

Word and letter: open practice pack

25 untimed puzzles on a difficulty 1–5 ladder.

Detail	Value
Pack	puzzles-word-and-letter
Source	puzzles
Pack version	v1
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Learner worksheet

Work the ladder in order. The early puzzles apply one transformation to a short word; the last few compose two rules or run a mirrored alphabet, and reward writing the steps down. Nothing here is timed and nothing is scored, so read the explanation after every attempt, including the ones you get right: the method it names is the part that carries over to the next puzzle. Paper and pencil help on the letter series, though none of these puzzles needs them.

Choose one answer for each item. Keep the authored hints, answer key, and worked explanations separate until you are ready to check your work.

Difficulty 1

Start here and establish the method before moving up the ladder.

1. puz-word-and-letter-01: Furniture in five letters

Difficulty: Difficulty 1

The letters A, B, E, L and T can be rearranged to spell a common five-letter word. That word names a piece of furniture. Which word is it?

- A. BLEAT
- B. TABLE
- C. CHAIR
- D. BLAME

Your answer: _____

2. puz-word-and-letter-02: One step at a time

Difficulty: Difficulty 1

Every letter in this series stands one step further along the alphabet than the letter before it. Which letter belongs in the gap?

Letter series, five terms. J, K, ?, M, N

- A. L
- B. I
- C. M
- D. O

Your answer: _____

3. puz-word-and-letter-03: Three of a kind

Difficulty: Difficulty 1

Three of these words belong to the same everyday category. Which word does not belong with the other three?

- A. PIGEON
- B. SPARROW
- C. EAGLE
- D. SALMON

Your answer: _____

4. puz-word-and-letter-04: Same meaning, second pair

Difficulty: Difficulty 1

BEGIN is to START as FINISH is to which word?

- A. BEGIN
- B. CONTINUE
- C. END
- D. LINE

Your answer: _____

5. puz-word-and-letter-05: Hidden across the gap

Difficulty: Difficulty 1

A six-letter everyday word is hidden in this sentence: Kindly ask for estimates today. Its letters run in order, straight across the space between two adjacent words. Which word is hidden?

- A. FOREST
- B. ESTATE
- C. KINDLE
- D. MASTER

Your answer: _____

Difficulty 2

Continue in order; use the worked explanations from earlier rungs when needed.

6. puz-word-and-letter-06: Two steps, alternating

Difficulty: Difficulty 2

The gaps between these letters are not all the same size. Which letter belongs in the gap?

Letter series, six terms. B, D, E, G, ?, J

- A. F
- B. H
- C. I
- D. K

Your answer: _____

7. puz-word-and-letter-07: Seven letters, one room

Difficulty: Difficulty 2

The letters C, E, H, I, K, N and T can be rearranged to spell a common seven-letter word naming the room in which meals are cooked. Which word is it?

- A. THICKEN
- B. HALLWAY
- C. KITCHEN
- D. CABINET

Your answer: _____

8. puz-word-and-letter-08: Opposites in pairs

Difficulty: Difficulty 2

ANCIENT is to MODERN as SHALLOW is to which word?

- A. WIDE
- B. NARROW
- C. SLIGHT
- D. DEEP

Your answer: _____

9. puz-word-and-letter-09: Look at the spelling

Difficulty: Difficulty 2

Three of these words share a feature of their spelling that has nothing to do with meaning. Which word lacks that feature?

- A. COFFEE
- B. BALLOON
- C. SUMMER
- D. PLANET

Your answer: _____

10. puz-word-and-letter-10: One letter changed

Difficulty: Difficulty 2

Which word can be made from HEAT by changing exactly one letter and leaving the other three letters where they are?

- A. HEAP
- B. HEART
- C. HATE
- D. MEAL

Your answer: _____

11. puz-word-and-letter-11: The word in the middle

Difficulty: Difficulty 2

Which word makes an ordinary compound word both when it follows SUN and when it comes before HOUSE?

- A. SHINE
- B. GREEN
- C. LIGHT
- D. BOAT

Your answer: _____

Difficulty 3

Continue in order; use the worked explanations from earlier rungs when needed.

12. puz-word-and-letter-12: Pairs on the move

Difficulty: Difficulty 3

Each term in this series is a pair of letters. Which pair belongs in the gap?

Letter pairs, five terms. AC, BD, ?, DF, EG

- A. CD
- B. CE
- C. CF
- D. BE

Your answer: _____

13. puz-word-and-letter-13: Part and whole

Difficulty: Difficulty 3

PETAL is to FLOWER as PAGE is to which word?

- A. WORD
- B. LIBRARY

- C. BOOK
- D. PAPER

Your answer: _____

14. puz-word-and-letter-14: Seven letters, one meaning

Difficulty: Difficulty 3

Rearrange all seven of the letters A, D, E, I, L, S and T into one word meaning the small points of a plan or description. Which word uses exactly these letters?

- A. DETAINS
- B. DETAILS
- C. DILATES
- D. LISTED

Your answer: _____

15. puz-word-and-letter-15: Vowels and consonants

Difficulty: Difficulty 3

Three of these words share the same pattern of vowels and consonants. Which word does not share it?

- A. TIGER
- B. WATER
- C. PAPER
- D. PLANT

Your answer: _____

16. puz-word-and-letter-16: Two steps between words

Difficulty: Difficulty 3

CAST becomes COAT in two steps. Each step changes exactly one letter, leaves the other letters in place, and must produce a real word. What is the word in between?

- A. COST
- B. CART
- C. COAST
- D. CAT

Your answer: _____

17. puz-word-and-letter-17: Hidden over three words

Difficulty: Difficulty 3

An eight-letter everyday word is hidden in this sentence: They watch and someone waves back. Its letters run in order across three consecutive words. Which word is hidden?

- A. HANDS
- B. WATCHES
- C. HANDSOME
- D. SOMEONE

Your answer: _____

Difficulty 4

Continue in order; use the worked explanations from earlier rungs when needed.

18. puz-word-and-letter-18: Numbers in, letters out

Difficulty: Difficulty 4

Replace each letter of COLD with its position in the alphabet, where A is 1 and Z is 26. Add 3 to every number, then turn the numbers back into letters. Which word do you get?

- A. ZLIA
- B. FROG
- C. ERNF
- D. FORG

Your answer: _____

19. puz-word-and-letter-19: Instrument and measure

Difficulty: Difficulty 4

A RULER is to LENGTH as a THERMOMETER is to which word?

- A. TEMPERATURE
- B. THERMOSTAT
- C. WEATHER
- D. MERCURY

Your answer: _____

20. puz-word-and-letter-20: A phrase in nine letters

Difficulty: Difficulty 4

The letters B, B, G, H, I, L, L, T and U can be rearranged into an everyday two-word phrase for something that lights a room. Which phrase uses exactly those nine letters?

- A. BULL FIGHT
- B. LIGHT BULB
- C. BLUE LIGHT
- D. LIGHT BULBS

Your answer: _____

21. puz-word-and-letter-21: A step that grows

Difficulty: Difficulty 4

The gaps in this series are neither all equal nor repeating. Which letter belongs in the gap?

Letter series, six terms. A, B, D, G, ?, P

- A. H
- B. J

- C. L
- D. K

Your answer: _____

22. puz-word-and-letter-22: The rule applied twice

Difficulty: Difficulty 4

Apply this two-part rule to PLANT: first swap the two letters at the front, then move the letter now at the end to the front. Apply the whole rule a second time to the result. Which string do you finish with?

- A. TLPAN
- B. NLTPA
- C. LTPAN
- D. PLANT

Your answer: _____

Difficulty 5

Continue in order; use the worked explanations from earlier rungs when needed.

23. puz-word-and-letter-23: Three conditions at once

Difficulty: Difficulty 5

Which word satisfies all three conditions? It has exactly seven letters; its first and last letters are the same; and it contains exactly three vowels, no two of them next to each other. Count A, E, I, O and U as vowels and treat Y as a consonant.

- A. DIVIDED
- B. DEFENDED
- C. MINUTES
- D. SEASONS

Your answer: _____

24. puz-word-and-letter-24: Forward and mirrored

Difficulty: Difficulty 5

Two different runs are interleaved in this series. Which letter belongs in the gap?

Letter series, eight terms. B, Y, E, V, H, ?, K, P

- A. I
- B. R
- C. S
- D. T

Your answer: _____

25. puz-word-and-letter-25: Two steps in order

Difficulty: Difficulty 5

In the chain WINDOW to GLASS to SAND, the first step names what the object is made of and the second step names the raw material that substance is made from. Apply the same two steps, in the same order, to a wooden table. Where does the chain end?

- A. WOOD
- B. FOREST
- C. PAPER
- D. TREE

Your answer: _____

Authored hints

Only hints supplied by the puzzle authors are included. Items without a source hint are listed as missing; no hint text is generated or inferred.

0 worksheet items do not have an authored hint. No hint text was generated for them.

puz-word-and-letter-01: Two of these use exactly the letters you were given. Separate them with the category cue, not by which looks more familiar.

puz-word-and-letter-02: Say the alphabet aloud starting from the letter before the gap and stop at the letter after it.

puz-word-and-letter-03: Group the words first, then see which single word has no group left to join.

puz-word-and-letter-04: Turn the leading pair into a sentence, then use that identical sentence on the second word.

puz-word-and-letter-05: Write the sentence out with the spaces removed, then read it slowly from left to right.

puz-word-and-letter-06: Write the size of each gap under the series and work with the sizes, not with the letters.

puz-word-and-letter-07: Start from the cue and list rooms, then test each one against the letters rather than the reverse.

puz-word-and-letter-08: Decide what relation joins the leading two words before you read the rest, then apply exactly that relation.

puz-word-and-letter-09: Nothing here depends on what the words mean. Read each word letter by letter and compare neighbours.

puz-word-and-letter-10: Write the starting word above each candidate and line the letters up in columns before deciding.

puz-word-and-letter-11: Say both compounds aloud for every candidate. A word that works on one side only is not the bridge.

puz-word-and-letter-12: Read all the leading letters as one series and all the trailing letters as another.

puz-word-and-letter-13: Say the leading pair as a sentence containing the words one part of, then reuse that exact sentence.

puz-word-and-letter-14: Cross each letter off the given list as you use it and make sure nothing is left over at the end.

puz-word-and-letter-15: Write a V under every vowel and a C under every consonant, then compare the four patterns.

puz-word-and-letter-16: Compare the first and last words position by position; only the positions where they differ may change.

puz-word-and-letter-17: The stated length is part of the puzzle. Keep sliding your window until a run of exactly that size appears.

puz-word-and-letter-18: Write the four position numbers in a row first, do the arithmetic on the row, and only then convert back.

puz-word-and-letter-19: Write the leading pair as a sentence containing the word measures, then check that your candidate keeps the same kind of word on each side.

puz-word-and-letter-20: Sort the given letters alphabetically, sort each candidate the same way, and compare the two lists.

puz-word-and-letter-21: Work out the size of each gap, then look at how the gaps themselves change from one to the next.

puz-word-and-letter-22: Write each intermediate string on its own line and label which of the two moves produced it.

puz-word-and-letter-23: Check the fastest condition first and drop a candidate the moment it fails one; you should not need all three tests on every word.

puz-word-and-letter-24: Read the letters in the odd positions on their own, then the even ones, and ask how the two runs relate.

puz-word-and-letter-25: Do the two steps separately and write the middle word down before you take the second one.

Answer key

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Word and letter: open practice pack answer key

Item	Choice	Answer
puz-word-and-letter-01	B	TABLE
puz-word-and-letter-02	A	L
puz-word-and-letter-03	D	SALMON
puz-word-and-letter-04	C	END
puz-word-and-letter-05	A	FOREST
puz-word-and-letter-06	B	H
puz-word-and-letter-07	C	KITCHEN
puz-word-and-letter-08	D	DEEP
puz-word-and-letter-09	D	PLANET
puz-word-and-letter-10	A	HEAP
puz-word-and-letter-11	C	LIGHT
puz-word-and-letter-12	B	CE
puz-word-and-letter-13	C	BOOK
puz-word-and-letter-14	B	DETAILS
puz-word-and-letter-15	D	PLANT
puz-word-and-letter-16	A	COST
puz-word-and-letter-17	C	HANDSOME

puz-word-and-letter-18	B	FROG
puz-word-and-letter-19	A	TEMPERATURE
puz-word-and-letter-20	B	LIGHT BULB
puz-word-and-letter-21	D	K
puz-word-and-letter-22	B	NLTPA
puz-word-and-letter-23	A	DIVIDED
puz-word-and-letter-24	C	S
puz-word-and-letter-25	D	TREE

Worked explanations

puz-word-and-letter-01: Solve an anagram by fixing the category first and testing arrangements against it, rather than shuffling letters at random. The cue here is furniture, so you want the arrangement of A, B, E, L, T that names something you could sit at, which is TABLE. The word for the sound a sheep makes uses exactly those same five letters and so feels right, but it fails the category cue; another candidate names furniture while needing letters you were never given, and one more quietly swaps an M in for the T. An anagram answer has to pass both tests at once: the letters must match exactly, and the meaning must match the cue.

puz-word-and-letter-02: This is a constant-step letter series, the alphabet equivalent of adding one each time, so read the letters on both sides of the gap: J, K, gap, M, N. Because K is followed by L and L is followed by M, only L keeps a single step running in both directions at once. Copying the letter that sits after the gap, or carrying on past the end of the series instead of filling the gap, each breaks the step on one side. Always test a candidate against the term before it and the term after it, never against just one of them.

puz-word-and-letter-03: Odd-one-out items are solved by finding the largest group that shares one property, not by asking which word feels unusual. Three of these name birds, and no other single property gathers three of them, so the fish is the word left outside. A common wrong route is to rank the birds against each other and decide that the bird of prey stands apart from two smaller garden birds, but that splits three words into subgroups instead of leaving exactly one word out. Look for the property that covers three and only three, and stop as soon as you find it.

puz-word-and-letter-04: Name the relation in the leading pair before you look at anything else: BEGIN and START mean the same thing, so this analogy asks for a synonym and nothing more. Applied to FINISH, you want a word meaning to stop or complete, which is END. Offering the opening word back again supplies the opposite of what was asked, and a word meaning to carry on describes what happens before finishing rather than the same idea. The word that merely sounds attached to FINISH in a familiar phrase is word association, which is the most common way analogies are lost.

puz-word-and-letter-05: The method is to ignore the spaces, read the sentence as one unbroken run of letters, and slide a six-letter window along it. Doing that turns ask for estimates into askforestimates, where f-o-r-e-s-t sit together in order and straddle a space, giving FOREST. Words such as ESTATE and MASTER can only be built by picking letters out of order from estimates, which makes them anagrams rather than hidden words. KINDLE looks promising because the sentence opens with kindly, but the letters there run k-i-n-d-l-y; a hidden word never reorders a letter and never skips one.

puz-word-and-letter-06: When one constant step will not fit, write the gap sizes underneath the series and look for a pattern in the gaps themselves. B to D is two, D to E is one, E to G is two, so the run alternates two, one, two, one, two. The gap after G is therefore a single step, giving H, and H to J is a two, exactly as the printed final term requires. Treating every gap as two would put you one letter further on, and continuing past the end of the series answers a different question altogether; confirm that the gap before your candidate and the gap after it both fit.

puz-word-and-letter-07: At seven letters, work from the cue towards the letters rather than the other way round: list rooms first, then check whether the given letters allow that room. Cooking happens in a KITCHEN, and K, I, T, C, H, E, N is exactly the set supplied. The word meaning to make a sauce denser is built from those identical seven letters, so the letter test alone cannot separate the two and only the cue can. The remaining candidates are drawn from the world of houses and kitchens without using your letters at all, which is what happens when you answer from the topic instead of from the spelling.

puz-word-and-letter-08: First name the relation: ANCIENT and MODERN are opposites, so the analogy asks for the opposite of SHALLOW, which is DEEP. The reliable check is to test the relation on the second pair using the same wording you used on the first, because shallow water and deep water sit at the two ends of a single measurement just as ancient and modern do on a timeline. A word meaning slight is a near-synonym of shallow rather than its opposite, so it runs the relation the wrong way round. The two words about width belong to a different dimension entirely, and one of them is the opposite of that other dimension, which is precisely why it feels like an answer.

puz-word-and-letter-09: When four words share no meaning, switch from what they mean to how they are built: length, repeated letters, vowel patterns. COFFEE has a doubled F and a doubled E, BALLOON has a doubled L and a doubled O, and SUMMER has a doubled M, while PLANET has no two identical letters standing side by side. Solvers who keep hunting for a category waste time comparing a drink, a toy and a season, which never form a group. If no category will appear, look at the letters themselves; structural odd-one-out items are far more common than they seem.

puz-word-and-letter-10: A word-ladder step has a strict definition: same length, same positions, exactly one letter different. Line each candidate up under HEAT and compare position by position, and HEAP matches h, e and a while differing only in the final position, which makes it a legal step. HEART keeps every letter but inserts an extra one, which makes it longer and therefore not a substitution; HATE reuses the same four letters in a new order, which is an anagram; and MEAL differs from HEAT in two positions rather than one. Counting the differing positions is the whole test, and it takes seconds.

puz-word-and-letter-11: A bridge word has to pass two separate tests, so write both compounds out in full before deciding anything. SUNLIGHT is a word and LIGHTHOUSE is a word, so LIGHT passes on both sides. SUNSHINE passes on the left while shinehouse is not a word; greenhouse and boathouse pass on the right while neither sungreen nor sunboat exists. Each of those is a half-solved item, and that is the whole trap: a candidate feels obviously right because one of its two joins is familiar, so force yourself to say the other join out loud.

puz-word-and-letter-12: Two rules run at once here, so split the series into two columns and treat each column as a sequence of its own. The leading letters read A, B, gap, D, E, a plain one-step run that fixes C. The trailing letters read C, D, gap, F, G, another one-step run, which fixes E, so the pair is CE; you can confirm it because every printed pair holds its two letters two apart. Handling the pairs whole instead of splitting them is what produces answers where one column is right and the other is off by a step, and those are the hardest slips to spot afterwards.

puz-word-and-letter-13: This is a part-to-whole analogy, and the trick is to state the relation with its direction attached: a petal is one part of a flower, so you need the thing a page is one part of, which is a BOOK. Getting that direction right is most of the work. Naming something smaller that sits on a page runs the relation downwards instead of upwards, and naming a collection of books climbs a level too far, since a flower is not a garden. The material a page is made from answers a different question again, about substance rather than membership.

puz-word-and-letter-14: Test an anagram candidate by crossing letters off the given set one at a time; a candidate fails the moment it needs a letter that is not there or leaves one unused. DETAILS uses A, D, E, I, L, S and T exactly and means the small points, so it satisfies the letters and the meaning together. DETAINS is a near-anagram that quietly substitutes an N where the L should be, which is invisible at a glance and the most expensive mistake available here. DILATES really does use the same seven letters but means widens, and LISTED is a genuine word built from only six of them, leaving a letter spare.

puz-word-and-letter-15: Map each word to a pattern before you compare anything: mark every vowel as V and every consonant as C. TIGER, WATER and PAPER all come out as C-V-C-V-C, whereas PLANT is C-C-V-C-C, so it stands apart. Notice that a meaning-based reading pulls in a different direction, because two of these name living things, and that tempts solvers away from the rule the question has already named. When a question tells you which property to use, apply that property mechanically and ignore every other one; all four words are five letters long, so length by itself would have told you nothing.

puz-word-and-letter-16: Work a two-step ladder by comparing the start and the end first: CAST and COAT differ in the second and third positions only, so the middle word must repair exactly one of those two positions and leave the other alone. Repairing the second position gives COST, which is a real word; repairing the third gives CAAT, which is not, so COST is the only possible bridge. CART is a legal step away from the start but then sits two changes from the end, the classic dead end that comes from working forwards without checking the destination. Adding a letter or dropping one changes the length, and a ladder step never does that.

puz-word-and-letter-17: Run the letters together and look for a window long enough to swallow a whole short word in the middle, because that is what spanning three words means. Here watchhandsomeone contains h-a-n-d-s-o-m-e in order, borrowing the end of one word, all of the next, and the start of the third, which gives HANDSOME. A partial find that stops after five letters is the decoy: it obeys the reading rule but not the stated length, so it should be discarded rather than accepted with a shrug. A word already sitting whole in the sentence is not hidden at all, and a word whose letters must be reordered is an anagram.

puz-word-and-letter-18: This is a shift cipher written as arithmetic, so take it one letter at a time and keep the numbers on the page. C is 3, O is 15, L is 12 and D is 4; adding 3 gives 6, 18, 15 and 7, which read back as F, R, O and G, so the word is FROG, and nothing has to wrap past Z. Subtracting instead of adding produces a string that falls off the front of the alphabet, and adding 2 leaves every letter one place short. Converting each letter correctly and then writing them out of order is the quietest failure of all, so read your output back against the original order before committing to it.

puz-word-and-letter-19: State the relation as a full sentence before you answer: a ruler is the instrument that measures length, so you need the quantity a thermometer measures, which is TEMPERATURE. Notice that the two halves of the leading pair are different kinds of thing, one a device and one a quantity, and the second pair has to keep that shape. Reading the relation backwards, device for quantity instead of quantity for device, produces a second gadget, which is why the controller of a heating system feels tempting. Naming what the instrument is used to talk about, or a substance found inside it, answers questions the analogy never asked.

puz-word-and-letter-20: For a phrase anagram, sort the given letters into alphabetical order, sort each candidate the same way, and compare the two strings character by character. The given set sorts to B, B, G, H, I, L, L, T, U; the phrase naming the thing that lights a room sorts to exactly that, so it survives. One candidate sorts with an F where the second B belongs and another with an E in that same place, and both substitutions stay invisible until you sort. The plural form uses every given letter but adds an S, and a phrase anagram has to account for the number of letters as strictly as for their identity.

puz-word-and-letter-21: When gap sizes neither hold constant nor alternate, check whether the gaps grow by a fixed amount. A to B is one step, B to D is two, D to G is three, so the next gap should be four and the one after it five. G is the seventh letter, four steps on is the eleventh, which is K; five further steps reach the sixteenth letter, P, exactly the term already printed at the end, and that confirmation is what the final term is for. Repeating the previous gap of three, or jumping straight to a gap of five, lands either side of the right letter and fails that final check.

puz-word-and-letter-22: Composed rules are handled by writing every intermediate string down rather than holding them in your head. Starting from PLANT, swapping the leading two letters gives LPANT, and moving the final T to the front gives TLPAN, which completes one pass. Running the same two moves on TLPAN gives LTPAN after the swap and NLTPA after the move, and that is the finished string. Stopping after a single pass, or performing the swap but forgetting the move on the second pass, both leave you holding a genuine

intermediate result, while assuming that any rule applied twice returns the original word is a guess that happens to be false here.

puz-word-and-letter-23: With several conditions, test them in the order that eliminates fastest and stop at the first failure: counting letters is quicker than scanning vowels, so start there. DIVIDED has seven letters, opens and closes with D, and carries vowels in the second, fourth and sixth positions, which is three vowels with a consonant between each pair, so it passes everything. One near miss meets both letter conditions but runs to eight letters; another has the right length and vowel spacing but opens and closes with different letters; the third has the right length and matching outer letters, yet two of its vowels sit side by side. Each near miss fails exactly one condition, which is why checking only two of the three feels convincing and still delivers the wrong word.

puz-word-and-letter-24: Split an interleaved series by position before doing anything else: the letters in the odd positions read B, E, H, K, a run advancing three each time, and the letters in the even positions read Y, V, gap, P. Those even letters are the mirror images of the odd ones under the pairing that sends A to Z, B to Y and C to X, so a letter and its mirror have alphabet positions summing to 27. H is the eighth letter, so its mirror is the nineteenth, which is S; the even run also falls by three each time, and Y, V, S, P confirms it from the other direction. Mirroring with a total of 26 rather than 27, or counting A as zero, shifts the result one place either way, and simply stepping one letter on from H ignores the interleaving altogether.

puz-word-and-letter-25: A composed analogy needs each relation named separately and then applied in the stated order, one at a time. The first step takes an object to its material: a table is made of wood, just as a window is made of glass. The second step takes that material back to its source: glass is made from sand, and wood comes from a TREE. Stopping after the first step leaves you holding the material itself; carrying on to the place where many of them grow adds a third step the chain never asked for; and naming another product made from the same material follows the arrow forwards when the second step deliberately looks backwards to a source.

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