Toobeez Language Arts Activity Workbook

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Award-Winning!

Tested in 2004 by multiple teachers with families, the Toobeez Interactive Family Edition has won a Teacher's Choice Award for 2005. The Interactive Family Edition is what you get when you combine a set of Toobeez with Tom Heck's book, *The Official Toobeez Teambuilding Games and Activity Guide,* and Multimedia Training CD.

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Project Connect
Training Opportunities

Do you want to:

- Become a more effective educator, teacher or trainer?
- Learn to creatively increase student involvement?
- Develop strategies for creating a dynamic learning environment?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then the Project Connect training workshops are for you! We offer two types of workshops:

1. **Train-the-Trainer Workshop**
2. **TEAM Workshop**

Train-the-Trainer Workshop

This workshop is for you if:

- You are an educator looking for new ways of teaching team and leadership skills
- You like learning in a fast-paced and hands-on environment

What to expect

In the Train-the-Trainer workshop, you will learn how to lead activities that develop team and leadership skills. This workshop is fun, empowering and educational. It is also experiential, meaning you will learn by doing.

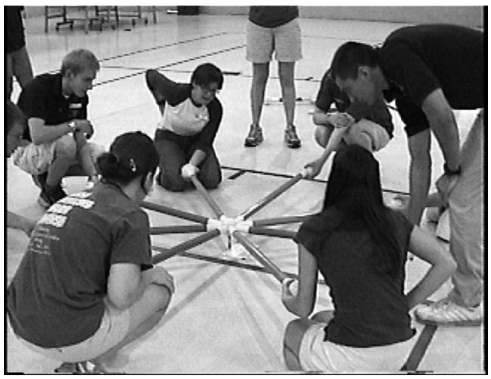
You will learn activities that promote trust and creative problem solving, as well as encourage purposeful and kind communication. You will experience physical activities, as well as activities which demand high cerebral skills. You will learn how to design everything from a five-minute

icebreaker to a full two-day adventure. Depending on the length of the program you choose, you can even learn how to integrate the activities into an existing curriculum.

You will learn how to deliver important debriefing (processing) skills to learn how to draw out the genius of the group by asking thought-provoking questions. When a debriefing session is delivered properly, groups learn to own the information they generate from the teambuilding activities, providing them with a sense of empowerment, connectedness and success!

This is the perfect workshop for you if you are a:

- Classroom teacher
- School counselor
- Camp counselor
- Human Resources director
- Trainer or workshop presenter
- Therapeutic Recreation Specialist



TEAM Workshop

TEAM = **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore

The TEAM workshop is for your team if you are ready to:

- Move quickly from a "good" team to a "great" team
- Have fun and be challenged in a dynamic learning environment
- Be treated with respect and dignity while leveraging the strengths of your group

Over the years, we have worked with thousands of people from all walks of life, including:

- Business teams (from such industries as investing, communications, and insurance)
- Non-profit organizations (such as YMCA, YWCA and Boys & Girls Clubs)
- Educators (including public & private school teachers, school counselors, college students, college teaching staff and international students)
- Alternative education programs (including corrections officers, after-school programs and enrichment programs)

What to expect

In this workshop, you will participate in fun activities and engaging hands-on learning exercises to help your team address vital issues so it can move forward. This workshop focuses on where you are now as a group and where you are going.

For more information about attending or scheduling teambuilding training workshops, call:

1-877-TOOBEEZ

1-877-866-2339

Toobeez®
PROJECT CONNECT
Fostering Connections and Teamwork Through Fun!

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Introduction

Project Connect is dedicated to providing cutting-edge activities and tools for educators. Toobeez are a unique means of teaching academics, social skills, teamwork and problem solving. For the first time, the Toobeez program has been adapted as a useful teaching tool for utilization in schools and educational forums. The activities found in this workbook are designed to challenge students to evaluate concepts from a practical point of view with hands-on learning opportunities.

Project Connect Materials

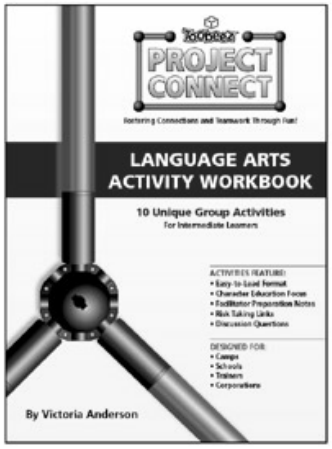
Project Connect offers the following products:

Toobeez

Toobeez are the incredible construction tubes used to build and create the activities for your group! A one-of-a-kind construction system, Toobeez give you the chance to "connect" as a group while engaging everybody in constructive play. Toobeez are a hands-on, easy-to-assemble and safe product that captivates the imagination of anyone who uses them. You can use them indoors or outdoors to hold a powerful experience anytime!

Each 57 Piece Toobeez Kit contains: (20) 3.4" spheres, (8) 36" tubes, (8) 24" tubes, (8) 16" tubes, (8) 11" tubes, (1) GIANT Toobeez storage bag, (2) red slide-on curtain panels, & (2) blue slide-on curtain panels. Shipping box is 36" x 12" x 6" and weighs 21lbs.

Activity Workbooks



The *Toobeez Language Arts Activity Workbook* includes 10 detailed lesson plans with safety reminders, helpful hints, procedures, debriefing questions and more to build and develop the academic skills of your group. Other available products include Math, Science, Physical Education, Occupational Therapy and Teambuilding workbooks. A teambuilding Multimedia Training CD is also available.

The Teacher's Role

The teacher plays a crucial role in the Toobeez program's activities. After selecting the activity, the teacher must aid students in executing the instructions, monitor safety, and observe the group's dynamics. Most important, it is the teacher's responsibility to convey positive leadership and the potential for success to create the best environment for these academic activities.

Motivational Learning Guide
Once the teacher determines that an activity is suitable for a particular group, he or she must make judgments about how the group is working. The teacher is responsible for running the activity; however he or she should not run the group. Instead, the teacher should act as a guide for students and ask probing questions which will help the group to progress in the activity. The teacher should positively motivate students so each individual enjoys the best possible learning experience.

Observer
While running the activity, the teacher must allow students to solve problems on their own. When groups are working, the teacher should take a step away and observe the group's dynamics so he or she can guide the group appropriately if they encounter problems.

Discussion Coordinator
The teacher begins the discussion by asking the questions he or she feels are most appropriate for the group. While considering the lessons learned from the challenge, as well as the possible "failures," the teacher should focus on the group's positive learning experiences while acknowledging both negative and positive issues.

Connections to Education

Teachers can use Toobeez as an innovative tool to implement the current educational practices discussed below. In addition, use of Toobeez in the classroom can play an important role in establishing connections between students, peers and teachers!

Brain-based Research

The Toobeez program activities support brain-based research by engaging learners and providing enjoyable hands-on experiences. The essence of brain research suggests that all learners have emotions, desires and needs. Researchers have found that relaxed, yet active, lessons that completely immerse the participants provide the most authentic learning experiences. This type of environment has been shown to increase retention, enjoyment and positive feelings about learning. The Toobeez program provides activities that challenge each participant at his or her individual level while engrossing them in a fun-filled learning environment.

Multiple Intelligence Theory

Developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner, the Multiple Intelligence Theory states there are multiple learning styles that maximize the learning potential in children and adults. The theory takes into account the various strengths in individuals, such as linguistic, logical, spatial and kinesthetic skills. It also suggests that different people learn in different ways. The Toobeez program provides a unique way to broaden the learning experience beyond traditional methods. By allowing instructors to offer lessons which address different learning styles, learning increases across the classroom.

Differentiated Instruction

In addition to building on the varying strengths of individuals, the Toobeez program allows instructors to appropriately adapt lessons to the various ability levels in a classroom. Activities can be enhanced for a greater challenge or they can be modified for a simpler activity.

Problem Solving

Lesson plans and activities in the Toobeez program require critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Participants are required to work together to brainstorm, select and execute solutions to each activity challenge.

Character Education Themes

Helping young people develop good character is a goal of many educational settings nationwide. The Toobeez program offers activities that can supplement or launch a character education curriculum. The character themes listed below have been aligned with the activities in this guide, and the first page of each activity associates a character education trait with the activity.

- Perseverance
- Respecting Others
- Communication
- Teamwork/Cooperation
- Citizenship
- Responsibility
- Uniqueness
- Caring
- Trust

Teambuilding & Connections with Others

Research has shown that a sense of "connectedness" to parents and peers is the most influential protective factor in a teenager's life. If teenagers lack this connection, their chance of engaging in risky behaviors increases. Through increasing teambuilding skills, the Toobeez program brings peers together while boosting the individual's self-confidence and sense of "connectedness" with others.

Collaborative Hands-On Experience

The Toobeez program centers around a collaborative learning environment. Groups work together to solve each challenge while completing interactive, hands-on activities. Each lesson involves member participation, movement and teamwork for completion of the activity.

Safety

Please use caution when utilizing Toobeez in your classroom. Studying the material in this activity guide is not a substitute for professional training. Please refer to page 6 for information regarding the training options offered by Project Connect. For additional safety information, as well as product assembly and care, please turn to page 78.

Safety Tips!

- Do not allow students to climb on any Toobeez structures
- A first-aid kit should be easily accessible during the activities
- Follow general classroom safety guidelines during all lessons

The information presented in this activity guide is a reference, and the teacher is ultimately responsible for judging the suitability of an activity and safely supervising the activity.

The teacher's job is to make safety a priority and to manage the risk.

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How to Use This Workbook

Lesson Introduction Page
The first page of each lesson contains an outline of information for the teacher. This page includes lesson objectives, links to character education, the activity challenge and setup procedures. An **Activity Plan** box on the page includes information regarding group size and time requirements. Space requirements are defined as follows:

Minimal: The activity can be conducted in the front of the room
Medium: A few desks may need to be moved
Lots: Clear all desks or relocate to the gym or an outdoor area

Helpful Hints
This section provides the teacher with suggestions to help guide the students and avoid possible obstacles during the activity.

Activity Challenge
Each activity presents a specific challenge to the students. Be sure to read this box to the group and clarify their understanding of the challenge.

Activity Instructions
This section explains how to conduct the actual lesson.

Activity Discussion and Processing
This section provides the teacher with a discussion topic that relates to the activity, as well as support information to use in guiding a group discussion. Questions are provided for the teacher to help guide the discussion.

Activity Variations
This section provides variations of easier or more challenging versions of the activity.

Notes
Space is provided for the teacher's notes on the activity. Notes can help teachers reflect on the lesson, as well as record possible future modifications.

Learning Strategies

A number of learning strategies can be used in conjunction with the Toobeez classroom activities. Prior to an activity, these techniques serve to prime a student for learning by reviewing, highlighting and sharing relevant material from prior lessons and personal student knowledge. During an activity, these strategies can be used to organize material being taught for easier student recollection and understanding. Following an activity, these educational strategies summarize the learning experience in a useful, learner-friendly format. In all cases, use of these strategies enhances a student's learning experience by reinforcing the need for active, lasting information processing.

- **KWL Charts**
  These three-column charts are used to record "What students already **k**now," "What they **w**ant to know" and "What they have **l**earned." The first two columns can be used as a preparatory strategy, and the last column can be used as a summarizing technique.
- **Concept Mapping**
  This technique serves to demonstrate a student's ability to organize knowledge. In this technique, students must be able to demonstrate true understanding of the relationship between various concepts.
- **Venn Diagrams**
  These diagrams can be used to compare and contrast different topics from classroom material. This technique can be used to demonstrate interrelation between information from different lessons.
- **Jigsaw/Reciprocal Teaching**
  This strategy allows students to become experts on certain topics/aspects of a lesson and share their knowledge. Allowing students to teach sections of a lesson to the rest of the class can be a powerful tool. It enhances student learning and can build student confidence.
- **Reflective Teaching**
  Teachers, remember to use your "Activity Notes" section provided in the Toobeez activity workbooks. These notes can be used to improve future lesson implementation by highlighting any encountered challenges.

In the Next Volume

Some topics in the *Toobeez Language Arts Activity Workbook, Volume Two* include:

Persuasive Writing
Descriptive Writing
Vocabulary-Building Games
Creative Writing
Character Development
Revision
Poetry
Grammar
And more…

ACTIVITY 1 SUCCINCT SUMMARIES

Objectives

- Identify purposes for and characteristics of a good summary
- Differentiate between details and main events
- Communicate with peers to select the main events to include in the summary
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 1 minute
Materials: 2 Toobeez sets
short story (sample on page 70 of the Appendix)
20 index cards
tape
chart paper (optional)

Setup:
1. Create a rectangular or cube tower that is three "stories" high (as pictured).
2. Write out 20 story bits on the index cards (see page 73 in the Appendix for samples) to accompany the story.

Character Focus

Communication

Activity Plan

Time: 45 - 55 minutes
Space: Medium
Instruction: Whole class and pairs

The Challenge

Determine the difference between the details and main events of a story to construct a "summary" from Toobeez.

Succinct Summaries

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- You may use the story and materials provided in the Appendix, or you can select your own favorite story and develop the appropriate index cards
- To save time, have students read the story prior to the lesson
- Without revealing the answers, guide students through deciding between details and main events. Ask questions to help them determine the information that should be omitted from the summary. Refer back to your list of elements for a good summary if necessary
- Number the index cards on the back as a reference to ensure the proper order of the story

See page 6 for available training options!

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Review the differences between retelling and summarizing (see below).

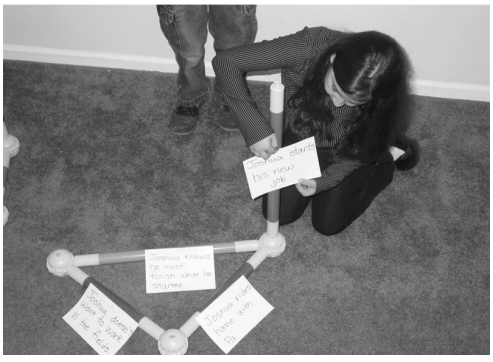
   * A **retelling** is when a listener recalls an entire story in order to reconstruct and share the story in their own words with others.
   * A **summary** is when a listener recalls only the main events of the story to present the highlights of a story to others.

2. Record on the board or on chart paper some of the applications for summary writing (for example, book reviews, sports highlights, literature circles, projects, etc.)
3. As a group, list and record the elements of a good summary. A good summary should include information on the A) main events, B) main characters, C) story's conflict, D) ending (if desired by instructor) or moral (if present).
4. Distribute the selected short story and have students read the story in pairs or small groups.

5. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

> **Challenge**: Determine the difference between the details and main events of a story to construct a "summary" from Toobeez.
> Goal: Reduce the 20-card retelling to a 6-8 card summary.

6. As you distribute the cards, read them aloud to review the story to maximize student comprehension. Have students tape the index card onto one tube of the tower (work from the top down to the bottom).
7. Once all the cards are attached, have students determine what the tower represents: A summary or a retelling? (Answer: a retelling).
8. Define the term **concise** and **succinct** with students. Inform students they are now the "Concise Committee," and their job is to determine which pieces of information will construct the Toobeez summary.
9. Review the elements of a good summary before continuing.
10. Going through the cards one at a time, have students give a "thumbs up" for information to stay, "thumbs down" for a detail to leave out, or a "wavy thumb" if they want to leave the card "on hold" and make a decision toward the end. **Teacher Note:** Cards may also be combined to make one sentence.
11. Cards that are to be omitted should remain on the original tower.
12. Cards that have been selected to construct the summary are removed from the tower and attached to a **new** Toobeez tube. With each of these "summary" tubes, students will build a new structure to represent the summary (students can determine this shape).
13. Once the retelling has been trimmed to represent a good summary, have students read through the remaining cards on the new Toobeez summary structure as a group.
14. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.



Remove cards from tall "retelling" tower to build a smaller "summary" structure.

Assessment

- In the class discussion, students supported why a piece of information was included in or omitted from the summary (using the summary characteristics listed at the start of class to support their answers)
- Teacher observed good student participation

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- What should be included in a well-written summary?
- What is the difference between the original Toobeez tower structure and the new structure you built?
- How did you help the group work together to build the structures?
- How did this activity help you to determine which events to include in your summary?
- Why do you think summaries are an important element in communicating with others?
- How did this activity help you to communicate better with others?

Activity Variations

1. **Integrated instruction.**
Use this lesson with the current classroom reading book(s) to enhance reading comprehension. You can also use a picture book, a section from a content area textbook, a chapter from the classroom's read aloud, etc.
2. **Avoid comprehension problems.**
With challenged readers, use a popular story with which students are familiar (for example, *The Wizard of Oz*) to ensure difficulties with reading do not interfere with the objective of creating a good summary.
3. **Extension/Follow-up.**
Working off the smaller "summary" structure (if time permits or on the following day), students can work in pairs to use the structure and the attached index cards to write out a paragraph summary for the story.

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 2

HOW TO-BEEZ

Objectives

- Analyze a sample of expository writing with peers
- Write clear, step-by-step instructions to assemble a structure
- Work cooperatively with group members
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 5 minutes
Materials: 2 or more Toobeez sets
sample of how-to writing (see page 74 in the Appendix)
paper and pencils
tape
crayons or colored pencils
chart paper (optional)

Setup:
1. Divide up the Toobeez equally among each small group.
2. Using multiple Toobeez sets allows students more flexibility in their creations.

Character Focus

Cooperation & Communication

Activity Plan

Time: 45 - 55 minutes
Space: Medium
Instruction: Small groups

The Challenge

With a small group, construct a Toobeez structure. Then write clear "how-to" directions so another group can duplicate the unique structure.

How To-beez

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- When identifying the elements of good expository writing, make sure students understand the need for clear, yet concise, directions
- Use tongue depressors, clothes pins or name tags with the following titles to help groups share the different responsibilities of the activity: 1-2 Designers, 1 Recorder, 1 Illustrator and 1 Coordinator
- If possible, have groups work in various areas of the class, hallway or common areas so other groups do not see their structures

See page 6 for available training options!

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Discuss the purpose of "how-to" writing (see information below).

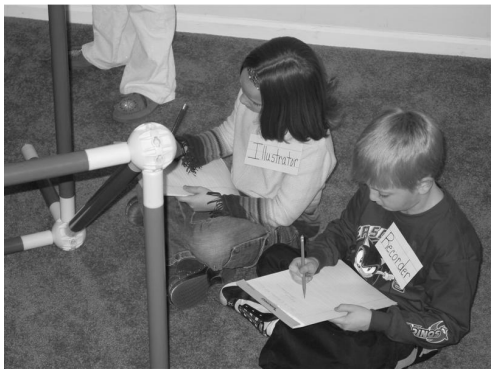
* "**How-to**" writing is a type of sequential expository writing which informs a reader how to complete a task.

2. Have students determine some purposes for how-to writing, and record their ideas on the board or on chart paper (for example, recipes, kit instructions, etc.).
3. Share a sample of how-to writing with the class. You can use a transparency or chart paper. You can also hand out individual samples to the groups.
4. Arrange students in small groups of four or five.
5. Have groups write down two or more characteristsics of this form of writing, and then have the students share their ideas with the class. Record how-to writing characteristics for the class. Some points they should include are: short/concise, clear, numbered, inclusion of each step and so on.

6. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

> **Challenge**: With a small group, construct a Toobeez structure. Then write clear "how-to" directions so another group can duplicate your unique structure.

7. In the small groups, students will take their share of the Toobeez to create a small, but detailed, structure. Inform students that tube size and color must also match. They have 15 minutes to complete this task.
8. It is helpful for group members to take on a job title (Designer, Recorder, Illustrator, and Coordinator). The Designers create the structure while the Recorder writes and numbers each step taken to create the structure. The Illustrator sketches the structure recording colors and sizes of tubes. The Coordinator watches the time and may ask the teacher any necessary questions.
9. ***Important.** Once a group has completed their structure, all group members should agree the sketch and written steps are <u>accurate</u>. The steps should follow the guidelines of good expository writing as discussed earlier in the class. Then, the group can disassemble their structure.
10. Now, have each small group switch the Toobeez and written instructions with another finished group. Illustrators should hold on to the sketched picture for their group.
11. Groups should reassemble the structure according to the written instructions. Once each group assembles the structure, the original group's Coordinator will compare the structure to their own sketch to determine accurate assembly.
12. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.



The Illustrator (left) and the Recorder (right) must pay close attention to record every detailed step.

Back row (left to right): Coordinator, Designer
Front row (left to right): Illustrator, Designer, and Recorder. All working to develop "how-to" instructions

Assessment

- Students worked cooperatively in small groups
- Students wrote clear, step-by-step instructions
- A group's structure could be accurately replicated by another group
- Teacher observed good student participation

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- What should be included in good "how-to" instructions?
- What was challenging about writing how-to instructions?
- What do you think helped groups to be successful in writing clear directions?
- Did your group respect the roles given to each member?
- How did having roles help your group communicate with one another?
- How did you contribute to your group's outcome?
- What did you find challenging about working as a team during this activity?

How To-beez

Activity Variations

1. The need for every step.
Students often take certain steps for granted in this type of activity, and so they often have a difficult time truly understanding the importance of detailed directions. As an introduction or if groups had a difficult time with this activity, extend this task by providing your own poorly-written instructions to the students. When they have a difficult time, they will better understand why including each step is crucial. Allow students to revise the poorly-written directions (they love to do this on their teacher's writing) to improve the instructions for building the structure.

2. Extension/Follow-up.
Allow students to revise their written steps based on feedback from the group which attempted assembly.

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 3 SENTENCE SWITCHERS

Objectives

- Differentiate between complete sentences and sentence fragments
- Identify simple subject, simple predicate, complete subject and complete predicate
- Create complete sentences with a small group
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 15 minutes
Materials: 1 or more Toobeez sets
4-6 pairs of safety scissors
sentence strips
tape
chart paper (optional)

Setup:

1. Divide the Toobeez into two piles. Each pile should consist of half the larger-sized and half the smaller-sized Toobeez. Separate the piles in the room.
2. Using sentence strips, write down different complete subjects and complete predicates (samples are provided on page 75 of the Appendix).

Character Focus

Perseverance

Activity Plan

Time: 45 - 55 minutes
Space: Lots
Instruction: Whole class and small groups

The Challenge

Groups will identify complete subjects, complete predicates, simple subjects and simple predicates. Students will then mix them in a grammatically correct manner to develop various complete sentences.

Sentence Switchers

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- Students may get a little active as silly combinations arise
- Guide students toward making sentences that are complete and make sense
- Have the following terms defined on a displayed poster or overhead for easy reference during the activity: noun, verb, complete subject, complete predicate, simple subject and simple predicate
- When writing your own sentences on the strips, make the sentences simple (avoid complex phrases) so they can be easily interchanged with other strips during the activity

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Discuss the importance of writing complete sentences. Ask students, "What happens if a sentence is written incompletely as a fragment instead of as a complete sentence?" Students should state something to the effect that writing becomes unclear and is difficult to comprehend.
2. Review the following terms with students. Use this sample sentence with the class if necessary. Review **noun, verb, adjective** and **adverb** if necessary:

*The **complete subject** is the "who" or "what" (noun) doing the action plus all the modifiers (adjectives, adverbs, articles, etc.).
* The **simple subject** is just the "who" or "what" doing the action.
* The **complete predicate** is the action (verb) plus all the modifiers (adverbs, prepositional phrases, etc.).
*The **simple predicate** is just the action.

Sample: **The sneaky gray mouse quickly gobbled the cheese.**
Complete subject: The sneaky gray mouse
Complete predicate: quickly gobbled the cheese
Simple subject: mouse Simple predicate: gobbled

3. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

> **Challenge**: Groups will identify complete subjects, complete predicates, simple subjects and simple predicates. Students will then mix them in a grammatically correct manner to develop various complete sentences.

4. Distribute sentence strips with sentence fragments written on them. Students should not read what is on the strip until told to do so.
5. Separate the students into two groups by subjects and predicates near each of the piles of Toobeez. Once assembled in their areas, be sure everyone is in the appropriate group. Make adjustments as needed.
6. Take a few minutes to have each group share some examples of their complete subjects and complete predicates. Then, review the terms **simple subject** and **simple predicate** with the groups.
7. Using scissors with caution, each student should cut out the simple subject or simple predicate from their sentence strip.
8. Now have students tape simple subjects to a small Toobeez, subject modifiers to large Toobeez, simple predicate to a small Toobeez, and predicate modifiers to large Toobeez.
9. Group students into two or three medium-sized groups to see how many different sentences they can make with their Toobeez by linking tubes together with spheres.
10. Have students record their variations as they come up with complete sentences.
11. Switch up the groups after five minutes and repeat this exercise as often as time permits.
12. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.

Remove the simple subject or predicates from the sentence strips to make new sentences.

Assessment

- Students worked cooperatively in small groups
- Students used appropriate vocabulary when discussing complete sentences
- Teacher observed good student participation

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- What is the simple predicate? The simple subject? The complete predicate? The complete subject?
- How do you feel everyone worked to build complete sentences?
- What challenges arose during this activity?
- How do you feel using the Toobeez helped you to better understand the concept of complete sentences?
- How did this activity help you learn about yourself and perseverance?

See page 6 for available training options!

Activity Variations

1. Student creativity.
Once students understand complete subject, complete predicate, simple subject and simple predicate, have students write their own subjects and predicates on sentence strips for further practice of this topic. Remind students to keep their phrases simple, and prepare for a lot giggles during this activity as things can get quite silly!

2. Additional parts of speech.
Look for another activity covering additional parts of speech (such as direct objects, prepositions and more) in the next volume!

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 4

MOUNT PLOT PEAK

Objectives

- Discuss the importance of a story's plot and the related story elements
- Analyze a story plot for necessary plot elements
- Cooperatively "construct" a mountain plot line
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 1 minute
Materials: 1 Toobeez set
construction paper
markers
tape
copy of *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum (optional)
chart paper (optional)

Setup:
1. Have Toobeez available for setup.
2. Refer to samples (on page 76 of the Appendix) of plot elements to include.

Character Focus

Respecting Others

Activity Plan

Time: 40 - 50 minutes
Space: Medium
Instruction: Whole class

The Challenge

Using the Toobeez, students are going to construct a mountain plot line to represent the story events in *The Wizard of Oz*.

Mount Plot Peak

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- This is a good activity to introduce the concept of plot. As a class, students can work to add plot elements as they are revealed during or after a class novel or other read aloud
- This activity can get loud as everyone wants to participate, volunteer their ideas or perhaps disagree with another person's suggestion. Be sure to emphasize "respecting others" during the conversation to maintain a positive learning environment
- This activity can also be used to help teach writing skills (see "Activity Variations")

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Ask students about some recent favorite books they have read and why they liked the stories. Ask students, "What makes a good story?" Steer students toward the topic of plot and that good conflicts make stories interesting. Remind students that stories without conflict do not maintain a reader's interest.
2. Review these terms with the group before beginning the activity.

* The **plot** is made up of the series of events that take place in a story.
* The **exposition** is the beginning of the story and introduces the setting, main characters and conflict.
* The **conflict** is the problem or obstacle the main character(s) must overcome.
* **Rising action** includes all the events that lead up to the climax.
* The **climax** is the turning point of the story and has the most action.
* **Falling action** includes the events following the climax.
* The **resolution** is when the problem is solved in the story.

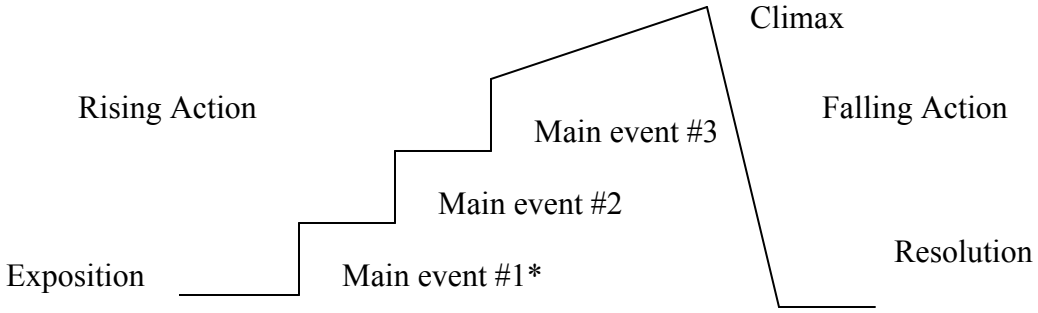
3. As a class, students are going to "build" the plot of a well-known story, *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum. You could also use a recent class read-aloud, a picture book or other popular story.

Mount Plot Peak

4. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

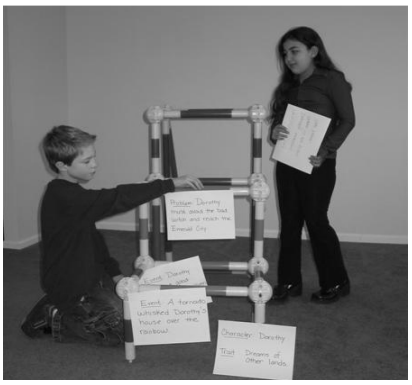
> **Challenge:** Using the Toobeez, students are going to construct a mountain plot line to represent the story events in *The Wizard of Oz*.

5. As elements of the story and plot (such as characters, setting, main events and so on) emerge from the conversation, students may take turns writing down parts of the story on pieces of large construction paper. Decisions will need to be made about what is important enough to become part of the plot line. **Please see the Appendix for suggested plot line elements**.
6. Have students construct the Toobeez mountain plot line. On each section, students should display the construction paper story elements. You can do this as you go or after you have completed reviewing the story. See below for the plot line shape and refer to pictures.



7. *You may adjust the number of main events if needed, but try not to have more than five (for stability of the Toobeez mountain).
8. Once assembled, have students review the elements of a plot and discuss how this represents a mountain.
9. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.

The Toobeez mountain



Students attaching plot elements

Mount Plot Peak

Assessment

- Students participated in the class discussion
- Students actively engaged themselves cooperatively in providing events from the story
- Teacher observed good student work

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- What is conflict, and why is conflict a critical element to a good plot?
- What was challenging about identifying the plot lines of a story as a group?
- How did constructing the plot line using Toobeez help you to understand the elements of a good plot?
- How did you show respect to others during this activity?
- Why is it important to show respect to others, especially when working in a large group?

See page 6 for available training options!

Mount Plot Peak

Activity Variations

1. **As a writing lesson.**
   When writing a story, students are often quick to begin drafting before they have thoroughly developed a plot. This tends to lead to stories that end in "and then I woke up." To avoid this problem, use this lesson at the beginning of the year to emphasize the importance of plot so students can develop rewarding plots all year.
2. **Tie to summaries.**
   This lesson can help reinforce the idea of summaries as well. If students turned this visual plot line into a paragraph or two, they would have a good summary of the story.
3. **Extension/Follow-up.**
   To reinforce this concept during the following days or weeks, have small groups of students read picture books and then the groups can take turns to construct plot lines for the books they have read together. Have students display the title and leave the picture book and its plot line up for a few days for students to review.

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 5

THE DOUBLE DIAMOND

Objectives

- Differentiate between comparing and contrasting when analyzing a story
- Determine similarities and differences between two stories
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 10 minutes
Materials: 1 Toobeez set
The Principal's New Clothes by Stephanie Calmenson
The Emperor's New Suit by Hans Christian Anderson
sentence strips
markers
chart paper (optional)

Setup:
1. Create two large square shapes using the Toobeez.
2. Turn the squares so each represents a diamond, and overlap them at two corners (refer to photo).

Character Focus

Citizenship

Activity Plan

Time: 45 - 55 minutes
Space: Medium
Instruction: Groups

The Challenge

Analyze two stories to determine both similar and differing elements between the stories.

The Double Diamond

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- Reading the stories: You can read both these stories aloud to the class, or you can split students into two groups so each group hears only one of the stories
- To save time, have students read the stories in advance, or read one story the day before and the other story prior to beginning the lesson
- This lesson imitates the Venn diagram technique to make the skills of comparing and contrasting reading material a hands-on activity

See page 6 for available training options!

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Discuss the following concepts with the group before beginning the activity. Have students recall times when they had to compare or contrast something in their life.

   *To **compare** items means to analyze the similarities between the items.
   * To **contrast** items means to analyze the differences between the items.

2. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

   Challenge: Analyze two stories to determine both similar and differing elements between the stories.

3. If students are going to read both stories for the first time, divide students into two groups. Provide each group with one of the books, and have students in each group take turns reading the story aloud**.** **Teacher Note:** Groups should move far enough apart so as not to be distracted by the other group's reading. **Teacher Note:** See the "Helpful Hints" section above for other reading options.

4. Once reading has been completed, regroup the students and place the Toobeez diamonds in the middle of the circle with the two corners overlapping (they should look like overlapping diamonds). Arrange students around the Toobeez.
5. Label one Toobeez diamond for each book title using a sentence strip.
6. Begin discussing the stories by asking some of the questions below. As the students respond to the questions, have students take turns recording the responses on sentence strips or paper. **Teacher Note:** If the two groups read separate books, have each group record their own responses on their own sentence strips. If both stories were read as a whole class, then have students take turns recording responses for each story.
    - Who was the main character?
    - What was the character's conflict?
    - What happened to the main character?
    - Who were the secondary characters?
    - How did the main character solve the conflict?
    - What was the moral of the story?
    - And so on….
7. For each question, have students determine if the group's responses are similar or different. If they are similar, place the similar-statement sentence strips (one on top of the other) in the center of overlapping Toobeez. If they are different, the responses should go in the larger open part of the Toobeez square under the corresponding book title.
8. When the Toobeez are filled with as many responses as possible, review how the books were similar and how they were different.
9. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.

Label each diamond with the book title and place cards in the diamonds. Place similar traits in the overlapping center space.

The Double Diamond

Assessment

- Students worked cooperatively in groups
- Students participated in classroom discussion and volunteered information from the group reading
- Teacher observed good student work

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- Why is comparing and contrasting stories important?
- How did using the Toobeez help you to see the similar and different elements between the stories?
- How do you feel your group communicated during this activity?
- How did your work contribute to the success of the group?
- Why is it important for people to work together when trying to achieve a common goal?

The Double Diamond

Activity Variations

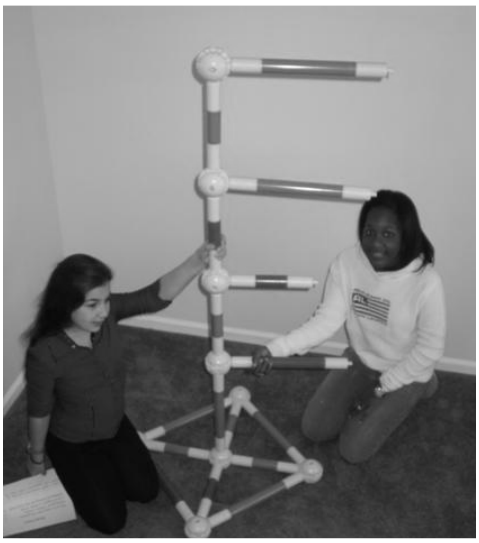
1. On display.
Tape the large, overlapping Toobeez diamonds to the wall to track and display similarities and differences of a classroom novel as the class works through an entire book. You could also use this method to emphasize character development by comparing and contrasting characters between or within books.

2. Extension to content areas.
This activity can extend beyond reading and be applied to content areas, such as Social Studies, to compare and contrast information. You can also apply this technique for non-fiction sources such as textbooks, magazines, pamphlets or any other research resource.

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 6

THE RHYMING TREE



Objectives

- To be introduced to different rhyme scheme patterns
- To analyze and label poetry for varying rhyme schemes
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 1 minute
Materials: 2 or more Toobeez sets
pencils
overhead of Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"
5-6 sample copies (1/group) of a rhyming quatrain
chart paper (optional)

Setup:

1. Assemble four "tree trunks" of Toobeez with the number of balls equal to the lines of poetry (refer to photos).
2. Have the remaining Toobeez available and ready to use to make the branches.

Character Focus

Teamwork/Cooperation

Activity Plan

Time: 30 - 40 minutes
Space: Medium
Instruction: Whole class and small groups

The Challenge

Students will use Toobeez to grow a "rhyming tree" and label the rhyme scheme of a poem.

The Rhyming Tree

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- Select short poems (try not to go much longer than six lines) with varying rhyme schemes. If your poems are four lines, two Toobeez sets will provide enough Toobeez balls for four supported tree trunks
- Tree trunks can be made without a base if Toobeez are limited
- Use short tubes between connecting spheres when making a "tree trunk" for a longer poem
- Tree trunks are a little shaky, so have students should work in pairs or small groups so someone can support the poetry tree

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Discuss if and why students like rhyme in poems. Ask students, "What role does rhyme play in a poem?" and "How does rhyming add/contribute to a poem?"
2. Review the term "rhyme scheme" with the group before continuing.

*The **rhyme scheme** of a poem is the pattern of end-line rhyme. The pattern is labeled using small letters alphabetically each time a new end line rhyme is introduced.

		Label
Sample:	The leaves dance upon the ground,	a
	Falling gently without a sound,	a
	Colored brightly in shades of red,	b
	Tickling and taunting the top of my head.	b

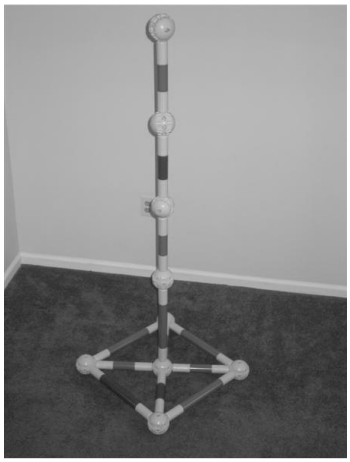
The **rhyme scheme** of this poem is *a, a, b, b*. There are many different rhyme schemes when writing poetry. Some examples include:

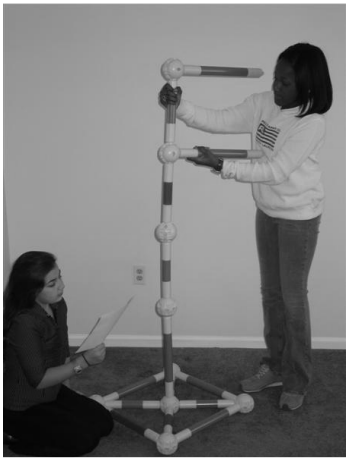
a	a	a	a	a
a	b	b	a	b
a	c	a	b	a
a	b	b	b	b
			a	c
				c

3. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

> **Challenge:** Students will use Toobeez to grow a "rhyming tree" and label the rhyme scheme of a poem.

4. Display an overhead transparency or poster of Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."
5. Lead the class in labeling the rhyme scheme of the poem (*aaba bbcb ccdc dddd*).
6. The four Toobeez tree trunks each represent one **stanza** in this poem.
7. Assign a tube color to each rhyme sound found in the rhyme scheme. For example, red tubes can symbolize "a" end-line rhyme and blue tubes can symbolize "b" end-line rhyme. Attach the appropriate colored Toobeez "branch" to the tree trunk to label each line in the poem.
8. A Toobeez branch will now be added for each line of poetry to represent the rhyme scheme. Have a few volunteers attach the appropriate colored tubes to each Toobeez ball on the tree trunk to symbolize the rhyme pattern of the sample poem.
9. Break students into three or four smaller groups, and provide each group with Toobeez balls, tubes and a tree trunk. Hand out samples of the quatrain poems to each group and have them "grow" their own rhyming trees for their poem using the Toobeez colored tubes. A **quatrain** is a four-line rhyming poem.
10. When a group is finished with one poem, have them switch poems with another group. Repeat this step as time permits.
11. Circle up the group again. Share the different patterns each group found within the poems.
12. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.





Each Toobeez ball in the tree trunk represents one line of poetry. Have students attach one colored Toobeez for each end line rhyme sound.

Assessment

- Students worked cooperatively in small groups
- Students adjusted Toobeez tubes to represent accurate rhyme scheme of various poems
- Teacher observed good student participation

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- What role does rhyme scheme play in traditional forms of poetry?
- How do you think poets choose a rhyme scheme for a poem?
- What do you think is difficult about writing a poem with a set rhyme scheme?
- How did using the Toobeez help you to see the rhyme scheme of each poem?
- How do you feel you communicated during this activity?
- Why is it important to work as a team when working in small groups?

See page 6 for available training options!

The Rhyming Tree

Activity Variations

1. Follow-up/Writing rhyming poems.
Using knowledge from this lesson, have one student volunteer to create a Toobeez tree trunk with a particular rhyme scheme and a certain number of lines. Sometime throughout the day, have students write a poem following the designated number of lines and rhyme scheme on the rhyming tree.

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 7

ANYTHING GOES

Objectives

- Allow creativity to flow
- Create a short story based on a writing prompt
- Develop a simple plot around which to base the story
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 15 minutes
Materials: 1 or more Toobeez sets
paper
pencils
story map, 1/student (optional)
chart paper (optional)

Setup:
1. Create one to three structures out of Toobeez for students to use as writing prompts for a short story.

Character Focus

Uniqueness

Activity Plan

Time: 20 minutes for ideas; Add 20 minutes for writing
Space: Medium
Instruction: Individual or pairs

The Challenge

Students will write a short story (either individually or in pairs) from creative ideas they imagine and develop from a prompt built from Toobeez.

Anything Goes

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- Some examples of structures include:
  - a tower (is someone or something locked inside?)
  - a door (where does it lead - another room or another land?)
  - a box (is it a treasure chest, a present?)
  - a helicopter, a boat, a spaceship or more
- Allow students (or pairs of students) time to brainstorm different ideas for their unique stories
- Timing this activity can provide practice for standardized tests for students

See page 6 for available training options!

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Discuss the difference between non-fiction writing (such as a biography or a research paper) and fictional writing (such as stories or poetry). Have students discuss the different purposes and the importance of both of these types of writing, as well as the possible audiences of each.
2. Review this term with the group before beginning the activity.

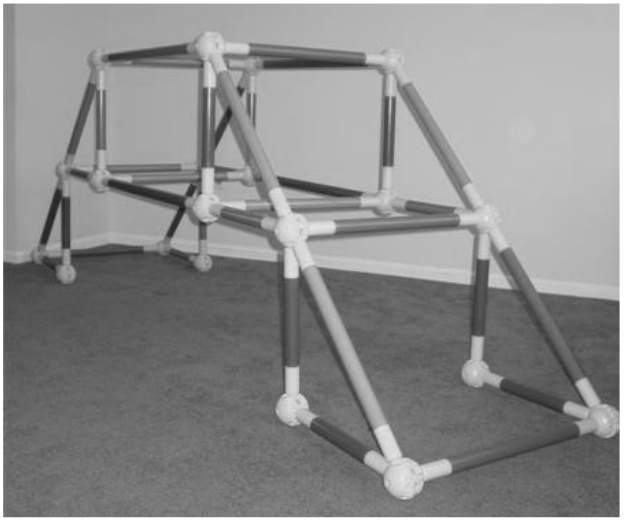
*__Creative writing__ is difficult to define because this type of writing encompasses many areas and ideas, as well as the unique imaginations of each individual writer. Story ideas can vary. Sometimes these pieces are structured and sometimes they are not. Creative writing can include plays, poems, narratives, commentaries and more.

3. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

> **Challenge:** Students will write a short story (either individually or in pairs) from creative ideas they imagine and develop from a prompt built from Toobeez.

4. Display the Toobeez structure(s) before the class.
5. Students will then use brainstorming techniques or a story map to brainstorm ideas for a short story. Have students focus on a simple plot line to keep their story from going on endlessly. Students should create a simple conflict for their character(s) to face.
6. Conference briefly with students as they plan their stories. Once the short story has been mapped out, students may begin to draft their story.
7. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.

Sample prompt structure: You can provide a story starter to accompany your structure or you can let students write simply from imagination.



This structure could represent a bridge. You can share what your structure is, or you can let the students' creativity take over. You can also provide a story starter like the one below to help students generate ideas.

Sample Story Starter

One afternoon, while hiking in the woods with your friend, you came across a mysterious bridge you had never seen before….

Anything Goes

Assessment

- Students worked cooperatively in pairs (if applicable)
- Students created unique story ideas and developed simple plot lines for their short story
- Teacher observed good student participation

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- What did you find challenging about writing from a visual prompt?
- What do you do when you encounter writer's block?
- Why is using your imagination important?
- How do you get unique ideas for writing?
- When is being different from others a good thing?
- What value do you place on your individuality?

Anything Goes

Activity Variations

1. Add some drama.
Once students have completed their stories and are ready to publish them, have the students adapt their stories into a screenplay format. Use the original prompt structures as a prop in the students' plays!

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 8

CONVERSATION CARWASH

Objectives

- Recognize dialogue in writing
- Punctuate dialogue appropriately
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 12 minutes
Materials: 1 Toobeez set
2-3 sheets of posterboard
markers
classroom novels
tape
chart paper

Setup:

1. Build a “Conversation Carwash” (refer to photo).
2. Copy the dialogue in Step #3 on chart paper without the punctuation.
3. Use posterboard to create large opening and closing quotations, a comma, a period, an exclamation point and a question mark.

Character Focus

Communication

Activity Plan

Time: 20 minutes
Space: Medium
Instruction: Whole class and pairs

The Challenge

Students will punctuate dialogue by using the Toobeez Conversation Carwash.

Conversation Carwash

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- Prior to the lesson, duplicate the examples in Step #3 on chart paper or on the blackboard to save time

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Discuss the role of dialogue in writing and reading stories. Ask the students, "Why is dialogue important?" and "When should we use dialogue?" Discuss with students what happens if dialogue is overused. **Teacher Note:** Dialogue should be used sparingly and only to advance the story or reveal relevant information.
2. Review these punctuation marks and terms with the group before beginning the activity.

* **Quotation marks** (" ") are used around a character's exact words.
* **Speaker tags** (he said, Carla responded, said the teacher) are used before, within, or after the direct character quotations. Speaker tags should include descriptive words and phrases that direct action.
* A **comma** is used in most instances to separate the speaker tag from the quote. Review the examples to determine its placement.
* **Exclamation points, periods** and **question marks** associated with a quote are placed inside the quotation marks.
* Every time the speaker changes, remember to **indent** each new line of dialogue.

3. Review this example, omitting punctuation, on chart paper.
Example (notice the indents for each new speaker):

Mitch said, "My favorite food is pizza."

"I agree," Jackie responded. "My favorite toppings are sausage and mushrooms!"

"Not me," disagreed Samantha. "I prefer Sicilian slices. What about you, Christine?"

"Well," Christine stated, "I don't like many toppings. I really like plain slices best!"

4. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

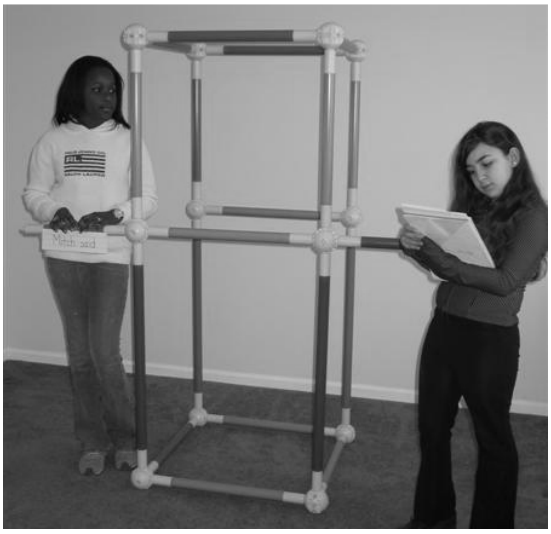
> **Challenge:** Students will punctuate dialogue by using the Toobeez Conversation Carwash.

5. Using the example sentences, "punctuate" them using the Conversation Carwash. Have one student read aloud each dialogue line. The student should read the written words, as well as the names of the punctuation marks as he or she comes across them. For example, the first line should be read as follows: *Mitch said, comma, open quotes, 'My favorite food is pizza' period, close quotes*.
6. As the student is reading the line of dialogue, another student is to "act out" what is being read. View the action that corresponds to each part being read below:

What is read	What is acted
Mitch said	Attach one long Toobeez tube (the "Speaker Tag" tube) to the sphere (refer to photos). Attach a written speaker tag if desired.
Comma	Place the comma at the end of the Speaker Tag tube.
Open quotations	Tape quotation marks on the carwash.
'My favorite food is pizza'	Actor steps inside the carwash and repeats the "spoken words."
Period	Tape the period to the bottom of the carwash.
Close quotations	Tape quotations marks on the carwash, and the actor exits.

7. Refer to photos on the following page for additional information.
8. Have volunteers read each quotation line in the same manner, and have other volunteers act out exactly what is being read.
9. With a partner, have students select a unique quotation line from a classroom novel and record it on a piece of paper. Then have students act out their selected line for the class.
10. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.

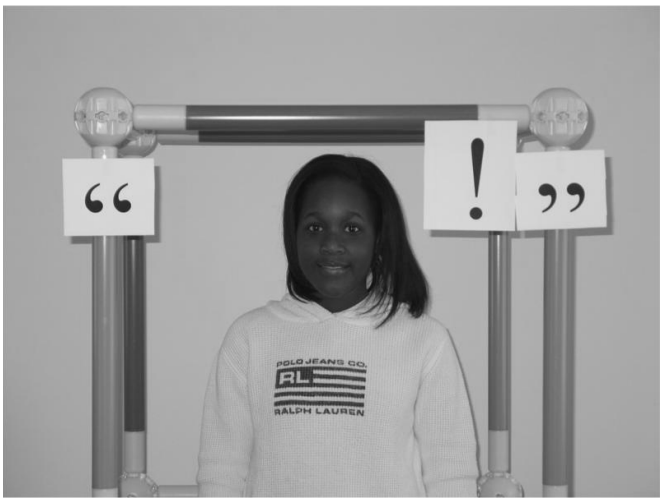
Conversation Carwash



Step 1 (at left)
In pairs, one student "acts out" the dialogue (Student A) while the other recites the quotation (Student B). Student A is on the left and Student B is on the right here.

Step 2 (at right)
Student B says "Mitch said"
Student A attaches **Mitch said** to the Speaker Tag tube.

Step 3 (below)
Student B says "comma, open quotes"
Student A attaches the comma and open quotations to the Conversation Carwash then steps inside.
Student B says "My favorite food is pizza."
Student A repeats this sentence inside the Carwash.
Student B says "exclamation point, close quotes"
Student A attaches the exclamation point and closing quotations and exits the Carwash.



Assessment

- Students worked cooperatively in pairs and participated in the class discussion
- Students accurately read and acted out samples of dialogue
- Teacher observed good student work

See page 6 for available training options!

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- Why is punctuating dialogue important?
- What role do you feel dialogue should play in a good story?
- Why is dialogue important for communicating with others?
- How did using the Toobeez help you to see the right way to punctuate dialogue?
- Do you feel you learn better by seeing and doing something yourself?
- What challenge(s) did you face in trying to communicate in this activity?

Conversation Carwash

Activity Variations

1. Have a conversation.
Build two Conversation Carwashes. When students have free time (perhaps when finished with another class assignment), have small groups of students write a conversation between each other and then act out the conversation.

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 9

PARAGRAPH PLAN

Objectives

- Understand the parts of a paragraph
- Analyze paragraph structure
- Identify the parts of a paragraph
- Construct Toobeez "houses" to represent paragraphs
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 1 minute
Materials: 1 or more Toobeez sets
2-6 sample paragraphs (one is provided on page 76 of the Appendix)
index cards
markers
string
scissors
paper
chart paper (optional)

Setup:
1. Have the Toobeez ready to use.

Character Focus

Teamwork/Cooperation

Activity Plan

Time: 50 - 60 minutes
Space: Medium
Instruction: Whole class, pairs and small groups

The Challenge

Students will use the plans, or blueprints, to construct a sturdy paragraph using Toobeez.

Paragraph Plan

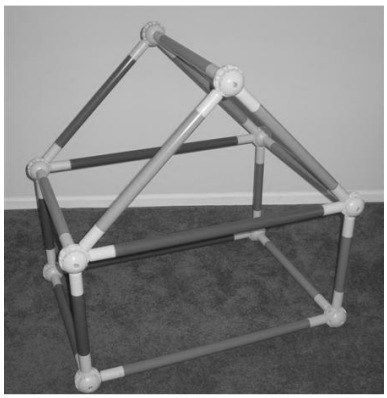
Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- Sample paragraphs should have five to eight supporting sentences to work well for this activity
- To save time, construct the initial Toobeez house in Step #7 in advance
- If students are using different sample paragraphs, leave the Toobeez on display for all students to see how different paragraphs were written

See page 6 for available training options!

Use this photo as a reference to build your house.



Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group. Begin by discussing what students already know about paragraphs. Record students' existing knowledge on the board.
2. Review these terms with the group before beginning the activity.

*A **paragraph** is a group of sentences (usually 6-8 at the middle school level) that explain and support a single topic.
* A **topic sentence**, or focus sentence, states the general idea of the paragraph.
* A **supporting sentence** provides specific information about the topic sentence.
* A **concluding sentence** restates the main idea and closes the paragraph.

3. Read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

> **Challenge:** Students will use the plans, or blueprints, to construct a sturdy paragraph using Toobeez.

4. Display the sample paragraph. Working in pairs, have students identify the main idea, the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence (if there is one).
5. Write each sentence on a sentence strip.
6. As a whole group, use the Toobeez to construct a paragraph "house" using the blueprints (refer to photos to help with constructing the house).
7. In building the house, students are actually working backwards. First, construct a square base which symbolizes the concluding sentence. Then, attach four "supports" from each ball to start the walls and connect them to complete the cube. These symbolize the supporting sentences. Finally, construct a triangular roof to cover the house. This roof symbolizes the topic sentence which "houses" the entire topic.
8. Now attach the sentence strips to the appropriate parts of the house.
9. On an index card, write down the main idea of the paragraph. Then, hang a string from the center of the roof, and attach the index card to the string.
10. Break students into three small groups. Provide students with a new sample paragraph (Students can use copies of a new paragraph or each group can have a unique paragraph).
11. Using the Toobeez, students can construct their own Toobeez house and label the house using sentences from their sample paragraph.
12. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.

First, attach the topic sentence to the roof, and then add the supporting sentences to each vertical "support" of the house. Add any supporting sentences next to its related sentence. Finally, attach the concluding sentence to the base of the house.

Assessment

- Students worked cooperatively in small groups
- Students accurately labeled the parts of a paragraph using the Toobeez and sentence strips
- Teacher observed good student work

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- What are the important elements for a good paragraph?
- How does writing paragraphs properly benefit the reader?
- How did building a house with Toobeez help you to understand the concept of paragraph writing?
- Do you feel your group worked cooperatively?
- How would you rate how your group worked?
- What do you feel is important for a team to know in order to be successful?
- Why is listening and cooperation important in teamwork?

Paragraph Plan

Activity Variations

1. **Making the activity a little easier.**
   If students are struggling with the concept of paragraphs, use this lesson to help introduce paragraphs. Provide students with a Toobeez house that is already labeled with sentence strips from a paragraph. Then have students write the paragraph based on the sentences on the Toobeez house.
2. **Follow-up lesson.**
   Once students grasp how the parts of a paragraph are arranged, provide students with new main paragraph ideas on index cards. Then, in pairs, have students write a 6-8 sentence paragraph based on the main idea. Once the paragraph is written, have students construct their Toobeez house to make sure all the parts are present. This will help students recognize when something is missing (especially the topic sentence).
3. **Extension: Writing transitional phrases.**

To avoid the problem of choppy sentences or to focus the lesson on sentence fluency, have students identify transitional phrases within the paragraph and write them on colored index cards. Attach these index cards to the Toobeez balls. The transitions connect the sentences just as the balls connect the tubes.

Activity Notes

ACTIVITY 10

SPELL-EEZ

Objectives

- Work cooperatively as a team for a common goal
- Spell words accurately to score points for a team
- Discuss and reflect on the experience

Preparation

Time: 10 minutes
Materials: 1 or more Toobeez sets
List(s) of spelling words
chart paper, chalkboard or dry-erase board
additional chart paper (optional)

Setup:

1. Create an obstacle course using the Toobeez (you can determine its shape).
2. Near the start of the course, place a Toobeez square on the floor. This is the "Spelling Square."
3. Place the chart paper, chalkboard or dry-erase board at the end of the course so students can mark their points.

Character Focus

Citizenship

Activity Plan

Time: 15+ minutes
Space: Medium
Instruction: Teams

The Challenge

Teams of students will practice spelling words to move members through the obstacle course to score points.

Spell-eez

Helpful Hints!

Be sure to review these tips prior to beginning the activity, and if necessary, share reminders with the group during the activity.

- **Important:** The course must have at least as many "spaces" as the number of letters in the longest word
- A section of the course is a square of Toobeez, and the students will move through the course like pieces moving on a board game

Activity Instructions

1. Circle up the group, and read aloud the following Activity Challenge Box to the group.

   Challenge: Teams of students will practice spelling words to move members through the obstacle course to score points.

2. Divide students into two teams. Explain the game to the teams.

   1. Line up the two teams parallel to one another.
   2. At the start of each word, one team member (Student 1) will stand at the start of the obstacle course and another member (Student 2) will enter the Spelling Square.
   3. Student 2 is given a word to spell. No other members can help Student 2 spell the word.
   4. If spelled correctly, Student 1 may enter the course and travel all the way through to score the team's point.
   5. If a mistake is made, determine how many letters were correct before the mistake. That is how many "spaces" Student 1 should move through the course.
   6. Now, the other team may attempt to steal the misspelled word. If they spell it correctly, they win the point and the student in the course can go back to his or her line.
   7. If the opposing team makes a mistake, determine how many letters were correct before the mistake. Student 1 (still in the course) will move forward one "space" for every TWO letters correct before the mistake. If this leads the student out of the course, that student's team wins the point. If it does not, no one wins a point, but the next team's turn starts from where Student 1 left off in the course.
   8. ****See an example of how this is played on the next page!**

Spell-eez

Example Scenario

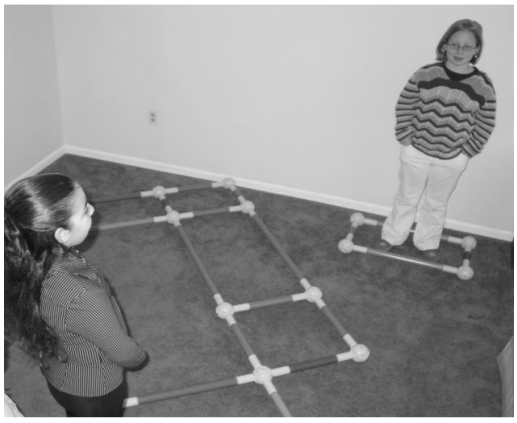
Team A is given the word "beneficial." Brian (in the Spelling Square) spells it correctly, and Sarah moves through the entire course to mark a point.

Team B is given the word "meticulous." Chris (now in the Spelling Square) spells the word as: **m-e-t-i-c**-o-u-l-o-u-s Since the first five letters were spelled correctly before he made a mistake, Kristen can move five sections into the course.

Now, Team A is given a chance to steal the same word. Josh spells the word: **m-e-t-i-c-u-l**-u-s. Since seven letters are correct, Kristen (who is still in the course) will move ahead one space for every TWO letters correct (in this case, only three spaces – no rounding up). If this gets Kristen to the end of the course, Team B wins the point. If it does not, no one wins a point, but Andrew replaces Kristen at her spot as the starting point for his team's next word.

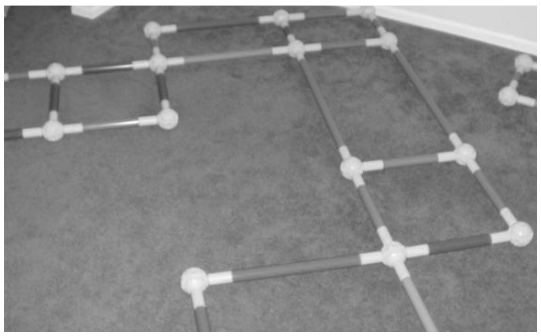
3. Play the game until a certain point value is won or a set time is over.
4. After the activity, move to the "Activity Discussion and Processing" section of the activity.

See page 6 for available training options!



Above, a student (at right) in the Spelling Square attempts to spell a word so her teammate (left) can move into the obstacle course.

Below is a sample of how a simple obstacle course could look.



Spell-eez

Assessment

- Students worked cooperatively as teams
- Students spelled words accurately to win points for their team
- Teacher observed good student work
- Students displayed good character and sportsmanship while engaging in competitive play

Activity Discussion and Processing

To close the lesson, end with a group discussion about what was learned during the activity. Circle up the group, and work through the following questions. If possible, record the group's responses on flip chart paper so all comments are displayed.

- How did this game motivate you to focus on your spelling?
- How did your group work together for a common goal?
- Why is it important for citizens to work together?

Spell-eez

Activity Variations

1. Remove the element of competition.
Play the game in the same manner and track points. At the end of the game, however, combine point scores for a total score. After students study their words, play the game again (perhaps the next day or as a review for a test) and see if they can beat their original combined score.

Activity Notes

Appendix

Activity Materials

Activity One: Succinct Summaries

A JUDGEMENT FOR JOSHUA

By Victoria Anderson

"Wait for your Pa," Ma scolded as she placed the steaming bread on the table. Joshua timidly tucked his hand beneath the table. He knew better than to start eating before Pa sat down, but he was so nervous about dinner that he forgot. It had been four years since the Morgan's last good corn harvest back in 1882, and the Morgan men had been working relentlessly this planting season. Still, Joshua knew he had to ask his Pa tonight. His new job was set to begin in just two days, and he hadn't told his family yet!

The small kitchen buzzed with activity. Grease spit and sizzled as Ma scooped the fried chicken out of the iron skillet. Harrison and Eli, Joshua's older brothers, were crowded around the sink. The water from the spicket flashed like clear lightening as they scrubbed the workday from their hands. The cabin door flew open, inviting in the warm glow of the setting sun. Joshua's Pa entered. His boots brushed across the floor as he approached the table.

"I hope supper is ready. I'm as hungry as a bear in spring!" roared Pa as he grabbed his chair. He flashed a warm smile at Joshua, but all Joshua could do was drop his head. He had been offered a job as a stock clerk at Mr. Walterson's mercantile in town, and Joshua knew how disappointed Pa would be in him.

"The north field is almost ready for planting, Eli. It's a good thing we got a head start this spring," stated Pa. "You boys are great workers, and together we will all get the work done for a successful harvest." Pa lifted the warm, crisp chicken to his mouth and took a hearty bite.

Joshua stared down at his plate. What would his Pa say if he told him he didn't want to work in the corn field anymore? Joshua felt the knots in his stomach tighten. He was so nervous he could barely open his mouth!

"P..P..Pa," Joshua stumbled. Pa wiped his mouth with his napkin, settling his large dark eyes on him. Suddenly, the words rushed out of Joshua's mouth like a raging river. "I won't be able to help in the fields. I got a job at the mercantile. I am so much smaller than Harrison and Eli, and the work is so hard. I've been given a job in the store for three weeks. I start Monday morning."

"Pa! We'll never...," protested Harrison.

Pa lifted his hand sternly without a word. After a pause that seemed eternal, he turned to Joshua.

"You can handle the fields - you're almost twelve," Pa said calmly. Joshua's cheeks burned red with embarrassment. Pa was disappointed. "But," Pa continued, "if it's a store job you want, then perhaps that is what you should try. However, I fear the job will be different than what you expect. Whatever you chose to do, you must stick with it."

Monday morning, the sun sparkled off the spotless glass storefront as Joshua climbed the steps of the mercantile. Tiny bells jingled a welcome as he entered the store.

"Good morning, Joshua!" cheered Mr. Walterson. "I am so glad that you are here. At this busy time of year, I sure can use your help."

Joshua looked around. The shelves overflowed with coffee, tea, sugars, flour and cornmeal. Wooden barrels secured pickles, potatoes and onions. A rainbow of fabrics and delicate lace patterns brightened the rear of the store. As Joshua stepped behind the counter, he noticed the clear jars of candy that lined countertops - a treat for him later, no doubt. He was confident that this would be a great day.

"Uhh, no, Joshua," said Mr. Walterson motioning him away from the counter. "You will do most of your work back here." He led Joshua into the rear stock room. "See, what I need is someone to clean these shelves, stack the new seed and keep the stockroom tidy."

Joshua's confusion washed into a wave of disappointment as he realized that he wasn't going to work with fine merchandise and customers in the front of the store. He had only been hired as a stock boy.

Mr. Walterson showed him the chores and Joshua set right to work. As he steadied into the monotonous rhythm of lifting and stacking grain sacks, Joshua's mind wandered off to his family's corn field and a clear picture flashed into his mind. Pa was working the plow, while Harrison and Eli buried seeds in tiny notches, covering them with a damp blanket of dirt. By afternoon, the heat would be unforgiving, but the moist soil would cool their fingertips. As they worked, showers of laughter refreshed their spirits like a dip in an icy stream. Joshua knew they were all working hard and their backs would ache by the day's end, but they were together with the fresh air and hope of a new season.

The thought of aches and pains snapped Joshua's mind back into the stock room. He became aware of his own hands, which had grown pink and swollen. He had forgotten to put on the gloves, and the canvas seed sacks had grated his palms. As he wiped his forehead with the back of his sore hand, tiny streams of sweat trickled down his back like lines on a map. The musty air inside the storeroom strangled him. He hadn't enjoyed a breath of fresh air all morning, and the dust grabbed at his throat.

"Sure wish for some fresh air in here," he muttered to himself. Joshua placed his hands on his waist to stretch his tight muscles.

"Oh, resting on the job?" joked Mr. Walterson as he entered the stock room carrying a wooden crate. "The latest order has just arrived. Please help the driver unload the wagon."

As Joshua walked through the front of the store, he began to realize that this job was harder than he had thought. However, he still felt it was far better than sweating in the sun. “I can certainly unload a few crates and get some fresh air!” he said as his spirits began to lift.

Joshua stepped out onto the porch. His eyes exploded at the sight! Barrels and large crates, not small ones like the one Mr. Walterson had carried in, filled the wagon. There was also a mountain of new linens, as well two large leather saddles.

"What did I get myself into?" he said, this time not realizing he spoke out loud.

"Don't worry," encouraged Mr. Walterson who had appeared from behind him. He patted Joshua's shoulder, which slumped under the weight of the light tap. Joshua was suddenly reminded of the throbbing aches in his back and shoulders. "Just take it one chore at a time," Mr. Walterson suggested with a smile.

Stacking grain and unloading the wagon was just the start. For the entire day, Joshua had chores to do - each chore more grueling than the one before! He moved a pile of pine lumber, filled the fresh water supply (which took six trips to the creek!), and cleaned out the barn stalls for Mr. Walterson's delivery team.

It wasn't just the chores, though. Here at the mercantile, he worked alone. Joshua was used to hard work, but with his family, the sounds of each other's laughter kept him company. The sweat was nothing new, but being alone was. By the end of the day, Joshua was so tired that he felt like sleeping on the roadside rather than trudging the two miles home.

As he stepped onto the merchantile's whitewashed porch, Joshua inhaled deeply. The sweet air filled him, and the sun glowed over the pasture as he crossed the open field to head home. Each throbbing step reminded him of how wrong he had been about the mercantile job. He thought it would be easy, but today showed him that he was mistaken.

As he neared the road to his farm, Joshua heard the familiar rumble of wagon wheels approaching. He turned to see a wagon not too far behind him. As the wagon drew closer, Joshua could see it was his Pa! Joshua smiled as the wagon pulled up beside him. The seat creaked as Joshua climbed into the seat.

"So," Pa started as he rapped the leather reins, "how was your first day?"

"Fine," Joshua replied, rubbing his finger gently across the bump of a growing blister.

"From the looks of your hands, it musta' been hard," stated his Pa. "The field's just not the same without you. It's going to be a long three weeks."

Three more weeks! The thought of three weeks seemed to stretch out before Joshua like the open prairie. He wanted to be back in the fields tomorrow, but he couldn't say he had changed his mind so quickly. He couldn't say that he changed his mind at all. Pa's words rang through his head, "Whatever you choose, you must stick with it."

Sitting next to Pa, Joshua felt at home for the first time all day. The aches in his back and hands burned, but he ached even more to be with his brothers and Pa planting the corn. Just one day in that stale, old storeroom had proven that. Being outdoors was hot, but the sunshine and fresh air made it great! Instead of doing chores alone, there was the laughter of his family. This realization seized his entire body.

The bright green leaves glowed as the sun began to set behind the hills. Joshua sat quietly in the rig as it rumbled along the dirt road. The darkening shadows of the day blanketed the fields, yet a light seemed to brighten in Joshua's heart. As he looked over at his Pa, a light of love for his family flowed through him. He knew his place was with his family, and even though the work was hard, his family would always be there to support him. Joshua decided two things that evening. First, he was determined to finish his work with Mr. Walterson, no matter how difficult the chores. Second, he decided never to forget the love and support of his family ever again.

Sample Summary

Below are sentences and/or phrases that can be copied onto index cards for this activity using the story, "A Judgment for Joshua." The sentences in bold would probably be included in a well-written summary. Adjust the phrases for what works in your classroom, and remember that students can combine/change phrases when doing this activity.

1. The kitchen buzzed with activity.
2. Eli and Harrison were in the kitchen.
3. **Joshua did not want to work in the fields anymore**.
4. Pa told his sons they are good workers.
5. **Joshua told his Pa he got a job**.
6. **Pa told Joshua he had to stick with his new job**.
7. The mercantile shelves were filled with goods.
8. **Joshua started his new job**.
9. Joshua was confident in his new job.
10. **Joshua realized he was to work in the stock room.**
11. Joshua lifted and stacked the grain sacks.
12. Joshua unloaded the wagon.
13. **Joshua's chores were hard, and he was very tired**.
14. **Joshua missed his Pa and brothers**.
15. Joshua missed the fresh air.
16. **Joshua rode home with his Pa**.
17. Joshua's hands were very sore.
18. The springtime leaves were green.
19. **Joshua decided he had to finish what he started**.
20. **Joshua realized how much the love of his family meant to him**.

Activity Two: How To-beez

Sample Recipe
(It is not critical to include ingredient measurements for this activity)

Fruit-Filled Pancakes

1. Wash your hands before beginning.
2. Wash all of the fruit.
3. Peel the bananas and cut them up into small pieces.
4. Remove the leaves from the strawberries and cut them up into small pieces.
5. Dump the cut-up bananas and strawberries into a bowl. Add blueberries into the same bowl.
6. Warm up your griddle on the stove top.
7. In another bowl, combine the instant pancake mix with water.
8. Stir the pancake mix and water together until there are no lumps in the batter.
9. Gently add the fruit to the batter mix.
10. Pour the batter on the warmed griddle to create small circles (approximately three inches in diameter).
11. When the bubbles pop through the batter, use a pancake flipper to flip the pancakes onto the other side.
12. After a few minutes, remove the finished pancakes.
13. Repeat these steps until all the batter is used.
14. Place pancakes on a plate and serve with warm syrup.

Activity Three: Sentence Switchers

Sample Complete Subjects (the simple subject is in bold)

1. The tall oak **tree**
2. The **ballerinas** in chiffon dresses
3. The black and white soccer **ball**
4. **Michael**
5. The spring leaf **buds**
6. On the field, the **kids**
7. The old **dog**
8. My best **friend**
9. My baby **sister**

Sample Complete Predicates (the simple predicate is in bold)

1. **danced** gracefully before my eyes.
2. silently **exited** the stage.
3. **broke** the antique lamp.
4. **ran** home.
5. **grew** quickly.
6. loudly **laughed** with joy.
7. **moved** swiftly.
8. **drank** the cool water.
9. **giggled.**

Activity Four: Mount Plot Peak

Exposition: Dorothy (dreams of other lands)
Rising Action:
Event #1: A tornado whisked Dorothy's house over the rainbow.
Event #2: Dorothy meets a good witch and is given ruby slippers.
Problem: Dorothy must avoid the bad witch and reach the Emerald City to get home.
Event #3: Dorothy meets three friends who help her on her journey.
Climax: Dorothy destroys the Wicked Witch and brings her broomstick back to the Wizard of Oz.
Falling Action: Dorothy's wish to return home is granted.
Resolution: Dorothy realizes there is no place like home.

Activity Nine: Paragraph Plan

Sample paragraph
When using this sample, keep the supporting sentences and their descriptive sentence on the same leg of the Toobeez house to show how one elaborates the other. Perhaps use different-colored pens to display that one is a supporting "extension" of the other.

Autumn is the best time of year. First, the beautiful fall scenery is spectacular. The crimson and golden leaves cover the ground like a blanket. Second, the cool weather is a relief. Crisp breezes dance through the evening skies, bringing refreshment after hot summer nights. Third, autumn brings some wonderful holidays. Halloween is a haunting time, while Thanksgiving welcomes family and friends together for a feast. Finally, there are many wonderful smells in the fall. Nippy air, pumpkin pies, cinnamon and crackling fires can fill anyone's heart. These are just some of the reasons why the fall is such a special time of year.

References

The following titles are used as resources in activity lessons in this book.

Anderson, Hans Christian. *The Emperor's New Suit*.

Baum, L. Frank. *The Wizard of Oz*.

Calmenson, Stephanie. *The Principal's New Clothes*.

Frost, Robert. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

Important Safety Information

Visit www.toobeez.com/safetyinfo.htm for the latest safety information & product updates.

ATTENTION ALL USERS OF THIS PRODUCT:

- This product has been tested and approved for use with participants 4+ years of age
- Please inform all users of this product of this very important information
- Failure to obey or understand these legal disclaimers could result in bodily injuries
- This product was not designed to be a "climb-on" that you may see in a playground or schoolyard
- Using excessive weight or force on a structure could cause it to break and may void the warranty
- It is highly recommended that all structures be built on a flat and even surface at all times
- Do not use this product as a baseball bat, sword or any type of weapon. Please inform all users of this information
- Do not use this product to harm other people, animals or other personal property
- This product was not designed or manufactured as a "water toy" or as a water-safety flotation device. The tubes on this product will absorb water which will cause it to sink. Use of product in water is at your OWN RISK
- Please use this product in a safe manner to ensure years of fun

Product Information

This product is made of a high quality polypropylene and ABS thermoplastic material. This product also includes an ultra violet (UV) stabilizer to help minimize color fading due to excessive and direct sunlight. It is not recommended to leave this product in direct sunlight over long periods of time.

Product Care

Outdoor use: It is not recommended to leave this product in direct sunlight over long periods of time. Doing so will shorten the life of the product and possibly cause the plastic to become brittle, in turn causing the plastic to break. If this product is left in direct

sunlight for extended periods of time, thermoplastics will absorb the heat. This product could become too hot to handle with bare hands. Please be cautious.

Storage: It is not recommended to store this product in a place where the temperature is not regulated, such as in a car on a hot day for an extended period of time. To avoid injury, try to avoid storing this product in places where heat can build up and be absorbed by the product.

Do not climb: Toobeez were intentionally designed as a "non-climbable" structure/building product. It is primarily used for building framework. That is why the ends on the tubes may come apart if you stand on the product or try to bend the ends forcefully into a sphere. This is a built-in safety feature and is not advertised (it is our patent-pending "company secret").

First-time Use

When using this product for the first time, it is highly recommended that an adult instruct all users how to properly assemble and disassemble a structure. Start building from the bottom up to complete your structure. When you are ready to disassemble a structure, you must always begin by removing pieces from the top and working your way down to the bottom. Please review the set up and take down instructions for more information.

As an educational tool, it is suggested that teachers, parents or guardians work with and teach the children who use this product how to build safe structures and other creative forms.

Assembly

It is very important that every time a tube is inserted into a sphere, the rotating end of the tube should be turned to secure (or semi-lock) the tube to the inside of the sphere. This is accomplished by turning the rotating end of the tube ¼ of the way around (or 90 degrees) in either direction. You should feel the "key" (located on the end of the tube) roll over the speed bumps located inside of the sphere. **Note:** This is not a 100% secure lock, and therefore this product is marketed as a "do not climb construction/structure product." If you do not feel the "key" roll over the speed bumps (located inside of the sphere), try using another "key hole" on the sphere until you have achieved success. If you still cannot feel the speed bump "semi lock" into the sphere, please do not use that

particular piece. It may still be under warranty or have reached the end of its product lifecycle.

Never attempt to remove the screws from the sphere(s), or the rotating ends from the tubes. This will permanently damage the product and will void the warranty. The ends of the tubes are to be used only at certain angles when in use with the spheres. If you try to force the tubes into a bad angle, this puts unwarranted stress on the sphere and on the tube ends and can cause one of the following actions:

- Pressure on the screws to become loose on the sphere (Screws can be re-tightened with a #10 Torx screwdriver (previous models) or by using a Phillips or flathead screwdriver – be careful not to over-tighten the screws)
- Pressure on the "T," located on the rotating tube ends, may become bent or damaged if excessive weight and pressure is applied. If this occurs when you are attempting to lock a tube into a sphere, you may not feel the "T" rollover the bumps inside of the sphere
- The rotating ends may become separated from the tube. To fix, simply re-insert it into the tube and be careful not to pinch your hand

If any of these actions occur, we will conclude the product was "possibly" being used in an inconsistent manner for which it was designed or manufactured.

We encourage you to contact the Toobeez™ Project Connect Joint Venture members for more product information or additional services. Additional contact information is available on pages 4-5 of this guide.

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