

# Letter Symbols

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## Letter Symbol Activity Explained

Letter symbol activities exercise attention, concentration, and visual search. These abilities fall under the broad category of cognitive functions called *executive functions*. As the term implies, executive functions control and manage other cognitive skills. You might think of executive function as the “control center.”

Improved executive function can affect many daily activities—from organizing tasks, to prioritizing, to managing time and decision-making. In addition, improved visual search abilities (which letter symbol activities exercise) can be useful in driving or walking through environments with potential trip hazards.

The letter symbol activity is similar to the widely used Symbol Digit Modalities Test (SDMT), which is used to identify deficits in executive functioning. The SDMT involves a simple substitution task. Using a reference key, the examinee has 90 seconds to pair specific numbers with given geometric figures.

The letter symbol activity is also a substitution exercise, except letters are used instead of numbers. When the letters and symbols are matched up, a phrase or quote is revealed.

Letter symbol activities exercise the prefrontal area of the brain.

