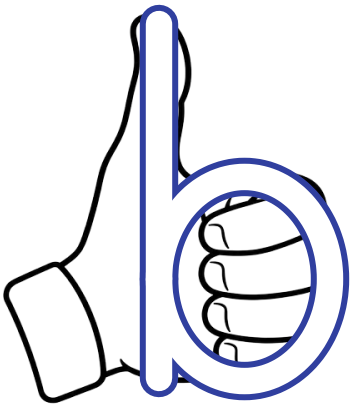
Name _____

The thumbs-up trick for b, d and p

Your **left hand** is a letter. Make the hand first, then write the letter the same way.

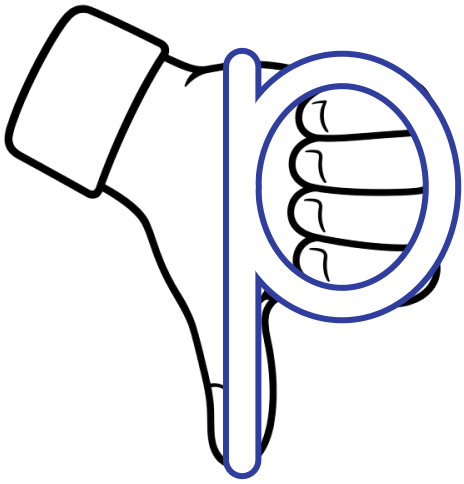
b Thumbs up = b

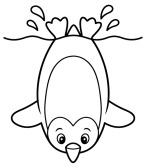




Birds fly up!

p Thumbs down = p





Penguins dive down!

1 Make the hand first

Left hand. Thumb up for b, thumb down for p.

2 Write it like your hand

The thumb is the stick, the fist is the round part. d goes the other way.

3 Reading? Hold it up

Matches your hand: **b** (or **p**). Faces the other way: **d** (or **q**).

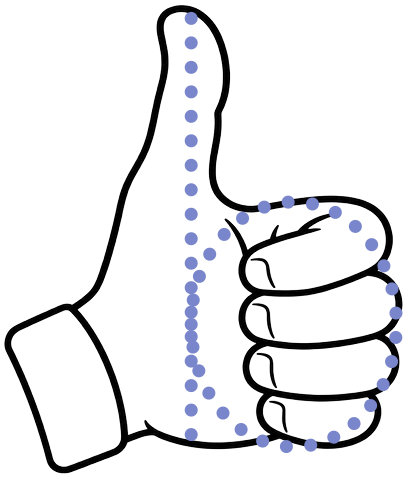
Always the left hand. Left-handed? Make the shape first, look at it, then pick up your pencil and write. Your right hand makes the opposite letter.

Say the sound too. /b/ bird, /d/ donut, /p/ penguin. And a tip for q: it almost always comes with a u, as in queen.

Name _____

Trace the letter on the hand

Trace the letter on the hand with a crayon and say its sound. Then color the hand.

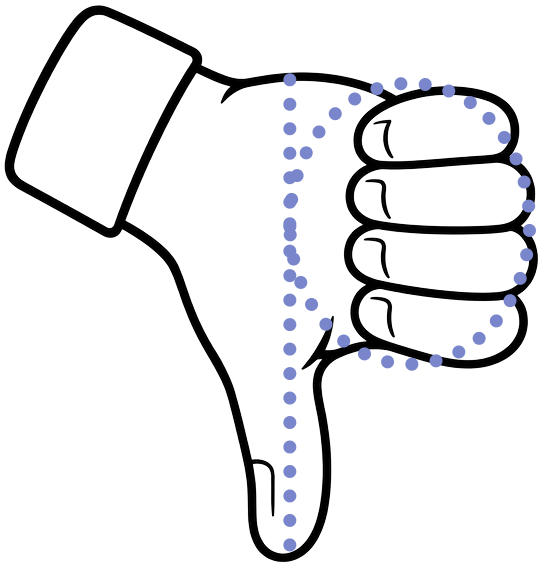


b Thumbs up

Trace the b. Say /b/.

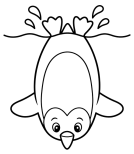


Birds fly up!



p Thumbs down

Trace the p. Say /p/.



Penguins dive down!

Name _____

Find the bird letters

Make your thumbs-up hand first. **Circle every letter that matches it.**

b	d	d	b	b
d	b	d	d	d

I found _____ b's.



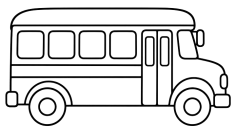
Color the bird.

Birds fly up, like the thumb in a b.

Name _____

b or d? Write the missing letter

Say the word. Hear /b/? Make your thumbs-up hand, then write the b just like it. Hear /d/? It faces the other way.



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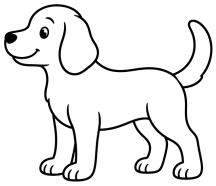

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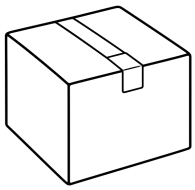

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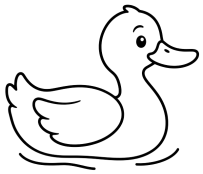

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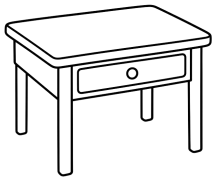

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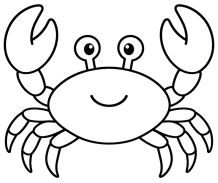

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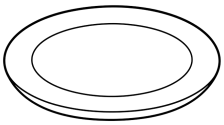

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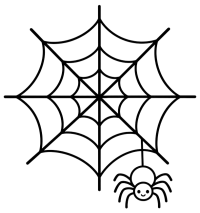

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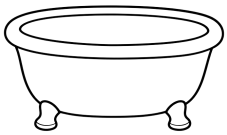

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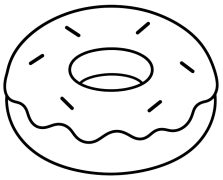

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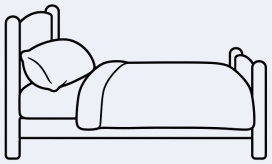


Bonus

__e__

This word has a b *and* a d.

Name _____

Thumbs down = p

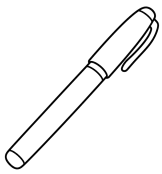
Make your thumbs-down hand first. **Circle every letter that matches it.**

p	q	q	p	d
d	b	b	p	p

Make your thumbs-down hand, then **write p** just like it where it goes.



__an



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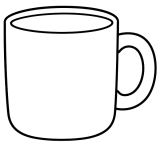

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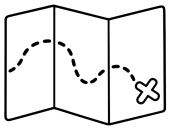

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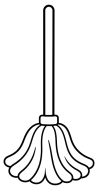

mo__



__u__

qu

q tip: q almost always comes with u, as in queen.

Name _____

Trace it, then read it

Make the hand first, then trace the gray letters and write your own. Say the sound each time.

b

Say /b/, like bird.

d

Say /d/, like donut.

p

Say /p/, like penguin.

Read these words

Stuck on a letter? Check it with your hand.

bed	dad	pup	bad	dip
pad	bud	pod	bid	bib

For parents and teachers

Answer key

1. **Page 3:** there are 4 b's.
2. **Page 4:** **b**us, **d**og, **b**ox, **d**uck, **d**esk, **b**ag, cra**b**, **d**ish, we**b**, han**d**, tu**b**, **d**onut. Bonus: **b**e**d**.
3. **Page 5:** there are 4 p's. Words: pan, pen, pot, cup, map, mop, pup.

How to use these pages

1. **One letter at a time.** Make b solid (pages 1–3) before mixing in d.
2. **Sound first.** Every time the student writes or finds a letter, they say its sound.
3. **Hand first.** Before writing b or p, the student makes the hand and writes the letter to match it. When reading, they hold it next to a letter they are unsure of. Over time they need it less.
4. **Little and often.** Five minutes a day beats one long session.

Is reversing b and d a sign of dyslexia?

- **Usually not on its own.** Young children mix up b and d because the brain first learns that a thing facing left is the same thing facing right. Reading means unlearning that for letters.
- **Most children stop by about age 7 or 8** (the end of second grade).
- **Ask about an evaluation** if reversals continue past second grade, or come with other signs: trouble linking letters to sounds, slow and effortful reading, or guessing at words.

Watch the 40-second video

See the trick in action, with the bird and the penguin, and read our short guide to letter reversals.

readingmountain.com/resource-center/b-and-d-reversals

Reading Mountain teaches b, d and p with interactive lessons. Try the first two lessons free.

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