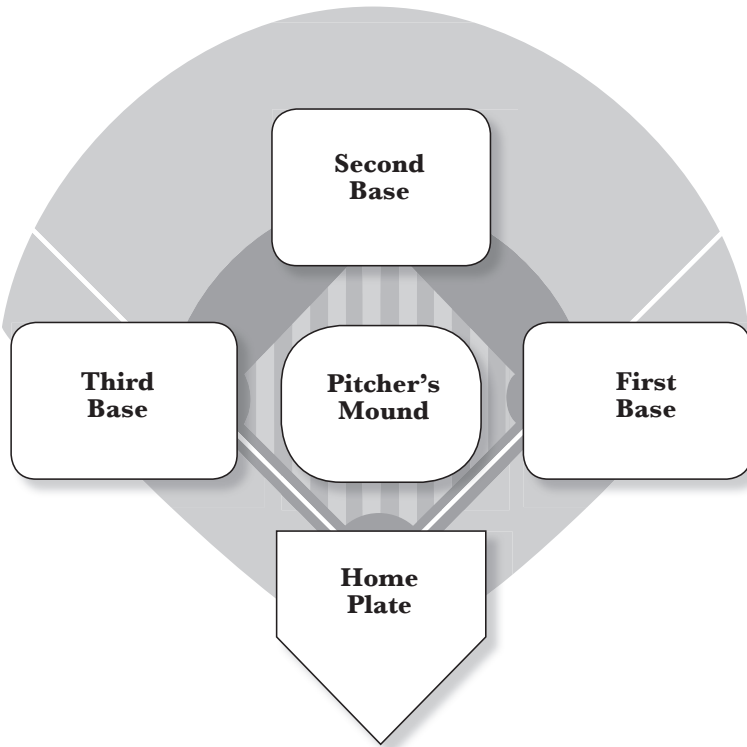


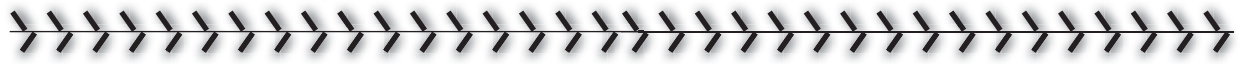


# INTRODUCTION CONTINUED



All the action starts on the **Pitcher's Mound**, just like in baseball. The "Pitcher's Mound" represents the subject of the piece—what will later turn into the topic sentence. Once your children know the subject, they should "load the bases." **First Base should be the first event** or the most important point related to the subject. **Second Base** is the second event or second most important point and **Third Base** is the third event or third most important point. Finally, **Home Plate** will be the conclusion to their paragraph. When the bases are loaded, they're done!

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## Learning the Method

The Diamond Notes method starts with simple tasks, and then builds in complexity with each assignment. Here is a unit-by-unit look at what your children will be taught:

Since most young children are more comfortable drawing pictures than writing words, the first three lessons feature a simple, non-threatening introduction to the method. In the first lesson in **Unit 1**, your children will draw pictures on the diamond. In the second lesson, they will use picture cards to show they understand which items fit in a certain category. This sets the foundation for writing clear, focused paragraphs later, since only items that fit together belong on a diamond or in a paragraph.

(Note: If your children are bored using pictures, feel free to have them go ahead and use words from the start!)

### Unit 1: Categorizing Ideas

Students learn how to:

- ✓ use the basics of the Diamond Notes method
- ✓ categorize and group items together
- ✓ determine what things belong on a diamond and what do not



### Diamond Two

When they're done with the first diamond, move on to the second diamond, which will be about tools. Ask them to think of three tools and have them write the word **"Tools"** on the pitcher's mound. Then have them draw pictures of the tools on the bases. Since the pitcher's mound has the word **"Tools"** on it, all the bases should have pictures of tools on them.

### Diamond Three

For the third diamond, ask your children to write **"Shapes"** on the pitcher's mound and think of three shapes. Have them look at the diamond itself if they need some help thinking of shapes! Then ask them to draw or paste pictures of those shapes on the bases.

Once they've finished their third diamond, that's all for the day. Good job!



## Lesson 2: Pictures That Fit

### Materials list:

- 4 copies of **Diamond A** (page 31)
- **Cut-out sheet** (page 37)
- **Scissors**
- **Paste**

In Lesson 2, you will challenge your children's understanding of the grouping process. Do they understand the concept of which items belong on a diamond and which do not?

### Diamond One

The first diamond is going to be about clothes. Have your children write **"Clothes"** on the pitcher's mound of a new diamond. Then give them five picture cards, three that fit the category and two that do not. Ask them to place the correct cards on the bases. If they start to paste a card that doesn't belong, remind them of the topic to encourage them to choose the right cards. When they finish this diamond, congratulate them and reinforce that all the pictures fit because they are all kinds of clothes.

### Diamonds Two Through Four

If the first diamond was difficult for your children, do the second diamond (**"Weather"**) the same way. If the second diamond still proves difficult, do the third (**"Animals"**) and fourth (**"Food"**) diamonds the same way.

For more of a challenge, have them do the remaining diamonds with all of the remaining picture cards. Ask them to paste the cards where they belong and tell them that some of the cards will not fit on any of the diamonds.

If you want to really challenge your children, don't tell them what topics should be on the pitcher's mounds and see if they can figure them out on their own.

Once they've finished all four diamonds, that's all for the day. Good job!



## Lesson 2: Ranking Items with Words

### Materials list:

- 3 copies of **Diamond A (page 31)**

Lesson 2 is just like the last, except that your children will now write words on the bases instead of drawing pictures.

### Diamond One

For the first diamond, have your children write **“Favorite Ice Cream Flavors”** on the pitcher’s mound. Ask them to write their favorite flavor of ice cream on first base, second favorite on second base, etc. When they’re done, lead them in a rousing chorus of “I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream for Ice Cream” or, better yet, head to the ice cream parlor for some hands-on research!

### Diamond Two

For the second diamond, your children should write **“Favorite Subjects”** on the pitcher’s mound. Ask them to think of their three favorite subjects that they study. Maybe they will write “Bible” on first base, “History” on second base, and “Science” on third base.

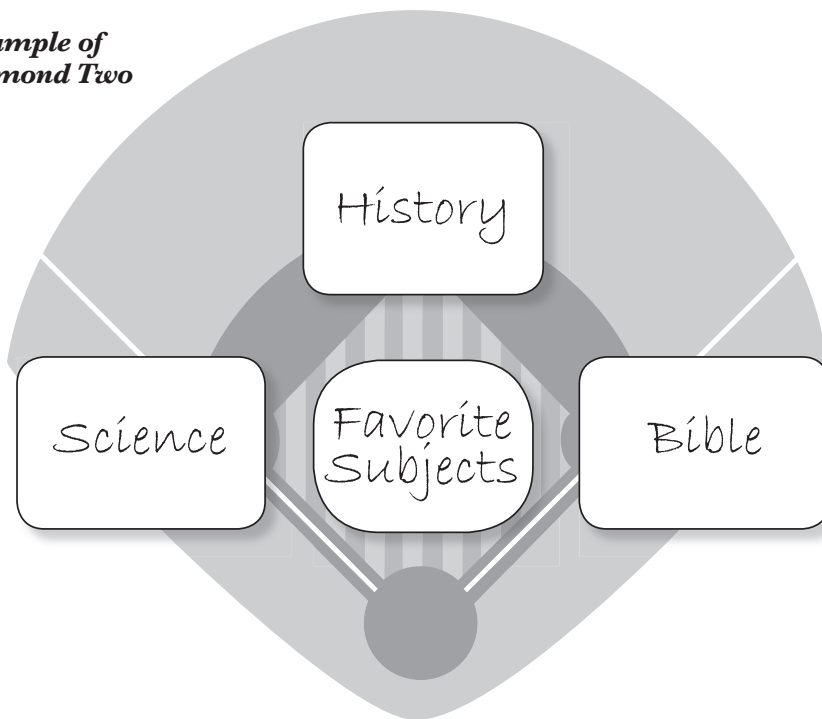
### Diamond Three

For the third diamond, have them write **“Favorite Snacks”** on the pitcher’s mound. They should then write their favorite snack on first base, second favorite on second base, etc.

If the actual process of writing is difficult for your children, you can serve as their scribe. But if your children write well then by all means let them do the writing! When they’ve finished the third diamond, they’re done for the day. Keep up the good work!

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*Sample of  
Diamond Two*



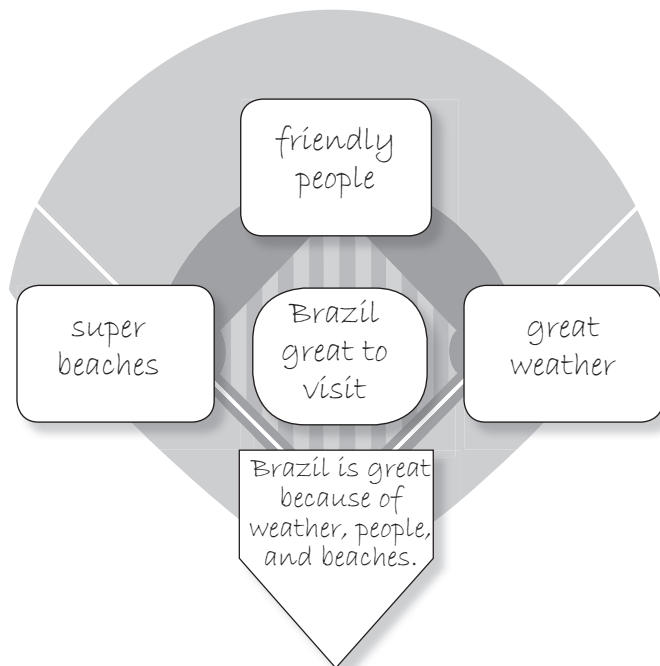


ple in Brazil are very friendly to tourists. Even total strangers will help you with whatever you need.” What is the main message in these sentences? Probably that “people are friendly,” so we’ll write, “friendly people” on second base. Everything else simply adds detail to that phrase.

On third base, we have the sentences: “And the beaches are the best in the entire world. No other beach can even compare.” It seems like these sentences can be summed up just by saying “super beaches.”

Finally, for home plate we need to write a few words to reflect the conclusion sentence. Home plate doesn’t have to be as short as the other bases. Our home plate sentence is: “As you can see, the weather, the people, and the beaches make Brazil an ideal vacation spot.” On home plate we can write, “Brazil is great because of weather, people, and beaches.”

So now it looks like the diamond below:



Since your children already know how to use the diamond to write a paragraph, they can now take a paragraph and turn it back into a diamond.

There is a diamond for your children to practice with on the following page.

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