

# Crafting Sentences

**Making cardboard characters to  
stimulate  
grammatical development**



# Crafting Sentences: A Teacher Guide

## A focus on prepositions

Using prepositions is often a challenge for children learning English as a Second Language. It is common for children to use the wrong preposition when speaking, as well as in their writing.

Prepositions have a range of functions; two common examples are given below:

Prepositions	
What do they do? Show the <b>direction</b> and <b>place</b> .	
Function	Example
<b>Direction</b>  (Where things are going)	to, toward,  into,  onto
<b>Place</b>  (Where things are found)	up, above, over,  across, through, along,  by, beside, near, with, between  down, below, under, beneath,  in, inside,  out, outside,  on, against, at

## Grammar Skill: Using prepositions to show where things are (place)

### Model and Materials:

- Cardboard animal
- Leaves, twigs, stones, flowers etc

### Activity

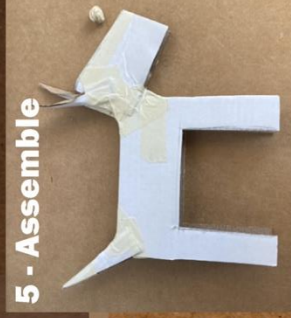
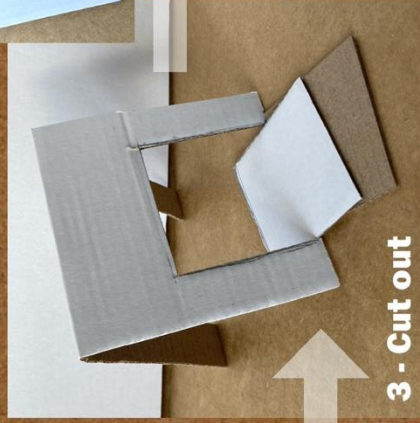
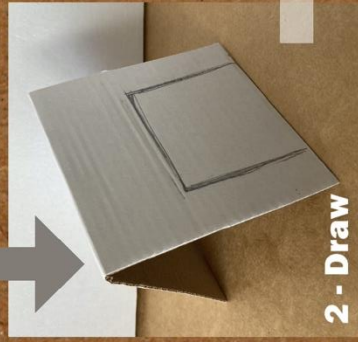
1. Explain to the children that they are going to use their imaginations to create a story map for their model animal to travel along.
2. Ask the children to think about all the different places that the animal might visit.
3. Ask children to use leaves, flowers, twigs and stones to build an imaginary forest or jungle. Children could work outside and draw paths in the sand or soil using sticks.
4. Ask the children to work in pairs or small groups. The challenge is to take their animals on a '**preposition adventure**' to lots of different places.
5. The teacher reads aloud some examples of sentences using prepositions:  
*The dog walks along the path; the cheetah jumps over the log; the elephant stomps through the bushes; the hippo swims in the river.*
6. Provide children with a list of preposition phrases to help them describe their animal's journey. Underline the prepositions to help children's understanding: around the rock; under the bridge; down the hole; up the tree; into the cave etc.
7. Ask children to be a storyteller and describe the different places that their animal goes to.
8. Ask children: *How many different **prepositions** can you use correctly in your '**preposition adventure**'?*

### Variation

- One child can be the storyteller and their partner can be the story writer. The story writer must listen carefully and write down the preposition phrases that they hear.
- When the story has been told, the children work together to underline the correct prepositions.



# Cardboard ANIMALS



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Take your animal on a  
'preposition adventure'.



Around the rock



Prepositions help you to  
describe where things are.

Under the bridge



Into the cave

Down the hole



Where will you go next?

How many different  
places can you think of?

## Crafting Sentences: A Teacher Guide

# A focus on verbs to build a complex sentence

Using verbs correctly is often a challenge for children learning English as a Second Language. A verb is often described as a 'doing' word or 'action' word. A verb is a word that tells you *what is happening* in a sentence. You will always find a verb in a sentence; verbs help you to make sense of what is going on in a sentence.

Understanding verb tense is particularly tricky for English Language Learners. The tense of a verb tells you about the *time of the action* taking place. A useful way to check the tense of a verb is to look at the suffixes. The suffixes '-ed' and '-ing' can usually be added to the end of verbs.

Verbs	
What do they do?	
Verbs help us to make <b>sense</b> of a sentence.	
Verbs help us to work out the <b>tense</b> of a sentence.	
<i>'Verbs help with the <b>sense</b> and <b>tense</b> of a sentence'.</i>	
-ing verb form (suffix)	-ed verb form (suffix)
smiling	smiled
laughing	laughed
giggling	giggled
strolling	strolled
skipping	skipped
dancing	danced

## Grammar Skill: Using an -ing verb and -ed verb to build a complex sentence

### Model and Materials:

- Cardboard emotion face masks
- -ing verbs and matching -ed verbs

### Activity

1. Explain to the children that they are going to create sentences to describe the actions of a happy character.
2. Ask children to think about different times when they have felt happy and excited.
3. Ask the children to use their happy face mask to think about the expressions and actions of a happy person.
4. Ask the children the question: "What do happy lips do?"  
Provide children with the -ing verb form: *smiling, laughing, giggling*
5. Ask children to use their happy masks to think about how a happy person would move across the classroom.
6. Ask the children the question: "What do happy legs do?"  
Provide children with the the -ed verb form: *danced, skipped, strolled*.
7. Explain that a complex sentence adds detail and keeps the writing moving. A complex sentence can start with an -ing verb and then follow with an -ed verb.
8. Demonstrate how to build a complex sentence. Start with the -ing verb form and then use the -ed verb form afterwards. Show the children that a comma is used after the first verb.

*Smiling,* the boy *danced* across the room.

*Laughing,* the girl *skipped* along the path.

9. Ask children to work in pairs to use an **-ing** verb followed by an **-ed** verb to build a variety of complex sentences. The children use their happy emotion face mask to think about the actions of a happy character. Children talk in sentences and then write in sentences.

### Variation

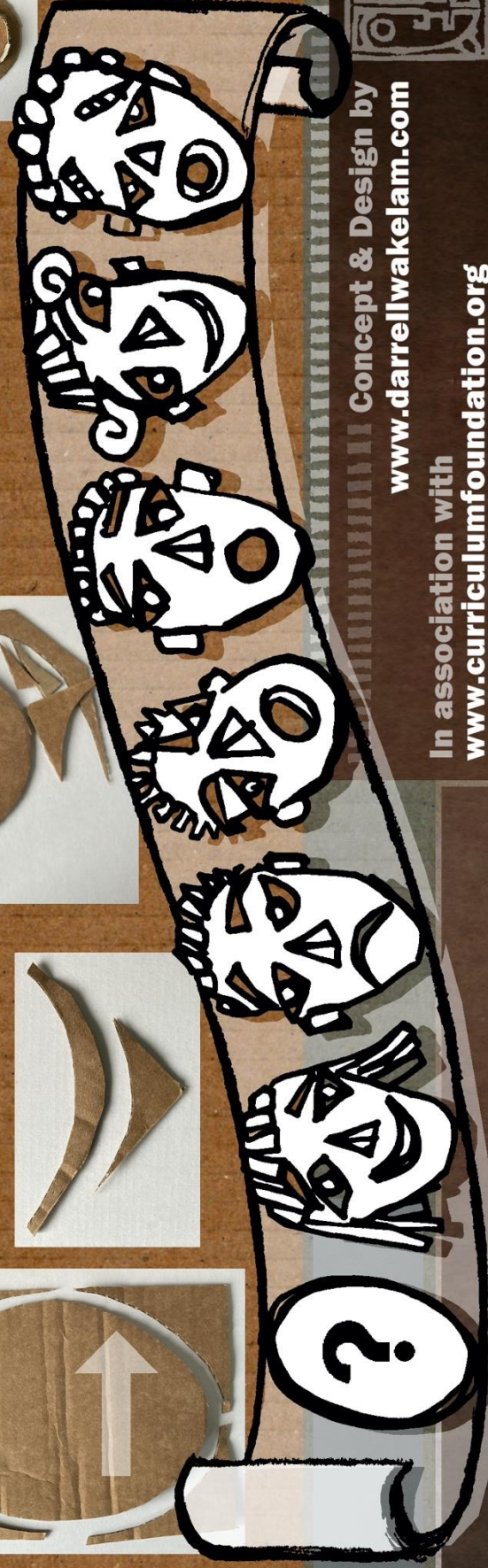
- Teach children synonyms/alternatives for the happy action verbs for example, laugh: giggle, snigger, chuckle, whoop.
- Children use their happy emotion face mask to 'tell' and 'write' detailed and interesting stories.



# Cardboard FACES



4 - Eyebrows and hair



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What are the actions of  
a happy character?

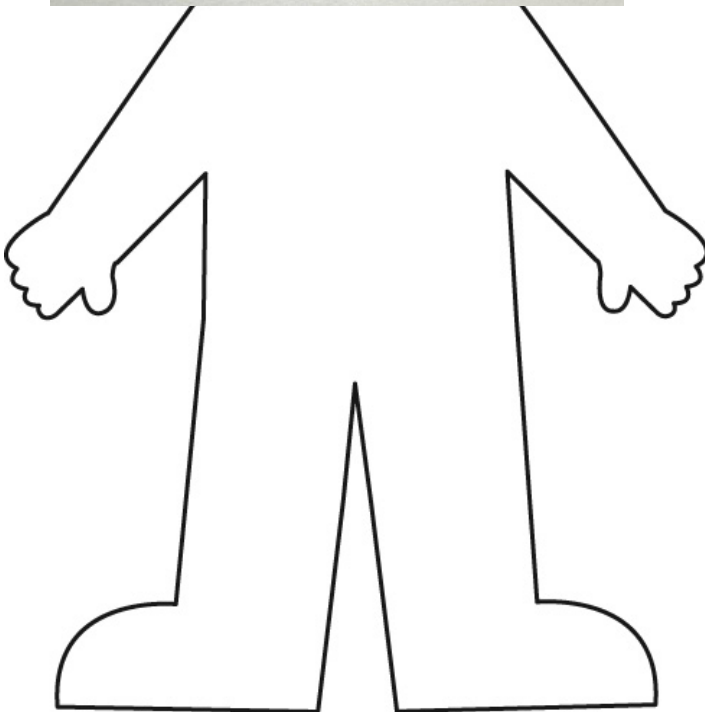


What do happy lips do?

Smiling

Giggling

Laughing



What do happy legs do?

danced

skipped

strolled

Using an **-ing** verb and an **-ed** verb  
to build a complex sentence

## Crafting Sentences: A Teacher Guide

# A focus on adjectives

Using adjectives correctly can be a challenge for children learning English as a Second Language. An adjective is often referred to as a 'describing word'. An adjective tells us more about a noun (a person, a place, an animal or a thing). In English sentences, adjectives are usually placed just before the noun, which is the reverse of some languages, such as Arabic.

<b>Adjectives</b>	
<b>What do they do?</b>	
Adjectives describe what things are like.	
Adjectives give more information about a noun.	
Adjectives add detail to a sentence and provide a clear picture.	
What does the noun (dog) <b>look like?</b>	What does the noun (dog) <b>feel like?</b>
<b>small</b>	<b>hot</b>
<b>spotty</b>	<b>wet</b>
<b>wild</b>	<b>rough</b>
<b>noisy</b>	<b>damp</b>
<b>loud</b>	<b>nasty</b>
<b>annoying</b>	<b>unpleasant</b>
What does the noun (dog) <b>sound like?</b>	What does the noun (dog) <b>smell like?</b>

## Grammar Skill: Using adjectives to add detail

### Model and Materials:

- Cardboard bird
- Prompt questions for adjectives

### Activity

10. Explain to the children that they are going to use their imaginations to take their model bird on a journey.
11. Ask the children to think about different places that their bird might visit.
12. Ask the children to work in pairs or small groups. The challenge is to use adjectives to describe in detail what the bird can see whilst flying through the air.
13. Ask the children the question: "What things does your bird discover on its journey?". Children think of nouns that the bird can see from high up in the sky.
14. Ask the children the questions: "What does the noun (thing) look like?"; "What does the noun (thing) feel like?"; "What does the noun (thing) sound like?"; "What does the noun (thing) smell like?".
15. Provide the children with the prompt questions to think of different adjectives.
16. The teacher reads aloud some examples of sentences using adjectives: *The bird can see a **tall** palm tree; the bird can see a **dry** desert; the bird can see a **noisy** monkey; the bird can see a **fragrant** flower.*
17. Ask children to be a storyteller and describe the different things (nouns) that their bird discovers.
18. Ask children: *How many different **adjectives** can you use correctly to describe the places and things on your bird's journey? What adjectives have you used to create a clear picture?*

### Variation

- Teach children how to write sentences with two well-chosen adjectives: *The bird can see a **tall, green** palm tree; the bird can see a **wild, noisy** monkey.*
- Children choose a type of bird and write a list poem:  
*Soaring through the air, the eagle discovers...*  
*A **glistening** waterfall,*  
*A **trumpeting** elephant,*  
*An **enormous** mountain,*  
*A **noisy** class of children.*

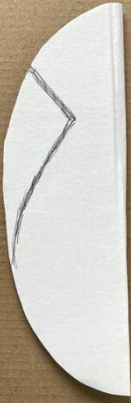


# Cardboards BIRDS

1 - Cut



3 - Draw



2 - Fold



6 - Fold



5 - Attach



4 - Cut



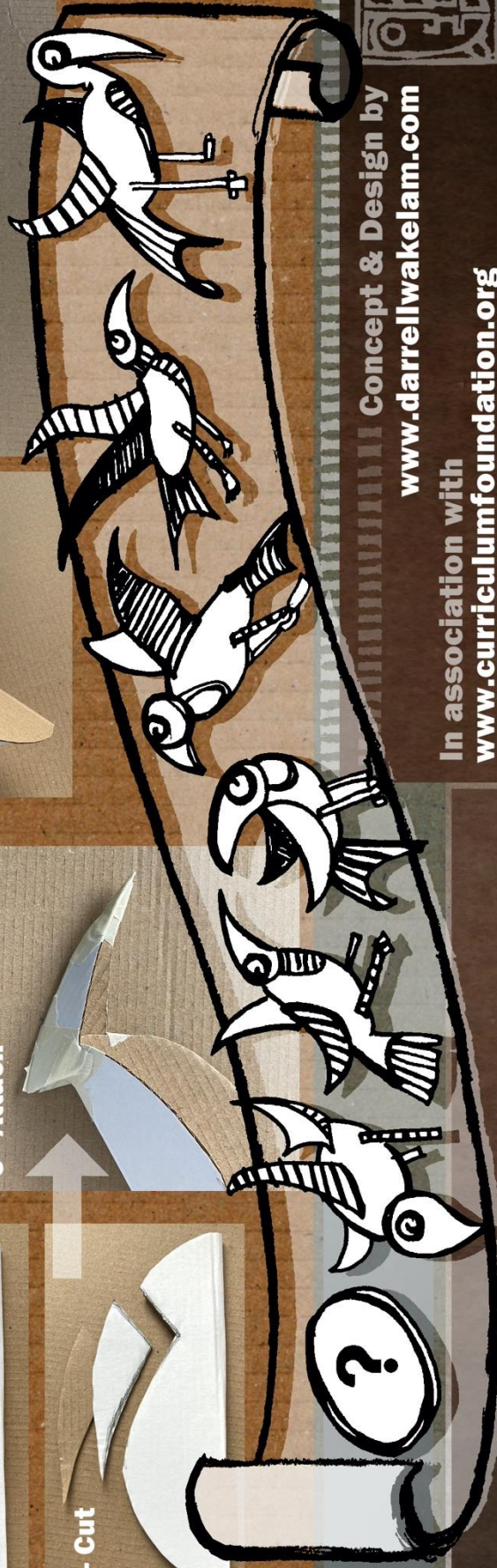
7 - Assemble



8 - Push



sticks - canes - twigs



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**What things will your bird discover on its journey?**

**Use adjectives to describe the nouns and add detail.**

**What does the noun  
look like?**

**What does the noun  
feel like?**



**What does the noun  
sound like?**

**What does the noun  
smell like?**

## Notes for Teachers



## Notes for Teachers

## **Crafting Sentences**



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