

2nd Grade - Lesson 1.1

Classifying Objects Based on their Observable Properties

Teacher Background

Grouping or classifying objects and materials is a classic 2nd grade activity. Most basic categorizing skills for young children develop naturally through interacting with objects and using language to describe them. As students learn new information or investigate new materials and phenomena, they can be encouraged to recognize and further develop their categorizing skills.

Organizing Their World

For young students, categorizing objects in the world around them helps students organize and better understand all the sense data they are flooded with every day. Even though an oak and a willow tree look very different, the characteristic of being a tree allows them to be grouped together and understood in a certain way. Helping students develop their natural ability to group objects helps build a foundation for understanding living vs. non-living, plants vs. animals, solid vs. liquid vs. gas, and the many other groupings and subgroupings in their world.



Objects Can Be Grouped in Different Ways

One important point for students to understand is that the same objects can be grouped in different ways depending on what characteristic is used to group them. A chair, pencil, and wooden shoes have very different purposes but they can be grouped together because they are all made of wood. Wood, brick, and steel are very different but can be grouped together based on their function as building materials.



Giving students these different examples can help them think more flexibly about the many different characteristics of objects and materials and the many ways they can be grouped. Students will continue to develop and refine this skill and understanding of categorizing as they continue in school and in everyday life.