

# FIELD PAPERS

Junior Secondary Education Improvement Project

## BOTSWANA

The Chalkboard:  
A Primer on Effective Chalkboard Use

September 1987

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Contract No. DPE-5823-C-00-4013-00  
Project No. 936-5823

# Junior Secondary Education Improvement Project

# BOTSWANA

## The Chalkboard: A Primer on Effective Chalkboard Use

Geoffry Marks

September 1987

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## CONTENTS

The Chalkboard: Introduction. . . . .	1
I. What's the Chalkboard For?. . . . .	2
II. Using the Chalkboard as a Teaching Aid. . . . .	9
III. Methods and Techniques. . . . .	17
IV. Chalkboard as Bulletin Board. . . . .	25
V. Student Use. . . . .	28
VI. Recreational Use. . . . .	29
VII. Erasing the Chalkboard. . . . .	31
VIII. Preparation. . . . .	34
IX. Exercises. . . . .	38

# **The Chalkboard**

**A Primer on Effective Chalkboard Use**

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J.S.E.I.P  
Junior Secondary Education Improvement Project  
The Florida State University  
United States Agency for International Development

September 1987

## QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE CHALKBOARD

SECOND YEAR EDUCATION STUDENTS:

This booklet is an educational material developed for use at Molepolole College of Education. It is in draft form and revisions are anticipated before it is finalized. Your comments will be extremely valuable in helping us improve it. We would therefore be most grateful if you could take a moment to read over this questionnaire and keep the questions it asks in mind as you read the booklet, so that when you are finished reading it you may complete the questionnaire.

**1. What is your overall impression of the booklet?**

a. excellent; b. good; c. fair; d. poor.

**2. Did the booklet offer useful ideas on how to use the chalkboard?**

a. extremely useful. b. somewhat useful. c. slightly useful. d. Not at all useful.

**3. Was there anything in the booklet that you thought was offensive?**

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ If you answered Yes to question 3, please explain what you thought was offensive. Be sure to indicate the page number and a specific description of what was offensive.

**4. Were there any parts of it that were confusing or unclear? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_** If you answered Yes to question 4, please indicate in the space below what you found confusing. Be sure to include the page number and a specific description of what was confusing.

**5. Was there a point that you felt should have been explained or developed further? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_** If you answered Yes to question 7, please indicate the page number and explain what needed further explanation.

**6. Additional comments:**

## **The Chalkboard**

### **Introduction**

The chalkboard is a teacher's primary teaching aid. If used effectively, the chalkboard can be a powerful tool that increases the teacher's ability to fulfill the objective of the lesson. If used ineffectively, it can confuse the student and waste precious time.

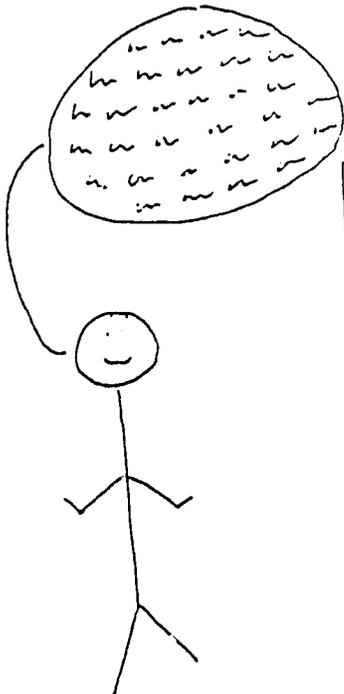
This booklet is a guide to effective chalkboard use. It presents basic principles and methods that will help teachers use the chalkboard well and develop their own distinctive chalkboard style through which their teaching skills can be strengthened and their individual personalities can be expressed.

Using the chalkboard effectively and creatively can enliven your teaching and inject elements of drama, surprise, laughter, and discovery into your classroom. We wish you well as you experiment and grow in the use of the chalkboard and hope the principles and ideas this booklet offers will serve you and your students well throughout your teaching career.

## I. What's the Chalkboard For?

The purpose of the chalkboard is to create visual images that enhance memory. It should be used as an aid to note-taking and should leave in the mind of the student an image that helps him remember the main points of a lesson. Thus, what is put on the board should be an abbreviated description of key points, and not the lesson itself.

Since the 1960s a dominant pattern in the social and political development of Africa has been the movement towards independence. Colonialism has given way to self-rule. The transition from colonial rule by European powers to political independence has now been achieved by all countries previously governed by non-African nations. In South Africa, however, about 12 million black Africans remains under the control of white Africans of European origin, who continue to subject the majority black population to undemocratic, minority rule.



1960s → Independence

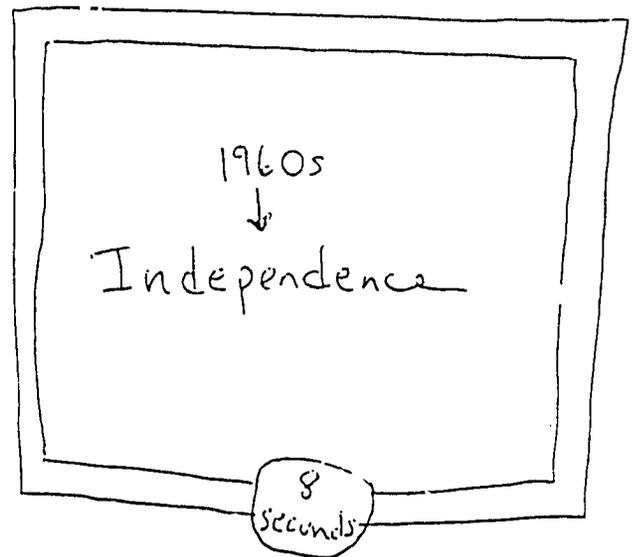
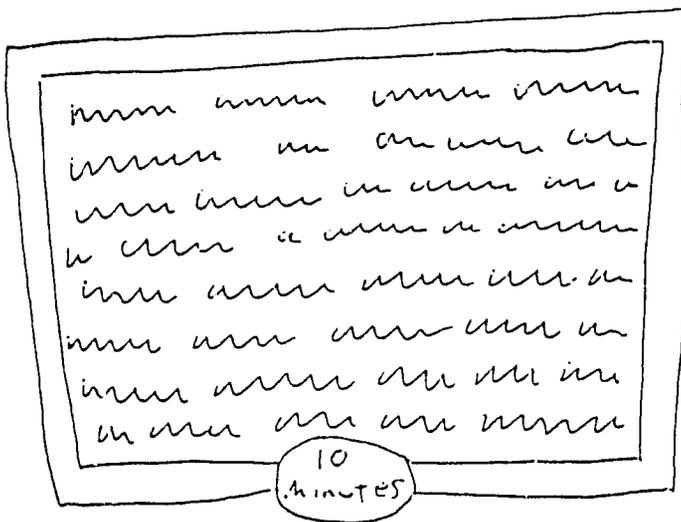
This chapter presents three principles of effective chalkboard use that will make you a better teacher: **Brevity**, **Vividness** and **Legibility**.

### Brevity: Use Key Words

One of a teacher's most precious resources is time. Every minute a teacher has with students needs to be used to best advantage.

Some teachers make the mistake of wasting classroom time by writing lessons out on the board in class, by writing a lot instead of a little, by writing on the board when a duplicating machine could be used to produce a handout for each student.

To use the chalkboard effectively, write key words on the board, words that refer to important concepts in the textbook, worksheets or the class discussion.



When using the chalkboard, less is more. The fewer words used, the clearer your point is made.

**Don't waste your time! Be brief! Use Key Words!**

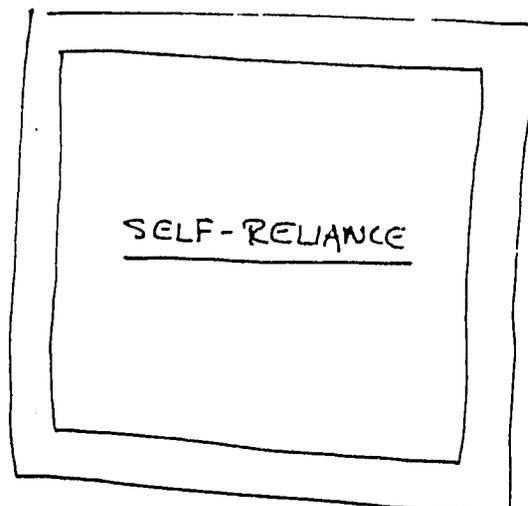
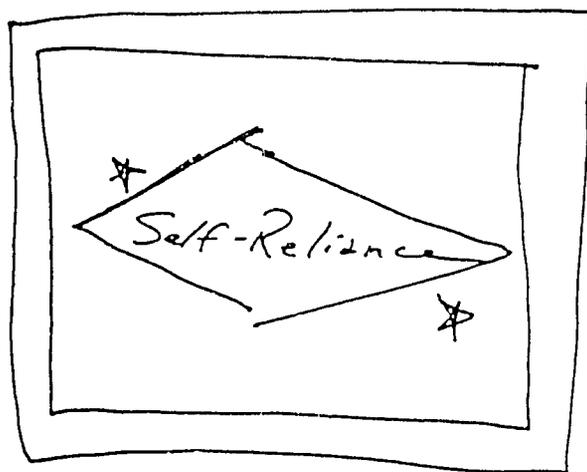
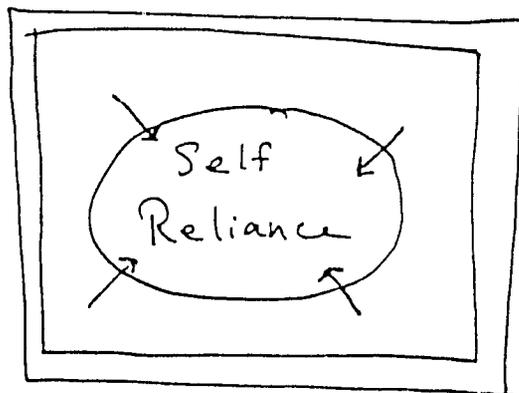
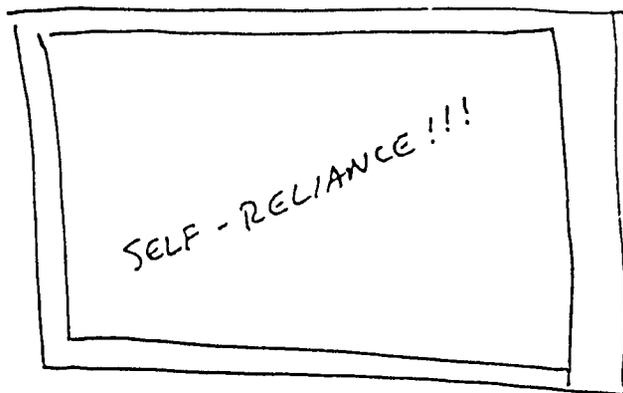
Don't write out lessons on the board for students to copy. Write down key words as you talk to emphasize your points, leaving an image of the idea for the student to see and note. This enables the student to listen and think while you are talking. You can also list subpoints under the key words, in outline form, which helps students in their notetaking.

When students copy entire sentences that you write on the board, they think about copying letters and words, not about the ideas they represent. Use the chalkboard to teach ideas, not your words.

**BREVITY, BREVITY, BREVITY!**

## Vividness: Highlights and Symbols

What you write on the board should be something you want your students to remember. It should be important and related to the key points of your lesson. So when you write on the board, make it **VIVID!**

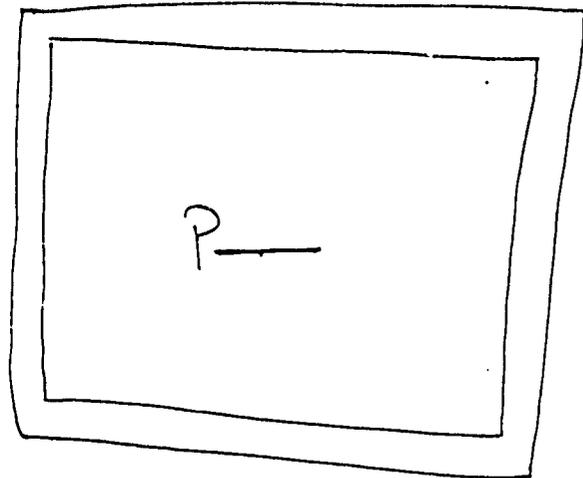
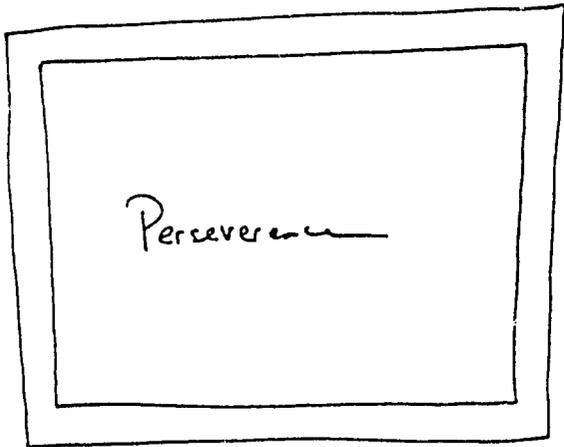
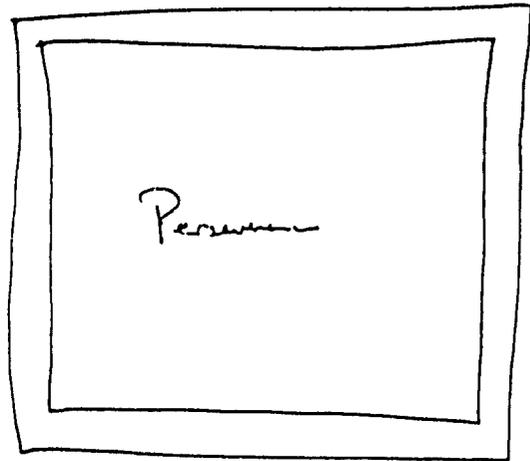
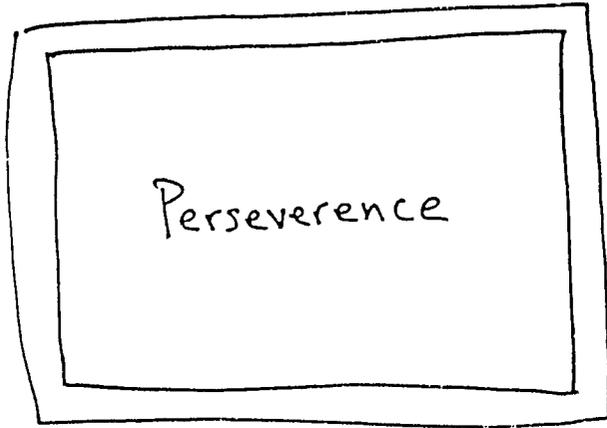


You can make your chalkboard vivid by emphasizing with your voice the key words you write, by underlining, using symbols, drawing geometric shapes, writing on an angle, and so on.

Use the chalkboard to stimulate a thought or an emotional response! Use it with style and flair! **BE VIVID!**

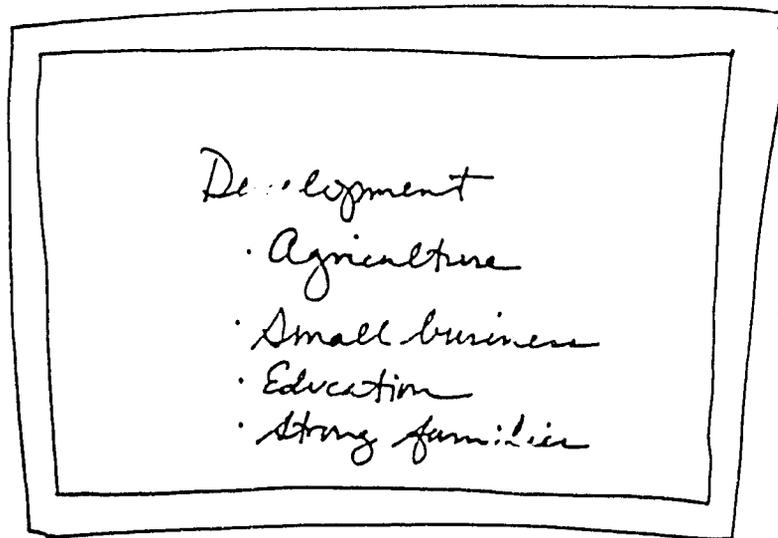
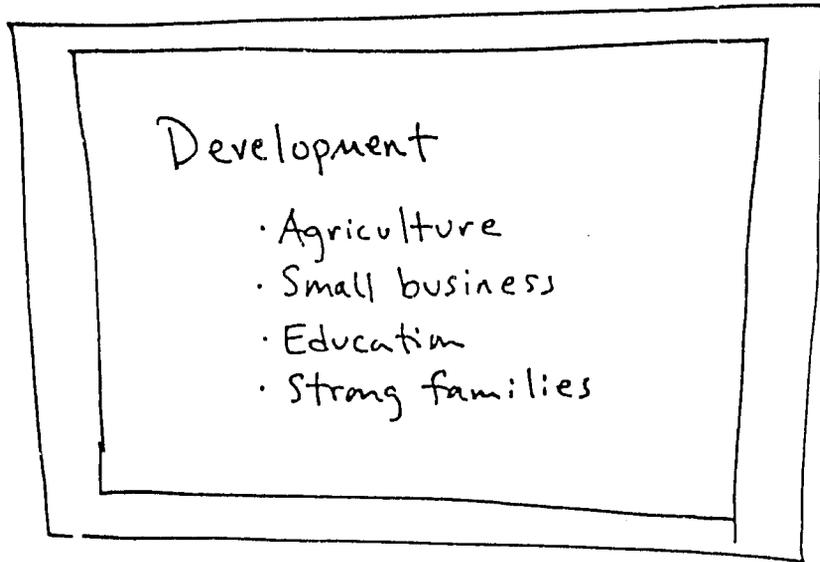
### Legibility

How legible should your writing be?



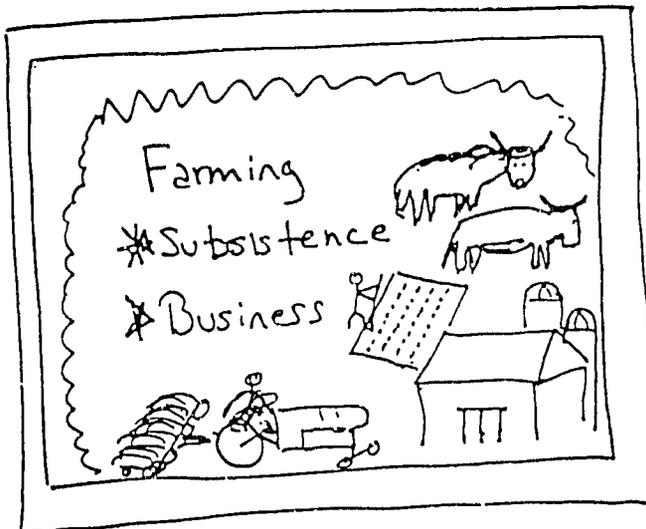
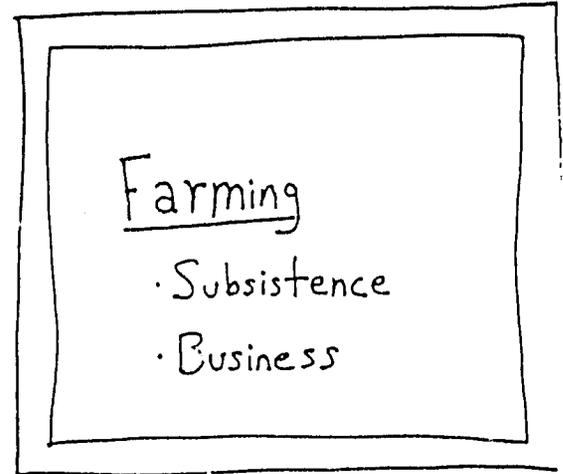
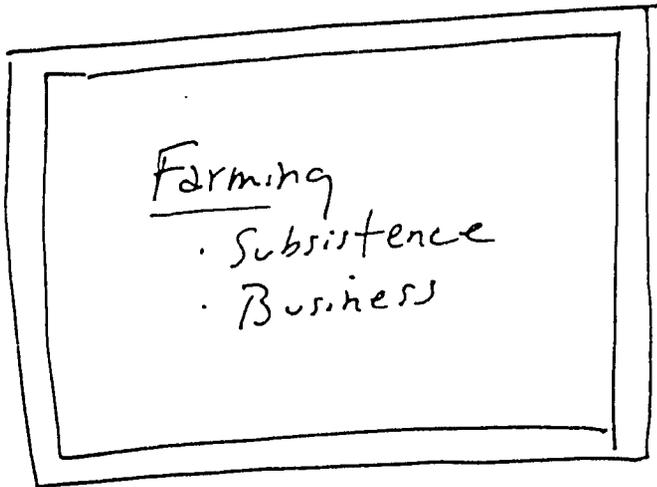
Legible enough for the student in the back of the room to see, read and understand!

Should I print or write in script?



YES! Use whatever style you like! Just be legible!

How artistic should I be?



Artwork is fine if it helps to convey your point and helps students remember. But it should not distract students from seeing your point or take up precious class time to draw.

## **II. Using the Chalkboard as a Teaching Aid**

As already mentioned, the purpose of the chalkboard is to create visual images that enhance memory. In addition to writing on the chalkboard key words you want your students to remember, you can demonstrate relationships between people, places, things, and ideas by creating diagrams, graphs, and maps, and by the way you place things next to each other. This chapter shows how to compare and contrast things and how to use lines and diagrams to show relationships.

## Comparisons and Contrasts

If you have ideas that you want your students to compare or contrast, place words or symbols on the chalkboard in a way that illustrates the comparison or highlights the contrast.

ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS
quick	quickly
smooth	smoothly
soft	softly

KALANGA	SAN
Farmers	Hunter-gatherers
Permanent settlements	Nomadic
Large communities	Small family units
Traditional gov. structure	Gov. structure non-existent

PREFIXES	
Ex	In
Exhale	Inhale
Exhibit	Inhibit

More complex relationships can be demonstrated in a chart:

	Mammals	Reptiles	Amphibians
Food supply	Plants & animals	Plants & animals	Plants & animals
Form of birth	Live birth	Eggs	Eggs

Then you can demonstrate distinctive characteristics easily:

	Mammals	Reptiles	Amphibians
Food supply	Plants & animals	Plants & animals	Plants & animals
Form of birth	Live birth	Eggs	Eggs

Two arrows point to the 'Live birth' cell in the 'Form of birth' row for 'Mammals'.

**Demonstrating Relationships**

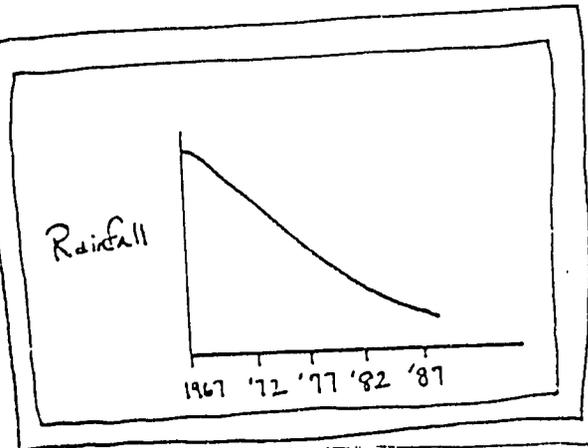
Chief  
Molepolole

Headman Thamaga	Headman Gabane
--------------------	-------------------

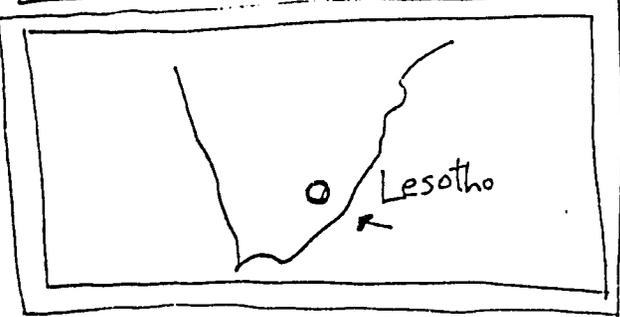
20 seconds

The chief rules over many villages. Each village has headmen who report to the chiefs and who are in charge of each village

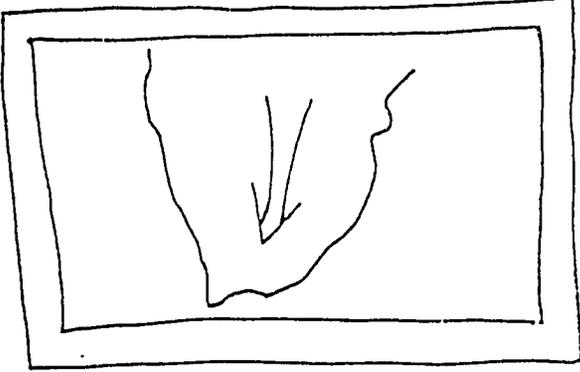
2 minutes



The last 20 years it has rained less and less



The Basotho were never defeated by the Boers and maintained their kingdom.



As the Zulus swept into southern Africa, they conquered every village in their way.

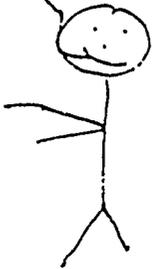
What do comparative adjectives have in common?

Lennie is taller than Molofili  
Molofili is shorter than Lennie  
Molofili is older than Lennie



Exactly! They usually end with "er."

Lennie is taller than Molofili  
Molofili is shorter than Lennie  
Molofili is older than Lennie



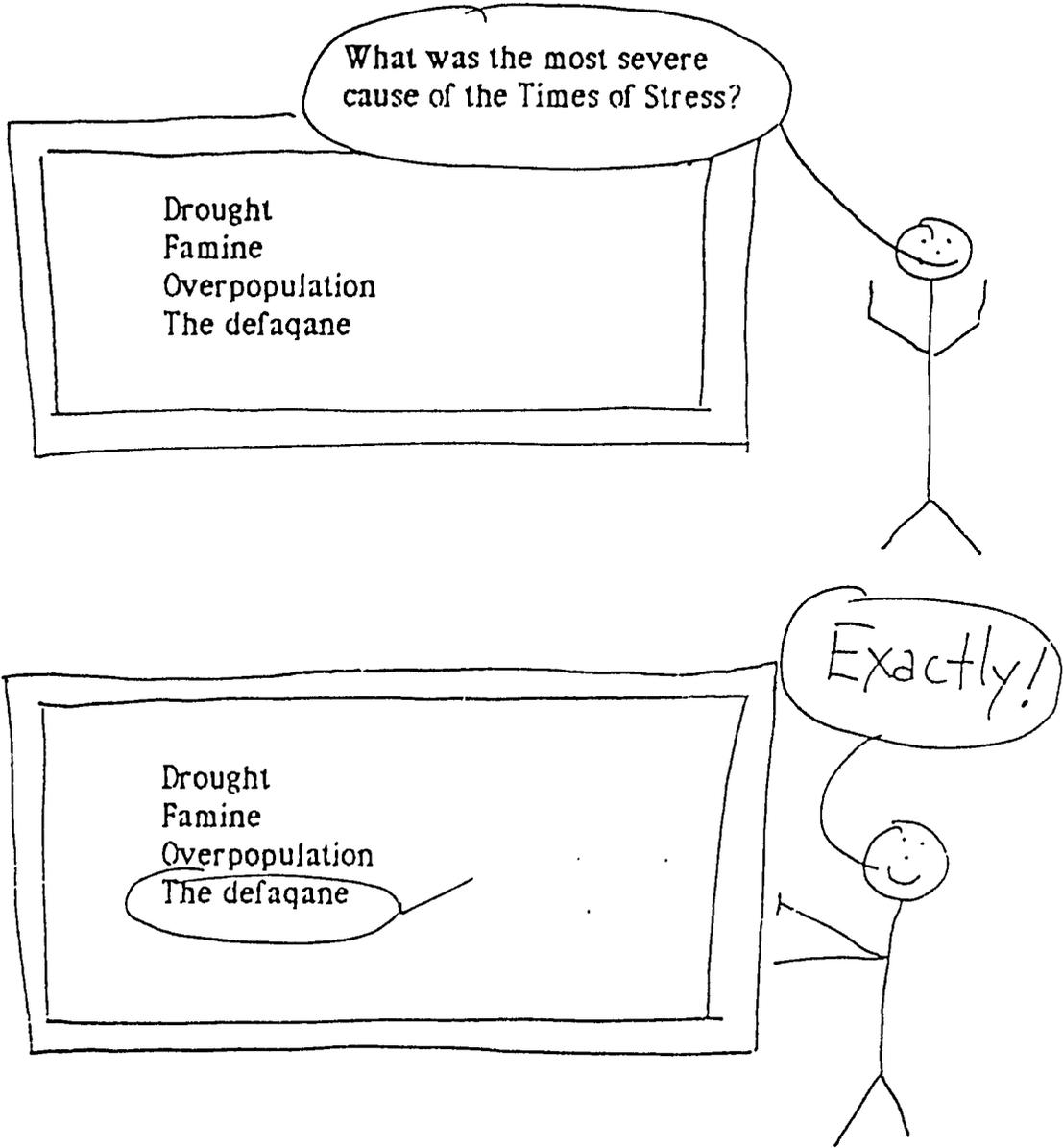
believe	telegraph
believable	television
believability	telecommunications
unbelievable	telescope
	telephone
	telex
	teleprinter

What was the most severe cause of the Times of Stress?

Drought  
Famine  
Overpopulation  
The defaqane

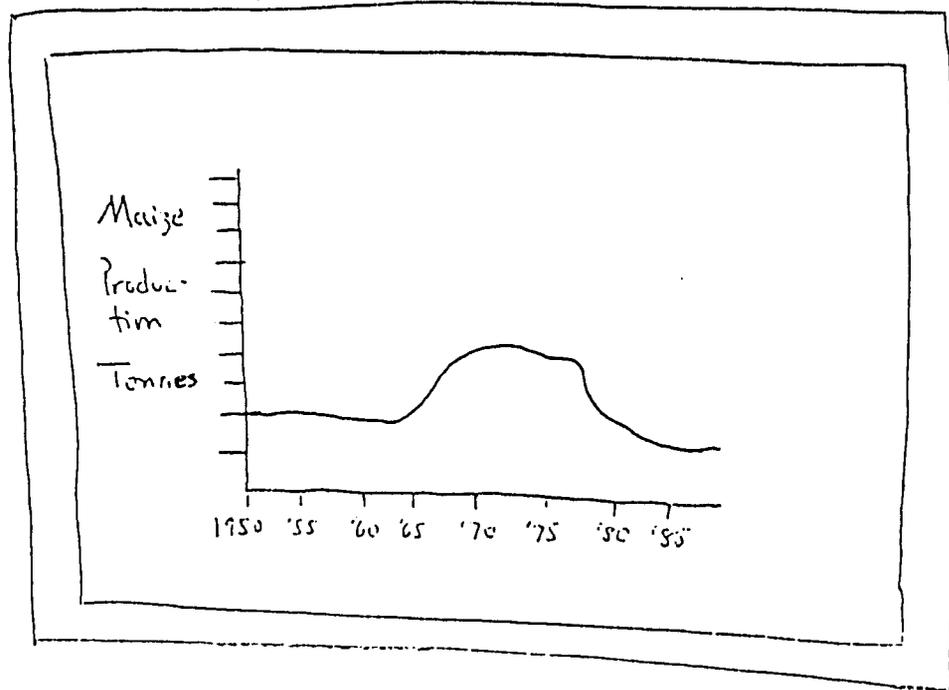
Exactly!

Drought  
Famine  
Overpopulation  
The defaqane

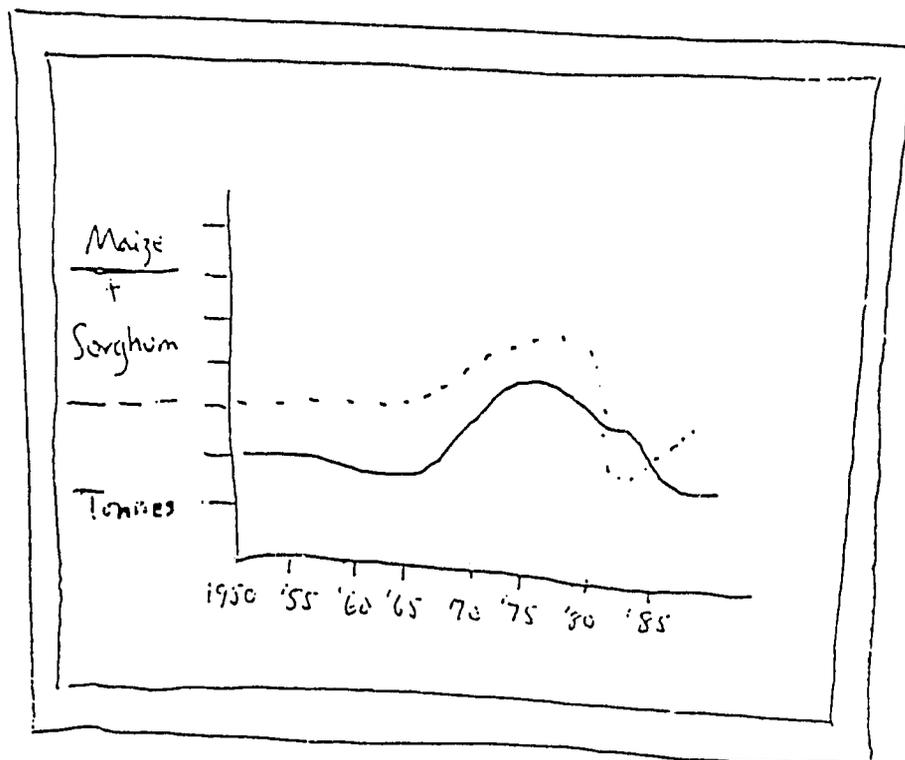


## Some common diagrams and formats

### 1. Quantity Over Time



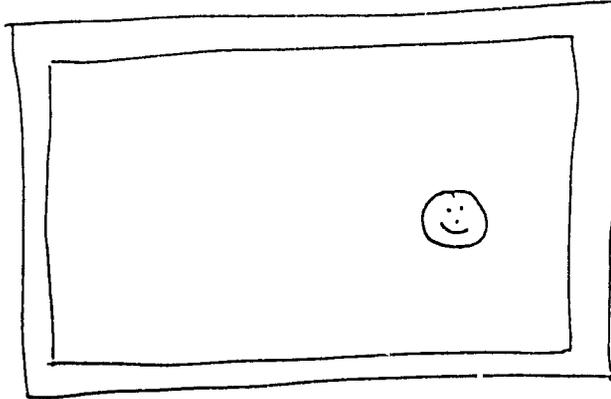
### 2. Comparing Two Factors



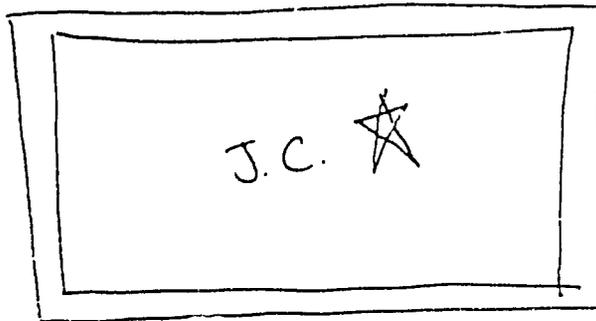
## Strengthening Rapport with Your Class

The chalkboard can also be used to strengthen your rapport with your students. This can be done by using certain symbols the meaning of which only you and your students know.

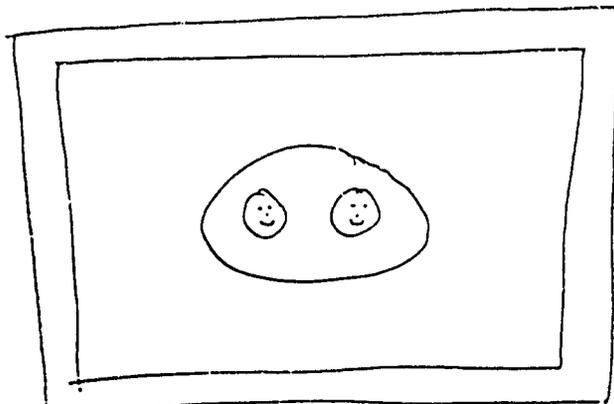
For example, if the class does especially well, you can show your pleasure by drawing a symbol on the board:



If a student solves a difficult problem, you can reward him:



The idea is to use the chalkboard to establish a sense of togetherness between yourself and the class. Fostering the feeling of belonging to a group draws the members of your class closer together and closer to you. They add interest and create unity.

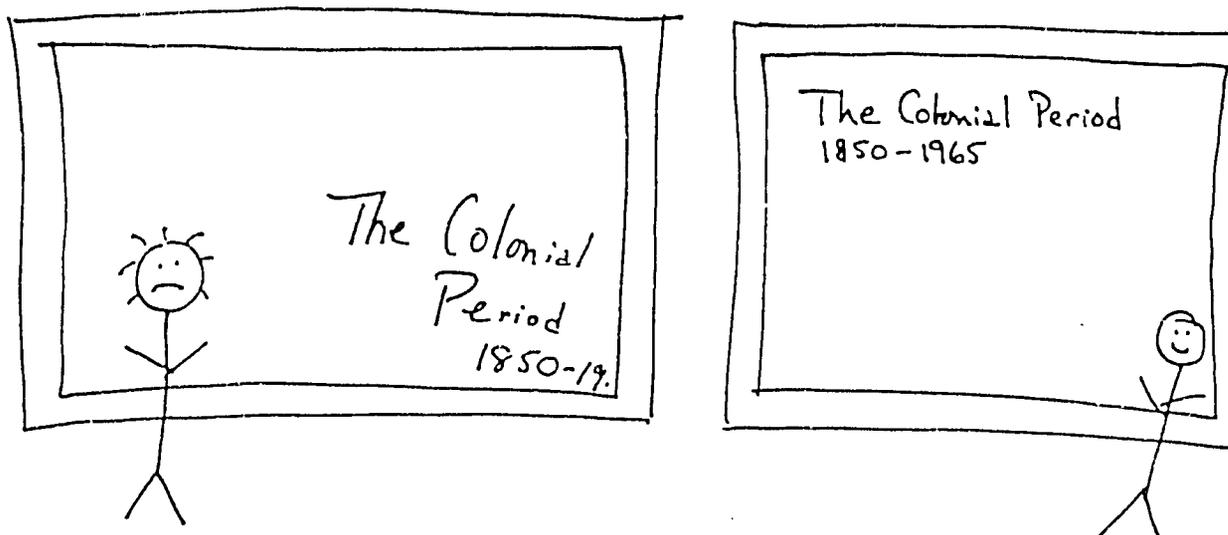


### **III. Methods and Techniques**

There are a variety of methods and techniques that will make your use of the chalkboard more effective. This chapter discusses the use of the whole board, abbreviations, highlighting, symbols, and large and small letters.

## Using the Whole Board

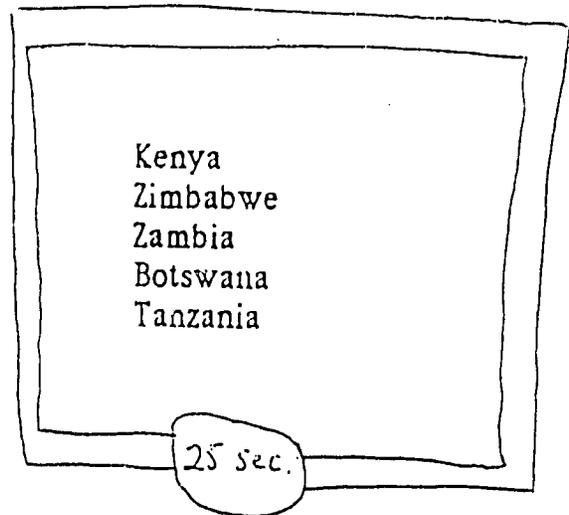
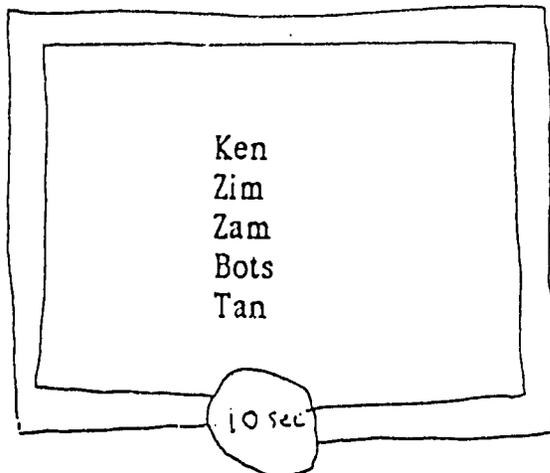
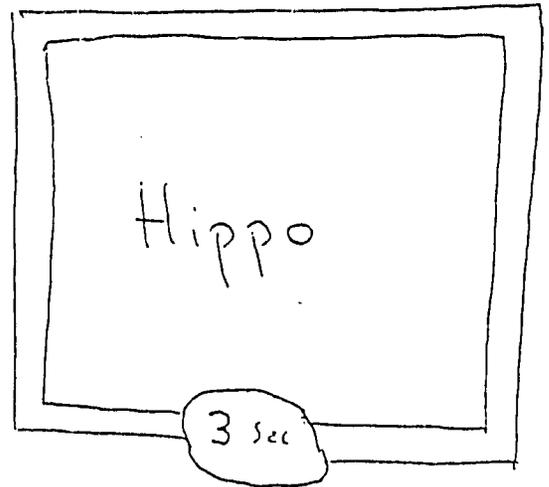
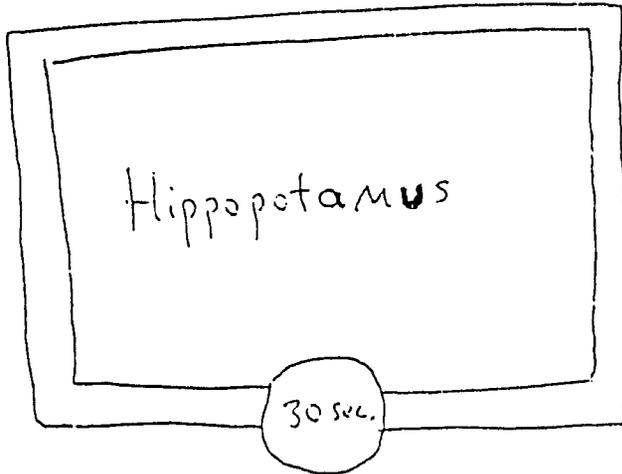
Some teachers use only part of the board and thus run out of space.



Think ahead! Leave yourself enough space for the whole lesson!

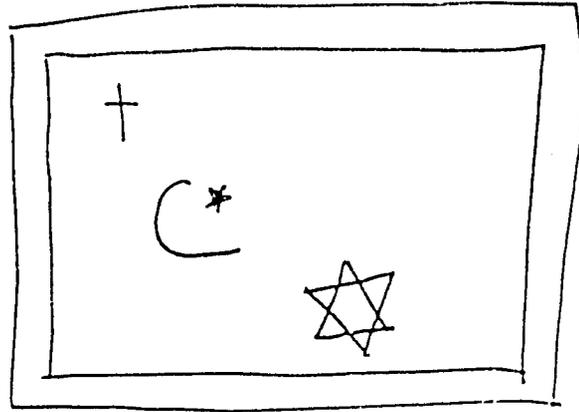
## Abbreviations

Using abbreviations can save you time. It can also help you keep up the pace of your lesson and maintain the attention of your students.

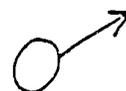
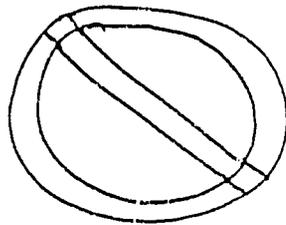


You can invent your own abbreviations to use in the context of your lesson!

**Symbols**

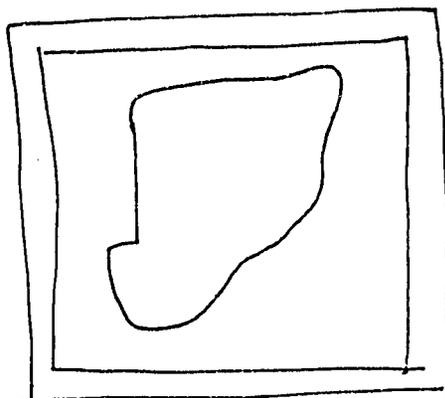


Like abbreviations, symbols can be used in place of words.

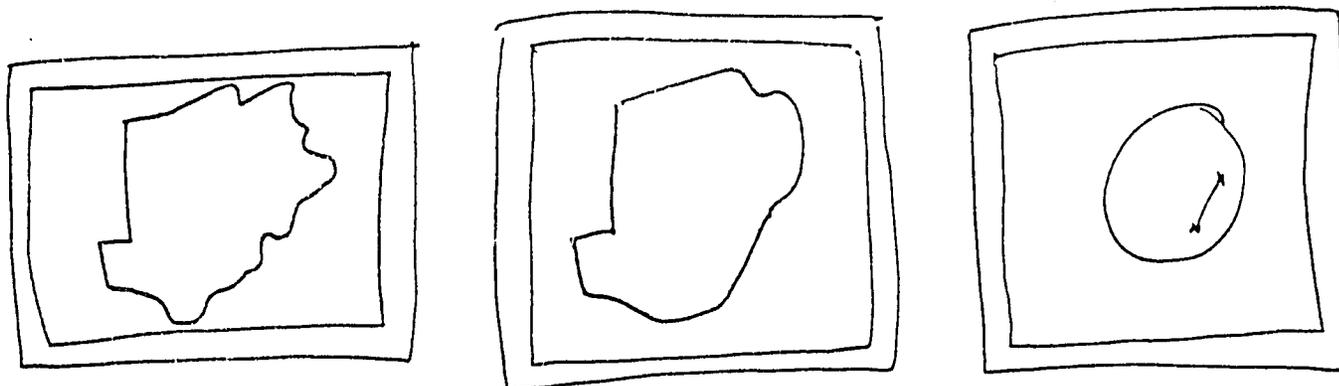


## Approximation & Abstraction

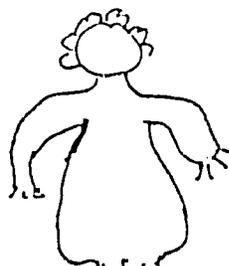
It is useful to learn how to draw quickly a graphic image of a continent or country.



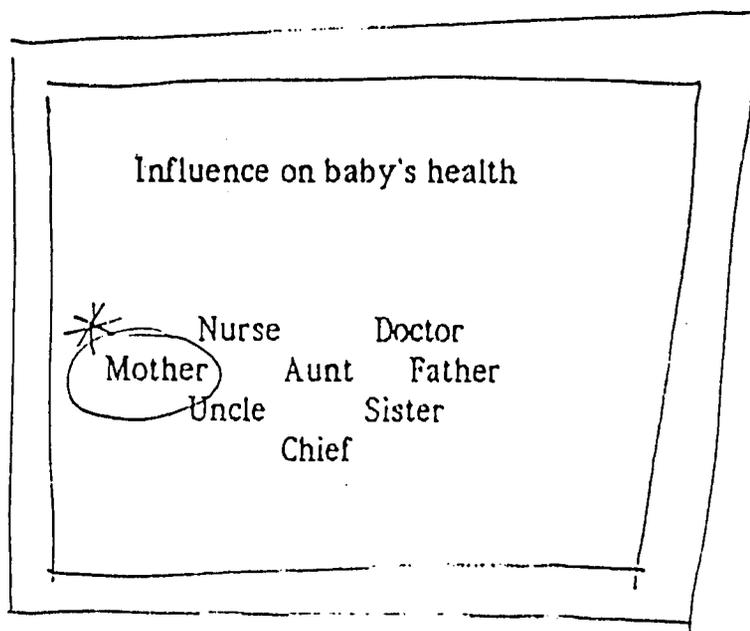
Sometimes you might want a rather crude depiction of something. Other times you might want to be more precise.



It's a good idea to develop symbols for certain things or concepts that are important to the course you are teaching that you can draw quickly and without having to think about it while you are at the chalkboard.



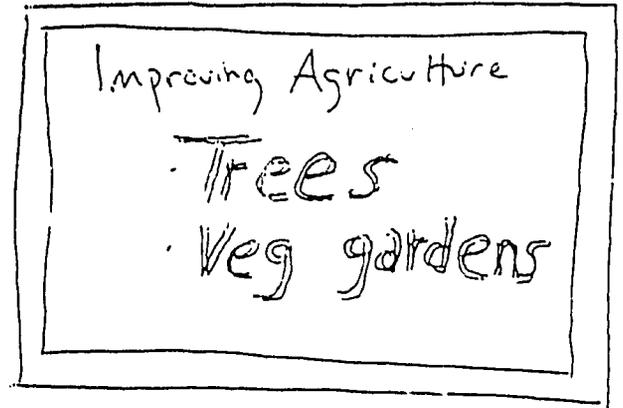
## Highlighting



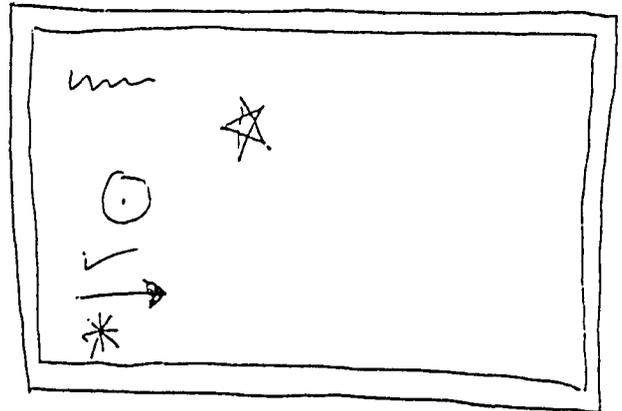
By highlighting certain words and symbols you draw attention to them and give them emphasis, which help the students remember them.

Tips for highlighting:

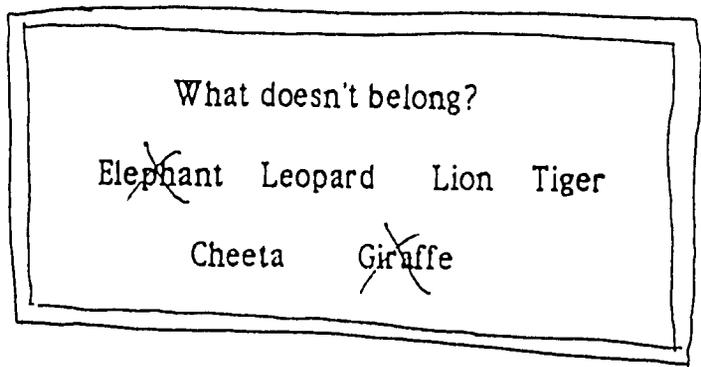
Write with two pieces of chalk.



Use symbols that you develop.

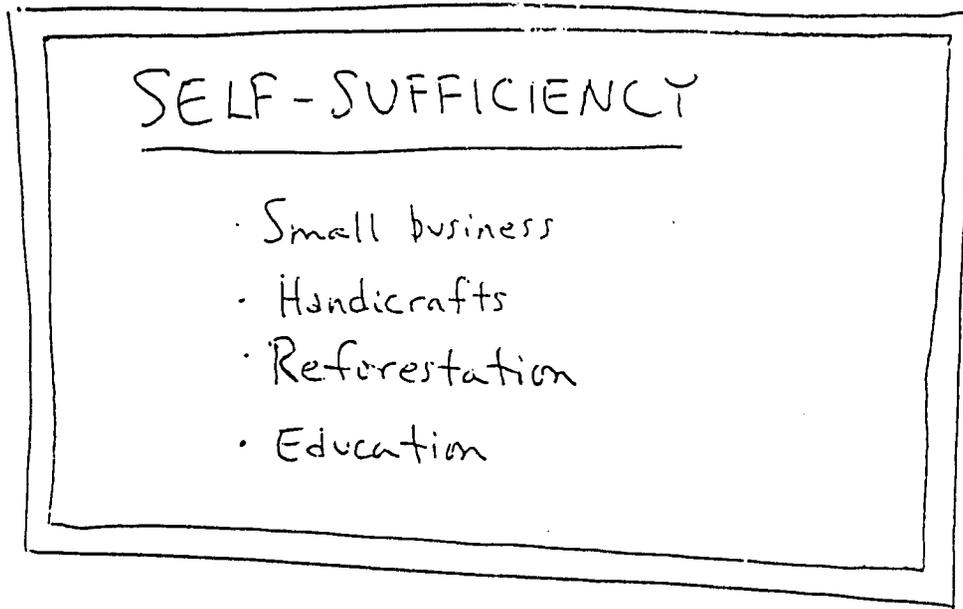


Demonstrate relationships:



You can also use different colours of chalk.

## Large and Small Letters



You can use large and small letters to show how important something is. You can also place words on the board in such a way as to show how they relate to something else. In the above example, the terms "small business," "handicrafts," "education," and "reforestation" are placed in smaller letters and under the key word "self-sufficiency" to show that they are factors that contribute to the achievement of self-sufficiency. In other words, self-sufficiency is the larger concept and small business, handicrafts, education, and reforestation are sub-concepts. The size and placement of the writing reflect the nature of the relationship between the larger concept and the sub-concepts.

#### **IV. Chalkboard as Bulletin Board**

The chalkboard can be used to record such things as daily assignments to be done outside of class, the objective of the lesson, and even a daily proverb. This chapter gives examples of how the chalkboard can be used each day as a bulletin board to post information that every student needs to know.

October 14

Read Chapter 6  
Exercises 1,3,5, 6 and 9

Due October 24:  
10 page paper on the positive  
and negative effectives of  
foreign aid.

Writing assignments on the board helps ensure that they are communicated clearly to each student. Checking the board for assignments thus becomes part of the student's daily class routine.

October 14

The role of teenage  
pregnancy in  
perpetuating poverty.

10:30 am - 5 min. quiz

Proverb

Give a man a fish and  
you feed him for a day.  
Teach a man to fish and  
you feed him for a  
lifetime.

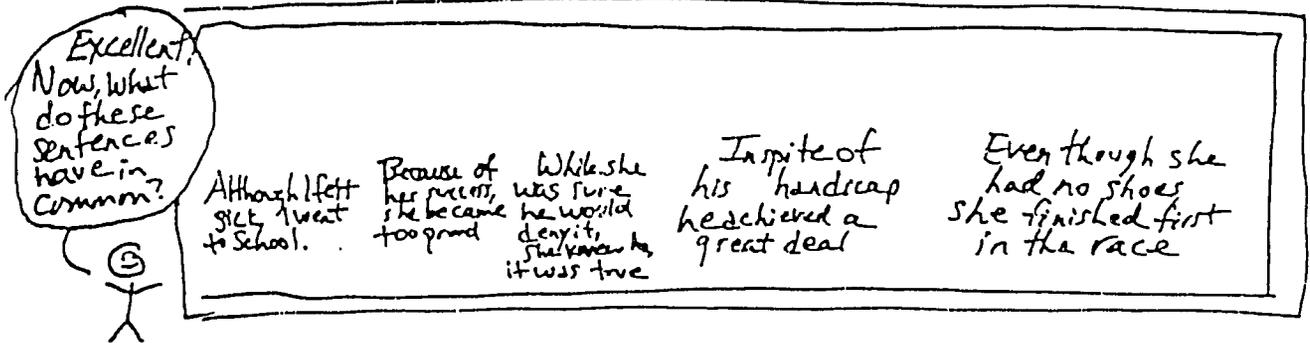
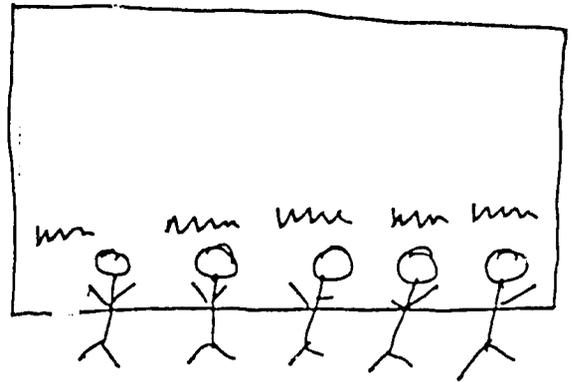
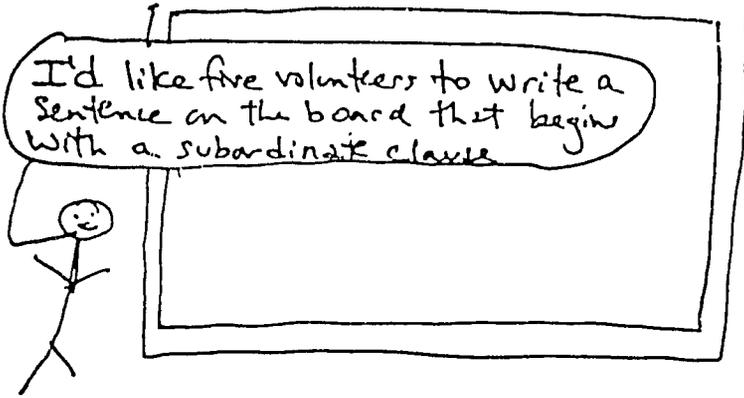
The daily lesson, special events and the daily proverb can also be posted in standard places so the students know where to look for them each day.

You can save time by writing the daily assignment, lesson objective, and proverb on the board before class. Some teachers like to leave them up during the entire class, others like to erase them before starting the lesson and after the students have written down the assignment and had a chance to read the lesson objective and daily proverb.

What other things can be posted?

### V. Student Use

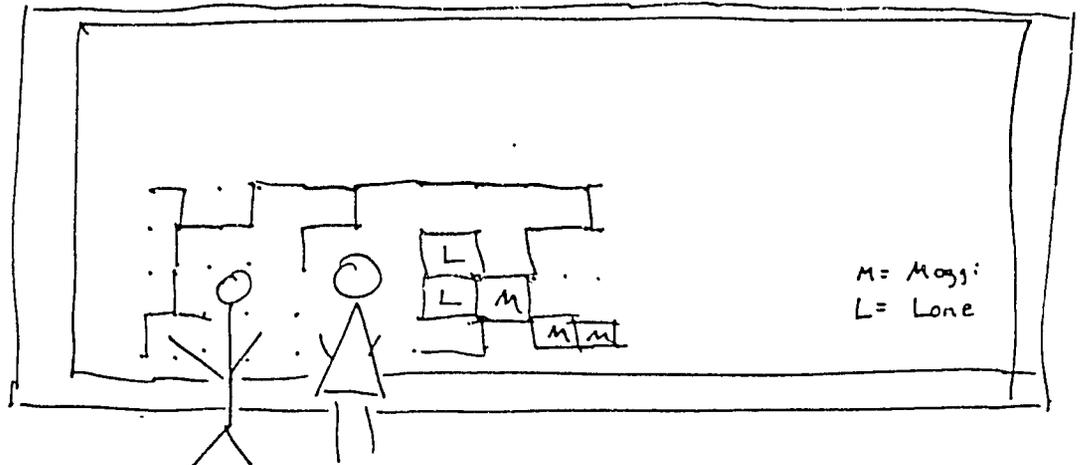
The chalkboard can also be used by students to record exercises which can then be seen and discussed by the class.



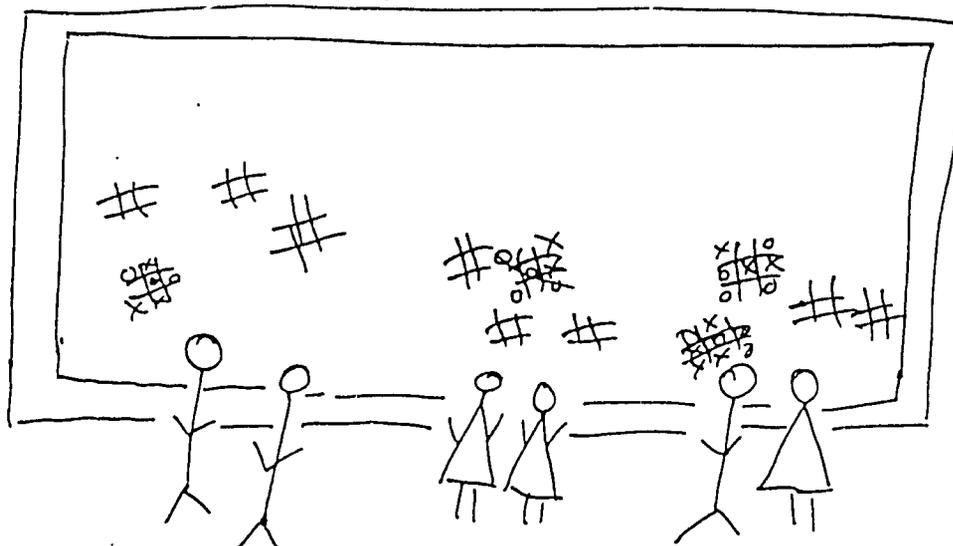
What other ways can you think of to incorporate students writing on the board into a lesson?

## VI. Recreational Use

Recreation is another use for the chalkboard. There may be times when you'll want to give the students a chance to play some games on the board, such as tic tac toe, boxes, or hangman.

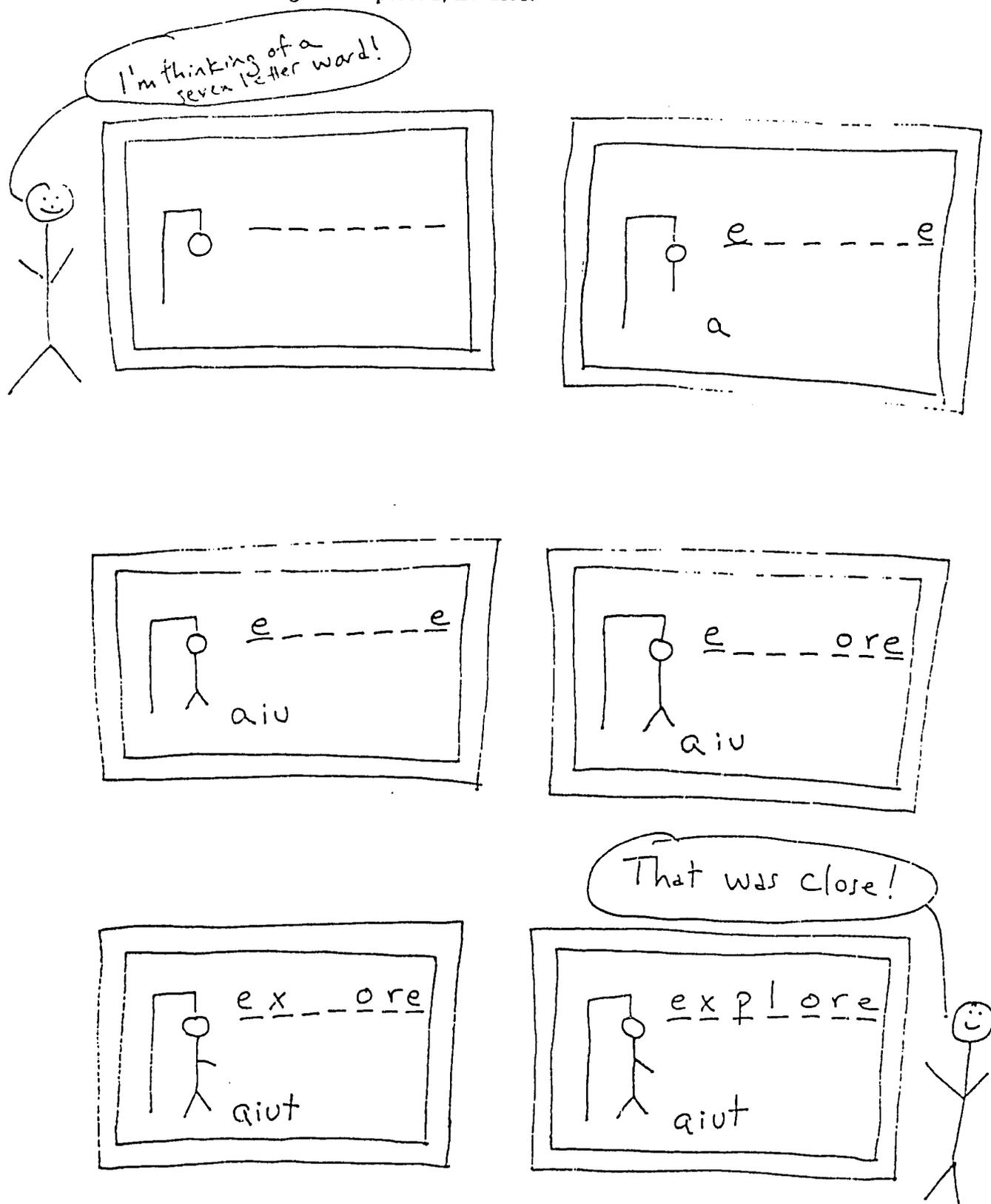


The object of tic tac toe is to place your mark in three squares in a row, whether sideways, up or down or diagonally. One person starts by placing a mark in a square and the other person follows.



The object of boxes is to try to form the more boxes than your partner. You make a grid of dots, as many dots as you want. One person starts by drawing a line to connect two dots. The players take turns, each drawing one line at a time. A person forms a box when he draws the fourth side of a box, and puts his initial in it to claim it as his. He then must draw another line which may or may not create a box. He continues until he cannot make a box. Then his partner takes a turn.

In hangman, a person thinks of a word and draws on the board a blank for every letter of the word. The students try to guess what letters go in what spaces. Every time they guess wrong, the person at the board adds a line to the stick figure at the gallows. The letters guessed incorrectly are written at the bottom of the board. If the word is guessed before the drawing is completed, the man lives and the students win. If the word is not guessed before the drawing is completed, he dies.



Hangman is a bit gruesome, but the drama heightens interest!

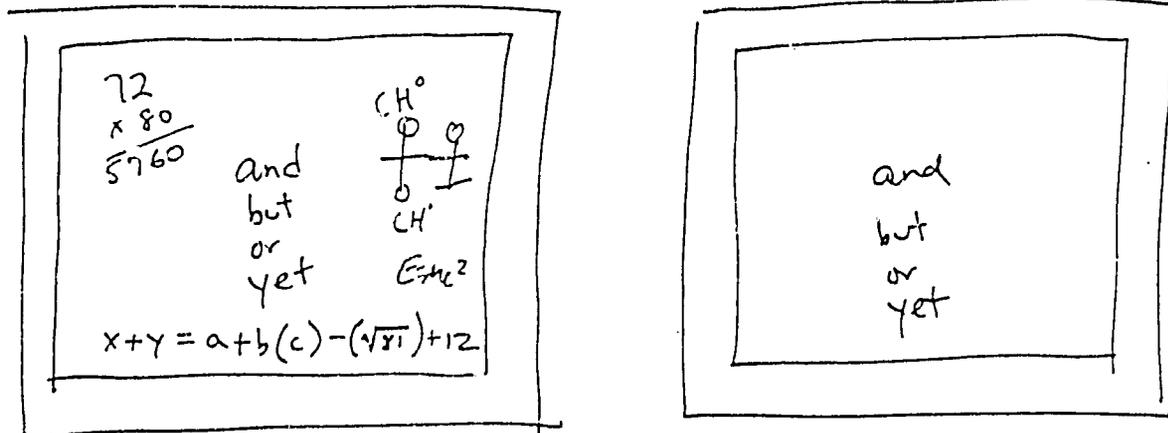
One version of hangman is simply to omit the hangman and put blanks on the board for each letter of a word. Then the students guess what letters fill in the blanks and what the word is. It helps develop deductive thinking.

Students can also take turns at the board leading the class in word games like these.

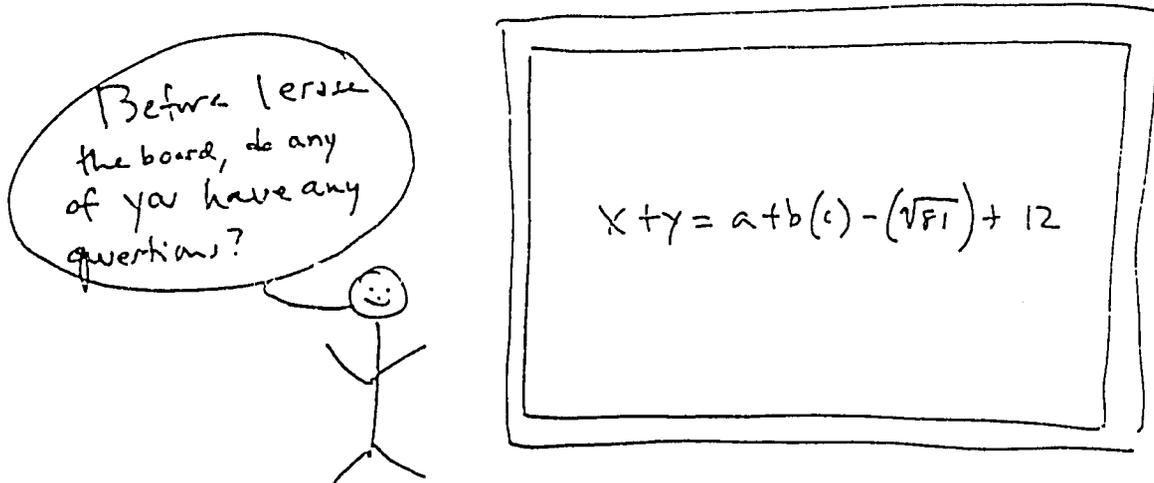
What other games can you think of that can be played on the board?

## VII. Erasing the Chalkboard

Just as what is on the board should be there for a purpose related to the lesson, so erasing the board should be done for a purpose. As a rule, what is on the board should be current and relevant to the lesson at hand. If not, it should be erased. Why clutter up the board--and the minds of the students--with things not related to the lesson?

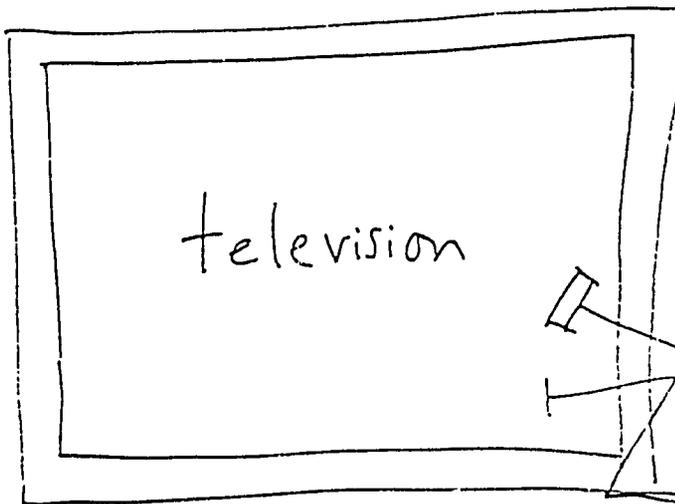
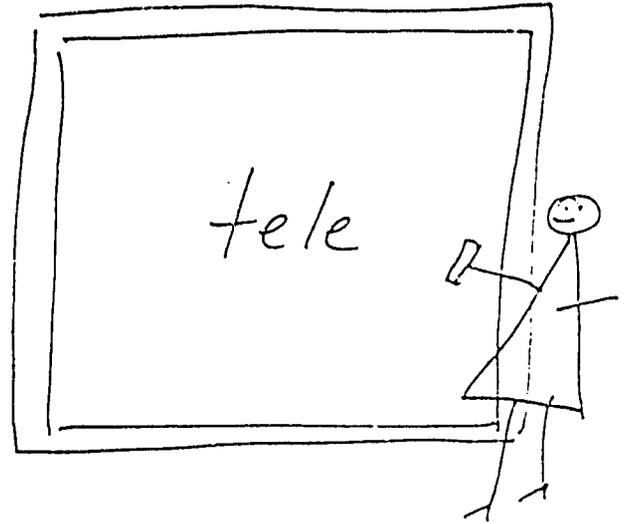
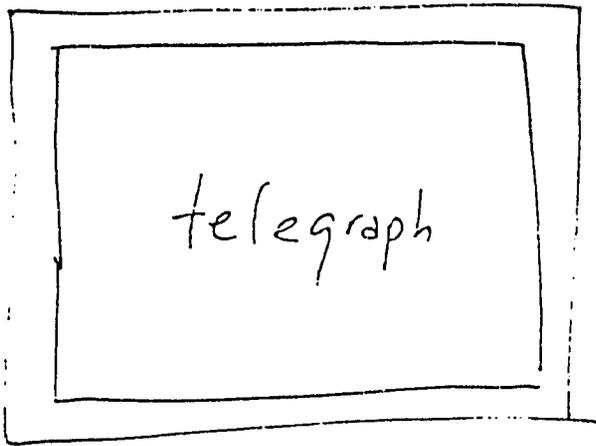


Another rule: Always erase the board completely before beginning a new lesson. And before erasing the board, ask if anyone has any questions about what's on the board before you erase it.



Remember: What goes on the board goes in the mind.

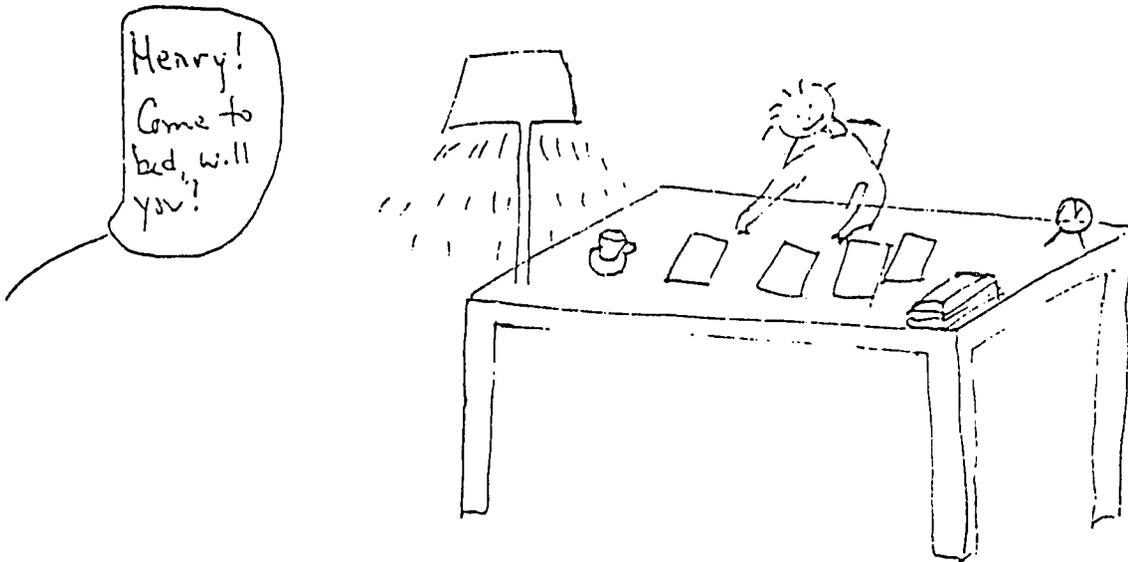
You can also erase words and symbols, or parts of words, to make a point.



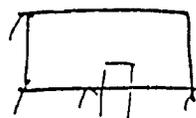
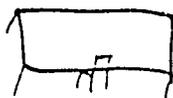
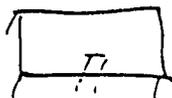
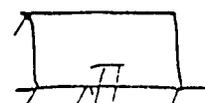
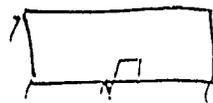
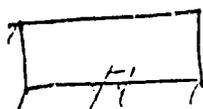
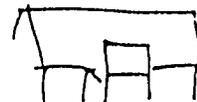
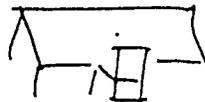
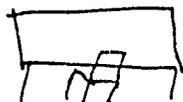
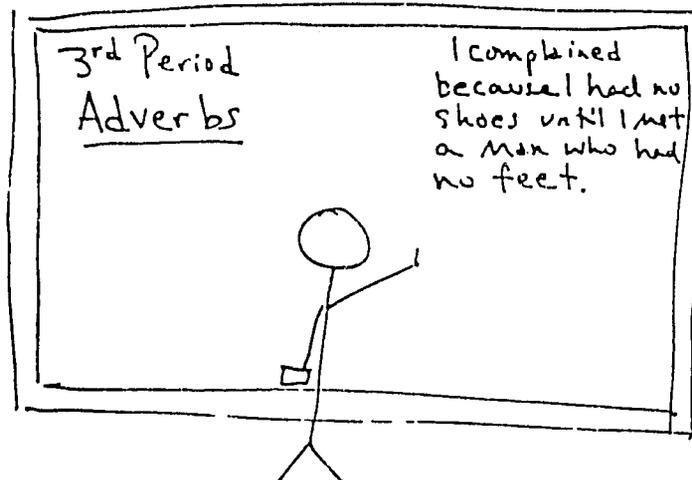
What does the prefix  
"tele" mean?

### VIII. Preparation

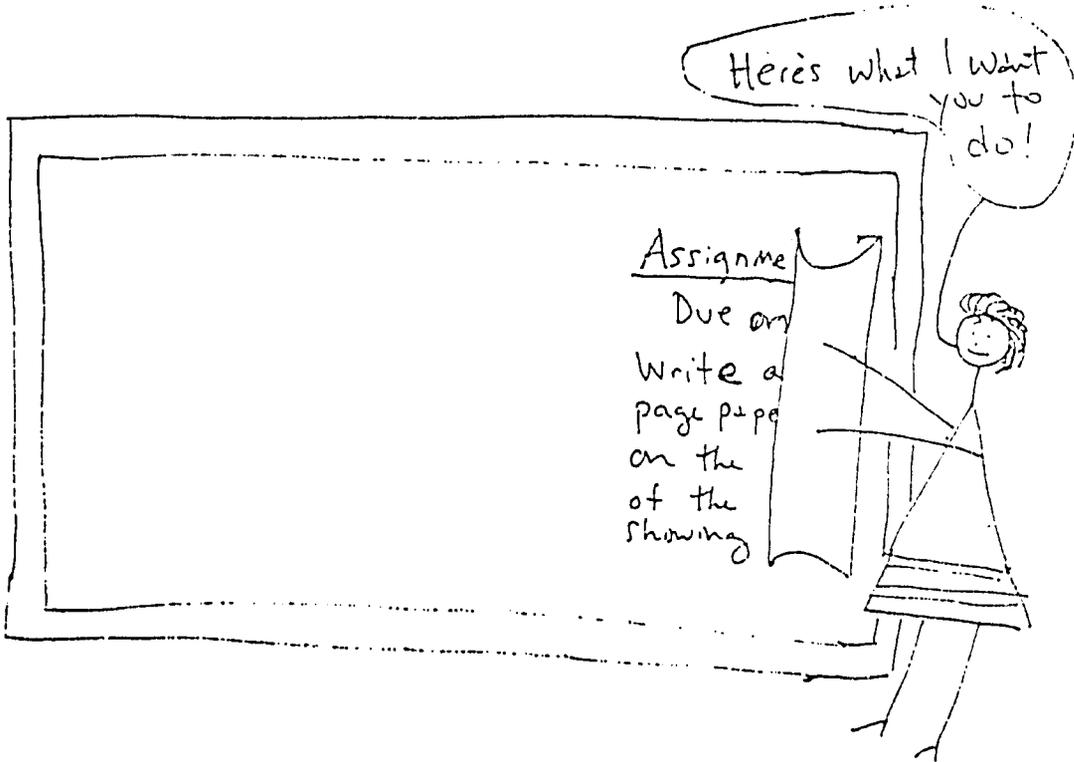
Since the chalkboard is your most important visual aid, it is important to know how you intend to use it. When you are preparing your lesson, include in your planning how you are going to use the chalkboard, and make a diagram of what you want to put on it.



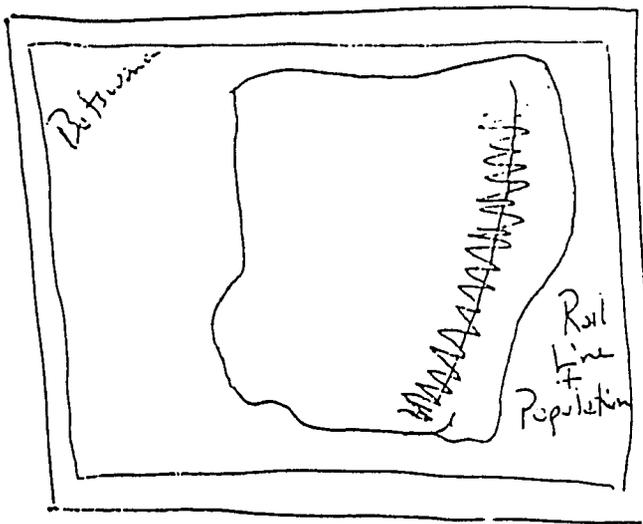
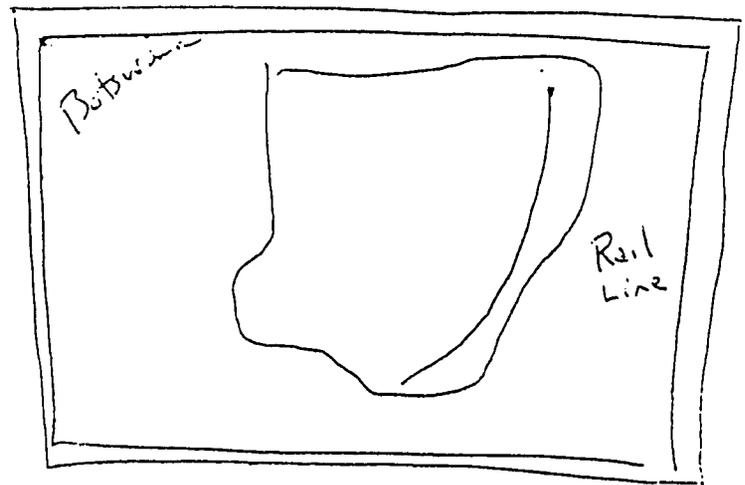
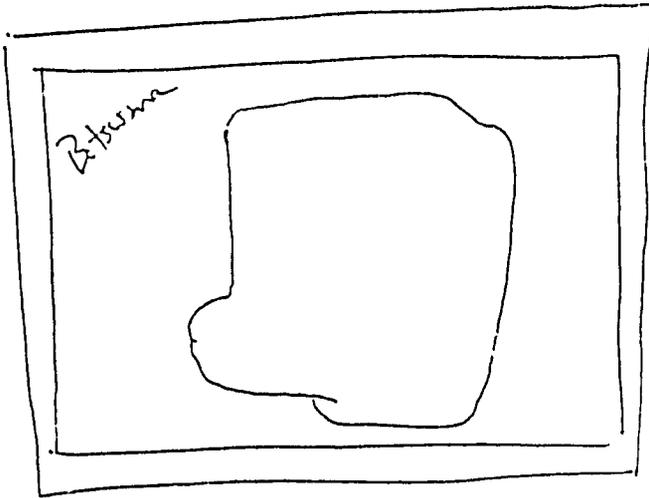
Sometimes there are things that you will want to write on the board before the class begins, so as not to take up class time. We have already talked about writing daily assignments, lesson objectives and proverbs on the board beforehand. What other things would you want to put on the board before class starts?



Sometimes you might want to write something on the board and cover it, taking the cover off to reveal your boardwork at a strategic moment.



By planning your board work ahead of time, you can work out a scheme that leads to a conclusion, filling in parts of it in a step-by-step fashion, until you come to the final point that makes everything fall into place.



## IX. Exercises

The following exercises can be done individually or in groups, with members of the group discussing each other's work.

1. Think of alternative ways of illustrating the following on the board:

$$2 + 3 = 5$$

$$\begin{array}{ccc} 1 & 3 & 9 \\ 4 & 6 & 12 \end{array}$$

The organizational structure of your school.

The organizational structure of your country's government.

The relationship between the village chiefs and the local form of government.

The relationships between the members of your family.

2. Experiment with symbols you can use to represent huts, churches, schools, crops, cattle, industry, government, poverty, war, peace,

3. Develop three ways to depict major ethnic groups in your region. What do you like about each method and why? What other methods could be devised?

4. Choose a lesson plan and devise a chalk board strategy for your lesson.