

## Activity Guide

A picture book for ages 4 to 7

In *Letter Lunch*, two hungry kids try to figure out what's for lunch — but there's nothing ordinary about the meal they're cooking up. They go letter-picking in their backyard, browse through the alphabet at the local market, and even climb a mountain to track down consonants both common and rare, then season them with vowels to make the perfect letter lunch.

### Activity 1: Playing with Letters

First you will need to make letters. Print the letters in Appendix 1: *Letter Lunch* Alphabet and have students color them in and cut them out in rectangles. Now you are ready to use the letters in any of the activities that follow.

#### Sort letters

Individually or in groups, sort the letters. Use baskets, paper plates, jars, or bowls as containers in which to group letters:

- By shape (round vs. straight)
- By the areas in which they are found in the story
  - ♦ **garden:** t, n, r
  - ♦ **market:** b, c, d, f, g, h, k, l, m, p, r, s, v, w, y
  - ♦ **forest:** j, q, x
  - ♦ **mountain:** z
  - ♦ **vowels:** a, e, i, o, u
- Or make your own grouping categories

#### Create words

Combine the letters to make words. Print copies of Appendix 2: *Letter Lunch* Plate and have students use it as a base on which to experiment with different letter combinations. Once they have a word or collection of words, have students glue their letters to the page.

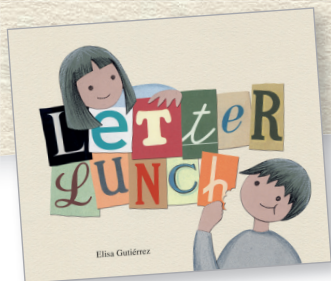
#### Feed the imagination

Have students draw a picture or write a story based on one or more words they have created.

#### Discussion questions

- Which letters are part of several words?
- Which letters do we use the least?
- How do we see different letters' frequency of use being applied in the real world? (e.g., layout of computer keyboards)
- How does the frequency of letter use change in other languages?
- What do you think feeds the imagination?
- What is healthy food for the imagination? Why?
- What is "junk food" for the imagination? Why?





## Activity 2: Make Your Own Collage

### What you'll need:

- Print-outs of Appendix 3: *Letter Lunch* Collage Shapes
- Tracing paper
- Pencil
- Colored papers (heavier papers are best)
- Colored pencils, crayons, markers, pens
- Scissors
- Glue or masking tape
- Tissue paper, cut letters, old magazines and cards, stickers, leaves, etc.
- Rubber stamps and inkpad (optional)

### What to do:

1. Place tracing paper on top of the page with the tree trunk. Copy the outline of the tree trunk onto tracing paper.
2. Flip your tracing paper over and use a pencil to shade in the area bordered by your outline. Make sure the area is covered evenly.
3. Turn your tracing paper back over.
4. Place your tracing paper on top of the colored paper you've chosen, making sure that the area where the drawing is fits properly on the colored paper.
5. Outline the drawing again, but this time with a different color pen. Make sure you apply pressure when re-tracing the image. A pen works well for re-tracing because it has a hard point that transfers the image well.
6. You should see the transferred image on your colored paper.
7. Repeat steps 1–6, this time with the leaves.
8. Once your transfers are complete, add detail with crayons, markers or stamps.
9. Cut out the tree trunk and the leaves.
10. Decorate with little pieces of tissue paper, cut letters, images from old magazines, stickers, leaves, etc.
11. Assemble the tree. Try placing the leaves in front of the branches or behind them, as well as lower or higher on the tree. You may decide to leave some elements out. Play with the shapes until you are happy with your tree.
12. Glue the pieces together. For a more 3D result, paste the different elements using rolled masking tape.
13. Hang your tree or paste it onto a background!



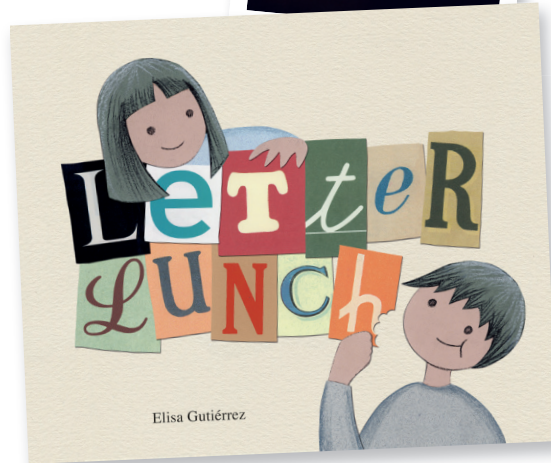
# A look behind the scenes at the making of *Letter Lunch*

by Elisa Gutiérrez



*Letter Lunch* first appeared as a short comic-panel story in the March 2011 issue of *chickaDEE* magazine. The original story was created to unfold on two spreads. Reworking *Letter Lunch* for a book allowed me to add more elements and detail to the story.

The artwork for *Letter Lunch* was created using collage, which involves assembling small pieces of different materials, drawings, and artwork to create a new composite image. For *Letter Lunch*, I used colored paper, printed pages from old and new magazines, books, and maps, as well as cards, wrapping paper, and stickers. I also created textures and letters with rubber stamps and colored pencils.



## Here's how it all worked:

First, I made rough sketches to help myself develop the story. I revised them several times until the story was working.

Then, I made a final drawing of each scene.

Next, I traced each element in the scene onto different colored papers (for skin, hair, clothing, and scenery) using see-through tracing paper and carbon paper. Carbon paper has a coating of ink on one side that transfers what you draw to a different sheet of paper.

Once I had my drawing on the right paper, I added some details with colored pencils, pen, and stamps.



Rough sketches



Final drawings of figures on tracing paper



When all the drawings of a scene were finished, I cut each piece with scissors or a special cutter on an art cutting mat — a surface that protects the table you are working on. I was careful to keep the pieces of paper together and not lose any bits!



*Roughs are traced on colored paper, details drawn with pencil, and pieces cut.*

Then, I assembled the pieces into people, shapes, and backgrounds. This is one of my favorite parts of the process, because I can play with the pieces and move them around until I really like the way they all work together — this is what artists call “composition.” I changed my mind many times: I would move a character’s head a little to one side, then back to the other side. I’d tilt the upper body a little, move some elements closer together, and then move them farther away again. I’ve found that with human figures, tilting the elements of the body a little bit gives expression and the feeling of movement to the characters.



*When all pieces for each panel are completed, the scenes are assembled.*

Once I was sure I liked how everything looked, I put all the people together using my glue pen. Then, I stuck the foreground figures — elements that are shown at the front — to the backgrounds using little pieces of masking tape folded into tiny rolls. Sometimes, I had to use tweezers to pick up the tiny letters!

When each scene was finished, I scanned the artwork onto a computer in individual panels. I fit the panels together on the computer to make them look like they do in the book and did a few final touches on the artwork. And voilà — *Letter Lunch* was born!

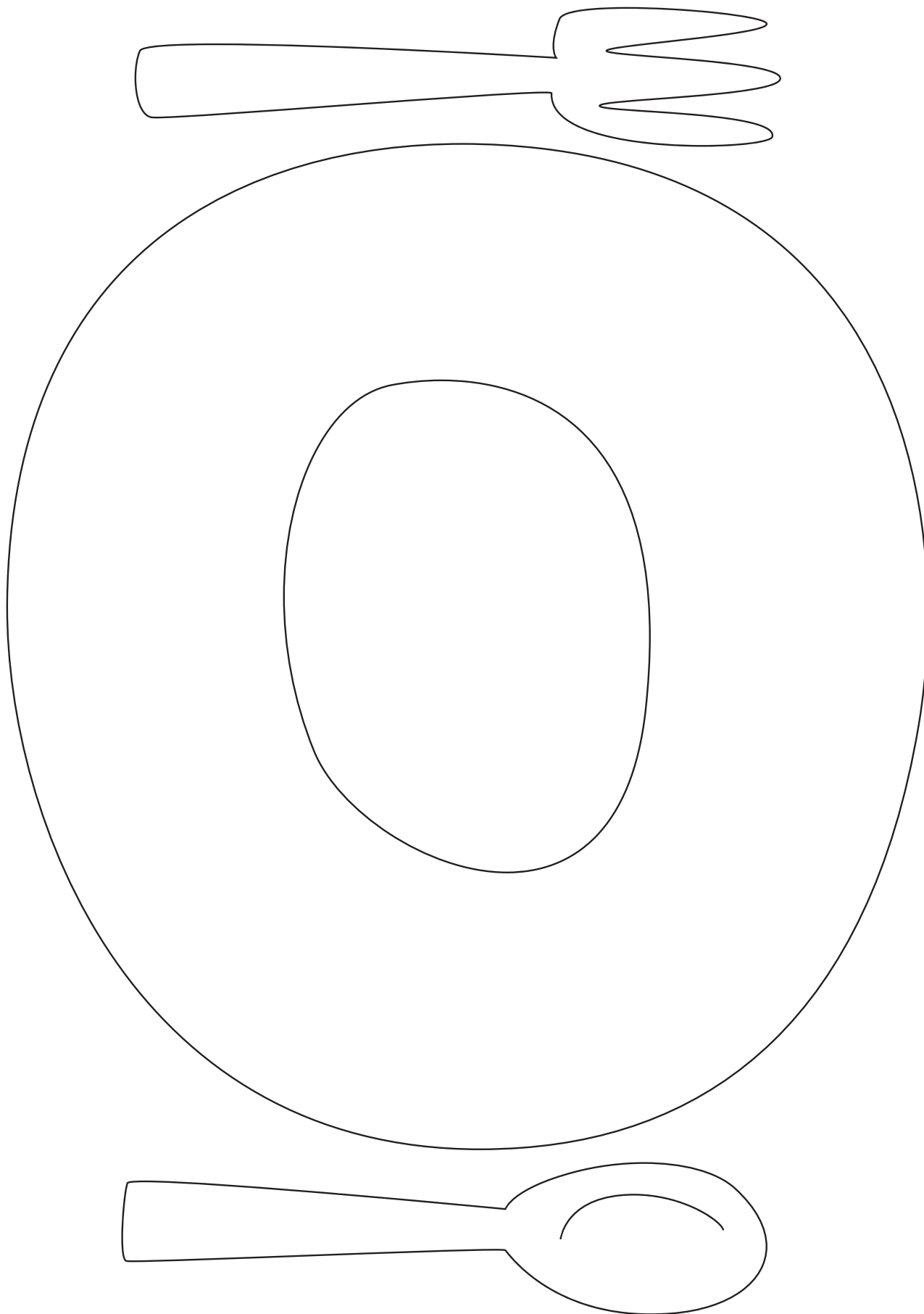


*Once every panel is assembled, they are scanned and retouched on the computer.  
These are the final pages as they appear in the book.*

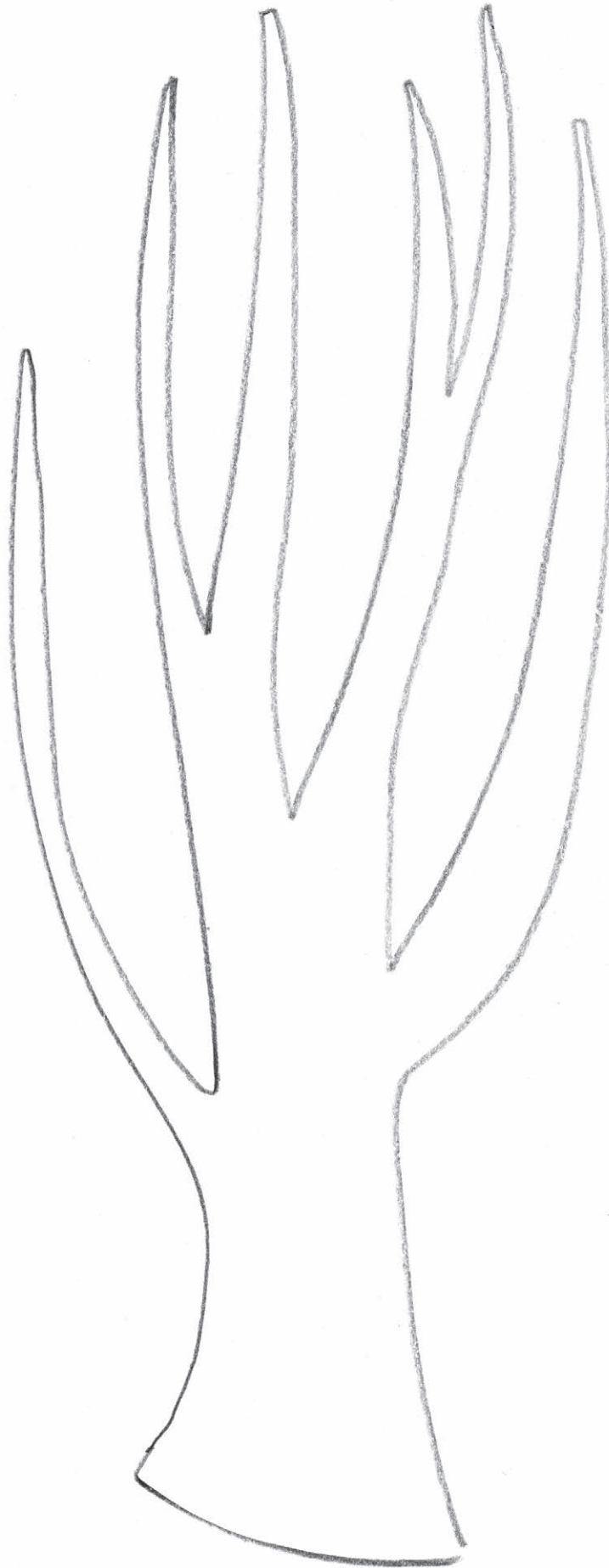
# APPENDIX I: Letter Lunch Alphabet

K	H	G	F	C	A
k	h	g	f	c	a
K	h	g	F	C	a
L	J	H	F	S	B
l	j	h	f	s	b
l	j	k	f	s	b
Y	W	U	S	O	M
y	w	u	s	o	m
Y	w	u	s	o	m
Z	X	V	T	R	N
z	x	v	t	r	n
z	x	v	t	r	n

## APPENDIX 2: Letter Lunch Plate



### APPENDIX 3: Letter Lunch Collage Shapes



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