

LETTER DASH

ACTIVITY SPECIFICS:

Tool type: Team Word Game

Our inspiration: Word-Building Relay

Format: Offline

Time needed: 30-45 min

SET-UP

Number of participants: 6-30

- Letter tiles or cards (one set/team)
- A timer
- A table/team
- A scoring sheet
- Optional: a list of target phonetic patterns or word-length limits per round.

Focus (SLD topic)

- Dyslexia
- Phonological awareness
- Word decoding
- Reading fluency

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Letter Dash is a team-based word-building game where small groups race against the clock to form as many valid words as possible from a shared set of letter tiles. The activity makes phonics and spelling fun and collaborative. It can be adapted for different skill levels by adjusting word length or focusing on specific phonetic patterns. It is designed to raise SLD awareness in a playful, non-stigmatising way.

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INSTRUCTIONS / STEPS

1. Divide participants into small teams of 3-5 players. Each team receives an identical set of letter tiles placed face-down.
2. On “Go,” teams flip their tiles and start building words relay-style: each player adds one tile at a time before passing to the next.
3. Every valid word earns 1 point. Longer words (5+ letters) earn 2 bonus points. Repeated words are not allowed, each word may only be scored once per round.
4. Run 3 rounds of 3-5 minutes each. Between rounds, the facilitator may restrict word length or require a specific phonetic pattern (e.g. words starting with “str”).
5. After the final round, teams share their word lists. Discuss which words were easy or hard to build and how the relay format felt for everyone.
6. Debriefing time: After the game, take 5-10 minutes to reflect together. “How did the time pressure affect you? Was spelling under pressure harder or easier than you expected”. This debriefing can enlighten the fact that time pressure and word-building challenges are part of everyday life for many people with dyslexia. Giving extra time and visual support can make a difference.
- 7 **Adaptation options:** For players who need more support, allow extra time/round, limit to 3-4 letters, etc.

