



**Introduction**

**WELCOME TO OTTER WATER 2011!**

**OTTER WATER** is a mini-unit for **kindergarten, first, second and third grade** classrooms. It is designed to help students meet grade-level benchmarks in language arts, science, and mathematics, with a focus on observing, describing, and sequencing.

It also includes an inspiring **service project** to help keep water flowing in New Mexico rivers for otters and other wild animals.

**What's Inside**

**LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION TO OTTERS**

**LESSON TWO: SOMETHING STINKS!**

**LESSON THREE: LET'S SAVE WATER FOR OTTERS**

**BACKGROUND: VOCABULARY IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH, OTTERS IN NM**

**OTTER PHOTO**

**HANDOUT 1: OTTER DRAWING** (*reproducible*)

**HANDOUT 2: 10 OTTER FACTS** (*reproducible*)

**HANDOUT 3: OFFICIAL ORDER OF OTTERS CERTIFICATE** (*reproducible*)

**OTTER PUZZLE** (*reproducible*)

**OTTER WORDS** (*reproducible*)

**Online  
Resources**

At [www.earthsbirthday.org/nm](http://www.earthsbirthday.org/nm), print and copy additional resources.

**SOMETHING STINKS! STORYBOOK**

**ORDER WATER BANKS** (*for coin collecting activity*)

**Lesson One** INTRODUCTION TO OTTERS - SCIENCE

**Prep** Make a simple chart by drawing 3 large circles on paper or your white/black board. Label the circles: **FACTS, WHAT WE SEE, QUESTIONS.** Familiarize yourself with otters by reading **HANDOUT 2: 10 OTTER FACTS.**

**Materials** Otter photo, chart and marker;  
*for each student* - **HANDOUT 1: OTTER DRAWING**, crayons.

**Setting** Large group area. Display your chart for easy viewing. You will be writing in the circles as you present the lesson. Move to tables for the second half of the activity.

**Time** 35-40 minutes

**Step One:  
Web Chart** Tell students that they will be participating in an animal project especially for kindergarteners, 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders. Show the otter photo. Ask students if they know what kind of animal it is. When you have an answer, write **OTTER** in the **FACTS** circle. Tell students that they will be learning about this amazing animal during the next few weeks. Today they will be sharing what they observe about the otter photo.

1. Pass around the otter photo. As each student takes a turn holding it, ask *What do you see?* Make a list of their observations in the **WHAT WE SEE** circle. Some words that should come up are: head, nose, eyes, ears, tail, whiskers, fur, brown, black, legs, paws. Students may also volunteer words like cute and funny.

2. When students start to repeat information, ask them questions to make their observations more specific. *How many legs? What color is the fur?* Write these more specific facts in the **FACTS** circle: four legs, four paws, two ears, brown fur, soft fur.

3. Keep words like cute and funny in the **WHAT WE SEE** circle. Don't write them in the **FACTS** circle. These are words that describe what students observe about their own feelings, rather than words that describe that describe what they observe about otters.

4. When students repeat an observation or answer, put a check next to the word you've written in the circle to show that you are including them on the chart.

5. As you and your students fill in the **WHAT WE SEE** and **FACTS** circles, ask some questions that you can write in the **QUESTIONS** circle. *Why do otters have whiskers? Where do otters live?* Ask students if they can think of more questions. *What do otters eat? Do otters talk? Do they have families?*

**Lesson One** INTRODUCTION TO OTTERS - SCIENCE *continued*

Show the photo of the otter again. Talk about its physical characteristics.

Ask *Does it look wet? What is it near? What is around it? (rock, water, sky)*

1. Refer to the facts that you have written on your **FACTS** circle. *Can you see all four legs in the picture? What is on its paws? Are they claws? What color is it? What is different about its fur? (It looks wet!)*
2. Add new observations, facts and questions to the circles.

**Step Two:  
Handout I**

Move students to their tables for coloring.

1. Have them color the otter drawing.
2. Suggest they draw a “habitat” around the otter. *Where does it live? Outside? Are there plants and water there? What else?*

**Step Three:  
Closure**

Reconvene to the large group area.

1. End the lesson by having each student share a comment about her/his picture with the group.
2. Save your chart! You will use it again for future lessons two and three.

**Extension**

In Background, you will find an **OTTER PUZZLE** handout to print and copy. This is a word and number activity.

1. Make a copy of the puzzle for each student. Have students cut out the words and paste them where they belong by matching numbers.
2. When they are finished, they will have a picture of an otter with labels pointing to its main body parts (head, eye, ear, tail, etc.).

<b>Lesson Two</b>	<b>SOMETHING STINKS! - READING AND SEQUENCING</b>
<b>Prep</b>	See English and Spanish vocabulary in the Background section. You might like to make an Otter Water word wall.
<b>Materials</b>	<b>SOMETHING STINKS!</b> storybook, otter photo; <i>for each student</i> , <b>HANDOUT 2: FACTS</b>
<b>Setting</b>	Large group area.
<b>Time</b>	20 minutes; repeat daily for several days
<b>Step One: Read Story</b>	Read <b>SOMETHING STINKS!</b> to students. The goal is to learn all the places that the otters visit and what they find in each place. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the story once or twice a day for several days in a row.</li><li>2. Give each student their own book. Have them put their name on it. As you read the story, have the students follow along in their book.</li><li>3. Each time you repeat the story, ask students many questions. <i>Where do they go next? What stinks on the hill? What stinks in the forest?</i></li><li>4. When students make a right or wrong answer, say <i>Yes!</i> or <i>Try again!</i></li></ol>
<b>Step Two: Otter Chart</b>	Once each day, after you read, revisit the otter chart. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read <b>HANDOUT 2: 10 OTTER FACTS</b> with the students. Ask students <i>Do we know where otters live? Where do they like to live the most?</i></li><li>2. Write “live in” and “near rivers” in the <b>FACTS</b> circle. Tell students that river otters might live in rivers near us like the Rio Grande or Santa Fe River.</li><li>3. Ask students if they have any new questions to add to the <b>QUESTIONS</b> circle and write their answers.</li></ol>
<b>Step Three: Closure</b>	Tell students that sometimes rivers dry up. It is important to help keep water flowing in rivers where otters live, and this is a job that some people do. They take care of rivers and the wild animals that live in and near them.

**Lesson Three**      **LET'S SAVE WATER FOR OTTERS**

**Prep**                      On your white/black board, write **OFFICIAL ORDER OF OTTERS** and make another simple chart: two large circles labeled **USE WATER** and **SAVE WATER**. Read **OTTERS IN NEW MEXICO** in Background. If you plan to do the coin collection activity, set up water banks.

**Materials**              Water chart and marker, otter photo;  
*for each student* Handout 3: Certificate, crayons and water bank.

**Setting**                      Large group area; move to tables.

**Time**                              25 minutes.

**Step One:  
Introduction**              Begin by explaining to students that otters have been gone from New Mexico for a long time, but they are returning. We can help them by saving water at home and at school. This will help keep our rivers flowing. We know that otters love water!

**Step Two:  
Otter Chart**                      How do we use water? Ask students to help you make a list.

1. Ask students to name some things they do with water. Pass the otter photo from student to student and ask for an answer from each. Write answers in the **USE WATER** circle. Answers might include drink, take a bath, swim, float in a boat, wash dishes, wash clothes, cook, water yards, irrigate fields, wash cars, wash pets, flush toilets.
2. Ask students - *Do we ever use too much water?* Some ways we might use too much include (1) forgetting to turn water off, (2) letting water run while we brush our teeth and wash dishes, (3) flushing the toilet when we don't really need to, (4) watering our yard or washing our car in the hot sunlight, (5) forgetting to turn the hose off outside. Ask students if they know of other ways we waste water.

**Step Three:  
Take the Pledge**              Tell students that they are invited to be members of **OOOO**—it rhymes with glue—the **OFFICIAL ORDER OF OTTERS**.

1. The **OFFICIAL ORDER OF OTTERS** is a big group of hundreds of kindergarten, first, second and third grade students in New Mexico who are saving water for otters.

2. Read the **OTTER WATER PLEDGE**. Ask students - *Do you want to be a part of OOOO and take the pledge to save water for otters?* Together say the

**OTTER WATER PLEDGE:**

**NO JOB IS TOO BIG,  
NO ACTION TOO SMALL,  
FOR THE CARE OF THE EARTH  
IS THE TASK OF US ALL!**

**Lesson Three**      **LET'S SAVE WATER FOR OTTERS** *continued*

**Step Four:  
Promise**

Move students to their tables and give them the certificate, picture side up.

1. Show students that the pledge is printed with the picture.
2. Tell them that when they write their name, they are promising to save water for otters!
3. Have students color the picture and write their names. Tell students that when they see their certificate, they will remember how important it is to save water for otters.

**Step Five:  
Closure**

Tell students that they will take their certificate home with the promise they just signed. **Suggest they tell their families how important it is to save water for otters. They can tell them the ways to save water.** Quickly read the list on the water chart.

**Step Six:  
Coin Collection**

We can also help otters by buying water for rivers. Just **5 PENNIES** will buy the rights to one gallon of water in the Rio Grande or the Santa Fe River—every year forever.

1. Students collect a few coins each to help keep water flowing in New Mexico rivers. Set a goal! *Can you collect enough coins to equal a dollar?* **We suggest that you aim for 100 pennies or \$1.00 per student.**
2. Send penny banks home with students' storybooks and the handout. The handout tells parents that the coins they collect will be used to conserve water in local rivers. Add a note of your own to let parents know when to return filled banks to school.
3. As banks are returned, have the students sort the coins into piles and count how many of each denomination. Record their numbers in chart form on the board and use a calculator to determine how much money the class has collected.
4. Ask some older students to help kindergartners wrap pennies and also to count and wrap other coins.
5. Place all of the money into a large envelope and label with your information. Give your envelope to your coordinator and someone from **EARTH'S BIRTHDAY PROJECT** will pick it up. Or the coordinator could deposit wrapped coins and mail a check to **EARTH'S BIRTHDAY PROJECT** with the donation form that came with your banks.

**BACKGROUND**

**Vocabulary**

**SOMETHING STINKS! VOCABULARY IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH**

Desert	Desierto	<i>A sandy place with little water and few plants</i>
Forest	Bosque	<i>Many trees and other plants growing together</i>
Grass	Pasto	<i>A plant that grows close to the ground and has blades instead of stems and leaves</i>
Hill	Cerro	<i>A swelling or hump in the ground—large or small</i>
Junk	Basura	<i>Things people don't need anymore; trash</i>
Muck	Mugre	<i>Sticky mud</i>
Otter	Nutria	<i>One kind of mammal that lives near water</i>
River	Rio	<i>Water flowing in a wide stream over a long distance</i>
Skun	Zorillo	<i>One kind of furry animal that defends itself with a bad smelling liquid</i>
Stink	Apesta	<i>To smell bad—really bad</i>
Stunk	Apestaba	<i>Past tense of stink</i>
Stinkweed	Pastoapestos	<i>A wild plant that smells bad</i>
Stink bug	Bichoapestoso	<i>A beetle that defends itself with a bad smelling liquid</i>
Town	Ciudad	<i>A place where many people live in neighborhoods</i>
Water	Agua	<i>The liquid that all living things on Earth need in order to be healthy and happy and to stay alive</i>
Yuck	Yuck	<i>What we say when something smells or tastes bad</i>

**BACKGROUND** *continued*

**What About  
New Mexico?**

**OTTERS IN NEW MEXICO**

Until the early 1950s, river otters lived in New Mexico on the banks of the Rio Grande and the Gila, Mora, Chama, San Francisco, Santa Fe, and Canadian rivers. Since 2007, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the New Mexico Friends of River Otters (sponsored by Amigos Bravos) have been working together to bring otters back. Two summers ago, they re-introduced otters to the Rio Grande.

In 2011, The Nature Conservancy of New Mexico and the City of Santa Fe are committed to conserving water and increasing flows in local rivers (the Santa Fe and the Rio Grande) in order to restore wildlife habitat. We can help them do this work by saving water at home and school. It's easy! Just a few simple things we do can make a big difference.

**Thank you for participating in OTTER WATER 2011!  
Your students, along with students throughout New Mexico  
and the United States, are making a world of difference  
by learning language, science, and math skills to care for the Earth!**

# River Otters



# River Otter



No job is too big, No action too small, For the care of the Earth Is the task of us all!



## 10 Otter Facts | 10 Datos sobre las Nutrias



1. Otters are furry, brown animals.  
*Las nutrias son animales peludos y de color café.*
2. They have short legs and long tails.  
*Tienen patas cortas y colas largas.*
3. They have long whiskers and sharp claws.  
*Tienen bigotes largos y garras afiladas.*
4. Most otters live near rivers.  
*La mayoría de las nutrias viven cerca de los ríos.*
5. Otters swim, run, and dig.  
*Las nutrias nadan, corren, y escarban.*
6. Otters love to slide and play.  
*A las nutrias les encanta deslizarse y jugar.*
7. They eat fish and frogs.  
*Les gusta comer pescado y ranas.*
8. Otters grunt, snort, and scream.  
*Las nutrias gruñen, braman, y chillan.*
9. They chirp, whistle, and chuckle.  
*Ellas pían o cantan, chiflan, y se ríen.*
10. Otters stink! They make smelly musk.  
*¡Las nutrias apestan! Ellas producen un olor almizcleño apestoso.*



# OFFICIAL ORDER OF OTTERS



## OTTER WATER PLEDGE

No job is too big,  
No action too small,  
For the care of the Earth  
Is the task of us all!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ promises to save water for otters!

Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

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# OFFICIAL ORDER OF OTTERS



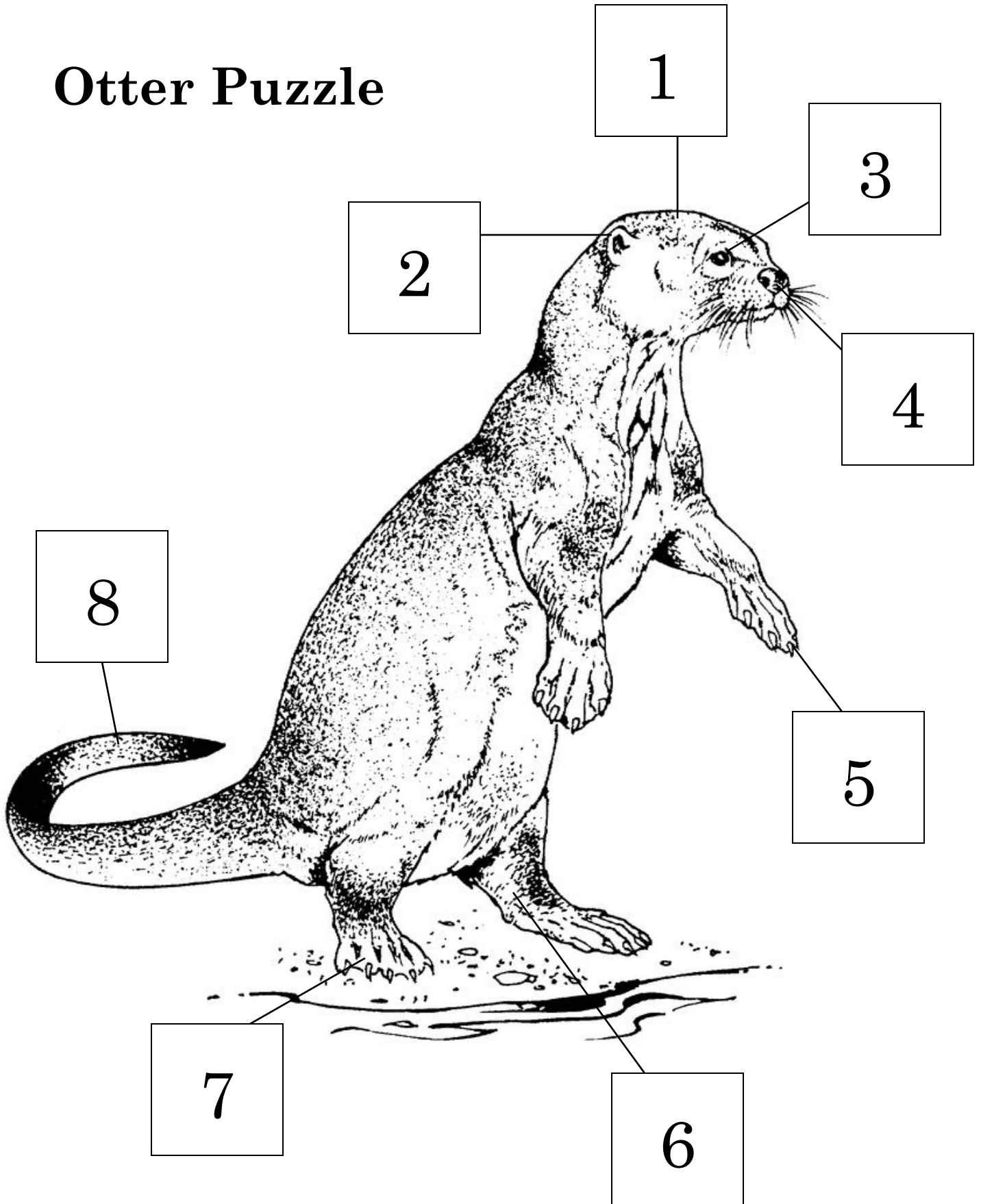
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# Otter Puzzle



1. Head	2. Ear	3. Eye	4. Nose
5. Paw	6. Leg	7. Claw	8. Tail

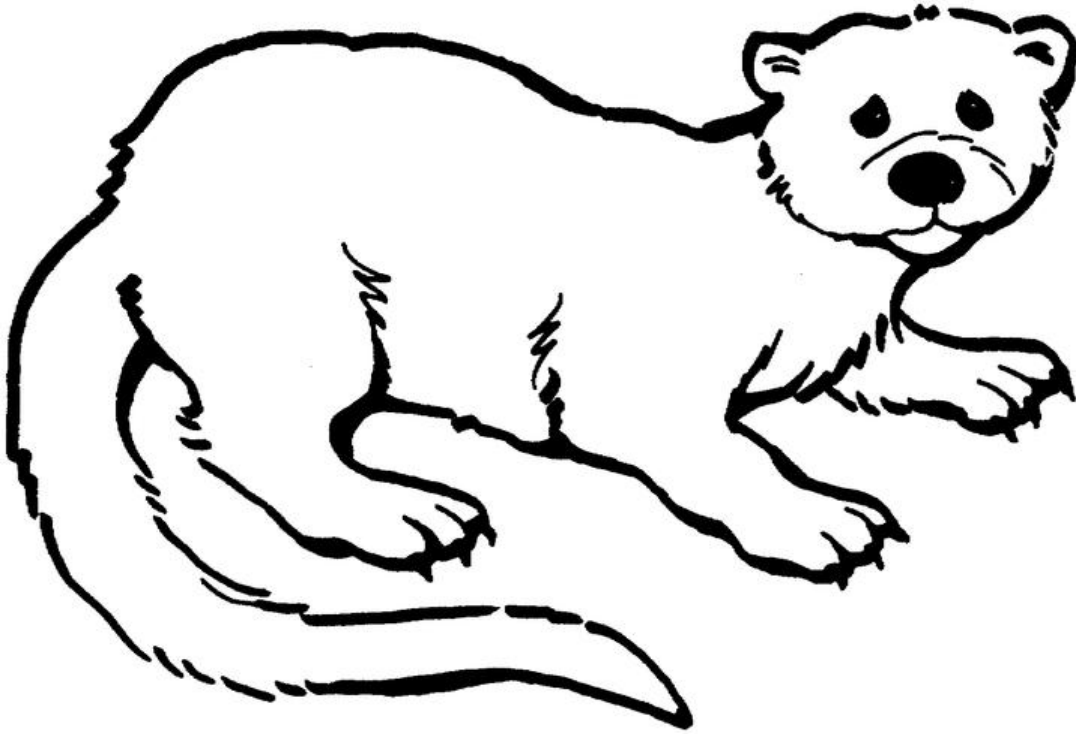
1. Head	2. Ear	3. Eye	4. Nose
5. Paw	6. Leg	7. Claw	8. Tail

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# Otter



Four sets of handwriting practice lines, each consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.