

Match That! A Spatial Observation Game

Developing a keen eye for observation is an essential skill for any scientist and a fundamental step of the scientific method. Help your middle schooler (and yourself!) improve his observation skills by playing this simple game.

What You Need:

- Duplicate set of common household items (coins or Legos work great, as long as there are at least two of each item)
- Cloth large enough to cover items
- Timer
- Paper and pen or pencil

What You Do:

1. Arrange five related items on a table. For example, one penny, one nickel, one dime, and two quarters.
2. Set the timer for 30 seconds and have your child study the arrangement of coins during that time. He may not write anything down to help him remember.
3. At the end of the 30 seconds, cover the coins with the cloth.
4. Give your student the duplicate set of items (another penny, nickel, dime, and two quarters in this case) and have him arrange the items in the same pattern as the ones under the cloth.
5. When he is satisfied with his arrangement, remove the cloth and compare the patterns. Award 1 point for each coin that matches the pattern, being as specific as possible – is the coin facing head or tails up, is it turned in the same direction? Use the paper and pen to keep track of the points.
6. Your turn! Now your child gets to set the pattern for you. Take your turn and tally the score.
7. Continue play by rearranging the items and adding one more item each round for a total of five rounds. In addition, up the challenge by decreasing the time allowed for observation each round by five seconds. Keep track of each of your scores for each round.
8. At the end of five rounds, tally the score for each player and crown the champion of observation!

