

## Sparking Conversation

**SEE, THINK, WONDER** - While looking at an object, photograph, wordless picture book, animal webcam, out a wonder window, while outdoors, etc. ask:

What do you **see**?

What do you **think** about that?

What does it make you **wonder**?

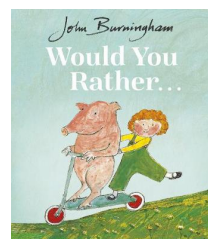
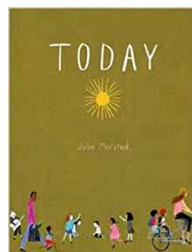
**WHAT IN THE WORLD?** - share an up-close photograph of part of an object. Ask, "What do you see?" After eliciting attributes of the image, invite predictions with "What is it?" and reasoning with "Why do you think that?" before revealing the full photograph. Invite "What do you wonder?"



**WHO'S HIDING?** - cover most of an image with Post-its. Ask, "What do you see?" Encourage descriptions of the image's attributes. Invite a student to select which Post-it to remove and ask, "What do you see now? Continue the process of removing Post-its and inviting noticings. Along the way invite predictions with "What is it?" and reasoning with "Why do you think that?" before revealing the full photograph. Continue the conversation with "What do you wonder?"



**WOULD YOU RATHER?** - use as an open-ended prompt with picture cards or objects to generate discussion (i.e. Would you rather have a dog or cat as a pet?). Invite students to think-pair-share and explain their reasoning and/or ask questions of their partner to uncover more about their decision. For an online resource see <https://kidactivities.net/would-you-rather-questions-for-kids/>. Today by Julie Morstad and *Would You Rather* by John Burningham offer wonderful sparks.



**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS** - involves asking and answering questions. It might involve a hidden object in a bag and students asking question to uncover clues about what is hidden. It could involve a hidden picture, familiar object, or character from a story.

**SORT THEM** - provide a collection of small objects, pictures or word cards for students to sort (i.e. by concept or feature, name cards, environmental print, initial or final sounds, syllables, rhymes). If concept sorts are new to your learners, you might begin by offering a category and a variety of objects, some of which fit into the category and some of which do not and invite them to sort. Complexity can build with experience.

**LIST AND LABEL** - involves brainstorming words to fit into a category, i.e. things that are square or containers that hold things). It might begin by showing students 3 objects and inviting them to identify how they are related (i.e. flashlight, a picture of the sun, and a light bulb . . . "things that make light or make heat").

**GUESS MY RULE** - provide a collection of objects, pictures, letters/sounds or words and ask students to think about and share how they are connected. Multiple connections between a set of objects can be encouraged (i.e. jog, jump, jive ... "They all start with /j/. They all describe ways to move.")

**WHAT'S THE STORY?** - choose a character, setting and problem from familiar stories and invite students to tell a story with objects or picture cards (i.e. Papa Bear, a castle, a lost slipper). Alternatively, offer one or more photographs or picture book illustration to spark storytelling. Wordless picture books offer a wonderful spark, as do loose parts, visual arts materials, etc.

**WHAT'S GOING ON IN THIS PICTURE?** - a feature started by the *NY Times- The Learning Network* (<https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/learning-multimedia>) Students are encouraged to look closely at a photograph, describe what they see, and share their reasoning. After showing students photograph, invite conversation by asking: *What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you think that? What more can you find?*



**DESCRIPTIONS** – help students to describe objects or pictures through questioning, i.e. How big it is? What colour is it? What is it used for? What are other things that are like it?

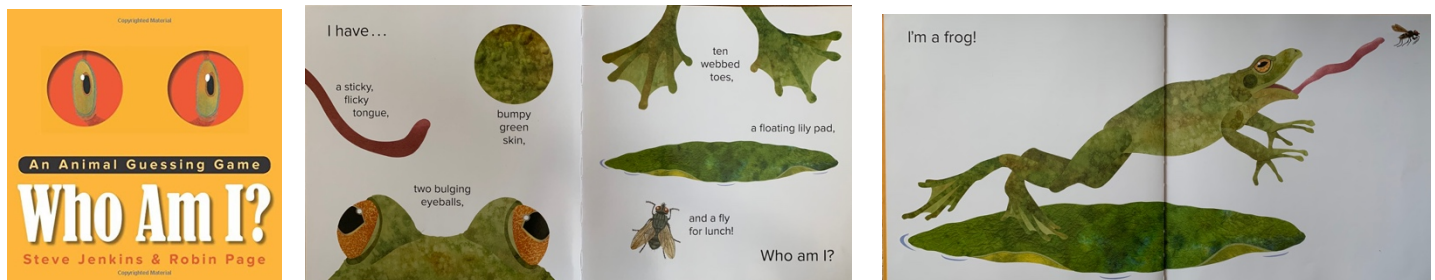
**BARRIER GAMES** – simple procedures based on giving and receiving instructions. Partners sit on either side of a barrier (book propped up, file folder, etc.) with the same set of materials. One partner describes step-by-step how to complete a design, pattern, colouring sheet, image, etc. The other partner asks questions to clarify any confusion. The barrier is removed at the end to verify likeness. Construction and pattern making barrier games are a great place to start.

**SAME OR DIFFERENT?** – involves presenting students with 2 or more pictures, objects, letters/sounds, words, numbers, etc. and inviting them to generate ways they are alike and different. For an online resource see [samedifferentimages.wordpress.com](http://samedifferentimages.wordpress.com).

**WHICH ONE DOESN'T BELONG?** – students are presented with four objects, pictures, letters or words in a box divided into quadrants. The goal is to identify as many reasons as possible why each of the four items doesn't belong. Some responses might include: "S because it is the only curvy letter. X because it is the only letter with 4 end points, etc." The four parts need to be thoughtfully chosen to enable all students to have access to the problem. For an online resource see [wodb.ca](http://wodb.ca)



**RIDDLES** – offer three or more clues (sentence stems to scaffold as necessary - I am..., I can..., I like..., I have...) and invite guesses. Can continue to offer clues as necessary. This could be inspired by "Secret in a Bag" in which a mystery object is placed in a bag. *Who Am I?* By Steve Jenkins might offer a great spark.



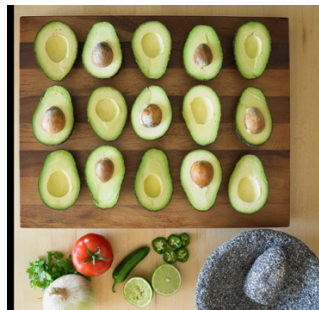
**ALWAYS, SOMETIMES, NEVER** - provide a statement/set of statements to participants and invite them to decide whether they are *always* true, *sometimes* true, or *never* true. Elicit reasoning to support decision. For example, *I am an early bird, a square is a rectangle*

**TALKING POINTS** - provide one or more controversial, thought-provoking, sometimes factually incorrect statements related to a given topic to promote discussion. For example, *the purpose of a story is to entertain the reader, the heavier an object, the faster it will fall*

**WHICH IS MORE?** - students are presented with two related images that invite consideration of which is more from multiple perspectives.



**HOW MANY?** - students are shown an image that has many possibilities for counting. Without specifying what to count, students are asked *How Many?*



**TALK BACK** - share an image that includes people and/or animals and ask: What are they thinking?

