow Books, 1999. 2 - 5. A teacher travels around the world, views animals in their natural habitats, and writes back to her class about her findings.

Back to School (It's a Kid's World series) by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko. The Global Fund for Children, Shakti for Children, 2001. K - 4. Photographs with short captions depict the school lives of children around the globe.

Back to School for Rotten Ralph written by Jack Gantos, illustrated by Nicole Rubel. Houghton Mifflin, 1998. K - 1. Afraid of being left alone, nasty red cat Rotten Ralph follows Sarah to school and tries to prevent her from making new friends.

Bill and Pete by Tomie dePaola. Putnam, 1978. K - 2. Bill the crocodile gets a new toothbrush, Pete the Plover, before he starts school and learns many new things. (Available in Spanish and as a DVD.)

Boomer Goes to School by Constance W. McGeorge, illustrated by Mary Whyte. Chronicle, 1996. PreK - 1. Boomer the golden retriever accompanies his owner to school for show-and-tell. (Available in Spanish.)



The Bus Stop Janet Morgan Stoeke. Dutton Children's Books, 2007. PreK - K. Kindergartners gather for their exciting first ride on the school bus.

Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow Books, 1991. K - 2. Chrysanthemum loves her name, until she starts going to school and the other children make fun of it. (Available in Spanish, as a Big Book, and as a DVD.)

Cleversticks by Bernard Ashley, illustrated by Derek Brazell. Crown, 1992. PreK - K. Wishing he had something to be clever at like the other children in his class, Ling Sung unexpectedly and happily discovers that his peers admire his prowess with chopsticks.

CriCTOR by Tomi Ungerer. Harper & Row, 1958. PreK - 3. When Madame Bodot's son sends her a pet boa constrictor, she names him CriCTOR and brings him to her classroom where he helps by shaping his body into letters, numbers, and so forth. CriCTOR eventually foils a burglar, and is gratefully honored by the entire community.

Extension Idea: Tell the story with a tightly coiled snake puppet inside a round box addressed to Madame Bodot. The snake can arrive wearing a baby bonnet and sucking a pacifier, then loosen his coils and remove the baby items as he "grows."

David Goes to School by David Shannon. Blue Sky Press, 1999. K - 1. David's activities in school include chewing gum, talking out of turn, and engaging in a food fight, causing his teacher to admonish over and over, "No, David!" (Available in Spanish.)

First Day Jitters by Julie Danneberg, illustrated by Judy Love. Whispering Coyote, 2000. K - 4. Sarah is afraid to start at a new school, but both she and the reader are in for a surprise when she gets to her class. Sarah turns out to be the new teacher! (Available in Spanish.)

Froggy Goes to School by Jonathan London, illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz. Viking, 1996. PreK - 1. Although Froggy is initially nervous about his first day of school, he has a wonderful time.

How Do Dinosaurs Go to School? by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Mark Teague. Blue Sky Press, 2007. PreK - K. Explains how young dinosaurs should behave during a typical school day. (Available in Spanish.)

I Love School! by Philemon Sturges, illustrated by Shari Halpern. Harper Collins, 2004. PreK - K. A brother and sister describe the things they love to do during their day at kindergarten.

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn, illustrated by Ruth E. Harper and Nancy M. Leak. Child Welfare League of America, 1993. PreK - K. When Chester the raccoon is reluctant to go to kindergarten for the first time, his mother teaches him a secret way to carry her love with him.

Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow, 1996. K - 2. Lilly loves everything about school, especially her teacher, but when he asks her to wait a while before showing her new purse, she does something that she is sorry for later.

Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come! by Nancy Carlson. Viking, 1999. PreK - K.

Henry can't wait for kindergarten to start. When he gets to school he is a little intimidated by the big building and new faces, but quickly regains his enthusiasm. (Available in Spanish.)

“Lunch box, lunch box” in *You Be Good & I’ll Be Night: Jump-on-the-Bed Poems*

by Eve Merriam, illustrated by Karen Lee Schmidt. Morrow Junior Books, 1988.

Extension Idea: Fill a real or toy lunchbox with all of the items, real, pretend, or clip-art cutouts mentioned in the poem, and share the poem with the props.

Maisy Goes to School by Lucy Cousins. Candlewick Press, 2005, 1992. PreK - K. By lifting flaps and pulling tabs, the reader shares Maisy the Mouse’s experiences at school.

Mary Had a Little Lamb by Sarah Josepha Hale, photographs by Bruce McMillan. Scholastic, 1990. Toddler - 2. A contemporary interpretation of the well-known nineteenth-century nursery rhyme about the school-going lamb, accompanied by color photographs, a sample exercise from McGuffey’s reader, and a note on the history of the author and her famous rhyme. (Available as a Big Book.)

Mary Had a Little Lamb adapted by Mary Ann Hoberman, illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott. Little, Brown, 2003. K - 2. This expanded version of the traditional rhyme shows what happens after the lamb gets to school. Includes music on the last page.

Minerva Louise at School by Janet Morgan Stoeke. Dutton, 1996. PreK - K. Out for an early morning walk, a chicken wanders into a school that she mistakes for a fancy barn.

Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten by Joseph Slate, illustrated by Ashley Wolff. Dutton Children’s Books, 1996. PreK - K. Introduces the letters of the alphabet as Miss Bindergarten and her students get ready for kindergarten. (Available as a Big Book.)

Miss Malarkey Doesn’t Live in Room 10 by Judy Finchler, illustrated by Kevin O’Malley. Walker, 1995. K - Grade 2. A first-grade boy is shocked, then pleased, when he discovers that his teacher has a life away from school.

Miss Nelson is Missing! by Harry Allard, illustrated by James Marshall. Houghton Mifflin, 1977. K - 3. The kids in Room 207 take advantage of their teacher’s good nature until she disappears and they are faced with a vile substitute. (Available in Spanish.)

Moses Goes to School by Isaac Millman. Frances Foster Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. K - 2. Moses and his friends enjoy the first day of school at their special school for the deaf and hard of hearing, where they use sign language to talk to each other.

Mouse’s First Day of School by Lauren Thompson, illustrated by Buket Erdogan. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003. Toddler - K. When he goes to school, Mouse finds a world of new objects and new friends.

My School / Mi Escuela by Ginger Foglesong Guy, illustrated by Vivi Escriba. HarperFestival, 2006. PreK - Grade 1. Spanish and English texts identify parts of the school day.





Mi Escuela = My School by George Ancona with Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy. Children's Press, 2004. 1 - 5. A Hispanic American fifth-grader tells us about his school day. Text is complete in both Spanish and English.

Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathmann. Putnam's, 1995. K - 4. The children at Napville Elementary School always ignore Officer Buckle's safety tips, until a police dog named Gloria accompanies him when he gives his safety speeches. (Available as a DVD.)

Ohmygosh My Pocket by Janet Perry Marshall. Bell Books, 1992. PreK - 2. A young child decides what to put in his pocket to take to school.

Extension Idea: Make a giant denim pocket and add three-dimensional items to it as you tell the story, ending with a noisy frog puppet.

A Place Called Kindergarten by Jessica Harper, illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Putnam, 2006. PreK - K. Wondering why their friend Tommy has not come to the barn at his usual time, the animals become alarmed when the dog tells them that he has gone to a place called "Kindergarten."

Running the Road to ABC by Denizé Lauture, illustrated by Reynold Ruffins. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1996. 2 - 5. Long before the sun even thinks of rising, the children of Haiti run long distances to school where they learn the letters, sounds, and words of beautiful books.

School Bus by Donald Crews. Greenwillow, 1984. Toddler - K. Follows the progress of school buses as they take children to school and bring them home again. (Available as a Big Book.)

School Days Around the World by Catherine E. Chambers. DK, 2007. (DK Readers series, Level 3.) 2 - 5. Explains what school is like for different children from seven countries around the world.

This Is the Way We Go to School; A Book About Children Around the World by Edith Baer, illustrated by Steven Björkman. Scholastic, 1990. K - 3. Describes the many different modes of transportation children all over the world use to get to school. (Available as a Big Book.)

Timothy Goes to School by Rosemary Wells. Dial Press, 1981. K - 1. Timothy learns about being accepted and making friends during the first week of his first year at school.

Tom Goes to Kindergarten by Margaret Wild, illustrated by David Legge. Albert Whitman, 2000. PreK - K. When Tom, a young panda, goes to his very first day of kindergarten, his whole family stays and plays and wishes they could be in kindergarten too.

Welcome to Kindergarten by Anne Rockwell. Walker & Company, 2001. PreK - K. A boy visits the classroom where he will attend kindergarten the following fall and finds out what is in store for him.

The Wheels on the School Bus by Mary-Alice Moore, illustrated by Laura Huliska-Beith. HarperCollins, 2006. PreK - 1. Text adapted from the traditional song describes how students and staff ride the bus to school.

When You Go to Kindergarten by James Howe, photographs by Betsy Imershein. Morrow Junior Books, 1994. PreK - K. Text and photographs explain what it is like to go to kindergarten.

Will I Have a Friend? by Miriam Cohen ; pictures by Lillian Hoban. Macmillan, 1967, 1989. PreK - K. Jim's anxieties on his first day of school are happily forgotten when he makes a new friend.

Also see:

- Victoria Smith's website www.kinderkorner.com for wonderful back-to-school ideas. Go to the monthly themes section (September), or go directly to: www.kinderkorner.com/back.html
- UNICEF's downloadable activity packet entitled "Going to School Around the World" (see link at www.campaignforeducationcanada.org/sendateacher/curriculum/resources/)

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Kimberly Faurot has been a children's librarian since 1991, and currently works as a Library Associate for Saint Paul Public Library in Minnesota. She presents Toddler Storytimes for The Red Balloon Bookshop in Saint Paul and is the author of *Books in Bloom: Creative Patterns & Props That Bring Stories to Life* from American Library Association Editions and *Storytime Around the Year* and the *Mother Goose Rhyme Time* series from UpstartBooks.



Magic Bag and School Bus Bingo Activity Directions

You will need:

- 1 “magic change/tote bag” (buy or make using pattern here)
- 1 small toy schoolbus OR foam schoolbus cutout (see pattern here)
- Large and small size capital letters: B-U-S (see pattern here)

You can make your own “magic bag” using the patterns and instructions included here. I shared these patterns in my article “Book! Book! Storytime” in *LibrarySparks Magazine*, Jan. 2005, Vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 6-13 and am including them again for those who are more recent subscribers to the magazine. It really is worth your time and money to make (or to buy) one of these magic bags; I promise that you will use it again and again! If you do not sew, ask a friend or volunteer to make it for you. It will be well worth the effort, as you will be able to use your creation for all sorts of exciting illusions! Always make sure that the items you are changing are small and lightweight enough that they don’t make lumps in the bag and give away your magic bag’s secret.

Please also see Caroline Feller Bauer’s *Leading Kids to Books through MAGIC* (American Library Association, 1996, 2000) for an alternate method of making a “change bag” as well as a variety of wonderful literary ideas using it.

NOTE: If you prefer to purchase a ready-made magic bag, they are available from your local magic shop, online, or from: Twin Cities Magic & Costume, 250 East Seventh Street, Saint Paul, MN 55101, Telephone 651.227.7888, www.twincitiesmagic.com (ask for a “Magic Tote Bag,” \$16.99 plus shipping charges).

Pattern Instructions

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How to Make a Magic Change Bag

Tools and Supplies

- fabric shears
- pinking shears
- straight pins
- steam iron
- sewing machine (*or* may be hand sewn)
- hand-sewing needle
- candle and matches/lighter (for *heat fusing* cord ends)
- 1/3 yard black lining fabric (must appear the same on both sides of the fabric)
- 1/3 yard velvet or other heavy weight fabric for exterior of change bag
- thread: black, and whatever color will match the exterior fabric of change bag
- 1 yard gold or other color nylon cord to gather the top of the change bag

Directions

1. Photocopy the “magic change bag” patterns from here and cut them out along the pattern outlines. Lay the paper patterns onto the designated fabrics and pin. Cut out all fabric pieces, as specified on the patterns. *Make sure to cut the velvet/ exterior fabric panels with right sides together so that the pieces will be mirror images of each other.*
2. Mark and stitch the buttonholes with colored thread on the velvet/exterior fabric as indicated on the pattern. There are four buttonholes on each panel, so you will stitch a total of eight buttonholes.
3. With right sides together, pin and stitch the velvet/exterior fabric panels along the

sides and bottom with colored thread to create an open-topped bag. Trim seams. Turn the bag right side out.

4. Create a $\frac{3}{4}$ " finished hem along the top edge of lining Panel C: fold under $\frac{1}{4}$ " and press, then fold under an additional $\frac{3}{4}$ " and press. Topstitch along the edge of the hem with black thread.
5. Layer the black lining fabric panel pieces as follows: Panel A on the bottom; hemmed Panel C in the middle; Panel B on the top. Position all three lining pieces so that they match up along the sides and along the *bottom* edge. Pin and stitch with black thread along the sides and bottom to create a double bag. Trim seams with pinking shears to prevent fraying. Leave the black lining double bag with right sides facing inward.
6. Slip the black lining double bag inside of the velvet bag. The top edges of the lining outer panels should be approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " down from the top edge of the velvet bag. Create a $\frac{1}{2}$ " finished hem around the top of the bag by folding under $\frac{1}{4}$ " of velvet, then folding an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ " of velvet down over the black lining outer panel top edges to secure all of the edges together. (The top hemmed edge of the center panel lining should remain free.) Pin and topstitch with colored thread to match the velvet/exterior fabric.
7. At the bottom corners of the bag, carefully hand-tack the black lining double bag to the velvet/exterior bag by taking a few small stitches in the seams. This will ensure that the bag's layers stay securely in place.
8. Cut the yard of cording in half, so you have two 18" lengths. Using a lit candle, carefully heat fuse each of the four cord ends (hold each cord end in the flame until the fibers melt slightly) so they will not unravel. Weave the first length of cord in and out of the buttonholes, tying its

two ends together in an overhand loop knot. Repeat this process from the other side of the bag, and tie those two cord ends together in an overhand loop knot opposite the first knot. When you pull the two knots outward at the same time, the cords will gather the top of the bag inward.

9. Ta-daa! Have fun with your "magic change bag"!

B-I-N-G-O Letters and Dots

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Tools and Supplies

- Foamies—any color
- scissors
- ballpoint pen
- hot glue gun and hot glue sticks
- flexible magnet mounting squares or Velcro dots/squares

Directions

1. Photocopy the B-I-N-G-O letter patterns and cut them out.
2. Trace the patterns onto the colored foamies with the ballpoint pen, and cut the pieces out. (Yellow bus, black wheels with red centers; orange B, red U, green S, or other colors as desired.)
3. Hot glue the parts of the bus together.
4. Hot glue bits of magnet or Velcro to the back side of the bus and the letters.

How to Make a School Bus and B-U-S Letters for your Magic Bag

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Tools and Supplies

- Foamies: yellow, black, red, green, orange (or other colors as desired)
- scissors
- ballpoint pen
- hot glue gun and hot glue sticks

- flexible magnet mounting squares or Velcro dots/squares

Directions

1. Photocopy the school bus and large and small B-U-S letter patterns and cut them out.
2. Trace the patterns onto the colored foams with the ballpoint pen, and cut the pieces out. (Yellow bus, black wheels with red centers; orange B, red U, green S, or other colors as desired.)
3. Hot glue the parts of the bus together.
4. Hot glue bits of magnet or Velcro to the back side of the bus and the letters.

Preliminary Set-up

1. Hide the school bus in one side of your magic change bag before your “Back to School” storytime begins. Make absolutely certain that you know (and don’t forget) which side it is in!

Sources for Purchasing Large Size Alphabet Letters

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You may wish to make your own Alphabet letters from foams or felt, but here are some alternate resources:

Lakeshore Learning Materials

www.lakeshorelearning.com

(Jumbo 5” Magnetic Letters--UPPERCASE, item #RR932; Jumbo 5” Magnetic Letters--LOWERCASE, item #RR933)

Childcraft Education Corp.

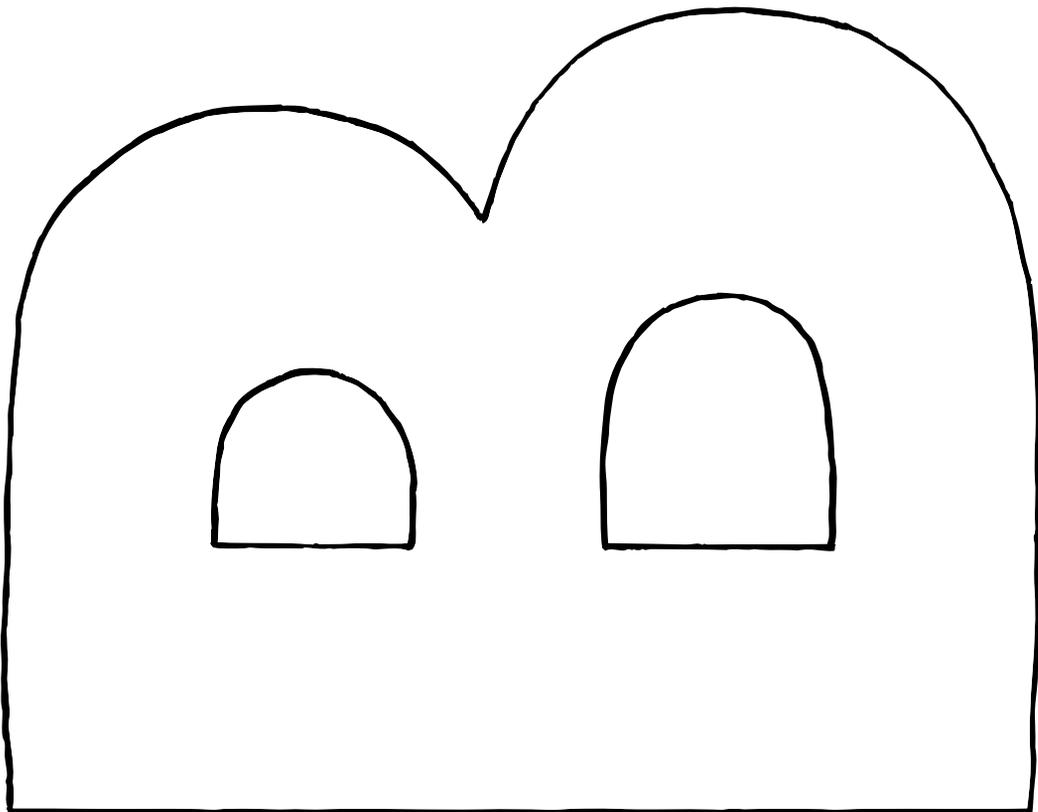
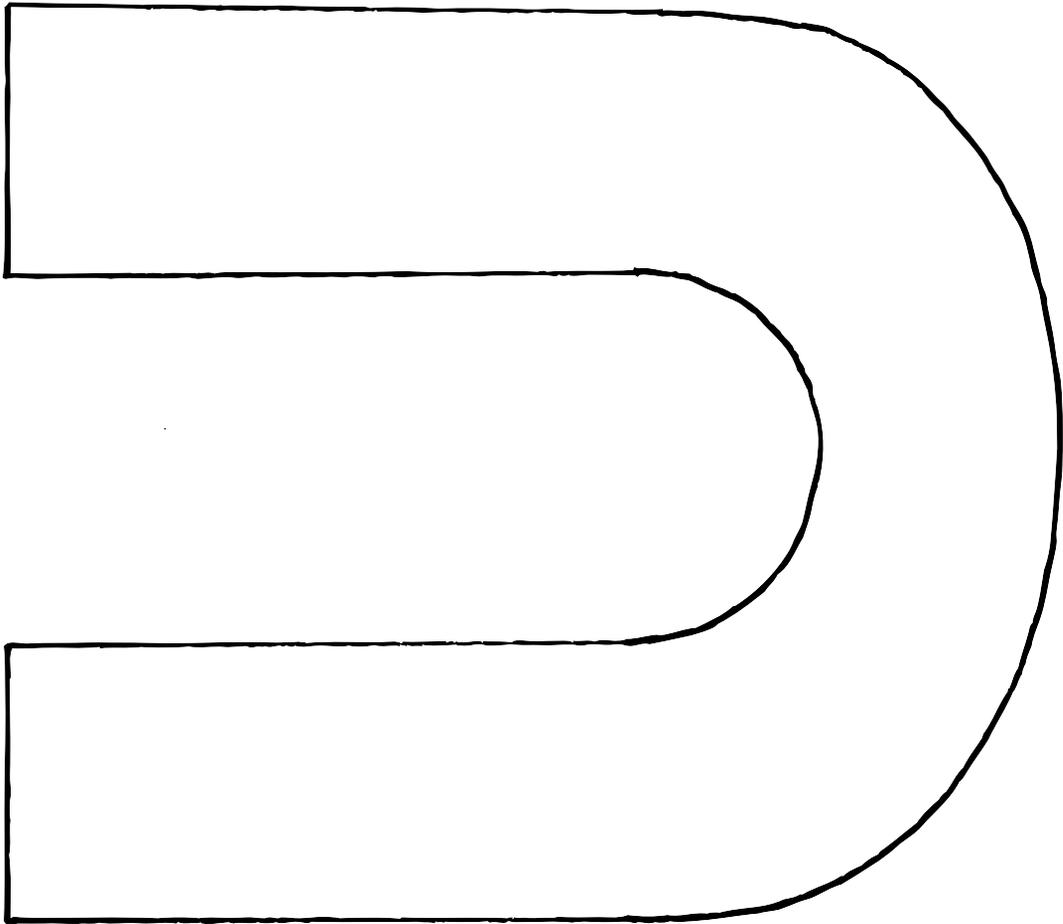
www.childcrafteeducation.com

(Jumbo Magnetic Foam Letters - UPPERCASE, item #295244; Jumbo Magnetic Foam Letters - LOWERCASE, item #295247)

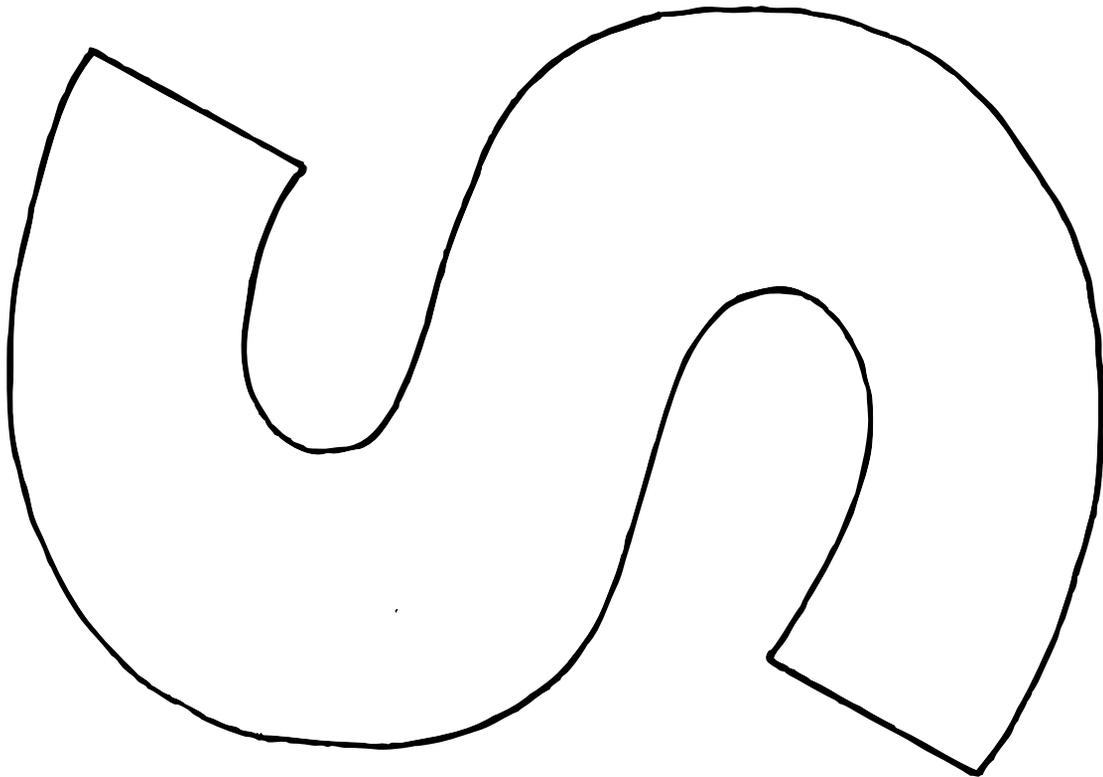
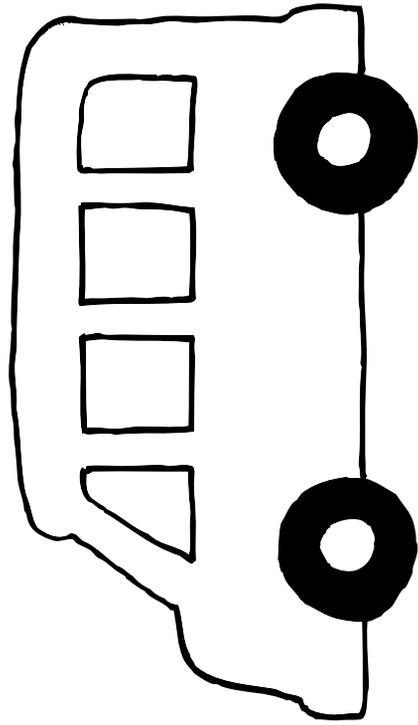
Constructive Playthings

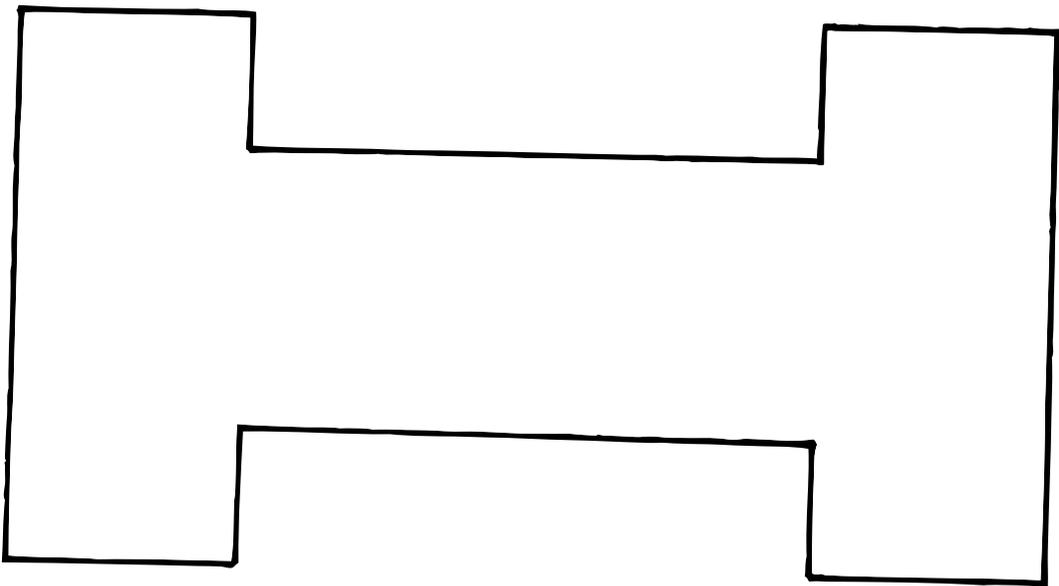
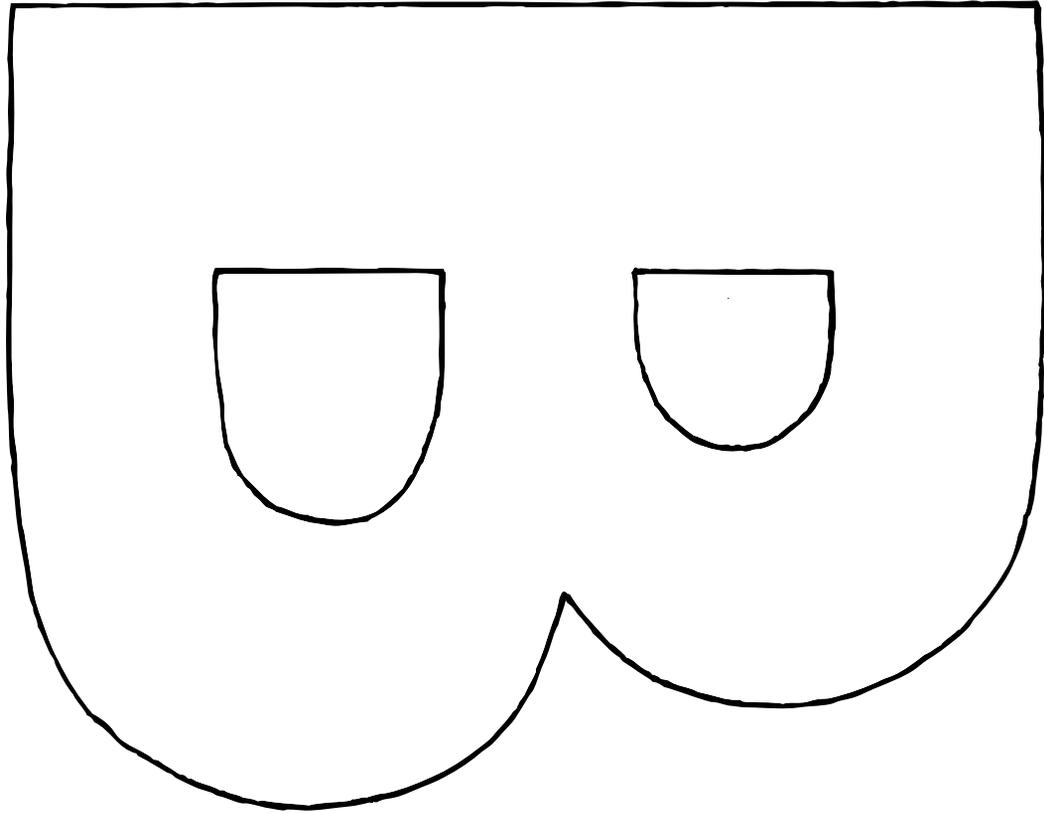
www.cptoys.com

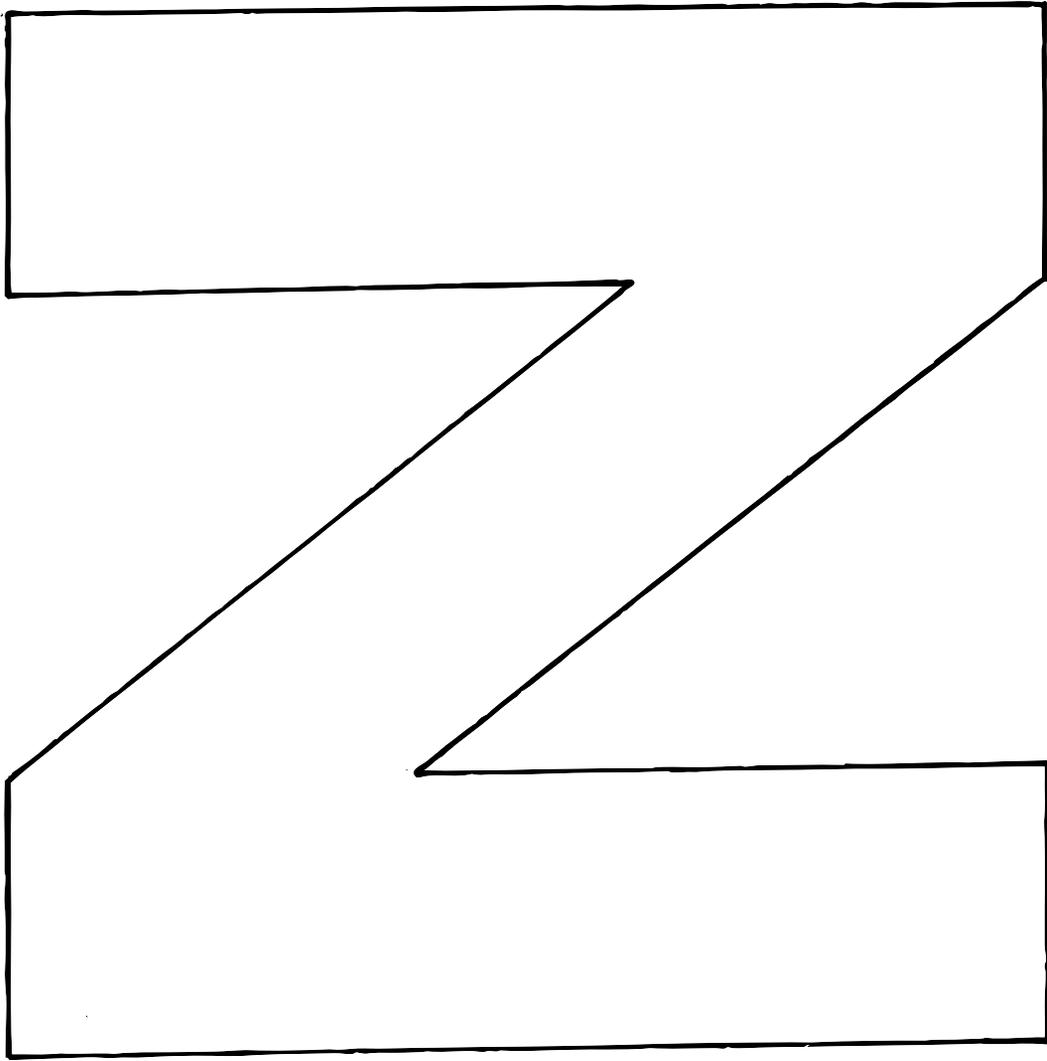
(Giant 4.75” Magnetic Foam UPPERCASE Letters item #EDL-776; Giant 4.75” Magnetic Foam LOWERCASE Letters, item #EDL-617) (Jumbo 7.5” Foam UPPERCASE Letters, item #EDL-170; Jumbo 7.25” Foam LOWERCASE Letters, item #EDL-171)

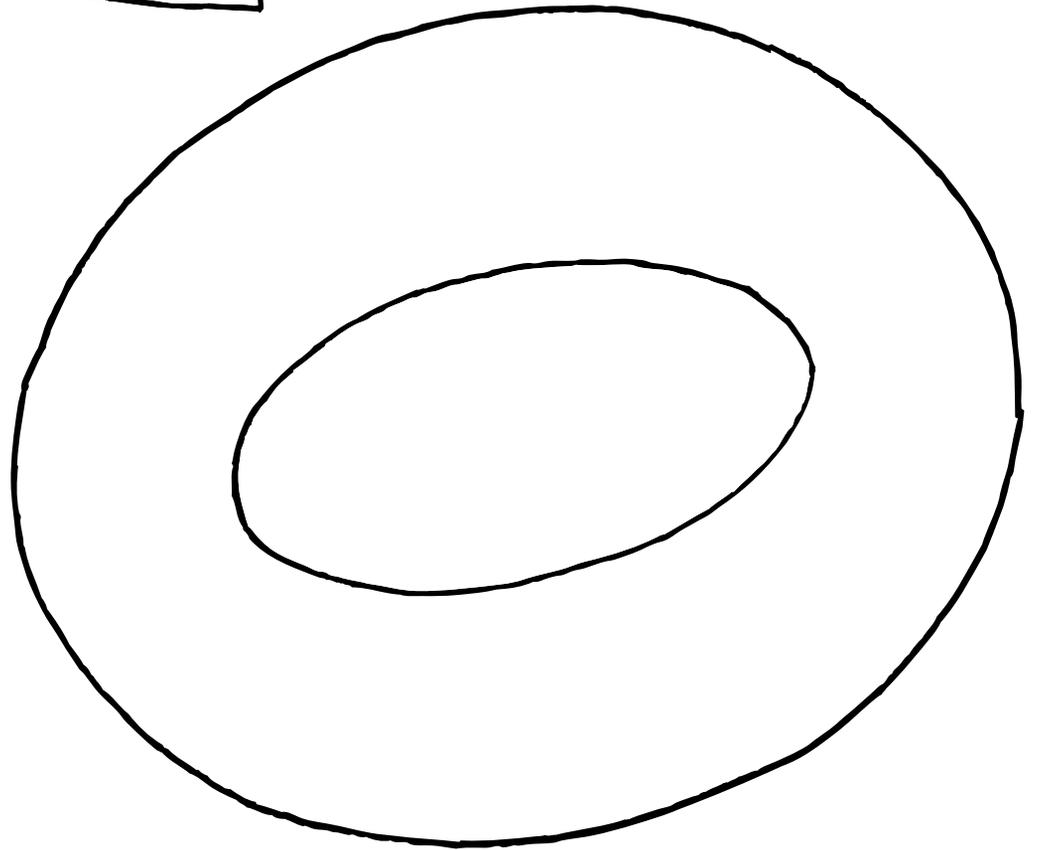
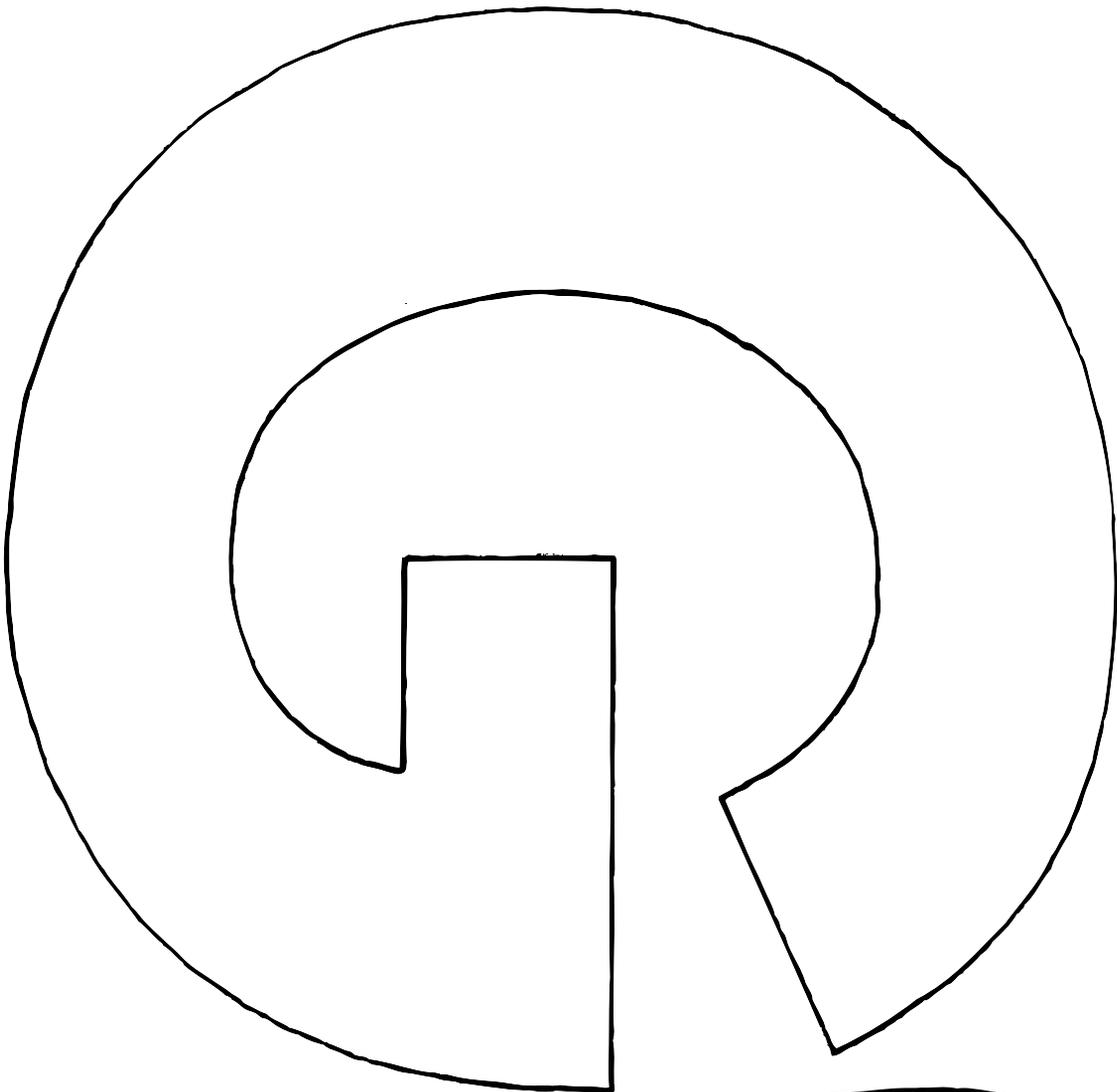


BUS









Panel C cutting line

Panels A and B cutting line

fold line for center panel hem

Magic Bag

black lining outer panels

cut Panels A and B from black lining fabric

black lining center panel

cut Panel C from black lining fabric

seam allowance $\frac{1}{4}$ inch

fold line

fold line

topstitching line



buttonholes



Magic Bag

velvet/exterior fabric panels

cut two from velvet or other heavyweight exterior fabric

seam allowance $\frac{1}{4}$ inch