

Locactions

This set of six cards may be used in a variety of ways¹ to teach or re-teach the most common words and phrases used to indicate location². Using boxed illustrations to teach these location words provides the opportunity to simultaneously sharpen up singular / plural aural discrimination and also review some basic action verbs. The title, above, is not a misprint. This coined³ word combines the caninial locations and actions of side A, while also being appropriate for side B spidambulatories.⁴



This set may be used anytime after a few of the basic location words have been learned, e.g., from the ‘Nakayoshi Cards.’ Or, older kids or adults may be taught them from ‘Locactions’ from the beginning. This is not, in spite of resemblance, a bingo game. Please do not use it as one. Other than respecting that prohibition, try anything, for example, the following:

After a brief review of in-on-under-between-behind-in front of, using perhaps one chip and your hand(s), to demonstrate, pass out the cards. It doesn’t matter if kids have a card of their own or share because they won’t be used as game boards. With everyone looking at their cards, begin with yellow 1, and say, “Yellow 1: The dog is in the box.” Proceed through the other 3 yellows sequentially, emphasizing locations and plurals. Go through the rest of the colors the same way.

After this preparatory phase, have them take three chips apiece, all of the same one or two colors. Tell them that the first to find and call out the correct color and number will win a chip, but if wrong, will lose one. Awarded chips should be a different color than those initially distributed so you can keep track of any non-gamblers. Praise for honest tries. (Better to end with no chips than just ‘sit on’ the original three.)

Teacher says, e.g.: “The dog is on the box.” Student A says, “Blue 1!”

¹ Some yet to be discovered.

² Some of these (‘behind,’ etc., side A) are broadly and insufficiently classed as ‘prepositions.’ Others (such as ‘below,’ on side B) which by all logic should be under that same rough blanket, are authorized to be ‘adverbs.’ Since neither grammatical term clarifies function, we should ignore them, as well as most others of their arbitrary ilk, borrowed from an attempt to pigeonhole the vocabulary of Latin, a language structurally unlike our own.

³ Grammarians having failed us.

⁴ A title which would amalgamate all three of our learning goals would, of course, be even more desirable—but such a compound would be unwieldy and acceptable only to Germans.

Student B says, “Blue 2!” Teacher says, “Thank you” to Student A, for a surrendered chip. Student B is awarded a chip. Before proceeding, focus attention on both the wrong and right answers showing that ‘on’ and ‘dog’ were correct in the wrong answer; the error was in ‘box’ vs. ‘boxes.’

Step 1 T: “The dog is on the box.” S: “Blue 2!”
T: “The dogs are in the boxes.” S: “Green 1!”

Step 2 T: “The dog is on the box.” S: “Blue 2!”
T: “The dogs’re in the boxes.” S: “Green 1!”

Step 3 T: “The dog’s on the box.” S: “Blue 2!”
T: “The dogs’re in the boxes.” S: “Green 1!”

Step 4 T: “The dog’s on the box.” S: “Blue 2!”
T: “That’s right. Say it.” S: “The dog’s on the box.”

Step 5 T: “The dog’s on the box.” S: “Blue 2!”
T: “That’s right. Say it.” S: “The dog’s sitting on the box.”

Step 6 T: “The dog’s on the box.” S: “Blue 2!”
T: “That’s right. Say it.” S: “The dog’s sitting on the blue lemon box.”

Full sentences for Locations A are printed at the end of this explanation.

Suggestions and Cautions

It won’t be easy for the kids at first because they have to get not just one, but three things simultaneously right (the two singular or plural nouns and the location word or words). Don’t overdo and kill it the first time. Play just a few minutes each week until they get smooth. Don’t expect them to start doing well until the third week or so.

Although basically individual, it can still be, e.g., boys vs. girls for total accumulated points.

Step #3 is a very big jump up. Don’t proceed to it until step #2 is fairly easy for all in a class. When you are ready to proceed, explain verbally and in writing (blackboard) that dogs / dog’s being orally identical, they must distinguish between singular and plural sentences only by the absence or presence of that brief and barely audible ‘er’ sound.⁵ With younger children you may wish to postpone the step 3 contraction, making it a later or final challenge.

An alternate or in-between step can be for the teacher to call out a color

⁵ Or ‘uh’ sound, for native speakers who do not pronounce the North American retroflex ‘r’.

and number, and the students to respond (raising hands or being fastest) with a step 4, 5 or 6 level dog sentence.

You could also sometimes reverse the order, saying, e.g., “The boxes are in front of the dog.” (Blue 3.) Not every panel is reversible without using new and/or cumbersome vocabulary, however, so be careful. And you wouldn’t want to try this very soon, because it would only confuse your slow or younger kids.

The cards can also be used individually or by pairs the same way that PCCs are used for preparation. They will compete, moving a marker progressively over the ones they can say without error.

A variation⁶ is for the teacher to circulate around the class while individuals whisper in your ear any one they think they can say. They don’t have to go in any board order. If they miss, the teacher will whisper it to them and they must try the same, next teacher visit. They will put chips on their successes. This is a psychologically softer but effective challenge which will build confidence. It’s also ticklishly satisfying for teachers who like to have their ears whispered into.

In none of these game plans is it necessary to do every square. You can, and often should, terminate the game earlier to maintain a good activity balance and positive student attitude.

Locations B

Side B should not be tried until some degree of proficiency has been reached with side A — ideally, Step #6 level. But it may be unrealistic to expect such restraint from either students or teachers, eager to begin operating in spinderland.

The same side A game plans can be used, but note the differences:

1. There are no plurals, which makes it easier, but...
2. There are a full 16 different locations, which is harder.
3. The 7 containing the words ‘coming’ or ‘going’ are full-length from the start and thus not to be expanded with extra verbs.
4. While side A was sexless, side B offers possibilities of eliciting ‘he’ and ‘she’ or ‘male’ and ‘female’ in responses.
5. Identification of squares is simply by letters ‘a’ through ‘p,’ reinforcing the recognition of these small block letters.

The first pre-playing step is to explain that there are two (not unrelated

⁶ Developed by PLS veteran Ron Zavislak.

but) separate things, called ‘wall’ in English and *kabe* and *hei*, respectively, in Japanese. Likewise with the word ‘corner’ (*sumi* and *kado*)⁷. To a native speaker, the words ‘in’ and ‘on’ (or ‘at’) are sufficient to reveal, even out of context, which kind of corner is referred to. Whereas with walls, we do rely on situational context, but more frequently use ‘on the wall’ to mean *kabe ni kakatte imasu*, rather than the *ue ni* meaning they have learned previously, which we could use here, but don’t, to refer to something on (the upper part of) an outside wall. (‘On top of the wall’ is included, however—our young male spider having adventurously scaled it.

Next, while students are following with their cards, go through the pictures saying the sentences for each (omitting verbs in parentheses). All sentences are printed at the end of this explanation.

Step #1 T. calls; kids compete to find and identify by letter.

Step #2 As above, plus finder must say, e.g., “She’s on the wall.”

Step #3 As above, but finder says, “She’s reading on the wall.”

- With either side, when leading the ‘first to find’ game, the teacher never includes the auxiliary verb. To do so would betray answer without need of target location word comprehension.

⁷ The wall of a building is *kabe* in Japanese, while an outdoor wall (e.g. surrounding a garden) is *hei*. The inside of a corner is *sumi*, while an outer corner (e.g. a street corner) is *kado*.

Full Sentences for Locactions A

Yellow

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The dog's standing in the yellow carrot box. |
| 2 | The dog's wagging its tail under the yellow cherry box. |
| 3 | The dog's eating (a cookie) in front of the yellow cookie boxes. |
| 4 | The dogs're drinking (milk) under the yellow milk boxes. |

Blue

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The dog's sleeping on the blue apple boxes. |
| 2 | The dog's sitting on the blue lemon box. |
| 3 | The dog's listening (to music) behind the blue toy boxes. |
| 4 | The dogs're fighting in front of the blue banana box. |

Green

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The dogs're playing catch in the green potato boxes. |
| 2 | The dogs're running between the green vegetable boxes. |
| 3 | The dogs're barking behind the green orange boxes. |
| 4 | The dogs're dancing on the green pea box. |

Brown (or pink)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The dog's walking between the brown grape boxes. |
| 2 | The dog's sneezing in front of the brown pepper box. |
| 3 | The dogs're playing in the brown pear box. |
| 4 | The dogs're crying under the brown onion box. |

Full sentences for Locactions B

- a A spider's coming out of the wall.
- b A spider's coming around the corner.
- c A spider's going through the wall.
- d A spider's (frowning) in the corner.
- e A spider's going around the corner.
- f A spider's (walking) far from the wall.
- g A spider's going into the wall.
- h A spider's (singing) on the corner.
- i A spider's (reading) on the wall.
- j A spider's (hanging) above the wall.
- k A spider's (hopping) near the wall.
- l A spider's (digging) below (or beneath) the wall.
- m A spider's (standing) on top of the wall.
- n A spider's going over the wall.
- o A spider's (painting) at the bottom of the wall.
- p A spider's going around in the corner.