

ACTIVITY 10

ROCKET ALPHABET

Objective

Students practice uppercase letter recognition and sequencing uppercase letters in the correct order.

Standards

Language Arts

Materials

- 26 large rocket drawings (Figure 6, page 78), colored
- Alphabet chart
- Drawing of space shuttle launch to orbit sequence (Figure 12, page 83), colored

Educator Information

- Write an uppercase letter, A to Z, on each one of the 26 rockets. Color and decorate the rockets. Laminate the rockets for future use.
- Decide on a location in the classroom to place the rockets in alphabetical order.
- Be prepared with a familiar alphabet song for students to sing.

- This activity requires one class period. Students should review the activity over several days.
- Review the sequence of a space shuttle launch and be prepared to share information with students.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that, in space shuttle and rocket launches, events have to take place in the right order or sequence. Refer to the drawing of the space shuttle launch to orbit sequence. Remind students that, like the events in a space shuttle launch, the letters in the alphabet have a certain order or sequence.
2. Introduce the rockets with the letters of the alphabet. Using the rockets, demonstrate how to sequence the alphabet on the floor or on a chalkboard tray. Use the term, *alphabetical order*.
3. Distribute the rockets to the students. If there are fewer than 26 students in the class, keep the extra rockets or give two rockets to some students. Ask students to place their letter in the correct order. Remember to always



monitor sequencing from left to right. If students require extra help, call out the next letter or have students refer to an alphabet chart.

4. Using an alphabet chart or an alphabet song, have students check that the sequence is correct.
5. As the activity becomes more familiar, encourage students to sequence the alphabet independently using the rockets. If necessary, have students refer to an alphabet chart for assistance.
6. To vary the activity, tell students to hold the rockets, stand, and then line up in alphabetical order. Hand out the rockets to students. If you have fewer than 26 students, keep the extra rockets and be prepared to place the rockets in the correct order. Remember to monitor sequencing from left to right. The educator may need to prompt students with the next letter.
7. As the activity becomes more familiar, encourage students to sequence the alphabet without assistance. Have one student check that the sequence is correct using an alphabet chart or song.

Assessment

- Observe students as they practice recognizing uppercase letters and putting them in the correct order.

Enrichment

- Distribute the rockets with uppercase letters to the students. If you have fewer than 26 students, give two rockets to some students. Play a simple alphabet game using the letters. Call out certain letters. Students hold up their letter when appropriate. For example, the educator requests: *the letter W; all vowels;*

the letter in the alphabet before C; the letter in the alphabet after R. Repeat using variations of the activity. For students familiar with sounds, the game could include: *the first letter in hat; the last letter in mop.* Repeat using variations of the activity.

- For emerging spellers, hand the rockets with uppercase letters to students. Name a simple word. Ask students holding the letters that spell the word to stand, come forward, and place themselves in the correct order. Remember to sequence from left to right. Repeat using other simple words. To practice rhyming words, name a simple word. Ask students to come forward with their letters and spell the word. Name a word that rhymes. Change the first letter in the word. Ask the student with the first letter, or initial sound, in the word to sit down. Ask the student with the new first letter, or initial sound, to come forward. For example, start with *cat*; then *hat*; then *pat*. Repeat using other simple rhyming words.
- Make copies of the small rocket drawings (Figure 7, page 79). Color and cut out 26 copies of the rocket. Write a lowercase letter on each rocket. Laminate for future use. Use the rockets with uppercase letters, and allow students to practice matching uppercase and lowercase letters on the chalkboard tray or the floor.
- Using the small rocket drawings (Figure 7, page 79), create activities for independent practice on letter recognition and sequencing the alphabet.
- Using the paper rockets in *Activity 6*, page 28, students practice letter recognition. Lay rockets with uppercase letters end to end on the floor. Depending on the capabilities of students, letters may be in alphabetical order or randomly placed. Place a piece of paper tape on the floor at the end of the line of letters. Position the rockets so that students



standing on the tape can read the letters. Students launch their rockets from the line. They note the letter nearest the spot where their rocket lands. Repeat the activity changing the order of the letters or using lowercase letters.

- The space program uses many acronyms or initials, including NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), ESA (European Space Agency), EVA (extravehicular activity), STS (space transportation system), SRB (solid rocket booster), and ET (external tank). Review

what these acronyms mean. Write them on the chalkboard. Introduce the concept of using the first or initial letter of a word. Have students apply this to their names and figure out their initials. For example, *the initials for Robert James Smith would be RJS*. Ask students to think of other acronyms.

Examples could include *U.S. (United States)*, *VCR (video cassette recorder)*, and *CD (compact disc)*.

- Choose alphabet books to read to the class. Use the books to check that students correctly sequence the alphabet rockets.



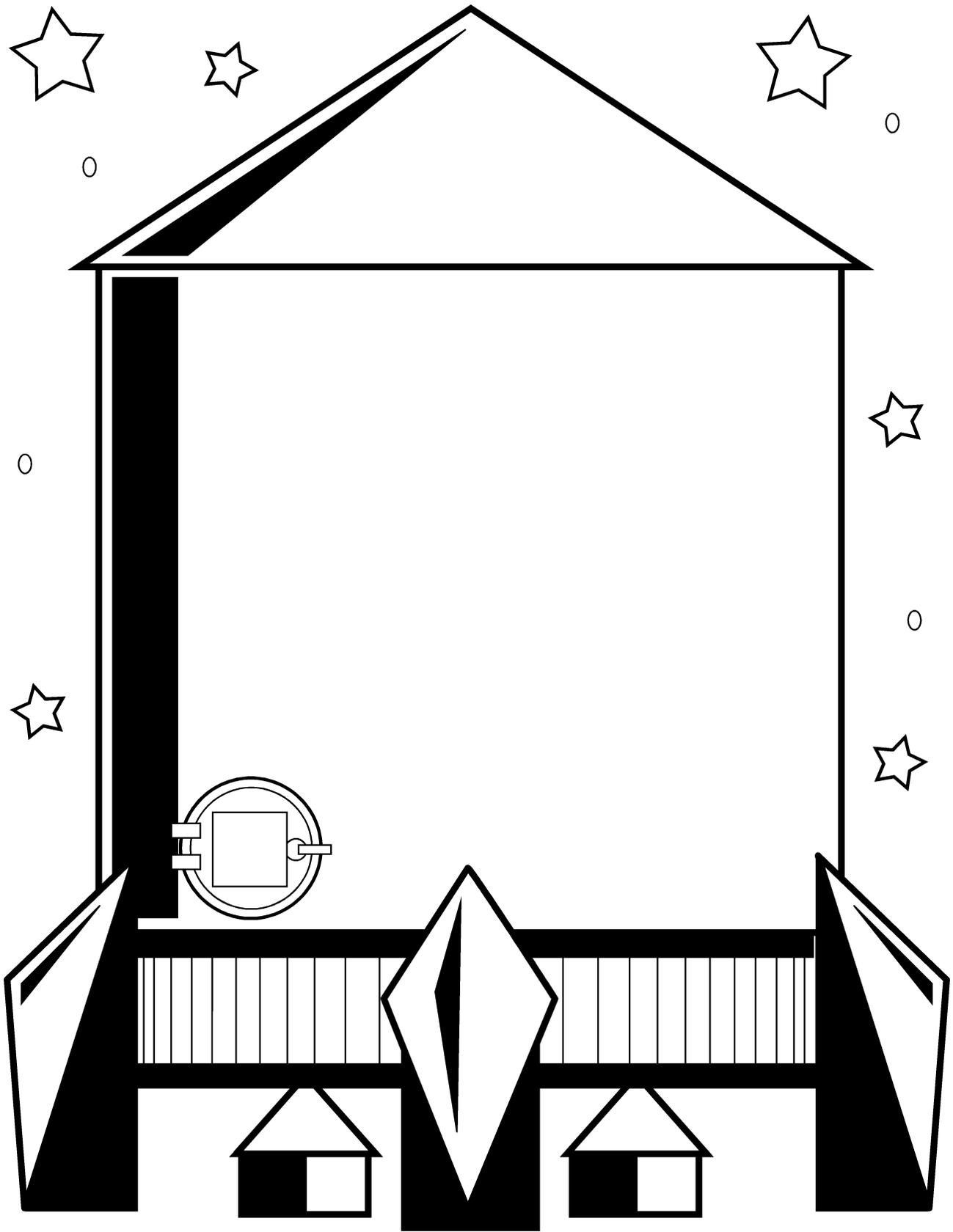


Figure 6. Large Rocket Drawing



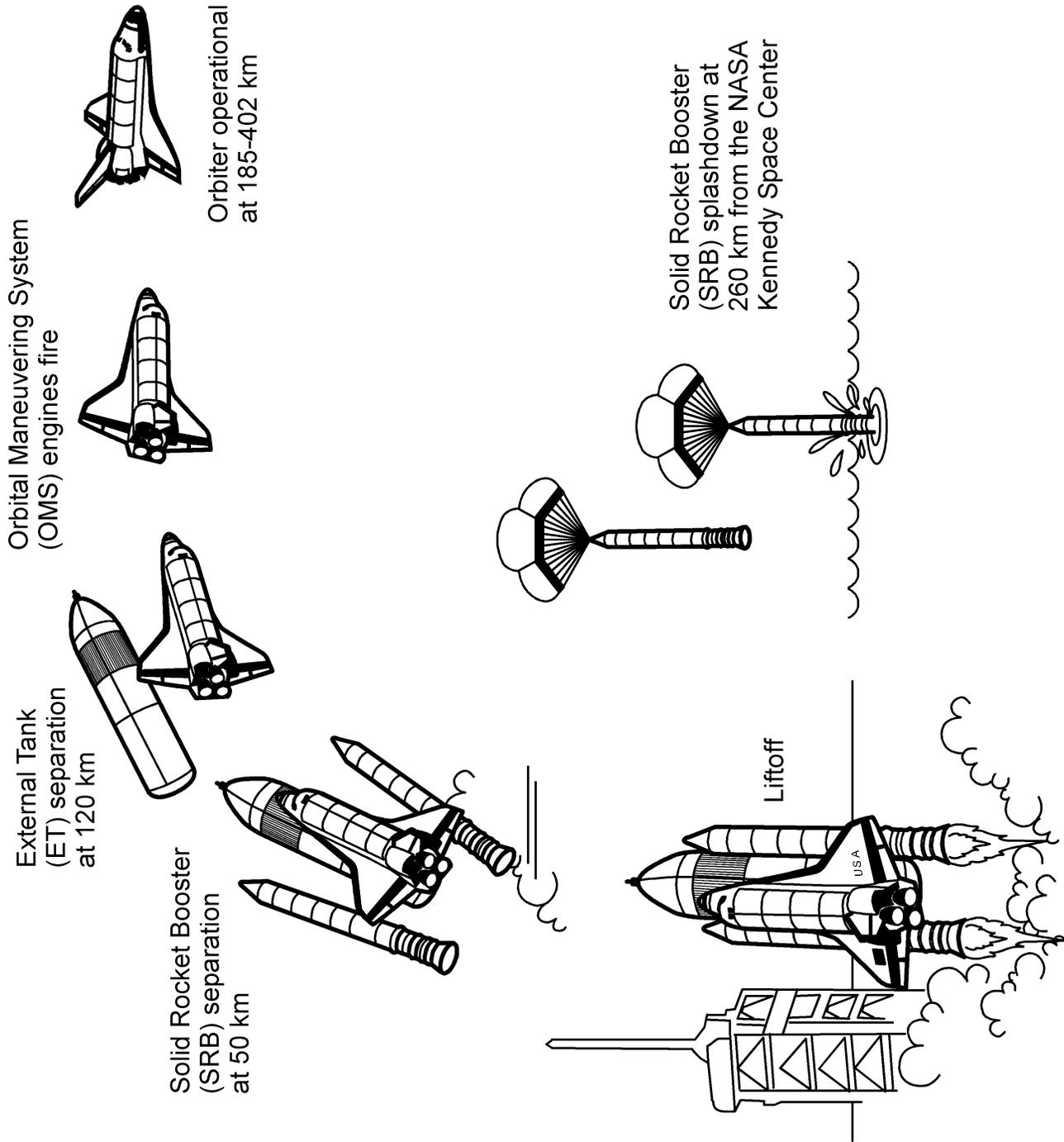


Figure 12. Shuttle Launch to Orbit Sequence

