

# LETTER BALLS

The game includes fifteen two-piece puzzle balls which represent the English vowels and are differentiated by three different types of text (capital, lower-case and negative (white on colour) letters). On the front of each ball is the vowel, while on the back is an illustration with the corresponding noun in English. The game allows the child to develop their first linguistic skills, associating the vowels with the letters and completing their first categorisation exercises, recognising the same vowel presented in three different ways.

## How to play

Before starting the game, it is essential to prepare the environment to encourage the child's attention. The play area must be a calm and controlled space, with the playing surface free from any items not linked to the activity. The goal of the game is to put together the fifteen vowel puzzles.



## Recognising the vowels

It is preferable to start the game by presenting one vowel at a time, for example by starting with the vowel "A". The adult prepares the three puzzles incorporating this vowel and presents them to the child saying: "This is the letter A and it's a vowel – let's see which words start with an A". In the meantime, we can bring the pieces of the vowel puzzle in question together, leaving the child to put them together or helping them in the initial phases. Once the puzzle has been put together, ask the child to look at the images on the back, telling them: "Let's see which words start with an A". Once they have looked at the image, the adult must pronounce the word and specify the vowel: "This is an apple", "Apple begins with an A!". Proceed in order with the following vowels, from E to U.

In an advanced phase of the game, the child can put together the fifteen puzzles independently and have fun categorising them by vowel, or else on the basis of the subjects, for example putting all the animals together.

## Further Information and Tips

Numerous studies recognise "phonological awareness" as a key prerequisite for learning to read and write. Nevertheless, other skills also provide a significant contribution to language learning, in particular "Rapid Automated Naming" and knowledge of the letters of the alphabet. These are skills which are preparatory to the automatic connection between the visual and phonological codes.

