



# Back to Back

*This is an easily applied and fun activity that promotes verbal skill, listening, observation, comprehension and co-operation. What more could you want!*

## HOW?

1. Students sit in pairs 'back to back'. They decide who is **A** and who is **B**.
2. **A** is given visual material which he holds close to his chest. **B** is given piece of plain paper and pencil.
3. **A** describes the visual to **B**, while **B** draws it aiming to make a perfect replica which is exact in size shape and detail, complete with labeling. No peeking! No drawing in the air with your finger!
4. This is a co-operative exercise. **B** can ask as many questions as she likes and **A**'s job is to be as helpful as possible.
5. When the time is up, partners compare original with attempted copy.
6. Partners swap roles and try it again, using different material, with **B** describing and **A** drawing.

## APPLICATIONS

- Photographs e.g. landscapes, settlements, historical monuments, works of art, maps, fashion garments, religious buildings ....
- Geometry and trigonometry: giving precise details of angles, lengths of lines, diameters
- Scientific apparatus, circuit diagrams, sketches of equipment.
- Flow diagrams, maps and plans.
- The exercise could be conducted in a Modern Foreign Language (e.g. the cross-section of a house showing the position of different rooms).
- Designs in Technology.

## WHY DO IT?

- Lasting learning occurs through the attention to detail and the struggle to use appropriate language.
- Listening and questioning skills are deliberately developed.
- It strengthens visual and interpersonal intelligence.
- It's an exercise in co-operation - each depends on the other for success.

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## VARIATIONS

1. Try it with squared paper, thereby inviting students to use co-ordinates in the desire for accuracy.
2. Try it *Face to Face* rather than *Back to Back* with papers hidden behind boards or books. In this case students benefit from eye contact, but are not allowed to use gestures or trace shapes in the air. The describer should not be able to see the drawer's work.
3. After a while stop the process and discuss with the class the technical terminology demanded by the exercise. Make a list on the board of terms and their meanings - this creates a word bank which supports language learning and application.
4. Use it for 3-Dimensional modeling - e.g. circuit boards, plasticine, wire ...
5. Use an overhead projector. One partner faces the screen; the other has their back to it.

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