

Name _____

Date _____

Topic: Math - 'Where am I?' – Position in Space

Reading/Discussion:

We all speak English. Some of us have friends who speak French, or Spanish, or maybe German. But did you know that mathematics has its own special language? Some of the language we use in math consists of numbers, and some of symbols, like %, +, -, =. However, a lot of the time the language used in math consists of words we use everyday. When we use them for math, though, they have a much more **precise** meaning. For example, if you **divide** a cake among three friends, you make sure each gets more or less the same amount, but if you divide something three ways mathematically each section will be exactly the same. Words like **divide**, **multiply** and **subtract** are all **operational** words and belong to the language of math.

Today we are going to explore some other everyday words which are used in mathematics. These are called **positional** words. Positional words describe where an object is or in which direction it is, or should be, moving. Here are some examples of positional words: The dog is **under** the table; the bird is **in** the cage; turn **left** at the next crossing; go **around** the tree; drive **through** the tunnel. Can you think of any others?

We use positional words all the time in our conversations without even realizing it but there are times when it is really important to use them correctly. For example, when we give someone directions, or explain where to find an important object, or tell a friend where to meet us after school.

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Activities:

A Vocabulary brainstorming

This is a whole class activity. In five minutes see how many positional words you can think of. Let someone list all the words on the board.

B Treasure Hunt

The class will have to be divided into two groups for this activity. One group will hide the treasure and the other group will search for it. Each member of the first group will take their 'treasure', a sheet of paper and a pencil outside. Hide the treasure well and write clear directions to the hiding place, using as many positional words as you can. Then give your directions to a member of the other team and see if they can follow them to find the treasure. When all the treasure has been found, change around and let the second group have a turn to hide it. After everyone has had a turn, talk about the words which were most useful in helping you find the treasure.

C Fill in the missing word

Now that you have learnt so many positional words, see if you can decide on the best one to fill in the space in the following sentences:

The little boy climbed _____ the tree which stood _____ the river. One of the branches stretched out _____ the water. He stood _____ the branch and jumped _____ the river. There was a large rock _____ the surface of the water. As he waded _____ the rock a small school of fish suddenly appeared from _____ the rock and swam _____ him. One swam _____ his legs and gave him quite a fright that he leapt right _____ of the water!

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Answer Sheet

Activity A

Here is a list of some of the most common positional/directional words. There are many others you could add to it.

Above After Around Backward Before Below Beneath Beside Between Down Forward In Inside	In front Left Next to Past Out Outside Over Right Towards Through Under Up
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Activity C

- 1 Up;
- 2 beside/next to;
- 3 over;
- 4 on;
- 5 into;
- 6 under;
- 7 towards;
- 8 behind;
- 9 past/towards;
- 10 between
- 11 out