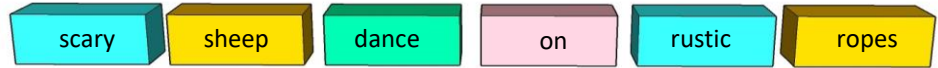


## Scary Sheep

### Finding Meaning in Unusual Word Combinations



This activity explores unusual word combinations and allows students to practice using parts of speech and rules of syntax.

#### Activity Challenge

Use word blocks to build sentences with a variety of word combinations.

2" x 3"

sharp
scary
blue
round

#### Preparation

1. Assign a color to a part of speech (e.g., blue = noun, green = verb, etc.). Be sure to assign colors for prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and articles.
2. Cut 5-7 rectangles with dimensions 2-inch x 3-inch from each color of paper or cardstock (see above right).
3. Fold each rectangle in half in the 3-inch direction. Unfold, and then fold each edge to the centerline to create four ¾-inch spaces.
4. Write a "part of speech" word corresponding to the assigned color on each of the 4 spaces on the rectangle. Use 3<sup>rd</sup> person, plural for noun and verb tenses.
5. Fold each rectangle into a rectangular prism "block" with open ends and secure it with tape. (See picture above, under the title of the activity, for an example).
6. Make at least 5 rectangular blocks for each part of speech. (See next page for examples).

#### To Do

1. Choose several blocks (5-7) and string them together.
2. Create a sentence using Standard English syntax (noun, verb, preposition, article, noun). View the block combination from every side.
3. Create a sensible sentence using the blocks, and then turn the blocks and read the newly created sentences on the remaining three sides.
4. Continue choosing different blocks and building new sentences.

#### Observations

- How many different sentences are possible using each string of blocks?
- How is this different when viewing the strings of blocks on each side?

#### Extensions

- Make blocks and form sentences that include several adverbs.
- Draw pictures to illustrate the imagery for each string of blocks.

#### Materials Needed

- Paper or cardstock. 5-7 different colors
- Pencil and/or pen
- Scissors
- Tape

#### Grade Range

3-5

#### Topics/Skills

Use of English Grammar  
Syntax

#### Learning Standards

[CCSS ELA: Conventions of Standard English; Knowledge of Language](#)

#### Duration

15-30 minutes

#### Prep Time

15-20 minutes

### The Content behind the Activity

Scary Sheep reinforces the written English grammar concepts of parts of speech and syntax. Students also learn:

- A **simple sentence** is defined as a noun and verb.
- **Complex sentences** have a prepositional phrase, a noun and verb.
- A **compound sentence** is formed when two simple sentences are connected using a coordinating conjunction.
- **Complex-compound sentences** have a prepositional phrase and a compound sentence.
- **Nouns** are parts of speech that name people, places, things, qualities, or actions. Dogs, cats and a person are examples of nouns.
- **Adjectives**, such as free or heavy, describe nouns or pronouns.
- **Adverbs** are used to modify a verb, adjective, or another adverb.
- **Conjunctions** are words that join other words, phrases, and clauses.
- **Interjections** are words that express emotion, meaning or feelings.
- **Prepositions** are words that are used to connect a noun, or pronoun, to another word in a sentence.
- **Pronouns** replace nouns in sentences to refer to the subject(s) spoken about in the sentence.
- **Verbs** express actions or states of being.

Sometimes the best way to understand a concept is to “break it” or look at in a way that doesn’t make any sense. This kind of out-of-the-box thinking can either push the boundaries of creative expression, or help a person internalize inner workings by “fixing” it. Followers of the Dadaist art movement (Europe from about 1916-1920) used a method very similar to the one presented in this activity to explore principles of deliberate irrationality and to develop creative thinking.

### EXAMPLES: Parts of Speech

Nouns	Adjectives	Adverbs	Conjunctions	Interjections	Prepositions	Pronouns	Verbs
Music	Careful	Always	After	Phew	About	His	Have
Audience	Heavy	Freely	When	Congratulations	Inside	Hers	Keep
Pets	Polite	Quickly	Through	Hurray	Regarding	Mine	Taste
Herd	Loudest	Somewhere	Since	Whoops	Toward	Some	Jump
Wednesday	Freezing	Very	Because	Thanks	From	Those	Turn
Family	Alive	Now	Unless	Bravo	Like	Yours	Become