Making and Explaining a Tangram Puzzle
Writing Instructions for Someone Else

Project Summary: The tangram was invented by the Chinese in ancient times. For centuries people from around the world have had fun with the tangram puzzle. The seven pieces of the tangram can be arranged in interesting and creative shapes. It is fun to make interesting shapes with a tangram, and it is important to be able to explain to others how to make your tangram puzzle. In this project, you will make your own tangram puzzle and write a set of instructions explaining how to make your puzzle.

Purpose: Your purpose is to explain how to make your tangram puzzle.

Writer’s Role: You are a master tangram puzzle maker who is making a puzzle and writing the directions for solving it.

Audience: Your audience is classmates who are familiar with the pieces of the tangram and want to fit pieces together to make your puzzle.

Form: Your final product will have two parts. On one piece of paper, you will have a silhouette of your tangram puzzle. It will be all black.

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On another piece of paper you will write the directions so that someone else can understand how to fit the pieces together to make your puzzle.

Focus Correction Areas: 1. Name the Pieces (tell which pieces you are using and how many of each)
2. Directions for Each Piece (tell where each piece goes and how it fits into the puzzle)
3. (To be determined)

Procedures: Before you write, you will do several activities in class:
- Review the seven pieces of the tangram and the name for each:

  large triangle  large triangle  medium triangle  small triangle  small triangle  parallelogram  square

- Cut up the master tangram and try making shapes with four pieces, five pieces, or seven pieces.
- Read Grandfather Tang’s Story (by Ann Tompert, Crown Publishers), and talk about the ways the animals were made with the tangram pieces; can you make the turtle? the crocodile?
- As a class, make a four-piece tangram puzzle, and write a set of directions. Note how important directions words are. These are words such as first, next, then, under, beside, above, right, and left.
- Create your own tangram puzzle using _______ pieces.
- Write directions for making your tangram puzzle.
- Read your directions out loud in a one-foot voice, and make any changes you feel will make the directions easier to follow.
- Make a silhouette of your tangram puzzle.
- Work with a partner, and get feedback by having your partner make the tangram from your instructions; double-check your FCAs to make sure you have written a good set of directions.
- Write the final version of your directions that will go with the silhouette of your design.

The Tangram