

House on the Run

A travelling around the classroom talk to writing activity to encourage children to write the basic description of a house collaboratively. It can be adapted to much more complex descriptions. This one will work for Year 2 up.

Webaddress: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org/houseontherun.pdf>

Last updated 1st November 2012

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

17, Barford Street, Islington, London N1 0QB UK Phone: 0044 (0)20 7226 8885

Website: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org>

BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of oracy. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of talk.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

House on the Run - Teacher instructions

This is a prototype activity that can be adapted to a wide variety of things that need descriptions.

How the Activity Works

Stage 1:

You have sets of three external features cards printed here (describing function, shape and material) together with a picture card of the feature itself so that you have a set of four. The idea here is for everyone in the class to have a card, and for the children with pictures of the features to collect three children who have appropriate descriptions so that they form groups of four. We have produced eight sets you can omit the chimney, drainpipe or balcony if your class is smaller.

Stage 2:

Each group has an A3 line drawing of a house with label spaces, and they can transfer the information for the feature for which they have the cards. They will need to change from the first person to the third: e.g. 'I am flat' becomes 'It is flat'

Stage 3:

Each group sends two members to the next group carrying their house drawing (e.g. all move clockwise or you can number the groups). Two members remain with the cards as experts to help their visitors write the label for the feature they know about. This process continues until all the groups have been visited and the house drawing is completely labelled.

We have not provided pupil instructions for this activity since it is easier to demonstrate rather than describe.

House on the Run cards



window

I let light into the house.

I am usually a rectangle.

I am made of glass and wood, metal or plastic.



roof

I keep the house dry.

Sometimes I am sloping and pointed and sometimes I am flat.

I am made of tiles, slates, lead, straw or asphalt.

House on the Run



balcony

I let people and plants sit outside.

I am high up and flat

I am made of wood or metal or concrete.



letterbox

I let the postman put letters in the house.

I am made of metal.

I am a small thin rectangle.

House on the Run



door

I let people in
and out of the
house.

I am a rectangle.

I am made of
wood.



drainpipe

I take rainwater
away from the
house.

I am very long
and thin.

I am made of
metal or plastic.

House on the Run



chimney

I take smoke
away.

I am tall and
thin.

I am made of
bricks.



I make the sides
of the house.

I am flat and
tall.

I am made of
bricks, tiles,
stone or wood.

House on the Run

