



Distance Learning Activities 2020

Theatre-Inspired Learning for Preschoolers, ages 2 – 5

Activity: Triangle Math Inspired by Everything Is Round



The following activity can be used to either introduce the concept of shape vocabulary and triangles with very young children or adapted to be a review of these important observation skills for slightly older and more advanced preschool learners.

Parents, reinforcing important skills your child needs in order to be academically ready for school success are not hard to lead. You can do it right there at home! This very simple activity reinforces letter and number recognition skills for very young learners. How? Well, being able to look for the details in images that they see (like the number of sharp corners, the number of lines or sides, etc.) are important for strong pre-literacy skills. So whether you are an **experienced preschool teacher** who wants a fun, new activity for students or you are a parent looking for ways to keep your youngest children engaged in learning while you are at home together, here is a video to help you along with step-by-step instructions:

Start by telling the young learner that you are going to show them a short video from Pollyanna Theatre's production of **Everything Is Round** by Nicholas Kryah.

If your young learner has not watched the first video from this series, **start by doing so now**. This will introduce them to the characters. Explain that all plays have a playwright that creates the story and the characters. The playwright for this play writes plays for people their age. His name is Nick. In this play, Nick created two very different people, one named Circle and the other named Square. Circle and Square are good friends. But sometimes even good friends don't agree on things.

If you are a **teacher** of preschool students, this activity can be used to help you reach the following learning objectives from the Texas Pre K Guidelines: **Development of visual discrimination skills**. Children learn to discriminate between similar objects. Strengthening these skills will later help children identify letters, numbers, and shapes, and distinguish the difference between shapes, such as a, q, b, d, and numbers like 6 and 9 or 3 and 8.

Tell the young learner that you are going to show them *another* scene in Nick's play about Circle and Square. The friends have just been eating breakfast and they cut their square toast from corner to corner so that they can share the toast. The two friends then discover that they have created two toast triangles. This leads them to playing with the triangles to imagine all sort of things that they can pretend the triangles might be by using their imaginations. **Watch Scene 2 from Everything is Round now.**

While the child watches the video, gather the following **supplies** for the activity: a large piece of heavy paper, a pair of scissors, and a pencil or crayon.



From the heavy paper, cut out pairs of matching triangles in different sizes: two tall and skinny, two short and wide, two with equal sides, etc. Depending upon the age of your child, you may use only 2 pairs or for more advanced learners, you may use 6 or 7 pairs.

After the child has watched the video, ask them to tell you what kinds of things Circle and Square used their imagination to turn their toast triangle into? (pirate eye patch, bird's beak, boat's sail, etc.)

Remind the child that we know that those are triangles because they have 3 points or corners and 3 sides. Use one of the paper triangles to count the corners and count the sides. Ask the child to show you how to count the corners and sides from a second triangle you have made, perhaps one of a totally different size.

Next, mix up the triangles on the table in front of you and challenge your children to find the match-ups. Use vocabulary that strengthens shape recognition as well as comparing and contrasting vocabulary as you work with the child such as "small, large, sharp angles, long lines, short lines, etc.) After all of the triangles have been matched, mix up the triangles on the table again and challenge the young learner to find the matching triangles again but this time to talk to you about why each two match. Remix the triangles and ask them to see how quickly they can find the matches.

As an extension, trace around the triangles on a large poster board or outside on the sidewalk with sidewalk chalk. Have the children place the shapes on the matching tracings, turning the triangles into pieces of a puzzle.

Last, watch the video again and ask your young learner to use their fingers to help them count and remember how many different items Circle and Square transformed their toast triangles into using their imaginations.