

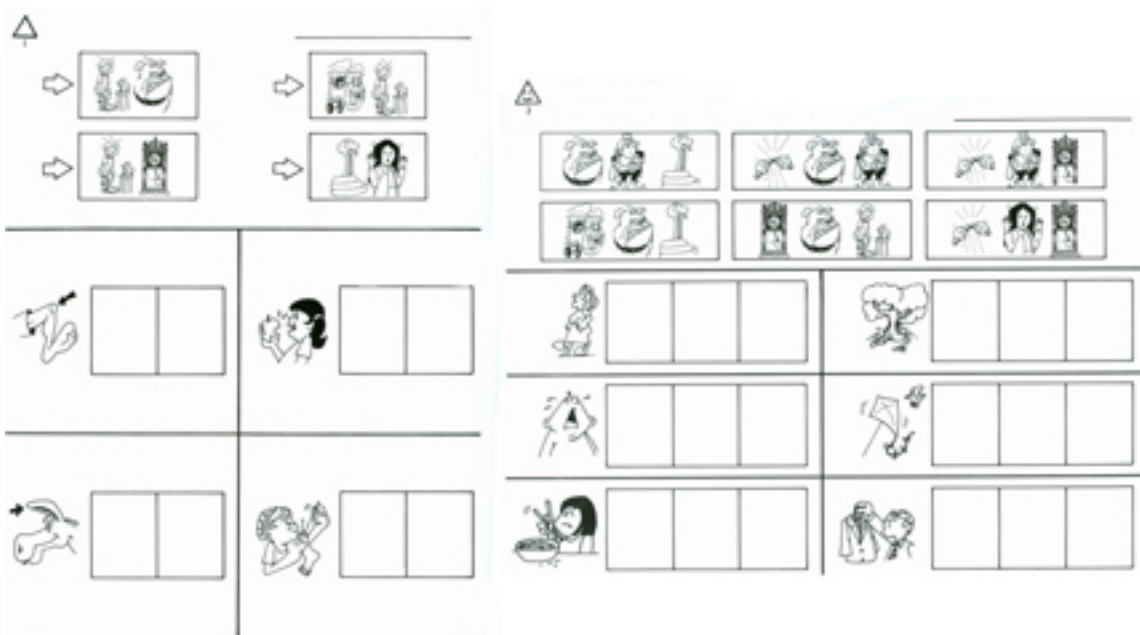
## Stamping Station - Stamp Trays



As was said earlier, as soon as 8 sounds are known, triangle activities at the five learning stations begin. At the Stamping Station, the stamp trays are introduced.

The layout of the trays matches the order of the introduction of the sounds. The 24 stamps in the first tray are the 8 sounds of the triangle level, followed by the 8 sounds of the circle level, followed by the 8 sounds of the square level. The 21 stamps in the second tray are the 8 sounds of the rectangle level, followed by the 8 and then 4 sounds of the star level, with the very last stamp being the silent letter stamp. Each sound is in the same order as it was introduced in *Dekodiphukan*.

As sounds are introduced, students at the Stamping Station use the stamping worksheets to practice stamping out words as each new level is introduced.



## Stamping Station - Stamping Words

One factor in ensuring every child learns to read is the availability of help from one's classmates at all five learning stations. Another factor that is just as important is the Stamping Station itself. Once all 44 sounds are known, the real purpose of the Stamping Station begins.


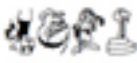
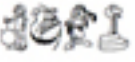
Any student who knows all, or at least most of, the 44 sounds and has used the stamping worksheets to read and stamp out many two and three-sound words, begins the process of stamping out any word or words he or she wishes to. The only limit to what may be stamped out is that what any student stamps must be okay for the teacher to show his or her parents.



The stamping out of words takes two main forms. The first form is the teacher asking each child what word or words he or she would like the teacher to stamp out that day. The teacher then stamps the word(s) on a sheet of paper, and the child draws a picture on that same sheet to accompany the word(s).

Each child's stamped-out words and pictures are gathered together every ten pictures or so and turned into that child's own book of words and drawings. The books in turn are added to the Books Station for other children to read.

If anyone at the Books Station has trouble reading any of the stamped-out words in another child's book, the child with the question asks the book's author for help with the word. Regardless of any child's reading level in the overall Reading Program, without exception, every child can read every word in his or her own book.

The second form, taking place in parallel with the first, is children deciding on their own any word or words they wish to write. Once they decide the word(s), they stamp out each word's sounds to the best of their ability. Each child then shows his or her stamping to the teacher. The teacher and the child review what has been stamped, adding or subtracting sounds as needed.

dress =   
 = jress  
dress = 

In the example above, the student wished to stamp out the sounds for the word "dress". However, she stamped out "jress" because when she says the word, she says "jress" unaware that the word starts with a "d" sound and not a "j" sound. The teacher said to her, "Some people may say dress that way, but dress starts with a  sound, not a  sound."

The Stamping Station has as its purpose giving every child the opportunity to write whatever he or she may wish, regardless of the length of the words involved. The act of listening to the sounds in words of the child's own choosing and stamping out what the child hears is integral to this writing process.

Children listening to the sounds in words and stamping out the sounds they believe they hear gives the teacher an opportunity to correct errors in pronunciation that often pass undetected when simply listening to what the child says. The teacher in the example above did not know the child was saying "jress" and not "dress" until the child stamped out the sounds she thought she heard in the word.

### **White and Blue Tiny Writing Cards – Phrase Level**

For any student who knows all 44 sounds and can read two and three-sound words, the Stamping Station is now a place where each student is expected to spend his or her time each day stamping out a word or words and illustrating the word(s). Students can make up their own words. Students can also use the Tiny Writing cards for ideas if they choose.

The tiny writing cards are introduced when students begin the Picture Packet and Worksheets Stations phrase levels. There are sixty-four white tiny writing cards and sixty-four blue tiny writing cards. The white cards contain one, two, or three-sound words in one- or two-word phrases. The blue cards contain, in addition, words that may be four sounds long or phrases that may have three words in them.

Below are the first eight cards at the white and blue levels:



The white cards are introduced first. The blue cards are introduced whenever the teacher considers that any students are ready for them. The tiny writing cards are a stamping activity. A student selects any one

of the sixty-four cards and stamps the words on that card onto a piece of drawing paper. The student then demonstrates that he or she can read the stamped words by drawing an illustration for them.

The two main forms of the stamping-out of words mentioned earlier required students to think of a word or words to be stamped out, either by the teacher or by the students themselves. The teacher's visits to the Stamping Station only last as long as it takes to stamp out a word or two for each child. Until the tiny writing cards are introduced, the students have been on their own in thinking of each day's new word or two to stamp out and illustrate.

Students confident enough to think of multiple words they wish to stamp out and illustrate need not use the tiny writing cards, or perhaps only use them when they have run out of ideas of their own. The purpose of the tiny writing cards is to help all students at this level become comfortable stamping out more than one word on a page. Whether to use the tiny writing cards as a guide to words to stamp out and illustrate, or use one's own imagination for words to stamp and illustrate, is a daily decision each student makes.

### **Free Stamping of Words**

Students may be very good at hearing all of the sounds in the words they are free stamping. They may also be terrible. Good or bad isn't important. What is important is that the students are free to stamp or 'write' any words they want, how ever well or poorly they may perform stamping at the start.

Writing means recording in symbols something for others to read. Free stamping of words allows students to begin writing what they would like someone else to read. Writing what you want to write and not what someone else tells you to write is called "creative writing". The free stamping of words represents students' first efforts at creative writing.

These first efforts may not be readable by anyone but the student who actually does the writing. The words stamped out may be too long for others to read because the words may go substantially beyond the three-sound words the students are learning to read. The words may also be missing sounds, or have included extra sounds, or have sounds in the wrong order. None of this is important.

The logical progression of learning, represented by the two-sound, three-sound, and phrases sequence of activities, still occupies the majority of each student's reading time. But the logical progression cannot capture for the child the pleasure that comes from being able to put his or her own words on paper, or the feeling of power that writing affords when

what one has written can actually be read by someone else. Even if that someone else may initially only be the teacher, and even if that someone can only read what has been written with a few subtle hints drawn from the illustration that accompanies the stamped-out word(s).

The logical progression of activities ensures that each child will have the technical ability to read. But what fun is learning to read or learning to write if all you ever get to read is what someone else tells you to read and all you ever get to write is what someone else tells you to write? Reading and writing are not ends in themselves. They are tools that enable us to reach our own ends. Reading allows us to discover things others have written to share with us. Writing allows us to share our own discoveries, or adventures, or fantasies, or feelings with others.

The carefully structured, logical sequence of the activities of the program continues. The free stamping of words has a purpose all its own. Free stamping is the children's first taste of why we read and why we write.

### **Stamping Station - Writing Words with Letters**

The transition level begins for students who can read phrases easily. At the Picture Packet Station, letter spellings now appear below each word's sound cards. At the Worksheets Station, the Decoding Charts guide students in adding letter spellings beneath each worksheet's word-sounds. At the Books Station, transition books are added to the books already there. At the Handwriting Station, learning of one hundred sixty-one sight words begins. At the Stamping Station, stamping out words is replaced by writing words instead.

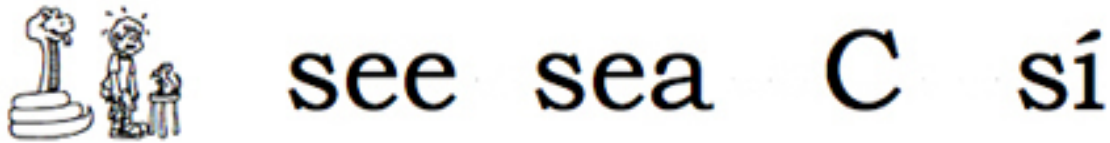
The activities at the Picture Packets, Worksheets and Books Stations have students reading words and phrases. The Stamping Station combines reading with writing. Writing with stamps means knowing what you want to say, listening for the sounds in each word, and then stamping it out. The range of what students may write using stamps is not limited by penmanship or the words a child may have learned to spell. What may be written is limited only by what the child wants to write. With the stamps, writing and reading go hand in hand.

### **Tiny Writing Cards - Now Required**

At the Stamping Station, all transition-level students start by using the white and blue tiny writing cards as their first experience in letter writing. The cards are used in nearly the same way as they were at the stamping level. Now, however, instead of stamping the phrase onto drawing paper and then illustrating it, the students write the phrase on their drawing paper using traditional letters before illustrating it.

All sixty-four white and sixty-four blue tiny writing cards contain the codings necessary to indicate the correct Decoding Chart spelling for each word's sounds. When students were asked to stamp out their own words and illustrate them, using the tiny writing cards was a choice students could make for themselves. That was because, regardless of whether the cards were used or not, the words stamped out were composed of the sounds each student heard in the words stamped.

Remember this from the Concepts Section?



The two sounds shown are the two sounds for the four different letter spellings of the word. The tiny writing cards are used at the start to give students practice in writing letter words on paper without having to decide which spellings the different sounds in each word might use.

How children learn which spellings to use when writing the words they have stamped out with letters will be explained in the [Creative Writing](#) section that follows.