Section 9.8

Using category names and explaining the differences between things in the same category/finding the odd one out

? Why is this important?

As language skills develop, children learn to be able to identify and explain increasingly more subtle differences between things.

What to do

- Gather together some pictures/objects from a variety of categories (e.g. clothes, food, toys, furniture, transport, animals).
- Choose three pictures/objects from the *same* category (e.g. three animals). Two of the animals must have something in common and one must be different (e.g. horse, cow, fish).
- Put out these three pictures. Ask which group *all* the pictures belong to. If this is difficult, offer a choice 'Are these clothes or animals?'
- Ask which two pictures go together best (e.g. horse and cow).
- Ask why: there could be several reasons (e.g. four legs, farm animals, live in fields).
- Ask what's different about the other animal (e.g. fish).
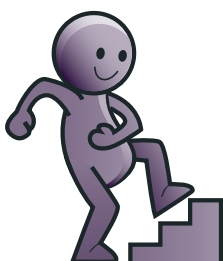
Step up

- Ask the child to generate other animals that would go with the horse and cow (e.g. sheep, pig). You could think of other animals with four legs or other animals that belong on a farm. Which ones live on a farm *and* have four legs?
- Move on to objects that have *more* similarities so that it's harder to find a 'difference' (e.g. cat, dog, rabbit – all pets and have four legs). There may be several answers that are correct (e.g. take dog for a walk, rabbit hops, rabbit likes different foods, cat and dog have longer tails).
- Move on to different categories (e.g. furniture) or use topic vocabulary to discuss differences (e.g. between kings and queens, characters in fairy stories).

Step down

- Start with two objects from one category and one from a different category making sure that the child knows the category names (e.g. hat, jumper, banana).