

Describing Objects Worksheet

Saying more than the name: group, parts, function, looks, size and place.

MASTERED BY

Naming one or two features from about 3

ITEMS

14

Name: _____

Date: _____

Semantic feature analysis is the practice of describing a thing by its features rather than reaching for its name. A child who can only produce the name has one route to the word, so when the name will not come there is nothing to fall back on; a child who can say "it is an animal, it has four legs, it gives milk" can get the idea across without the word, and the word itself is easier to retrieve next time because it is attached to more. That is why this is worth doing with children who know the vocabulary perfectly well.

What to expect: A child who is not ready answers "it's a cow" and stops, or repeats the name louder. That is not a vocabulary problem - they do not yet know what counts as an answer. Naming the slot is what unlocks it: not "tell me about the cow" but "what group is a cow in?" Expect one feature at a time at first, and expect color and size long before group and function.

Describing Without the Name

Cover the name and describe the thing using the six boxes. The child does not have to use all six - two good features is a win at first.

1. It is an animal. It has four legs and a tail. It says moo and it gives us milk. It lives on a farm. What is it?
2. It is a food. It is round and red. You eat it and it is crunchy. It grows on a tree. What is it?
3. You wear it. It goes on your feet. It has laces. You put it on before you go outside. What is it?
4. It has wheels and a steering wheel. You sit inside it. It takes you places. You park it outside. What is it?
5. It is in the kitchen. It has a handle and a spout. You put water in it and it gets hot. What is it?
6. It is an animal. It has wings and feathers. It flies and it sings. You see it in a tree. What is it?
7. You sleep in it. It is soft and it has a pillow. It is in your bedroom. What is it?
8. It grows outside. It is tall and brown with green leaves. Birds live in it. What is it?

Which Feature Is Missing?

Read the description. The child says which of the six boxes has not been filled in yet - group, parts, what you do with it, looks, size or where.

9. "A dog is an animal with four legs and a tail. It is furry and brown." What have we not said?
10. "A cup is small and round. You drink out of it. It is in the kitchen." What have we not said?
11. "A bike has two wheels and handlebars. You ride it. It is bigger than a cat." What have we not said?
12. "An apple is a food. It is red and round and it grows on a tree." What have we not said?
13. "A spoon is in the kitchen. It has a handle. You eat with it. It is small." What have we not said?
14. "A cow is a farm animal with four legs. It is black and white. It gives milk." What have we not said?

Answer Key

Describing Without the Name

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. A cow | 5. A kettle |
| 2. An apple | 6. A bird |
| 3. A shoe | 7. A bed |
| 4. A car | 8. A tree |

Which Feature Is Missing?

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 9. What you do with it | 12. What you do with it |
| 10. What parts it has | 13. What group it is in |
| 11. Where you find it | 14. How big it is |