



# Visual Discrimination Instructions



a

Basic Code - Sound Pictures

a b c k ck d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v w y z s qu x

Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

## What is Visual Discrimination?

*Visual Discrimination* is the ability to discriminate—or see the difference—between two or more shapes, letters, or Word Pictures (groups of letters representing a sound).

### Why is Visual Discrimination a key to reading?

In order to read, Visual Discrimination is a critical first-step skill that must be mastered. Reading has many steps. Visual discrimination is the first step.

To read, one must see each squiggle on the page as different; a reader must discriminate, or see the difference between, shapes and lines. The problem is, many of our letters look alike (h and n, o and c). And many letters are “flipped versions” of each other (n and u, f and t). If a student struggles to visually discriminate between “like letters,” then the first step of reading is sabotaged—and all of reading that comes afterwards becomes more difficult. It’s logical that moving to Step 2 or 3 before Step 1 is “solid” can make any task more difficult.

That’s why True North Reading takes time to help your child understand and know the difference between letters—with certainty and confidence—before moving ahead.

### How are the pages laid out?

The Visual Discrimination pages are in order, from simple to complex. Differences in shapes of letters are “easiest to see” at the start. The shapes of the letters become more similar (and more difficult to discriminate) within each following page.

### Are there sections to the pages?

Yes—there are a number of different kinds of pages here, and each “works on” the Visual Discrimination skills in a different way. Every page is sequential, with the prior pages’ skills building on the next pages’ skills. Types of Visual Discrimination pages you’ll see include **Random Shapes and Letters**, **Right-Left-Right Path Tracking**, and **Left-to-Right Reading**.

### How do we use the Visual Discrimination pages—and what do I need to play?

To play, you’ll simply need the printed pages and at least 40 hands-on manipulative pieces such as pennies, colored plastic chips, buttons, or any other 1-1 ½ cm. hands-on shape that’s about the same size as the letters on the page. Place the manipulatives in a bowl or plastic container. Have an empty bowl/container nearby, too.

#### “Random Shapes and Letters” Pages

The first pages, “Random Shapes and Letters,” has shapes or letters randomly spread around on the page, and there is open spacing between each letter and shape. At the beginning, it’s easy to see the difference between the shape and the letter. As you move forward in the pages, it gets slightly more difficult for the child to see the difference between the choices. Changes between pages are super small, so your student is challenged but never pushed too far, too fast.

Using a hands-on token such as a penny or manipulative, have your child cover up the Sound Picture and *say the sound at the exact time that the picture is covered*. Sound Pictures can be covered randomly.



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For more repetition, once the page is full, remove each token one by one and place the removed token in the empty bowl. As a token is removed, say the sound for the uncovered Sound Picture.

## “Right-Left-Right Visual Path” Pages

On the next pages, shapes or letters are in a path curving in a right-left-right pattern (from the top left of the page to the bottom right of the page). This visual path is exactly what the eyes travel when reading—but here, the student practices the gentle, simple eye movement first (before using the “strict” across-and-back movement of reading). Sound Pictures are identified “in reading order.”

Along with identifying the Sound Picture, students practice the visual tracking movement of reading (a simple/gentle movement).

There are two ways to play the Visual Path games: 1) **Roll the Sound Picture Dice** and 2) **Roll the Number Dice**.

### Roll the Sound Picture Dice

Before playing, cut out the paper dice pattern provided on the final page. Tape the dice together, and it’s ready to use. For sturdier dice, buy and use blank wooden cubes and, in the same way as shown on the paper dice pattern, write the same Sound Picture(s) and/or shape(s) with a thick black marker on the sides of the cube.

To begin, place a player’s game piece/token at the beginning of the path, which is the top left corner of the page. Roll the Sound Picture dice. Say aloud whatever was rolled: “/a/!” or “That’s a star.” Move your game piece along the path to the first shape or Sound Picture that matches what was rolled.

For example, if the child rolls an “a,” he/she says the sound: “It’s an /a/.” Then he/she moves the game piece to the first /a/ Sound Picture (“star, star, /a/” or “not it, not it, /a/”).

For every move on the board, the student gets a point. Keep track of points on the tally-board page provided or give the child a hands-on manipulative/token to keep in a bowl, to keep track of points. For example, if he/she moved three spaces, he/she gets three tally marks or three tokens.

If it’s an older child who’s playing, and he/she has already learned other letter sounds (and is re-learning reading using True North reading), he or she can say the non-target letter sound as well.

Please see the Parent Video in the lessons area for more variations to the *Roll the Sound Picture Dice* game.

### Roll the Number Dice

To begin, place a player’s game piece/token at the beginning of the path, which is the top left corner of the page. Roll the dice. Move your game piece along the path equal to the number rolled on the dice.



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If landing on the target Sound Picture (the Sound Picture learned in the current lesson), then the student says the Sound Picture's sound—and the player gets a point. If the game piece does not land on the lesson's Sound Picture, he/she says, "Nope—that's not the /a/ picture." (Be sure he/she says the sound, not the letter name.) No point is earned.

If it's an older child who's playing, and he/she has already learned other letter sounds, he/she can say the non-target letter sound (say the sound, not the letter name). Points are only earned, though, for the target letter sound.

Please see the Parent Video in the lessons area for more variations to the *Roll the Sound Picture Dice* game.

## "Left-to-Right Reading" Pages

The next pages organize the shapes and letters on a strict left-to-right line (or pathway). The direct pathway practices Visual Discrimination *and* reinforces left-right-left visual tracking. The activities are also increasingly more "visually dense" (with more to focus on, within the page and row).

The lesson's Sound Picture (the picture that you're looking for) will always be at the top right corner of the page, in a box. The goal of the game is to, one by one, from left to right and top to bottom (in order), cover all of the Sound Pictures matching the Sound picture in the box with manipulatives/tokens.

Before playing, prepare a bowl or bag of manipulatives or tokens off to the side.

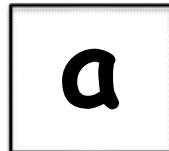
Take one token/manipulative in the hand. Starting at the top left of the page, move the token along left to right, across the row of Sound Pictures or shapes, to find the target Sound Picture. When the child finds the first matching Sound Picture, he/she says the sound and places the manipulative/token on top of the letter, leaving it there (to "cover up the sound").

He/she then gets another manipulative/token and "keeps going," looking for the next matching Sound Picture. When he/she "finds" the next Sound Picture, he/she says the sound and covers up the Sound Picture, again leaving the token behind.

He/she gets a third manipulative/token and, in the same way, continues to cover all of the Sound Pictures that match the picture in the top right corner of the page. When one row is complete, the student begins on the next row (just below the completed row). Don't skip Sound Pictures or rows. The page is complete when every target Sound Picture has been "found" and "marked."



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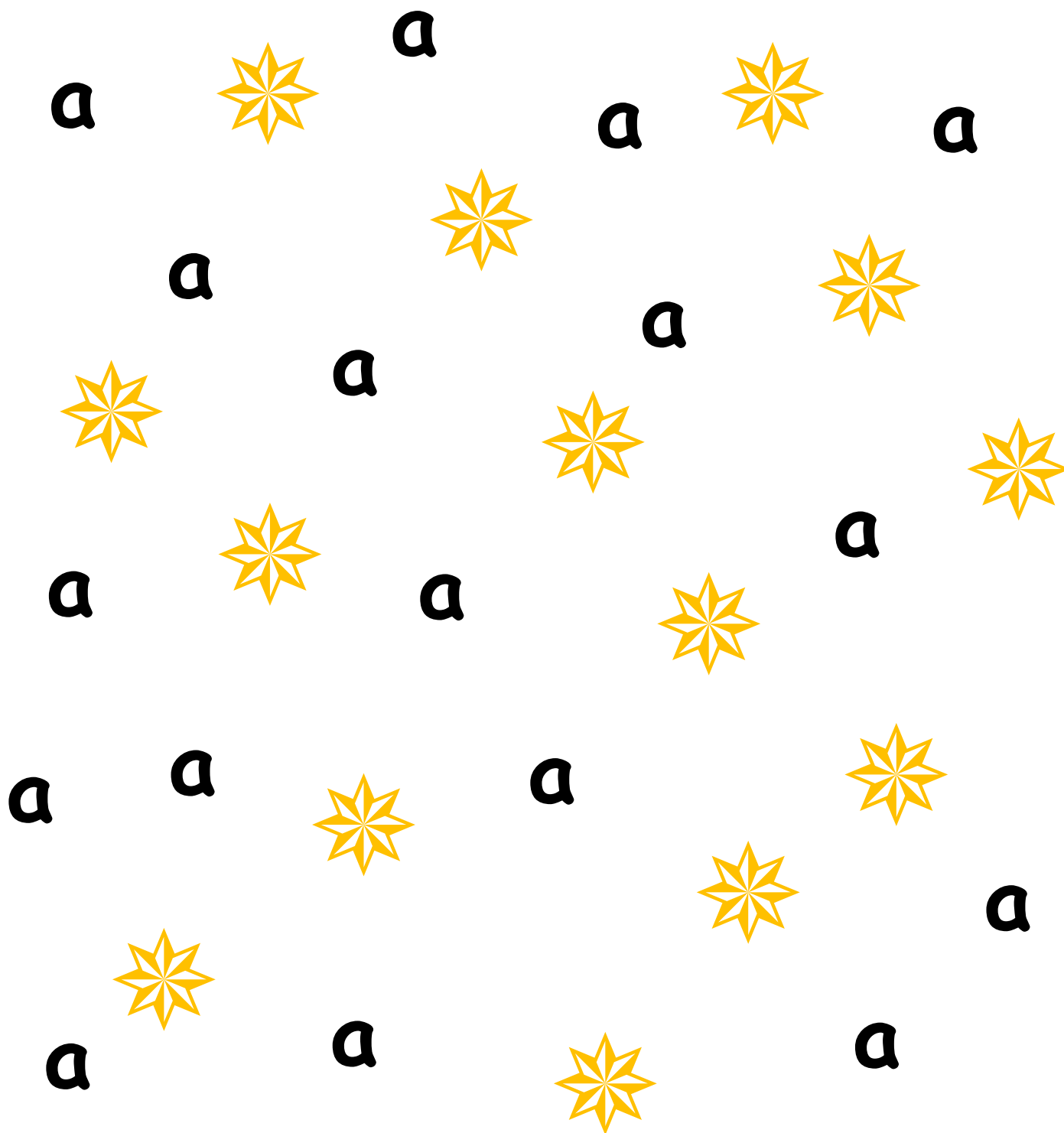


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Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

a t a  
t a a  
t t t  
a t t  
a a a  
t t t  
t a t



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Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

c a c c  
a a  
a c a  
c a  
c a c  
c a c  
a a



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a b c k ck d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v w y z s qu x

Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

a o o

o o a

o a a

a o a

o o a

o o a



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a b c k ck d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v w y z s qu x

Alphabet

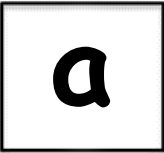
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

a o c o  
o c o a  
a a c a  
c c a o  
o a c a  
c a o a  
o c o





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Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Use the homemade dice on the last page to play Roll the Dice games.

Visual discrimination practice for the letter 'a'. The page contains a grid of lowercase 'a's and yellow starburst shapes. The 'a's are scattered across the page, and the starbursts are also scattered. The goal is to identify the 'a's among the starbursts.



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Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

t a t a t t

t a t a t

a

a t t a t

a t t a a

t a a a t t.



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a b c k ck d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v w y z s qu x

Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

a a c c a c

c a c a a

a c a a c

a a c a

c a c c a c.



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Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

o a o a o o

o o a a o

a o a o a a

a a o a o o

o a o a a a.



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Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

a o c c a o  
c o c a o  
a  
a o a a c  
c  
a a o a o  
c o c a a c.



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Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

a

\* a \* a a \* a

→ \* \* a \* a a \*

→ \* a a \* a \* \*

→ a a \* \* a a a

→ a \* a a \* a a

→ \* a \* \* a a a

→ a \* a \* a \* a

→ a \* \* a a \* a .



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a b c k ck d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v w y z s qu x

Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

a	t	a	a	t	a	t	t
→	t	t	a	a	t	t	a
→	a	a	a	t	t	a	t
→	a	a	t	a	a	t	a
→	t	a	t	a	t	t	a
→	a	t	t	a	a	a	t
→	t	a	a	t	a	a	t
→	a	t	a	a	t	a	t.



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Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

<b>a</b>	a	o	o	a	o	o	a
→	a	o	a	a	o	a	o
→	o	a	a	o	a	o	o
→	o	o	a	o	o	a	a
→	a	a	o	o	a	o	a
→	o	a	o	a	o	a	a
→	o	o	a	o	a	o	a
→	a	o	o	a	a	o	a.





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a b c k ck d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v w y z s qu x

Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

<b>a</b>	a	a	c	a	c	a	a
→	a	c	c	a	c	c	a
→	c	a	c	c	a	c	a
→	a	c	a	a	c	a	c
→	a	a	c	a	c	c	a
→	c	a	a	c	a	c	c
→	c	c	a	a	c	c	a
→	a	c	c	a	a	c	a.



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a b c k ck d e f g h i j l m n o p r s t u v w y z s qu x

Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

<b>a</b>	o	a	c	a	o	a	c
→	a	o	c	a	o	c	a
→	o	o	c	a	a	c	o
→	a	c	o	a	c	o	c
→	o	a	c	o	c	o	a
→	c	a	o	o	a	c	c
→	o	c	a	a	o	c	a
→	a	c	o	a	o	c	a



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**Homemade Dice**  
1. Cut on the solid lines.  
2. Fold on dashed lines.  
3. Tape to make two dice.

