

Social Studies Activity 2. The Shoes We Wear (condensed from p.128-130)

Concept: Shoes appear in different styles. Different forms of shoes have different functions.

Learning Goals: To promote awareness of different styles, fabrics, and functions of certain articles of clothing, specifically shoes.

Thinking Operations: Observing and comparing; suggesting hypotheses; classifying; imagining and inventing; evaluating and judging

Materials: A collection of shoes (rain boots, sneakers, running shoes, sandals, sports shoes, workboots, shoes with laces, shoes with straps, shoes with high heels, snowshoes, slippers, moccasins, booties, snow boots, platform shoes, high-button shoes); photos of “old-timer” shoes. Children may be asked to bring in old or discarded shoes from home; thrift stores and rummage sales may yield a large supply as well.

Activity Card

Use the materials in this centre to make some observations of shoes.

- How are these shoes different from each other? How are they alike? What similarities and differences can you find?
- Talk together and think of a good way to classify these shoes. Which ones belong together? How come?

Sample Debriefing Questions

Asking Children to Reflect on Their Observations

What observations did you make about shoes? About styles? About the fabric? About how they are made? About what we wear them for?

What differences did you observe about the shoes? What similarities?

Why do you suppose some women wear shoes with high heels? What are your ideas on this?

Challenging Children Beyond Their Observations

Which shoes, do you suppose, are “old fashioned?” How can you tell? What do you suppose “old fashioned” means?

Why do you suppose there is such a big difference in shoe styles? Why do you suppose shoe styles change over the years?

How do you suppose shoes are made?

What do you think shoes will look like in 100 years? Try to imagine it.

Suggestions for Replay

The children may replay with the same materials and the original activity card until interest in these materials is exhausted.

For later replays with the original activity card, the children may be given new shoes and pictures of shoes (high-style shoes; baby shoes; shoes from other cultures such as wooden shoes and clogs, mukluks, thongs, and Japanese wooden sandals; military boots; ballet slippers; designer-label running shoes).

New activity cards that focus on different aspects of shoes may be introduced; for example:

Make some observations of how shoes are made.

- What kinds of materials are needed?
- How are the materials put together?

Make some observations of how different shoes feel to wear.

- Which shoes feel good? Which hurt your feet?
- Which are easy to walk in? Hard to walk in?
- Which look beautiful? Ugly?
- Which keep your feet warm?
- Which are good to wear for working? Playing soccer? Riding a bike?

Make some observations about the shape of shoes. Make some observations about the shapes of feet.

- How are shapes of shoes and shapes of feet alike? Talk together and share your ideas.

Suggestions for Creative Play

Drawing pictures of shoes.

Imagining what the first pair of shoes in the world looked like and drawing pictures of those shoes.

Designing shoes for the next century and for space travel

Making shoes out of fabric and heavy-duty cardboard

Dramatizing stories about shoes (*The Shoemaker and the Elves*), and/or creating original plays about shoes