

Defining Words



When you are asked to define a word, you should try to make your definition as clear, complete, and concise as you can. If you do those things, your listener or reader will understand very plainly what the word means. Remember that a good definition has three parts:

1. The *term*, or word itself.
2. The *genus*, or category, to which the word belongs.
3. The *differentiating information*, or the information which explains how this particular item is different from all the other items belonging to the same category.

Here's an example of how a definition for *dog* is put together.

term	A dog
genus	is an animal
differentiating information	that has fur, barks, and makes a good pet

It is important to be as detailed as you can with the differentiating information and to try to think about something that only that term has or does. Otherwise, your definition might be unclear or confusing. For example, you might say that *A dog is an animal with fur that makes a good pet.* That definition could also fit a cat or a rabbit. Adding the information that a dog *barks* makes the definition much more specific and clear.

Defining Words



Supply the genus, or category, and differentiating information for the following words. Then create a good definition from your information.

1. **Term:** tree
Genus: _____
Differentiating information: _____

Definition: A tree is _____

2. **Term:** motorcycle
Genus: _____
Differentiating information: _____

Definition: A motorcycle is _____

3. **Term:** garage
Genus: _____
Differentiating information: _____

Definition: A garage is _____

4. **Term:** sock
Genus: _____
Differentiating information: _____

Definition: A sock is _____

Defining Words



Write a definition for each word. Make sure your definitions contain genus and differentiating information.

1. library _____

2. guitar _____

3. lemon _____

4. tent _____

5. potato _____

6. penguin _____

7. sofa _____

8. ocean _____

9. rice _____

10. cactus _____

Defining Words



Choose four nouns from your current spelling list or from a textbook. Complete the information below for each word and write a definition.

1. **Term:** _____
Genus: _____
Differentiating information: _____

Definition: _____

2. **Term:** _____
Genus: _____
Differentiating information: _____

Definition: _____

3. **Term:** _____
Genus: _____
Differentiating information: _____

Definition: _____

4. **Term:** _____
Genus: _____
Differentiating information: _____

Definition: _____

Asking Wh- Questions



To get the information, you want you usually ask a question. A question often begins with a word, such as these:

- Who
- What
- Why
- When
- Where
- How

You'll see that five of those words begin with "Wh-." Questions that begin with one of the words above are called "Wh-" questions.

Here's when you would ask each type of question.

- If the information you want is about an object or a thing, the question should begin with **What**. *What do you use to clean your teeth?*
- If the information you want is about a month, day, year, or time something happens or happened, the question should begin with **When**. *When will you return from your vacation?*
- If the information you want is about a person's name or occupation (job), the question should begin with **Who**. *Who is going to clean off the table?*
- If the information you want is about a place, the question should begin with **Where**. *Where did you go after school?*
- If the information you want is a reason for something and you would expect the answer to start with the word *because*, the question should begin with **Why**. *Why was your assignment two days late?*
- If the information you want is an explanation of how to do something or how something happens or happened, the question should begin with **How**. *How do you adjust the seat on this bicycle?*

There are some exceptions to the above rules. For example, to ask someone the time of day, you would ask, "What time is it?" and not "When time is it?" Or, if you were asking someone about the work he or she does, you would ask "What is your occupation?" and not "Who is your occupation?"

Asking Wh- Questions



Write an appropriate “Wh-” question for each answer.

1. **Question:** _____

Answer: the gym

2. **Question:** _____

Answer: George W. Bush.

3. **Question:** _____

Answer: on Saturday afternoon

4. **Question:** _____

Answer: because it makes too much noise

5. **Question:** _____

Answer: put it in the microwave for two minutes on high

6. **Question:** _____

Answer: a zookeeper

7. **Question:** _____

Answer: a pair of pliers

8. **Question:** _____

Answer: February 14

Asking Wh- Questions



Write an appropriate “Wh-” question for each answer.

1. **Question:** _____

Answer: because it’s good for you

2. **Question:** _____

Answer: the park

3. **Question:** _____

Answer: use glue to stick the pieces back together

4. **Question:** _____

Answer: a computer mouse

5. **Question:** _____

Answer: 10:00 tomorrow morning

6. **Question:** _____

Answer: in the top drawer of my desk

7. **Question:** _____

Answer: Turn the switch on.

8. **Question:** _____

Answer: you and I

Asking Questions to Obtain Information



Read each situation. Then, on another sheet of paper, write three questions you would ask to get more information.

1. Your teacher says that your class will be going on a field trip next month.
2. Your counselor tells you that your schedule next semester is going to change.
3. When you get home, your sister says "You got a phone call this afternoon."
4. You see four big boxes stacked on your porch.
5. On the school announcements this morning, it said that the cafeteria would be closed for the next week.
6. You go to the computer lab and none of the computers are working.
7. A friend says, "Meet me after school."
8. Your mom tells you that your family is going to be moving.
9. Your grandmother asks you to help her clean house because company is coming.
10. You go to the mall and see that your favorite store is no longer there.

Relating Events: Clarifying References



Writing or speaking clearly is always important. If your sentences are not constructed correctly, your readers or listeners might become confused. You should be sure that it is clear what pieces of information your sentence refers to, otherwise, what you say can be unclear or even funny! Here's an example:

- Falling down the stairs, the boy heard the boom box.

Was the boy falling down the stairs or was the boom box? The *reference* in this sentence needs to be clearer. The reference is the person or thing the action is happening to. We need to know exactly what was falling down the stairs. Here are two other ways the sentence could have been written:

- The boom box fell down the stairs.
- As it fell down the stairs, the boy heard the boom box.

Rewrite these sentences on another sheet of paper to make the references clear. Make sure your reader knows to whom or to what the action is happening to.

1. My blue sweater given to me by my aunt that is old and worn out is in this box.
2. My cousin Josh loves his pet bird, and he sits on his head.
3. Last Monday my friend adopted a dog and that night he ate three bowls of dog food.
4. The Jones family saw mice in their living room last night, and they climbed right up the curtains!
5. After hiking in the woods, I found a tick on my foot, which I pulled off.
6. When the principal visited the circus and saw the bear, he danced around.
7. They ate a nice big watermelon right from the refrigerator that had lots of juice.
8. I looked out into the yard and saw the cat with my glasses.

Relating Events: Clarifying References



Rewrite these sentences on another sheet of paper to make the references clear.

1. We saw four skateboards belonging to our friends that had been painted orange outside the building.
2. The fastest horse in the race was ridden by Marie with the coal-black mane and tail.
3. The doctor told my uncle that if this medicine didn't help the pain in his stomach, it would need to be replaced.
4. When we saw the program on TV about San Diego and the zoo, we decided we wanted to live there.
5. She made a cup of tea and then she filled the bathtub and drank it.
6. Flying all around the house, Amanda chased the parakeet.
7. The old hat was in the trash can which Uncle George wore.
8. Stan and Les saw a huge pile of leaves walking down the street.
9. The birthday card is for Aunt Lena, covered with glitter.
10. Stuck to the floor, Marty found the stamp.

Relating Events: Identifying Temporal Concepts



You often need to relate information in the order in which it happened. This is called placing things in time, or **temporal**, order. Here are some connecting words we use to show time order:

earlier	finally	when
later	before	after
yesterday	today	now
tomorrow	during	while
preceding	following	next
then	ago	last
first, second, third, etc.	seasons (winter, spring, summer, fall)	
beforehand		

Underline the temporal order words in this paragraph.

Jake went to school yesterday to enroll. This will be his first year at Green Valley Middle School. After having him fill out a form with his name, age, address, and telephone number, his counselor Mrs. Jackson, talked with him about his interests in school subjects. Then, they filled out a schedule form listing the classes that Jake will be taking. He wanted to take a class in computers but learned that he would have to wait until second semester. Mrs. Jackson told Jake that he would need to have a parent look at his schedule and sign it. Then, he should bring the signed schedule back to her. Following their meeting, Jake took his schedule home and his mom signed it. Jake is going to return the schedule to Mrs. Jackson today.

Relating Events: Identifying Temporal Concepts



Underline the temporal order words in these paragraphs.

Two years ago, there were no flowers at all in our yard. Last year my dad decided to plant some lilacs to make the yard look nicer. Early this spring we saw our lilac bushes begin to sprout green leaves. Before long we noticed green buds forming. The buds then bloomed into wonderful-smelling purple flowers. Now we have plenty of flowers in our yard!

It is really easy to make a pasta salad. First, cook one cup of pasta in boiling water for 10 minutes. While the pasta is cooking, chop up two cups of vegetables, such as onions, peppers and tomatoes, and grate one cup of cheese. When the pasta has finished cooking, drain off the boiling water. Then, rinse the pasta with cold water and drain it again. Next, pour the pasta into a large bowl and add the chopped vegetables and grated cheese. Finally, pour one cup of Italian dressing over the salad and stir to mix well. The salad is now ready to serve!

Relating Events: Using Temporal Concepts



Write a sentence using each temporal concept.

1. later _____

2. then _____

3. before _____

4. last _____

5. next week _____

6. while _____

7. finally _____

8. preceding _____

9. now _____

10. two months ago _____

Relating Events: Using Temporal Concepts



Write a sentence using each temporal concept.

1. first _____

2. last year _____

3. during _____

4. after _____

5. tomorrow _____

6. beforehand _____

7. following _____

8. late summer _____

9. ago _____

10. earlier _____

Relating Events: Using Temporal Concepts



Write a short paragraph using each group of temporal concepts.

1. during, after, before

2. ago, next, now

3. following, preceding, during

For more practice, use each set of temporal concepts below in a separate paragraph:

- yesterday, tomorrow, today
- earlier, when, later
- second, then, first, finally
- before, then, while, now

Relating Events: Using Temporal Concepts



Write a response for each item. Use temporal words correctly so that your meaning will be clear.

1. Tell about a trip you have taken with your family or with a school class. _____

2. Tell how to make a grilled cheese sandwich, or something else you like to eat. _____

3. Describe an event that you have attended, like a school play or a parade. _____

On another sheet of paper, use temporal words to describe the plot from one of your favorite books or movies.

Relating Events: Identifying Cause and Effect Words



Cause and effect is an important concept that you use over and over when you speak and write. If something happens (effect), there is usually a reason behind it (cause). For example, an **effect** would be a glass of milk being spilled. The **cause** might be that someone knocked it over.

There are certain words we use when we explain cause and effect situations. Here are a few of them:

because	due to	consequently
since	on account of	therefore
as a result	for this reason	thus
	so	

Here's how those words are used in sentences:

- The milk spilled because someone knocked it over.
- As a result of someone knocking over the glass, the milk spilled.

There are some special cause and effect situations that require special words. In some cases things happen when they probably shouldn't have. These words are used for those situations:

anyway	even though	anyhow
in spite of	nonetheless	however
	nevertheless	

Here are a couple of examples:

- I told him to be careful, but he spilled the milk anyway.
- Even though he tried to catch the glass of milk, it spilled on the floor .

Underline the cause and effect words in each paragraph.

1. Since the medicine tasted so bad, Jordan didn't want to take it. Nonetheless, he went ahead and swallowed it because he wanted to feel better.
2. The grass in our yard has really grown this year on account of the rain. As a result, I have been mowing the lawn twice a week.
3. We have to do a research paper this semester in science. Even though science is my favorite subject, I still haven't decided on a topic. Today the teacher announced that he wants to see how we are doing, so he's going to check our notebooks next week. Therefore, I had better get busy!
4. Jessie had trouble concentrating on the test due to the noise from construction work on the new school wing. She tried hard to pay attention and did well in spite of the noise.
5. Ashley has allergies, and for that reason she has never had a pet. Nevertheless, she couldn't resist taking home the stray kitten that she found.
6. Hannah knew that the thrilling carnival rides often made her feel sick. However, she rode the roller coaster anyway. Consequently, she got an upset stomach.

Relating Events: Using Cause and Effect Words



Write a sentence using each cause and effect concept.

1. due to _____

2. so _____

3. because _____

4. as a result _____

5. even though _____

6. since _____

7. nevertheless _____

8. thus _____

9. consequently _____

10. anyhow _____

Relating Events: Using Cause and Effect Words



Write three sentences using cause and effect words for each of the following topics.

1. Things that happen at home _____

2. Things I have studied in social studies _____

3. Things I have studied in science _____

4. Things that happen when I'm with my friends _____

Relating Events: Using Cause and Effect Words



Write a short paragraph using each set of cause and effect words.

1. because, however, therefore

2. so, anyway, even though

3. since, nonetheless, as a result

Identifying Complete Sentences



A complete sentence contains a subject and a verb. An incomplete sentence does not contain a subject and a verb, and doesn't express a complete thought. Here are some examples of incomplete sentences:

- The tallest oak tree. (missing a verb)
- Running all over the room (missing a subject)
- Where the highway ends. (missing a subject and a verb)
- Shopped for gym clothes. (missing a subject)

None of the the examples above express a complete thought. They are all incomplete sentences, or sentence fragments. We often speak in sentence fragments when we answer questions or are talking with our friends and in other relaxed situations. However, in school and business writing, you should use complete sentences. To make a sentence fragment into a complete sentence, you need to add missing information, such as a subject or verb, to make a complete thought.

Here are some examples of how the fragments above could be turned into complete sentences :

- The tallest oak tree fell to the ground during the tornado.
- The mice had gotten loose in the science lab and were running all over the room.
- Where the highway ends, a narrow gravel road continues to the state line.
- Brandi and I went to the new discount store and shopped for gym clothes.

Identifying Complete Sentences



Read each item. Write **C** on the blank if it is a complete sentence. Write **I** if it is an incomplete sentence.

- _____ 1. Jared and Cody went to the swimming pool.
- _____ 2. It was really crowded that day.
- _____ 3. At least 200 people.
- _____ 4. Forgot his bottle of sunscreen.
- _____ 5. He borrowed some sunscreen from another friend.
- _____ 6. Jared decided to dive right in.
- _____ 7. The deep end of the pool.
- _____ 8. Felt really cold!
- _____ 9. Cody wanted to try the high dive.
- _____ 10. He got a little nervous when he got to the top.
- _____ 11. Jumped off anyway.
- _____ 12. They swam for three hours.
- _____ 13. Without taking a break.
- _____ 14. Cody told Jared he was too tired to walk home.
- _____ 15. And was going to call his sister and see if she would come and give them a ride home.

Identifying Complete Sentences



Read each item. Write **C** on the blank if it is a complete sentence. Write **I** if it is an incomplete sentence.

- _____ 1. In the deepest part of the ocean.
- _____ 2. Gordon sneezed.
- _____ 3. After school, we'll have practice.
- _____ 4. Where did you put it?
- _____ 5. Tonight at the meeting.
- _____ 6. Don't fall down.
- _____ 7. As soon as I can.
- _____ 8. They are too busy.
- _____ 9. E-mailed her yesterday and the day before.
- _____ 10. The mosquito bites itched all night.
- _____ 11. About the time the leaves turn red and yellow.
- _____ 12. Who did that?
- _____ 13. On top of the flagpole it sat.
- _____ 14. Finished the paper at last.
- _____ 15. And visited our neighbors.

Using Complete Sentences



Use complete sentences to write a response for each item. Use another sheet of paper if you need more room.

1. Tell what you did in one of your classes yesterday. _____

2. Tell how your family celebrates a holiday. _____

3. Tell how you learned how to do something. _____

4. Tell about something you would like to learn to do. _____

5. Tell about the music that you like. _____

6. Tell about a time when you helped someone. _____

7. Tell about something that makes you angry. _____

There are many special words you use when you describe how to do something or give directions. Here are some examples:

after	on top of	in the middle
before	under	around
in front of	right	north
behind	left	south
above center		east
over	outside west	
below	inside	corner
long	short	upper
lower	connecting	horizontal
vertical	diagonal	beside

It is important to be as specific as you can when giving directions. For example, if you said, "Draw an 8. Now make an X beside it," the person listening wouldn't know whether to put the X before or after the 8.

X 8 or 8 X

If you had said, "Draw an 8. Now make an X directly to the left of the 8," the result would be exactly as you intended.

Also, remember to use specific words for size, shape and color when you give directions. For example, if there are two cans on the shelf and you want the tall blue one instead of the short green one, you will need to say so.

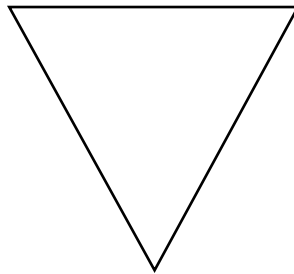
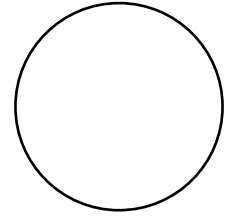
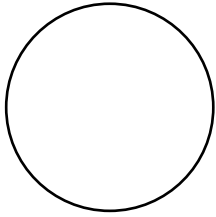
Giving Directions: Barrier Activities



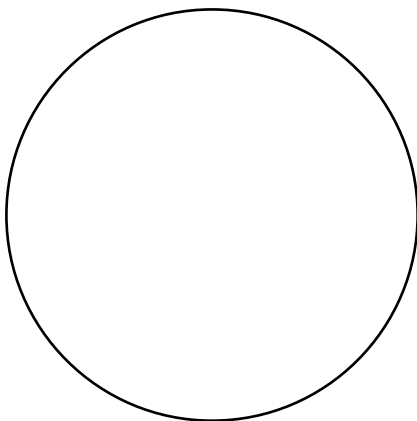
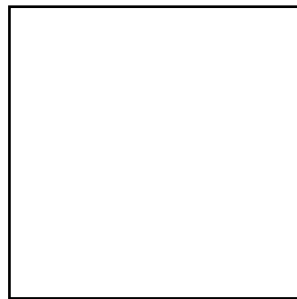
You will work in pairs to do these activities. Sit back-to-back so your partner can't see the page that your teacher will give you. Your partner will need a blank piece of paper, a pencil or pen, and crayons or colored pencils.

Give your partner specific directions to draw a copy of the design on his or her paper. If your directions are clear, your partner's finished page should look like your page. If your partner's finished design does not match the one on your page, work together to find out why the misunderstanding happened.

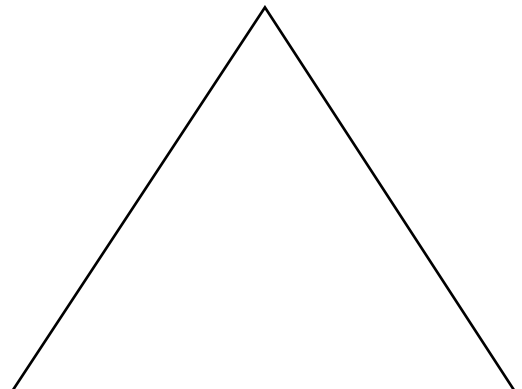
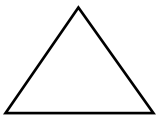
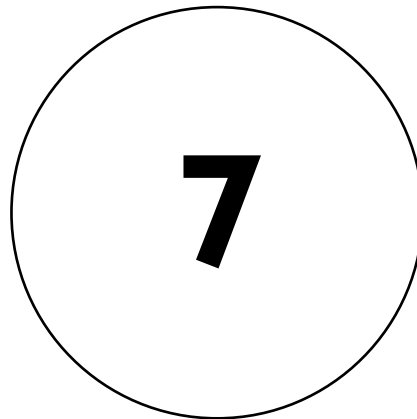
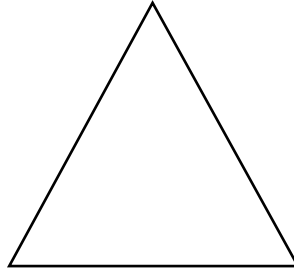
Instructor note: The following materials are needed for this activity: blank pieces of paper, pencil or pen for each pair of students, and set of crayons or colored pencils for each pair of students. Have the students alternate roles of giving directions and drawing the designs. If the student doing the drawing does not understand a direction, he or she should be encouraged to ask questions to clarify what is supposed to be done. You might discover that tape recording a pair of students carrying out this activity and then playing back the tape can provide valuable feedback to the students regarding unclear directions and misunderstandings. Encourage discussion about how to provide clearer directions and also how to ask better questions to obtain information when a direction is not understood.



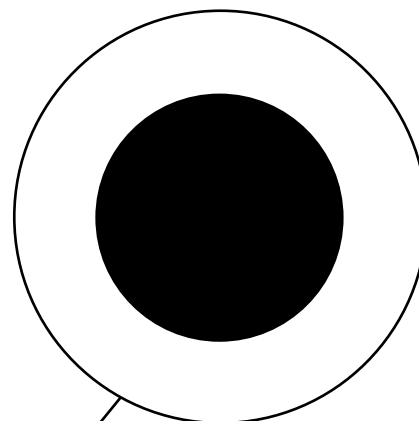
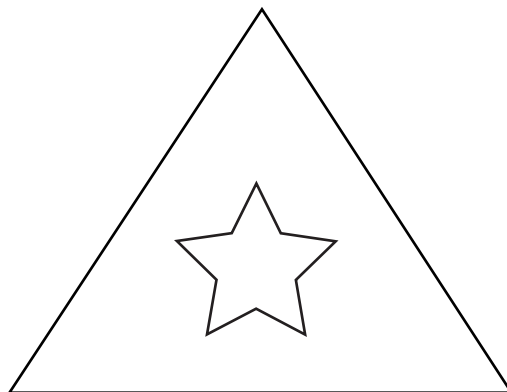
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Giving Directions: Barrier Activities

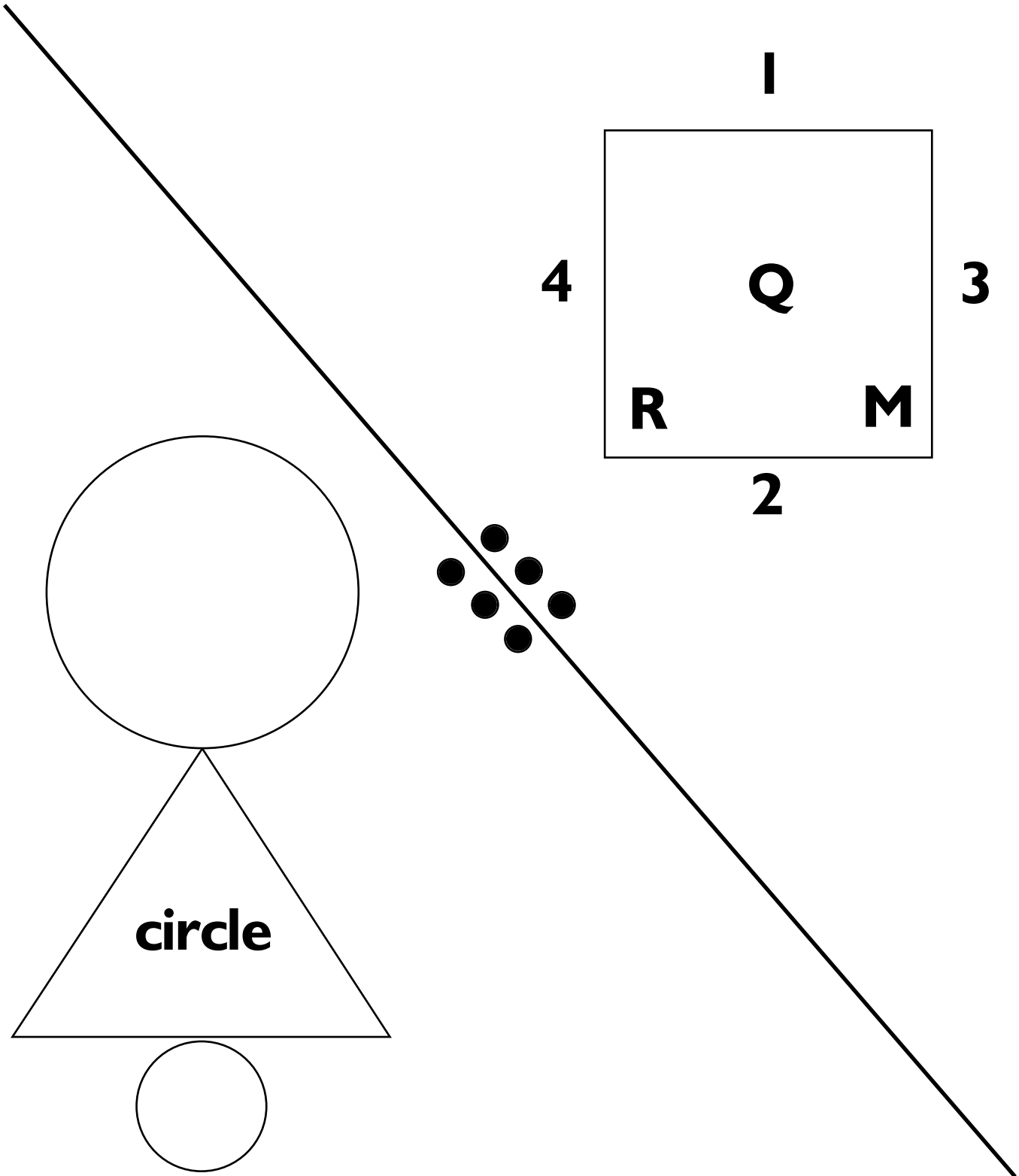


Giving Directions: Barrier Activities



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Here are some additional ideas for using barrier activities:

1. Have students create their own designs and then describe them to a partner or to a group who draws the design as directed.
2. Assemble two matching sets of objects, such as two sets each containing a book, a ruler, an envelope, a long pencil, a short pencil, a white index card and a colored index card. Give one student a set of objects and have him or her arrange the objects on a desk or table behind a barrier. Then have that student give directions to another student who has the matching set of objects to arrange those objects in the same way as the ones behind the barrier. As an additional challenge, ask the first student to write down instructions for the second student to read and follow.
3. Have a student build a simple structure with Lego® blocks or a similar material behind a barrier. Then have the student instruct another student orally or in writing on how to build a matching structure.
4. Have each student decide on a destination within the school building. Ask each one to write specific directions on how to get to that destination from either the front door or your classroom. Then have students try to follow each other's directions and see if they reach the intended destinations.