



Web Lessons

# Puzzled Partners

by Eric Muller

**Topic:**

Communication

**Type of Web activity:**

Communication/  
Chat-room

**Materials / Software needed:**

-Web browser

-Index cards,  
cardstock,  
cardboard or foam  
core approximately  
4x6 inches.

**Grade Level /****Audience:**

8 - 12

**Time involved:**

1 period

**Created on:**

7/26/00

The Web Science Workshop lessons were created in cooperation with the Exploratorium [Teacher Institute](#).

This site developed and maintained by

The objective of this activity is to figure out whom in a chat-room, has the matching puzzle piece.

This is a matchmaking activity that can be used to introduce students to chat-rooms and improve communication and writing skills.

This activity works best if all participants are at the same location or computer room. However, people can be located in various locations as long as puzzle pieces can be distributed to each participant prior to starting this exercise. Participants need to be on-line at the same time and in the same chat location. Participants should be able to meet "in-person" with their pieces after the on-line portion of this activity is complete.

**Setup:**

This activity requires an even number of participants. The instructor or leader can choose to participate to make the number of participants even.

1) Using a scissors cut each cardstock into two pieces. Make the cut in interesting way so that each piece is identifiable as matching the other. You will need one piece per participant.



Here are some examples of how to cut your cards:



2) Mix up the appropriate number of pieces and pass out one piece to each participant. Do not let other participants see who has what piece.

3) The instructor should locate a suitable chat-room before beginning this activity. Appropriate chat-rooms can be found at [yahoo.com](#), [excite.com](#) and other commercial and private web sites (Teacher Institute teachers may use the ti alumni chat room - click [here](#) to access.)

### **Doing the activity:**

Discuss rules with participants:

-When you sign-in to a chat-room you may not use your real name.

-You may not hold-up or show your puzzle piece to any one.

-You may not talk...only type.

Have participants log-in to a chat room and find out who has their matching piece.

After each participant has found their respective puzzle partner the partners should set up a place to rendezvous (i.e. let's meet at the soda machine...). If this activity is conducted in a large computer room, all chatters should leave to meet at the same time (otherwise, if only two people stand up at a time, they will know, by default that the other is their matching partner.) Participants should bring their pieces to their meeting location and see if they match.

### **Once they meet:**

If this is an icebreaker activity, participants may be told to ask their partner a variety of questions (What is your real name, where are you from, ...). The answers to these questions can be used to introduce each other to the whole group.

**Optional:**

This activity can also be used to discuss classification schemes and taxonomy. Mix the pieces again and have people log-in again. This time have people type and organize themselves into groups/groupings. They may break off into other chat rooms or instantly message each other. For example, all people with a curved piece should go to chat-room xxx.

Compare the amount of time it took people to meet previously when they were communicating to the group randomly vs. methodically and using classification schemes. Classification should be much more efficient.

**[Back to Web Lessons Home Page](#)**