

Symbol-Adjectives

A toolkit for introducing and developing the skills in basic description.

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Symbols-Adjectives has been designed to introduce and develop the student's skills in basic description. The students will develop and practise their ability to describe various objects through a progressive set of activities. These activities are ideal for home, classroom and therapy use and have been developed in conjunction with education and speech and language professionals.

The series is based on ideas and materials created by Justin Drew and colleagues, Speech and Language therapists working for Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust (SWBH) in the West Midlands.

Acknowledgements

Illustrations are used with permission of Sandwell and West Birmingham hospitals NHS Trust

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Contents

Introduction to Symbol-Adjectives	Page 3
Activity outlines	Page 4
Writing skills within the Primary Classroom	Page 8
Oral Language Development	Page 9
Assessment Opportunities	Page 12
Follow on activities	Page 15

Symbol-Adjectives

Symbol-Adjectives is part of the Symbols2Write series. It has been designed to introduce and develop the student's skills in basic description.

It aims to develop three main skills:

1. Understand terminology related to description.
2. Learn how to use adjectives to describe.
3. Develop a wide and rich vocabulary.

By using the application, students are encouraged to:

- sustain attention and listening skills
- extend memory and recall
- increase skills in understanding and following instructions
- widen vocabulary and naming skills
- develop independent writing.

Through the use of colourful illustrations and Widgit symbols, pupils can develop their knowledge and understanding of basic description. The symbols offer the user a visual representation of the word's meaning. When the user is developing their language understanding, the symbols enhance and improve their ability to understand the words within the correct context whilst also developing their confidence. A simple colour-coding system is used to assist students in constructing phrases and sentences to describe.

Activities outlines

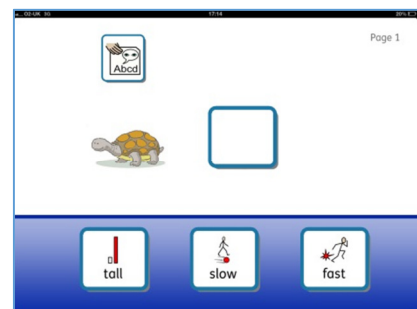
The activities have been designed with two levels of support to allow practitioners to differentiate them according to the needs of the users. Level 1 activities begins with basic description skills where the user begins to understand the concept of an adjective and shows that adjectives can be used in different positions within a sentence. Level 2 activities deepen the skill of description with the introduction of simple conjunctions, connectives and commas.

You can select the length of the activities according to the user's need, either four page or eight page length.

Level 1

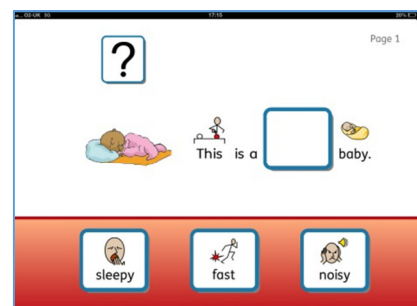
01 One Adjective

This activity is a perfect way to introduce description. Within this activity, the user identifies an adjective from a selection of three to describe the given illustration. The symbolised adjectives enhance the user's vocabulary and also begin to develop their understanding of the meaning of certain adjectives.



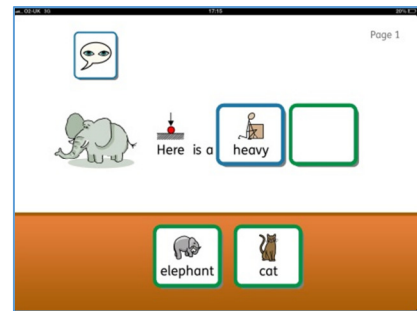
02 Adjective in a sentence

Once the user is accurately selecting appropriate adjectives, the next stage is to use adjectives within a sentence. In this activity the user selects a suitable adjective to be inserted into the given sentence which is describing the illustration. When the user chooses the correct adjective, the speech support will read the sentence to the user.



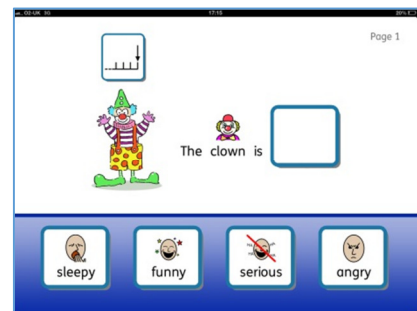
03 Adjective with noun

When developing language understanding, it is important that the user understands syntax. This activity begins to develop this skill by asking the user to firstly select an appropriate adjective for the illustration, followed by identifying the noun the illustration is describing. The speech support reads the sentence that the user has created. At this level the user must choose the correct adjective before the noun is offered.



04 Adjective at the end

Once the user understands nouns and adjectives, this activity introduces the concept of varying sentence structure. The previous activity focuses on the adjective being in front of the noun. Activity four focuses on the noun and adjective being used in a different order. The given sentence has the noun at the beginning and the user selects a suitable adjective to place at the end to describe the illustration.



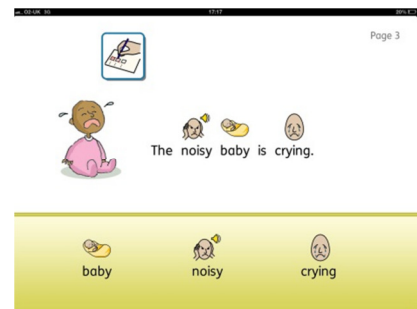
05 Put all the words in order

This activity consolidates the skills learnt so far in the series. The user places all of the words in the correct order to accurately describe the given illustration. The user uses their knowledge and understanding learnt so far to create simple sentences.



06 Which is the adjective?

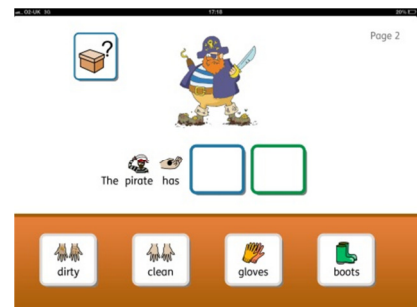
This activity extends the user's ability to identify adjectives. The given sentence is read to the user and they are asked to identify which word within the sentence is an adjective. This activity is perfect for users who understand what an adjective, verb and noun are, but have difficulty identifying them within a sentence.



Level 2

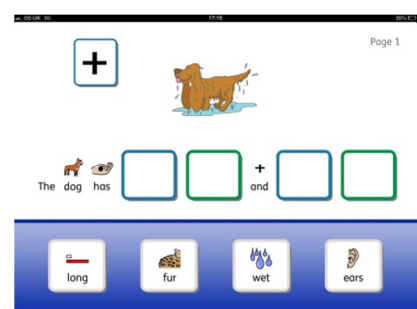
07 Adjective and object

In this activity the user selects the nouns and adjectives to accurately describe the illustration. The enhanced collection of adjectives and nouns within the activity provides stretch and challenge to the user whilst developing their vocabulary.



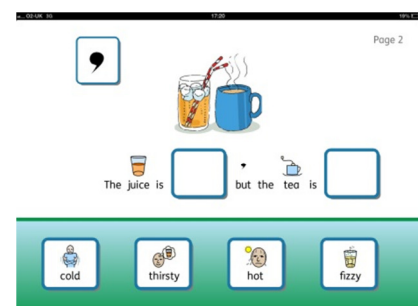
08 More words with 'and'

Once the user can identify and create simple sentences, the skill of using conjunctions can be introduced to extend their sentence length. In this activity users insert suitable adjectives and nouns to create a sentence where it describes two objects linked to the subject depicted within the illustration.



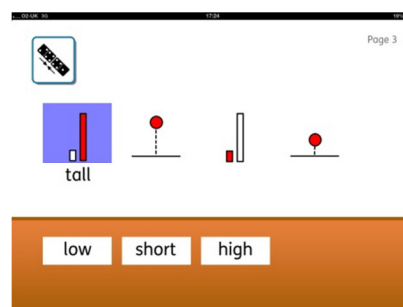
09 Opposites with 'but'

The use of conjunctions is enhanced further within this activity. The user's ability to use 'but' is developed through the use of opposites. The illustrations portray an 'opposite'. The user makes choices to create a sentence that describes the opposite situation using nouns, adjectives and the conjunction 'but'.



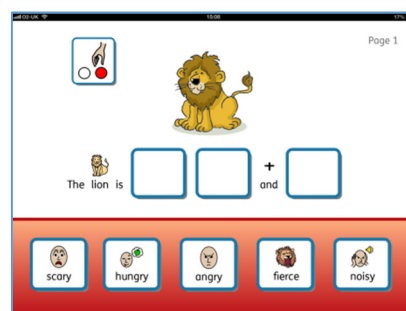
10 Picture-word matching

This activity is designed to develop the user's understanding of adjectives. The symbols in the activity help the user to begin to understand what the adjectives mean. The user matches the text with the correct symbol. A large variety of adjectives are used within the activity to expand the user's language vocabulary.



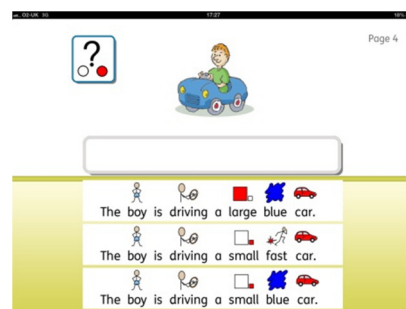
11 Choose the adjectives

Once the user can use adjectives, nouns and conjunctions accurately, punctuation skills can be illustrated through the introduction of commas. This activity demonstrates the use of commas to create a list. Users insert appropriate adjectives and the punctuation is automatically added as a preparation for further work.



12 Which sentence is right?

This activity consolidates the skills learnt over the series. Three sentences have been created to describe the given illustration, only one of the sentences correctly depicts the subject. The user uses their knowledge and understanding learnt so far to identify the correct sentence.



Writing Skills within the Primary Classroom

Symbol-Adjectives can be used within the primary classroom to support the teaching and learning of basic description. It is the second application within the Symbols2Write series to support the teaching and learning of sentence structure and basic writing skills. Teachers and other practitioners can incorporate the application activities into their teaching sequence and differentiate the activities according to the needs of the user.

Pupils learn grammar as an integral part of learning to speak from the earliest stages. The development of oral language is essential in its own right as well as being crucial for writing progress. In the course of development, children will use grammar in a wide variety of ways, often with a level of intricacy. Young children will imply meanings using single words in a range of grammatical ways. Older children often use complex linguistic constructions in speech which may not be appropriate as written forms. Children frequently encounter very complicated grammar in the speech and writing of others which they understand without difficulty.

Symbol-Adjectives has been specifically designed to be used to develop basic description skills. The activities correspond to the standard language levels of four to seven year olds. This application can also be used by older pupils to practise these essential skills, where the practitioner has identified a specific learning need.

Before Symbol-Adjectives is used with a pupil, it is suggested you:

- Use a range of practical hands-on activities linked to description.
- Develop the pupil's ability to use description in their oral language.
- Ensure that the pupils have a secure level of oral language.
- Encourage pupils to apply their description skills in conversations.
- Access Symbol-Sentences app to develop understanding of simple sentences

During oral language sessions, it is recommended that the practitioner uses symbolised flashcards for the key vocabulary. Students familiar with key

vocabulary symbols will have a solid foundation of oral and visual cues for developing their language skills. This will enhance their ability to use adjectives in their writing.

For Symbol-Adjectives to have the greatest impact on the user, it is recommended that students are also immersed within a symbol rich environment. The symbols add meaning and context to any word. If signs, labels and notices are all symbolised, the user will be familiar and confident in using symbols to support the meaning of writing.

Once the user has completed the application activities, they can practise their new skills by using SymWriter2 environments. The environments provide structured grids where the user can build their own sentences using their knowledge and skills they have developed.

Oral language Development

There are lots of simple games you can play and so indirectly work on speech and language. These can be played while driving in the car, when you are at the park, or even in the supermarket. Learning language does not have to be done in a structured environment. When you play a game, you will also be developing the student's social skills, turn-taking, observing, listening and attention so the student is learning a range of life skills as well as enhancing their oral language.

Example activities:

Playing football

Speech and language opportunities:

Adjectives - high, fast, slow

Verbs - kick, pass, head, pick up, score,

prepositions - on, in, up

nouns - ground, ball, foot, football, goal

Build a tower from building blocks

Speech and language opportunities:

adjectives - higher, up, strong, weak, solid,
verbs fall down, build
prepositions – on top, above,
nouns - colours, numbers

Toy racing cars

Speech and language opportunities:

adjectives - fast, slow, noisy, loud, quiet,
verbs – drive, move, watch
prepositions - on, in, under, behind
nouns - car, road, colours, wheels

Look at books

Books are great for having a shared focus and for learning new words like adjectives. Books can also play a key part in developing speech and literacy skills. Evidence shows that children who are exposed to lots of books prior to starting school often develop literacy skills more easily, giving them a better foundation to learn other subjects. As with language games and games with toys, there are many ways to use books and pictures to focus on language. You can focus on books with symbolic sounds for early speech, or storybooks to focus on language. There is often no need to follow a story, just look at the pictures, comment on the pictures, and respond to what the student says about the pictures.

For younger children, use lots of intonation and point to things in the book as you talk about them. For older children, a good way to work on the student's language skills is to look through the book first and make statements about the pictures. These statements can be to name things, describe colour, size or shape, or describe the function of something. After making three or four statements on each page, ask a question.

Preferably ask an open question so the student has to use more language. Once you have read the story, try and get the student to retell it in their own words either using the book as a reference or from memory. This activity focuses on many language and cognitive skills as the student is listening to language, learning new vocabulary, comprehending, and using their memory.

Photo albums or talking photo albums

Photo albums contain people and events the student is familiar with. Photos provide an excellent opportunity to rehearse and develop a student's description skills. "Talking" photo albums allow you to record a message with each photo which can be updated at any time. This way the student can look at the photo and get a commentary, or record their own message. Talking photo albums also give a student a way of sharing information with others. This helps particularly if he/she has delayed speech and/or language skills.

Role play and pretend play

Dressing up and playing different roles will expand the student's imagination. Games involving different characters will allow you to introduce lots of new related language and stretch the student's creative play skills. For instance, if you pretended to be firemen putting out a fire, think how many related words you could use: fire, fireman, fire engine, ladder, water, hose, burning, building, driving, climbing, warm, hot, scorching, up, down, smoke, hat, boots, jackets, save, squirt, bucket, fire out, hero, etc. Role play is great for expanding anybody's imagination and introducing new vocabulary.

Assessment Opportunities

Symbol-Adjectives can be used to assess the student's knowledge and understanding of description. The app can be used in a variety of ways to provide assessment evidence for practitioners and parents. Baseline assessment is an essential evaluation process for any practitioner to understand the student's current level of skill. The application activities all focus on a specific language skill from recognition of adjectives to understanding the contextual meaning of adjectives. The student's independent level of understanding within the application can feed into the practitioner's baseline assessment of the student. Symbol-Adjectives will support the teaching of the highlighted skill gaps and can also be used to benchmark any intervention work carried out with the student.

Many of the early language assessments measure a broad range of expressive and receptive language skills in young children. Language assessments used with older students focus on measuring expression and language comprehension. Symbol-Adjectives can support practitioners with these important assessments including:

Comprehension – Understanding of spoken language

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Sentence comprehension: | Understand sentences of increasing syntactic complexity. |
| Semantic decisions: | Understand word meanings and how words relate to one another. |

Expressive – Use of spoken language

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Naming: | Name a series of pictures of objects to examine expressive vocabulary knowledge. |
| Syntactic formulation: | Construct sentences and phrases and use language including nouns, verbs, adjectives and conjunctions. |
| Sentence assembly: | Formulate sentences with given vocabulary |

Further apps in the series will extend these assessment opportunities.

Assessment opportunities within the Statutory EYFS Framework

The list below references the outcomes from the Statutory EYFS Framework linked to the activities within the Symbol-Adjectives application.

Speaking

30 – 50 months	Uses vocabulary focused on objects and people that are of particular importance to them Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences
40 – 60 months	Extends vocabulary, especially by grouping and naming, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events

Reading

40 – 60 months	Begins to read words and simple sentences Uses vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by their experiences of books
Early learning goal	Children read and understand simple sentences

Writing

40 – 60 months contexts	Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful Writes own name and other things such as labels, captions.
Early learning goal	Children write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others

Assessment opportunities within the Primary Curriculum

The list below references the outcomes from the 2014 Primary Curriculum (and its Appendix 2) which can be linked to the activities within the Symbol-Adjectives application.

Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Year 1	<p>Pupils should be taught to recognise sentence boundaries in spoken sentences.</p> <p>Pupils should begin to use some of the distinctive features of Standard English in their writing.</p>
Year 2	<p>Pupils might draw on and use new vocabulary from their reading, their discussions about it (one-to-one and as a whole class) and from their wider experiences.</p> <p>Pupils should learn how to use both familiar and new punctuation correctly (see Appendix 2), including full stops, capital letters, exclamation marks, question marks, commas for lists and apostrophes for contracted forms.</p> <p>Pupils learn how to use expanded noun phrases to describe and specify, e.g. the blue butterfly.</p> <p>The terms for discussing language should be embedded for pupils in the course of discussing their writing with them. Their attention should be drawn to the technical terms they need to learn.</p>

Year 1 references in Appendix 2

Sentence	<p>How words can combine to make sentences.</p> <p>Joining words and joining clauses using 'and'.</p>
Punctuation	<p>Introduction to capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences.</p>

Year 2 references in Appendix 2

Sentence	<p>Subordination (using when, if, that, because) and co-ordination (using or, and, but).</p> <p>Expanded noun phrases for description and specification (e.g. the blue butterfly, plain flour etc).</p>
Punctuation	<p>Use of capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences.</p>

Follow on Activities

Try to get students to extend the range of adjectives they can use. Activity 10 gave 'open' choices. This can be extended in the classroom by picking up real objects, example: a colourful book, a pencil box. Ask students, at random, to describe the objects, using as many adjectives as they can. Write the sentences on the board. Underline the adjectives with colour.

Examples:

It is a small red pencil.
This is a thick green book.

Next, use symbolised flashcards of items of interest to children i.e. animals, dresses, trees, etc. and elicit as many sentences describing each flashcard. Once again, the practitioner writes the sentences on the board while underlining the adjectives with colour. Other sentences can be illustrated with pictures or photographs.

Examples:

He is tall.
That is a beautiful dress.
The fierce lion has sharp teeth.

After the practitioner has written a couple of sentences on the board, he/she should ask the students to help identify all the adjectives used and then write the adjectives only, in a tabular form as shown below:

Examples:

small	red	sharp	beautiful	thick
green	tall	fierce		

A next activity is for students to use these adjectives in other sentences of their own.

These adjectives are all of 'positive degree'. They show the simple quality of an object without reference to any other. Comparative and superlative degrees can then follow later. They form the subject of a later app in this series.