



Exploring 2D Shapes

NRICH

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?

