Educational Solutions
for Children, Inc.

BUILDING STRONG READERS FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE!

PRINT AWARENESS

LITERACY TOOLKIT

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT



Educational Solutions for Children, Inc. | Birth-5 Literacy Resource Collection
Created through funding provided by the Comprehensive Literacy Grant Initiative.

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WELCOME, TEACHERS!

Thank you for using the Print Awareness Literacy Toolkit!

This toolkit is designed to help young children notice, understand, and use print in meaningful ways every day. Together, we can build strong foundations for lifelong reading success!



1 WHY ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT MATTERS

Children see print everywhere on signs, labels, packages, menus, and more! These real world examples help children make meaningful connections between print and the world around them.

Benefits Include:

- Builds early reading readiness
- Promotes print motivation
- Strengthens vocabulary
- Encourages independence
- Helps children understand the purpose of print

2 RESEARCH BASED BENEFITS

Research shows that exposure to environmental print supports children's early literacy skills and helps them recognize the importance of print in daily life.

Children who interact with environmental print develop stronger print awareness, letter knowledge, and word recognition.

Environmental print experiences increase curiosity about print, help children make meaningful connections to their everyday world, and inspire them to become active, confident readers.

3 HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

1 EXPLORE
Review the activities and choose the ones that best fit your classroom needs.

2 PREPARE
Gather a few materials and set up center or small group activities.

3 ENGAGE
Introduce print in meaningful, real life contexts through play and exploration.

4 OBSERVE
Use the assessment tools to note progress monitor and celebrate small steps of growth.

PERFECT FOR

- Classrooms
- Small Groups
- Intervention
- Take Home Practice
- Literacy Centers
- Family Engagement

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STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

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This toolkit aligns with key early learning and literacy standards that support print awareness and early literacy development.

BIRTH–3
(INFANTS & TODDLERS)

Early experiences with songs, rhymes, and books build the foundation for lifelong reading.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Engages in back-and-forth interactions using sounds, words, and gestures.
- Responds to and enjoys finger plays, songs, and rhymes.
- Explores books and shows interest in pictures, print, and story.
- Demonstrates early understanding that print carries meaning.
- Develops attention and memory through repeated experiences.

PRESCHOOL
(3–5 YEARS)

Preschoolers strengthen print awareness and oral language through meaningful literacy experiences.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Identifies that print carries meaning and has a purpose.
- Recognizes some letters, words, and signs in the environment.
- Understands that we read from left to right and top to bottom.
- Participates in shared reading and retelling of familiar rhymes.
- Uses vocabulary and oral language to express ideas and make connections.

PRE-K
(4–5 YEARS)

Pre-K children use their knowledge of print to connect language with meaning and purpose.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Demonstrates understanding of basic concepts of print.
- Identifies letters and their associated sounds.
- Recognizes and produces rhyming words.
- Reads and understands high-frequency words.
- Retells stories and rhymes in sequence using key details.

KINDERGARTEN
(5–6 YEARS)

Kindergarteners apply print awareness skills to support reading comprehension and emergent writing.

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Demonstrates a deep understanding of concepts of print.
- Reads emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.
- Uses phonological awareness skills to decode and encode words.
- Writes letters, words, and sentences to express ideas.
- Comprehends and retells nursery rhymes and connected text.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT: FIND IT!

Where do you see it?

Students identify and talk about real-world signs, labels, logos, and words they see every day.

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ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Recognizing Environmental Print
Grades:	Preschool–Kindergarten
Time:	10–15 minutes
Group Size:	Whole Group, Small Group, Pairs

LEARNING FOCUS

Students will notice, identify, and understand the meaning of print in their everyday environment such as signs, labels, logos, and packages.

MATERIALS

- Environmental print cards (real-life images)
- Real items from home, school, or the community (optional)
- Pocket chart or chart paper (optional)
- Sorting mats or categorization cards (optional)

WHAT TO DO

1. Show a print card or real item with a familiar logo, label, or sign.
2. Ask students what it says and what it means.
3. Talk about where they might see it in real life.
4. Invite students to share their experiences with it.
5. Extend the activity by sorting, matching, or finding more examples.

TEACHING TIP

Use real-world examples that are familiar and meaningful to your students. The more authentic the print, the more engaging the learning!

"Where have you seen this?"

"What does it tell us?"

"Why is this helpful?"

"What other places might we see this?"



LET'S EXPLORE ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT!

Directions: Show an item or picture card. Talk about what it says, what it means, and where we might see it. Let your friends share their ideas!

Real words are all around us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is this?
2. Where have you seen it before?
3. What does it tell us?
4. Why is this print helpful?
5. What other places might we see this kind of print?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Take a print walk around the school or neighborhood.
- Create a class chart of print you see every day.
- Sort environmental print by category (food, stores, signs, etc.).
- Make a class book with pictures of environmental print.
- Invite families to send in pictures of print from home and share with the class.

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DUNKIN' DONUTS®

STOP

Walmart®

Shell®

Walmart®

CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL®

PEPPERIDGE FARM®

Goldfish®

BAKED SNACK CRACKERS

FINN©

Giant®

TM



Pizza Hut®

YIELD


Welcome to
Washington, DC


CONSTRUCTION
ZONE


M
metro
bus stop
202 637-7000
wmata.com


SLOW
DOWN

McDonald's®

cvs pharmacy®

BIKE LANE

DO NOT

ENTER

The LAUNDRY MAT



BURGER KING®

LIBRARY



FedEx®

ELEVEN®

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

Walgreens®

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT IN THE CLASSROOM

Let's Label Our Classroom!

Students explore print in their own classroom by helping to identify, read, and use labels. We see print everywhere including right here in our classroom!

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ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Recognizing Environmental Print
Grades:	Preschool–Kindergarten
Time:	15–20 minutes (plus ongoing use)
Group Size:	Whole Group, Small Group, or Centers

LEARNING FOCUS

Students will recognize, identify, and use environmental print to build print awareness and understand that print has meaning in their everyday environment.

MATERIALS

- Large, clear labels (with words and pictures)
- Index cards or label paper
- Tape, sticky tack, or laminating materials
- Pictures of classroom items (optional)
- Student helpers
- Chart paper (optional)

WHAT TO DO

1. Introduce the activity and talk about the labels.
2. Show and read a few labels together.
3. Invite students to help place labels around the classroom on real objects and areas.
4. Have students read the labels as you go and use them throughout the day.
5. Revisit the labels often and invite students to find and read them independently.

TEACHING TIP

Use clear, high-contrast print with pictures. Place labels at students' eye level. Involve students in creating and placing the labels to build ownership and engagement.

"What does this say?"
"Where do we see this?"
"How do we use this?"
"Can you find another label like this?"



REAL PRINT. REAL PLACES. REAL LEARNING!

Directions: Work together to label items and areas in the classroom. Read the labels, talk about what they mean, and use them every day. Let's make our classroom a print-rich place!

Look around. Read. Discover!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does this say?
2. Where do we see this in our classroom?
3. What do we use this for?
4. Why is this label helpful?
5. Can you find another label like this?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Create labels for special areas (library, math center, art center, dramatic play, etc.).
- Have students draw pictures to go with the labels.
- Take a "print walk" around the classroom to find all the labels.
- Sort classroom labels by category (school supplies, furniture, areas, etc.).
- Invite families to help create labels in home languages.

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Chair

Silla



Desk

Escritorio



Light

Luz



Pencils

Lápices



Computers

Computadoras



Tablet

Tableta



Scissors

Tijeras



Window

Ventana



Floor

Piso



Cubby

Casillero



Water Bottles

Botellas de agua



Carpet

Alfombra



Markers

Marcadores



Board

Pizarrón



Table

Mesa



Books

Libros



Crayons

Crayones



Table

Mesa



Door

Puerta



Bathroom

Baño



Closet

Armario

SCAVENGER HUNT

Let's Be Print Detectives!

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

Students search for print around the classroom by helping to notice the words, letters, numbers, signs, and labels all around them!

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Print Awareness
Grades:	PreK–Kindergarten
Time:	15–20 minutes (plus ongoing use)
Group Size:	Whole Group, Small Group, or Centers

LEARNING FOCUS

Students will recognize, identify, and use print to build print awareness and understand that print has meaning in their everyday environment.

MATERIALS

- Classroom scavenger hunt cards or chart (optional)
- Clipboards or recording sheets (optional)
- Pencils or crayons (optional)
- Pictures of classroom items (optional)
- Student helpers

WHAT TO DO

1. Introduce the activity and talk about being Print Detectives.
2. Look around the classroom together.
3. Invite students to find the print, point to it, read it aloud, and talk about it.
4. Explain why it is important.
5. Celebrate each discovery!

TEACHING TIP

Use clear, easy to read print and real classroom environment examples. Encourage students to look at print at their eye level. Ask questions to extend thinking and conversation.

"What does this say?"
"Where do we see this?"
"How do we use this?"
"Can you find another print like this?"



Look around, Read, Discover!

Directions: Work together to search for print around the classroom. Read the print, talk about what it means, and use it every day. Let's be Print Detectives and see how much print we can find!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does this say?
2. Where do we see this in our classroom?
3. What do we use this for?
4. Why is this print important?
5. Can you find another print like this?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Go on the hunt again tomorrow and look for new items!
- Challenge students to find the same item in a different place.
- Take a photo of the items and create a classroom "Print Wall."
- Sort the items by category (letters, numbers, signs, labels, etc.).
- Invite families to go on a print hunt at home!

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SCAVENGER HUNT

Look around the classroom. Find the print.
Check the boxes when you see it!

☐ **Letter**

Aa

☐ **Number**

3

☐ **Word**

book

☐ **Sign**



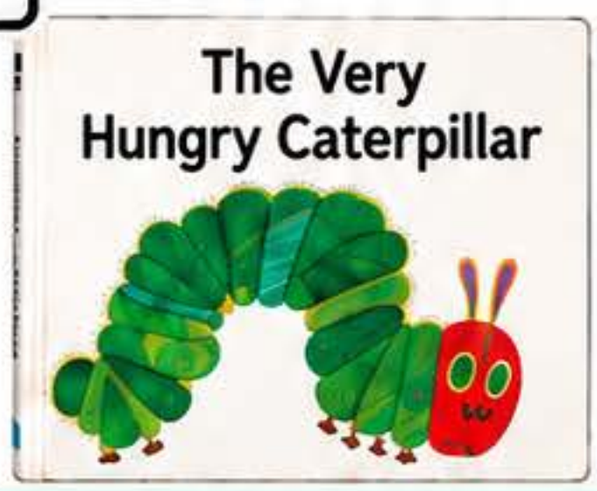
☐ **Label**



☐ **Logo**



☐ **Book Title**



☐ **Menu**



☐ **Schedule**



☐ **Name**



☐ **Environmental Print**



☐ **Other**

_____

SCAVENGER HUNT

Look around the classroom. Find the print.
Check the boxes when you see it!

☐ **Letter**

Aa

☐ **Number**

3

☐ **Word**



☐ **Sign**



☐ **Label**



☐ **Logo**



☐ **Book Title**



☐ **Menu**



☐ **Schedule**



☐ **Name**



☐ **Environmental Print**



☐ **Other**

_____

SCAVENGER HUNT

Look around the classroom. Find the print.
Check the boxes when you see it!

☐ **Letter**

Pp

☐ **Number**

8

☐ **Word**

little

☐ **Sign**



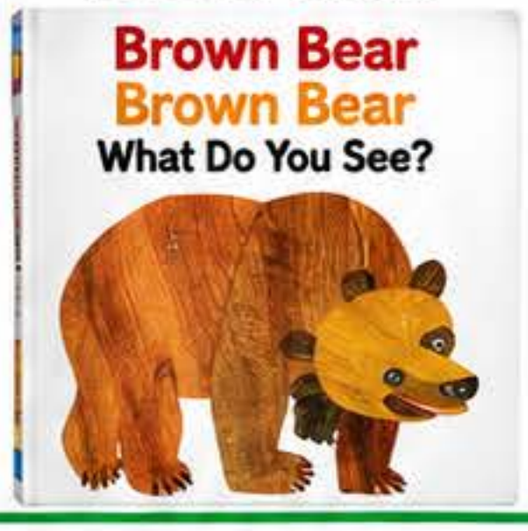
☐ **Label**



☐ **Logo**



☐ **Book Title**



☐ **Menu**



☐ **Schedule**



☐ **Name**



☐ **Environmental Print**



☐ **Other**

_____

SCAVENGER HUNT

Look around the classroom. Find the print.
Check the boxes when you see it!

☐ **Letter**

Tt

☐ **Number**

4

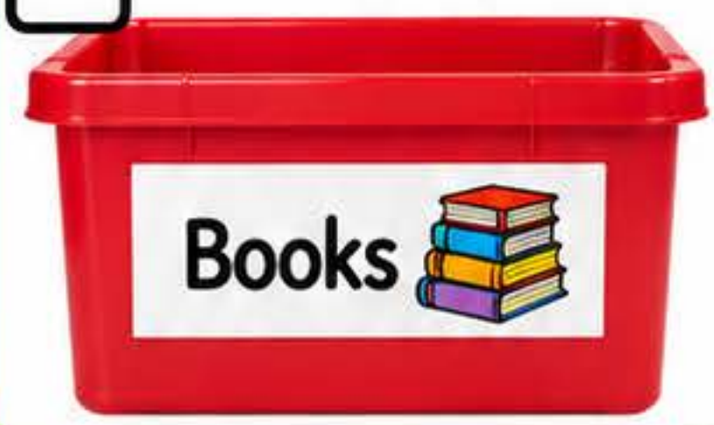
☐ **Word**

read

☐ **Sign**



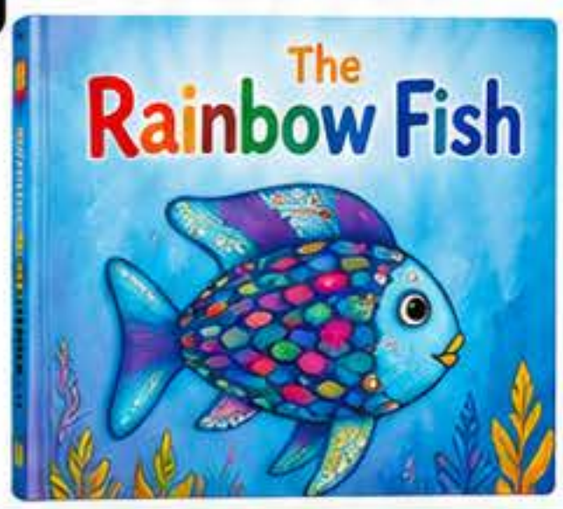
☐ **Label**



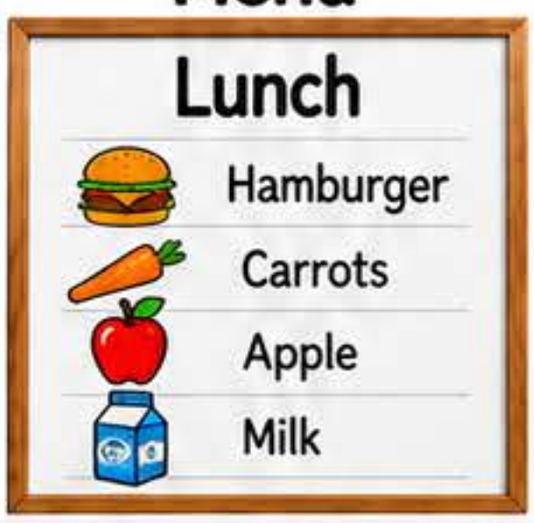
☐ **Logo**

amazon

☐ **Book Title**



☐ **Menu**



☐ **Schedule**

- Morning Work
- Read Aloud
- Centers
- Music

☐ **Name**



☐ **Environmental Print**



☐ **Other**

_____

SCAVENGER HUNT

Look around the classroom. Find the print.
Check the boxes when you see it!

☐ **Letter**

Mm

☐ **Number**

10

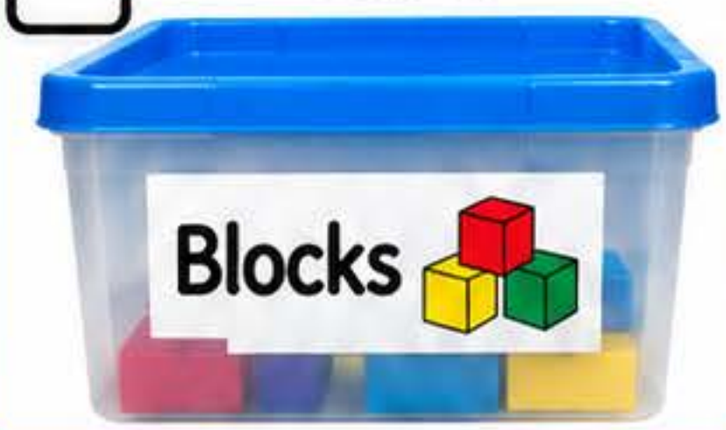
☐ **Word**

play

☐ **Sign**



☐ **Label**



☐ **Logo**



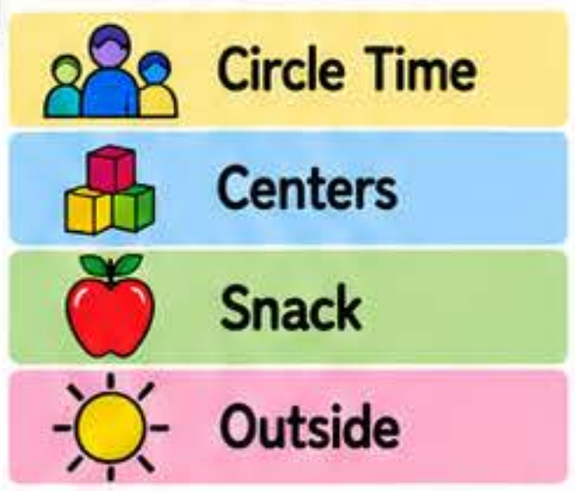
☐ **Book Title**



☐ **Menu**



☐ **Schedule**



☐ **Name**



☐ **Environmental Print**



☐ **Other**

_____

SCAVENGER HUNT

Look around the classroom. Find the print.
Check the boxes when you see it!

☐ **Letter**

Kk

☐ **Number**

5

☐ **Word**

girl

☐ **Sign**



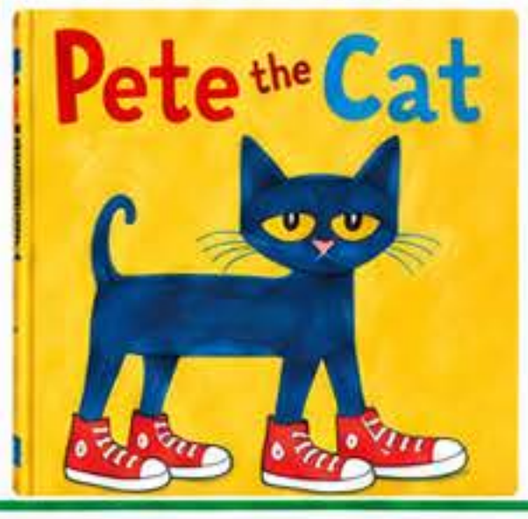
☐ **Label**



☐ **Logo**



☐ **Book Title**



☐ **Menu**



☐ **Schedule**



☐ **Name**



☐ **Environmental Print**



☐ **Other**

_____

PICTURE vs. WORD

Let's Sort and Discover!

Educational Solutions for Children, Inc.

Students look closely at cards and decide if each card shows a picture or a word. This helps build early print awareness and vocabulary as students learn the difference between pictures and words.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Picture vs. Word Discrimination
Grades:	PreK–5
Time:	15–20 minutes (plus ongoing use)
Group Size:	Whole Group, Small Group, or Centers

LEARNING FOCUS

Students will distinguish between pictures and words as a foundational skill for reading and understanding that print carries meaning.

MATERIALS

- Picture and word cards
- Sorting mats (Picture / Word)
- Chart or pocket chart (optional)
- Baskets or containers for sorting (optional)
- Recording sheet (optional)
- Student helpers

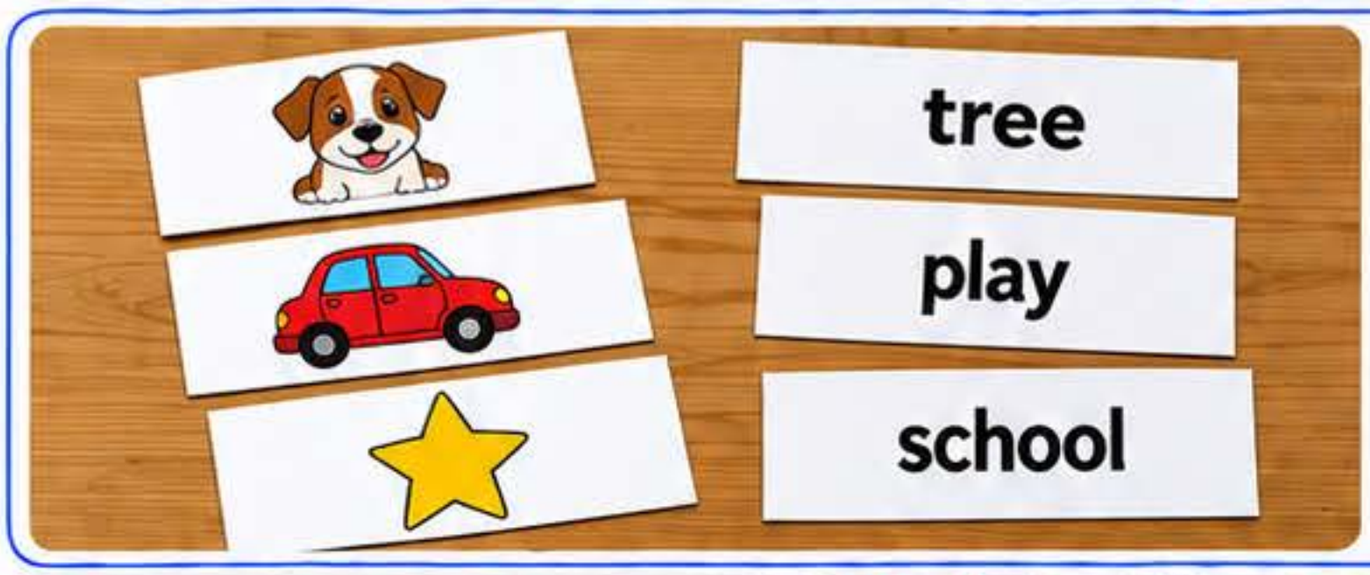
WHAT TO DO

1. Introduce the activity and discuss what a picture is and what a word is.
2. Show examples of a picture and a word.
3. Students sort the cards into "Picture" or "Word."
4. Invite students to explain their choices.
5. Celebrate and discuss what we noticed!

TEACHING TIP

Use real, clear examples that are meaningful to students. Encourage them to look carefully at the details. Remind them that pictures show what something looks like, and words tell us what something is.

"How do you know?"
"What do you see?"
"What does this say?"



Look, Sort, Learn!

Directions: Look at each card. Decide if it shows a picture or a word. Sort the cards into the correct category. Talk about how you know and what each card means.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you know this is a picture?
2. How do you know this is a word?
3. What does this word say?
4. What does this picture show?
5. Can you find another example like this?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Use the cards in a center.
- Have students find pictures and words in classroom books, charts, or the environment.
- Challenge students to create their own picture and word cards.
- Sort cards by category (animals, food, places, etc.).
- Take a photo of student work and create a class "Picture vs. Word" wall display.

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crayons

bus

plant

book

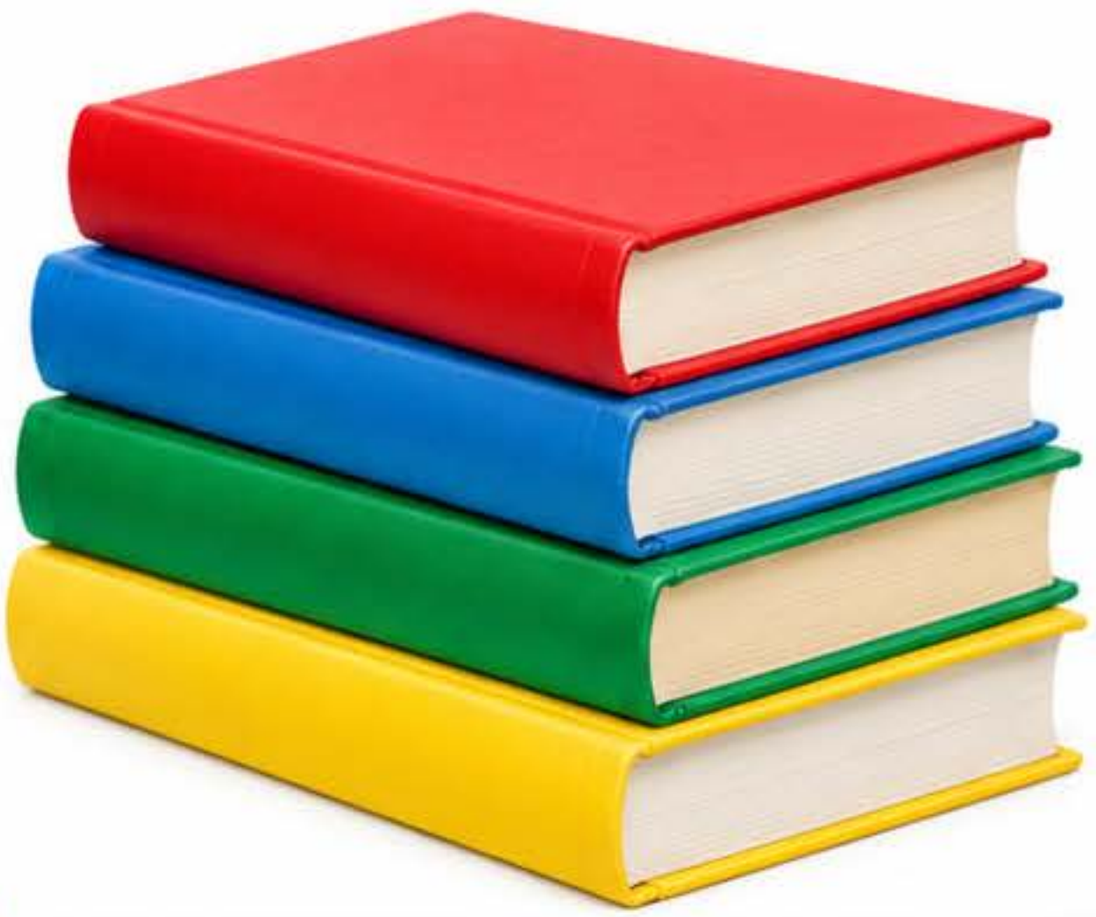
brush

shoe




SCHOOL BUS









stop

coat

pen

hat

cup

bag


STOP











cat

play

tree

school

dog

sun










SCHOOL



notebook

pencil

lunch

tablet

chair

desk













apple

marker

glue

paint

paper

scissors













PRINT MATCH-UP

Find My Match!

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Students match familiar environmental print (logos, signs, and labels) to the correct word. This activity builds print awareness, vocabulary, and helps students make the connection between what they see and what it says.

ACTIVITY AT A GLANCE

Focus:	Environmental Print – Picture/Word Matching
Grades:	PreK–5
Time:	15–20 minutes (plus ongoing use)
Group Size:	Whole Group, Small Group, or Centers

LEARNING FOCUS

Students will match familiar environmental print and logos to the correct written word, building print awareness, vocabulary, and understanding that print carries meaning in everyday life.

MATERIALS

- Environmental print picture cards (e.g., signs, logos, labels)
- Matching word cards
- Sorting mats (optional)
- Chart or pocket chart (optional)
- Baskets or containers for sorting (optional)
- Recording sheet (optional)
- Student helpers

WHAT TO DO

1. Introduce the activity and talk about environmental print (signs, logos, labels).
2. Show examples of a picture card and the matching word card.
3. Students match the picture cards to the correct word cards.
4. Invite students to explain how they know it's a match.
5. Celebrate and discuss where we see these words in our everyday lives!

TEACHING TIP

Use real and familiar environmental print that students see in their daily lives (e.g., stop signs, food labels, store logos, and classroom signs). Encourage students to look closely at the details and notice the letters, shapes, and colors. Remind them that print helps us find information and tells us what something is.

"Where have you seen this before?"
"What does it say?"
"How do you know?"



See It. Match It. Read It!

Directions: Look at each picture card. Find the word that matches. Sort the cards into the correct pairs. Talk about how you know and where you might see this print in real life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is this?
2. Where have you seen this before?
3. What does the word say?
4. How do you know it matches?
5. Can you find another example like this?



EXTENSION IDEAS

- Use the cards in a center.
- Go on an environmental print scavenger hunt around the school or community.
- Have students create their own picture and word cards.
- Sort cards by category (food, places, signs, classroom, etc.).
- Take photos of student work and create a class "Print Match-Up" wall display.

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school

library

office

nurse

classroom

playground


SCHOOL


LIBRARY


OFFICE


NURSE


Welcome
to our
Classroom



bus

stop

store

restaurant

cereal

restroom


SCHOOL BUS


STOP


Walmart


McDonald's


General Mills
Cheerios
100% Whole Grain Oats


RESTROOM

park

zoo

hospital

fire station

grocery

pharmacy


PARK


ZOO


EMERGENCY


FIRE STATION


Grocery


CVS
pharmacy

bank

post office

police

airport

hotel

gas station


CHASE


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Departures


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