Activity: Toothpick Puzzles (aka Matchstick Puzzles)

Toothpick puzzles, otherwise known as matchstick puzzles, are a rearrangement puzzle. You need to look for patterns and shapes. Additionally, some of these puzzles require lateral thinking. Lateral thinking is a thought process that requires a creative approach as opposed to a purely logical approach.

1. Set up your sticks to look like the starting picture.
2. Follow the rules (usually how many sticks you can move) to make a new picture.
3. Remember to think creatively!

Materials

- Toothpicks, pipe cleaner pieces or other objects similar in size to a matchstick

Instructions

Example 1

- Move 3 sticks to get 5 squares

Example 2

- Move one stick to make the equation correct

Example 3

- Change the picture so the fish is swimming in the opposite direction by only moving 3 sticks
Answer key

Example 1
- Move 3 sticks to get 5 squares

Example 2
- Move one stick to make the equation correct

Example 3
- Change the picture so the fish is swimming in the opposite direction by only moving 3 sticks