

The Podgon Game

Student Handout

Grades 6–10 · 1–2 sessions

Group members: _____

Date: _____

What is going on

Two people (Person A and Person B) each have a definition for the word **podgon**. Their definitions are different — they do not agree on every shape. All you know is that a podgon is a type of closed shape.

Here is what we know so far:

Shape	Podgon for A?	Podgon for B?
Equilateral triangle (all sides equal)	Yes	Yes
Square (all sides equal)	No	No

Your job is to figure out what each person's definition of “podgon” is.

Your first guess

Based on the examples above, write a definition that works for both A and B:

Our definition:

Check your definition against what we know:

- Equilateral triangle is a podgon by our definition
- Square is NOT a podgon by our definition

Testing your definition

To figure out the real definitions, you will propose shapes and ask A and B whether they are podgons. Before you propose a shape, think about what you will learn from the answer.

Test 1

Shape (draw or describe):

Why are we asking about this? What do we want to find out?

If it IS a podgon, that tells us:

If it is NOT a podgon, that tells us:

A's answer: _____ B's answer: _____

What we learned:

Test 2

Shape (draw or describe):

Why are we asking about this? What do we want to find out?

If it IS a podgon, that tells us:

If it is NOT a podgon, that tells us:

A's answer: _____ B's answer: _____

What we learned:

Test 3

Shape (draw or describe):

Why are we asking about this? What do we want to find out?

If it IS a podgon, that tells us:

If it is NOT a podgon, that tells us:

A's answer: _____ B's answer: _____

What we learned:

Test 4

Shape (draw or describe):

Why are we asking about this? What do we want to find out?

If it IS a podgon, that tells us:

If it is NOT a podgon, that tells us:

A's answer: _____ B's answer: _____

What we learned:

Test 5

Shape (draw or describe):

Why are we asking about this? What do we want to find out?

If it IS a podgon, that tells us:

If it is NOT a podgon, that tells us:

A's answer: _____ B's answer: _____

What we learned:

Test 6

Shape (draw or describe):

Why are we asking about this? What do we want to find out?

If it IS a podgon, that tells us:

If it is NOT a podgon, that tells us:

A's answer: _____ B's answer: _____

What we learned:

Your final definitions

After your tests, write the best definitions you have:

Person A's definition of podgon:

Person B's definition of podgon:

Reflection

1. Which of your test shapes was the most useful one? Why did it help more than the others?

2. Did you propose any shape that turned out to be useless — it did not help you figure out anything? Why was it not useful?

3. Can you think of a word that people use in everyday life where different people actually mean different things by it?
