

The People Puzzle: A Kinesthetic Parts of Speech Activity
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1. Create your cards.

Averaging 36 students in a class, I have four sets of nine cards (four teams), with a part of speech on both sides—and every card is used in every sentence. (Longer sentences, having to choose sides, etc., make it more difficult for older students). For younger students, I suggest smaller groups, putting a part of speech on only one side of the card, and having more cards than words in a sentence (to make it less frustrating). If you had five kids per group, you'd still have five words per sentence, but you may give each group ten or twelve cards.

My cards are as follows:

Noun = red
Pronoun = goldenrod
Adjective = blue
Verb = orange
Adverb = purple
Conjunction = pink
Preposition = green
Interjection = yellow

And they are paired like this:

Interjection – adjective
Adjective – verb
Conjunction – adverb
Adjective – noun
Preposition – noun
Adverb – preposition
Pronoun – noun
Pronoun – verb
Conjunction – verb

2. Create your sentences.

My nine word sentences are in the PowerPoint (attached).

3. Explain the rules.

Objective: be the first team to sit down in the correct (left to right) order. (I have the four teams create a square facing the middle with their lines).

- a. Entire team sits at the same time once the puzzle is solved.
- b. Once you sit, you can't exchange positions or cards. (Everyone has to stand back up).
- c. Parts of speech have to defend themselves.
- d. All teams must complete all puzzles.

e. Scoring:

First correct team: 4 points

Other correct teams: 2 points

Defenses: 1 point

*Here's an example of a defense: Say the sentence is "The big dog ran." After you've corrected their card order, you call all the adjectives out to stand in the middle and ask them "What is 'big' modifying?" Whoever gets the answer gets the point—teams can't help. You can ask questions like "What kind of verb is 'stinks'?" "Is 'Tom' a common or a proper noun?" "Add another adjective to the sentence and tell me what it's modifying." Etc. Etc.

Variations on a theme: Give the students a parts-of-speech order (adj, adj, noun, verb, adverb, prep, adj, noun) and have them come up with their own sentences.