

Active Learning for Language Arts & Social Studies

Lessons by Bloomfield Teachers

Developed in collaboration between the
Three Rivers Education Foundation
and Bloomfield Public Schools
through the PACE project

PACE:

*Promoting Action in
Children's Education*



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Introduction

On June 6–8, 2017, 5 Bloomfield teachers met for a 3-day workshop on integrating physical activity into Language Arts and Social Studies instruction. Over the course of the workshop, the teachers developed a series of lesson plans that promote active learning.

Their lesson plans are presented here.

During the workshop, the teachers participated in many sample language arts and social studies activities that demonstrated active learning principles. Those activities are included as an appendix to this resource guide.

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This workshop was sponsored by the PACE project, a collaborative project of the Three Rivers Education Foundation and Bloomfield Public Schools.

The goals of the PACE project are to

1. Improve students' physical fitness
2. Increase students' daily moderate to vigorous activity
3. Improve students' academic learning outcomes

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Principles of Active Learning

6 Basic Principles of Active Learning

1. When instructional content is taught through physical activities, the learning is unavoidable. Just by participating in the activity, students learn the content.
2. Students are more enthusiastic about learning when they can be active during the learning process.
3. Active learning engages more parts of the student's brain, increasing understanding, attention, awareness, and memory.
4. Students access the learning content through multiple modalities and processes.
5. Students enjoy learning when participating in fun learning activities.

Keys to Effective Active Learning

1. Active learning is purposeful, with a focus on engaging students in content, i.e., the active component is the process, not the purpose, of the lesson.
2. Active learning combines social, emotional, and academic learning.
3. Active learning promotes cooperative learning.
4. Every student has the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way. Teachers ensure that all students can participate so that no student misses the opportunity to learn.

Schools are not just places for students to learn core academic subjects. They are also the place where students learn communication skills, collaboration self-responsibility, and appropriate social behaviors. Effective Active Learning provides learning opportunities in each of these areas simultaneously.

Well-designed Active Learning lessons will focus on engaging students in academic content, but they will also provide students the opportunity to collaborate, solve problems, negotiate, mitigate and appreciate differences, and build connections with others—each of which is a necessary skill for achieving life-long success.

3 Components of Cooperative Learning

When we talk about cooperative learning, this is what we mean.

1. Every student in the group has a meaningful responsibility to fulfill for the group to attain its goal or purpose.
2. The group is responsible for producing some product or outcome that demonstrates both the success of the cooperation and the attainment of a learning outcome.
3. Each member of the group is responsible for demonstrating individual learning.

Teachers' Active Learning Lesson Plans

Each lesson plan in this guide contains similar items, as follows.

Topic: Language Arts or Social Studies, plus the specific content topic

Supplies: Supplies you need to conduct the activity

Set up: Steps and actions to prepare for the lesson

Student Product: What students will create, produce, enact, or perform to indicate that they have learned the content of the lesson

Learning Assessment: What you will do to determine what the students have learned

Lesson Introduction: Actions, discussion, or preparation for getting students involved in the activity and developing an understanding of the content prior to the lesson

Lesson Instructions: Steps for conducting the activity

Lessons vary in length and physical activity. Levels of physical activity are as follows.

Calm: Students stand or sit with little movement. All students of all fitness levels can perform these activities with no difficulty.

Moderate: Students move around their space, usually by walking, or perform actions in a single space. Heart rates will stay fairly low, and students probably won't sweat. All students should be able to perform these activities with no difficulties.

Vigorous: Students may run, jump, or perform slightly vigorous actions. Their heart rates will climb, they may breathe a bit harder, and they may sweat a little. Some students may find these activities taxing, particularly if the lesson is long.

Ridiculous: Students will run fast, move a lot, and perform fairly strenuous physical actions. They will sweat, pant, and get tired. These will tire out most students if prolonged, and some students may not be able to participate without modifications.

All lessons in this guide can be modified to meet your instructional needs, content and topics, and students' fitness levels.

Comprehension Race

by *Melanie Goins*

Topic

Language Arts: Text Comprehension

Supplies / Materials needed

Rope or tape to mark the finish line
Balls, one per team
Hula Hoops

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Clear a large classroom space, or use another large open area.
2. Set up the race area: create a start and finish line.
3. Place Hula Hoops in a line from start to finish, with a line of hoops for each team. (If you don't have enough Hula Hoops, you can create squares in a grid from start to finish.)
4. Make sure all students have a copy of the story.

Student Product

Demonstrate understanding of the content in a story by answering a sufficient number of questions about the story and by being able to generate questions, with answers.

Learning Assessment

Questions generated from the student groups answered correctly

Lesson Introduction

1. Read the story.
2. Explain the “rules” for the game and expectations for student participation and learning outcomes.

Lesson Instructions

1. Read the story to/with the students.
2. Assign teams of 4 or 5 students; give each team a ball.
3. Teams will generate 5–10 questions with answers after reading / listening to the story.
4. Each team will designate a “teacher,” who will ask questions to the other teams.
5. The “teachers” will stand at the finish line for their team’s row, facing away.
6. Team members will pass their balls from student to student.
7. A “teacher” will turn around, and students stop passing the balls immediately. The “teacher” selects a group and asks a question. (You can also have the “teacher” ask the question first, let the groups discuss the question, and then have the “teacher” select a group.)
8. The student holding the ball answers the question for the team.
9. If the student answers correctly, the team moves forward to the next hoop / space. If the student answers incorrectly, the team moves backwards to the prior hoop / space.
10. The race continues until one of the teams crosses the finish line or until all the questions have been asked and answered correctly.

Grade: 2nd–5th

**Time needed:
30 minutes or less**

**Activity Level:
Moderate**

Lewis and Clark Exploring Regions

by *Bellamie Herrera-Presley*

Topic: Social Studies:

US Regional Geography

Supplies / Materials needed:

Rope or tape to make a grid on the floor
Cones or paper tents to name the regions (e.g., tundra, desert, forest area)
Objects for students to mark their path
Buzzer (optional)

Grade: 2nd–5th**Time needed:
30–60 minutes****Activity Level:
Moderate****Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)**

1. Build students' background knowledge about types of obstacles.
2. Create a grid of regions on the floor (4x4 for lower grades, 5x5 or 6x6 for upper grades)
3. Place cones/tents in every space, with the names of the regions on the cones/tents
4. Regions should correspond to regions in the continent being studied (typically the U.S. for these grade levels).
5. Create your own map of the grid, with region names. Decide what obstacles the regions will have and list them on your map. Some regions will have no obstacles. There should only be one path through the grid with no obstacles.

Student Product

1. Students produce an “exit ticket” describing the similarities and differences of the regions studied.
2. The “exit ticket” could be extended into a description of the supplies needed to live in each region or a description of the strategies needed to overcome the various obstacles.

Learning Assessment

Students in the groups can describe the various obstacles that explores would find in the regions, and any other features that they are studying

Lesson Introduction

1. Discuss that the class will be studying regions and their unique geography and features.
2. Discuss that the class will pretend to be the first explorers to enter the region, as if they were Lewis and Clark on their expedition.

Lesson Instructions

1. After you have the grid set up and have made your map of the regions, assign students into groups of 5 or 6, with varied learning abilities.
2. If you have enough students, create several identical grids and assign a student to be the official “mapkeeper” for each grid. The “mapkeeper” will indicate when a student has entered a region with an obstacle and will describe the region and obstacle. In this case, a student is performing the job of the teacher.
3. Have the group members assign roles to the students: directions keeper (N/S/W/E), time keeper, map maker (to chart the groups progress through the grid), documenter (to record

features of the regions), analyst (to lead the group’s discussion of the barriers they encounter), and strategist (to determine what direction the group members should try next).

4. Provide the “rules” for successful navigation:
 - (a) only one person enters the grid at a time, following the route of any prior attempts through the regions;
 - (b) students may only move north, south, east, or west: no diagonals;
 - (c) if a student steps in a region with an obstacle, the teacher will sound the buzzer or indicate that the region has an obstacle, as well as describe the obstacle
 - (d) the student who encountered the obstacle must return to the group;
 - (e) after a student leaves the grid, the group must discuss the nature of the obstacle, and the next student can try; and
 - (f) to complete the game, all members of the expedition group must be successfully guided through the grid without encountering any obstacles.
5. The students should fulfill their various roles to assist in finding the “safe” route through the regions.
6. After all students make it through the grid safely, students discuss the value of the various roles, the strategies they used, and the features of the region and obstacles.
7. If you have several groups using their own grids, the group that makes it through in the least time wins the Lewis and Clark award!

Sample Grid (make a larger grid with more options, but only one safe route):

Starting region: Safe	Safe	Canyon lands: Can’t cross the Grand Canyon	River lands: Can’t cross the Mississippi River
Far North lands: Can’t survive the brutal cold weather	Safe	Safe	Safe
Desert lands: Can’t cross Death Valley	Mountain lands: Can’t cross the Rocky Mountains	Rainy lands: Can’t tolerate the mosquitoes	Ending region Safe

Map Fitness

by Erik Anderson

Topic: Social Studies

Map skills

Supplies / Materials needed

Playground map with key for each group of students

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Create playground map
2. Create a key for different types of locomotor skills (e.g., skip, side slide, hop, walk) and different types of activities to do on the playground (e.g., swing, hang, slide, spin)
3. Pre-teach various locomotor skills

Grade: 3–5

**Time needed:
40 minutes**

**Activity Level:
Vigorous–Ridiculous**

Learning Assessment

Students successfully complete the course before the time limit expires.

Lesson Introduction

1. Discuss the value of understanding maps and mapmaking skills
2. Discuss the different types of labels that can be found on maps.

Lesson Instructions

1. Pass out copies of the playground map, and display a larger one for the class to see. Discuss how to use the map and how the key will be used to complete the proper exercises in the correct order.
2. Place students in groups of 4 or 5 students.
3. Groups number the 10 places they would like to visit on the playground in any order they choose.
4. Groups place a symbol for an activity on the map, one at each place they have chosen; they also place symbols for a type of locomotor activity that students will use to get from one location to another.
5. As a class, create a color code for each of the map symbols; groups will apply that color code on their own maps.
6. Go to the playground with the groups of students, and have them exchange maps.
7. On the word “start,” groups try out the maps they receive, moving from location to location using the indicated locomotor skill and then performing the activity indicated at the playground locations.
8. Continue until all groups have completed one course or until the time has expired.
9. Discuss with the class how easy or difficult it was to use another group’s map and what could have been done to make the experience better.

Target POV

by Grace McFarland

Topic: English Language Arts

Point of View

Supplies / Materials needed

Balls (4 colors, enough for each team to have one of every color)

Large target (enough targets for each team to have one)

A variety of sample texts in different points of view

Grade: 6th

**Time needed:
20 minutes**

**Activity Level:
Moderate**

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

Place targets on walls around the room

Student Product

Answers to questions (optional)

Learning Assessment

1. Check the color of balls thrown at the targets; the right color indicates a right answer.
2. Assess depth of knowledge through a short discussion after each question about the vocabulary or other clues the groups used to identify point of view.

Lesson Introduction

1. Discuss the differences in points of view: first, second, third limited, third omniscient.
2. Read a sample of each type of text and discuss with students what point of view each one represents and why.
3. Discuss rules the game and how to stay safe (e.g., only the catcher can catch, but must always leave one foot in place).
4. Make sure students know what color ball goes with each point of view (for example: white = first, yellow = second, orange = third limited, green = third omniscient)

Lesson Instructions

1. Organize students into groups of 3; have students select roles (thrower, catcher, recorder)
2. Read a sample of writing and give groups a minute to decide what point of view they think is represented.
3. On your mark, the thrower throws a colored ball at the target, and the catcher attempts to catch it.
4. Observe the colors thrown to see which group got the right answer. Clarify the answer as needed and ask students why they thought their answer was correct. Give groups a chance to change their answer if they wish. The recorder writes down the group's answer.
5. Students get a point for the right color/answer, and a point for catching the ball.
6. At the end of the game, have students submit their recorded answers.

Rule Detectives

by Melanie Goins

Topic: Social Studies

Good citizenship

Supplies / Materials needed

Behavior cards with desired and undesired behaviors

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Clear a classroom space for 2 students to perform a short skit
2. Create the sets of behavior cards for each group and shuffle them.
3. Get 2 students to agree to perform a short skit.
4. Prepare the instructions / script / descriptions for each student's role in the skit.

Grade: 2

**Time needed:
20 minutes**

**Activity Level:
Calm**

Student Product

1. Card sorted into 2 stacks: desired and undesired behaviors
2. Completed I-Chart graphic organizer (I for Independence, a form of graphic organizer for listing behaviors). One side of the chart is for desired behavior, the other side for undesired behavior.

Learning Assessment

1. Degree to which cards are sorted into the correct stacks
2. Completed I-Chart graphic organizer

Lesson Introduction

Introduce idea of learning about behavior expectations by observing good and bad role models.

Lesson Instructions

1. Have students create groups of 3–4 students.
2. The two chosen students will perform the skit. Student 1 will perform the desired behaviors, and student 2 will perform the undesired behaviors.
3. Students in groups watch the skit and try to decide which student is performing desired or undesired behaviors. They will explain their ideas to each other.
4. Teacher hands out the stacks of behavior cards, plus some blank cards for students to fill in.
5. Students in the groups sort the behavior cards into two stacks according to their findings, and they can fill in and then sort the blank cards if they would like to add behaviors to either stack.
6. Groups will explain to the class what choices they made and why.
7. Independently, students will complete the I-chart.

Culture Clash

by Grace McFarland

Topic: Social Studies

Social Norms, Intercultural Communications

Supplies / Materials needed

Cards with one social/cultural expectation

(examples: don't look others in the eye, look straight at other people, stand an arm's length away, address others by their name, speak softly, talk loudly, touch someone you wish to speak to)

Grade: 6th

**Time needed:
30 minutes**

**Activity Level:
Calm**

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Clear a large classroom space for students to move around and interact
2. Prepare sets of cards, one set for each group, and enough of each type of card for all members of the group to have the same card (example: if you have 4 groups of 3 students, you need 4 types of cards and 3 of each card type).

Student Product

None

Learning Assessment

1. Students will be able to demonstrate their own social expectations and infer others' based on "cultural" interactions.
2. Students will recognize challenges of communicating with members of other cultures based on their expectations. (Example: Did conversations get quieter or awkward?)

Lesson Introduction

1. Discuss what social expectations are and how they differ from region to region.
2. Students may notice a difference between households, states, and even between countries.
3. Have the students consider the following questions: Is there something that is normal at your house but not at a friend's house? Are there any behaviors that we find normal in NM that other states may think are strange? Do all cultures pay for food in the same way?
4. Introduce social norms and expectations we follow in the USA or NM, such as expectations for personal space, tipping for services, readily available toilet paper.

Lesson Instructions

1. Divide the class into groups and give group members a card that describes a social expectation they will follow. (All group members get the same expectation card.)
2. Students will then have 2–3 minutes to have discussions with people from other groups on any topic they wish. They should talk to as many different students as possible during the time.
3. Students will employ the expectation on the card they received. They may not tell other students what their expectations is.
4. When the time is up, call the students back to their original group. As a group, they will discuss what they think the other group's expectations are and make a list of those

- expectations. This may take 5–10 minutes.
5. Students will again have brief discussions with members of the other groups for 2–3 minutes to see if their understanding is correct.
 6. When time is up, they meet with their groups to discuss their findings and make modifications to their list, if necessary.
 7. Again they will have 2–3 minutes to have discussions with other groups, and then meet back to try to make a list of the people who exhibit each group's expectations.
 8. Once they have their lists of group expectations and members, they decide as a group which expectation from another group they would like to employ. (They can't choose something opposite from their own group's expectation. For example, if one group has the expectation of standing an arm's length away from others when talking, they can't choose standing very close to other people because it is impossible to do both at once).
 9. Students will have a third round of brief conversations with other students for 2–3 minutes. They will exhibit both their original expectation and the expectation they decided to adopt.
 10. When time is up, students share their original expectations and what they think the expectations were for the other groups.
 11. As a class, discuss how students discovered other group's expectations, how they felt when discussing with members of other groups, and how they decided what other expectations to adopt. Finally, discuss how this exercise might affect their interactions with people outside the classroom.

Spelling Hoops

by *Melanie Goins*

Topic: English Language Arts
Spelling

Supplies / Materials needed

Hula hoops (or buckets), 2 per group
Bean bags (or other soft throw-able item), 3 per group
Cards with individual letters

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Prepare and shuffle the letter cards; create a stack of cards.
2. Set up the Hula Hoops for each team.
3. Use tape or other marker to identify the throwing line.

Student Product

Word list

Learning Assessment

Word list

Lesson Introduction

1. Explain that you will be doing a spelling game in a new way.
2. Explain the rules.
 - (a) Only one team member, the “thrower”, may throw the bean bag at the hoops until the team creates a word.
 - (b) Only one team member, the “retriever”, may retrieve letter cards until the team creates a word.
 - (c) Students retrieving the cards should walk, not run, not push, etc. Think safety!
 - (d) For bean bags that land in the farthest hoop, the team can pick up 3 letter cards; for bean bags that land in the nearest hoop, the team can pick up 2 letter cards; for any bean bag that lands outside the hoops, the team can pick up 1 letter card.
 - (e) If the team cannot create a word with the letter cards, the thrower throws the next bean bag, and the runner picks up more cards.
 - (f) The team can throw a maximum of 3 bean bags.
 - (f) New letter cards must be retrieved from the top of the letter card deck, without looking at the cards until they are picked up. They cannot return the cards to the pile and choose other cards. (Teams may end up with some unused cards.)
 - (g) The words created must be real words.
 - (h) Once a team creates a word, they return their letter cards to the discard pile or shuffle them and place them at the bottom of the card stack.
3. Explain the scoring system.
 - (a) Students receive one point for each letter in the words they create.
 - (b) At the end of the game, the team with the most points wins (or you can set a minimum score necessary for success so that multiple teams can win).
4. Choose two students to demonstrate the process.

Grade: 2–3

Time needed:
20–25 minutes

Activity Level:
Calm

Lesson Instructions

1. Have the students form teams of two and then designate the first thrower and the first retriever.
2. Thrower throws a bean bag. If it lands in a hoop, the retriever picks up the number of cards corresponding to the hoop.
3. The team attempts to make a word. If they cannot, then the thrower throws the next bean bag.
4. Once the team makes a word, they write it down, the thrower retrieves the bean bags, and the retriever returns the cards.
5. The team members switch roles.
6. When time is up, the teams count up their total points, one point per letter.

Three-legged Quiz

by Grace McFarland

Topic: Social Studies & Language Arts
content knowledge assessment

Supplies / Materials needed

- Lengths of rope
- Cards with questions you want students to answer
- Text or other resources to answer the questions
- Copies of a worksheet or other type of question list

Grade: All elementary

Time needed: 45 minutes

Activity Level: Vigorous

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Prepare the question cards.
2. Set up stations around the room, each with a question and the resources to answer it.

Student Product

Completed list of questions

Learning Assessment

Number of questions answered correctly

Lesson Introduction

1. Note: You can use this activity for nearly any content area.
2. Discuss the content being studied and how it is necessary to find information, rather than simply receive it.
3. Explain how the activity is conducted.
4. Explain the “rules” for the activity
 - (a) When students are going to stations, linked together 3-legged style, they must walk. Think safety!
 - (b) All questions must be answered at the various stations, the answer written on a question card found at the station, and then the completed question card is brought to the group for completing the groups’ worksheet / questionnaire.
 - (c) Considering the group size (4, 6, 8), at least one pair of students must remain at the group’s home base at all times, but any pair that remains during one round will visit a question station in the next round.
 - (d) A round is teams going to get answers and returning. As soon as the discovery pairs for one group returns from the question stations, the next round for that group begins. Rounds will take different amounts of time for the different groups.

Lesson Instructions

1. Divide the students into groups, with an even number of students per group. Further divide the groups into pairs of students.
2. Pairs of students should tie their ankles together, 3-legged race style.
3. At the activity start, pairs of students go to visit one of the question stations. One pair stays at the group’s home location. (For example, If you have 3 pairs of students in a group, 2 pairs visit stations while 1 pair remains at the home location.)

4. Pairs at the stations pick up a question card, review the resources, and then put their answer on the card.
5. Pairs return to the home location and transfer their answer to the group's worksheet / questionnaire.
6. As soon as one pair returns to the home location to record the answer, the waiting pair leaves for another station.
7. The first group with a completed worksheet / questionnaire wins.
8. Optional: You could have 1 or more students with a correctly completed worksheet to check the other group's answers. If a group doesn't have the correct answer, they need to go back to the question station and try again. In this case, a different pair than the original pair will visit the station.
9. After all the groups are done, have the group members quiz each other on the content, and then call on students at random to answer the questions.

Ultimate Vocabulary

by Erik Anderson

Topic: English Language Arts
Vocabulary

Supplies / Materials needed

- 2 Flags of different colors, pennies, or other marker
- Football or Frisbee
- 2 Hula Hoops
- List of vocabulary words previously used as “word of the day”

Grade: 4–6

Time needed:
15–30 minutes

Activity Level:
Ridiculous

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Use a basketball court.
2. Place the 2 Hula Hoops on either side of the center line, just outside the sideline.

Student Product

None

Learning Assessment

Number of points achieved by answering vocabulary questions

Lesson Introduction

1. This game is played like Ultimate Frisbee, but with a twist to use it for vocabulary practice / instruction.
2. Explain the rules:
 - (a) Turnovers: the Frisbee touches the ground, a player takes more than 2 steps with the Frisbee, a player catches the Frisbee thrown by a member of the other team, a player holds the Frisbee for more than 3 seconds.
 - (d) Don't collide with other players. Think safety!

Lesson Instructions

1. Create two teams, and designate one player from each team to be the initial “vocaballer,” who will carry the penny/marker for the team.
2. Students on a team pass the Frisbee to each other attempting to get it past the opposite endline of the court and caught by a team member. This is a score for the team.
3. When a team scores, the vocaballers from each team run to the Hula Hoops for a vocabulary question, which is asked by the teacher.
4. The first vocaballer who answers the question correctly scores another point for the team.
5. While the 2 vocaballers are answering the vocabulary question, the play continues.
6. After the question, the vocaballers re-enter the game and give their flag / marker to another player.

You can play this game for a specific amount of time then see which team has the most points, or play until one team reaches a certain amount of points.

Vocabulary/Syllable Relay

by *Bellamie DeHerrera-Presley*

Topic: English Language Arts

Vocabulary / Syllables

Grade: K–6**Time needed:
30 minutes****Activity Level:
Moderate****Supplies / Materials needed**

Construction paper or index cards
Sharpie / magic marker
Baskets for each team
2–5 Cones to “serpentine” between

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Create the cards with syllables of vocabulary words.
2. Create a stack of cards for each team.
3. Set up cones for students to run through, serpentine fashion.
4. Set up a start line and place stacks of syllable cards at the finish line.

Student Product

List of completed words

Learning Assessment

Students are able to make words from the syllables.

Lesson Introduction

1. Explain that you are doing a new type of vocabulary review that focuses on the syllables in the words, then has students define the words they make from the syllables.
2. Explain and demonstrate how to complete the task.
3. Explain the rules:
 - (a) Only one student can run through the cones to retrieve a syllable card at a time.
 - (b) Students can only retrieve cards from their team’s stack of syllable cards.
 - (c) Students must weave, serpentine fashion, through the cones. If they miss one, they have to start over.
 - (d) The words students create must be one of the vocabulary words.

Note: You can provide a list of words to create if students need it, or you can have them remember the words you have been studying.

Lesson Instructions

1. Create groups of 3–4 students, and have one student chosen to be the first runner.
2. At the start, the first runner from each team weaves through the cones to pick up a card, then weaves back through the cones to the group.
3. The next team member runs through the cones for another card, and back.
4. When the team has completed one of the vocabulary words, they write the word on the front of a blank card and the definition on the back. They place completed words in their “finished” basket, with the whole word on top and syllable cards below it.
5. Teams continue until all the words are formed.

In or Out

by Martha Annette Mendoza

Topic: Social Studies

Significance of historical people to US / NM history

Supplies / Materials needed

Polyspots (or other floor place holders)

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

Create a list of “Who was/is” questions to ask students during the activity.

Grade: K–6

**Time needed:
10–30 minutes**

**Activity Level:
Moderate**

Student Product

Brief oral or written report

Learning Assessment

Students present a brief oral report about one of the people discussed during the activity.

Lesson Introduction

1. Discuss how certain people have influenced current society, whether through advocating for certain ideas, causing laws to change, affecting how people interact with one another, etc.
2. This activity can be used to expand students’ knowledge of historical people or as a mini-quiz to review information. Instead of questions about people, this activity can use questions about significant historical events.

Lesson Instructions

1. Students form a large circle, standing on a marked spot (simply a placeholder so students know where the circle is as they jump forward and backwards).
2. The teacher asks a “who was/is” question about a person of historical significance, and the students who know the answer take a small hop forward. Students who don’t know the answer take a small hop backwards.
3. The teacher asks the students who hopped forward to provide any information they know about that person. The teacher may ask additional probing questions and may provide additional useful information about the person.
4. Students return, with a small hop, to the starting circle.
5. After all the historical people have been used once as a question, the teacher asks another round of questions about the same people. The questions may ask about deeper or additional information about the historical people. This will expand students’ knowledge and give all students the opportunity to respond correctly.
6. After all the questioning, break students into groups of 3.
7. The groups choose one of the people and list all the information they know about that person.
8. The groups present a choral reading about the person to the rest of the class. (Note: have them practice first before presenting.)

Food Chain Race

by Martha Annette Mendoza

Topic: Social Studies

Food chain relationships, predator-prey interaction

Supplies / Materials needed

None

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Create a large open space.
2. Establish a center line where students will face each other.
3. Establish goal lines on either side of the center line, at least 10 feet away from the center line.

Grade: K–6

**Time needed:
5–15 minutes**

**Activity Level:
Vigorous**

Student Product

Participation

Learning Assessment

Participation

Lesson Introduction

1. Discuss how food chains work, with predators chasing prey, and provide (or have students provide) example of predator-prey relationships (for example: hawks eat mice, mice eat insects, insects eat plants).
2. Review and practice Rock-Scissors-Paper game with students, which will be the basis for this activity.
3. Introduce the creatures that will be used for this activity: Bears, Fish, Mosquitos, and have students practice stances and sounds that represent each creature.
 - (a) Bears: hands over head, with a loud growl.
 - (b) Fish: hands together in front making a swimming fish motion, with a “bloop bloop” sound.
 - (c) Mosquitoes: hands up in a “hang ten” gesture and vibrating, with a “zzz” sound.
4. Have two students demonstrate the creature motions. On the count of three, the demonstration students enact one of the creatures. Discuss who wins the round.
 - (a) Bears win over Fish.
 - (b) Fish win over Mosquitoes.
 - (c) Mosquitoes win over Bears.
5. Remind students of safety rules:
 - (a) Only tag students on the arms.
 - (b) Don’t push or shove other students or collide with them.

Lesson Instructions

1. Create two equal teams of students.
2. Each team decides which creature to enact. All the team members must do the same creature.

3. The teams will face each other in a line across the center line, at least 4 feet from each other.
4. On the count of 3, teams will enact their chosen creature. One side will be the predator, and one side will be the prey, depending on what creature they selected.
5. The prey creatures will attempt to run past their goal line, and the predatory creatures will chase them and try to tag them.
6. Any members of the prey side that is tagged become a part of the other team.
7. Students on each team choose their next creature, and the activity repeats.
7. The activity continues until all the students are on the same team.

This activity can be modified for a variety of content. For example, the teams can think of questions to ask each other. For a wrong answer, the asking team chases the answering team. For a right answer, the answering team chases the asking team.

Figurative Toss

by Bellamie DeHerrera-Presley

Topic: English Language Arts

Figurative language

Supplies / Materials needed

2 colors of bean bags, enough for 4–6 sets

4–6 baskets or buckets

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Build background knowledge of metaphors and similes.
(This can be expanded for older students to include idioms, personifications, etc. if you have enough colors of bean bags.)
2. Prepare figurative language examples (or choose a poem or other type of writing with many examples of figurative language).
3. Clear an open space in the classroom.
4. Set up buckets, one for each group of students, and a throwing line.

Grade: 2–6**Time needed:
15 minutes****Activity Level:
Calm****Student Product**

List of expressions for each type of figurative language

Learning Assessment

Observe of the color bean bag each team throws.

Lesson Introduction

1. Explain the instructions for the activity.
2. Provide examples of each type of figurative language that will be used in the activity.
3. Select a color bean bag for each type of figurative language (example: green for simile, red for metaphor).

Lesson Instructions

1. Create groups of 2–4 students, and select a thrower, retriever, scribe, and score keeper.
(The retriever and score keeper are optional.)
2. Randomly select one of the samples of figurative language.
3. The groups decide what type of example you provided (such as metaphor or simile).
4. On your signal, the thrower throws the colored bean bag.
5. Observe what color each team throws. Ask clarifying questions or briefly discuss the type of figurative language used in the example.
6. Groups earn 2 points for the correct selection and 1 point for getting the bean bag into the bucket.
7. The retriever (or thrower) collects the bean bag, the scribe writes down the example and type of figurative language, and the score keeper updates the group's score.
8. Continue until all the examples are used. Reuse any examples in which several groups made an incorrect explanation so they have the opportunity to get it correct.
9. Ask and compare how the groups scored.
10. Groups make lists of each type of figurative language.

Vocabulary Fitness

by Erick Anderson

Topic: English Language Arts
Vocabulary

Supplies / Materials needed

Cones (2 per student group)
Exercise charts (1 per cone), Pencils, writing paper

Grade: 4–6

Time needed:
10–20 minutes

Activity Level:
Vigorous

Set-Up (what you do before the lesson)

1. Place cones at opposite ends of a large space, such as a gym.
2. Place an exercise chart at each cone, with a pencil and stack of writing paper.
3. Prepare the exercise charts and place them at the cones. (Charts may have a different exercise for each letter of the alphabet or may describe a single type of exercise to be completed at each cone.)

Student Product

Written sentences / paragraphs that use the vocabulary word(s)

Learning Assessment

Students complete the activity. Ability to use the vocabulary words correctly in writing.

Lesson Introduction

1. Build background knowledge of the target vocabulary word (or words, if you are using the modified version).
2. Explain the instructions and expectations for the activity.
3. Make sure students know how to do the various exercises they will do at the cones.
4. Explain the rules for the activity.
 - (a) Students must run from cone to cone.
 - (b) Think safety: no pushing or shoving, leave the pencils and papers at the cones.

Lesson Instructions

1. Create students groups of 3–4 students.
2. Each group has a starting cone on the same side of the activity area.
3. On your mark, the groups run to a cone on the opposite side of the area.
4. The first person to arrive will take a paper and pencil, write his or her name on the paper, and then write a definition, sentence, or paragraph using the vocabulary word.
5. The other group members complete the exercise(s) found on the exercise chart.
6. When the first group member completes the task, the next student completes the writing part. Group members continue performing the exercise(s).
7. When all group members complete the activity at one cone, they run back to a cone on the starting side of the activity area where they will perform the exercise(s) found there.
8. When all groups are finished, collect the papers and discuss student ideas about the vocabulary words.

Modification: Use a different word at each cone to cover more vocabulary words and have students visit all the cones.

Active Learning Samples from the Workshop

During the 3-day event, the teachers participated in many sample active learning activities. The following pages describe those activities, all of which can be adapted to meet the needs of your students.

The purpose of the sample activities was to demonstrate a variety of ways that content-area learning can be transformed into active learning opportunities for students. They may also give you ideas for teaching your content and for getting students more engaged in learning, through active learning.

Language Arts Active Learning Samples

Passing Sound: Students stand in a circle. One student says a word and makes an underhand passing motion to the left. The student to the left says a rhyming word and passes to the left again OR says a non-rhyming word and makes an underhand passing motion to the right for the student on the right to respond. Option: Instead of rhyming words, pass (or not) words that start with the same sound. After a minute or two, try this with two sets of words/sounds going around at the same time! (Calm)

Grammarthenics: Have students assign a part of speech to body parts. Practice a few times by calling out a part of speech. Then call out various words. The students will touch that part of their bodies. Then try doing short sentences. Let the students practice slowly a few times, then repeat faster and faster. You can also do this with syllables, having students touch their toes for every syllable, with even and odd numbers (math) by touching toes and shoulders, and many other types of content. (Moderate to Vigorous)

Hopping Sounds: Read a simple poem to students and have them hop at every rhyming word. Or use vocabulary words and have students hop for every syllable. Let a student choose a word for syllable hop, after which that student will call on another student. Option: You can also use this for a name recognition activity early in the year: student says his or her name, other students hop while saying the name. (Moderate)

Sentence Race: Create and shuffle cards with words and punctuation marks. Group students by 3 or 4. Give each group 10 cards and put the rest in a stack face down at the front of the room. Students try to make a complete sentence with their cards, punctuation included. If they cannot, they can put one of their cards in a discard pile and take a card from the card stack. Completed sentences are laid out on the group's table, and they get 10 new starter cards. After some time, have students add up their points. (Moderate)

Scoring:

noun = 2 pt

verb = 3 pt

punctuation = 2 pt

conjunction = 3 pt

all other cards = 1 pt

Spelling Scramble: Choose a 6-letter word, and create letter cards with those letters, enough to make a pack for every group. (For example, if you choose “dreary,” you need stacks of cards with the letters D, R, E, A, R, and Y.) Create groups of 3 students. Groups try to make a word with the letters. On your call, a student from each group goes to the board and writes the groups word. Duplicate words are acceptable in each round, but not from one round to the next. Groups receive 1 point for each letter in the word they create, and the words must have at least 3 letters. Do multiple rounds until groups cannot make any new words from the letters. Add up the points. (Calm)

Sentence Ropes: Place many word cards all over the floor. Create groups of 3 students, and give each group a long rope. Starting on any card, the groups lay their ropes across the words to make grammatically correct sentences. Groups may “steal” a word by placing their rope across a word that another group has already used. The prior group has to re-start from the word previous to the “stolen” word, but the stealing group loses 5 points. Scoring: 2 points for every word. (Calm)

Story Board: Break up a story into multiple parts, one part for every student group. Each group gets one part. Out of order, the groups will act out their part one at a time while the other groups watch. When all the groups have performed, each group tries to make a story out of what they have seen. When creating their stories, groups can use the parts in any order that makes sense to them. Then they share their created stories with the group. Finally, have the groups do a choral reading of their parts in the correct order. How did the groups’ stories compare to the original? Option: Have students act out key events in a story, and see if other groups can determine what part of the story the group is acting out. (Moderate)

Social Studies Active Learning Samples

Resource War: Spread colored balls (natural resources) all over the floor, and lay out enough Hula Hoops for every group to have one (this is their “home country”). Divide the class into groups of 4 students, and assign every group to a Hula Hoop. Give each group a styrofoam “whacker,” which may only be used on legs. **Goal:** to get as many balls as possible, and to get an even number of each color ball.

Phase One: only 1 person is allowed out of the home country at a time, either the miner or the army. The miner collects balls from the floor. The miner can go get a ball, and then bring it to the home country before going for another ball. The army can take the miners’ balls by whacking them on the legs. The army can take balls from miners, but no more than 3 at a time before returning them to the home country.

Phase Two: only 3 people are allowed out of the home country at the same time: the miner or army, the spy, and the ambassador. The ambassador can trade with other countries. To trade, the ambassador holds 1–2 colored balls over his head and approaches another country. The ambassador cannot be attacked by the army. The ambassador will make an offer to the other country to exchange for up to 2 balls of a desired color. The spy can roam freely to see where more resources exist and to collect information on the resources the other countries already possess.

Conclusion: Stop when all the natural resources are gone or groups can no longer get an even number of resources or when it seems students are winding out their enthusiasm. This game doesn’t really have a winner, but it leads to great discussions about access to natural resources, strategy, and how countries gather resources. (Moderate)

Interface: Students will try to learn the language spoken by other groups. Create an even number of groups of 3 or 4 students and give each group the same list of English words: name of group, home, adult, child, leader/king, trade, and another word the group chooses. Groups make up a nonsense word for each English word. This will be their language.

Pair up the groups so each group is working with partner group. Groups list their words on the board out of order. A group will use up to one minute to attempt to teach their partner group one of the words in their language. They may not make any sounds except the word in their language. Groups take turns teaching their language. If a group thinks they know the meaning of the partner group’s word, they write it down. Once the partner groups are done, they try to connect their word to the partner group’s word on the board.

When all the groups are done, they reveal the English equivalencies of their nonsense words, and students determine how well they did learning the new language. Finish with a discussion of language, interacting languages and cultures, and multiple ways different cultures express the same idea. For example, members of the older generation may have different words than the slang used by students. How does this affect communication? (Moderate)

Major Domo: Students learn about the complexity of allocating water resources through an acequia system. Place 6 or more Hula Hoops (fields) around the room. One end of the room is up hill; the other end of the room is downhill. Students try to place a rope from the uppermost field to the bottom field so that they can get water to every field one at a time. Water may only enter one field at a time. Students may use rulers to indicate on/off valves. (Calm)

Colored Communication Chains: Students will pass a message down a line to get the last person to pick up the correct color of ball. First, decide what type of touch will indicate heads or tails (example: right shoulder for heads, left shoulder for tails), as well as what color balls will be picked up for heads and tails (example: red for heads, green for tails). The students create one long line or two lines of students (to make this a race), either standing or sitting. The first person in the line faces the teacher; all other students turn around towards the students behind them (so each student is looking at another students' back). Place the two colored balls at the end of the line.

The teacher flips a coin, which only the first student in the line can see. Students give the signal to the next student in line, all the way to the end, and the last student picks up the correct color ball. Repeat multiple times to get faster and faster. With two lines of students, the first team to get the correct color ball wins. After a few rounds, debrief and let students discuss their strategy. Keep going. For more fun, flip the coin twice in a row so two messages are being passed at once. (Calm)

Capricious Leader: Students will attempt to figure out the laws by determining why some students get “put in jail” and others don't. Start by teaching students three movements: bear pose, fish pose, and mosquito pose. Gather all the students to face the teacher, or in a circle. All the students and the teacher perform one of the poses, and the teacher tells the students which ones “go to jail,” meaning step away from the group. Students get sent to jail for breaking the rules.

When all, or most, students are in jail, the round is over. Students should discuss their ideas and try to figure out the rule. If they think they know what the rule is, go another round so they can find out whether or not they are correct. They may share their idea with the teacher, who will answer “Let's find out!” If most students stay out of jail, have them share what they think the rule is. Create large cards with the rules on them, and when the students figure out a rule, reveal the card as a memory aide.

You will add one rule at a time, and only add a new rule when students figure out the current rule. So, for the first round, students only have to learn and follow one rule. During the second round, they have to figure out a new rule and follow both rules one and two or they will go to jail.

Critical: The teacher always follows all the rules.

Critical: The teacher must do the poses in the same order every time! (example: bear, then mosquito, then fish) Otherwise, students won't be able to learn the first rule.

The rules are on the next page.

The Rules for Capricious Leader:

- Rule 1: Students must make a different animal than the teacher (easier version: must make the same animal). This is why the teacher must make poses in the same order every time.
- Rule 2: No talking during a round of play other than animal sounds.
- Rule 3: Bear must roar, fish must make bubble sounds, mosquito must buzz. (Harder version: they must make an animal sound that is not associated with their animal; example: bear can buzz or make bubbles, but may not roar.)
- Rule 4: Feet must remain in place when making the animal pose.

You can make only 1 or 2 simple rules for younger students, such as animals must make their sounds, students cannot talk other than making their animal sounds.

Option: Have 2 or 3 students “outside” the play area. Their role is to try to figure out the pattern of why some students are sent to jail and others aren’t. They share their observations with the other students at the end of each round.

Follow the activity with a discussion of interacting with a new culture and trying to figure out the expectations, as well as the benefits of learning the expectations, laws, or rules. What “rules” are they expected to follow at home, in school, in society? (Moderate)

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