



Exploring 2D Shapes

Describing and comparing
2D shapes. Understanding
the characteristics of 2D shapes



Children enjoy playing with long strings and ribbons and making and describing shapes .

Adults could build on this by providing long loops of string or elastic to stimulate conversations about 2D shapes.

The Activity

Provide loops made from lengths of string or elastic at least 3m long. These can be put on the ground or held in the air by several children for the task. Invite the children to work in groups of three or four. Ask the children to make shapes with their loops. Ask them to talk about what they see.

Encouraging mathematical thinking and reasoning.

Describing

Have you seen a shape like this before? Where?
Can you see another shape like yours that someone else has made?
Put your shape near, inside, outside, under another one. What do you notice?
See what you can make. Tell me about what you have made.
What does it remind you of? Look at that. Can you make one like that?
What can you see?
How is the same as... different from...?
Does your shape have corners or sides? How many?

Recording

Trace your shape with chalk on the playground or with felt tip pens on a big sheet of paper.
Make a small drawing of your shape on paper.

Reasoning

What if something was different?
What if you had another one the same?

Opening out

I like your shape. I wonder how you could change it?
What would you like to do next?
How about working with some more string?
Can you fit inside the shape? Can you fit more/less children in the shape when you change it?

Resources

String or elastic at least 3m long

The mathematical journey

Same and different:

- developing the use of language to compare, contrast and describe. Examples; straight, wiggly, curved, roundy, pointy, bigger, smaller, longer, shorter, corner, like, different, side, curve . . .

Recognising & labelling common shapes:

- making connections with shapes in their own environment and beginning to use names such as triangle, rectangle, square, corner, side . . .
- counting the sides and corners of the shapes they make.

Describing position:

- using words such as on, inside, outside, under, left, right, above, below to describe position.

Comparing sizes:

- beginning to use language such as bigger, smaller, longer, shorter, to introduce ideas about measuring.

Additional resources

Links to video clips and photos

More ways into the same mathematics and other resources that may be used.

This is presented here as a teacher led activity. It might also be possible to model the activity and then let children play freely with the string or elastic but they would need careful supervision to avoid the health and safety issues associated with the resources.

Other activities that complement this one could be:

Printing with potato or sponge shapes.

Drawing.

Shape searches in series of photos or in books and drawings.

I spy shapes games.

Using educational games that involve shape sorting or matching.

Building pictures from precut shapes or cutting shapes from coloured paper or magazines.

Drawing shapes in the sand tray, with paints, through cornflour gloop, with a finger.

Riding wheeled toys through puddles and looking at the tracks.

Painting on the ground or wall with big wallpaper brushes and water

Using natural materials to make shapes: leaves, twigs, daisy chains.

Story, rhyme and song links

My Mum and Dad Make Me Laugh by Nick Sherratt

Washing line by Jez Alborough

Aliens Love Underpants by Claire Freedman

Opposites books such as Kipper's Book of Opposites by Nick Butterworth or Opposites by Eric Carle. Robert Crowther's Opposites is a pop up book.

Photo Acknowledgements:-<http://nymetropolista.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/children-class.jpg> http://www.schoolpsychologyblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/school-readiness_web.jpg <http://www.parentingstyles.co.uk/images/18907.jpg><http://abcphoneticblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/activity2.jpg><http://www.parentingstyles.co.uk/images/18907.jpg>