

Categories and Word Finding

What is this?

Sorting items into categories develops your child's vocabulary skills by allowing them to compare how objects are similar, how they belong within certain groups, and also compare the function of the groups, e.g. food we eat, clothes we wear, vehicles you drive. It also helps your child learn, store, and retrieve new vocabulary.

How you can help

Sorting objects into groups is something that we do every day without realising. Many daily chores around the house can be used to help your child develop their understanding of categories. Involve them in the activities listed below and use these as opportunities to talk about where things belong and why.

- Sorting shopping. When putting away groceries. Ask your child to help you decide where each item belongs, e.g. that goes in the fridge/fruit bowl/cleaning cupboard/freezer/vegetable box/bathroom cupboard, etc.
- Tidy-up time. As you put things away around the home, talk to your child about where they belong in the house or in a particular room, e.g. 'Towels go in the hot-press', 'your shoes go in your room', 'books go in the bookcase', 'toys go in the toy box', or 'clothes go in the wardrobe'.
- Doing dishes. While putting the dishes away, ask your child to tell you in which cupboard each item belongs, e.g. 'Cups belong in the cup cupboard', 'plates belong in the big cupboard', 'saucepans go in the pots cupboard', or 'knives, forks, and spoons go in the cutlery drawer.'



Washing Day

Involve your child in the job of sorting laundry. Ask them to help you to sort out the clothes in your laundry basket in a number of different ways.

Sort by;

- colour
- name, e.g. trousers t-shirts, socks, etc.
- fabric
- clothes you hang up/fold.

As you take each item from the basket talk about its name, colour and which group it belongs to.



Sort It Out

On the sort boards provided overleaf help your child to match each item to the correct category.

Name and talk about each item with your child and help them decide in which group the item belongs.

When you have decided where the item belongs, use a marker to match it to the correct group.



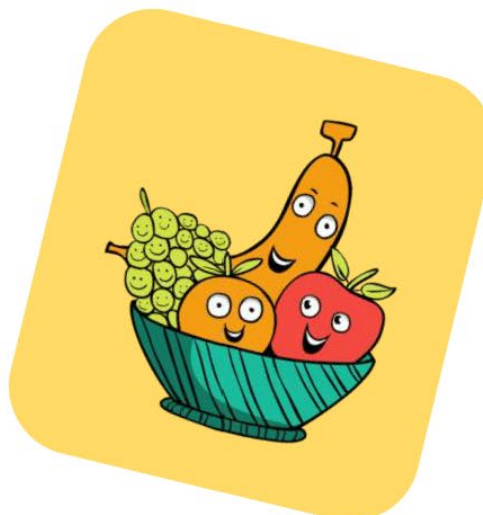
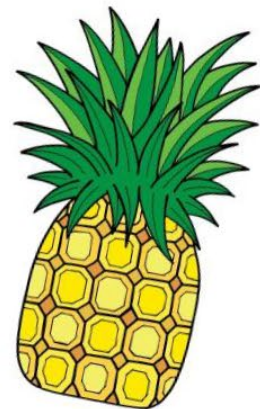


Sort it out





Sort it out



Cheeky Monkey mix-up

Show your child the picture of Cheeky Monkey and explain that he likes playing tricks.

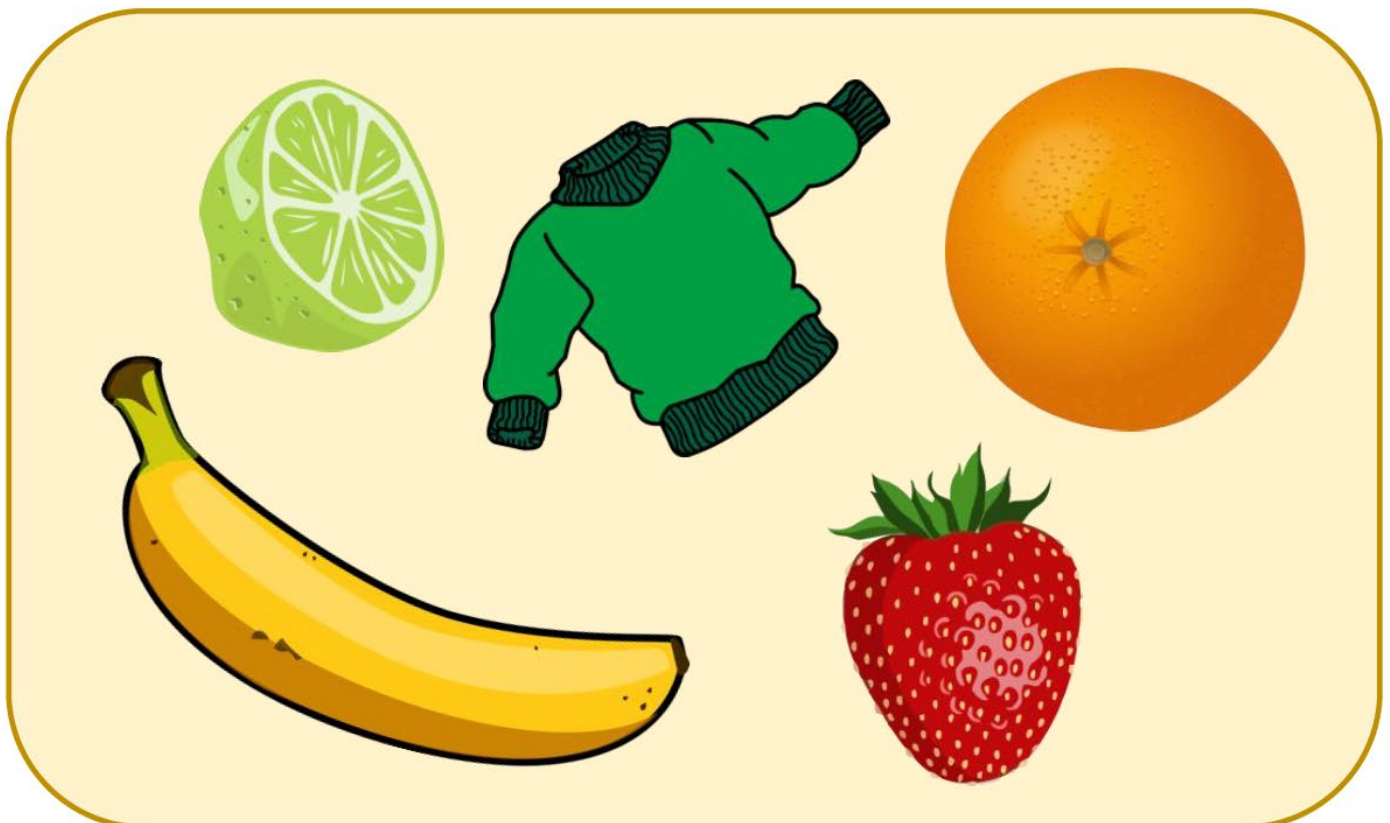
Mummy Monkey has been tidying up and sorting out the things that go together. Cheeky Monkey is playing a trick on his mummy and has mixed some of the things up.

Look at the items on the next three pages.

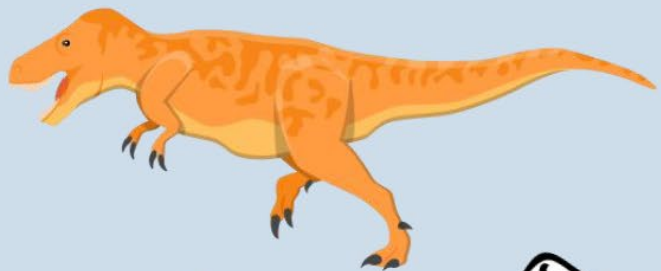
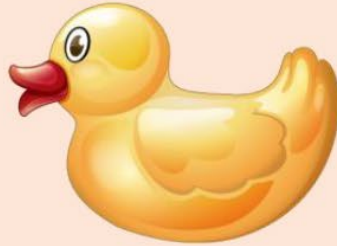
Show your child each item in turn, name and talk about the thing in each picture and ask them to tell you which things belong together and why.



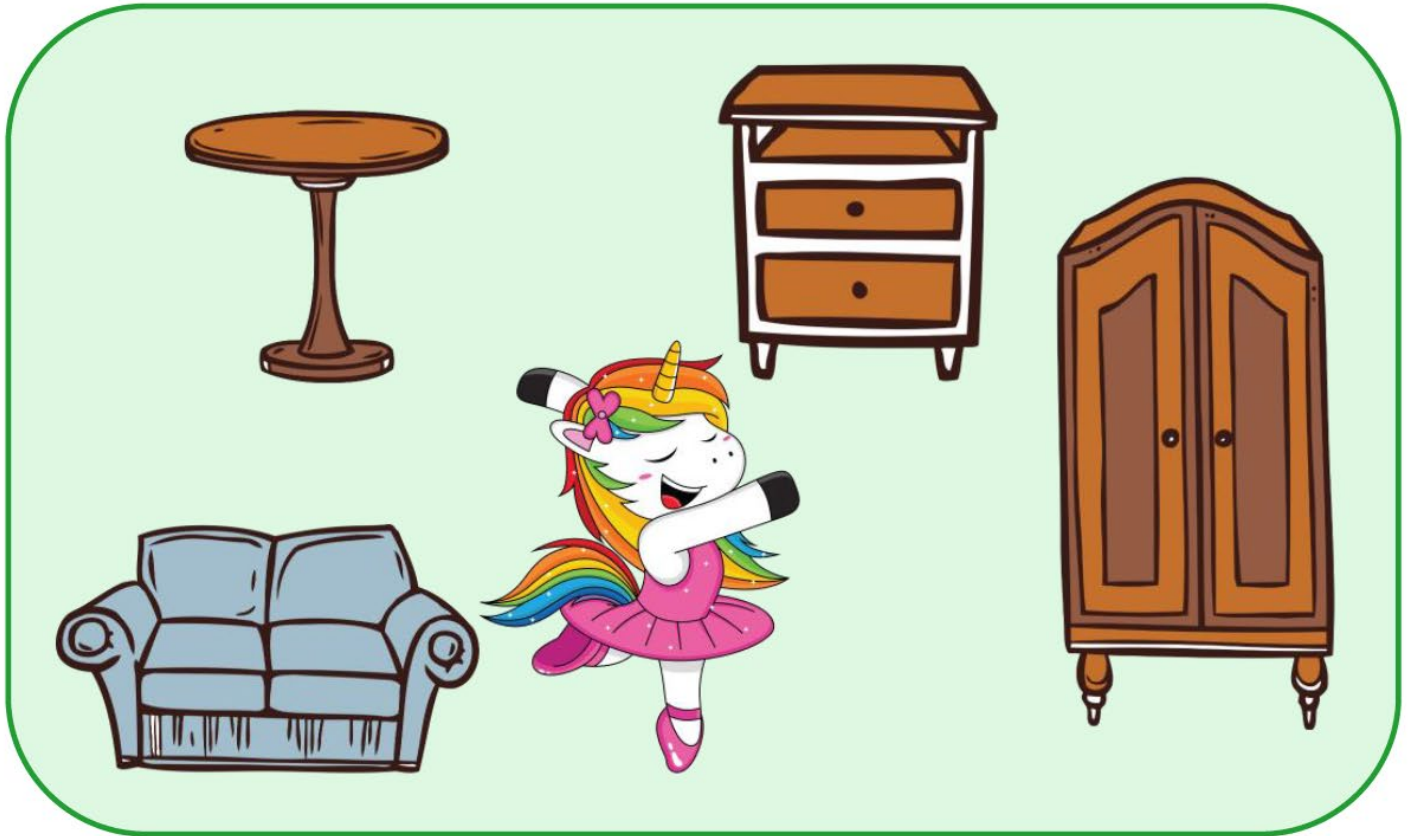
Cheeky Monkey mix-up



Cheeky Monkey mix-up



Cheeky Monkey mix-up

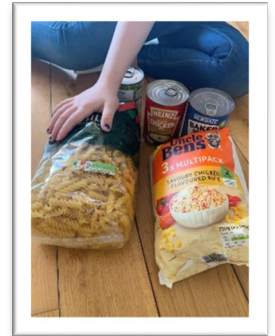


Categories around the home

Tell your child that they you are going to give them a 'topic' and they have to go around your home in a given time to find as many items as possible within the given category.

For example, you could tell your child "*clothes*". Your child would go around your home and gather different clothes. Talk through the items, naming each item they have brought. Now, see how fast your child can put all the items back again!

Now change the topic!



Times up



Show your child a timer on your phone. Tell your child that you are going to give them 2 minutes to try and name as many items as they can within a category. You could perhaps do a category first to give your child ideas and then let your child have a turn.

Take it in turns to think of objects in a category and see who can think of the most!

Here are category ideas to help get you started:

toys	games	boys names
drinks	movies	toys
animals	vegetables	transport
sports	clothes	flowers
colours	fruit	hot things
soft things	actions	buildings

Name the category

Tell your child that you are going to give them some words and they have to see if they can think which category the items would all belong to. For example, *"cats, dogs, guinea pigs are all".... "pets"*.

Here are some examples to help get you started:

- Red, blue, green, orange and pink are all ,
- Lions, tigers, monkeys and elephants are all ... ,
- Coats, jumpers, trousers and socks are all ,
- Cars, lorries, vans and trains are all ,
- Apples, pears, oranges and bananas are all

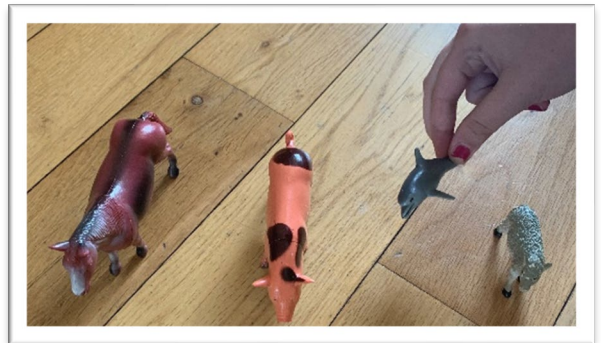
Odd one out

Tell your child that you are going to give them a few words to listen to. Tell your child that one of the words doesn't belong in the group. Your child has to listen to the words and decide which word doesn't belong in the group.

For example, *"cat, dog, car, parrot. Which is the odd one out?"..... "car!"*

Here are some examples to help get you started:

- Car, lorry, apple and train.
- Peas, beans, cars and carrots.
- Red, dog, orange and blue.
- Cow, tree, horse and pig.
- Shoes, boots, trainers and hat.



Name Things

Tell your child that they are going to try to name as many things as they can in the category you give them. For example, *"Name things you see in the sky."*

You can adapt this by using a die, e.g. if your child rolls the die and gets the number 3 they have to name 3 things, etc.

Depending on your child's ability you could adapt it again and use 2 dice and encourage your child to add the two numbers together e.g. $3 + 2 = 5$. *"Name 5 things you see at the zoo."*, etc.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Name things that are red (or yellow or green etc)
- Name things you see in the park
- Name things you see in the garden
- Name things you see at the farm
- Name things you see at the beach
- Name things you play with
- Name things you wear
- Name things that live in the sea
- Name things that have wheels
- Name things that are pets
- Name things that are fruits
- Name things that are round
- Name things that are sweet



Suitcase Game



Fill a suitcase with clothes we wear when the weather is hot and when it is cold.

Draw a picture of the sun (for hot weather) and another of a snowman (for cold weather).

Now help your child to name the clothes and sort them into clothes we wear when the weather is hot and clothes we wear when it is cold.

When all the clothes have been sorted, close the suitcase and see if your child can remember some of the clothes you wear when it is hot/cold.

Now get your child to help you to tidy them away.

Items needed: Sun hat/cap, swimsuit, shorts, sun dress, sandals/flip flops, t-shirt, vest top, ankle socks and sunglasses. Woolly hat, gloves, scarf, thick socks, jumper, winter coat, trousers and boots.

Homes and Houses

Use pictures of furniture from a catalogue. Help your child to cut out the pictures and name them.

Now sort the pictures into items you see in the living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom.

You may want to draw a house and divide your house into four rooms, 2 upstairs and 2 downstairs. Get your child to stick the items into the appropriate rooms.

At the end hide your house picture. How many items can your child recall from each room?

If you have a doll's house and toy furniture you could use these items instead to place the furniture into the correct rooms.

Items needed: Pictures of furniture and items found in the living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, scissors and glue, a blank page to draw a picture of your house, or a doll's house and furniture.



Make a daily menu

Talk to your child about the foods you eat. Ask for help to make a daily menu using different food categories.

- Will you have cereal, fruit or bread for breakfast?
- What drinks will you have through the day? Water, milk, juice?
- Will you have sandwiches at lunch? What will you need to make this?
- Bread, butter, variety of fillings, cheese, ham, chicken, salad?
- Will you have any fruit or vegetables?
- What will you have for dinner? Pasta, rice, potatoes, vegetables, meat, eggs?



Transport category game



Talk about the various types of transport with your child.

Now ask your child to name transport items you might see:

- On the road
- In the air
- In the sea

How many can your child name from each category?

Which ones go together?

Collect two items from different categories. For example, clothes, toy transport items, fruits, vegetables, toy farm & zoo animals and toy furniture.

Show the items to your child, name them and then ask your child to help you find the items that go together.

For example, *“The train and bus go together because they are transport.”* or *“The elephant and the lion go together because they are zoo animals.”*

