

“The ability to perceive visual stimuli as being the same or different is necessary for reading.”

Esther Minskoff
Teaching Reading to Struggling Learners

- Objective** The student will identify the object that is different.
- Materials**
- several sets of objects, each containing two objects that are the same and one that is different (e.g., two paperclips and one pencil)
- Method** Place the first set on the table. Ask the student, “Which one is different?” Repeat this activity several times with different sets of objects. Some students may benefit from doing this activity daily for several days.
-

- Variations**
1. Repeat the method, but reverse the question. Instead ask, “Which two objects are the same?”
 2. Increase the difficulty by selecting objects that have one attribute in common. For example, you might select three empty boxes. Two of the boxes might be gelatin boxes, and the other box might be an oatmeal box. Ask the student, “Which one is different?”
 3. Create sets that include three objects that are almost exactly alike. For example, you might gather three index cards and cut off the corner of one index card. Or you might select three toothbrushes, two of the same color and one of a different color. Then, place all three objects on the table. Ask the student, “Which one is different?”

“Teachers who prepare children for transition activities—to get ready to work, to listen, to go outside, or to clean up—model expectations and help the brain to disengage from one activity and prepare for the next”

Patricia Wolfe and Pamela Nevills
Building the Reading Brain, PreK–3

Objectives The students will exhibit an immediate “stop, look, and listen” response to a bell tone and will smoothly transition between activities.

Materials • a bell

Method Explain that there will be times during the day when you will need the students to stop what they are doing and listen for new directions. Show the students the bell, and ring it once. Explain that when you ring the bell, they must “stop, look, and listen” (stop working, look at you, and listen for new directions). Have the students practice correct transitioning behavior. Ring the bell, and wait for them to stop, look, and listen. Then, give a direction such as, “When I set the bell down, please stand up.” Use the bell anytime you need the students to transition from one activity to another.

Variations

1. While this transition technique is new to the students, give an additional verbal prompt. Ring the bell, and whisper, “Stop, look, and listen.” If the students begin to whisper the directions with you, ask them to say the words in their heads instead of aloud. After a few weeks, stop giving the verbal cue.
2. Praise individual students for following the directions you give after ringing the bell. For example, you might say, “Tanya, thank you for listening to me,” or, “I like the way you are looking directly into my eyes, Joseph.”
3. Build attention and listening skills by gradually adding more than one direction for the students to follow. For example, you might say, “When I set the bell down, please stand up and stretch your arms,” or, “When I set the bell down, please take out your pencil, get your folder, and sit down.”

“Just as muscles improve with exercise, the brain seems to improve with use.”

David Sousa

How the Special Needs Brain Learns

Objective The students will build short-term memory through repetition.

Materials none

Method Ask the students to sit in a circle for a game. Begin the game by saying, “I went to the grocery store, and I bought eggs.” Ask the students to repeat the sentence together. Then, have the student on your left repeat the sentence and add another item that can be bought at a grocery store (e.g., I went to the grocery store, and I bought eggs and milk). Continue around the circle until each student has repeated the original sentence, stated all the items added by other students, and added his or her own item. Assist students who omit items from the list or who cannot remember all the items.

Variations

1. Repeat the method with a different location. For example, “I went to the mall, and I bought a shirt.”
2. Repeat the method with a different action. For example, “I went on vacation, and I saw a mountain.”

“The concept of print is integral to the mastery of organized patterns of language systems.”

Alice Quiocho
“Students With Special Needs”

Objective The students will become familiar with different types of print products.

Materials

- hardcover and softcover books
- large and small books
- a comic book
- a newspaper
- a magazine

Method Show the students each print product, and ask them to identify it. Discuss the characteristics of each. For example, ask the following questions:

“How do you know that this is a book?”

“How can you tell that this is not a book?”

“Are all books the same size?”

“Do all books have a hard cover?”

Point out some of the characteristics of books, such as the title, author’s name, illustrations, and spine. Discuss the differences between books and magazines or newspapers, such as advertisements, multiple articles, multiple authors, pictures with captions, and article columns.

Variations

1. Laminate pages or sections of a variety of print products (e.g., magazines, newspapers, and comic books) Hold up one of the laminated pages. Ask the students to identify which kind of print product it came from.
2. Allow the students to bring in various types of print products to present to the class.

“Research reveals that poorly developed phonemic awareness is the core difficulty for a large proportion of children who are having difficulty learning to read!”

Marilyn Adams et al.
Phonemic Awareness in Young Children: A Classroom Curriculum

Objectives The students will listen actively to environmental sounds and will recognize and mimic them.

Materials • classroom machines that make distinct sounds (e.g., an electric pencil sharpener, a printer, and a clock)

Method Have the students listen to one of the classroom machines. Then, ask the students to practice making the sound. Repeat the activity with the other classroom machines.

Variations

1. Take the students to different locations in the school, such as the main office, the teacher’s lounge, and the cafeteria. Have the students mimic sounds made by other machines (e.g., a fax machine, a copy machine, a telephone, a microwave, a refrigerator, and a dishwasher).
2. Name a location such as a grocery store, restaurant, or theme park. Challenge the students to think of sounds made by things in that location. Call on one student to make the sound he or she has thought of. Ask the other students to listen to the sound and try to guess what makes that sound. Have the student who guesses correctly make the next sound.
3. Take the class outside to listen for sounds. The students may mimic some of the sounds they hear, such as birds, wind, and vehicle engines or horns.