

1

Start them together

Pair two students with a job each that has a clear start and finish, such as threading beads and doing up buttons, and hold both of them still until the signal. Drop your hand once for both of them. Two events can only be compared when they start at the same moment, and the signal is what makes that true.

"Hands off until I drop my hand. Ready. Go."

"Who finished first? Who took longer?"

Run it a second time and let one student start early on purpose, then ask the class whether the answer can be trusted. What they should notice is that the finishing order no longer tells you which job took longer.

2

I took longer because

With the pair finished, give the student who took longer the sentence to complete rather than a question to answer. The reason should come from the job, such as having more beads or more buttons, not from how hard it felt.

"Finish this for me. I took longer because..."

"Was that about the job, or about how it felt?"

Swap the jobs between the two students and run it again. A student whose reason was really about the job will give the opposite answer the second time.

I took longer because

It took less time because

They finished first because

We started at the same time