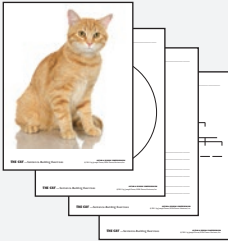


THE CAT

Sentence-Building Exercise I



Materials:

photograph of cat, students' circle-in-circle charts and branch organizers, lined paper, tape, three pieces of chart paper, dry-erase marker, watercolor marker



Before the Lesson:

1. At <http://fhautism.com/arc.html>, find the circle-in-circle chart, branch organizer, and lined paper. Print one of each for each student, plus a few extras. Then find the photograph of the cat and print one copy.
2. On the chart paper, draw a blank circle-in-circle chart, branch organizer, and lined paper.
3. On the board, hang a blank circle-in-circle chart on the left and a branch organizer on the right. Make them large enough to write all the words you will need.
4. Write the date on the board.

Teaching the Lesson

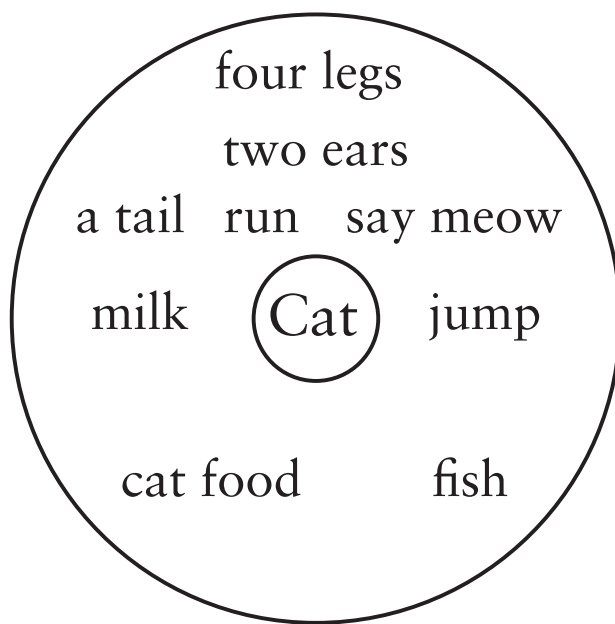
1. Gather the children in a circle. Hold up the photograph of the cat. Ask: "What animal is this?" If no one can identify the animal, ask an aide to answer, or answer the question yourself. Students are still hearing the oral language and watching it become written language.
2. When a student says, "cat," write "cat" in the smaller, inner circle of the circle-in-circle chart. Write very legibly. Students will be copying these words later.
3. Ask: "What can the cat do?" If no one answers, prompt the students. Ask: "Can the cat fly?" If no one answers, ask an aide to answer, or answer the question yourself. Possible answers include jump, run, say meow. Students may come up with different answers. Ask the question several times, and allow different children to answer. Write the answers in the large circle. Leave space between the words.

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4. Ask: "What does the cat have? If no one answers, prompt the students. Ask: "Does a cat have wings?" If no one answers, ask an aide to answer, or answer the question yourself. Possible answers include four legs, two ears, a tail. Students may come up with different answers. Ask the question several times, and allow different children to answer. Write the answers in the large circle. Leave space between the words.
5. Ask: "What does the cat like? If no one answers, prompt the students with a guessing game. Say: "The cat likes to drink a white drink. We pour it over cereal. Sometimes we put chocolate syrup in it for chocolate _____." Do this for the other two answers. If no one answers, ask an aide to answer, or answer the question yourself. Possible answers include milk, fish, cat food. Students may come up with different answers. Ask the question several times, and allow different children to answer. Write the answers in the large circle. Leave space between the words. NOTE: Guessing games may be stressful for some children. If students appear to be getting agitated or panicky, just tell them the answer. The lesson is more important than the game.

Here is an example of what your circle-in-circle chart may look like (includes sample answers from paragraphs above):

6. Praise students and pass out reinforcers.
7. The children return to their desks. Pass out pencils and blank graphic organizers. On each desk, tape the circle-in-circle chart on the left and the branch organizer on



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the right. (Always emphasize a left-to-right progression when teaching reading and writing.)

- 8.** Say: “Write your name on your paper.” Make sure everyone writes his or her name. Then say: “Write the date. It is on the board.” Make sure everyone writes the date.
- 9.** Say: “Copy the words from the circle-in-circle chart on the board onto your circle-in-circle chart.” They do not have to copy all of the words at first.
- 10.** Say: “Now we will do the branch organizer.” On the branch organizer on the board, write “Cat” on the top line and “Can,” “Has,” and “Likes” on the three spaces under the top line. Say: “Copy the words onto your charts.”
- 11.** Ask: “What can the cat do?” Point to the words on the circle-in-circle chart. Encourage students to look at their own chart. If no one answers, ask an aide to answer, or answer the question yourself. Ask the question several times, and allow different children to answer.

If someone uses a nonsensical word, e.g., “milk,” say the whole sentence. Say: “The cat can milk? Does that make sense? Let’s look back in the circle and find something the cat can do.”

- 12.** Write students’ answers on the branch organizer on the board. For each answer, say: “Write (the answer) under the word ‘Can’ on your branch organizer.”

As you use words from the circle-in-circle chart, you may choose to cover up the words with a sticky note or leave them all showing.

- 13.** For each word that students write, say the whole sentence, e.g., “The cat can jump.” As you say each word of the sentence, point to the corresponding word on the branch chart. This way, they become familiar with the way we use the chart to form the sentences.
- 14.** Ask: “What does the cat have?” Point to the words on the circle-in-circle chart. If no one answers, ask an aide to answer, or answer the question yourself. Ask the question several times, and allow different children to answer.

If someone uses a nonsensical word, e.g., “run,” say the whole sentence. Say: “The cat has run? Does that make sense? Let’s look back in the circle and find something the cat has.”

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- 15.** Write students' answers on the branch organizer on the board. For each answer, say: "Write (the answer) under the word 'Has' on your branch organizer."
- 16.** For each word that students write, say the whole sentence, e.g., "The cat has a tail." As you say each word of the sentence, point to the corresponding word on the branch chart.
- 17.** Ask: "What does the cat like?" Point to the words on the circle-in-circle chart. If no one answers, ask an aide to answer, or answer the question yourself. Ask the question several times, and allow different children to answer.

If someone uses a nonsensical word, e.g., "four legs," say the whole sentence. Say: "The cat likes four legs? Does that make sense? Let's look back in the circle and find something the cat likes."
- 18.** Write students' answers on the branch organizer on the board. For each answer, say: "Write (the answer) under the word 'Likes' on your branch organizer."
- 19.** For each word that students write, say the whole sentence, e.g., "The cat likes milk." As you say each word of the sentence, point to the corresponding word on the branch chart.
- 20.** Praise students, pass out reinforcers, and take a short break.
- 21.** Draw a large version of the lined paper on your chart paper, using the watercolor marker. Tape the chart paper to the board. Pass out the lined paper. Tape one to each desk, next to the branch organizer. It's important that all three graphic organizers stay in front of students for the sentence-building phase.
- 22.** Say: "It's time to make a sentence. Let's make a sentence from the first column of the branch organizer, using the word 'Can.'" (Example sentence: The cat can jump.) Point to the words on the branch chart on the board as you slowly say them, forming the sentence. Show the students the relationship between the words on the chart and a spoken sentence. This will help them read the chart and form the sentences themselves.
- 23.** Write the sentence on your "lined paper" on the board.
- 24.** Say: "Copy the sentence on the first line of your paper."

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- 25.** Say: “Let’s make a sentence from the second column of the branch organizer, using the word ‘Has.’” (Example sentence: The cat has a tail.) Point to the words on the branch chart on the board as you slowly say them, forming the sentence.
- 26.** Write the sentence on your “lined paper” on the board.
- 27.** Say: “Copy the sentence on the second line of your paper.” Make sure they write on the lines and not in the blank space above. This is for the illustration.
- 28.** Say: “Let’s make a sentence from the third column of the branch organizer, using the word ‘Likes.’” (Example sentence: The cat likes milk.) Point to the words on the branch chart on the board as you slowly say them, forming the sentence.
- 29.** Write the sentence on your “lined paper” on the board.
- 30.** Say: “Copy the sentence on the third line of your paper.”

When students become familiar with this process, they may choose any of the three words to make a sentence.

- 31.** Say: “Now we will read our sentences aloud.” Group students in pairs to read to each other, or let each child read aloud to you, an aide, or the whole class.
- 32.** Praise students and pass out reinforcers.
- 33.** Say: “Now we will draw a picture to go with our sentences.” Lead students to read the first sentence and then draw a picture of it. Do this for each sentence, one sentence at a time at first. Monitor the drawings and try to limit them to drawing only one cat. If a higher-functioning child is drawing three cats, clearly intending one cat for each sentence, without exhibiting difficulties, then that is okay. Later in the program, they may be able to remember two or three details at once and incorporate them all into one cat picture.

The illustration must reflect the information in the sentence. If you see an illustration of a cat missing a tail or not drinking from a bowl of milk, ask the student to read the corresponding sentence again. Then show the student what’s missing. (“Your sentence says, ‘The cat has a tail.’ Your picture of the cat does not have a tail. Draw a tail on the cat.”)

- 34.** Collect papers and pencils, praise students, and pass out reinforcers.