

## **Following Direction Icons For Your White/Black Boards**

### **Background:**

- My Y5's have an attention span of negative 5 seconds.
- They bring new meaning to "ants in your pants!"
- They also don't listen well so following directions is difficult for them.
- Even tho' I would explain and model what we would be doing for Table Top lessons on the white board, they were not retaining that information when they'd take their seats.
- I was constantly answering "What are we supposed to do now?"
- I felt this was reinforcing negative behavior as well as a waste of my time. I could be working one-on-one with my Hispanic children, helping with a center etc. It was frustrating all the way around and we were not getting a whole lot done.
- They couldn't read the directions on their paper or on the board so what could I do that would turn the light bulb on?
- I developed easy-to-understand icons.
- I also put the words on the square. In a few weeks my students could actually read the words too!
- I simply made a list of all the directions that I have my students do consistently and looked for clip art to match.
- Because I always have Hispanic children who are not yet bilingual, I try to keep the same one-word commands instead of using a different synonym.
- The icons really help my ESL students too!
- Each morning my children do "Table Top" lessons at their desk.
- These are skill sheets that I've designed that revolve around our report card standards.
- They are stapled in a packet at their desk.
- The first day of school they only have one page.
- We work up from there as days progress 'til I have them doing entire mini booklets.
- This gets them ready for the workbooks they will have to do in kindergarten.
- Even learning how to turn a page, self check their work to make sure they have done all the pages, learn that this is the cover page, ask

- themselves have they written their name at the top? Etc. are all skills that they need to learn. The mini-packets help with that.
- It also helps keep them organized. If Parent/Teacher conferences are coming up and I need something to show families, I simply keep one or two mornings of work and I pretty much have a lot of my report card standards to share with them.
  - Most days they are doing 5-8 pages. (Counting both sides to conserve on paper.
  - On my white board I separate the sheets and hold them up with those magnet clips that look like kids.
  - My students sit on the floor while I explain and model.
  - I keep things short 5-8 minutes.
  - Before I even explain what we will do with a particular page, I have them read the icon and tell me what we will do.
  - For some papers I have more than one icon under the paper.
  - This is great for understanding ordinal numbers.
  - I'll put 1, 2, 3 by the icons and later 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - For example: Color, then cut, then glue.
  - Children have a tendency to want to cut things out first which makes it hard to color little pieces later.
  - I also have the CENTER projects displayed at the white board and use the icons for those directions as well.
  - My students start out the first week of school doing 1 to 2 centers. We work up to doing 6 to 8 centers on a daily basis.
  - They range from quickie 1 to 2 minute activities to more involved ones that take up to 10 to 15 minutes. All of them they can do independently within the time frame allowed.
  - I explain and model these at the white board too using the icons as directional clues. The Pinch & Poke and Bingo Dot/Pattern sheets are part of my center activities.
  - Now when my students go back to their desk, if they forget what they are supposed to do, they simply look at the board and see the icon. It jogs their memory and they can get down to business.
  - It REALLY does work! I have so much more time to help students with other things!
  - My students are also able to READ those words so that when they do see written directions on other skill sheets they can actually figure them out!

- The first week, before they are used to the system, they might still ask “What do I do?” Simply refer them to the board and say: “You tell me. What does the picture tell you that you should do?”
- I really try to train my students to think for themselves.
- I encourage them to ask questions, but I want them to know that I’m not always going to give them the answer, especially if I know it’s rolling around in their head somewhere. It’s much more exciting and self-esteem building for them to find it!
- My skill sheets are also of the same format so that they are consistent.
- Students who can’t read need that consistency so that they feel comfortable showing you that they know a skill or can practice a skill. Not get something wrong simply because they aren’t following directions.

### **Directions:**

- ❖ I print off 2 of each in color and then because I do lots of center activities I photocopy 5 Cut, Glue, Color, and Write in black and white. I also photocopy 4 Trace, Circle and X -out in black and white because I often have several worksheets that I need to have those icons under.
- ❖ I trim them into squares and laminate them.
- ❖ I put a magnet strip at the top of each square. The kind that you peel off the back that you can buy in a roll. They sell this at *Wal-Mart, Hobby Lobby, Michaels, and JoAnns*. I get the fatter 1 inch width.
- ❖ To make sure that the stickiness does not dry out, I put a piece of scotch tape over the magnet as well.
- ❖ I keep the same ones clipped together in alphabetical order in 3 groups, resting in the chalk sill.
- ❖ As soon as everyone is finished with Table Top I clip up the next day’s lessons. This has made writing out lesson plans easier too. I simply jot down **8:00 8:30 Table Top: See white board.**
- ❖ **If you have an icon that you’d like help with, contact us, and I’ll see what I can do. Especially if a lot of other teachers need that same directional clue. Or...if this concept has really worked for you, we’d enjoy hearing your positive comments too! ☺ Contact us...**