



CLIMB THE LADDER INSTRUCTIONS

When to use:

Climb the Ladder is an activity where students work through four ladders that increase in complexity and depth of knowledge levels for a given standard. A Climb the Ladder works best for standards that reach a variety of depths of knowledge.

Supplies Needed:

- Four different ladders (half-sheets), copied on different colors of paper
- Expert tents

Directions:

1. Create four ladders. Each ladder is a half-sheet that should have 3, 5 or 7 problems on it. The first ladder should focus on the basic skills and concepts of the standard. Each ladder should be more challenging, reaching higher depths of knowledge than the previous ladders.
2. Students work with an assigned partner on the first ladder. Each student does one problem at a time, switching who is writing for each item (although they are encouraged to work together). The person who finishes the last problem brings up the ladder to the scorer, which is usually the teacher.
3. If the problems are all correct, the teacher keeps the ladder and hands the student the next ladder. If there are one or more problems incorrect or if students have not attended to precision by showing work and labeling answers, the problems are marked wrong and the student is sent back to work with his or her partner to make corrections. Once those corrections are completed, they can bring the ladder up to have it checked again.
4. "Experts" for each ladder can be used in the classroom to assist struggling partner sets. The first one to three partner sets to finish a given ladder can be given the Expert Tent for that ladder. Students in the class who are struggling with that ladder can visit the experts to get help at any time. In some cases, like when students have been to the scorer two times on the same ladder and still are not able to move on, the scorer can specifically direct students to a certain Expert group.

NOTE: It is helpful to use four different colors of paper for the four different ladders. One way this is useful is in assessing the progress of each partner set. During the activity, you can quickly scan the room and be able to tell which sets of students are falling behind or are almost finished. Also, you can use colored paper for the expert tents to match the colors of the ladders so students are able to find the appropriate experts quickly. Another way the colored papers are helpful is to allow students who are struggling to be called to a *huddle*. This is where the teacher can call all of the partner sets with a certain color of paper to huddle with experts around the room. The expert's job is to stop what they are doing and help these students complete this ladder. The teacher may choose to allow the students who have huddled with an expert to take cuts in line at the scoring table. At the end of the activity, students who finish early can be asked to join groups as a third person. The teacher can direct them to partner sets with a certain color of ladder that is the earliest in the progression.