

Chinese Characters

Note: This is for students who know Chinese Characters. If your students don't, make about four simple pictures consisting of circles, squares, triangles and lines (about 10 items in each picture). Give one picture to each student. They tell their partner how to draw it. Preparation: Get enough toothpicks so each group of 3 students has 10 - 12. If toothpicks aren't available, students can draw. You may want to prepare an OHP to demonstrate the activity.

Procedure:

1. On the board, write:

Put a ___ centimeter toothpick _____ (the table).
(#) *on* (that one).

in

under

over

to the ^{right} of

left

between the (first one) and

2. Teach these words: --- = horizontal(ly), |= vertical(ly), / & \ = diagonal(ly). (The Chinese character that means "under" or "down" is a good one to use for showing the meaning of these words.)
3. Telling the students that you are going to think of a Chinese character. You will tell them how to 'build' the character out of toothpicks. Unlike writing real Chinese characters, the stroke order (which line is first, which line is second, etc.) doesn't matter. Stop after each 'stroke.' Encourage the learners to guess the meaning of the character (even though you haven't finished). Of course, they have to say the meaning in English. Explain the character one line at a time, using the patterns in the box. You may want to use one of the following since, if students guess correctly 'too soon' (before others understand the activity) you can change the character you 'were thinking of.'

{Use Chinese characters for these words:

up/over mountain stop correct king}

4. After students have guessed your example, divide the class into 3's. One person thinks of a character and explains how to 'build' it. Partners make it with toothpicks and try to be the first to guess the meaning. The first person to guess gets a point. That student does the next character.