

Same and Different Directions

Preparation: Copy “Pictures 1 and 2,” enough of each picture for half the number of students in the class. White out the words “Picture 1” and “Picture 2” so they do not appear on the copies. Attach each Picture 1 to the inside of one color of file folders. Attach each Picture 2 to the inside of the other color of the file folders. (For example, you will have 15 red folders with Picture 1 inside, and 15 yellow folders with Picture 2 inside).

Procedure:

1. Pair students and have them sit at their desks or tables facing their partner.
2. Assign one student in each pair to be the recorder. Distribute “Same-Different Answer Sheet” to the recorder for each pair of students.
3. Explain to students that each pair will be receiving two pictures that are very similar, but have some key differences. Emphasize that students are to find as many similarities and differences as possible using verbal descriptions of their pictures and asking questions of one another.
4. Stress that students must look only at their own picture, not at their partner’s picture.
5. Encourage students to minimize the volume level of their conversations so other teams will not overhear answers.
6. Student pairs raise their hands when they have found the assigned number of similarities and differences. When the goal has been achieved or the activity time limit reached, pairs open folders side by side on their desks and compare pictures while looking at both.
7. Encourage students to find additional similarities and differences they did not identify during the activity. Ask students to discuss the verbal strategy they used to communicate, and suggest to each other more effective methods they could have used now that they see the both pictures at once.
8. Repeat the activity again several times at later dates using teacher-made Same-Different pictures. Make sure each student eventually has the chance to record. Students hone verbal communication skills and pay closer attention to details with each opportunity they have to participate in this activity.
9. To ensure success and a challenge for all, include in each Same-Different activity some differences that will be obvious for the slowest achievers and some that will be difficult for the highest achievers. The remaining differences should be distributed between the extremes.

Procedure for Making Materials

1. White-Out Method

Start with a drawing, map, photo or written material. Make two copies. Use white-out and a black line marker to add and subtract content from one copy. Add and subtract content to the other copy. Use the two altered copies as originals as you duplicate copies for your class. Try using different colored paper for each original to avoid confusion.

2. Photo Method

Arrange objects in a scene. Take a picture. Rearrange the objects in the scene. Take a second picture. Use the enlarging feature on copy machine on resulting photos to create two master copies and then duplicate copies of each for classroom use.

3. Written Method

Text can be altered to create Same-Different materials. For example, make two copies of a page from a textbook describing a currently studied topic such as crops and livestock. From one copy, white-out all descriptions of crops. Take out all descriptions of livestock from the other. The Same-Different Answer Sheet can be altered to ask compare-contrast questions about crops and livestock so students have to read copies carefully to each other to be successful.

Adapted from Spencer Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structures