

WHO MADE THIS MESS?

An Inquiry and Opinion Activity using The Cat in the Hat

A negotiation education activity created by

Hollie Moscovitz

holliemosco@gmail.com

Summary

For small groups of 4th – 6th grade English Speakers, this is an activity to practice the Negotiation Skill of Inquiry and the English language skill of Oral Proficiency / Social Interaction, specifically, Expressing an Opinion. I will use the PATHWAYS Vocabulary Sentence Stems for inquiry and expressing an opinion, and a classic, rhyming children’s book.

Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about the concept of inquiry, asking good questions to understand someone else’s thoughts, interpretations and conclusions.
- Students will learn more mature wording, using more advanced vocabulary and sentence stems, to ask good questions.
- Students will practice the skill of expressing opinions, specifically someone else’s opinion, as a means to check if, in fact, they did good inquiry and really understood their partner’s ideas, and also to learn to express opinions using more mature wording, and more high-level sentence stems and vocabulary that they are in the habit of doing

Lead-in / Preparation

- The Cat in the Hat book by Dr. Seuss, to be read aloud by the teacher or using a recording such as: <https://youtu.be/u4ziM0xWTmg>
- Sentence stem cards or pages from the PATHWAYS Sentence stems vocabulary pages – Inquiry and an adaptation of Advocacy
- White board and markers

Estimated Class-Time Required

This activity takes one class hour of 45 minutes.



Description of Activities

The teacher explains what they will learn and do in this lesson. These kids are already fluent English speakers, but they need to learn to express themselves using higher level language than they are used to using, and they need to learn the negotiation skill of inquiry to uncover how someone else can hear the same story, yet draw different conclusions about who is responsible.

Step by step:

1. Write on the top, center of the white board **“Who is responsible for the mess?”** and the characters scattered under the question **“The Cat in the Hat”, “Thing One and Thing Two”, “the fish”, “the children (Sally and me)”, “the mother”** (2 min)
2. You are going to learn to inquire (ask questions) to understand someone else’s viewpoint and express opinions using high-level sentence starters (1 min. questions later, after the story)
3. Now we’ll do active listening – pay attention to who is responsible for the mess, and note that it can be shared responsibility (more than one character can be responsible). Teacher read dramatically **“The Cat in the Hat”** by Dr. Seuss, in which a terrible mess is made. (10 mins)
4. Pair off (2 min)
5. Now, question each other about who is responsible for the mess using at least three of the inquiry sentence stems. Try to understand what your partner thinks and why. Teacher - present each of the 13 inquiry sentence stems and take any questions (10 min)
6. Now, present your partner’s opinion using at least one of the sentence stems for expressing opinions. Teacher – present each of the 11 expressing opinion sentence stems (10 min)
7. Reflect - so what did we learn? Inquiry to understand someone else’s way of seeing things, sentence starters for asking good questions and expressing opinions using high level vocabulary and sentences (10 min).



Key Vocabulary / Phrases

Inquiry - asking to understand someone else's opinion

- Could you help me to understand ...?
- What leads you to say that...?
- Do you have anything to add to ...?
- What I'd like to understand is...?
- How do you see...?
- If you had to choose between ... and ...?
- Please tell me more about...
- Walk me through ...
- What is your understanding of...?
- What information/experience leads you to believe ...?
- What leads you to see ... the way that you do?
- Why do you feel...?
- Why...? Why not...?

Expressing someone else's opinion

- Because of....he/she thinks that...
- He'd / she'd say that...
- He/she believes that...
- The way he/she sees it is...
- He/she thinks ...
- In light of... he / she thinks that ...
- In his / her opinion...
- His / her take is that...
- His / her understanding is that...
- The things he / she is focused on are...
- According to his / her view...

Stems are enlarged on attachment, and can be printed or written on cards to be scattered on the table, or handed out to each student to have on a page in front of them.



Assessment

Assessment rubric

Used at least three inquiry stems to ask questions	30 pts
Used at least one “expressing an opinion” stem to present partner's opinion	10 pts
Partner agrees that this is his / her opinion	20 pts
Spoke loudly enough to be heard and spoke clearly	20 pts
Participated and made an effort to learn	20 pts

Reflection

Ask the students to think of real life situations in which they or people they know saw or heard the same thing, but understood it differently or had differences of opinion regarding what happened; or of a book or text they read in which something like that happened to two characters.

Allow class time for a pair/ pairs to use the inquiry stems to try to understand the other’s opinion and present another’s opinion using the appropriate stems.

In future lessons, if there are characters in texts or books who see things differently, ask the students what inquiry stems could be used to better understand how and why the character comes to the conclusion that he / she does, and present the character’s opinions based on first understanding his / her interpretation and conclusions of an event.

Comments

- Be familiar with the book so that when you read it you can do fun voice inflections and make the listening enjoyable for the students.
- Show them the pictures as you read.
- If you feel unable to read it clearly and well, use a recording from YouTube. I like the reading by **Nana’s Story Time** <https://youtu.be/u4ziM0xWTmg>



This activity was created by Hollie Moskowitz with PATHWAYS and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

www.pathwaysnegotiation.org