

## ShapeShifters Activity Guide

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### Movement Activity Ideas

The **ShapeShifters** are FUN, brightly colored manipulatives designed to help movers understand, develop and reinforce movement vocabulary concepts and skills. Individual, partner and small and large group movement activities can be introduced and adapted to limited space or large open areas. Each individual may use their own **ShapeShifter** or one **ShapeShifter** may be shared by partners. By using the **ShapeShifter** and your own inventiveness, many exciting activities can be created that challenge movers to use their knowledge, concentration, memory and critical thinking skills through dynamic body movements. **ShapeShifters** can also be used as a wonderful interdisciplinary enrichment to academic areas in the school curriculum connecting activities in the gym with those in the classroom. The following movements activities are a few suggestions to help get your own imagination and creative ideas flowing.

### Activities for Individuals

**Math Curriculum Connection:** Numbers and counting, geometric shapes, computation and measurement

#### CONSTRUCT-A-SHAPE

Place large geometric shapes randomly on the floor and have all movers choose and stand on their own individual shape with their **ShapeShifter**. Have them make the shape with their **ShapeShifter** on the floor around the actual geometric shape. Have the movers study Directional and Spatial Movements by moving "inside", "outside", "around", "over", etc., their **ShapeShifter** traveling "forward", "sideways", and "backward". Next have mover use the **ShapeShifter** with their Body Parts, (such as hands, feet, head, elbow, knee, etc.), to reproduce their geometric shape. Have the movers create the shape by stretching the **ShapeShifter** with tension.

#### Extension Ideas:

- Have movers make the shape smaller and larger while still trying to keep the **ShapeShifter** taut. Have movers try to reproduce the shape using the least number of body parts they can with their **ShapeShifter**. Have movers try to reproduce the shape using the most number of body parts they can with their **ShapeShifter**.

## Activities for Individuals

### BALANCE-A-SHAPE

Have the movers stretch their **ShapeShifter** taut with various body parts to create a geometric or abstract shape. Have them balance the shape they created on a different number of Body Part points.

**Example:** Tell them to balance their shape by touching the floor with two parts of their body, then five parts of their body, etc.

### MOVE-A-SHAPE

1. Have movers create a geometric or abstract shape using their body parts and the **ShapeShifters**. Instruct them that these shapes should use tension so the **ShapeShifters** are stretched taut. Have them then use Axial Movements (such as shake, bounce, bend, twist, sway, swing, stretch, rock, etc.), while keeping their shape taut.

#### Extension Ideas:

- Have them move their shapes created by the **ShapeShifter** on different Levels (such as high, medium, low), making sure to keep their **ShapeShifter** taut.
- Have them move their Axial Movements to different Tempos (fast, medium, slow). Music of varying speeds or a drum played at different tempos is a nice addition.
- Have them move their shape in an Axial Movement with varying counts (such as bounce your shape for six (6) counts and freeze your shape for two (2) counts; or shake your shape for four (4) counts, freeze your shape for four (4) counts, etc. This works best when the leader beats the counts out on a drum or claps them for the movers.
- Have movers change their shape on certain counts (such as every count, or every even numbered count, or every fourth count, etc.) to create a sequence or pattern of shape changes.
- Have movers do the above movements using two (2) **ShapeShifters** Body Parts to create a taut shape or design.

2. A more difficult challenge activity is to have movers create a taut shape using their bodies and a **ShapeShifter**, or two, and use Locomotor Movements (such as walk, jump, slide, gallop, etc.).

#### Extension Ideas:

- Create Pathways (such as straight line, circular, zig zag, spiral, etc. or geometric shapes like square, diamond, etc.), and have the movers travel along these with a Locomotor movement while keeping taut the shape they created with their bodies and their **ShapeShifter**.

3. Have the movers study the effect of Energy and Effort by exploring the use of tension and relaxation with the **ShapeShifter**. Let the movers create a taut shape with their **ShapeShifter** and move that shape with different degrees of energy or effort, (such as move the shape gently, abruptly, lazily, suddenly, smoothly, heavily, etc.).

#### Extension Ideas:

- Have the movers move their shapes by using a pair of Opposite Words (such as tense/relax, weak/strong, up/down, smooth/bumpy, etc.).

## Activities for Partners

### USING ONE SHAPESHIFTER BETWEEN PARTNERS

**Social Studies Curriculum Connection:** Learning to work cooperatively and study of transportation.

1. **Artist & Shape/Design:** The “artist” has the “model” create a shape in space with his body and then “freeze” that shape. The artist then stretches the **ShapeShifter** onto the model to create an interesting design shape. Have partners switch roles.

#### Extension Ideas:

- Have artist move body parts or placement of the model to create a new taut design. Through directions given by the leader, incorporate Levels and Directional/Spatial Movement Elements into this activity.
- Have artist give verbal movement directions only (such as use certain Body Parts, Levels, etc.), and model must respond to these directions while keeping the **ShapeShifter** taut.

2. **Moving Designs:** Have the partners create a design between themselves by stretching one **ShapeShifter**. Have them move together rhythmically using Axial (such as bounce, shake, twist), or Locomotor Movements (such as walk, hop, jump); making sure the design does not change while executing these movements.

#### Extension Ideas:

- Add one or more **ShapeShifters** and have the partners create a design and again move the new design together.

3. **Inside Design:** Have one partner create a stretched design with a **ShapeShifter**. The other partner must move using Directional/Spatial and Pathway/Level Movement Elements (such as into, through, over, under, etc.), either through or around the space of the design of the **ShapeShifter**.

## Activities for Partners

### USING ONE SHAPESHIFTER BETWEEN PARTNERS (continued from Page 2)

**4. Mode of Transportation - Land, Sea and Air:** Have partners together use one (or more) **ShapeShifter(s)** to build a form of transportation that could travel on land, sea or in the air (such as a boat, a train, a plane, etc.).

**Extension Ideas:**

- Have the partners then “travel” by using Axial & Locomotor Movements, making sure to keep their designed vehicle in a taut shape.
- Have the partners use the movement elements involving Pathways, Directional/Spatial, Levels, Tempos and Energy/Effort to bring their mode of transportation to life.

**5. Pony & Guider:** Have partners take turns with one being the horse or pony and the other being the guider. Have the “pony” step inside the **ShapeShifter** and place it around his/her waist. Have the “guider” stand behind the pony and hold the **ShapeShifter** with gentle tension, as if it were the “reins”. The guider then gives the pony verbal direction of various Movement Elements, such as:

- **Directional/Spatial:** forward, backward, sideways, turning around, right, left, etc.
- **Levels:** high, middle, low
- **Pathways:** circular, straight, zig zag, etc.
- **Tempo:** slow, medium, fast, start, stop, etc.
- **Locomotor:** walk, gallop, jump, hop, skip, etc.

**Extension Ideas:**

- Have guider give horse or pony non-verbal commands by using different tension signals with the **ShapeShifter**, (such as pull back to stop, pull with the right hand to turn right, pull with the left hand to turn left).
- Have the partners create their own unique silent signals for any of the above mentioned Movement Elements.

### USING TWO OR MORE SHAPESHIFTERS WITH PARTNERS

**Language Arts Curriculum Connection:** Study of effective communication

**1. Mirroring:** Each partner has their own **ShapeShifter** and they stand or sit facing each other. One is the “real person” and the other is the “mirror image”. They take turns leading and following each other using their **ShapeShifter** to create designs.

**Extension Ideas:**

- Have partners imitate “dancing” their designs to different Tempos (such as slow, staccato, fast, medium, syncopated rhythm, even and uneven rhythm, etc.). A nice addition to this activity is to use different styles of music or drum rhythms.

**2. Overlapping:** Each partner creates an interesting shape design with his/her own **ShapeShifter**, and then work with a partner to create a new design that overlaps the two **ShapeShifters** in different ways. Movers can try to create several different designs that overlap, each design overlapping in a new unique manner. Have the mover take turns as to who does the overlap to help movers gain an awareness of the spatial concepts of over and under.

**Extension Ideas:**

- Have each partner use two or more **ShapeShifters** and try to overlap designs.
- Have the partners move the overlapped design using Axial and Locomotor movements.
- Have movers experiment overlapping their designs on various Levels.

**3. Connectiong:** Have the partners each create a design with his/her **ShapeShifter** and touch or link these shapes creating an interesting design.

**Extension Ideas:**

- Have partners use Directional/Spatial elements (such as touch or link back to back, or side to side, etc.).
- Have partners try to create a three-dimensional shape by touching or linking the **ShapeShifter**.
- Have partners try and create symmetrical and asymmetrical designs on various Levels.
- Have partners try to create one geometric design between them using both **ShapeShifters**.
- Have partners balance their touching or linked design on different Body Parts.
- Have partners move the connecting design through use of Axial & Locomotor movements in set Pathways.

**4. Contrast:** Have one partner create a shape with his/her **ShapeShifter** and have the other partner create a contrasting or opposite shape with his/her **ShapeShifter** that relates to the first shape.

**Extension Ideas:**

- Have the partners change the size of the design created by the **ShapeShifter** (such as make it smaller, larger, etc.), making sure to keep **ShapeShifter** taut and not allow design to change.
- Have partners move the design they created by using Directional/Spatial elements (such as up, down, etc.).

## Activities for Partners

### USING TWO OR MORE SHAPESHIFTERS WITH PARTNERS (continued from Page 3)

#### SHAPE'N MACHINES

**Science Curriculum Connection:** Study of machines, cause & effect, chain reactions and environments.

- It is helpful to begin this activity after a discussion and study of Simple Machines: inclined plane, wedge, lever, screw, wheel and axle, and pulley (both fixed and moveable).  
Have all movers use their **ShapeShifter** individually to explore creating the above simple machines and their properties.
- The following movement elements can be incorporated nicely at this time: Size, Level, Directional/Spatial, and Energy/Effort. Some movement vocabulary words that should be stressed are: sustained, percussive, swinging, vibratory and suspended.
- Have movers get together in small groups and using their **ShapeShifters** create a more complicated machine. Some examples of machines that movers can make are: blender, vacuum, lawn mower, computer, printer, rocket launcher, escalator, trash masher, calculator, toaster, popcorn popper, washing machine, etc.  
**Challenge Activity:** Have movers create their **ShapeShifter** machine and apply the following Mechanical Laws of Motion, (gravity, force, leverage, equilibrium, rebound, and spin).
- Small or Large Group Machine:** Begin in a circle. Have one mover go into the center and create a shape part that has a distinctive movement with his/her **ShapeShifter** for imaginary "machine". Have other movers help build the machine sequentially by joining one at a time and relating to other shape parts in the center of the circle.  
**Extension Ideas:**
  - Have each mover create a sound to use when his/her shape part moves.
  - Have total group create a name and purpose for their imaginary machine.
  - Have leader pretend to turn a crank or knob, or push buttons to start and stop the machine. Also have signals to accelerate and decelerate the operating speed of the machine.
  - It is interesting to use various Times (accent, duration, steady beat, etc.), and Effort/Energy Qualities of movement during this activity. Patterns of rhythm can be established with an accent on specific counts.
- Chain Reactions:** Have the movers create a small or large group machine as in number four (#4) above. Leader assigns shape parts to move in a set designated, sequential order. This help movers understand the importance of the use of patterning and sequencing.
- Cause and Effect:** Leader chooses certain shape parts to break. Have movers notice the effect on the total machine when this is done. Leader could also "remove" a shape part and observe what effect this has on the machine. The removed shape part should still operate on its own.  
**Challenge Activity:** Leader can designate some shape parts to move at different Tempos with different Axial movements, and with different Energy/Effort.

#### PICTURES SHAPE EXPRESSION

Have movers look at various pictures of different environments and create (using their **ShapeShifter**), a three dimensional design based on the look or feeling of the pictures viewed. Since **ShapeShifters** come in various colors, color can be one of the important elements used in constructing the group design. Some excellent visuals to use are pictures of rainbows, oceans, trees, waterfalls, rolling hills, mountains, city skyscrapers, snow, sand, and even abstracts.

##### Extension Ideas:

- Have one group be the "performers" and move their design to the specific rhythm or beat created by another group which is the "orchestra". The orchestra can create their rhythms with rhythm instruments, or by clapping, tapping, patting, snapping, etc. Each group should have the opportunity to be both performers and members of the orchestra.

