

## Section 4.6

# Understanding and using doing words (verbs) in simple sentences

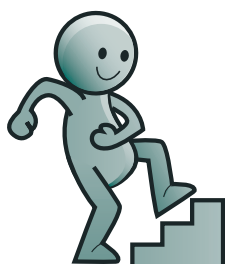


### Why is this important?

This activity encourages children to build sentences using two key words: it also helps to widen vocabulary. This is an important step in the development of grammar.

### What to do

- You will need:
  - ★ Teddy and doll (or two other favourite toys).
  - ★ Cup, brush, item of food, flannel.
- Put out teddy and doll and two different items (e.g. cup and flannel). Say:
  - ★ ‘Make *teddy drink*.’
  - ★ ‘*Wash doll*.’
  - ★ ‘Make *doll drink*.’
- You could also ask the child to make doll or teddy perform an action that doesn’t need any additional items (e.g. sleep, run, hop, sit, wave, clap).
  - ★ ‘Make *teddy jump*.’
  - ★ ‘Make *teddy sit*.’
  - ★ ‘Make *doll sleep*.’
- When the child has successfully followed an instruction, ask ‘What’s happening?’ Encourage the child to use a two-word phrase to describe (e.g. ‘teddy jump’, ‘doll drink’).
- If the child doesn’t respond or uses a single-word (e.g. ‘jump’), offer a choice:
  - ★ Adult: ‘Make teddy jump.’
  - ★ Child follows instruction correctly.
  - ★ Adult praises: ‘Well done. What’s happening?’ (points to teddy).
  - ★ Child: ‘Teddy.’
  - ★ Adult: ‘Is teddy sleeping or teddy jumping?’
  - ★ Child: ‘Teddy jump.’



## Step up

- Introduce more items/actions and vary the instructions.
- When looking at books, take it in turns to find something in the picture and describe what's happening. Pause to allow time for the child to fill in words: continue to provide vocabulary for new words.
- If the child spontaneously uses a two-word phrase (e.g. 'Joe eating'), you add *another* word (e.g. 'Joe eating *dinner*').
- Introduce less common action words (e.g. digging, throwing, crawling).

## Step down

- Use gestures/signs to help understand the instruction.
- Use lots of repetition and demonstrate what you asked the child to do. Once demonstrated, repeat the instruction and see if the child can copy.
- Get the child to do it first and then comment on his/her actions (e.g. 'Marcus hop', 'Sunita jump').
- During play or when looking at books, talk about what toys or people are doing, using two-word sentences.

