

CATEGORIES

CATEGORIES INSTRUCTIONS

When to use:

A Categories activity is great to use with standards that ask students to connect visual and mathematical models and vocabulary.

Supplies Needed:

- Categories cards (one set per group)
- Post-Its (Optional)

Directions:

1. In this activity, partners or small groups of students are given a set of cards. Depending on the standard, these cards may have vocabulary terms, expressions, equations, numeric values, geometric shapes, graphs, tables or other mathematical displays. Create a set of 12 to 20 Categories cards to give students a wide variety of options on how to classify the cards.
2. Initially, students should be given 3-5 minutes to create different categories (encourage between 2 to 4 categories) that the cards can be separated into. The teacher should act as a sounding board for ideas but not lead groups too much. Students should be encouraged to come up with multiple ways to categorize their cards. The students may choose to use post-its to record their favorite category titles.
3. Once the initial 3-5 minutes has passed, one person from each group should become an observer. The observer is allowed to go around and ask other groups what their categories are. The people remaining in each group should share their categories with those that ask. After the observers have had a chance to view at least three other groups, they should report back with one example of the categories they came across. The group should try to use another group's categories to re-categorize their cards.
4. Once sharing has been done informally in groups and through the use of the observers, the teacher may choose to ask students to share out what categories they created and how they knew what went in each category. Choosing a specific card and asking students which of their categories they would put it in and why allows students to construct arguments and attend to precision.
5. If needed, you may choose to include some specific prompts and questions at the end of the activity to delve deeper into the standard being addressed.