

Guess My Rule

TEACHER DEMO

RUN AT 10:15

15 MIN

The point

The sorting rule lives in the sorter's head — and a careful watcher can figure it out from the evidence alone. That is what scientists do.

Materials

- Sorting/counting objects set + a few household items
- Two blank label cards, face down
- One card with a big ? on it (the talking signal)

Steps

- 1 **Silently** place objects one at a time into two groups. No talking — suspense is the engine.
- 2 Kids **watch and whisper** guesses to a neighbor; nobody calls out yet.
- 3 Hold up the ? card — now take guesses, one each.
- 4 **Test each guess against the evidence:** “if my rule were big/small, where would this button have gone?”
- 5 Confirm the real rule; flip the label cards and **letter them**.
- 6 Round 2 with a **sneakier rule** — **purpose, not looks**: things for drawing vs. things for holding stuff together.
- 7 Round 3: **a kid becomes the sorter** (they whisper their rule to you first); you guess — and get one charmingly wrong.

Say: “You couldn’t SEE my rule — it was in my head. But every object I placed was a CLUE. Watching carefully and guessing the hidden rule is exactly what scientists do all day.”

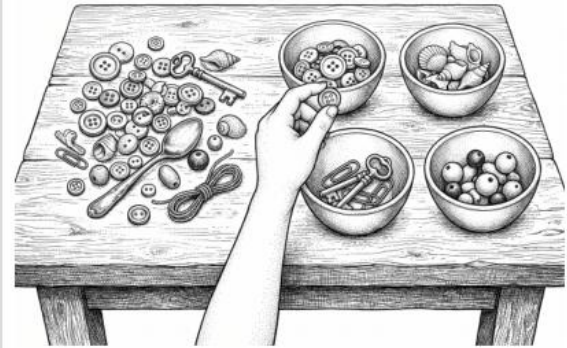


Fig. 1 — sort silently while the children infer the hidden rule from each placement

TEACHER PREP

Pick your three rules in advance: (1) easy — color or shape; (2) sneaky — purpose; (3) leave open for the kid sorter. Make the ? card.

What to watch for

- Guesses shifting as evidence accumulates — deduction happening out loud
- Appearance-guesses failing on the purpose rule — productively

EXPECTED RESULT

Kids deduce a rule they were never told — and discover the same objects obey **different hidden rules** in different rounds.