



Positional language

Can you use positional language to describe the position of different objects in the supermarket?
Use the words below:

in
next to
behind
under
under
beside

on
in front of
above
in between





Can you fill in the gaps?

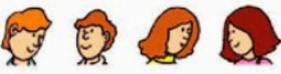
The oranges are _____ the counter. 

The kettle is _____ the clock and the microwave. 

The checkout man is _____ the counter. 

The olive oil is _____ the coffee. 

The girl is to the _____ of the trolley. 

The family are _____ the counter. 

The tea is _____ to the coffee. 

The apples are _____ the bananas. 

The woman is to the _____ of the trolley. 

behind

above

in front of

under

left

next

on

in between

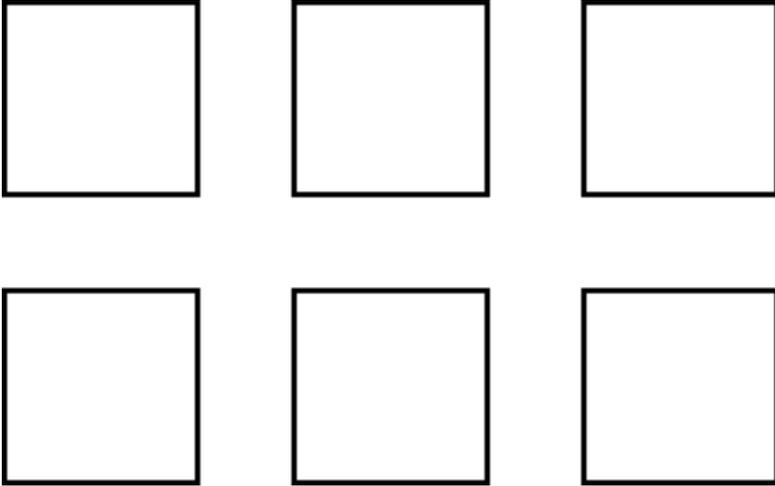
below

right



Problem solving:

Use these clues to colour each shape:



- Blue is between green and red
- Orange is below green
- Yellow is to the left of both purple and orange

Supporting information and a link to the interactive activity can be found on the next page.

Why do this problem?

[This problem](#) gives children the chance to become more familiar with everyday words which describe position. It also requires them to work in a systematic way.

Possible approach

Before trying this task, you might like to arrange some coloured sheets of paper on the floor, or to have some coloured circles arranged on the interactive whiteboard. Ask the children to talk about what they can see (perhaps in pairs first), drawing attention to the use of appropriate vocabulary, for example above, below, next to, opposite, in between, to the left of, to the right of etc.

For the problem itself, you might like to provide pairs of children with coloured counters or squares of coloured paper or multilink cubes so that they are able to physically recreate the arrangement. You could start with some simpler one-step instructions and only three or four counters to get the children into the task, then some two-step instructions which are independent of each other. Present the problem orally, repeating it several times, and leave them time to have a go. Depending on their reading level, you could also supply a few copies of the clues around the room so that they can refer back. If not using counters, you could give children copies of [this sheet](#) for them to colour, or of course they could work in pairs at a computer using the interactivity.

In a plenary, bring out the steps that had to be taken in order to solve the problem, for example, you can invite children to say how they started. This is a good opportunity to raise their awareness of different approaches and learners can use the interactivity on a whiteboard to demonstrate their own method.

Key questions

Where *could* the blue counter go? (Or which square could be blue?) How do you know?

How does the second clue help?

Try colouring the squares, or use counters to try out an idea. Does your arrangement fit the clues?

Possible extension

Pupils could make up their own version of this problem for a friend to solve (or for the whole class to try in the plenary).

<https://nrich.maths.org/234/note>