

Implementation Tool Guide: Position Cards

Overview

The Position Cards are a simple yet powerful way to bring reflection, literacy, and focus into any team sport. Each card represents a position within a sport—like point guard, setter, or defender—and includes a short description of the role on one side and a reflective prompt on the other.

This tool encourages students to think critically about their role, strengths, and decision-making within gameplay. It transforms those high-energy, transitional moments in class into opportunities for literacy and focus—helping students connect movement to meaning.

While originally developed for basketball, the Position Cards can be adapted for any team sport—volleyball, soccer, flag football, or even cooperative fitness games.

Setup & Materials

All you really need to get started are the Position Cards themselves and a little space for students to talk, think, and reflect.

Everything else listed below is purely optional—small add-ons that can take the tool a step further or add structure as you make it part of your class routine:

- Dry-erase markers or clipboards: for short written responses or quick note-taking.
- Team Strategy Wall: a display area where prompts, position descriptions, or student responses can rotate throughout a unit.
- Reflection Journals: if you want students to track how their thinking evolves over time.
- Exit Slips: a quick end-of-class option where students write a short summary of the discussion they had or a thought that stuck with them from the day's prompt.
- Timeframe: 3–5 minutes per use (can be done at any point in class).

How It Works

1. Introduce the Concept:

Begin by explaining that every team sport has different roles or positions, each requiring unique strengths and responsibilities. Tell students that their goal is to explore where they might fit best—based on their skills, mindset, and approach to the game.

2. Distribute the Cards:

Pass out one card per small group or individual. Have them read the short description and think about what that position requires.

3. Reflect and Respond:

On the back, students respond to a question such as:

- Which position best fits your strengths and why?
- What skill or mindset would you need to improve to excel in this position?
- Which position challenges you most, and how might you overcome that challenge?

Their responses can be discussed with peers before transitioning into skill work or gameplay.

4. Discuss or Rotate:

After 1–2 minutes of reflection, have students share their thoughts with a partner or small group. For longer units, rotate the cards so students explore multiple roles over time.

5. Connect to Skill Practice:

Use their reflections as a bridge into gameplay or drills that highlight the roles they've just discussed.

- After a basketball discussion about the responsibilities of guards versus forwards, run a drill that emphasizes ball movement and positional spacing.
- In volleyball, connect a reflection on the setter's or libero's role to a serve-receive or defensive rotation activity.
- In soccer, move from talking about midfield versus defensive responsibilities into a transition or spacing drill.
- In flag football, tie a conversation about offensive and defensive roles to a play-reading or coverage practice.

When to Use

- Beginning of class – to focus attention and set the tone.
- Mid-unit or skill day – to anchor reflection before or after movement.
- End of unit – as a lead-in to the Court Vision Assessment or other written reflections.

Teacher Script (Optional)

"Before we jump in today, take a look at your Position Card. Every role on a team matters, and each one requires different strengths. Read your card and think about what part of this description connects to you. What does this position need? What strengths do you bring to the table? Take a moment and discuss with a partner."

Why It Works / Checks All the Boxes

✓ Engagement: Students move, talk, and think at the same time—transforming reflection from a passive writing task into an active conversation. It uses their natural energy and curiosity instead of fighting against it.

✓ Literacy: The cards naturally embed reading and speaking into PE. Students decode short texts, interpret meaning, use content-specific vocabulary, and communicate understanding—without ever feeling like they've left the gym.

✓ Confidence & Culture: The cards change the question from “Am I good at this?” to “Where do I fit best?” helping students focus on self-awareness and contribution rather than comparison.

✓ Relevance: Every question on the cards ties reflection directly to the sport at hand—making literacy feel personal, purposeful, and instantly applicable.

✓ Efficiency: This tool takes only a few minutes but can completely shift the tone of a class period. It fits seamlessly into transitions or downtime without cutting into activity time.

✓ Adaptability: The Position Cards can be applied to any team sport or cooperative activity. Whether discussing offensive roles in flag football or communication dynamics in volleyball, the tool adapts to your unit focus and student age group.

✓ Equity Through Expression: Students who might struggle to “show” success through performance gain a new entry point—one rooted in voice, reasoning, and understanding. It levels the playing field by valuing different kinds of strengths and intelligences.