

INSTANT
PEP*
FOR
LANGUAGE



POSTMAN ENTHUSIASTS PROJECT
By the Staff of Fort Myer Elementary School
Arlington, Virginia

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Preface

The staff at Fort Myer School became involved during the 1965-66 school year with this perplexing question: "What is Linguistics?" We were looking for an understanding or a better awareness of what was behind the "new" revolution that seemed to be gaining momentum in the language arts area. There did not appear to be a satisfactory explanation even though we sampled various sources of information through in-service programs, and heard both presentations by experts and reports from other schools in the county where in-depth programs were being conducted. One person was mentioned to us as someone who could talk about linguistics and general semantics in a way that could be understood--a Dr. Postman of New York University. He was scheduled to appear in Arlington on one of the professional days in the spring of 1966 to meet with a group of schools involved in a language arts study. Three of our staff made arrangements to sit in on one of the sessions.

To make a long story short, we felt after this that we had found the man who could help us to develop a truly effective language program. The staff, as a group, agreed to move into an ambitious in-service program for the following school year. Dr. Postman was contacted, and he agreed to work with us on a consultant basis. We regret that the initial plans he proposed had to be drastically reduced, for we received only a part of the financial support that we had requested from the School Board. Nevertheless, we were ready to roll with the modified approach in the fall of 1966.

Dr. Postman spent four days with us in the 1966-67 school year: one of these was in October, another in November and the last two in January. During and in between these visits, he gave us many and varied concepts to consider. At first, naturally, there was hesitancy because several staff members found it difficult to shake some of the so-called traditional thinking. However, each visit by Dr. Postman brought with it an increased acceptance of his ideas. He is an inspiring and provocative person to work with, and his points of view about language and the learning process soon became a part of our nervous systems.

At the conclusion of his last day with us in January, he challenged the staff to continue with the work it had begun in the classroom. The group of ten which originally met after that session soon increased to sixteen busy, eager, hardworking people. For us the remainder of the year was the most exciting and satisfying experience we have had in education. Much work was done in the classroom while the pupils tried out Dr. Postman's ideas. We met frequently in early morning sessions to discuss the next steps, to exchange experiences, and to bask in our own feeling of well-being. An exhibit of our work was presented in a release time day, and viewed with interest by many from other county schools.

Dr. Postman made an unexpected return visit in May and he was extremely surprised and pleased with all that the teachers had done and with the high degree of enthusiasm that seemed so evident in the staff.

As the materials developed and used by the teachers in the classroom accumulated in great quantity, there were frequent expressions from the group that we should try to package these into a guide or resource booklet. During the summer twelve of us came together to start the ball rolling toward the production of what is presented on the following pages as the PEP book. The finished product is something we hope will be useful to teachers in other schools, as well as here at Fort Myer. It would be most satisfying if we could transfer to the reader some of the excitement we have felt in the full run of our experiences. There is no doubt that we have discovered something about ourselves in the process, along with a better understanding of how our language works.

We owe a lot to PEP (Postman Enthusiasts Project).

Introduction

The ideas and suggestions included on the following pages of this book represent more than just points of view about linguistics and general semantics. We feel that what we have attempted to do with the boys and girls at Fort Myer School is much more than that. We have attempted to show them varied forms of behavior as they operate in our world of language. It has been our aim to assist them in discovering knowledge about language. And, in a final analysis, we have tried to help our students learn how to learn.

It is our belief that the main task of the school is that of helping youngsters learn how to learn, how to think critically, how to be good observers, how to develop greater awareness about "what is going on", how to appraise with validity the changing situations they will meet from day to day--in short, how to live more completely and effectively. We have talked about a language "for survival", or a "language of relevancy", because if we are to help our boys and girls achieve the above goals, we must involve ourselves with language. We live in a world of words that we call our language; many of our successes or failures stem from our skills or inabilities to handle and understand words and their meanings. If teachers make a careful search of what's happening in our language usage, it seems to us that we cannot avoid changing our attitudes and approaches about what goes on in the classroom.

The staff members who have worked in the PEP Project at Fort Myer School would probably be the first to admit that we have changed in our behavior as a result of the experiences we have had in the project. We see the instructional program becoming a process-oriented program for the teaching and learning of language arts and sciences at all grade levels. To do this, we have to change ways of teaching to the inductive, discovery, or inquiry method. This is not easy--habits in thought and action are difficult to break and a change is not accomplished in one quick turn-about. We are in the process of making changes in the approaches to learning that the above named methods imply. The examples of classroom activities described on the following pages are evidences that we are making some progress, and this encourages us to forge ahead even further toward a true "process" approach in our language teaching and learning.

Eventually, if we are successful, we would hope our youngsters would understand key ideas like: language has purpose, tone, audience, point of view, structure, etc.; language is metaphorical; language functions at different levels of abstraction; language controls perception. In addition, through our "process" approach to the study of language we would expect our students to develop greatly in their inquiry skills such as, question-asking, defining, observing, classifying, generalizing, and verifying. These are not new concepts or new competencies in any sense. The inductive method is not new. We have been conscious of these things for a long time. So why all the fuss over some obvious methods and ideas? Just the fact that things are obvious should not lessen their importance. The trouble is that too often we feel the obvious is so simple that it cannot be important, or it seems so apparent that we feel we must have known it all the time. But if we react in either of these ways we are missing the point. Instead, we can often profit if when meeting the obvious we ask ourselves: "What if I thought further in this direction?" or "What is here that I have not seen before?"

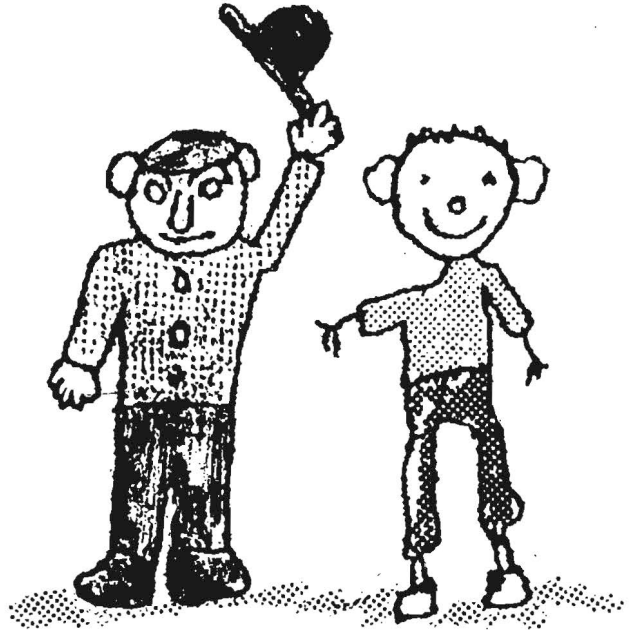
So what is proposed in this book is not "new" in fact, but for most teachers will be new in action and in thought. Certainly the discovery methods of teaching fall into this category. No one can say what the outcome will be but if we want to give our boys and girls the kinds of programs and procedures that have high goals and promise success, we should be willing to try "new" ideas and "new" methods.

C. Gordon Higgins

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....the more fully aware we are
of the language forms we are
using.....the more of a say we
have in what we have to say.



TONE

Tone is a manner of speaking or writing that shows a certain attitude on the part of the speaker or writer. Tone is used to achieve a certain effect or create a specific mood.

There are languages; not A language. There is the language used in the ball park, or at a formal reception. A language does not fit all occasions. Therefore, boys and girls must learn the relevant use of language that will allow them to meet each situation effectively.

The following activities are designed to increase the child's awareness of tone.

KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 2

1. FAMILIAR STORIES:

Use the stories -- Three Bears, Little Red Riding Hood -- to emphasize the tones of voice of different characters.

2. COME HERE:

Present a phrase or sentence to class. Example: "Come here." Change tone each time. Listeners should get different meanings from change of tone.

3. "WHO AM I?":

This is a game where children are in a circle. One with eyes covered is in the center and is "IT". "It" tries to guess who says "Who Am I?" The speaker disguises voice.

4. HOW DO I FEEL:

Child turns around with back towards class and says "It's a lovely day." Rest of class must decide how child feels from the tone of his voice.

5. DISCUSSION OF PICTURES:

Begin with a picture having a few characters doing one or two things (nursery rhyme pictures can be used). Ask questions and discuss pictures. Ask child to use tone of voice for character in the picture. Example questions: What are they saying? How do they sound?

6. TAPE RECORDER:

Have child speak into recorder. On another day discuss how child sounded by the tone of his voice. Also have class guess who is speaking.

7. USE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS:

Show pictures that express feeling: Happy Sad Surprised
Use different tones with back to class. Class has to guess
the face that matches the tone.

8. HOW DOES YOUR VOICE FEEL:

Discuss the voice using familiar comparisons. "Is your
voice grating, soft, hard, scratchy?" Have a chart showing
steel wool, cotton, sandpaper, wool, metal.

9. USE TELEPHONE:

Discuss need for tone when speaking on the phone due to
a lack of facial expression. Carry on short conversation
with child and then ask about facial expressions used
during the conversation.

10. WORDS:

a. Words have different meanings according to the tone
used to express them.

Example: Look at that, Look at THAT.

b. Pictures can be drawn about words.

Example: Draw "That Guy", "That Gentleman", "That
Bozo". Have children write stories about "That Guy".
"That Gentleman", "That Bozo".

c. Nonsense words.

Make up a word. Example; "gulu".

The word conveys different meanings with various changes
in tone. Children make up own words and present them
to the class.

11. POETRY:

Discuss the tone, character and mood of a poem. "How does
it make you feel?" Point out that the poet has used certain
words for a particular purpose--to create a mood or feeling.
If there is conversation in the poetry, discuss the char-
acter of the person doing the speaking.

12. CHORAL READING:

The group changes tone according to the change in mood of poem.

13. ANNOUNCER:

Play Announcer. Discuss importance of tone as to the nature of the audience, material being announced, etc.

14. SENTENCES:

Give part of a sentence. "I feel (happy or sad) because _____." The children finish the sentence in their own words. The object of the exercise is to have the children's endings relate to the tone of the beginning of the sentences.

15. ROLE PLAYING:

Children dramatize classroom incidents, imitate each other; the class then discusses who is being imitated.

GRADES 3 and 4

1. WORDS CHANGING WITH TONE:

The same words can have very different meanings if you change the tone of your voice, or if you emphasize a different word. Study the sentences below. See if you can say each sentence in three different ways so that the meaning changes to the listener.

- a. Whose dog is this?
(1) _____
(2) _____
- b. Now listen to me, Mrs. Ostrom.
(1) _____
(2) _____
- c. What a day this was.
(1) _____
(2) _____
- d. I don't believe you, Mrs. Hof.
(1) _____
(2) _____
- e. Shut the window.
(1) _____
(2) _____

Think of one tone in which each sentence might be said. Then write after (1) a sentence that might follow. Now change the tone for each sentence and after (2) write a different sentence to follow in keeping with the changed tone.

2. LETTER TONE:

Situation: Your friend Tommy has let you borrow his new toy rocket to play with for an hour while he is on an errand. You have promised to leave it on your porch for him when you leave for a scout meeting before his return. Accidentally, you threw the rocket through your neighbor's window, breaking it badly. Your neighbor and your mother are both away. Write a letter to your neighbor, your mother, and your friend explaining what happened and how you intend to solve the problem you now have with each of them.

GRADES 5 and 6

1. PARTY INVITATIONS:

Give a ditto to the class with three different types of party invitations. One is a very formal invitation, one is a casual note, and the third invitation uses slang and poor grammar. The class must answer specific questions about the invitations:

- a. What invitations reveal about the people sending them.
- b. What attire is to be worn.
- c. What type gift should be sent.
- d. Where the party would be held and the type of food that would be served.
- e. Class should tell which words in the invitation set the tone.

2. POETRY:

A poem is put on the board and is discussed by the class a few lines at a time. The poem used should tell an interesting story, or one seeming to have several indicated (but not stated) thoughts, solutions, or inferences.

Examples:

Annabel Lee - Edgar Allen Poe
My Papa's Waltz - Theodore Roethke
Miniver Cheevy - E. A. Robinson

When discussion is complete and children are exposed to a variety of opinions, this assignment follows; Students interpret and write down events and happenings and reasons behind them. No specific response to the problem the poem may present is required. Discussion of children's stories is to bring out the point that tone is personal and/or individual.

3. WORD TONE:

Give a list of words to the class.

Examples:

fat	-	obese
walk	-	slouch - slink - stomp
flit	-	fly
incident	-	affair - event - shindig - party
eat	-	dine
hungry	-	starved

Now ask children to write two stories with the same plot. In one story they are to use the more formal type words while in the other they are to use the more informal type. The children should realize, after reading the stories, that the tone of the stories will change according to the words used.

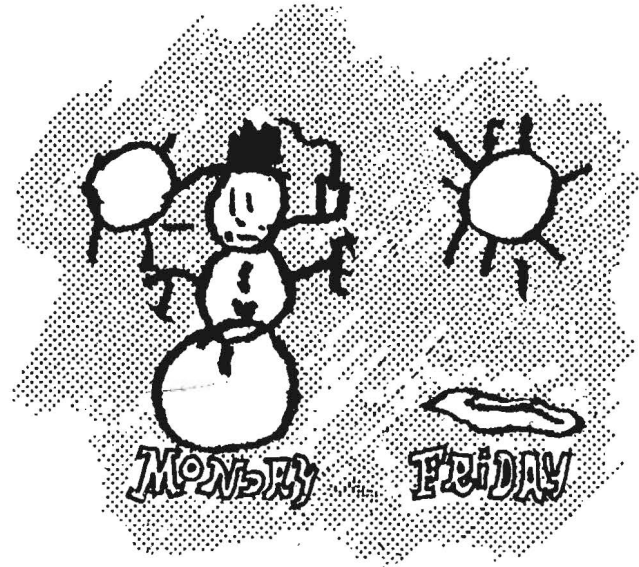
4. WATCH YOUR TONE:

As Mary Jane and her sister were leaving school, they passed the principal. Mary Jane's little sister looked up at him and said, "See ya' tomorra' bud!" Mary Jane quickly reprimanded her little sister saying that the tone in her language was improper.

What did Mary Jane mean? _____

Is it true that our language tones may differ depending upon with whom we are communicating?

Explain your answer. _____



DATING

This section will attempt to show how you can help students appreciate that our language, if effective, must be cognizant of the "when" in any situation. This notion is related to the idea that we live in a world of processes--change is ever with us and nothing remains exactly the same, even though the change may be very slight. A man today is not the same man tomorrow when he, for example, has a cold or a headache--nor is he the same man a year or ten years from now. These differences are not provided for adequately in our language approaches. Our boys and girls need to have the kinds of experiences that will help them develop a conscious awareness of the dating techniques that we need to employ in the everyday use of our language.

KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 2

1. BABY PICTURES:

Have each child bring in a baby picture of himself. Put the pictures on a bulletin board. Let children guess the identity of each and put name cards under each. In a class discussion bring out the changes in:

- a. size (height and weight)
- b. hair
- c. ability to talk
- d. ability to walk
- e. feeding selves
- f. dressing selves
- g. reading
- h. writing

2. DISPLAY A FLOWER:

Ask children to draw it. Date the papers. Ask them to draw the same flower a week later. Children compare and discuss changes in their pictures.

3. VALUES:

Ask children to draw pictures of what people want (value) at varying ages -- six months, now, thirty years, etc. Discuss changing values.

Examples:

- At 1, I wanted a _____.
- At 30, I may want a _____.

4. STORIES:

Children can write creative stories of the past and the future.

Examples:

When I was a Baby

Trips to Another Planet

5. SEASONAL PICTURES:

Discuss changes.

GRADES 3 and 4

1. FROM LITERATURE:

Read to the children one of Aesop's Fables. Discuss the fact that even though people live in different ways, they can still learn from the moral of the fables. Have children write about changes.

Examples:

How cars have changed, how early people found food, etc.

2. OUT OF DATE WORDS:

List words not in common use today.

Examples:

Knickers, suspenders, carriage, derby, homburg, skimmer, spats

Children can be assigned to give a function of each item and compare it to a present day substitute.

3. MEANINGS CHANGE:

Discuss changing meanings of words.

Examples:

satellite, brave, jet, foul, magazine, trash, quick, shell

4. ORIGINS OF WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS:

Use book from library, Why You Say It, Webb. B. Garrison.

5. HOW LANGUAGE DEVELOPED:

Children draw pictures to represent the meanings of words.

Example:

I fall for you.

GRADES 5 and 6

1. APPLES CHANGE:

Cut an apple in half and display. Have the children write the date on a sheet of paper and record their observations. Collect. Keep for 4 or 5 days. Distribute the papers and display the same apple half again. Children write date and record observations.

Ask such questions as:

- a. What kinds of changes did you observe?
- b. Do other things reflect change due to a time lapse?
Name some.
- c. What types of changes take place in people observed at different periods of time?
(List other than physical and chemical)
- d. What behavioral changes have taken place in you since last summer?
- e. How can the knowledge of "dating" help you in everyday life?

2. CLASSROOM UNITS:

- a. Discuss time and place changes as related to behavior.
(Do we act the same on the playground as we do in the classroom?)
- b. Discuss changes imposed upon a country or countries during wartime.
- c. Use a unit on the United States and how it started out as a wilderness and evolved into 50 states.
- d. Use with the unit on evolving life on the earth.

3. CHANGES IN MEANINGS:

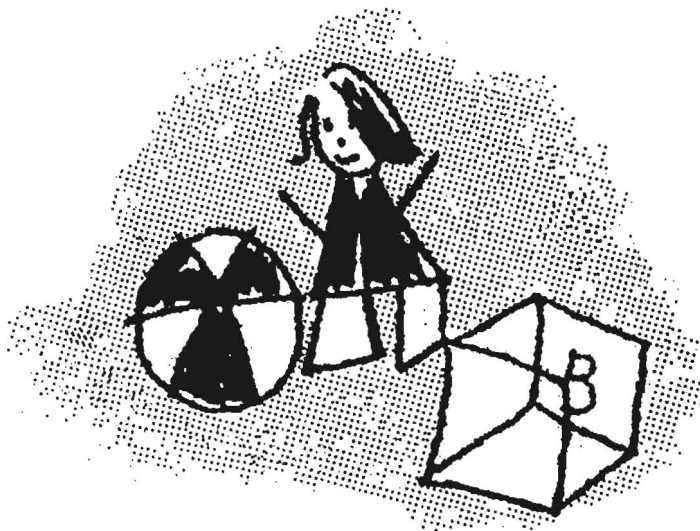
Discuss with the class how through the centuries changes in meanings have occurred as well as changes in written representation. Examples can be taken from ABC Our Language Today (6th Grade Edition). We may, for instance, have a completely different impression of a child described in the 15th Century English when a sentence states:

The wily brat, a villain's son, was a crafty counterfeiter.
Today, the sentence will mean:

The clever child, a serf's son, was a skillful imitator.

Children could be assigned to find and compare 15th and 16th Century meanings for :

silly	(happy)
cad	(cadet)
gossip	(sponsor in Baptism)
naughty	(worthless)
hypocrite	(actor)
daft	(neat)
smug	(trim, neat)
outlandish	(foreign)



INDEXING

A word, the name of something, things which we refer to by using the same name--all these may have different images, meanings, or variations for different people. This is due to the fact that each individual will react differently to the name of a thing. He reacts differently because his experiences with this thing have been unique.

When we refer to two or more things of the same name, we generally ascribe to them more similarities than differences. However, each item has many qualities which make it unique. It actually exhibits more differences than similarities when compared to another item of the same name.

KINDERGARTEN -

GRADE 2

1. STUDY OF FACES:

Children are assigned to draw their faces including the correct coloring of the hair and eyes. Class can write down or discuss the differences by observing themselves in a mirror.

2. LEARNING COLORS:

Hide an object in a box. Give the class only the color of the object, and have them name varieties of objects that are generally of the same color as the thing in the box.

3. THE MYSTERY BOX:

An object is concealed in a box. The children guess only by feeling the object. You may change the category of objects from time to time. One day it may be a toy and the class will guess its kind; another day the object may be a fruit, something round, a kind of animal, etc.

4. USING OUR SENSES:

a. Taste:

Put something in a box, the identity of which is to be guessed only through the sense of taste. For example, jars may contain combinations of sugar and water, chocolate and water, salt, vinegar, etc. You may also set up a line of small bottles with equal amounts of liquid, allowing the children to dip their fingers into each bottle and describe the taste of the liquid.

b. Touch:

Again the mystery box can contain an object to be guessed only by feeling it. Stones may be collected from the playground and placed in a box. Let children feel them and describe how each one feels to him. Responses may vary as to: heavy, light, smooth, rough, big, small, bumpy, holey, etc.

- c. Smell:
Mystery box contains object, the identity of which is to be guessed only by the odor it reveals; or a variety of liquids in bottles may be set up. Some familiar odors may be perfume, lemon juice, vinegar, ammonia, hair spray, moth balls, or soap.
- d. Hearing;
Have children close their eyes to guess sounds they hear. Some sounds they may recognize are: rhythm bells, running water, door knocking, shutting window, or xylophone.

5. LEARNING TO CLASSIFY:

- a. Class begins to observe differences, going from those most concrete and obvious, to those smaller and more subtle.
They may start with observing four children; for example, three girls and one boy.

Ask:

1. Which is different? Why?
2. Is their hair color different?
3. Are their clothes different?
4. Are their faces different?

Continue listing numbers of differences the children can observe among other children.

- b. Display toys or pictures of toys asking which ones can be used quietly, noisily, by girls, by boys.
This same kind of classification can be refined further and made according to size, color, use or shape.
- c. Divide sheets of paper into separate sections and tell children to draw whatever you ask. When complete, the children can be asked to draw one or two of their pictures on the board. Class can compare what they have drawn, and what you had in mind.
Example:

You say "sea".

Some children will draw "C".

- d. Tell children you have a card in the closet. Ask them to describe it including the size, color and purpose. A very odd type of card should be used in order that they will guess incorrectly--thus leading to a discussion as to why they have not guessed accurately. The same may be used with "I have a box", "I have a neighbor", etc. until the children realize that nouns of the same name can have innumerable images.

6. USING PICTONARIES:

Instruct the children to draw three pictures on a sectioned paper.

(1) airplane (2) toy (3) dog

Children compare pictures when all airplanes, all toys, all dogs are placed on individual charts and conclude that there may be as many varieties of dogs as there are students. The same applies to toys and airplanes. They should conclude through discussions that these pictures have different connotations and that this is due to a variety of experiences with this symbol, unique to each individual.

7. MATCH THE WORKER:

Instruct the class to match the worker with the item or happening that might be found near the worker.

<u>Worker</u>	<u>Item of Happening</u>	
clown	street	fire
policeman	children	bus
toy salesman	apron	money box
fireman	circus	broken toys
bus driver	fire trucks	whistle
shoemaker	cars	old shoes
	red light	funny shoes
	paint	wheel
	hammer	seats

8. WHERE DOES IT BELONG?:

Instruct class to look at the three titles below, study the words opposite the titles, and decide to which title the words belong. They can write the number of the title beside the word to which it seems to belong.

	present	bus
	watch	store
	library	policeman
	flash light	
1. Things to see in the city	ring	
	harbor	
	train	
2. Things to buy in the store	handbag	
	airport	
	elevator	
3. Ways to get from place to place	toy	
	truck	
	moving stairs	

9. MORE THINGS TO DRAW:

Initiate discussion with the children about a face, a hat, a toy, an animal, a building. Children may draw one or all of these items, and include a description of the item they have drawn. Children will be able to discuss the differences among their drawings as they are all displayed to the class.

10. WRITING ABOUT PICTURE WORDS:

Ask the children to suggest words from their reading that make interesting or pretty word pictures or sounds.

Some suggestions:

Sounds: rush, whistle, sing, thump, bark

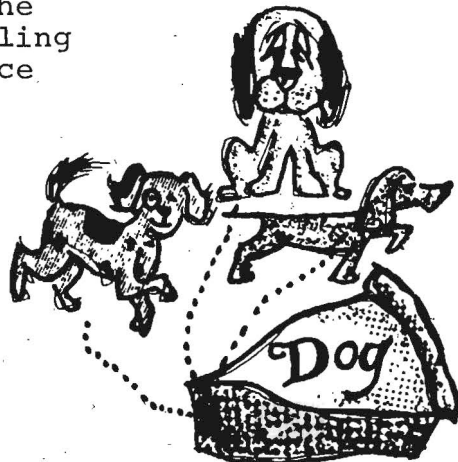
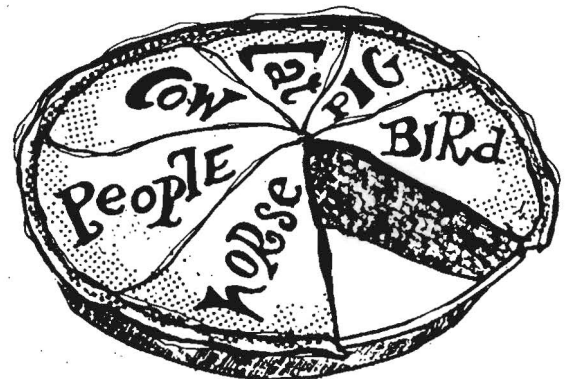
Colors: gray, red, yellow

Ways of moving about: sail, turn, rush, flash, follow, push, swing, whistle, finish, cover

Encourage children to write about something they think is pretty or exciting. Then let them read their descriptions to the group and begin a discussion about differences in opinion about what is pretty, what is exciting, or what is interesting.

11. ANIMAL PIE:

Draw a large pie on the board and tell the children it is an animal pie. Draw slices in the pie and ask the children for kinds of animals, one for each slice. Then take a slice from the pie, for example the "dog" slice, and ask the children to name different types of dogs for the filling. Through this, the children can see that the filling is part of the slice, the slice part of the pie.



GRADES 3 and 4

1. ARRANGING IN SETS:

Put any samples you can think of under each class:

Person	Animal	Food	Feelings
<u>(woman)</u>	<u>(cow)</u>	<u>(vegetable)</u>	<u>(mad)</u>
<u>(child)</u>	<u>(horse)</u>	<u>(orange)</u>	<u>(happy)</u>
<u>(man)</u>	<u>(dog)</u>	<u>(apple)</u>	<u>(curious)</u>

2. DESCRIBING A SET:

Name a particular example of each class named, and tell five things that pertain to each

<u>Class</u>	<u>Examples:</u>					
person	<u>(Mrs. Rogers)</u>	<u>(tall)</u>	<u>(glasses)</u>	<u>(teacher)</u>	<u>(married)</u>	<u>(black hair)</u>
animal	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
food	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
pencil	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
friend	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
worker	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Pupils can then write short stories about their examples of each class and include the five descriptive terms they have used.

3. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?:

The word "dog" or "house" or "toy" may mean many different things to many different people. Discuss this aspect of words with the children, and take one particular example to illustrate this fact. Ask, for example, how many different words or phrases come to your mind when you think of "house". Children should then list these ideas. Some responses may be: duplex, ranch house, apartment, landscaping, pad, tree-house, brick house, cement, cinder block, wood, doors, porch, blue room, air conditioning, tent, igloo, rented, place to visit. Above assignment may be followed up with another paragraph where children are asked to write about a house they have live in or one they admire.

GRADES 5 and 6

1. DRAW A DOG:

Class can be instructed to draw a dog. (No further instructions should be given to explain this assignment.) Display their drawings.

This can be followed by a question and answer session such as:

- a. Are these all pictures of dogs?
- b. Are they all the same dog?
- c. How can you tell that these are different dogs?
- d. Name some of the differences you see in these pictures?
- e. What are some of the similarities?
- f. Are there more similarities or more differences?
- g. Why then, do not all the pictures look alike?

The children can conclude through discussion that--because the directions to the assignment were vague in description rather than specific, and because we draw and picture what we have individually experienced--there are then as many varieties as there are children in the classroom.

2. DRAW A PENCIL:

Ask the class to draw a pencil. It is to have a brown eraser and a yellow stem. It is 1/2 inch wide and 5 inches long. It has not yet been sharpened. When drawings have been completed, display them and discuss the reasons for the fact that nearly all the pencils look identical. Continue the discussion with the question: "Are all pencils of this particular description exactly alike?" The children will at first agree that such a collection of pencils would necessarily look and be the same, but with further consideration they should question this assumption. Some things they can bring out in such discussion are the facts:

One pencil may have a small unnoticeable dent.

Another pencil may have markings in brand that will vary from the others.

One pencil may have an eraser of the same color, but may be made of a substance different from the rest.

Hopefully one conclusion will be: Even though things may be called by the same name, and may even look somewhat alike, they have more differences than similarities simply because they are individual entities.

3. WHAT IS THIS?

Make up a large chart displaying geometric shapes of many kinds, but arranged in no particular pattern. Invite children to comment as to what they want to call it. Write their comments or suggested titles on the board. (List children's answers in two columns--one column containing the responses that seemed to indicate the child was seeing the picture as a whole, the other column listing answers which indicate the child was seeing the individual designs. Do not reveal to the class why you are making two separate columns.)

The columns may contain:

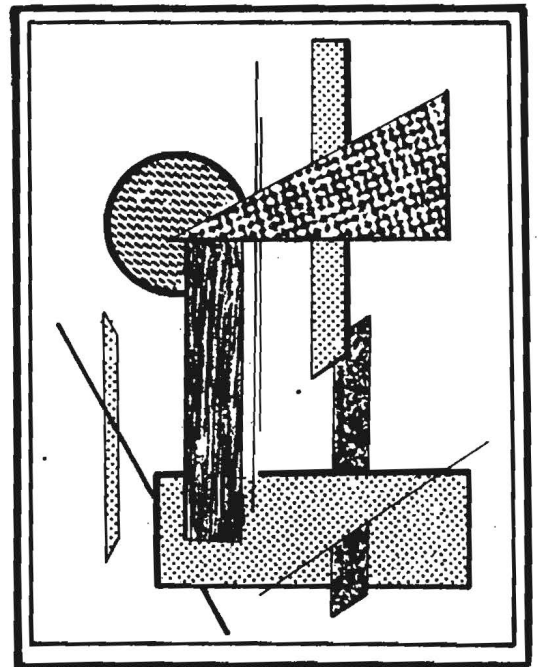
Column I

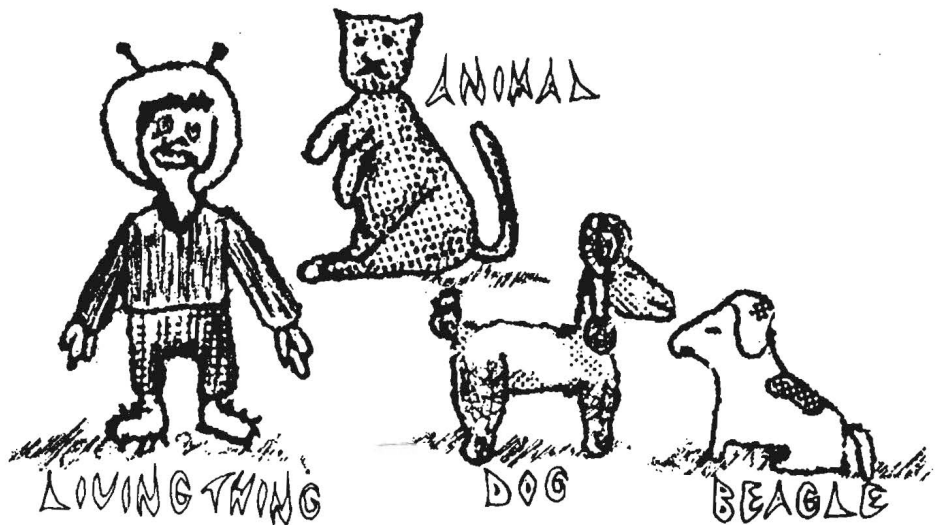
Designs
Shapes
Forms
Op Art

Column II

Rectangles
Combinations of
Lines
Circles

Then ask the class to note the differences in the answers in Column I and Column II. It is hoped that the class will realize that Column I contains answers which show similarities, while Column II shows differences. (The object of this lesson is to encourage children to see the similarities and the differences.)





LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION

To insure that our language has reliability, we want to build specificity into it. This could be referred to as going from a "high order" to a "low order", or "general" as opposed to "particular".

There are times when we use either end of the scale; however, children should realize that some words are more abstract than others, and may not convey the meaning which they intended. Misunderstandings in communication may develop unless they try to give specific examples in their language usage.

The following ideas are suggested as being helpful in promoting an awareness of "putting ideas in order".

KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 2

1. ABSTRACT TO SPECIFIC:

Have children collect pictures and then use them to go from abstract to specific.

Examples:

- Pictures of all types of animals--
- Pictures of farm animals only
- Pictures of small farm animals--
- Pictures of pig
- Pictures of all types of food--
- Pictures of fruit
- Pictures of yellow fruit--
- Pictures of a lemon

2. LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION BASED ON GEOGRAPHY:

- a. Our kindergarten is in Room 25
- b. It is in the Fort Myer School.
- c. Fort Myer is in Arlington County.
- d. Arlington County is in the State of Virginia.
- e. Virginia is one state in our United States of America.
- f. The United States of America is a continent in our World.
- g. The World is a planet in the Universe.

Make an acetate overlay to show how small our room is in the whole universe.

3. WHICH WORD MEANS MORE THINGS:

As a class project prepare a work sheet with the following ideas:

Which word means more things?

insects	or	animals
flowers	or	roses
Sheldon	or	child
animal	or	dog
clothes	or	dress
fruit	or	food

Have children circle the word which covers more.

4. QUESTION GAME:

- a. What color is it? red and white
- b. What size is it? size of a ruler
- c. How heavy is it? weighs as much as a little block
- d. What is it used for? play
- e. What shape is it? some things are round and some
are square
- f. Does it move? yes
- g. Does it have wheels? yes
- h. Is it like the pick-up truck we have here at school?
sort of
- i. Is it a play bus? no
- j. Is it some kind of a truck? yes
- k. What kind of a truck is it? that's the secret!
- l. Can I feel it? yes
- m. It feels like a bulldozer. Is it? no
- n. What letter does it start with? "s"
- o. Is it a cement truck? Yes, Joseph guessed it!

Many different objects can be used.

5. COLOR GAME:

- a. Have children draw something green.
- b. Have children draw something green which I can eat.
- c. Have children draw something green which is a fruit.
- d. Teacher then says, "I see green grapes."
- e. Children then draw green grapes.

Any color may be used. The game may also be played on the board.

6. FIVE CLUES GAME:

Players: Two teams--each team is allowed one answer per clue.

Clues: Five clues--going from highest to lowest level of abstraction.

Points: If team guesses the subject on 1st clue, 5 points; second clue, 4 points; 3rd clue, 3 points; 4th clue, 2 points; 5th clue, 1 point.

Examples of clues: "I Spy" I see something big. (Clue 1)
I see something big and gray.
(Clue 2)

Have each clue become more specific.

GRADES 3 and 4

1. PICTURE COLLECTIONS:

Have children collect pictures, and then use them to arrange ideas in order going from the abstract to the specific.

Examples:

- a. Illustrate the citizens of the country, of the state, of the school, and of the class.
- b. Show pictures of foods, then of sweets, and finally of a cookie.

2. WORD COLLECTIONS:

Starting with the word "treasure" each time, the children are asked to be more specific until they arrive at a definite object which is considered a treasure. The following examples were developed by the class:

<u>Treasure</u>	<u>Treasure</u>	<u>Treasure</u>	<u>Treasure</u>	<u>Treasure</u>
money	jewels	museum	caverns	landmarks
gold	diamonds	dinosaur	rocks	statues
pieces of	tiara	bones	uranium	people
eight		rib bones		G. Washington

3. PUTTING IDEAS IN ORDER:

Life - Animal - Cat - Siamese

Life - Plant - Flower - Daisy

Ask the children what they think the arrangement of these four words means.

Put these ideas in order. Go from the abstract to the specific:

Bird, canary, life, animal

Man, president, life, Kennedy

Mammal, mouse, animal, life

Noise, thump, sound

State, Virginia, place, Arlington

Object, diamond, jewel

Ford, entity, vehicle, Ford Mustang, conveyance,

Ford Mustang 1968, Ford Mustang 1968 Hardtop,

Ford Mustang 1968 Hardtop 3624987921

4. GENERAL STATEMENTS BECOME SPECIFIC STATEMENTS:

Make three very specific sentences from each of these very abstract sentences.

Examples:

- a. It went up
(1) The cost of living has gone up.
(2) The red kite went up on the telephone pole.
(3) The smoke of the factories went up in the air.
- b. She was there.
(1)
(2)
(3)
- c. That could be.
(1)
(2)
(3)

5. FROM ABSTRACT TERMS TO CONCRETE EXAMPLES:

Discuss very abstract terms such as:

honesty, patriotism, courage, gentleness, friendliness,
loyalty, patience, anger.

Have children give concrete examples of each. These examples should come from their experiences. This lesson should be done after much work on levels of abstraction.

6. FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS:

Can you follow directions? Test yourself by following those that are given below.

- a. Read all the directions before you do anything.
b. Write your name in the top right hand corner.
c. Raise your left hand.
d. Count down from 10.
e. Write the first line of "America the Beautiful".
f. Stand up quietly and touch your toes.
g. Do only "b".

Discussion:

Did you get caught? Why do you think this happened?

Can you give good directions? Write directions for doing something. Be specific. We will see if someone in our class will be able to follow your directions.

7. GUESS THE ANIMAL GAME:

- a. Tell class to listen closely as you read them a description of an animal from the Encyclopedia World Book. Say you will skip some specific clues concerning this animal, but see if they can guess what it is from the clues you give.

Description:

The (horse) can live in almost any climate. They have wide nostrils, and can breathe only through their noses, not through their mouths as man can. They have strong teeth, but eat only grain and plants. Their hard hoofs are their chief weapons. The _____ is intelligent and strong, and appears in many colors and combinations of colors.

- b. With the clues you have given, ask them to try drawing a picture of the animals which they think you have described.

- c. After the children have had time to complete their sketches, discuss what they think the animal is. "Why did you draw the one you are showing us?" "What else could I have told you about this animal."

At a later time you may want to repeat this lesson using other examples.

Description:

The (monkey) has a short, narrow face which looks like that of a wrinkled old woman. They can use their feet as well as their hands because their toes resemble thumbs and fingers. They eat fruit, plants, insects, eggs, young birds, and reptiles. They usually eat just after sunrise and just before sunset. They can scream in anger, and make low, sad sounds. They are usually green, gray, or brown.

Discussion follows.

Description:

The body of the (giraffe) is short, and slopes sharply down to the tail which ends in a tuft of hair. The front legs appear to be longer than the hind ones, but they are all the same length. The feet have cloven hoofs. On the long head are two moderate sized ears. Between them is a pair of short, bony projections resembling horns.

8. HOW ARE WE DOING?:

Check yourself:

a. Which statement is most specific? Why?

(1) I have a pet.

(2) I have a full grown, brown and white St. Bernard as a pet.

b. Arrange the following in levels of abstraction from vague to specific.

Pet _____ School _____ Principal _____

St. Bernard _____ structure _____ person _____

animal _____ Fort Myer _____ man _____

dog _____ Mr. Higgins _____

GRADES 5 and 6

1. SELECTING ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE WORDS:

(This is a good written test for follow-up of third and fourth grade work).

Abstract - Concrete

Write A before any word that is abstract and C before any word that is concrete.

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| _____ 1. wheel | _____ 4. glasses | _____ 7. heroism |
| _____ 2. loveliness | _____ 5. Nathan Hale | _____ 8. Hercules |
| _____ 3. geranium | _____ 6. patriotism | |

After each pair of words below write the word that is more concrete.

1. school, college _____
2. carpenter, tradesman _____
3. serviceman, sailor _____
4. food, steak _____

After each of the words below, write one other word that is more concrete.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Mammal <u>(whale)</u> | 4. job _____ | 7. cake _____ |
| 2. Plant <u>(ivy)</u> | 5. scientist _____ | 8. fruit _____ |
| 3. story <u>(legend)</u> | 6. wood _____ | 9. medicine _____ |

Write definitions of the following abstract words. (Do not use a dictionary). Make each definition as clear as you can.

- (1) Beauty _____
- (2) Ambition _____
- (3) Wrong _____

Lessons involving various levels of abstraction are developed in the upper grades to help promote a breakdown in meaning which will ultimately facilitate ability to define.

2. ARRANGING WORDS:

Prepare squares of paper, one per child, with one word on top. Child is to draw whatever the word says. Each square contains one particular level of abstraction or specificity.

Sample words:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|------------|
| a. 1. plant | b. 1. living things | c. 1. food |
| 2. flower | 2. animal | 2. meat |
| 3. red tulip | 3. dog | 3. hot dog |

Collect drawings and display. Allow children to decide which pictures belong in one unit. In grouping the pictures they will place all red tulips together; all flowers; all plants. Then conclude: "plant" could encompass all pictures, "flowers" only those plants which are flowers, and "red tulips" only those which are red tulips. They have narrowed the range down to the most specific: red tulip. (You might point out that this is the way scientists classify unknowns) Repeat with samples "b" and "c".

3. WRITTEN WORK SHEET:

Levels of Abstraction

In each sentence underline the word or phrase which would give the reader the most specific description needed. On the line beneath each sentence, arrange all of the choices in levels of abstraction from the most general to the most specific.

1. My father is a (specialist, professional, surgeon, doctor).

2. He always referred to (a novel, a book, literature, Tom Sawyer's Adventures)

3. The family lived in (Germany, the Eastern Hemisphere, Europe, Frankfurt).

4. Scottie was a (pet, animal, dog, terrier).

5. The class was told to use (pen, a ball point, an instrument for writing, a Papermate).

6. The most harmful habit is (smoking, smoking a cigarette, smoking a Camel).

7. She traveled (to Florida, south, 100 miles south, to Miami).

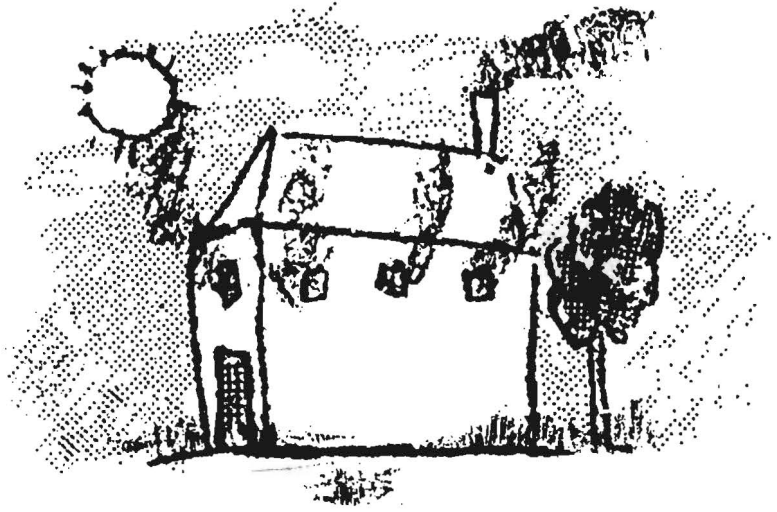
8. Directions for the recipe called for (sugar, a sweetener, an ingredient, 4X sugar).

9. (A person, Mr. Johnson, a man, a parent) entered the classroom.

10. (Vegetables, tomatoes, plants) are difficult to grow.

Other possible lessons:

1. Direct students to do an assignment using vague directions. Discuss why the outcomes were so varied. Allow the children to re-write the directions so that the outcome will be that which is intended.
2. Have a student give directions to another student. The second student will attempt to follow the directions. If the directions are not followed as intended, he will alter his language to a more specific (less abstract) level.



INFERENCE

vs.

FACT

The use of inference can often serve a vital purpose. A doctor must infer from a patient's symptoms the probable cause. Smoke seeping through a door could suggest a fire, and warn people to escape.

The use of inference can also cause much trouble. A well-dressed, intelligent, personable spy may penetrate into high government circles where he is able to obtain secret information because favorable inferences were made about him.

These examples are extreme. However, they point out the necessity of learning to distinguish between fact and inference. A child can learn what makes a fact - a fact. Also he can learn the clues to inference that are used in our language.

Many of the activities used in Kindergarten through Grade Two would make good initial lessons for the upper grades.

KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 2

1. THE SIX BLIND MEN:

Read the parable, "The Six Blind Men", found in any anthology of children's literature. Have the children draw each part of the elephant that the blind men touched. Reread the parable, and let the children try to put the whole elephant together.

Conclusion: Try to make children understand that the blind men should have felt all the parts of the elephant before deciding what it was like. One should always try to gather all the facts available before coming to a decision.

2. BLINDFOLD:

Blindfold several children. Let each of these children feel one part of a toy and describe it. Draw their inferences on the board. When drawing is completed, have children compare with the toy.

Conclusion: We should know all the things we possibly can about something before we can tell the true story. Could be related to "telling on" each other or spreading rumors and gossip based on partial knowledge.

3. WHERE TO GO FOR FACTS:

Ask the children to give their ideas about the sun or moon. Teacher writes stories on a chart. Children and teacher read stories together. Children decide which statements are true and which are inferences after teacher reads articles about sun or moon from resource materials, films, filmstrips, etc.

Conclusion: Children begin to learn where to go for facts.

4. IS THAT A FACT?:

Put the word "bread" on chart paper early in the day with no comment or explanation. Later ask children what they know about bread. Chart comments and statements verbatim. Show children a loaf of very moldy bread. Reread statements of fact on chart. Have children place check marks beside those now thought to be facts and an "x" beside the statements now considered false.

Discuss which statements were inferential.

5. I'VE FOOLED YOU:

Make a chart with four lists of words. The first list should be all words beginning with "B". Over the list staple a large B. Over a list of words beginning with "F", staple a paper with a large "F". Do the same for "M". Make the fourth list contain words starting with "L", but over this list staple a large "S". Gradually lift the stapled letters B, F, and M. Before lifting the S, ask what they expect to find.

Children should realize that they made an inference about the last list, and that inferences are not always correct.

6. RHYMES HAVE MEANING:

Underline the word or words which would give the best meaning of the rhyme.

- a. Let's be careful when we drive; it will look best if you're alive.

walking safe driving talking

- b. Up it goes when you see rain; down it comes when it's sunny again.

shoe hat umbrella

7. WHAT IS ALL?:

Arrange real and artificial grapes on a tray before the class. Feed a few of the real grapes to some children. Ask the children to describe all the grapes on the tray. List comments on board. Show the artificial grapes and then check for statements that were really true.

Conclusion: The word "all" is one to watch and should be used with care.

8. "I THINK"VERSUS "I KNOW":

Read the children part of a story. Ask them if they know what happened next. Have them draw pictures to illustrate their view. Compare the pictures to the real ending.

This should help children understand when "I think" would have been better than "I know".

9. DOES A LABEL LIE:

Bring in cans and boxes that are labeled. Have children say what is in each. Show some that do not contain what the label says. Discuss.

Conclusion: Because something is in writing, it is not necessarily a fact.

10. IS SEEING BELIEVING:

Show a colorful picture. Make several statements about the picture. Let each child check his choice of "yes" or "no" or "don't know" about each statement. Following a discussion let each child again check his choice of "yes" or "no" or "don't know".

Conclusion: Children begin to realize the difference between facts and inferences.

11. CHECK THE FACTS:

Written exercise.

Put an F beside only those statements which are Facts.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Dogs have curly tails. | 6. Dandelions are flowers. |
| 2. Cats will scratch you. | 7. I am a child. |
| 3. A little dog is a puppy. | 8. Miss Stanton is a teacher. |
| 4. Dogs do not like cats. | 9. Mr. Higgins is principal. |
| 5. Flowers grow fast. | |

Discuss how the statements that were not facts could with additional words or slight changes in wording become facts.

Examples:

Some dogs have curly tails.

A young dog is a puppy.

12. ADVERTISEMENT:

Show an advertisement. For example: a beautiful dress said to be permanently pressed, fully lined, washable, available in colors red and blue, and to be sold for \$10.00.

Discuss which parts of the advertisement could be accepted as facts? (Buy it, wash it, wear it)

Conclusion: One must learn to understand the purpose of advertisements, and the necessity for realizing how much can be accepted as factual.

13. LET'S DO COMMERCIALS:

Have children illustrate TV commercials and slogans. Evaluate with children, and try to decide upon the actual facts about each commercial.

14. ARE YOU SUPERSTITIOUS?:

Mount pictures on poster paper. Put superstitious sayings under the pictures. Discuss whether saying is fact or not, and how saying may have originated.

Example: Picture of black cat with the saying, "If a black cat crosses your path, you will have bad luck."

Conclusion: Children should become aware that superstitions are not facts.

15. FACT VERSUS OPINION:

If it is a fact, write Yes. If it is an opinion, write No.

1. The fire was lighted.
2. My hands are as cold as ice.
3. I have seven kittens.
4. My sister is very pretty.
5. My father is the best policeman in Arlington.
6. Mother has a red coat.
7. She was very sad.
8. Bobby has a bike.
9. It was the happiest day of my life.
10. Virginia is the best place to live.

GRADES 3 and 4

1. WHAT DO WE KNOW?:

Use overhead projector to show a living room scene with a family group. Mimeograph several statements and have each child check true, false, or ? . Discuss each statement with class. Then have the children rewrite the statements to make them statements of fact.

Some examples might include:

- a. The Osbourn family has four members.
There are four people in the room.
- b. They have a dog for a pet.
There is a dog in the room.

Conclusion: It is necessary to be exact in statements of fact.

2. FACTS COME FIRST:

a. Use facts to solve these problems:

1. A loaded truck weighed 9050 pounds. The empty truck weighed 6775 pounds.
What was the difference in the two weights?
2. Clark has a population of 6992 and Stephenson has a population of 9071.
What is the difference in their populations?
3. Sally had \$24.82 in her bank. She gave her father \$17.87.
How much did she have left?

What process did you use? Why did you subtract?

b. Do you always subtract to find the difference?

1. Two boys, back to back, walked straight ahead 30 feet. How far apart were they now?
2. A tower is 65 feet high. Near its foot is a pit 55 feet deep. What is the difference between the top of the tower and the bottom of the pit?
3. Today's temperature was 34 degrees above zero, but yesterday's temperature was 2 degrees below zero. What is the difference between today's and yesterday's temperature?

Conclusion: It is necessary to carefully establish the facts before doing arithmetic problems.

3. RED AND BLUE:

Underline the statements of fact in red and the statements of inference in blue. In a sentence or two tell why each inference could be completely wrong.

- a. Peter has been in a new elementary school for a week. He has failed two arithmetic tests. Peter will never become a math teacher.
- b. Bill was on his way home after being fired from his new job. He had an accident and injured a pedestrian. Bill is a terrible driver.
- c. On Monday, Suzanne lost her fountain pen. On Tuesday, she saw it on Timothy's desk. Timothy is a thief.

Conclusion: From the same set of facts, more than one inference can be made.

4. WHAT'S THE JOKE?:

What inference caused the joke in the following?

- a. Host: If you stay here tonight, you will have to make your own bed.
Guest: That's all right.
Host: Fine, here's a hammer, saw, and nails.
- b. Miss Bryan: Spell the word "mouse".
Bobby: M O U S
Miss Bryan: But what's at the end of it?
Bobby: A tail.
- c. A man was going the wrong way down a one-way street. A policeman stopped him.
Policeman: Hey, didn't you see the arrow?
Man: I'm sorry, officer. I didn't even see the Indian.
- d. Did your father ever spank you? Yes.
Did your mother ever spank you? Yes.
Who hurt the most? I did!

5. DEFINING TERMS:

Use the dictionary to help you choose the most appropriate comment.

- a. Miss Buscaglia's house is a mere five blocks from my school.
Which statement would be likely to follow?
(1) I went to the zoo today.
(2) She's lucky. I need to take a bus.

- b. This frigid day makes me feel like forgetting my studies.
 - (1) Let's go for a swim then.
 - (2) The ice on the lake is solid.
- c. Mrs. Feely finds the telephone exasperating at times.
 - (1) Her time is wasted.
 - (2) She loves to talk to her friends.

Conclusion: You make fewer false inferences if you try to be sure of what words mean (i.e., using a dictionary).

6. LOOK AT ME!:

Have a child volunteer to come to the front of the room. List on board the children's observations about him. Try to get about thirty observations. These will vary from the color of his eyes to the statement that he is silly. Then in turn discuss each comment about the child. Underline in red the ones agreed to be facts. Underline in blue the ones agreed to be inferences.

Conclusion: Most of the things we observe about a person are inferences, and therefore, we must be cautious in forming judgements.

7. ARE NEWSPAPERS FACT OR FICTION?:

Clip an article from the newspaper that would be of interest to the children. After reading the article, ask the children to find a fact in the article and make an inference from it.

Have children select an article from the paper. Underline two facts in red, and two inferences in blue.

Conclusions: Certain articles in a newspaper are almost entirely fact, and others make many inferences. Different types of writing in the newspaper fill different needs.

GRADES 5 and 6

1. DO YOU BELIEVE IT?:

A Fact is something generally accepted as true; for example, today's date, or your name.

An Opinion is what one thinks or believes to be true; for example, "geraniums are the prettiest flowers."

Some of the following are facts; others are opinions. Think about each. Then write the word "fact" or "opinion" after it. Give your reason for calling some facts and others opinion.

- a. The best tasting food in the world is apple pie.
- b. A deer is a four-legged animal.
- c. The best television story ever written is the one I saw last night.
- d. Maple trees in the north lose their leaves in winter.
- e. Basketball is the most exciting sport.
- f. There is a blanket of air all around the earth.
- g. There are 5280 feet in a mile.

Resource materials can be used to establish fact.

2. DID YOU GET THE MESSAGE:

Give each child an ad. Ask them the following questions about it.

- a. To whom would the ad appeal?
- b. What message is the ad trying to convey to the reader?
- c. What inferences are made in the ad?
- d. What facts are used?

Conclusion: All messages in writing can not be accepted as fact.

3. SOME COUNT AND SOME DON'T:

- a. Last week Bill saw some rabbits in a pet store near his home. He wanted to buy two rabbits.
 1. Can we tell how many rabbits Bill saw?
 2. Can we tell how many rabbits Bill wanted?

- b. At the head of the parade was a team of two pretty white horses. After the team came a funny man with legs five feet long.
 1. Can we tell how long the man's legs were?
 2. Can we tell whether the horses were really pretty?

Conclusion: Some words such as numbers are helpful in establishing facts. Words such as "pretty" and "many" would vary in meaning according to the viewer's opinion.

4. POETRY:

Read the poem, "Richard Corey", by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Have the children draw inferences from the poem.

Discuss it line by line.

RICHARD COREY

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Whenever Richard Corey went downtown,
We people on the pavement looked at him;
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean-favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good morning", and he glittered when he walked,

And he was rich, yes, richer than a king --
And admirably schooled in every grace;
In fact, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Corey, one calm summer night
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

5. TEST FOR FACTS:

Paste a magazine ad on a large poster. List these questions under the pictures:

1. What is the inference?
2. What is the fact?
3. How do you know?
4. What can you do to find out more?

Conclusion: Often a person must test a product to be sure of the facts.

6. LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP:

Written Test

a. Define.

Fact _____.

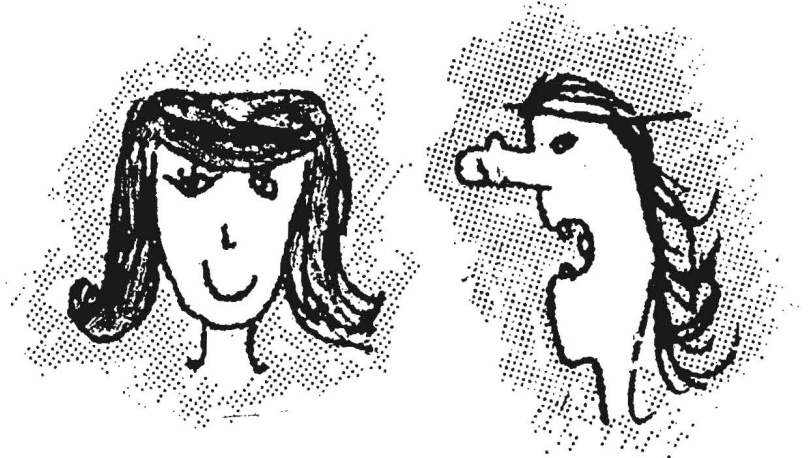
Inference _____.

b. Read each of the seven statements carefully. If you think it is a statement of fact, underline it. If you think it is an inference, put an "x" after it. Check your definitions if you are in doubt.

- (1) The product of 2 and 3 is 6.
- (2) Cherry pie is delicious.
- (3) Arithmetic is difficult.
- (4) Mrs. Dye is a teacher at Fort Myer School.
- (5) Wool sweaters are expensive.
- (6) Boys fight.
- (7) Teachers are hard to get along with.

c. Since some of the sentences above are not statements of fact, maybe we can change some of the words in them so that they will become facts.

Don't jump to conclusions,
Think before you act --
You might be surprised to find
You haven't got the facts.



JUDGEMENTAL STATEMENTS

Judgemental statements present a somewhat similar problem to that of confusing facts and inferences. As a rule, many of the appraisals we make about a situation lack validity because of the personal prejudice we bring into the situation. For instance, let's suppose that we walk into an office and find the secretary reading at her desk. One of us might comment later that "Jones' secretary certainly is a lazy individual" or "People don't work the way they used to." Both of those statements would probably be classed as judgemental statements -- they do not necessarily reflect what was going on. Jones' secretary may have been reading for research purposes as her boss had requested. In many cases, judgemental statements tell more about the person making the statements than about the situation they are describing.

KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 2

When considering judgemental statements, one must take into account the following:

Point of View When Where

1. POINT OF VIEW:

- a. Have Joe, who is short, and John, who is taller, stand in front of the class. Joe looks at John and says, "John is tall." Then ask Harry to join the two boys. Harry who is the tallest, looks at John and says, "John is short". Discuss with children the importance of understanding how judgements differ because of point of view.

The above illustration can also be used to begin teaching comparative adjectives -- good, better, best, etc.

- b. Take a picture of something, for example a building. Then take another picture of it from a different angle or at a different time of day or night. Discuss both pictures in class; note how different views of the same building evoke different judgements.

2. WHEN:

(Dating Element) The idea of "when" influences judgement.

Examples: When my sister was a baby she was very cute.
Now she is 7 and a pest.

Judgements about classmates can change from day to day.

Take a picture of anything. Discuss it one day, and again on another day.

Note differences of judgement.

3. WHERE:

Draw or find in a magazine a picture of a child doing something (laughing, studying, playing, singing, etc.). Ask the class their opinions (judgements) of his behavior if he were in church, school, at home, on the playground, etc.

GRADES 3 and 4

1. HOW DO WE GET THERE?:

Present this problem: There are two ways to go to a city 10 miles away. What would you take into consideration before you decided on your route?

Class might suggest such things as: ways to go, the road, things to be avoided, facts about the car used.

2. WHAT DO WE THINK?:

Class judgements of art, pictures, and stories which are read to them. Discuss important things to look for.

3. RATE YOURSELF:

Circle one:

- Are you good or bad?
- Are you slow or fast?
- Are you honest or dishonest?
- Are you smart or stupid?
- Are you good-looking or ugly?
- Are you musical or non-musical?
- Are you neat or sloppy?
- Are you a good sport or a poor sport?
- Are you noisy or quiet?
- Are you a happy person or sad?

Stress that these are judgements (opinions) and vary according to time, place, situation, etc.

4. UNFINISHED STORIES:

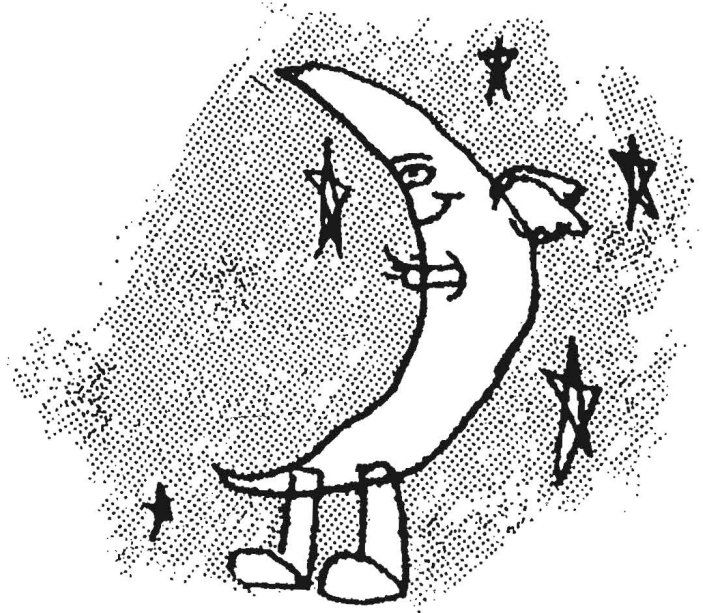
Stories can be read to the class from any NEA Journal, labeled "The Unfinished Story".

GRADES 5 and 6

1. JUDGEMENTAL PROBLEMS:

Suggestions:

- a. One shirt at a store cost \$3.00. A similar shirt cost \$5.00. If you had \$6.00, which would you buy?
What would you take into consideration before making the purchase?
- b. If man cannot be described as honest, is he dishonest?
Conclusion should be drawn that there are shades of gray with things, words, and judgements.



METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

Language is symbolic. Words and expressions often are not intended to convey their literal meaning. Language becomes more expressive and revealing through the use of comparisons, exaggerations or idioms. The choice of words influences the way people perceive reality, and also, the way people behave.

KINDERGARTEN

GRADE 2

1. COLORS DESCRIBE:

Show the children papers of different colors. On blue paper, for example, can be written "Paper as blue as _____." Children finish the sentence. One answer may be "Paper as blue as the sky." Class discusses the simile that is made.

2. ANIMALS DESCRIBE:

Give children an unfinished phrase; for example, "neck of a _____"

Have children complete the phrase with an animal name.

Examples:

neck of a giraffe

skin of an alligator

fat as a hippo

chatter of monkeys

3. DRAW WHAT YOU MEAN:

Present a figure of speech to the class.

Examples:

slow as molasses

raining cats and dogs

cute as a button

Discuss the figurative meaning of each expression and ask the class to illustrate this meaning.

4. HAVE YOU HEARD IT BEFORE?:

Let the children illustrate and discuss figures of speech with which they may be familiar.

Examples:

He hit the nail on the head.

Her eyes were glued to the TV.

His face was as red as fire.

Discuss and make clear the difference between the literal meaning and the speaker's intended meaning.

5. POETRY DESCRIBES:

Read descriptive poems to children to demonstrate that words can make pictures.

Robert Louis Stevenson's poems contain many figurative expressions.

6. COLORFUL SPEECH:

Ask children to give a list of objects, and put this list on the board. Then ask them for some actions that people or animals perform, writing these on the board also. Then ask the class to match the objects with the action words to make expressive sentences. The children can then illustrate these sentences, and discuss how various sentences affect them.

Examples:

The clothes swallowed the boy.

The shoes talked as they walked.

The picture gobbled the wall.

The motorcycle danced down the road.

7. LIKE AND AS:

Ask each student to write a sentence describing someone in the class using the words "like" or "as".

Example:

She is as pretty as a rainbow.

She is as skinny as a string.

She is as colorful as plaid.

Children explain their descriptions and illustrate them.

8. RIDDLES:

Children are asked to think of a riddle which describes a classmate. Other children guess who is being described.

Examples:

She wiggles like a worm,

She acts like a monkey - Who is she?

He is as tall as a tree,

And as happy as can be - Who is he?

9. SHAPES:

Squares, triangles, circles and rectangles are put on the board. Children are asked to name things that are shaped like the geometrical forms.

Examples:

<u>Rectangle</u>	<u>Triangle</u>	<u>Circle</u>	<u>Square</u>
door	beak	pancake	window
table	teepee	apple	table
radio	roof	clock	house

GRADES 3 and 4

1. METAPHORS:

Give the following list of words: mountain, bug, giant, flood, tiger, ball, landslide, king, angel. On one part of a sheet of paper ask children to illustrate the word. Then give the following corresponding sentences.

I could see a mountain of ice cream.
Come ride in my bug.
The tree is a giant in the woods.
At Christmas there is a flood of mail.
Put a tiger in your tank.
We had a ball at the pool.
The mayor won by a landslide.
My father is king of the family.
You are an angel to help Mrs. Best.

On the same paper, have the children illustrate the sentences so that the figurative meaning of the underlined words is understood.

2. OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS:

Have children make a list of figurative expressions related to special types of work.

Examples: restaurants, airports, military services, police, etc.

Have other class mates guess the occupation.

Restaurant examples: Adam and Eve on a raft; Java with moo.

3. MEANING UNLIMITED:

a. Introduce the class to the idea of a metaphor by reading or having a child read some well known riddles which compare one object with something else.

Example: Thirty-two white horses
 On a red hill;
 When you say "Stop!"
 They all stand still.

Children will readily guess "teeth". This is comparing teeth with horses, etc.

The children can be given an assignment of searching for other such rhymes in poetry books, and of writing their own rhymes or riddles.

b. Give children some sentences which compare one object with another such as:

- (1) The moon was a glistening pearl in a black velvet sea.
- (2) The wind was a knife cutting through my coat.
- (3) The treetops are lonely people.

Have the children point out the comparisons between two objects. Now ask them to try writing their own original comparisons of objects. Read these to the class and let them decide if colorful speech is being used.

GRADES 5 and 6

1. WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE:

Hold a class discussion comparing things or incidents which seem to have something in common. Teacher gives the example, "Her coat is as black as night". She then asks the class to think of a sentence comparing things using "like" or "as" in a sentence.

Examples:

Belgium is like a battleground of Europe.

Miss Kronlage is like a walking computer.

Children are then to rewrite their sentences without using the words "like" or "as".

Examples:

Belgium is the battleground of Europe.

Miss Kronlage is a walking computer.

At this time, the two terms "simile" and "metaphor" are introduced. The children are asked to elaborate on the meaning which the comparison implies.

2. PERSONIFICATION:

Introduce the words "animate" and "inanimate". Ask the class to give a list of inanimate objects. A second list is made up of verbs which describe human or animal actions. The children are asked to attribute one of the action words to an inanimate object.

Examples: The moon flew across the sky.

I saw a car drinking gasoline.

The children can illustrate the literal interpretation.

Follow-up activity: Class is asked to write stories using similes, metaphors, or examples of personification which describe a character or item they are especially fond of.

3. WHEN DID IT BEGIN?:

Assign a metaphor to groups of children and ask them to try to find out when the metaphor may have come into use, that is, what period of history might have first seen the metaphorical possibilities.

Examples:

Mrs. O'Connor is a Spartan.

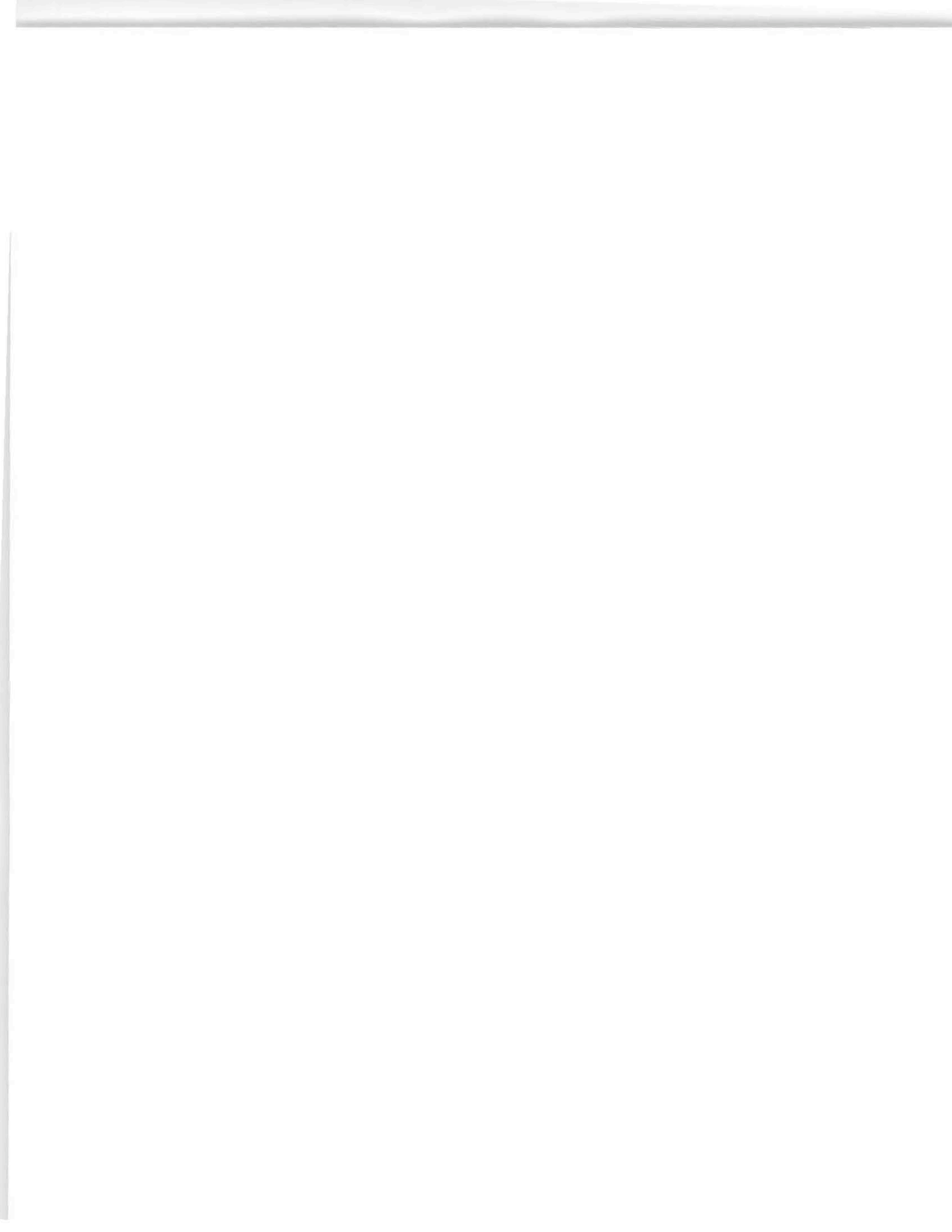
Mrs. Kaplan has a goldmine in that store.



LANGUAGE HAS ORDER

It is easy to see how the routine or pattern in our daily lives can become more efficient and valuable when we add order or meaningful organization.

Our English language itself contains an order that we often take for granted. To highlight the intrinsic order in language, the following section will deal with the importance of order, and the fact that sensible and effective actions and communications must be arranged in a particular way.



The ideas in this section were developed for fifth and sixth grades, but could be adapted for use in the other grades.

1. TWENTY QUESTIONS:

To stimulate interest in the order of things, teacher can introduce investigation with the "Twenty Questions" game. "I am thinking of something that ought to be changed." (One thing she may have in mind might be a number line in the classroom that is numerically out of order).

2. WHAT NEXT:

Have a daily proposed schedule for the school day written on the chalk board.

It may say:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Arithmetic | 5. Geography | 9. Finish lunch |
| 2. Spelling | 6. Spelling correc-
tions | 10. Reading |
| 3. Music | 7. Lunch | 11. History |
| 4. Arithmetic
completion | 8. Penmanship
lesson | 12. Reading
completion |

The class will, in many cases, react with confused attitude about such a schedule, and should be asked if it might like to make some changes in this schedule. A re-organized schedule can be then written by each student who can make any changes he sees fit. Samples of a new schedule can be transferred to the chalk board for evaluation and approval by the class. When the class has adopted one of the schedules, it should then be questioned about the differences between the original proposed schedule and the new one it prefers. The class will agree that a new schedule, which includes lessons to begin and end within one period of time, would be less confusing and more workable.

3. DIRECTIONS NEED ORDER:

Write a direction on the chalkboard for immediate completion.

Example:

"the of write continents the names seven."

Children will object to such an assignment, and decide it would have been simpler if the wording were in understandable order. The lack of order here has added an unnecessary problem which must be solved before the task can be completed.

4. WHAT'S GOING ON:

Re-arrange these word groups in two different ways so that they will make sense.

a. Tom John chasing is

b. Mary Mother chased.

Which of your answers to sentence "a" tells that Tom is being chased?

Which of your answers to sentence "b" tells that Mary is being chased?

Here the children may notice their responses differ. They may also note that in scrambled sentence "a", the action is taking place now; in sentence "b", it has already occurred.



The following section is used as a sort of catch-all to present some other notions or ideas about language that were not pursued as thoroughly as those ideas presented in the preceding sections of this book.

For instance, we talk about the meanings of words. We should be aware that words have meaning only to the extent that they are symbols. The word (or symbol) we use is not the event or thing about which it reports. But sometimes we act as though the word is the thing itself. For example, take a piece of chalk in your hand and tell your class group that you are going to scrape it across the board with your fingernail. The expressions on the faces of your students will probably be the same as if you had already committed the act you described. One expert in language study has said, "the map is not the territory" and in like manner the word is not the thing or event.

Another notion is that which concerns the limitations of our language. Effective communication demands that differences be defined if our language is to be realistic. For example, we have a degree of polarity in our language. We express situations mainly in terms of "yes" or "no", "black" or "white", etc. Our language does not have the built-in symbols to express degrees of variance from a strict affirmative to a negative, or to show the shades of grey in between the extremes. In some cases, we do have the symbols to show the differences and don't use them. Thus, our language lacks exactness in describing the situation.

1. THINK AGAIN:

- a. Children draw something in a favorite color and something else (or the same thing) with a color they dislike. If a certain color (for example, black) was least favorite, try to develop positive attitudes about items that are black; for example, through stories about small black animals they like, black toys, etc.
- b. Give list of colors. Children rate their favorite colors numerically 1-10.

_____ blue	_____ purple
_____ red	_____ black
_____ yellow	_____ brown
_____ green	_____ white
_____ orange	_____ pink

Next lesson: Have the colors listed in the same order but use picturesque or exotic descriptions. Children rate colors again, numerically 1-10.

_____ sky blue	_____ jazz purple
_____ lipstick red	_____ dark black
_____ sunny yellow	_____ field brown
_____ grassy green	_____ ghostly white
_____ brilliant orange	_____ hot pink

Conclusion: The added positive and/or negative adjective changed the meaning for the children.

2. WORDS WITH DOUBLE MEANING:

Children write sentences using for example the word "lead". Children should realize that the context of the message gives meaning to the word.

3. NONSENSE WORDS:

Class is assigned to make up a word that does not exist, such as "blooky" or "gof". They use the word in sentences while others try to guess the meaning of the nonsense word according to the context.

This helps point out that the printed word is merely a symbol of an accepted meaning. This is true because people have agreed to that meaning.

4. CREATIVE WRITING:

When a child is learning to talk, he receives encouragement from all about him. Until he goes to school, a child is seldom corrected in his speech. Without realizing it, most parents give a child four or five years to learn oral language. By the time a child enters school, he is usually able to communicate verbally with little trouble.

However, when a child begins to learn the written language he is not often given the same freedom to develop. His spelling, punctuation, and general mechanics of writing are corrected and criticized so frequently that the joy of writing a composition often becomes a torture.

The following procedure has been used successfully to encourage children in their creative writing.

- a. Provide each child with a composition book to be used only for his stories.
- b. Every day the child begins by dating the page.
- c. On four days of the school week, the teacher provides a title, subject, opening sentence, question, etc., to stimulate the children.
- d. One day a week the child should be encouraged to choose his own subject.
- e. The stories, as a general rule, should be short--four to eight sentences.
- f. Each day the teacher reads each child's story and writes a brief, favorable comment.
- g. The children are given frequent occasions to read their favorite stories aloud.
- h. They are encouraged to proof-read their stories.
- i. Freedom to write true or imaginative stories or poems is given. Most ideas can be easily adapted to the type of work each child prefers.

KEEP TALKING

All problems are not merely verbal,
The philosophers tell me in uncounted thousands of words--
but

I tried making love with my mouth taped shut
And I lost my love.

I tried making friends with my mouth taped shut
And I lost my friend.

I tried making war with my mouth taped shut
But no one was angry and the shooting stopped

I went about the streets with my mouth taped shut
And they took me to the nuthouse.

Where I am to this day
Wondering
If all problems are not merely verbal.

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Your Most Enchanted Listener, by Wendell Johnson, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956, page 162.