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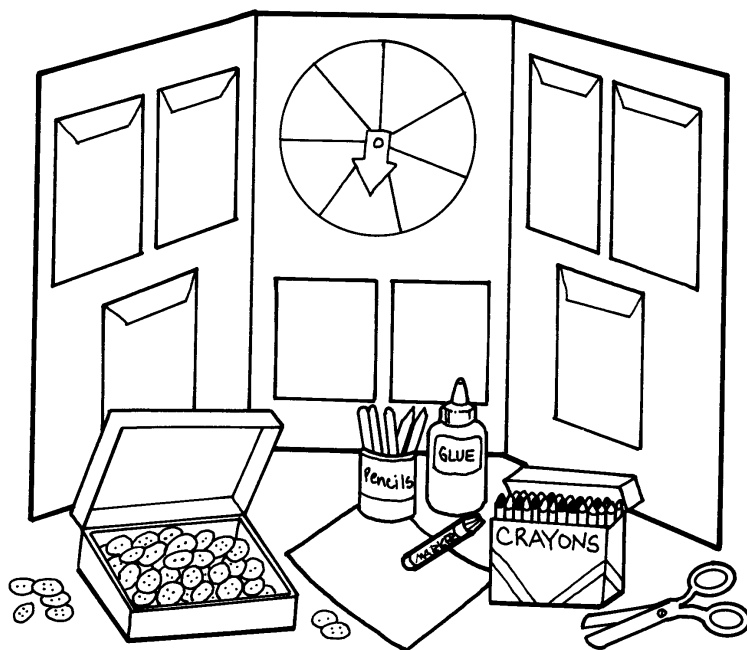
Introduction

Learning Centre Activities for Brainteasers, Puzzles, and Games presents strategies for solving verbal and non verbal problems and provides practical applications designed to exercise and enhance brain power. These strategies develop analytical and critical thinking skills that apply to all content areas and help children become problem solvers. In addition to critical thinking skills necessary for reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and maths, these interesting and challenging hands-on activities provide children with increased confidence in their own abilities.

This book contains over 20 ready-to-assemble learning centre activities designed to introduce problem solving strategies, develop visual perception, and provide practical and enjoyable applications of developing skills. Several levels are presented for each activity, allowing the teacher to select or modify the experience for the skills and abilities of the class. Using all of the levels provides further development of a particular skill. The patterns and student pages for each activity are provided in this book. Additional materials, when called for, are inexpensive and readily available. Because the patterns are interchangeable, they may be used in a wide variety of ways.

For each centre a list of skills, a student performance objective, a list of the materials needed, and directions for assembling the centre are provided. Suggestions for additional centres and new activities to extend the centre and provide additional practice and reinforcement of the particular skill are also included. The centres provide individual and/or small group activities for use with students in grades P-2, and are readily adaptable for a variety of age and/or skill levels. These puzzles and games emphasise the following skills:

- sequencing
- visual discernment
- patterning
- fine motor skills
- logic
- comparisons
- creative thinking
- listening comprehension
- oral language development



To keep this valuable resource intact so that it can be used year after year, you may wish to punch holes in the pages and store them in a three-ring binder.

Brain Teasers Activity Overview

Skills

- pattern recognition
- deductive reasoning
- classification
- sequencing directions
- comparing like and unlike objects
- following
- problem solving

Button Bear

Objective: To follow oral and visual directions to complete a pattern

Materials

general supplies, see page 4

one or more copies of *Corduroy* by Don Freeman (Viking Kestral, 1988)

copies of page 13

variety of real or paper buttons (see patterns on page 14)

tape recorder with ear phones (optional)

Teacher Preparation: Make copies of the bear pattern on page 13 on construction paper. Use markers, coloured pencils or crayons to add colour to one bear for centre display and demonstration. Make several copies of page 14, if needed. Assemble the materials for each activity and set them out in attractive, numbered containers, in order of use.

Set the stage by reading *Corduroy*, by Don Freeman, to the entire class during storytime. Discuss Corduroy's lost button and his search for it, with the whole class, asking comprehension questions like these: Why did Corduroy think he needed to find his button? Where did he look for the button? What happened to him? Did Corduroy find his button? Where?

Record the story on cassette for children to listen to individually. Provide a copy of the story so the children can follow along.

Variations

- Pre-cut bears and buttons for less skilled children.
- Put one pair of buttons for each child and several non-matching buttons in a container. Tell the children that Corduroy wants his buttons to match. Have them sort the buttons to find matching buttons, then glue the buttons to the bear.
- Make stuffed bears. Using the pattern on page 13, cut bears from felt, making two for each child. The children staple or glue two bears together, leaving an opening, and gently stuff it with cotton, old nylon hose, or tissue, then staple or glue it closed. Use markers, scraps, buttons, etc. to add features to the bears.
- Continue the story of Corduroy by reading and/or providing copies and tapes of *A Pocket for Corduroy* by Don Freeman (Viking Press, 1978). Provide construction paper squares and instruct the children to give Corduroy a pocket.
- Have the children practise writing their names and/or addresses on a piece of paper to put in Corduroy's new pocket.