



ARTS INTEGRATION AT HOME

OBJECT METAPHOR

Through these arts integration activities we want to offer a few simple, creative, educational, and arts-based ways to spice up your distance learning. The directions for the activity are shared in two ways - for caregivers/teachers and for kids who can read so they can do the activity independently. Have fun, and feel free to share what you do with us.

Tips for how to utilize these strategies:

- Use this strategy today, or print it out for a later date.
- Feel free to use a strategy more than once. Repetition will help students become familiar with the directions and then be able to take more ownership of sharing what they know through the activity.
- Play them for fun - you don't have to stick to talking about school information.

OBJECT METAPHOR

Object Metaphor invites students to make comparisons between a random object and a topic. Whether silly or serious, students will practice flexible and metaphorical thinking while making comparisons. Flexible thinking - being open-minded and adaptive to different ways of learning - is an executive function skill essential for school and life. Metaphorical thinking is a higher order thinking skill. This seemingly simple activity allows students to practice important life-long learning skills. Object Metaphor is recommended for students in second grade and up. (For younger kids you can try out [This is Not A...](#))

Object Metaphor is credited to theatre artist and educator Meryl Friedman. You can see a longer description of the activity in the link below from the Drama-Based Instruction website created by Drama for Schools at The University of Texas at Austin.

Object Metaphor: <https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/object-metaphor>

These activities are curated by Sarah Coleman, Portland Ovations' Director of Engagement/School Programs. Sarah is a theatre educator, an arts integration specialist, and a former classroom teacher who has taught students in grades K - college as well as led professional development workshops for teachers around the country for over 15 years.





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OBJECT METAPHOR

DIRECTIONS FOR CAREGIVERS/TEACHERS

Gather a few random objects from around the house (whisk, potato masher, unused toothbrush, candle, etc.). Make sure that you have more objects than kids. Find a place to sit and lay out the objects. Take a minute for the kids to look at the objects (in silence). Then invite them to pick up one of the objects. They should have the object in hand before you give the following instructions. Tell them they are going to describe the object and then share how the object represents a part of who they are. Remind them first to describe their object - What do you see? They should share only facts about the object - its color, shape, size, texture, smell. Then, ask them how this object might represent who they are. They can take another object and repeat with the same prompt or you can give them a different prompt.

Object: LEGO® block

How is this LEGO® block like a part of you?

This LEGO® block is yellow and rectangular. One of the long sides has 12 raised circles in two straight lines. The other side is hollow

with a few pieces that go across. It is made of plastic. This LEGO® block is like me because its straight lines represent how I am organized and like things to be neat. The yellow make me think of sunshine and warmth - and I love the sun, sunny days, and summer. It is just one LEGO® block and LEGO® are meant to be used with many other blocks. Similarly, I like to work in collaboration with other people to make things.



Then what?

- Connect it to topics that they are interested in or learning about. For example, pick an object that represents a historical figure, a form of government, or a character in a novel.
- If you stick with the theme of self, other prompts you could use include: How does this object represent who you are as a learner? As an artist? As a sibling?
- Once they know the structure of the activity you can use it at any time. Doing the dishes? Ask them how they are like a fork. Out for a walk? Pick up a stick and ask, how could this stick represent your day? It can be a quick interaction.

Tips!

- It's important that they move through the description first (for every object) because it allows them to see the object with more detail and then make deeper connections to the prompt.
- If the student feels frustrated or like they aren't able to come up with comparisons, encourage them to think back to one of the descriptions they gave.
- Remember there are no right or wrong answers.

Follow up Questions

1. How did you first feel when you first picked an object?
2. How did you feel as you listened to others share their comparisons?
3. Why do we use metaphors? When do people use metaphors? Why do we use metaphors?

Follow up questions allow kids to practice [reflection and metacognition](#) (thinking about one's thinking) both of which are key parts of effective learning.





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OBJECT METAPHOR

DIRECTIONS FOR KIDS

Today's at-home activity invites you to make comparisons with a random object in your house. Can you make a metaphor out of a potato masher?

How to do this activity

1. Find a few random objects from around the house (whisk, potato masher, unused toothbrush, candle, etc.).
2. Make sure that you have more objects than people.
3. Find a place to sit and lay out the objects. Take a minute to look at the objects (in silence).
4. Pick up one of the objects.
5. Now describe the object and share how this object represents a part of you.
6. First describe the object. What do you see? Tell about its color, shape, size, texture, smell.
7. Thinking about the descriptions you gave, share how this object could represent a part of who you are. How is this object a metaphor for you?
[Metaphor: A figure of speech that is used to make a comparison between two things that are not alike but do have something in common.]
8. Listen to someone else talk about their object or do it again with another object.

Then what?

- Connect it to topics that you are interested in or learning about. For example, pick an object that represents a historical figure, a form of government, or a character in a novel.
- If you want to keep talking about yourself, other prompts you could use include: How does this object represent who you are as a learner? As an artist? As a sibling?

Tips!

- Make sure you always start by describing the object. This is an important step of the activity and will help you when you get to the comparison part.
- If you feel frustrated or unable to come up with comparisons, think back to one of the descriptions you gave and see if it can spark a comparison.
- Remember there are no right or wrong answers!

After you have talked about at least one object, think about and answer these questions.

1. How did you first feel when you first picked an object?

2. How did you feel as you listened to others share their comparisons?

3. Why do we use metaphors? When do people use metaphors? Why do we use metaphors?

