

Pushes and pulls move things



Lesson at a glance

Open with one pull toy: give a gentle pull, then a gentle push, and ask how the toy started moving — do not name the words yet. Teach push and pull with a live ball and string-toy model, then send groups of three to four onto a cleared floor with one soft ball and one pull toy each. Every child names push or pull after each try; ready children also say what changed. Carpet share choruses the words, then a short partner talk links pushes and pulls to everyday jobs.

Learning objectives

- Use a push or a pull to start, stop or change how something moves
- Name whether they used a push or a pull
- With support, say one thing that changed (start, stop, faster or turn)

Before the bell – prep

Clear a safe floor space before the bell. Gather one soft ball and one pull toy (box or bag with a short string is fine) per group of three to four — aim for four to six groups so everyone is active at once. Keep only the demo pull toy beside you at the start.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
soft ball	1	group	classroom	a pair of rolled-up socks
pull toy (small box or bag with a short string, or a pull-along animal on wheels)	1	group	classroom	a small cardboard box with a string taped on as a pull handle
clear floor space for safe rolling	1	class	classroom	a short corridor space with an adult at each end
picture of a builder pushing a wheelbarrow (IWB image or simple printed photo)	1	class	classroom	teacher mimes pushing a wheelbarrow if no picture is available

Safety watch-point

Gentle pushes and pulls only; roll balls away from feet and faces; no throwing; keep short strings away from necks; leave space between groups.



Teaching moves

- **Getting Started:** Have only the pull toy ready. Give one gentle pull toward you, then one gentle push away. Ask how the toy started moving. Accept any ideas; keep it short and curious — do not say push or pull yet.
- **Push or pull?:** Hold up the soft ball and ask which will start it rolling. Model once: push the ball away and say that is a push; pull the string toy toward you and say that is a pull. Do not list start, stop, faster and turn on the board — coach those orally later for children who are ready.
- **Push and pull play:** Send groups out with one ball and one pull toy each. Stay mobile and ask after every try: was that a push or a pull? Stretch only for ready children: what changed — start, stop, faster, or turn? Every child needs at least one push and one pull in the 12 minutes.
- **What did we notice?:** Invite three or four children to show or mime one floor action. Class choruses push or pull after each. If someone mixes them up, re-model with the ball: hands move away = push; hands bring it toward or along with you = pull. Recording here is oral — no Investigation Journal page.
- **Who uses pushes and pulls?:** Show the builder pushing a wheelbarrow and name it a push; mime pulling a trolley and name it a pull. Anchor back to their ball and string toy, then open partner talk: one push and one pull from play or from the shared examples. Keep it oral only.
- **Tidy and remember:** Count balls and pull toys back into the box together. Exit check with two children: show me a push, show me a pull — class thumbs up. Optional oral home notice: spot one push and one pull tonight.

What it should show

Most children will correctly name a push (ball rolled away) and a pull (string toy came toward or along with them). Ready children may also say start, stop, faster or turn. If a child calls every move a push, re-ask did your hands push it away, or pull it toward you?

Misconceptions & interventions

- **Any movement is a push — children call the string-toy action a push too.** — Ask: did your hands push it away, or pull it toward you or along with you? Re-model both actions side by side with the ball and the pull toy.
- **Picking the toy up counts as making it move the STE way.** — Remind them the hook rule: make it move without picking it up. Point back to rolling the ball or pulling the string on the floor.



Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Stay beside the teacher table and name only push or pull after each supported try with the ball or string toy.	• After naming push or pull, try a soft side push on the ball to make it turn and say what changed.	• Compare a bigger push and a smaller push on the ball and say which went further; name start, stop, faster or turn for each try.

Cross-curricular hook

Link to PE locomotor language — push a ball away, pull a partner’s scarf gently in a follow-the-leader game.