For Grown-ups: How Lines Develop

A one-page guide to using these sheets well. Ages are a rough guide, not a test.

The order most children learn to COPY these shapes

Standing	Sleeping	Circle	Cross	Slant /	Square	Slant \	X	Triangle
2–3 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	4 y 4 m	4 y 6 m	4 y 7 m	4 y 11 m	5 y 3 m

Typical ages for copying each shape from a picture (y = years, m = months), in the Beery VMI order used in NHS occupational therapy leaflets. Most children can imitate a shape (watch you draw it, then do it) a few months earlier. Curves, waves and zigzags are extra pencil-control patterns for changing direction.

Trace, then imitate, then copy

- Trace: follow a dashed path. This is where the Level 1 and 2 sheets start.
- Imitate: you draw a line while your child watches, then they draw one.
- Copy: your child draws the shape from a picture alone. This is the real milestone, so finish each sheet with the “your turn” part.
- Big before small: crayon on wide paths, then pencil on thin ones.

How the sheets are levelled

- Level 1 · Big paths: wide lanes, start dots and arrows, pictures at both ends. For a chunky crayon, from about 2½.
- Level 2 · Smaller paths: thinner lines and more of them. For a crayon or pencil, from about 3.
- Level 3 · On my own: start dots only, then copy a model in an empty box. From about 3½ to 4.

Grip: what is typical

- 1–2 years: whole fist, moving from the shoulder.
- 2–3 years: all fingers on the crayon, palm facing down.
- 3–4 years: four fingers, starting to move from the wrist.
- 4–6 years: three-finger (tripod) grip, still fairly stiff.
- 6–7 years: a moving tripod grip with the fingertips doing the work.

Do not force a “correct” grip at 3. Short or broken crayons nudge small fingers into a better grip by themselves.

Set up for success

- Feet flat on the floor (or a box), table about elbow height.
- The helper hand holds the paper still.
- Tape a sheet to a wall or easel now and then: drawing on a vertical surface builds shoulder and wrist strength.
- 5–10 minutes is plenty. Stop while it is still fun.
- Lines first, letters later: praise the try, not the neatness.

Ready for letter tracing when they can…

- copy a standing line, a sleeping line, a circle and a cross
- start at the top and pull down without being reminded
- hold a crayon with their fingers, not a fist

Then try our alphabet and number tracing sheets.

When to ask for advice

Every child is different. Talk to their teacher, health visitor or doctor if, by about 5, your child cannot copy a cross or a square, avoids drawing, or finds holding a crayon painful or very tiring. A children’s occupational therapist can help.

PARENT OVEN

© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

PRE-WRITING LINES · PARENTOVEN.COM

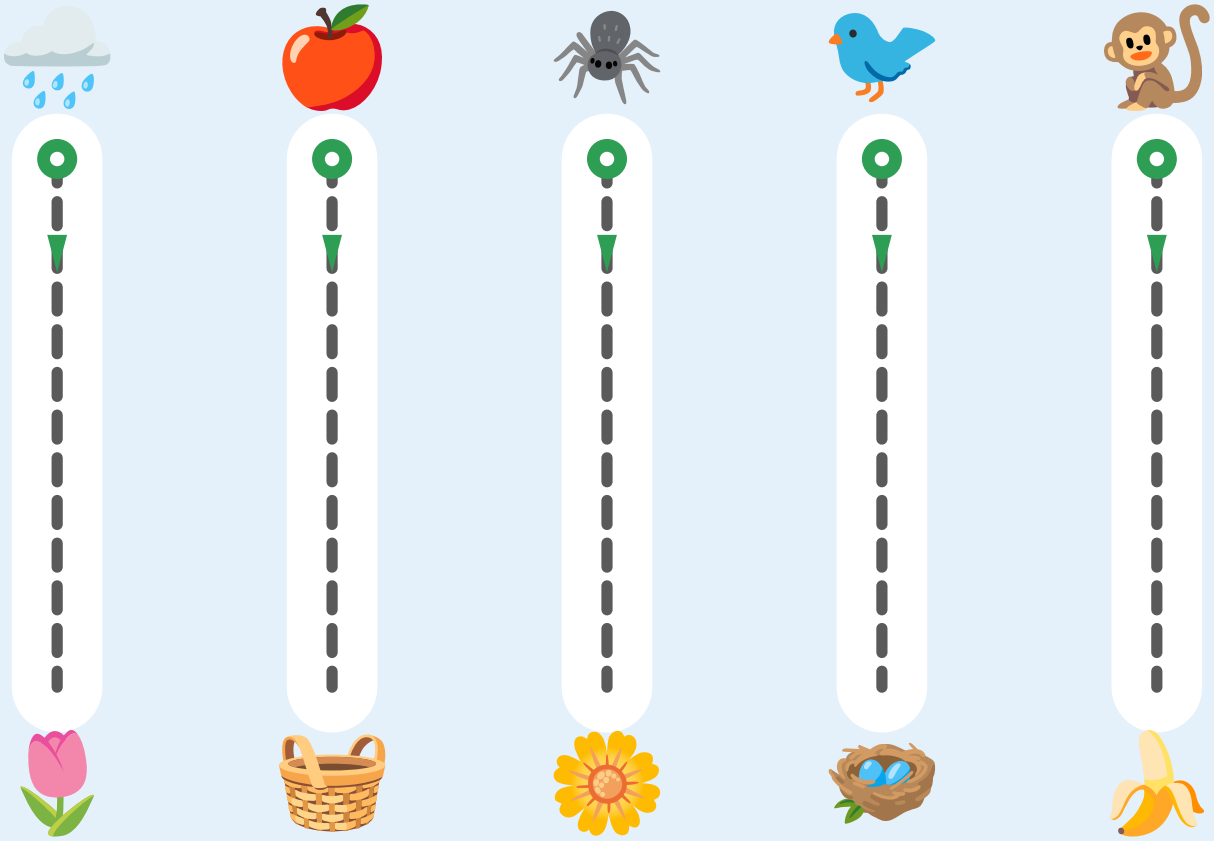
Standing Lines

Start at the green dot. Pull down, down, down to the picture.

Name: _____ Date: _____

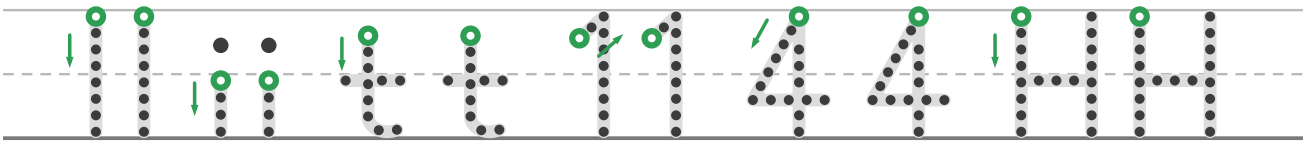
LEVEL 1 · BIG PATHS

Trace with a finger first, then with a chunky crayon. Say “top… down!” as you go.



Your turn: join each green dot to the grey dot below it. LEVEL 3

Standing lines help with: Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



Standing Lines: Smaller

Start at each green dot and pull down. Stop at the end of the line.

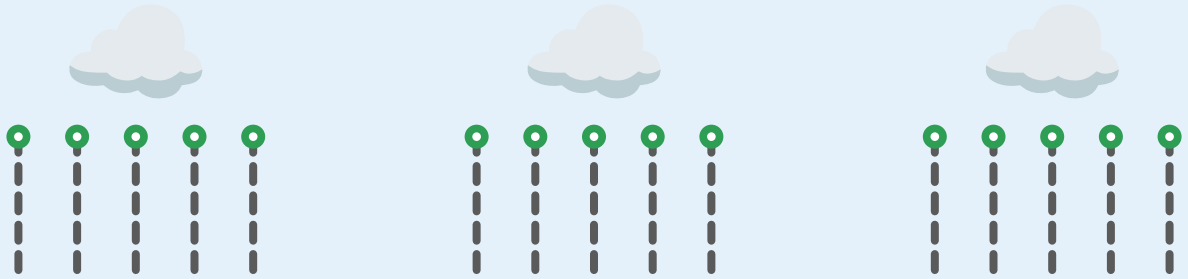
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 2 · SMALLER PATHS

Now use a crayon or a short pencil. Keep each line straight down, like rain falling on a still day.

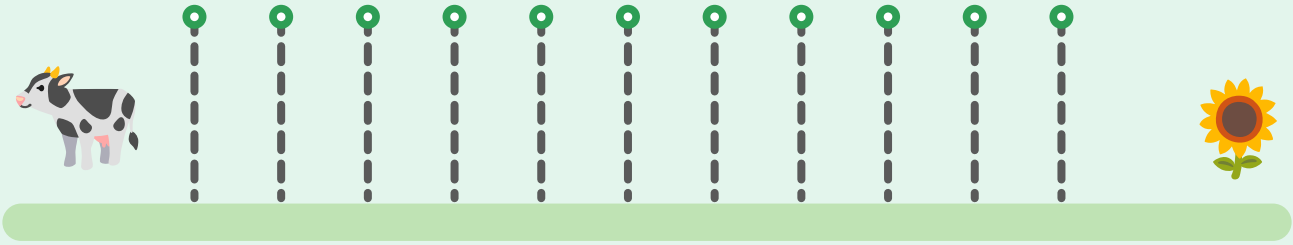
Make it rain on the garden.

LEVEL 2



Build a fence for the cow.

LEVEL 2



Put the candles on the cake.

LEVEL 2



Standing lines help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.

b b d d h h k k p p

© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

Sleeping Lines

Start at the green dot on the left. Slide across to the picture.

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 1 · BIG PATHS

We read and write from left to right, so sleeping lines always start on the left. Trace with a finger first.










Your turn: join each green dot to the grey dot across from it.

LEVEL 3

Sleeping lines help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.

T E F H L Z

Sleeping Lines: Smaller

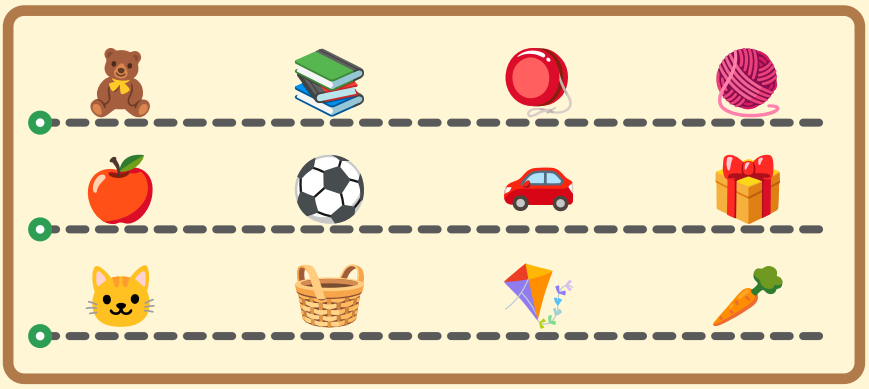
Start at each green dot and slide across to the right.

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 2 · SMALLER PATHS

Keep the helper hand flat on the paper. Slide slowly, and stop at the end of each line.

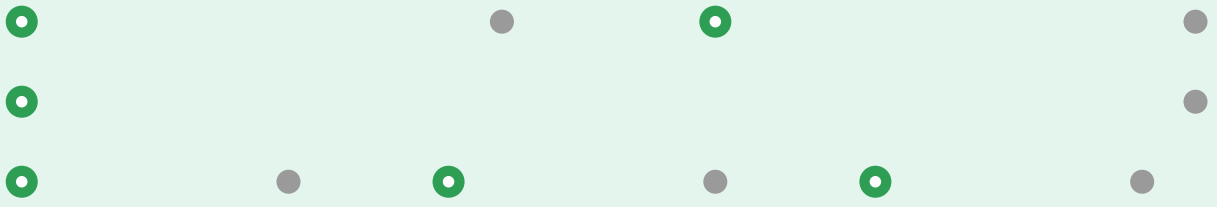
Give the toys a shelf to sit on. LEVEL 2



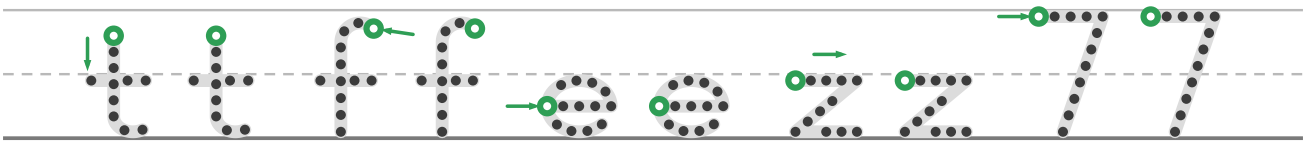
Make a rope bridge for the monkey. LEVEL 2



Your turn: join each green dot to the grey dot. Some lines are long, some are short. LEVEL 3



Sleeping lines help with: Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

Standing and Sleeping Lines

Standing lines go down. Sleeping lines go across. Put them together!

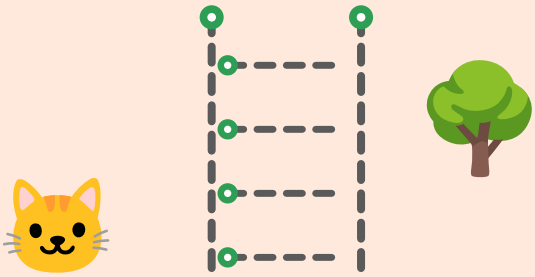
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 2 · SMALLER PATHS

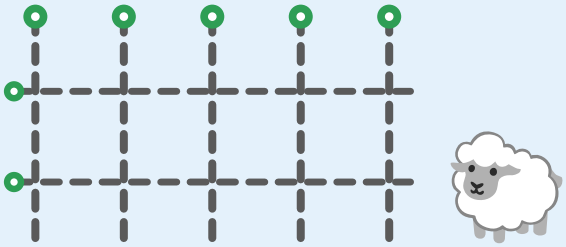
Do the standing lines first (top to bottom), then the sleeping lines (left to right). Start at every green dot.

A ladder for the cat

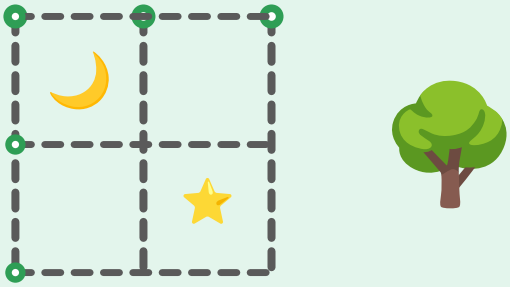
LEVEL 2



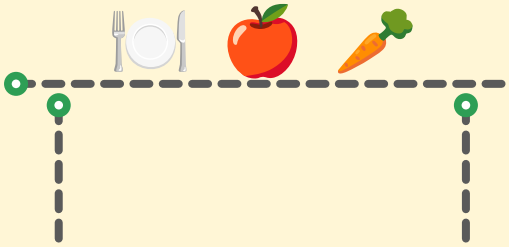
A fence for the sheep



A window to look out of

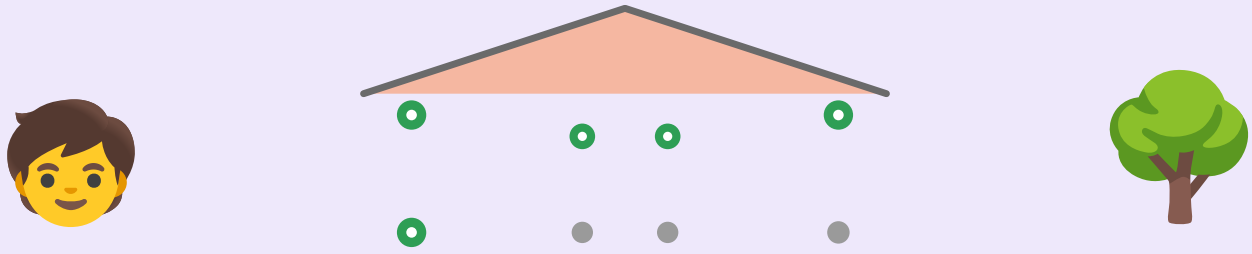


A table for lunch



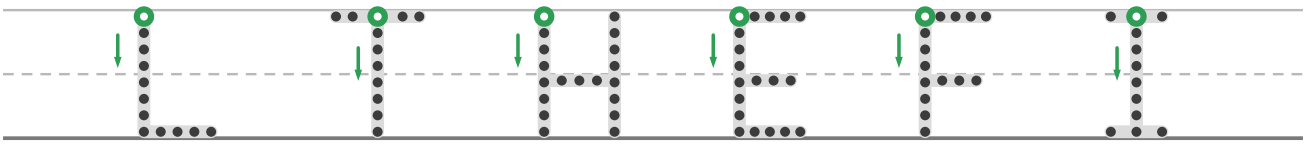
Your turn: join the dots to build the house. Walls and door down first, then the floor across.

LEVEL 3



Standing and sleeping lines help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

Big Circles

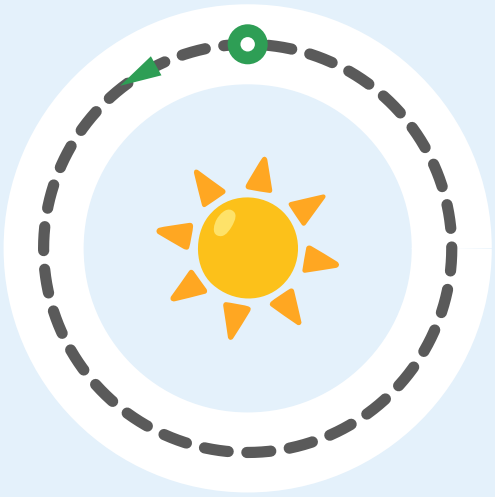
Start at the green dot at the top. Go round to the left and back to the dot.

Name: _____ Date: _____

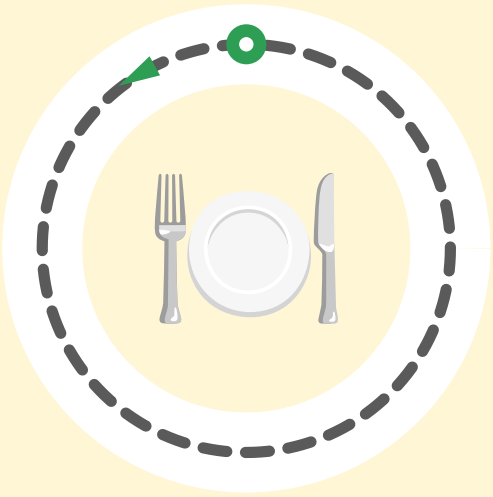
LEVEL 1 · BIG PATHS

Go round “like a c” (anticlockwise): it is the way we write c, o, a, d and g. Use a whole-arm movement for these big ones.

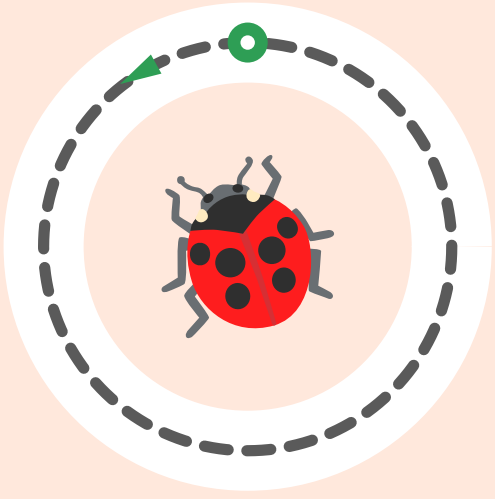
Round the sun



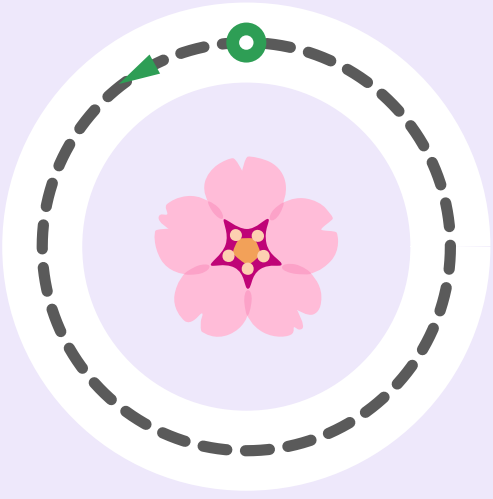
Round the plate



Round the ladybird

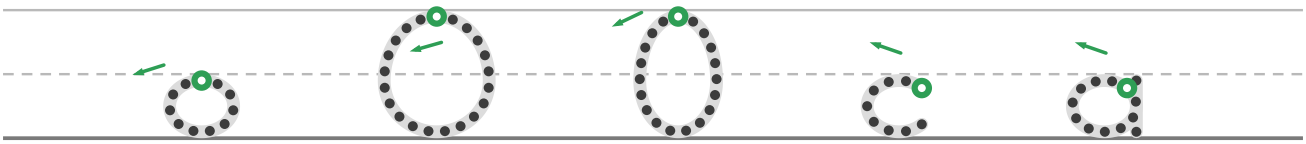


Round the flower



Circles help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

Circles: Round and Round

Start at the green dot at the top. Go round this way, like a c, and back to the dot.

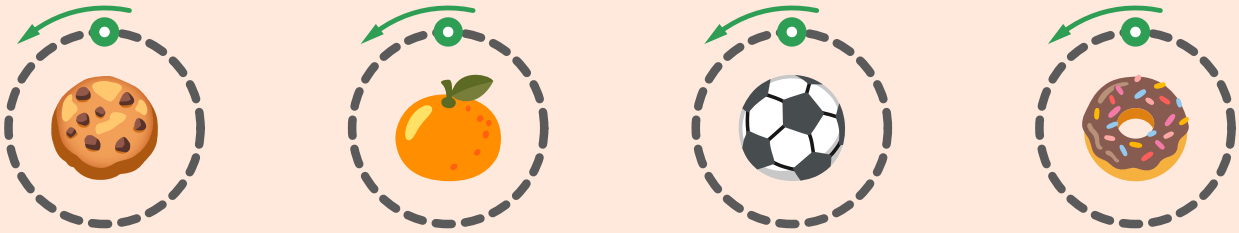
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 2 · SMALLER PATHS

Go round to the left first (anticlockwise). It is the same way we write c, o, a, d and g, so it is worth learning now.

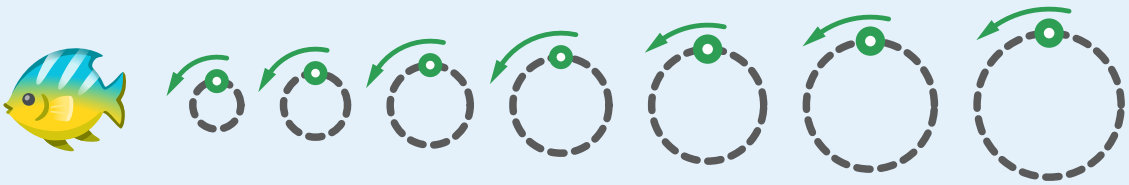
Trace a circle round each one.

LEVEL 2



Blow bubbles for the fish: small, then bigger.

LEVEL 2



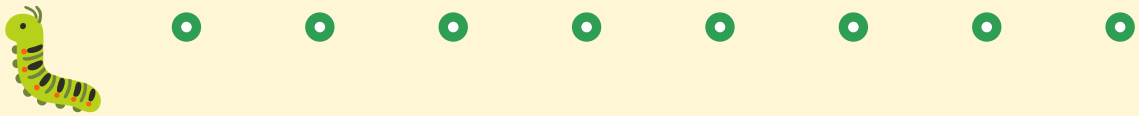
Trace 3 circles, then draw 3 of your own from the green dots.

LEVEL 3



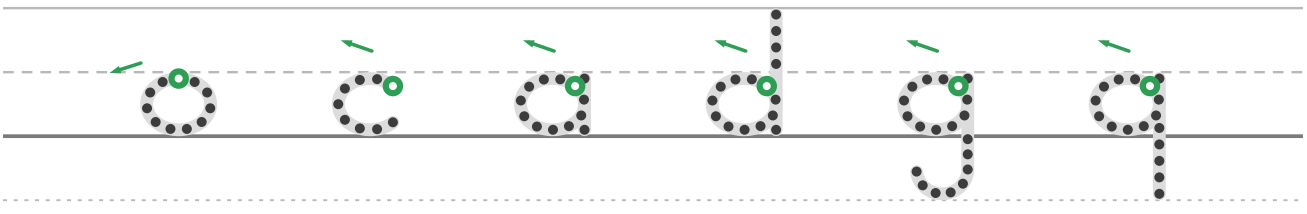
Your turn: give the caterpillar a long body. Draw a circle at each green dot.

LEVEL 3



Circles help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

Curves: Over the Hill and Into the Bowl

Start at the green dot. Go over the hill, then down into the bowl.

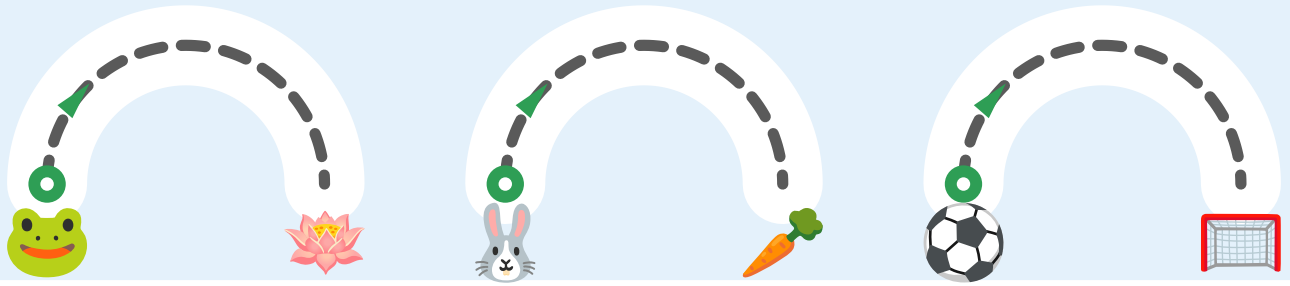
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 1 · BIG AND SMALLER PATHS

Hills go up, over and down: the shape in n, m, h and r. Bowls go down, round and up: the shape in u.

Jump over the hill.

LEVEL 1



Hills for the train.

LEVEL 2



Give everyone a smile.

LEVEL 2



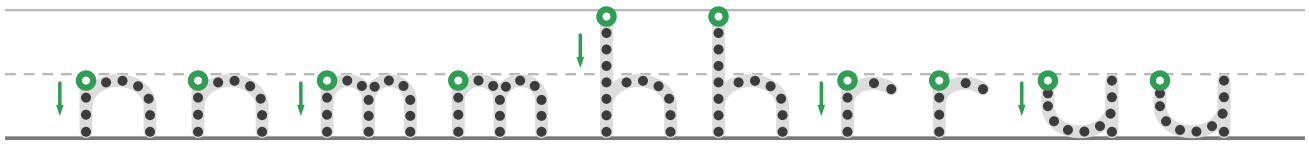
Make a bowl for each fruit.

LEVEL 2



Curves help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

C-Curves: Round to the Left

Start at the green dot at the top. Curve round to the left, like a big c.

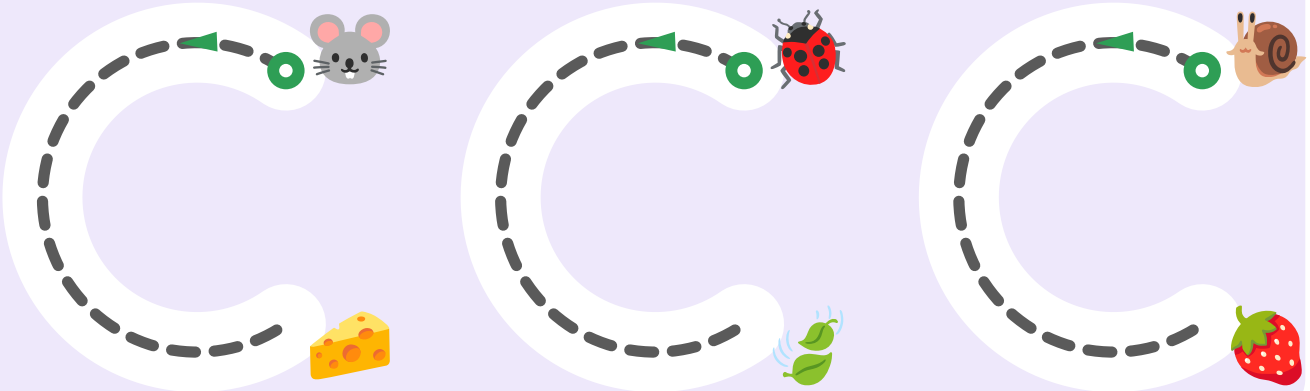
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 1 · BIG AND SMALLER PATHS

A c-curve is a circle that stops early. It is the start of c, e, s and the letters that begin like a c: a, d, g and q.

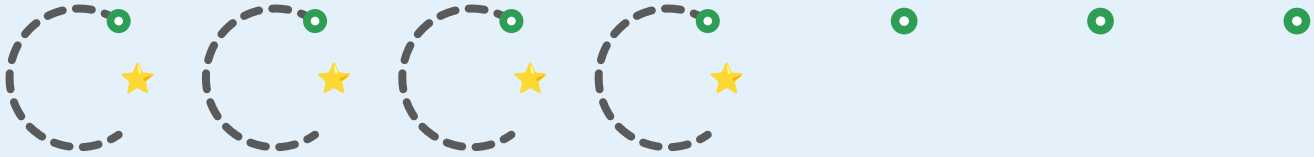
Help each one round the curve.

LEVEL 1



Draw the moons: trace 4, then make 3 from the green dots.

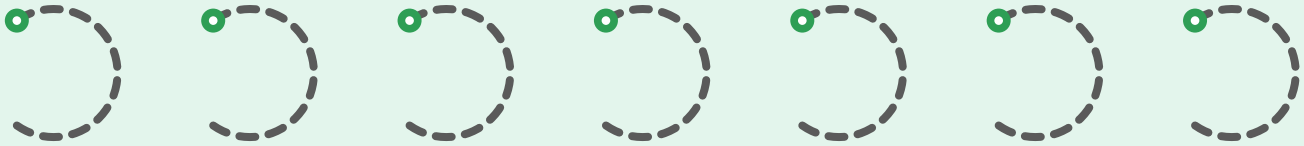
LEVEL 2



Now curve the other way, round to the right.

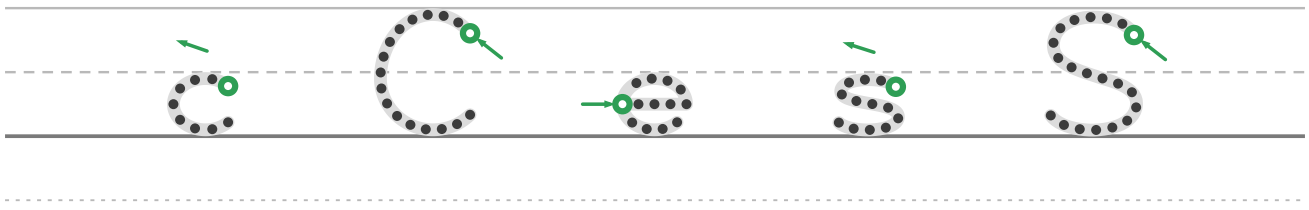
LEVEL 2

This backwards curve is in letters like D, B, P and the number 3.



C-curves help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

Crosses

A standing line, then a sleeping line across the middle: that makes a cross.

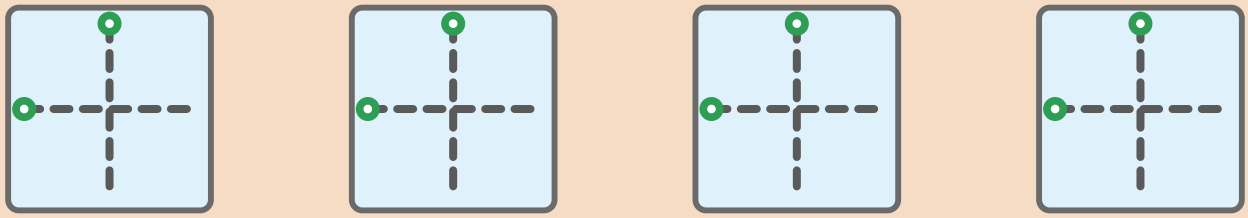
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 2 · SMALLER PATHS

Down first, then across. The second line goes through the middle of the first. Copying a cross is a typical skill at about 4.

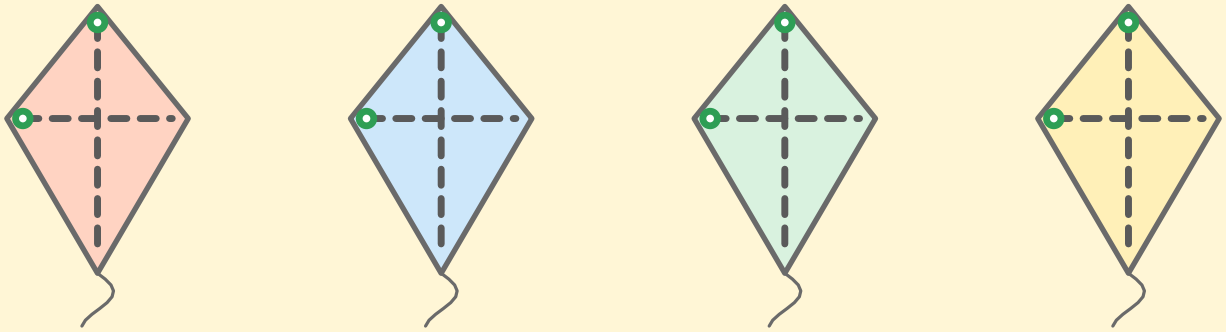
Put the frames in the windows.

LEVEL 2



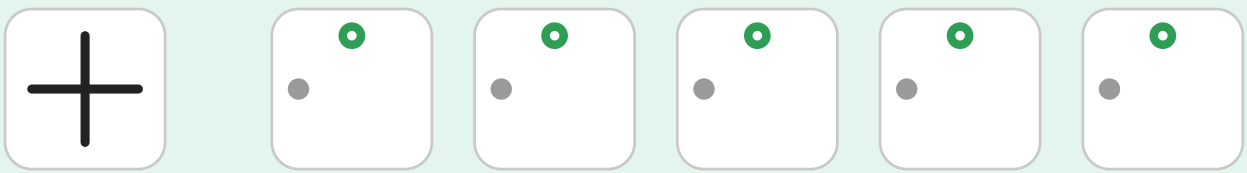
Give each kite its sticks.

LEVEL 2



Your turn: copy the cross. Start at the green dot, then the grey dot.

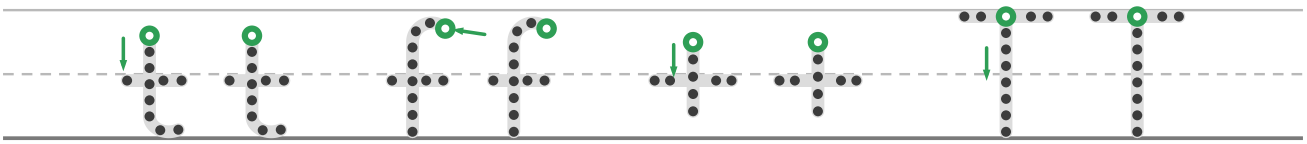
LEVEL 3



Look

Crosses help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



PRE-WRITING LINES · PARENTOVEN.COM

Slanting Lines /

Start at the green dot at the top and slide down to the left.

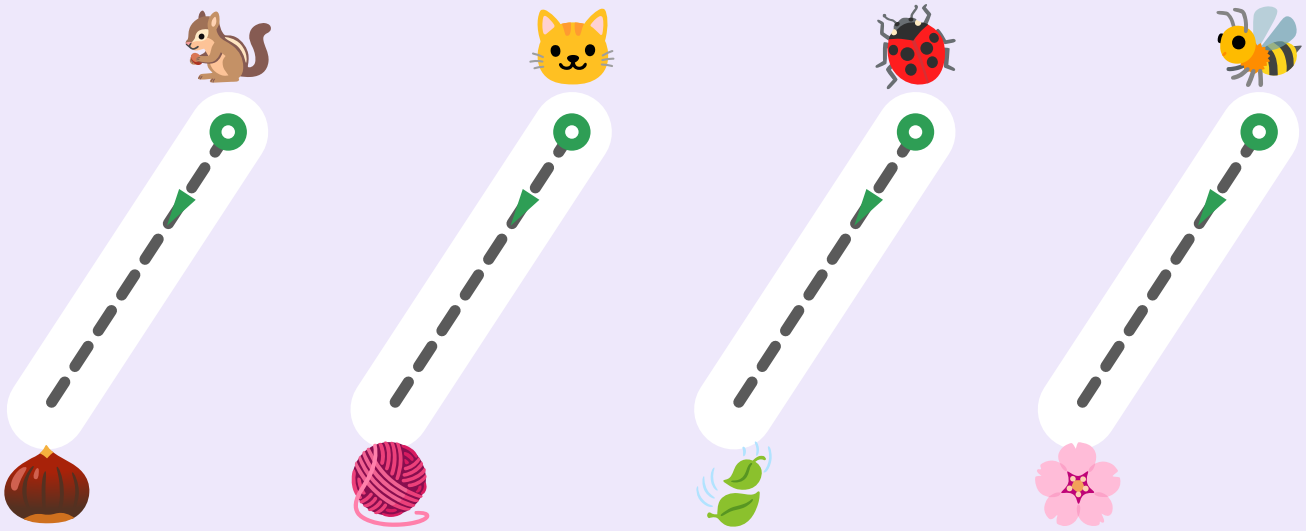
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 1 · BIG AND SMALLER PATHS | STRETCH · ABOUT 4–5

Slanting lines are harder than standing and sleeping lines, so many children copy them at about 4 to 5. Big paths first, and no rush.

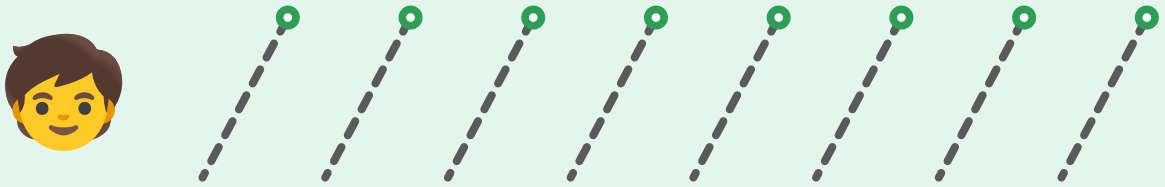
Slide down to the picture.

LEVEL 1



Slides for the playground.

LEVEL 2



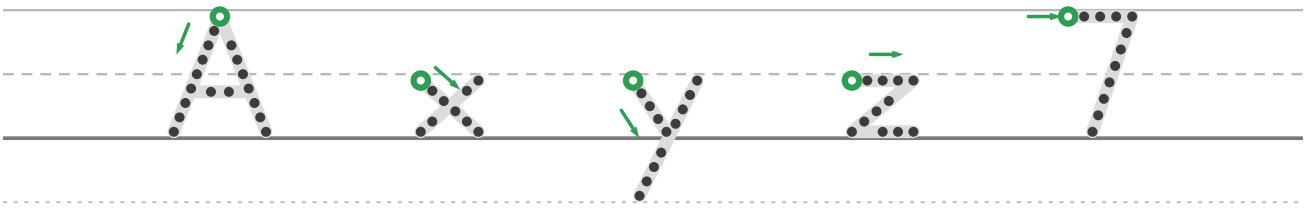
Your turn: join each green dot to the grey dot.

LEVEL 3



Slanting lines help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

PRE-WRITING LINES · PARENTOVEN.COM

Slanting Lines \

Start at the green dot at the top and slide down to the right.

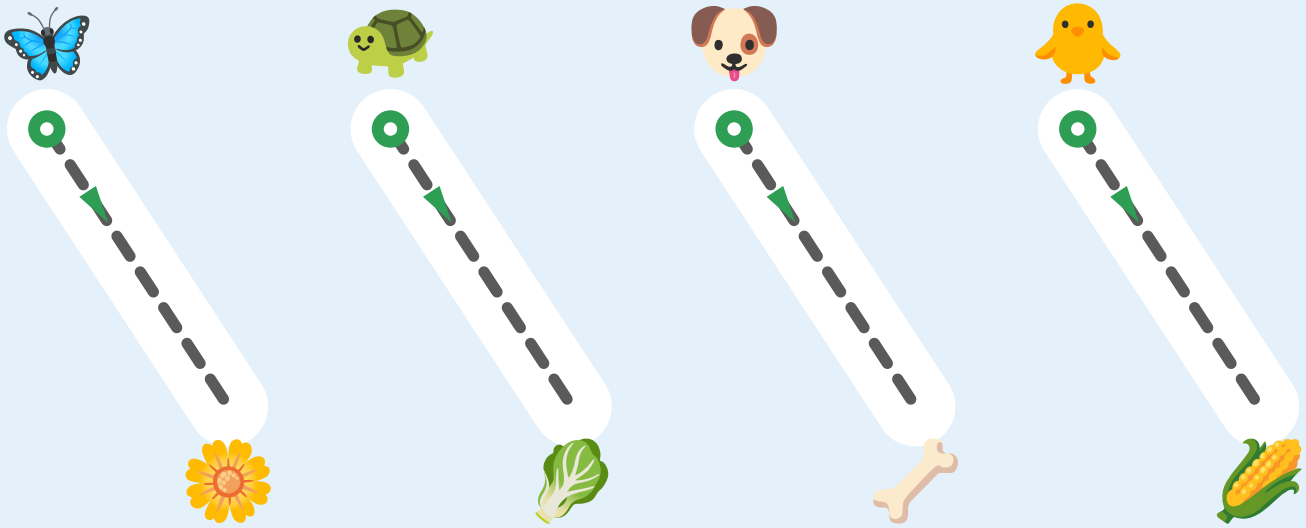
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 1 · BIG AND SMALLER PATHS | STRETCH · ABOUT 4–5

Slanting lines are harder than standing and sleeping lines, so many children copy them at about 4 to 5. Big paths first, and no rush.

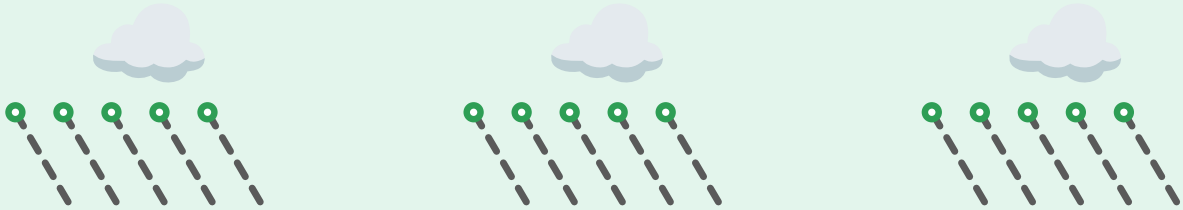
Slide down to the picture.

LEVEL 1



The wind blows the rain.

LEVEL 2



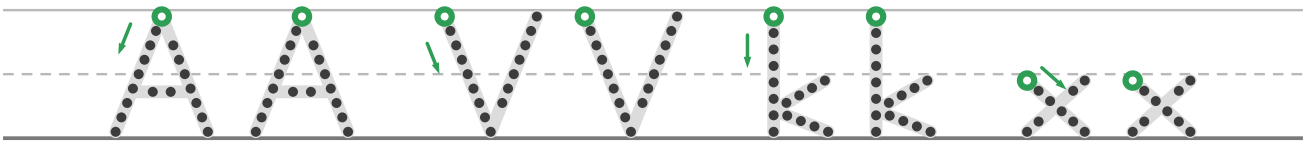
Your turn: join each green dot to the grey dot.

LEVEL 3



Slanting lines help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

Squares

Start at the green dot. Down, across, up and back across to the dot.

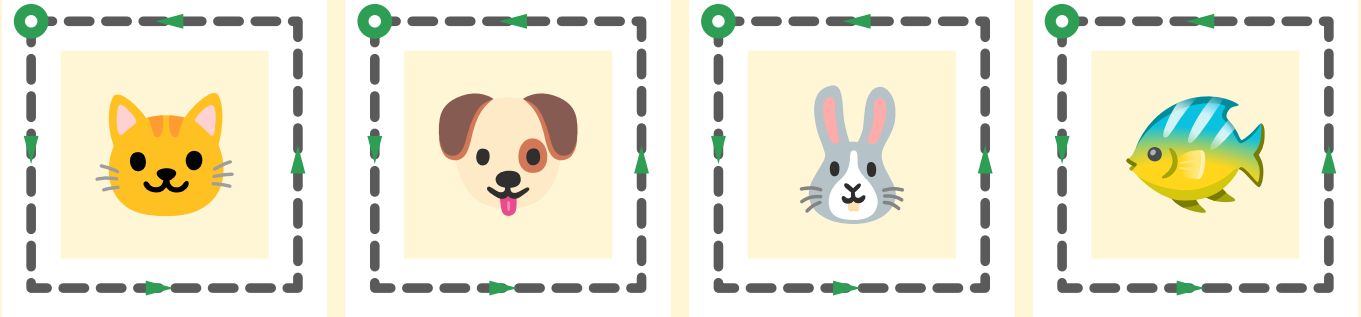
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 2 · SMALLER PATHS | STRETCH · ABOUT 4–5

🟩 Four lines and four corners. Stop for a moment at each corner, then turn. Copying a square is typical at about 4½.

Put each pet in a picture frame.

LEVEL 2



Windows for the tall building.

LEVEL 2

Your turn: join the corner dots to make squares.

LEVEL 3

Corners help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.

L L E E F F 4 4

X and Triangles

X: one slanting line, then the other. Triangle: down, across and back up.

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 2 · SMALLER PATHS | STRETCH · ABOUT 4½–5

These are the trickiest shapes, usually copied at about 5. If slanting lines are still wobbly, go back to those sheets first.

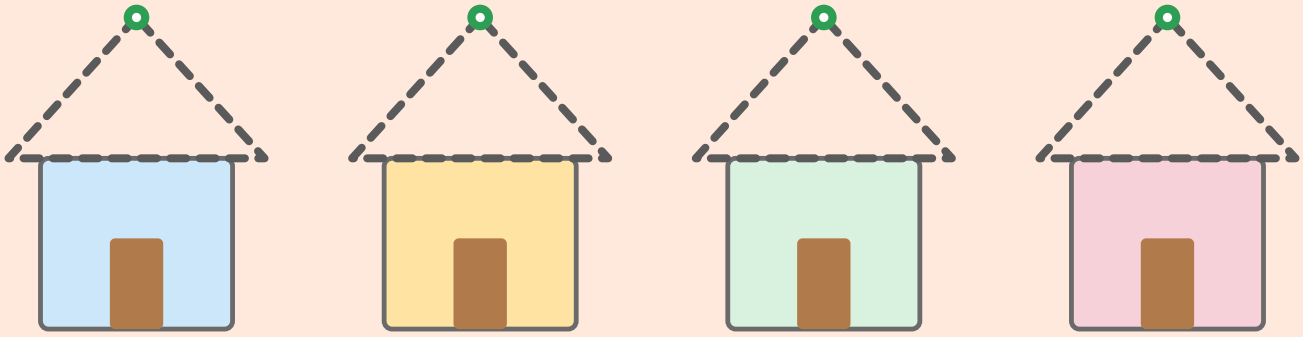
X marks the treasure.

LEVEL 2



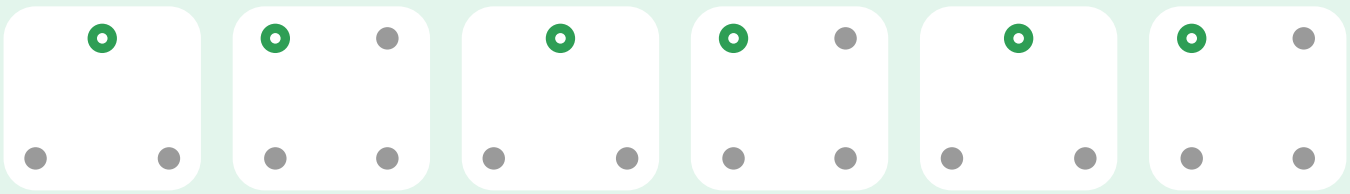
Put a roof on each house.

LEVEL 2



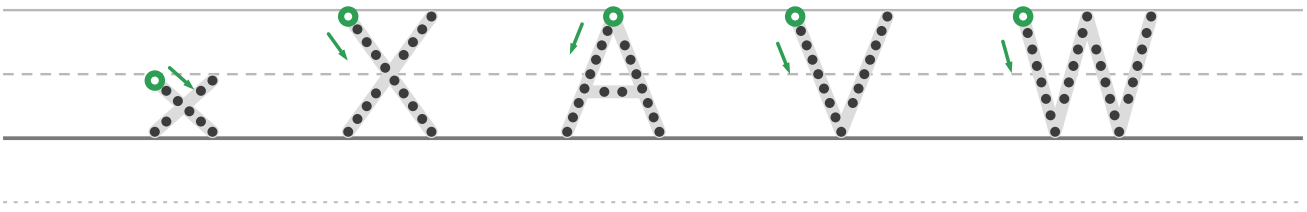
Your turn: join the dots to make triangles and Xs.

LEVEL 3



X and triangles help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

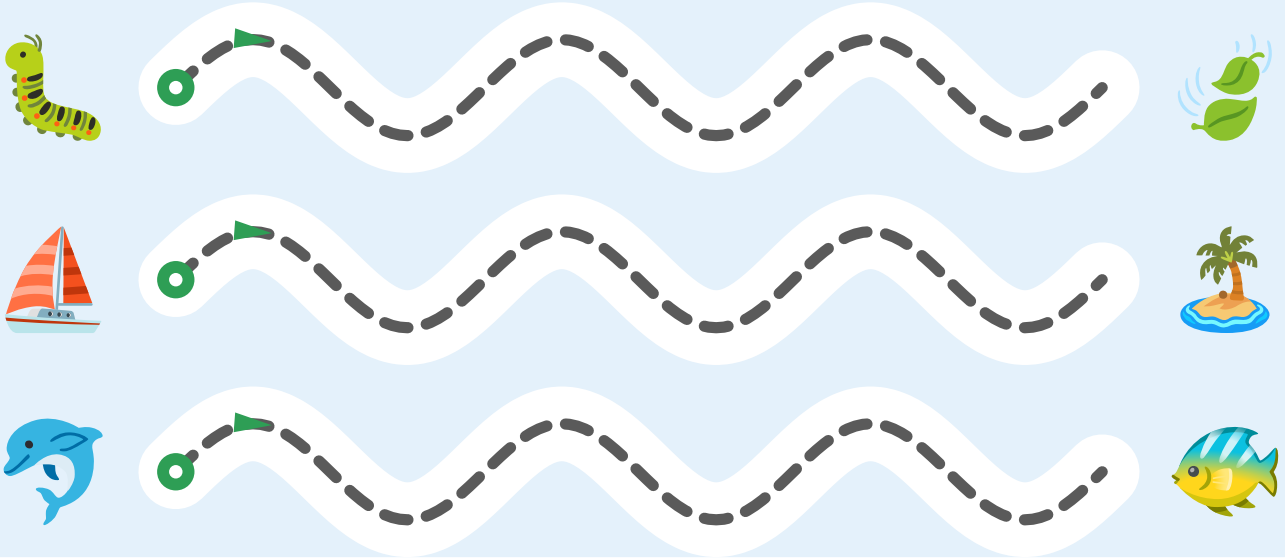
Waves

Start at the green dot. Go up and down, up and down, like the sea.

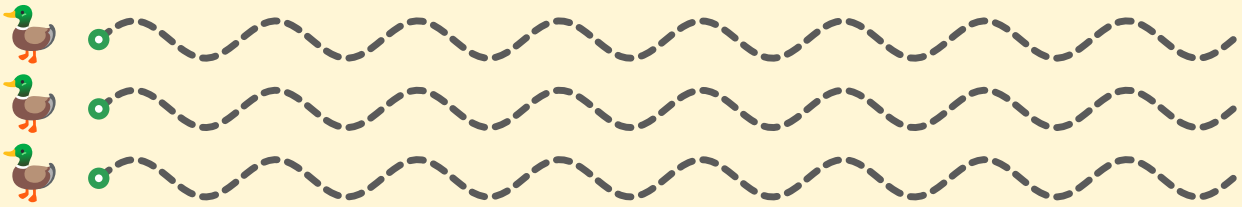
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 1 · BIG AND SMALLER PATHS

Waves are a smooth, joined-up movement. Go slowly and keep the crayon on the paper all the way to the picture.



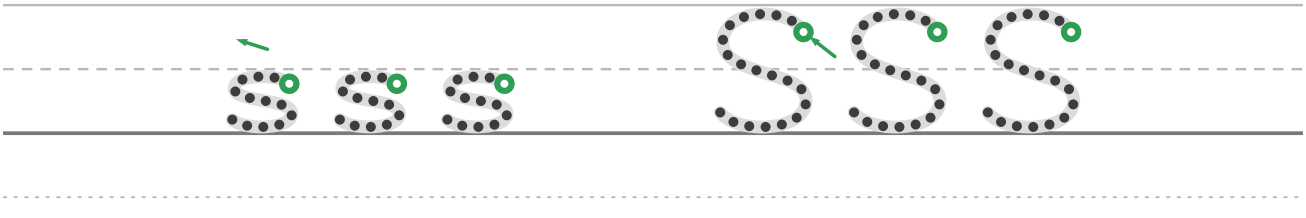
Make waves in the sea for the duck. LEVEL 2



Your turn: make your own waves between the lines. LEVEL 3

Waves help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



Zigzags

Start at the green dot. Up, down, up, down. Make sharp points!

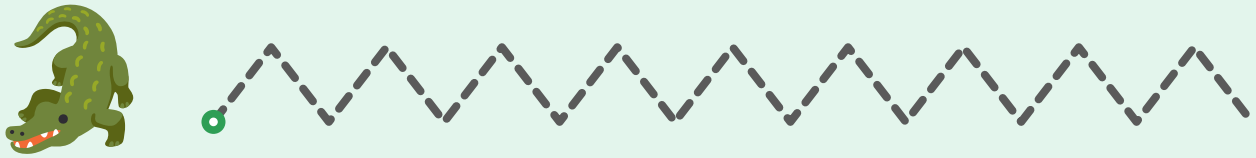
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 1 · BIG AND SMALLER PATHS

⚡ A zigzag is slanting lines joined together. Stop for a moment at each point, then change direction.



Give the crocodile its teeth. LEVEL 2

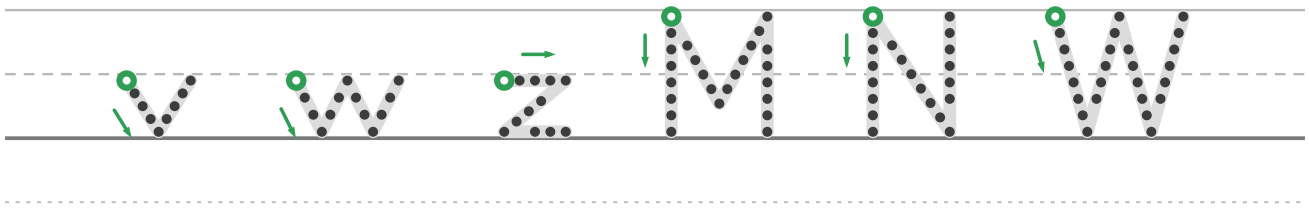


Lightning from the clouds. LEVEL 2



Zigzags help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



PRE-WRITING LINES · PARENTOVEN.COM

Loops and Spirals

Start at the green dot. Loop, loop, loop! Then go round and round into the middle.

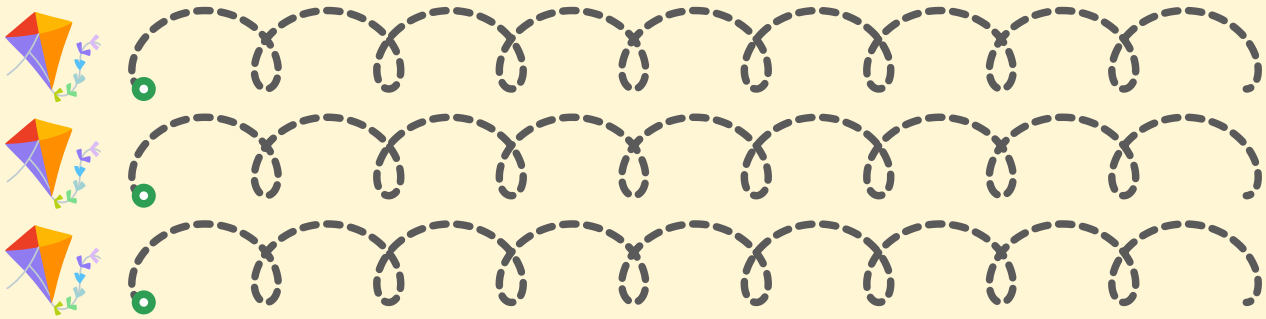
Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 2 · SMALLER PATHS | STRETCH · ABOUT 4–5

Loops get small hands ready for joined (cursive) writing later. This is a stretch sheet: wobbly loops are normal at this age.

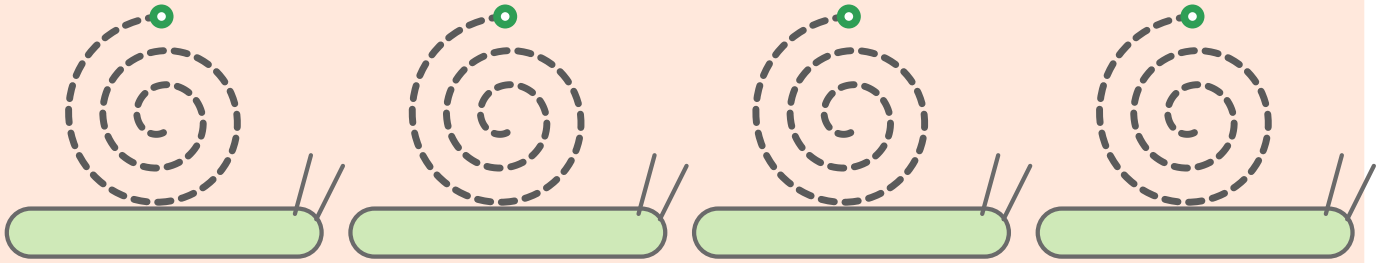
Give each kite a loopy tail.

LEVEL 2



Give each snail a shell. Start at the outside and curl round into the middle.

LEVEL 2

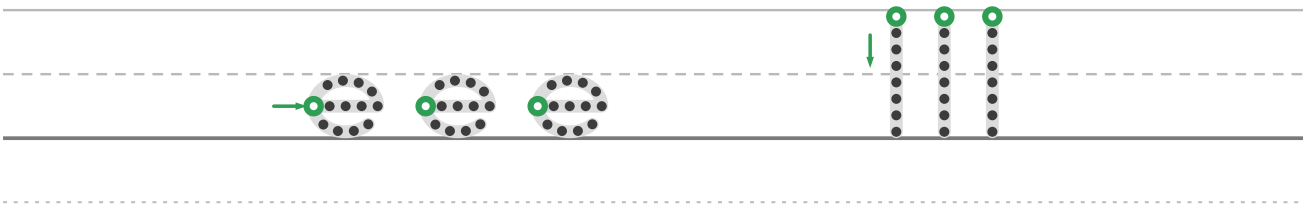


Your turn: make your own loops from the green dot.

LEVEL 3

Loops help with:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

PRE-WRITING LINES · PARENTOVEN.COM

Copy the Shapes

Look at each shape. Then draw it on your own in the empty box.

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 3 · ON MY OWN

A friendly “I can” check, not a test: any careful try counts. Colour a star for each one. Shapes 5–9 are usually copied from about 4 to 5.

1 Standing



Look

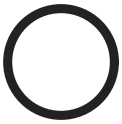
Draw it here

2 Sleeping

Look

Draw it here

3 Circle



Look

Draw it here

4 Cross



Look

Draw it here

5 Slant /



Look

Draw it here

6 Square



Look

Draw it here

7 Slant \



Look

Draw it here

8 X



Look

Draw it here

9 Triangle

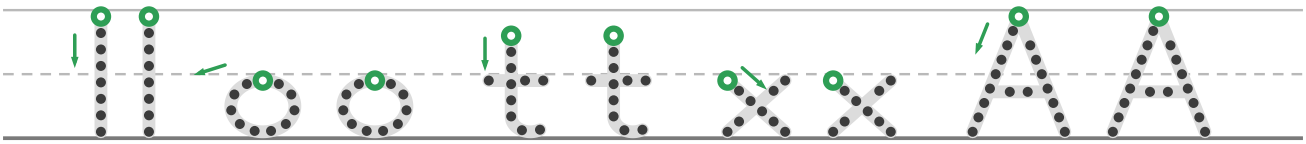


Look

Draw it here

Every letter is made of these lines:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

Lines on Four Lines

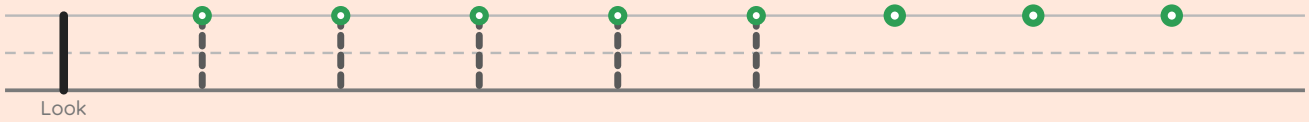
Practise each line in the right place, like in a school four-line notebook.

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEVEL 3 · ON MY OWN

Many Indian school notebooks use four-line (“kitta”) ruling. US and UK handwriting paper works the same way: top line, dashed middle line, baseline.

1 Tall standing lines: top line to baseline (l, b, d, h)



2 Short standing lines: middle line to baseline (i, n, m, r)



3 Sleeping lines on the middle line and the baseline (e, z)



4 Slanting lines from the middle line (v, w, x)



5 Circles in the middle space (o, a)

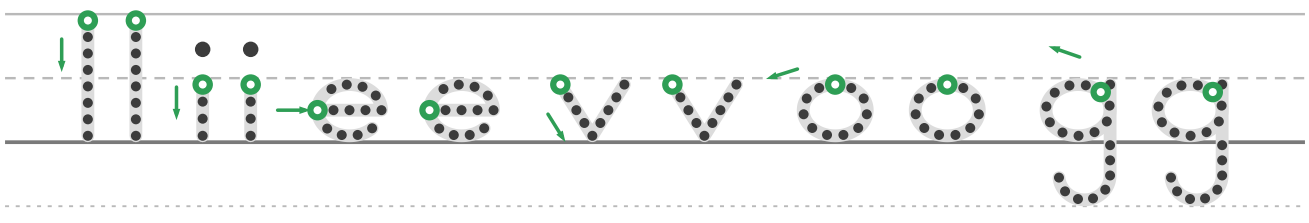


6 Tails that go below the baseline (g, j, y)



Now these lines become letters:

Start at the green dot and follow the arrow.



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

From Lines to Letters

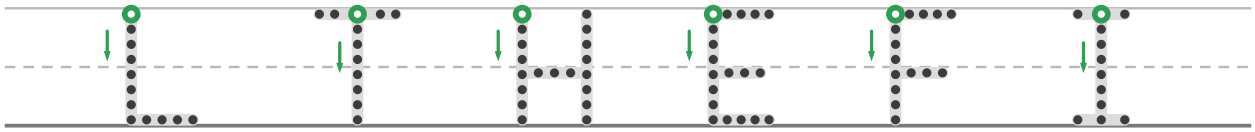
You can draw lines, so you can make letters! Trace each one from the green dot.

Name: _____ Date: _____

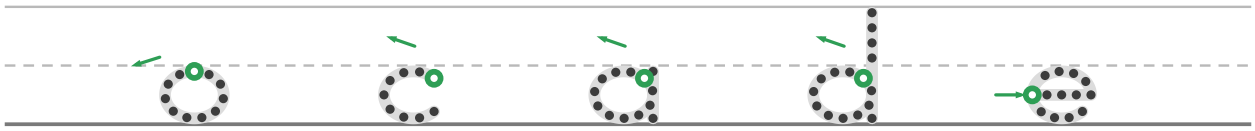
LEVEL 3 · ON MY OWN

Every letter is built from the lines in this pack. Say the line names as you go: “standing line down, sleeping line across.”

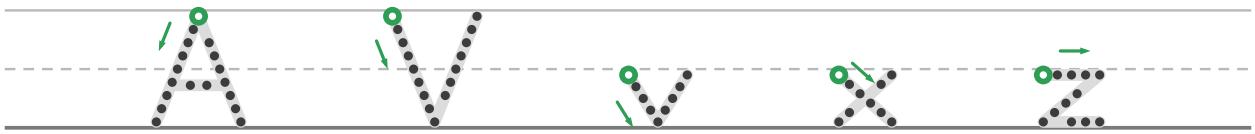
Standing and sleeping lines make:



Circles and c-curves make:



Slanting lines make:



© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use

My Pre-Writing Progress Chart

Colour a star each time you finish a sheet. Can you fill them all?

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Standing lines ☆	2 Standing: smaller ☆	3 Sleeping lines ☆	4 Sleeping: smaller ☆	5 Standing + sleeping ☆
6 Big circles ☆	7 Circles ☆	8 Curves ☆	9 C-curves ☆	10 Crosses ☆
11 Slanting / ☆	12 Slanting \ ☆	13 Squares ☆	14 X and triangles ☆	15 Waves ☆
16 Zigzags ☆	17 Loops and spirals ☆	18 Copy the shapes ☆	19 Four lines ☆	20 Aa Lines to letters ☆

LINE STAR

certificate

This is to say that

_____

can draw standing lines, sleeping lines, circles and crosses, and is getting ready to write letters!

Signed: _____ Date: _____

© parentoven.com

Free for home and classroom use