

CommuniCards®

are innovative tools that

- ◆ **strengthen and advance students' abilities to express themselves in clear and effective language**
- ◆ **measure their grasp of specific concepts**

CommuniCards help students to become more facile with language

Students learn to:

- describe
- question
- seek alternatives
- solve problems
- be divergent in thinking
- be creative
- apply and extend knowledge

CommuniCards lead students to better acquisition of cognitive skills

CommuniCards engage teachers and students in individual and cooperative thinking tasks.

CommuniCards®, created by Elinor Miller, are a product of **Sage Education Enterprises** (www.seepub.com) and are an extension of Word Web Vocabulary (www.WordWebVocabulary.com). CommuniCards are available in classroom sets for grades 3-4, 5-6, 7-8. Teachers or parents may order these sets from SageEducation Enterprises.

CommuniCards:

- ◆ Train students to be coherent in thinking and expression
- ◆ Provide practice in giving logical and concise directions
- ◆ Strengthen students' listening skills and abilities to follow directions
- ◆ Solidify students' understanding of spatial/directional words
 - o right, left, up, down, above, below, next to, adjacent, clockwise, counterclockwise, middle, center, bottom, top, corner, backwards, horizontal, vertical
- ◆ Reinforce concepts in mathematics
 - o geometric shapes: circle, semicircle, square, rhombus, rectangle, parallelogram, triangle, trapezoid, hexagon
 - o measurement, including length of lines in both metric and American measures, diameter, radius, bisect and size: "as large as ..." / "about the size of ..."
 - o Roman numerals
 - o characteristics: bisect, parallel, diagonal, perpendicular, equilateral, elliptical, oval, acute, obtuse and right angles
- ◆ Reinforce concepts and grasp of vocabulary
 - o upper and lower case
 - o printed versus cursive letters
 - o punctuation terms: period, comma, apostrophe, colon, semicolon, open and close quotes, exclamation point, question mark, apostrophe, parentheses, brackets
 - o homonyms: its, it's; to, two, too; their, there, they're; already, all ready; principle, principal
 - o ampersand
 - o spelling demons (frequently misspelled words)
- ◆ Reinforce time as shown by the hands on a clock
- ◆ Allow for analogies and creativity

You can assess CommuniCards' success by recording students' progress in fluency of presentations, thinking skills and mastery of concepts.

Here's how CommuniCards work: A student (hereafter, recruit) stands in front of the class, and — with no advance preparation and using only verbal directions — describes everything to the class, one by one, that is on the card he is holding.* Students at their desks apply these directions to a paper the same size as the CommuniCard (1/4 of an 8" x 11" paper). When recruits do a perfect job, their classmates' cards will look the same as theirs.

* If a word is written on the card, the recruit presents it in a sentence. "Its. It's a very hot day." (Students write the sentence, spelling *its* however they think it should be.)

As the recruit proceeds, the teacher monitors how many and what kinds of questions students ask in order to understand the directions. For example, if the recruit says “Draw a circle,” hands will shoot up all over the room. “How big a circle? Where does it go?” These questions cause the recruit to refine his approach. The ultimate answer would be, “Draw a circle about the size of quarter in the upper left corner of your card.” A primary object of CommuniCards is to have most students attain that type of fluency.

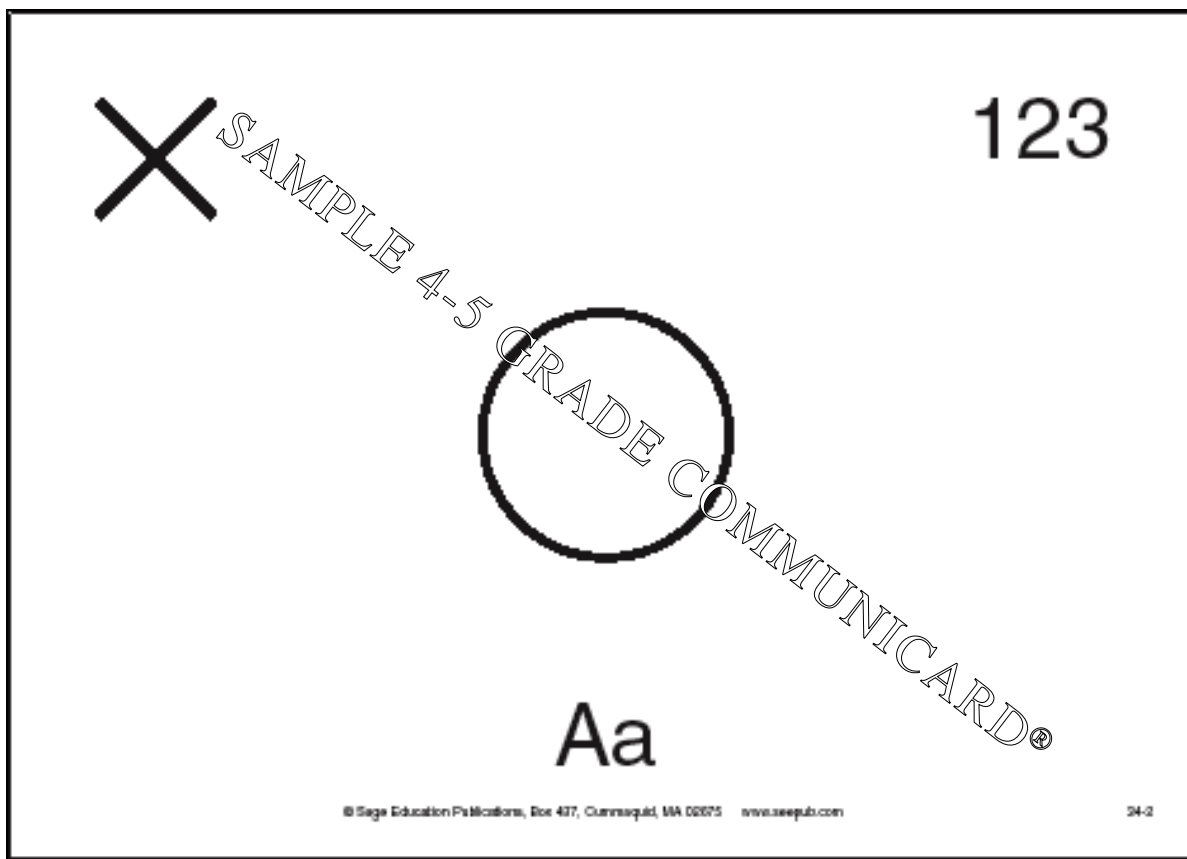
During the presentation, teachers should note how many “you knows” and “likes” the recruit uses, asking him to repeat what he said without the *youthspeak*. Furthermore, teachers should analyze the questions asked as a measure of the comprehension of some students. The teacher should further recognize the particular concepts that need reinforcing with the class. If an instruction such as “Draw a line about 2 inches long” is misrepresented by many students, then the concept of “2 inches” needs more work.

After the presentation, students hold up their “cards” for a comparison with the original. An analysis and discussion of variations will decide whether it was the fault of the presenter or the listener and will suggest ways for future improvement. Let students suggest various ways items on the CommuniCard could be described.

Teachers should keep records not only of which cards each student presents but also of how the recruit and each member of the class did with each card. This will help track all students’ proficiency. Teachers should also note areas of mild, medium and great hesitation shown by the presenter, as well as displays of ingenuity and originality.

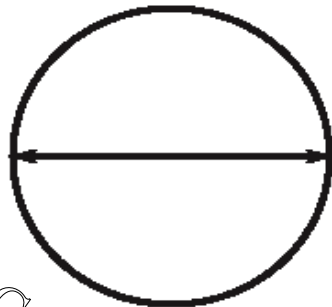
After everyone in the class has had a chance to present at least one CommuniCard from the classroom set, let students make their own cards for creative self-expression.

To be the most effective, CommuniCards should be presented at the rate of one a day, on a schedule of two or three times a week. Allow 15 minutes per presentation and follow-up discussion. After each child has had his turn as being the presenter, allow a lapse of at least a month and then present these same cards again.



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SAMPLE 5-6 GRADE COMMUNICARD®



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SAMPLE 7-8 GRADE COMMUNICARD®

