

# Games and Activities

## - Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum

**THINK-ALOUD-** Tell your students what strategy you will practice while reading aloud (visualizing, predicting, making inferences, etc). Read a passage to the students and model the strategy. Then, allow students to try thinking aloud while reading with a partner.

**PROBABLE PASSAGE-** The teacher gives a written excerpt to students (on the overhead or on paper) with 7-10 key terms missing. Then, they give students the key terms out of order. Students group the words into categories, such as person, place, thing, action, etc). When finished, they put the words into the passage, read it, and predict what the upcoming lesson / story will be about.

**SAY SOMETHING-** In pairs, students take turns reading a little. When the student reading stops, they clear up any confusion, ask a question, make a comment, connect it to something they know, etc. Afterwards, their partner responds, and then takes over the reading where they left off.

**DOUBLE-ENTRY JOURNALS-** Have students fold their notebook paper in half. On the left hand side, they write “Notes from the Text”, and on the right, they write “Notes from my Mind.” Then, on the left hand side, while they’re reading, students record words or quotes from the reading. On the right hand side, they write their comments about what they recorded on the left hand side.

**SOMEBODY WANTED BUT SO-** This strategy helps students summarize a story (fiction or nonfiction). The teacher writes up the following categories on the board: somebody, wanted, but, so. Then, as a class or in groups, students fill in the categories to retell the story. Somebody (characters), Wanted (events of a plot), But (examining the conflict), So (resolutions).

**THINK, WRITE, PAIR, SHARE-** Teacher asks the students some questions to get them brainstorming. Give students time to think and write down any relevant words or phrases. Then, students work in pairs to discuss and expand one another’s responses. Finally, students share their responses with the rest of the class.

**FOUR CORNERS VOCABULARY-** Have students fold their paper into four equal parts (or this can be done on index cards for more advanced students). In the upper left corner, students write the vocabulary word. In the upper right corner, students draw a picture, list synonyms and antonyms, and/or the word with prefixes and suffixes. In the bottom left corner, students write a sentence/s using the vocabulary word in context. Finally, in the bottom right corner, students write the definition of the vocabulary word.

**WORD TREE-** Students write the vocabulary word in a box. Below that box, more boxes are drawn, with lines connecting them to the box above. In those boxes, students write the meaning of the word in different academic contexts.

**WORD CATEGORIES-** Students try to place vocabulary words into categories such as “People,” “Places,” and “Things”. The teacher then helps them to correct any errors they’ve made. Then, after the words are in the correct categories, students are asked a series of questions about the material that will be taught. Students make educated guesses by observing the words in the categories. An adaptation for advanced students could be that they have to group the words and try to come up with the category names themselves.

**WORD SPLASH-** On paper, or index cards, the teacher has students write a specific topic (prefix, sea life, the Great Depression, etc) in a medium circle in the middle. Then, students write specific vocabulary words that are connected to the topic, all around the middle circle.

**VOCABULARY SPINNERS-** Take a big index card, draw a big circle and divide it into 8 “pie slices”. In the center of the circle, attach a metal arrow that can be spun. In the “pie slices”, write the following categories: free, splash, pronounce, sentence, draw, act, spell, and define.

**NEWS BROADCAST-** A student, or a group, read a selection (from the text, a workbook, teacher’s lecture notes) out loud to the class. The class listens to the broadcast. The students presenting can add nonsense words, or take out important words from the selection while reading. The students listening will quickly raise their hands to be called on in order to correct the mistake. After a selection has been read, the main points of the selection will be written either as a class or in groups.

**ELABORATION STATION-** Put students in groups. Each group needs only one sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. The teacher tells the class to write a paragraph about \_\_\_\_\_ (describing, retelling, explaining). One student begins by writing the first sentence of the paragraph. Then, they pass the pencil and paper to the next student in the group to write the next sentence, etc. They may help each other with spelling, wording, etc, but they may not write for another student. This can be done as a group grade, or as a race.

**HOW AM I READING?-** Students work in pairs. The first student begins by reading a short passage out loud to their partner 3 times. The second student fills out a chart for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> times. The chart asks if, after reading, the student can remember more words, read more quickly, read smoother, and read with expression. Then, the second student reads a different short passage, and the first student checks their fluency. The more students read important passages, the better they will remember key vocabulary and comprehend more.

**STUDENT-MADE TRIVIA-** Teacher assigns one vocabulary word (old, current, or new) to each student. On index cards, students write the vocabulary word, a sentence that uses the word, their definition of the word, an illustration of the word, and the book and page number on which the word is located. All cards are collected by the teacher, who mixes them up and then begins using them as trivia for the class, so they can guess the vocabulary words.

**KWL CHARTS-** Teachers and students work together to list (on a KWL chart) what they Know about a topic, or a few sub-topics, before the reading. They also brainstorm for things that they Want to know about the topic/s. Then, a mini-lecture, video, reading excerpt, or presentation is given. This can be done as a whole class or in groups or pairs. Then, the teacher and students come back together to list what they Learned about the topic. The teacher can influence their answers to reflect what is important.

**SILENT VIDEOS-** The teacher shows students a video clip with no sound. It could be a video from History, Science, a story, etc. Students write down what they believe to be the actual words, or the main points from the video. This can be done in groups so they can present while the video clip is running. After all groups present, the teacher then plays the clip with sound, and the students take notes. The group that had the closest guess wins. In English, while the students write, the teacher could check for quotation marks, spelling, capital letters, vocabulary, adjectives, etc.

**BEFORE AND AFTER SURVEY-** Students are given a questionnaire before a reading, video, lecture, presentation, etc. The handout has a series of blanket statements (like “Cars are the biggest factor in destroying the Ozone Layer.”), which students must label as fact or opinion, cause or effect, or number in order of importance. After the reading, presentation, etc, students answer the same questionnaire again to see if their opinions have changed. Then, their responses are discussed in groups or with the whole class.

**MOST IMPORTANT WORD-** After reading a selection, students individually decide which word they read is the most important and why. Then, they get into groups and discuss their chosen word. The group must decide to agree or disagree and tell why. As a class, they discuss the most important word/s from the selection.

**DICTIONARY RACES-** Students start by holding the dictionary on top of their heads. When the teacher says go, students look up a word they got “stuck” on while reading as a class. The first student to find the word gets to read the definition to the class.

**THE DICTIONARY GAME-** The teacher writes categories on the board, such as “Food, clothing, name, place, animal”, etc. The students should work in groups. When the teacher writes a letter on the chalkboard, the students try to find a word that begins with that letter for each category. They write their answers on a paper that has the five categories listed. After one or two minutes, the teacher says “Pencils down.” The students tell their words to the teacher, who writes them on the chalkboard under each category. Each word that was not repeated by any other group is a point for the respective group.

# More Games & Activities

**FLYSWATTER**- Write 10-20 vocab. words on the board. Split the students into two teams. One member from each team goes up to the board. Teacher says the definition, and the first student to hit the correct word with the flyswatter gets a point for their team. (This can also be played on paper, with two players and different color crayons. When the teacher says the definition, students mark the word first. They count up their points at the end to see who won.)

**SENTENCE SCRAMBLER**- Write at least 5 sentences. Write each word of a sentence on separate index cards and put the sentence in an envelop. (You will have 5 envelopes, one for each sentence). Divide your class into 5 teams. Give each team an envelop. When Teacher says go, students open their envelop, put the cards in order to form a sentence, and conjugate/punctuate/write true or false/etc. Students write the correct answer on one sheet of paper for the group. When time is up (1-2 min), teacher yells “Switch”, and the groups switch envelopes. Teacher should explain HOW the groups pass envelopes before beginning the activity. Teacher collects the papers at the end, and the group with the least amount of errors wins.

**DRY ERASE BOARDS**- Teacher asks a question, gives a definition, etc. and students write the answer on the mini white boards. When finished, the students can hold them up in the air to race for the correct answer, or they can keep them down and the teacher can check their answer.

**OVERHEAD SOCCER**- Draw a soccer field on the overhead projector. Use a little round “hole-punched” paper for the soccer ball. Divide the class into two teams. Each team has three questions in a row to score a goal, and then it is the other team’s turn to go for a goal. The team with the most points wins.

**JEOPARDY**- Make 5 categories, with 5 ?’s under each (500pts. for the hardest question, 100pts. for the easiest question). Write each category at the top of the chalkboard, with 500, 400, 300, 200, and 100 underneath of each one. Put students into teams, and have them take turns asking for a category and a question for a given amount of points. After 1-2 minutes, if the team does not have the correct answer, the other team gets to answer it. Whoever gets it right receives the points for their team.

**WHEEL OF FORTUNE**-Students are divided into 2-4 teams. The teacher has written five categories with five quotes, phrases, or vocabulary words written under each category. The five categories are written on the board. A team asks the teacher for a particular category. The teacher draws lines for the words or letters of the phrase, quote, etc. on the board. The team rolls the dice 2 times (#2-5 buy consonants, # 1 and 6 buy vowels). Each letter = 200 pts, each word = 500 pts., and solving it = 700pts. After it is solved, if that team can use/explain that phrase, word, quote correctly, they will be awarded a 200pt. bonus. Each team takes turns to solve the phrase, quote, word, etc. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

**PICTIONARY / CHARADES**- The class is broken up into 2-3 teams. One team member goes up to the board and chooses an index card, face down, from the teacher. They read the quote, phrase, word and then have to draw it on the board, or act it out. No words can be used, or the other team automatically gets their point. The correct answer must be made by that person's team within 2 minutes. If the answer is incorrect, the other teams get to guess to win the point for their team.

**ROW/TABLE RACES**- One paper is passed from one student to the next at the same table, or down a row of desks, to fill in the steps to get a correct answer. This could be the steps in the Scientific Method, a multi step math problem, conjugations of verbs, a quick write story with no errors, etc. They hold up the paper when finished. The first three will be read by the teacher. The first paper to have all steps correct wins that point.

**HOT POTATO**- Game #1- a soft ball/stuffed animal is passed from one person to the next while music is playing. When the music stops, whoever has the ball must answer the teacher's question. The teacher can ask a student helper to stop the music with their back to the class, so no one knows when the music will stop. Game #2- Students can write their own review questions and answers. Then, the student who has the ball asks their review question. They throw the ball to a student who has their hand raised. That student answers the question and then asks one of their own. Then, they throw the ball to a different student and so on.

**GRAB IT**- Students play this in pairs. Place flash cards (can be student made) face up on the table. You can also use index cards that say "True" and "False" or "Yes" and "No", etc. When the teacher asks the question, says the definition, etc, the first student to grab the correct card gets the point.

**BINGO**-Give each student a blank bingo sheet (5 squares by 5 squares – 25 total). Have students write one free space anywhere. Then, they fill in the rest of the squares with vocabulary words, phrases, math answers or problems, etc. The teacher would have 25 cut squares, folded, with the question and answer on each. Then, the teacher randomly picks up one of the 25 cut squares to read the question (which the students don't see). The student finds the answer (which they wrote on one of their 25 squares) and places an X in the upper right or left corner. When they have 5 in a row, they shout "Bingo". They repeat all of their answers, so the teacher can make sure they do have a Bingo. After the first student shouts bingo, you can continue on with the same game until someone else gets a bingo, or you can start all over, using the same Bingo sheet, but have students put an X in another corner.

**BOARD RACES**- Divide the class into 2-3 teams. Each team sends one person up to their designated space on the chalkboard. When the teacher asks the question, whoever writes the correct answer first gets the point for their team.

**GUESS WHO/WHAT?**- This can be played as a whole class, or split with the teacher leading one group and the assistant with the other. One student from the group goes out into the hall, with the door closed, for a moment. The rest of the group decides (quietly, in secret) who/what that person is. When the person is led back into the room, they are given three clues by different group members. Then they guess who/what they are (vocabulary word, famous person in history, important term, character, etc). If they don't guess it right, they are given two more clues. If they guess right, they could win a prize of some sort, decided by the teacher, or give the student prize choices.

**MATCHING (FLASHCARDS)**- Students play this in pairs. One student lays their cards face up in front of them, and the other lays theirs down bottom up in front of them, opposite of their partner. Then, students take turns matching the cards (one answer/picture with the correct word). The student with the most matches wins.

**TEACHER VS. STUDENT**- This can be played as a whole class, or in groups led by the teacher or the assistant. The teacher makes statements to the class. If the statement given is correct, students remain standing. If the statement is false, students sit down. The point is all or nothing. If one student messes it up, the teacher gets the point. (Usually the students end up winning, and they love it!)

**INTEGERS WITH DOMINOES**- Students play the game of Dominoes as usual. When the game ends, all players total their points on the tiles (game pieces) they have when one player finishes and no tiles remain to draw / take. Each player with tiles remaining has a negative score. The player with no tiles adds all the points of the other players. The game continues, and players who lose the next round add more negative points; or add with positive amounts to their negative and apply the rules for adding and subtracting integers.

**SKITS/PRESENTATIONS**- Don't forget to have your students present in groups or by themselves in front of the class. Usually, if you include some type of technology, props in their presentations (videotape them, or they write words to a silent movie, or they wear costumes, etc.) they will be motivated and have more fun.

**BROWN BAG COMPETITION**- Students work in pairs. Students take turns pulling a flash card out of the bag. They read the definition or the word, and wait for their partner to give the correct answer. If it is correct, they give their partner that flash card. Then, their partner pulls a card from the bag and asks them, etc. The student with the most points wins. At lower levels this can be done with letters, blends, or sight words.

**TO TAKE ON THE TRIP**- This game helps students remember, and to sequence. This could be done as a whole class, but is recommended for small groups. Tell students that they're going on an imaginary trip, or collecting things for an imaginary project. The first student says, "We will need a \_\_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_ (key term)." The next student then says, "We will need an 'A' and a \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_." The third

student says, “We will need an ‘A, a B’ and a \_\_\_ C \_\_\_.” And so on. The student who can remember the most without messing up wins.

**HOW MANY STEPS?-** This can be done with multi-syllable words, multi-step math problems, the number of “steps” or supporting sentences in a paragraph, or adverbs, adjectives, etc. The teacher shows, reads, or has students read a word or selection. The students hold up the same number of fingers as steps.

**Who’s the teacher?-** Let students take turn being the teacher in pairs to review flash cards, vocabulary words, spelling, ?’s about the story, math problems, etc. When the “student” gets the answer right, the teacher rewards them with a point.

**Book and Movie Combos-** Students will be motivated to read more with the reward of watching parts of the movie after reading it. Look on the American Library Association website for lists of Book and Movie Combos.

**DEBATES-** After the teacher presents new material, and students have read, students are asked to write three points for an issue and three against it. Then, they decide if they want to argue for or against the issue. Students for the issue sit together, and students against an issue sit together. Students then prepare for the debate by sharing their ideas with other group members, come up with new arguments, and counter arguments to what they think the other group will say. When both groups are ready, a coin will be tossed to see which group begins. The first group (one speaker at a time) is given one to two minutes to make an argument. Then, the second group gets to counter argue that point. After that, the first group can make a final statement. Finally, that sub-topic is closed. The second group then gets to present the second argument. The first group counter argues, etc. The teacher needs to be writing the arguments and counter arguments on the board or overhead while the debate is occurring. When time has run out, the teacher goes through each of the arguments and counter arguments out loud, reasoning which group won each argument, explaining how and why. The group that won the most arguments wins the debate. This activity may take up to two days.

**LET THE STUDENTS RE-TEACH!-** Let students teach in “student language”. Divide students up into the same number of groups as review topics you have. Each group chooses a review topic that they will “teach” to the class. They will give students notes on the chalkboard or overhead. The students will take notes. Then, the presenters will play a game, or do an activity with the class to help them remember their lesson. Tell the groups that they will be graded for this project, and that you are also taking notes to add what they’re teaching to the test.

## PRODUCT POSSIBILITIES

Design a Web page	Design political cartoons
Develop a solution to a community Problem	Design a game
Write a book	Write a series of letters
Conduct a series of interviews	Develop a collection
Submit writings to a magazine, newspaper	Design a structure
Plan a journey or odyssey	Present a news report
Write a new law and plan for its passage	Create authentic recipes
Present a mock trial	Design a new product
Write a series of songs	Create a dictionary for a subject
Develop a museum exhibit	Present a photo essay
Develop and use a questionnaire	Make a video documentary
Create a series of illustrations	Write poems
Compile a booklet or brochure	Draw a set of blueprints
Present a radio program, TV skit	Do a puppet show
Create a series of wall hangings	Present an interior monologue
Generate charts or diagrams to explain ideas	

-These product possibilities come from “How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms”.

**ESLHQ.com**- On [www.eslhq.com](http://www.eslhq.com) you can make flashcards with pictures and words, board games, worksheets, games, etc. You have to register, but it is all free.

**Puzzlemaker.com**-On [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com) you can make word searches and cross-word puzzles for review, or have your students make them for each other to review.

**United Streaming**- Don't forget about the wide range of educational videos (for all subjects) on [www.unitedstreaming.com](http://www.unitedstreaming.com) . Many come with handouts under teacher materials.

<p><b>Remember: The more students DO and TEACH ONE ANOTHER, the more they will RETAIN.</b></p>
--