Mighty Helpful Worksheets
From Rainbow Bridges
Elementary Series

All worksheets should be introduced and the students should have each discovered thoroughly how to complete the necessary tasks. Especially with the first assignment of a new type of worksheet, the demonstration should be detailed and the students should know exactly what to do.

Introduction
Mighty Helpful Worksheets are designed to be used with David Paul’s New Finding Out, but are also adaptable to other curriculums for children learning English. The worksheets can be used as part of a balanced approach to teaching English, incorporating each of the four main skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. NFO uses a child-centered approach, and the worksheets can be used in a child-centered way. Please consult the Introduction to any level of New Finding Out for more information on child-centered learning.

Identification and Order
The worksheets all have IDs under the logo. The first number corresponds with the volume of New Finding Out (zero can be used for students before they start the book), and the second number corresponds to the unit number. Worksheets of a certain unit number can be used when the students have reached that particular unit, or later on, for review. The next item, a letter combination, is the abbreviated code for the type of exercise. Last is the version number of that particular worksheet. Sometimes there are several versions per type of exercise per unit, and they generally become more difficult as the version number increases, so the worksheets should normally be completed in order.

Example: NFO Book 1, Unit 11, Question and Answer, Version 3

*Worksheets from each unit need not all be completed during the unit, for previous units’ worksheets can be done for review when classes are on later units. Since NFO 1 contains many of the core phonic and other skills that are recycled throughout the five-level course, many of these worksheets can be used even well after students finish the first level.

In some situations, students in the same class may be given different worksheets, though it is easier to keep track if all students do the same worksheets. We have tried to produce a large number of worksheets so that there is freedom in giving the students all of them.
or just some of them. More advanced students may attempt more difficult worksheets, while other students will be challenged by the easier versions with the same language target. However, this will necessitate much more coordination of which student has done what worksheet by the teacher.

You can keep track of your classes’ progress with the Checklist (please see Management below).

Phonics

**Coloring (c)**

Students **read** the phonic sound and color the letters and the anchor. They can **say** the phonic sound as well, for example, when they present you with their finished work.

These worksheets can be given for homework or used in class (while students are waiting for you to check their homework, for example). They can also be used just as fun worksheets to do that don’t need much in the way of explanation.

These sheets are coded “1” for students on NFO 1, but the alphabet ones (NFO Units 1-6) are fun for preschoolers as well.

**Phonic Drawing (pd)**

In this series, students **read** and **say** aloud the letter or double-letter combination and draw a picture of the corresponding anchor word. This helps them a) to identify the letter or diagraph and its corresponding phonic sound (**read**) and b) to internalize the letter and anchor word by drawing their own picture.

There is an easel with a paintbrush on each worksheet that you can point out to help students identify that they are supposed to draw the corresponding anchor.

*It’s not essential that the students draw a “good” picture; often, “poor” drawings can be a lot of fun. In cases where individual children are reluctant to draw because of a lack of confidence, they may be encouraged by a teacher’s example of a goofy drawing—the student-centered teacher may be more effective here but showing fallibility. In other cases, students that scribble something without trying can be encouraged to take some time and put effort into the drawing. Hopefully, giving time and effort will help them enjoy the worksheets, make a more personal connection with the drawing and internalize the language more.*
**Handwriting (hw)**

Handwriting worksheets help students learn how to make the letters, one at a time. They identify and **read** and **say** aloud the phonic sound at the top of the page, then **write** it. For the alphabet, students write the uppercase and lowercase letter on two lines, and then draw a picture of the phonic anchor. For double-letter phonic sounds, they write the letter combination on four lines, and then draw the phonic anchor.

*These worksheets can be used when students are first learning to write the letters, but they can also be used for quick reviews at later times. Many students have issues with forgetting how to write the letters, stroke order, or penmanship and need to focus on individual letters periodically. Although teacher opinions vary on both the importance of stroke order and the order of strokes, stroke order can sometimes help students distinguish between often-confused letters such as b and d. It can also be a beneficial factor in penmanship, handwriting speed, and adjusting to cursive writing later.*

**Phonic Matching (pm)**

Matching worksheets involving only phonics are categorized as Phonic Matching worksheets. Students **read** and **say** aloud the phonic sound and match it with the anchor picture. They **write** the phonic sound as well (trace it).

There are **pma**, **pmb**, and **pmc** and worksheets. In 1 01-06, worksheets labeled **pma** match the uppercase and lowercase set with the picture of the anchor word. From 1 11 onward, starting with the double-letter sounds, only lowercase letters are used. Next, **pmb** and **pmc** exercises match separate lowercase and uppercase letters with each other in two different formats. From 1 11 onward, **pma and pmb** exercises also connect the double-letter sound with the anchor picture. Tracing is involved to incorporate writing and to practice penmanship (students should be able to read what they are tracing).

**Phonic Writing (pw)**

These worksheets are **writing** practice. They also require the student to recognize the clue (usually a picture) and write the corresponding phonic letter, phonic combination, phrase, or sentence in order to describe the picture.

Starting in 1 01, students write the corresponding lowercase letter (Phonic Writing) next to the anchor picture.

In 1 03, students write the corresponding first letter of the picture in...
the space provided. There are some worksheets that especially target the easily confusable
\( b, d, \) and \( p \). Extra attention to writing \( d \) with the counterclockwise stroke first can help
distinguish it from \( b \) and \( p \) and their downstroke first. This version will add \( q \) and \( g \) in 1 04
(which can be similarly written with the counterclockwise stroke first like \( d \)).

Starting in 1 12, students write the matching double-letter phonic from the anchor
prompt.

**Phonics, Words, and Sentences**

*Tic Tac Toe (tt)*

This in-class game is a paper version of the game introduced in the
second unit of *New Finding Out 1*. Teachers can use these as pre-
made games to do on the whiteboard, or copies of the sheet can be
given students to play in pairs or teams during class. Students can put
either an \( x \) or an \( o \) (or their preferred symbols) in the squares they
obtain by **reading** and **speaking** aloud.

In one scoring version, teams amass points by completing 3 squares
in a row, column, or diagonal. The same box may be used twice or
more. Each 3-in-a-row is worth one point.

The main target of this game is to practice **reading**, including the skill of recognizing
phonic families and patterns, and **speaking**. There is also, of course, game strategy in
choosing the boxes that result in the greatest number of points for the team. Students (or
teams) in turn call out a number and then read the corresponding contents of the box.
Students will probably want to use their native language when a teammate is deciding
which number to pick, but it is possible to have a game held completely in English. Some
possible simple phrases include: *Number, please. What number? Number 12! 7! Yes! No!
OK! It's my (your) turn. Go. Great! Wow.* Gestures can be used as well.

This game also works well in groups of three or with three teams.

A variant point system is to score, for example, 1 point per square, 3 points for 3-in-a-
row, and 5 points for 4-in-a-row, but this requires a lot of calculating. There can also be a
random square that yields bonus points when chosen. In this version, a square’s number
can be secretly written and revealed when that square is chosen or when that square is
used to obtain a point. See the *New Finding Out Teacher’s Book* for further suggestions
about this game.
Words and Sentences

Connect and Write (cw)

These worksheets involve reading and writing. Here students identify a picture of a vocabulary word, determine the appropriate letters in order, trace the correct letters, then write the word again on the rules on the right. Among the choices are often mistaken letters (b vs. d) or letters that look alike.

*This version of worksheets helps isolate the letters and their sounds of each word. When the students are challenged, they can point to the picture clue, ask What is it?, and try to distinguish between the sounds represented by the letters by listening carefully.

Matching (m)

In 107, students match each two-letter word (a vowel with a consonant) to the corresponding anchor picture pair.

Matching worksheets from 108 and onward deal with connecting words to pictures. This is an opportunity for the students to practice reading as well as identifying vocabulary words and matching them to their written form.

Students also practice distinguishing words from similar-looking non-words. They are to draw lines connecting the non-words to the question mark boxes.

*Students will, on very rare occasions, meet a new word that is not part of the main syllabus; it is a chance to discover new words. The word “map,” for instance, is introduced in 108. In these worksheets, new words are introduced in a way that students can complete the worksheet even if map was not introduced as a vocabulary word in class, and even if they are not doing the worksheet in class (where they would have the opportunity to interact with the teacher and ask, “What is it?”) If, for example, students had to do the worksheet on their own if they missed class (or weren’t paying attention), they can still complete the worksheet because map is introduced as being the only option left on the worksheet—all of the other words are vocabulary that are part of the main syllabus and they can match “map” with the picture of the map by process of elimination. The goal here is for students to discover a new word and complete the puzzle by strategic thinking, either using communicative interaction or reasoning.

Question and Answer (qa)

This series reviews question and answer patterns introduced in New Finding Out and is an extension of the exercises in the Home Book. The main skill involved is writing. Each worksheet should have a picture of a notebook that helps students remember that these exercises are to be written in the student’s notebook.

The worksheets with the character asking the questions are fairly short. The tracing aspect here practices writing and penmanship, but
also attention to detail with the apostrophes, commas, question marks, and periods. This is a step in-between the text, which pre-prints punctuation for the students, and the notebook freewriting exercises.

**Read and Draw (rd)**

These worksheets mirror the textbook examples in *New Finding Out* and focus mainly on **reading**.

These sheets provide a chance for them not only to practice the skills mentioned in **phonic drawing**, but also to discover new vocabulary (or remember vocabulary) through reading (non-vocabulary words are, on rare occasions, added). Students can **ask** *What is it?* And the teacher may opt to use one or more of a number of forms of communication to convey the meaning: draw a picture, show a flashcard, act it out, gesture it, or describe it using learned sentence patterns (*It has two legs. It likes bananas. Etc.*).

Some Read and Draw worksheets have a blank writing space for the students to decide what they want to draw and write in the label. This is rare, so if they want to write an advanced (phonically irregular or non-vocabulary) word like *elephant*, they can also **ask** you, *How do you spell (elephant)?* and listen to your response.

**Segmenting (sg)**

In a new stage of making words, students link together chunks, or segments, of words to build a target word. Students identify the picture, **read** the chunks and trace them, then **write** the word in the space provided.

**Singular / Plural (sp)**

In 1 08 worksheets and onward until students learn “They are . . .” in 2 06, students begin to distinguish between singular and plural in a form simpler than using the question and answer format. At this time, the **sp** worksheets practice going from a picture to writing a description of the picture: e.g. seeing 2 dogs and then writing *2 dogs*. At this point, students are introduced to the written forms of plurals ending in *–s* and pronounced either “s” as in *cats*, or “z,” as in *dogs*. Plural endings of *–es*, however, will be introduced later in 2 07.
Word Building (wb)

The Word Building worksheets are designed to enable the students to focus on the vowel when writing a word. A demonstration of the process involved in this worksheet is especially important. Going through an example on the whiteboard or a piece of paper before assigning the first worksheet is highly suggested, as is periodic revisiting this type of example.

The series starts with a pseudo word building worksheet for Unit 7, with a consonant and a vowel, but it gets more complex with three-letter words. Word Building worksheets use double-letter sounds starting with Unit 11.

When seeing the picture of a cat on the right side of the worksheet and then attempting to write cat, for example, enabling the students to think about the sounds involved rather than just writing a memorized spelling gives them a big advantage. In the word cat, the students say the word aloud (or ask you What is it?) and concentrate on identifying the vowel sound from the 5 short vowels by listening carefully and then build the word from there in steps: a-at-cat. In the early stages of these worksheets, the vowel and second step (the vowel and the following consonant) will be given. They will then have to fill in the first letter of the word to complete it. If they are given at, they can work to detect the pattern and write cat, hat, or bat. The words on these worksheets are vocabulary words, so the student should be able to pronounce the word. If not, encourage the students to ask you What is it? as you are assigning the worksheet. They can then build the word from the sounds they hear. It’s helpful to make sure that the vocabulary included in the worksheet for homework is revisited during the lesson.

*These worksheets are helpful for the children to concentrate on the central vowel sound of words, building skill in connecting the sounds with the letters. The subtle differences in vowel sounds tend to be very challenging for children to master, especially as they learn romaji in elementary school and experiment with creating English words, they might try making English words in the same manner as they would make Japanese words with romaji. Going through this process can help students really concentrate on the sounds of English and how sounds are put together to make words. This process also helps students to break down words into smaller pieces, as suggested in New Finding Out. In the long run, developing these skills can be more helpful and easier than memorizing how to spell words.

Writing (wr)

These worksheets are writing practice. They also require the student to recognize the clue (usually pictures of a phonic anchors or a picture of a vocabulary word) and write the corresponding word or sentence in order to describe the picture.

In 108 and onward, students write whole words from prompts.
Starting in 112, students put words into groups according to the double-letter phonics they contain. *Car* and *carpet* both belong with the *ar* group.

**Puzzle Write and Draw (zd)**

These worksheets involve reading and drawing. Students read a coded sentence written in phonic anchor pictures, then write the sentence, and then draw what the sentence describes. They can read aloud their sentences to you as they present their finished worksheets.

**Management**

A Checklist is included to keep track of when the worksheets are used. An Excel file and a PDF file are included. When printing the Excel file, please be sure to print all three sheets of the workbook. The date each worksheet is assigned can be written in the space provided, or the sheets can be tracked by typing directly in the Excel file.

**General Strategies**

*The students are making many mistakes on the worksheets. What can I do?*

There can be many reasons for this, and the more you get to know your students, the easier it will be to diagnose what is happening. Regardless of the difficulty of each worksheet, all worksheets should be introduced and the students should have each discovered thoroughly how to complete the necessary tasks. They should know exactly what they are supposed to do for homework when they leave the classroom. Especially with the first assignment of a new type of worksheet, the demonstration should be detailed. Also, students who make many mistakes or do not complete the homework may be finding it difficult. Easier worksheets, review from earlier units, or a return to earlier units may help.

*How many worksheets should I give the students?*

Although the worksheets are designed to be doable in a short amount of time, some worksheets and worksheet types take longer than others. This can be an important factor in deciding when to give the worksheets and how many to give. One might opt, when checking homework in class for instance, to give quick or easy review worksheets (like Handwriting, Coloring, and Phonic Matching B or C) to students whose homework is completed and corrected, while still working with other students on their homework. Also, in considering how many pages of homework to give, one might choose to give a combination of long and short worksheets instead of all long or all short. For homework, we generally give 0–4 sheets per week, depending on whether the students have exercises to do in their copies of the *New Finding Out Home Book*.

*How can I make the worksheets more interactive?*

As the worksheets are a consolidation of the vocabulary, language patterns, and skills learned in the *New Finding Out* curriculum, teachers can interact with the children using these worksheets. While introducing each sheet, you can ask the children about the pictures or have them ask you questions. Also, if you choose to check the homework
during class, you can communicate with the children over the worksheets. This can be done in line with the simple language the children have been introduced in *New Finding Out*. The children can be encouraged to interact with you using the same language. Humor, too, can make the interaction a lot of fun, especially using absurd questions or answers.

*What if the students don’t accomplish the lesson plan for the day? If the students are not well enough prepared for the worksheets I’ve planned, how will they be able to do the homework?* Unpredictable variables, such as absences, behavioral issues, emotional moods, might affect how well the class does with the day’s lesson plan. Kids may also be ambitious and want to do more than the assigned homework. In any case, keeping a few review worksheets on hand just in case can come in handy.

*Are there any recommended methods of grading these worksheets?* Each teacher has their own methods, but here is one method. When the homework is checked, hinting and withdrawing can be used as it is described in the *New Finding Out Teacher’s Book*. Mistakes can be pointed to, underlined, circled, or otherwise hinted at, leaving the child to correct their own mistakes. Further hints may involve referencing a student’s *Class Book* or classroom posters, using gestures, drawing pictures, or having an interactive conversation about the worksheet. When a worksheet is complete and all errors have been satisfactorily corrected, it can be given a star, checkmark, stamp or other mark signaling that it is finished. It can then be left in the student’s binder and referenced in the future. If finished worksheets are marked, students, parents, and teachers can all easily determine which homework assignments are incomplete and which are complete. Ideally, each student should have a binder full of completed and marked worksheets that make very meaningful show of progress when presented to a parent.

*Is there a forum where I can see what others are doing with these worksheets?* Please visit our Rainbow Bridges EFL Materials Store on Facebook for the latest on using the worksheets and other materials as well as educational news and links!

**Printing Suggestions**

Adobe Reader is downloadable for free, and you can use it to view and print the worksheets. You can open any of the bundled Worksheets files, then select which individual pages you want to print from the page thumbnails for an individual class. You can also print double-sided and select the order in which you want the worksheets printed. Mac users can use Preview to combine selected individual worksheets and print them ([here’s how](#)). A4 paper is recommended. Double-sided printing saves paper and space in the students’ binders.

**Distribution**

For easily filing, you can use a hole puncher (available at most stationery shops for around 2000 yen) to punch holes along the edge of the worksheets. They can then be collected into ringed binders for neat storage. Binders can be purchased at most 100 yen stores and stationery shops. A4 paper and A4 30-hole binders and punchers are recommended.