

## How to practice describing words using the Expanding Expressions Tool (EET)

The Expanding Expressions Tool (EET) is a resource to help children's language development created by Sara Smith, a speech-language pathologist. More information can be found at <https://www.expandingexpression.com/>.

We can use the EET to help children think of many ways to describe a word — not just the name of the word. Children can practice describing:

- the group or category that the object or idea is a part of
- what you can do with the object or what the object can do
- what it looks like (size, shape, colour, texture)
- what it's made of
- what parts it has
- where you can find it
- other extra information



Green = Group



Blue = Do



What does it look like?



Brown = Made of



Pink = Parts



White = Where



Orange = Other extra information

EET uses coloured icons to help us remember all the different ways of describing a word. This makes it easier for children to remember new words because they have a more complete mental picture of the word. It also helps to strengthen the connections in our brain by comparing similarities and differences between different words or concepts. Teachers, please ask your school speech-language pathologist if you would like to borrow an EET Kit for your class or you can create your own materials from beads and pipe cleaners or coloured paper.

### Examples of using the EET to describe similarities and differences:

- A shark and a dolphin are both types of animals (group) but a shark is a fish (sub-category of animal group) that has gills (parts) while a dolphin is a mammal (sub-category of animal group) that can use echolocation (other information).
- A carrot and banana are both types of food (group) but a carrot is a vegetable (sub-category of food group) and a banana is a type of fruit (sub-category of food group). A carrot is crunchy and hard while a banana is soft (what it looks like).

Remember “What it looks like” covers more than just shape or size. You can compare size and weight of objects (e.g., a mountain is bigger than a hill; a rock is heavier than a feather) and also describe texture (e.g., rough/smooth, thick/thin, curly/straight) or taste of an object (e.g., sweet, sour, salty, spicy, bitter).

### Fun ways to practice describing words using the EET:

- Play a guessing game similar to the game HedBanz where each person has to guess what card is on their head. Players take turns describing the item to give clues so that the guesser can make a guess, e.g., *“it’s a type of fruit (group), it’s yellow (what it looks like), and it has a peel (parts).”*
- Play a hide and guessing game using a bag of objects. The hider secretly gathers pictures or items into a bag or a box. The hider then gives clues to the others players until they can make a guess, e.g., *“It’s a type of vehicle (group), it’s made of metal (made of), has two wheels (parts), and you can ride it on the sidewalk or the street (do and where).”*
- Play 20 questions using the EET describing details. For example:
  - Green = Group: *“Is it toy?”* – “Yes.”
  - Blue = Do: *“Can it roll?”* – “Yes.”
  - Eyeball = What does it look like: *“Is it round?”* – “Yes.”
  - Brown = Made of: *“Is it made of plastic?”* – “Yes.”
  - Pink = Parts: *“Does it have wheels?”* – “No.”
  - White = Where: *“Can I play with it outside?”* – “Yes.”
  - Orange = Other extra information: *“Is it bouncy?”* – “Yes!”
    - *“Ok, my guess... is it a ball?”* – “Yes!”

## Let's Describe using EET with sentence starters

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Object:  |                   |
| group/category<br>            | It's a type of    |
| do with/function<br>          | It can<br>You can |
| colour/shape/size<br>        | It is             |
| Made of<br>                 | It is made of     |
| Parts<br>                   | It has            |
| Where<br>                   | You can find it   |
| Other extra information<br> |                   |

Simplified EET visual helper



It's a...



What does it look like?



size?

colour?



What are it's parts?



Where do we find it?

