



Kim's Game - Teacher's Notes

Scientists try to explain change. First they have to collect evidence that a change has occurred. They use all their senses. Humans preferentially use their sense of sight. Using this activity, students can train themselves and each other to develop a good memory and to discover techniques to help themselves concentrate and remember.

In the children's book "Kim" by Victorian writer Rudyard Kipling, young Kim is a trainee spy and is taught to improve his observation and memory skills by looking at a tray of jewels for a short time. The tray was covered and young Kim tried to remember what was there. He was told

"Do it many times 'till it is done perfectly. For it is worth doing"



The exercise is still a part of fundamental training in the Scouting movement, in the CIA and for many diplomatic corps. It can be used to gainfully fill in 5 minutes at any time during the day.



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Materials

- A variety of familiar objects from the classroom
- A cloth or piece of paper to cover them

Method

This can be done as a whole class or in groups with one student in charge of placing the objects, timing viewing and covering.

An alternative version can be done with the whole class by loading object images on the Smart Board and screening them.

Activity 1 What was there?

It is best to start with a few (perhaps 6) familiar objects and slowly build up to 10 or 12. Students turn their backs on the tray (or Smart Board) and then all turn to view at the same time. After the teacher counts 20 seconds, the tray is covered with a cloth (dish towel) or sheet of newspaper and students, either as individuals or in groups try to remember as many objects as they can. Initially 20 seconds is long enough for viewing 6 objects but viewing time can be extended when more objects are added.





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Activity 2 What was changed?

Students are reminded that this year we are looking for evidence of change. One or more objects on the tray are substituted with others (as above) and students are asked, "What has changed?" The position of one or more objects can be also changed.

Students are encouraged to explain to others any strategies they may use to remember what was on the tray.

Some strategies are:

- Group those with similar uses together. E.g. pencil + pencil sharpener + ruler + pencil (writing) then knife and milk (eating) then glasses + matches (grandma smokes).
- Make up a story involving most of the objects. E.g. I had to put on my glasses to find the knife to open the milk carton, I sat down and used the pen and ruler to draw the matches and pencil sharpener.
- Memorising the first letter of each object.

Rare students with an eidetic memory, the ability to recall sights and sounds after only a few seconds exposure, will shine. All students will benefit from helping each other learn to learn.

