

Oral Language/File Folder Activity

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Preparation:

Materials: 1 for every two students: file folder with a photograph or calendar photo clipped inside, paper, drawing/art materials

Criteria: set criteria for good communication in advance: positive comments only, inside voices, descriptive words, clarifying questions and patience.

- 1) Put students into partners. One partner is the Talker. One is the Listener. Have seated across from each other.
- 2) The Talker receives a file folder with a picture clipped inside. Use calendar pictures, especially those connected to a theme, unit of study or interest area.
- 3) The Talker describes the picture in detail, but does not show the picture to the Listener. The Listener is encouraged to ask questions. The Talker may not use his/her hands, and may not criticize. This is a good activity to use for developing active listening and positive feedback skills.
- 4) When the Listener is ready, he/she starts to draw, based on the descriptions from the Talker. The Talker gives information and encouragement. The Listener draws, asks questions and makes changes. Erasing is not allowed, so if a problem comes up, both parties can make suggestions on how to make the picture conform to the hidden photo in the file folders.
- 5) The teacher gives a five minute warning of time ending. This part of the activity may take up to twenty minutes.
- 6) The Listener stops drawing and looks at the hidden photo.
- 7) The teacher models the next step before students participate. The Listener and the Talker will each have 30 seconds to describe the photo and as many details as possible. The Listener will start, and the teacher will keep time, using a signal for when the speaker role switches. Ideally, each partner should have three timed turns to describe as many things as possible.
- 8) Have the Talker and Listener sign the drawing. Bring the class together. Discuss the roles and how communication was clarified.

Alternative endings

- have younger students try to match the drawings to the photographs
- set criteria for a descriptive paragraph and have the students move to a writing activity, or vocabulary webbing activity (or any relevant graphic organizer)
- look at how the theme of the photos emerges, and discuss predictions for the next unit, if the photographs are part of a whole (theme, subject, unit, project)
- create a bulletin board of the original photo, the drawing and the writing from both students, grouped together