

"Z" is for Zebra!

Don't let alphabet practice turn into catching zzz's. Paint up a zany Z zebra and inject a little excitement into learning letters. Little kids love the hands-on fun of painting, and it's great exercise for small hand muscles, helping to strengthen them for writing. Paint up a stripey zebra and let the alphabet fun begin.

What You Need:

- Books containing photographs or illustrations of zebras
- White construction paper
- Black tempera paint
- Thin paint brush
- Scissors
- Clear drying, non-toxic glue or glue stick



What to Do:

1. Begin by researching zebras. Look at the photos or illustrations of zebras in the books with your child and talk about what he sees. Encourage him to describe the zebra's shape, size, and appearance to you.
2. Place the construction paper in front of him. Help him cut out large shapes to form a zebra. Ask him to choose shapes for the head, neck, body, legs, and tail. Cut out ears and facial feature shapes as well.
3. Glue the shapes onto a new sheet of construction paper. Encourage him to assemble the shapes into the form of a zebra first before adding any glue. Putting the zebra together is kind of like a puzzle!
4. Once the zebra's body is glued down, paint on the stripes. Squeeze out a little black tempera paint and have him paint stripes on the zebra's body.
5. While he paints, talk about the letter Z. What sound does Z make? Look at the zebras in the books again. Does he see how the stripes zigzag across the zebra's body similar to the letter Z?
6. After he paints all the stripes, help him paint a large letter Z at the top of the page.
7. Set the painting aside to dry.

Hang his zany zebra on the wall to keep him company as he learns the other letters of the alphabet.

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