

Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) Exercises – AAC Practice

Mental Word Map

Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA) was originally developed as a language rehabilitation approach for individuals with moderate expressive aphasia. These SFA exercises act as a mental word map to support language recovery and AAC use by helping organize and strengthen connections between words and their meanings:

- Each exercise helps the user **visually and mentally organize a word** by exploring its key features.
- Focuses on **category, function, place, properties/attributes, and related words** to build connections.
- Strengthens **semantic networks** in the brain, making it easier to **retrieve words quickly**.
- Supports **effective communication** by guiding the user to think about word meaning and relationships.
- Encourages caregiver involvement: prompt features, model responses, and engage the user in discussion.
- Promotes **generalization**, so the user can access words across different situations and contexts.

Caregiver Prompts:

- **Guide attention:** “Let’s look at this word. What kind of thing is it?” (Category)
- **Discuss use/function:** “What can we do with this?” (Function/Use)
- **Add context/place:** “Where do we usually see or use this?” (Place)
- **Explore details:** “What does it look like, feel like, or what is it made of?” (Properties/Attributes)
- **Make connections:** “What other words or items are related?” (Related Words)
- **Model and scaffold:** Point to or select answers first, then encourage the user to respond.
- **Reinforce and repeat:** Praise responses, discuss alternatives, and revisit exercises for practice.

Remember: These exercises help the user **map words mentally**, facilitating faster retrieval and more effective use of AAC across different situations and contexts.

Target Word	Category	Function / Use	Place	Properties / Attributes	Related Words
Apple	Fruit	Eat	Kitchen, grocery store	Red/green, round, sweet, crunchy	Banana, pear, snack
Banana	Fruit	Eat	Kitchen, grocery store	Yellow, soft	Apple, fruit, snack
Car	Transportation	Go, Drive	Road, garage	Wheels, window, doors	Bus, truck, drive, trip
Bed	Furniture	Sleep, rest	Bedroom, home	Mattress, frame, blankets, sheets	Pillow, sleep, bedroom
Coffee	Drink	Drink	Kitchen, café	Hot/cold, brown, bitter/sweet	Tea, Tim Hortons
Cookie	Food/Dessert	Eat	Kitchen, bakery	Sweet, baked, small	Cake, chocolate, snack
Doctor	Person / Profession	Heal, examine, treat	Hospital, clinic	Woman, man	Nurse, hospital, medicine
Family	People	Love	Home, park	Mother, father, children	Friends, home, parents

Phone	Communication	Call, talk	Home, office	Buttons, screen, small or handheld	Family, friend, doctor
Salad	Food/Lunch	Eat	Kitchen, restaurant	Tomato, cucumber, leaves	Sandwich, soup, vegetables
Sandwich	Food/Lunch	Eat	Kitchen	Bread, meat, veggies	Salad, burger
Soup	Food	Eat	Kitchen, restaurant	Hot, liquid, can have vegetables or meat	Salad, stew, meal
Tea	Drink	Drink	Kitchen, café	Hot or cold, liquid, sometimes sweet	Coffee, beverage, cup
Teeth	Body part	Bite, chew, speak	Home, dentist office	White, clean, dirty, pain, healthy	Brush, dentist, mouth
TV	Activities	Watch	Living room, home	Small, big, new, old	Remote, movie, show
Winter	Weather	Cold	Outdoors, city	Cold, snowy, short days	Summer, snow, winter games