

Supporting Young English Learners by Guessing an Object

Regional Educational Laboratories
West, Northwest,
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

Families and caregivers, you play an important role in your child's language learning. Children can learn new words every day and build their vocabulary by using descriptive language. When playing this game you and your child will use language to describe and guess hidden household items.

Keep in mind:

- You and your child can use your home language or English, whichever is strongest for you.
- Learning new words in your home language will also help your child with English.
- Enjoy this time with your child. Learning together is fun!

Why teach words that describe?

Talking and writing using descriptive words helps children build their vocabulary.

Let's play the guessing game!

Follow the steps below. See the back for additional language supports.

Step 1: Help your child **gather up to 5 objects** from around the home.

Step 2: Use the chart on the back to **help your child describe each object**. Practice many different descriptive words and try new words. Suggest more difficult words like *enormous* instead of *big*.

Help your child learn the new descriptive words. Define the word, use it to describe the object, provide other examples. Ask your child if the word can be used to describe each of the objects. Encourage your child to use the descriptive words they just learned as you play the game.

Step 3: **You and your child each select 5 more objects** and hide them under something like a towel, box, or bag so your partner can't see them.

Step 4: **Have your child select an object and ask them questions to get more detail about the object.**

Example: *How big is the object?* See the questions on the back of the page for ideas. **Then guess** what the object is.



▶ **Step 5:** Now it is **your turn to select an object and model using many descriptive words** and your child will ask questions and guess.

Step 6: **Repeat steps 4 and 5** until you both have guessed all of the objects.

Step 7: Have your child **draw, write, or talk about** one of the objects.



Learning Goal: Children will learn and practice descriptive words

Grades: Kindergarten–3rd grade

Suggested Materials: Any objects around the home, paper and crayons, pencils, or markers

Family and Caregiver Activity: Supporting Young English Learners by Guessing an Object

Additional Language Supports

Your child can build their vocabulary and stretch their language by using descriptive words. Consider using the questions and responses below to describe and guess objects with your child.

Questions to Ask About an Object	Senses Used to Describe	Responses to the Questions
How big is the object?	What you see : Size	The object is (big/large/small/tiny).
What shape is the object?	What you see : Shape	The object is (round/square/triangular/rectangular).
What color is the object?	What you see : Color	The object is the color (red/blue/yellow/purple/orange/green/black/brown/white/gray).
What does the object feel like?	What you feel : Texture	The object feels (bumpy/rough/smooth/sharp/pointy/soft).
How heavy is the object?	What you feel : Weight	When I pick up the object, it is (heavy/light).
How does the object smell?	What you smell : Scent	The object smells (good/pleasant/delicious/sweet/strong/fruity/stinky/unpleasant).
What does the object sound like?	What you hear : Sound	The object is (quiet/silent/loud/makes a humming sound).
How is the object used? What is the object used for?		The object is used to _____. The object is used for _____. I use the object when I _____.



► **Word Challenge**

Have your child write about an object using descriptive words related to each of the senses. Have them describe how the object is used. Ask your child to read their description and guess what object they have described.