

All Classes Great and Small

The activities below are all adaptable to both big and small classes. I currently in a primary and secondary school teacher and I've used each and every one of the following activities with my classes. The key to managing the crazier games is to set very clear boundaries very early on. Also getting your group selection right is a key. Letting your students know why you're doing an activity is absolutely imperative to them taking the absolute maximum from everything presented.

Before I get anything started in my class I like to make groups. I tend to avoid calling them teams to prevent vicious battles breaking out over any games or points throughout the class. I do this by giving chairs numbers and colours so the chair is the group member and he/she who occupies it is simply speaking on behalf of the chair.

1. Why is there a Monkey in your bag?

I tend to ask one of the stronger students this question. They are then forced to come up with an answer. In turn I get each of the students to ask a question about said monkey. You can then get the students to develop the idea and ask each other why they have various other bizarre objects in their bag. It's great for question formation and imagination. Works with all levels from about K2.

2. But, Why

I always start my classes with students interviewing each other about the night before. I try and encourage them to give long answers and always give reasons. Which is why their partner has to act like a 5 year old child and ask "But, why?" at least once for each question. That way students are forced to be creative not just give one word answers. I also like to ask myself this question before I do any kind of game. Why are we doing it? I make sure I tell the students too.

3. Line of Excuses

A great cooler. As students are preparing to leave they have to give reasons as to why they should leave first to get their way to the front of the line. The teacher decides who has the best excuse and that person gets to leave first.

4. City Race

Elicit a city from your students. Write them vertically down the board two or three times. Students must then take turns (in their teams) to come up to the board and write the longest word they can which starts with each letter. For higher levels you can make the parameters more difficult. Eg. Adjectives or Words related to a specific lexical set.

5. Consequences/Secret Story

Students write a line each for a story and then fold the page. After 8 rounds the pages are unraveled and stories read. This game is great for working on narrative tenses and the art of surprise. The 8 topics I use are: 1: His name 2: Her name 3: Where they met 4: When they met 5: What he said 6: What she said 7: What happened next 8: Why did that happen.

6. Pig, Dog, Cat, Duck

This is a pronunciation activity to work on weak forms. You can use any single syllable words from a lexical set. After Christmas perhaps you'd use. Toy, Ball, Doll, Car. Set a beat of about 112bpm. Then chant the words. Show them how the stress remains on the words even when other words are added. Stage 2. A pig, a dog, a cat, a duck. Stage 3. A pig and a dog and a cat and a duck. Stage 4. A pig and then a dog and then a cat and then a duck.

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7. It's a potato, isn't it?
This activity requires a little prep, well, it needs a prop really. Pop a potato on your table and ask students what it is. They'll say it's a potato. Then put students in groups and see which group can find the most suggestions for what it could be. Eg, a desk tidy, an edible murder weapon, a board eraser. In future classes you can use other innocuous items from around the room.
8. On ya Bike
I used to only use this with my kids but have started using it with higher levels as well to mix things up a bit. I simply grab a ball and throw it at a student and shout a topic/category. Students have to both catch the ball and respond instantly without repeating what's already been said. If they drop it they lose a life. I like to spice things up by letting my students stand on their chairs. If you don't fancy a hospital visit, maybe get them to sit backwards on their chairs. This is by far the most popular game in my classes.
Pepe, Animals: "Dog." Good,
Carmen, Clothing: "A shirt." Good.
Joaquin 15th Century Renaissance Artist "Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simon, also known simply as Michel Angelo" Nice. And so on.
9. Talk to the stars
Question formation. This can be extended to a full class activity. Which can read all about on my blog. Just google thefluencyfacilitator. In short, you take a verse or chorus from a song and get students to create questions with each line being the answer. It's also a really fun game to play in the car. I use this as a warmer for my 5th grade students and up.
10. Spoken Word Snake
Start students with a word, the next student has to think of a word that starts with the same sound as the previous word ended with. Eg. Watch - Chunder and sou can also do this with the final letter.
11. Yes, no, Maybe, I don't know
Simply ask students questions and their answers can't be any of the above words. To make it more difficult say they can't repeat other students' answers.
12. Word Tennis
This can be used with topics or individual words, in groups or in pairs. I take a word (or a lexical set) and I serve it to my students. They then have to bat it back and forth using different words with the same root word (or different words from the lexical set) until someone has nothing left to give or repeats a word. The last person to give a valid answer wins the point. If you have set teams these matches can continue throughout the year.
13. You know where to stick it
A simple post it game to review parts of the body, idioms about the body or simply a lexical set you've studied. Great for spelling.
14. Lexical Phone Numbers
Write 0-9 on the board. Above each number write a word. Students then have to come up with a very short story including all the words that appear in their phone number. It's a great way to recycle new vocab from the previous class.
15. Would you rather
A funny way to drill. You can make the questions as serious or silly as you like. The only important thing is students answer and then give their reasons. Eg. Would you rather have glitter ball eyes or a glow in the dark tongue? I'd obviously prefer to have a

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glow in the dark tongue because then I could read at night without having to run up huge electricity bills. After you've played a few times students will be able to come up with some real crackers.

16. Higher Lower

This is one of my favourites as you can use it to drill any kind of number and you can personalize it to you students. I usually start with something like Mount Everest and get students to guess its height. For time I get them to guess when I set my alarm or I ask them what time they had dinner. It's great for numbers and comparative structures. You can use students' height, shoe size, age of their grandparents. You can also get them to just think of a number between 1 and 10,000. It's great for when you're doing comparatives.

17. Word Sneak

This is a great way to recycle vocabulary. I often do it at the end of class to review new vocab. I give the students 5 words each and they have to seamlessly sneak them into a conversation. I normally give them a starting topic and see where the conversation goes. It's also good to use at the start of a class to recycle vocab from the previous lesson, especially after the weekend.

18. Cheddar Gorge

A very simple game here, whereby your students create a story by using just one word each. You can make it a sentence each if you so desire.

19. Alphabet Story Race

I get my students to think of a word for each letter of the alphabet and then sit with a partner and include each one in a quick story or a dialogue. Remember to encourage them to use each part of speech and not just nouns. Otherwise you'll just get a boring list.

20. Odd one out/Throw it out

An old favourite with a recently discovered twist, Give students 4 similar options they then have to discuss which one is the odd one out and why. The twisted version has you assigning each student a word and them fighting to their lives to remain as one of the three. I make out they're all in a boat and the odd one out has to leave. Obviously this sends all the wrong messages about accepting differences in people but hey, you're a banana get in the water.

21. Alphabet Challenge

Set a topic and students have to go through the alphabet in order naming one of each letter. Capital cities, food, Names etc.

22. Which one was yours?

Great for drilling. Wonderful for language of speculation. I get my students to write an item on a card. Perhaps a present they got or an innocuous item from their room. The cards/pieces of scrap paper are then mixed up and redistributed or thrown on the floor and fought for. Or even shoved into balloons, blown up and then popped. Students then have to guess who the owner of their card is. I had my pet students saying. I can't be sure but I reckon the beard comb belongs to Harry because he's the only one in here with a beard like a majestic lion. (ok perhaps the reason wasn't quite that elaborate)

23. Platanos Vs Bananas

This little game is a great way to get students up and moving. I use it for all levels. I put two opposing words/views on either side of the room. Students have to run to whichever they prefer. They then have to question each other as to why they chose the side they did. Eg. Cats vs Dogs. If Pablo choses dogs then you (or his cat loving, more

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awesome classmate) asks Why did you chose dogs, don't you think they look far worse in selfies than cats?

24. Things You Should Never Say

This is a lovely funny filler I use with higher levels. I start with the easy ones like, things you should never say in an airport. "I've got a bomb." I try and get them to think of situations. One student once said things you should never say in an elevator. "I'm just going to leave this smell for you guys." was his divine answer.

25. Instant Role Play

I walked into my 5th grade class on Thursday and didn't want to do the book. I that this would be a better idea. It helps with creativity and question formation. Students create a character with prompts. Eg. What's your name? Where did you grow up? What do you enjoy doing on rainy Saturday evenings? What's the worst thing you've ever eaten? Tell me something interesting about yourself.

Next I get students to cu this out of their books, fold it and throw it on the floor. Students then scramble madly to get a new one and have to go and interview their classmates to find out who "Felicity Moon. The Queen of Peru, who grew up in Boston, who once at Cat tail pie and loves playing chess with her neighbour's dog's cousin's owner" by asking them the prompts before. Then they can write up a quick role play/new conversation in their notebooks and perform it to the class.

26. Word Association

Just give the students a word and they have to say the first word that comes into their head. The following student does the same. It's a great little game to play whilst you're doing some kinda of paper filling in, like a homework list or something.

27. 5 words story

A simple and effective way to kill 5 minutes. Get students to use the theme of the day to write some kind of story. I did horror stories recently after teaching about fear. The example I gave them was one stolen from the internet. *Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Monday*. One, particularly strange students came up with this classic: *I cooked your dead cat*. So be aware of who is in your class.

28. You scratch my back

This is a delightful way to get students out of their chairs and more comfortable with each other. I've used it to drill difficult spelling and just for fun. Students are put in a line the student at the front is the writer and the others are the information road. The student closest to the teacher is given a word. They then have to send it forward to their writer, without speaking. The method they have to use is simply drawing the word letter by letter on the back of the student in front of them with just their finger. They will then in turn do it to the person in front until they reach the writer who writes the final word on the board, letter by letter.

29. Ad something

A simple sentence transformed into a beautiful one. In this game I write a boring sentence on the board and get the students to AD something. After eliciting that adjectives and adverbs are the key to descriptive writing I set them off in pairs or threes to create the most descriptive sentence EVER. This on one I got from my CAE class a couple of weeks back. From: The Teacher Ate a Sandwich. To: Last Friday the morbidly obese teacher greedily ate a disgustingly greasy BLT sandwich, without the L, the T or the sandwich.

30. Yes, no, maybe, I don't know

This game is to simply try and get your students to say one of the words above. After a quick demo they should be fine working in groups or pairs. Another fantastic activity

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for question formation. It also gets students thinking on their feet and paying attention to what they say.

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