

Activity 1:

What Is a Toy?

Young children are often encouraged to 'go and play with your toys' but what is meant by a 'toy'? Is it *anything* that can be played with (e.g. sticks and stones) or only things that are *intended* to be played with (e.g. dolls). This also has safety implications; for example, should children play with sharp objects? Should toys always be safe?



KEY CONCEPT:

Toys

KEY WORDS:

Toy, play, game, fun, enjoy, imagination, role play, construction, art, creativity, comfort, activity, exercise

LEARNING INTENTION:

To understand what makes something a toy

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

We can:

- Talk about our own toys and what they mean to us
- Decide which objects are toys and which are not
- Explain what makes something a toy
- Identify things that a toy **MUST** have or do
- Identify things that toys do **NOT** need to have or do

STRATEGY USED:

Sorting and classifying

Concept line

Odd One Out

1. IDENTIFY IMPORTANT CONCEPTS:

Toys come in all shapes and sizes and form an important part of childhood and development.

Support discussion around what makes something a toy and what the purpose and role of toys are. The children's ideas should be challenged for reasons and you should use both general and specific examples to test the ideas and reasons generated.

Areas of exploration can include examples of toys in different ages, different contexts and a variety of cultural environments.

Key questions to consider include:

- What makes something a toy?
- When does something stop being a toy?
- What do all toys have in common?

2. CHALLENGE CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING:

Here are some examples of cognitive conflict we expect your children to experience

Figure 59: Cognitive Conflict About Toys

Opinion	Conflicting opinion
A toy is something you play with	My mum says I play with my food
Toys are for children	My dad's phone has great games on it
Suzu says dolls are for girls to play with	I like playing with dolls and I am a boy.

Create challenge using some of these questions

- What is a toy?
- Why do we like toys?
- How do toys make us feel?
- What is your favourite toy?
- Can something be a toy if has never been played with?
- Can you play with something and it not be a toy?
- Are all toys play things?
- Are toys only for children?
- Can pets or friends be toys?
- Can we play without any toys?
- How important is it that shops make different toys for boys and girls?
- Does a toy have to be an object?
- Can anything be a toy?
- Are musical instruments toys?
- What would life be like without toys?
- At what age should we stop playing with toys?

3. CONSTRUCT UNDERSTANDING TOGETHER:

Help your children make sense of their thoughts using one or more of the following activities:

Activity 1: Sorting and classifying

Sit in a circle with your children and explain that there has been a mix up and you need some help in sorting out all the 'toys' from the 'non-toys' in the box. You can present the children with a bag or box full of objects (based on the activity cards or other objects) or use the activity cards supplied.

Remind your children of the ideas that came out of the discussion during the cognitive conflict stage. Then invite individuals to choose an object or card from the bag/box and describe it to the other children. They should then say whether they think it is a toy or not and be encouraged to give reasons for their answers. The other children can say if they agree or disagree with the classification and why.

Encourage your children to listen and respond to different reasons given and move towards a group decision before it is put into either the 'toy' category or the 'non-toy' category. The respective categories can be represented by two circles on the floor either drawn out or created by hoops or rope.

Always encourage your children to justify their decisions and ideas with reasoning:

- Why do you think that is a toy?
- Is that the only reason why that is a toy?
- Is that the most important reason for it being a toy?
- Does everyone agree?
- Does anyone disagree?
- Does anyone think that there is a different reason for why it is a toy that is more important than this one?
- Are there any cards/objects that you feel are definitely not toys?
- How can you tell if something is not a toy?

Your children can sort the cards/objects in different ways as the discussion progresses ...

- 'Toy', 'not a toy', 'not sure', 'not normally a toy but could be'
- Make links between cards/objects with common criteria
e.g. bounces, makes a noise, role play, fun, comforting
- Man-made toy, natural toy, imaginary toy

Support your children to think about the sorting criteria as they place the cards/objects into groups. For example, if they decide being a 'toy' means 'it has to be something you can play with', then all cards/objects relating to this should go into one pile and other clues that do not fit this criterion should go into another pile.

Activity 2: Concept Line

Alternatively, they can place the cards on a continuum or concept line (line of rope or string) with the most definite example of a toy at one end and the least likely to be a toy at the other end. They can then place all the other objects/cards at a suitable place along the line to represent how much of a toy or non-toy it is.

Figure 60: Concept Line for Toys



EXTENSION / SIMPLIFICATION :

To extend the learning further, you could ask your children to think of other examples that could be included in the sorting process. Each time they think of a new object, encourage them to use it to test their ideas. These questions should help:

- Does this fit the description of a toy?
- Does it have anything else about it that makes it a toy that we have not considered yet?
- In what ways might this not be a toy?
- Do all toys need to share the same characteristics as this one?

Activity 3: Odd One Out

To simplify the task, you could give your children fewer cards or objects to consider. You could also use the Odd One Out strategy to ask them to compare just 3 examples rather than sharing all the objects with them. For example:

Figure 61: Odd One Out of a Teddy, a Kitten and a Doll



4. CONSIDER THE LEARNING JOURNEY:

Ask your children to consider how they came to their decision and the process they went through to get there. Questions such as these could help:

- How did you make your decision?
- Is it important to agree on an answer together?
- What helped you to decide?
- If you could not have reached a decision what could you have done next?

Transfer activity ideas:

- Each child could become a toy detective and investigate school, the grounds and home to find as many examples of toys or potential toys as possible. These can be recorded as drawings or photographs.
- Each child could bring their favourite toy into school and do a 'show and tell' about what makes that toy their favourite.
- Each child could bring in an object that can be played with but that would not normally be thought of as a toy.
- Your children could engage in an art activity to design the perfect toy for an alien from another planet who had never had a toy before.

Figure 62: Cards for 'What is a Toy?' Activity



ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-4

A bed sheet



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-5

A treasure chest



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-6

A doll



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-7

A ball



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-8

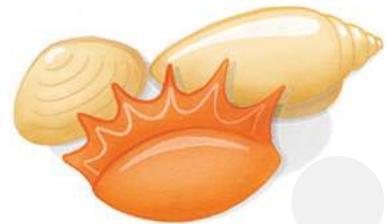
A dress



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-9

Sea shells



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-10

A tent



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-11

A kitten



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-12

A hamster



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-13

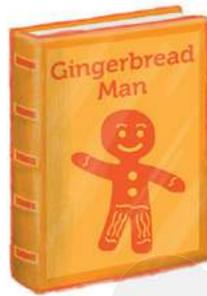
A friend



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-14

A story book



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-15

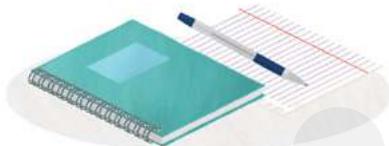
Colouring pencils and book



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-16

A pen and paper



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-17

Money



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-18

A teddy bear



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-19

A bike



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-20

A car



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-21

A mobile phone



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-22

Food



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-23

A torch



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ACTIVITY:
What is a toy?
1-24

Building bricks



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