

INTRODUCTION

This book is designed to help children develop the kind of visualization skills that lie at the heart of problem-solving and creativity. It also gives students excellent practice at listening.

How does the concept work? Here are a couple of activities that will give you the idea.

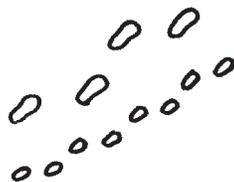
For a moment, please play the part of the student. This is what your teacher (or parent) says to you:

“A father and his young son went walking in the snow. They left tracks that you can see from above. How would that look?”

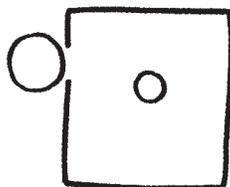
Another:

“A circle found a hole in the side of a square just big enough for it to get in, and went inside. Its friend, also a circle, tried to get in, but it was too big. How would that look?”

In the first example, students would obviously have to think about shoe sizes. But that’s not all. The matter of stride must be considered. A father’s footprints would be farther apart than the child’s. The footsteps also have to be going in the same direction. Thus, an adequate response would be:



In the second example, students grapple with a more abstract situation—circles and squares. To be successful, they must make a square with a “door” that is just about the size of a circle, and the circle must then be drawn inside the square. But the second circle, outside of the square, has to be drawn larger. Remember, it must be too large for the opening. So the solution might look something like this:



A few notes about how to use this book: You may choose to do the activities in a structured fashion, doing three or four at a specific time each day. Or you can take a more informal approach, doing them whenever you have five or ten minutes of free time. Each activity is designed to stand on its own.

Most of you will probably want to do the activities orally. This helps improve listening skills and direction-following as well as encouraging visual and conceptual thinking.

You may also reproduce the activities and put several of them together in a center. If you do, you may want to cut out the challenges, laminate them, and keep the picture-solutions in the book. Each is numbered for easy reference.

Keep in mind that the solutions included in this book are just suggestions, not hard-and-fast answers. They are meant to be used as guides showing how children may approach each activity. This is not an art book—the quality of the final drawings is not nearly as important as the thinking that goes into them.

Like our other books, we start with easier activities in the early pages and move gradually into more difficult challenges.

We trust you and your students will have many good moments—many enlightening moments—ahead!

— Greta Rasmussen and Matt Rasmussen