First. Next. Ready.

Ages 4–7 with a grown-up · 5–10 minutes · Plan and tell steps in order

https://kiddos.ai/explorations/benny-everyday-detectives/first-next-ready

Wonder together

What could come first?

Materials

One clean cloth, one empty plastic plate and one large spoon. A stable clear surface or clean floor mat.

Adult setup — read before trying

Set the folded cloth, plate and spoon separately within comfortable reach. Adult selects large safe materials and a stable reachable surface. No glass, sharp objects, small loose parts, blindfolds or climbing. Pointing, showing and directing an adult are welcome; no speed test or required spoken response.

Try together

1. Set the folded cloth, plate and spoon separately within comfortable reach.
2. Explain the plan: cloth underneath, plate on the cloth, spoon on the plate.
3. First, spread the cloth. Pause and show what changed.
4. Next, put the plate on the cloth. Last, place the spoon on the plate.
5. Point to the finished setup and retell the three steps with first, next and last.
6. Swap roles. Child directs the grown-up, using words, gestures or pointing. They may choose another safe arrangement and explain their own order.

Keep the comparison clear

Keep fixed: same three objects; same clearing and camera for the steps.

What changes: Cloth is unfolded, then plate and spoon are placed in the stated order.

Look for: Benny's shown plan is: first spread the cloth; next put the plate on the cloth; last put the spoon on the plate. This describes his chosen simple order, not the only physically possible way to arrange the objects.

Explain with care

Use first, next and last to follow and retell a three-step setup. Benny's shown plan is: first spread the cloth; next put the plate on the cloth; last put the spoon on the plate. This describes his chosen simple order, not the only physically possible way to arrange the objects.

This is Benny's chosen workable order, not the only possible plan. Welcome another safe order when the child can show how it works.

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Talk about it

What did Benny do first?

Answer cue: He spread the cloth.

What happened after the plate was placed?

Answer cue: He added the spoon to the plate.

Could someone choose another workable plan?

Answer cue: Yes. This is Benny's clear three-step plan; explain and check a different one instead of calling every alternative wrong.

A parent move: Pause after each action and let the child tell or show what comes next.

Start simply: Model one step at a time with the real objects. The child can indicate the next object rather than remember all three steps.

Explore further: Retell a familiar routine in three steps, or have the child invent a safe new arrangement and direct you through it. Ask whether a changed order still works.

Return to it: Return to the game another day with one adult-approved change. Ask which clue or checking method helped this time.

In the classroom

Flexible 15-minute small-group sequence; prepare materials first, and shorten or pause as needed.

2 min · Notice

Introduce the question and invite a first idea.

4 min · Read and compare

Read the clues and pause before the reveal; compare together.

6 min · Try together

Model the household game, then let pairs take turns with adult-selected objects.

3 min · Show your thinking

Retell or demonstrate the shown cloth–plate–spoon order, using words, pointing or an adult helper. Accept pointing, showing or directing an adult; an informal observation, not a score.

Understanding check

Retell or demonstrate the shown cloth–plate–spoon order, using words, pointing or an adult helper.

Answer guidance: Benny's shown plan is: first spread the cloth; next put the plate on the cloth; last put the spoon on the plate. This describes his chosen simple order, not the only physically possible way to arrange the objects.

Participation choices: Accept pointing, showing, words in a home language or directing an adult. Model one step at a time with the real objects. The child can indicate the next object rather than remember all three steps.

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Words to explore

first — Before the other steps.

next — The step that follows.

last — After the other steps in this plan.

Full adult notes and honest limits

Pause after each action and let the child tell or show what comes next.

This is Benny's chosen workable order, not the only possible plan. Welcome another safe order when the child can show how it works.

These are shared activities inspired by Benny's story world. Suggested ages and times are editorial starting points; they are not standardized assessments or measured learning outcomes.

Related reading

Meet Benny in Benny the Forest Detective, an interactive Little Clue Tales forest mystery about noticing clues, counting, matching, sequencing and sharing. This household game is a new carousel activity, not a page or experiment from the book. Browse Kiddos Books for the digital story and Amazon for the physical titles currently available; this link does not promise a matching paperback.

Scientific sources

NAEYC — Making Math Meaningful for Young Children — https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/oct2014/making-math-meaningful

NAEYC / NCTM — Early Childhood Mathematics — https://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/mathematics

Read with confidence. Explore Kiddos Books with a grown-up.

App Store: https://apps.apple.com/app/id6720721998

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