Great Sub Plan Ideas

These are suggested sub plan ideas for those looking for something to offer students in their absence that is substantive and results in learning, not just something that provides intellectual babysitting until your return. They are meant to be stand alone ideas, but they may require you to fill in the blank spaces with your curriculum. Feel free to photocopy, copy-and-paste, and share these ideas however you’d like.

‘Big suggestion for sub plans: Type out everything such as class lists, seating chart, school map, your teaching schedule, fire drill routes, class rules, etc. on your computer, then just print it off each time you need it for sub plans. Make sure to keep it up to date. Then, create a template of the class lesson plan and when you need to be out, you just insert the specific lessons plans for the day(s) into the template(s).

Note: Some of these ideas come from my book, Summarization in any Subject, ASCD, 2005.

‘Questions? Ways to improve the ideas? Pearls of Wisdom? Ideas you want to add? Let me know! -- Rick Wormeli, 703-620-2447 (Virginia, USA), rwormeli@cox.net.

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3 – 2 - 1

Ask students to read, view, or experience something then analyze it by recording 3 of something, 2 of something, and 1 of something. The “somethings” are up to you.

Examples from three disciplines:

3 – Identify three characteristics of Renaissance art that differed from art of the Middle Ages
2 – List two important scientific debates that occurred during the Renaissance
1 – Provide one good reason why “rebirth” is an appropriate term to describe the Renaissance

3 – List three applications for slope, y-intercept knowledge in the professional world
2 – Identify two skills students must have in order to determine slope and y-intercept from a set of points on a plane
1 – If (x1, y1) are the coordinates of a point W in a plane, and (x2, y2) are the coordinates of a different point Y, then the slope of line WY is what?

3 – Identify at least three differences between acids and bases
2 – List two uses of acids and two uses of bases
1 – State one reason why knowledge of acids and bases is important to citizens in our community
Backwards Summaries

“Make the web from which this paragraph came.”
“Here’s the completed math solution. What would happen if I had never considered the absolute value of x?”
“Here’s the final French translation of this sentence. What if I had not checked the tense of each verb?”
“Here’s a well done concerto. What happens if I remove the oboe’s eight measures on page 4?”
“Here’s a well-done lab procedure. What happens if I don’t use distilled water?”

Build a Model

Imagine the summarization and interaction that results from building models of the following principles and concepts:

- Checks and balances of the United States government
- Molecules and particular bonds
- Photosynthesis
- Levers and pulleys
- Parabolas and trajectories for missiles
- The Globe Theater
- Cellular Respiration
- Persuasive essays
- War strategies
- Population increases during heavy times of immigration and the subsequent drain on resources
- Erosion
- Pythagorean Theorem
- Pascal’s Triangle
- Boyle’s Law
- Poetic Rhyming Patterns
- Aristotle’s Rhetorical Triangle
- Proportions
- Velocity = Time divided by distance
- Symbolic portrayals of systems of government
- Latitude and Longitude
- Terrariums of specific biomes
- Metabolism
- The immune system
- Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- Geometric progressions
- Sets and subsets of ideas
- Slope and y-intercept
- Computer programming, flow charts
- Conversations and human interactions
Exclusion Brainstorming

Students are given topics they are studying with five or more words associated with the topic next to them. One of the words, doesn’t fit, however, and students must figure out which one it is and write a rationale as to why it doesn’t fit.

Example:

Mixtures – plural, separable, dissolves, no formula
Compounds – chemically combined, new properties, has formula, no composition
Solutions – heterogeneous mixture, dissolved particles, saturated and unsaturated, heat increases
Suspensions – clear, no dissolving, settles upon standing, larger than molecules

Student’s response: The student marks the lists as seen below, then either orally or in writing explains his reasoning.

Mixtures  – plural, separable, dissolves, no formula
Compounds  – chemically combined, new properties, has formula, no composition
Solutions  – heterogeneous mixture, dissolved particles, saturated and unsaturated, heat increases
Suspensions  – clear, no dissolving, settles upon standing, larger than molecules

One-Word Summaries

“If I had more time, I would’ve written less.” – Pascal

As a class, choose a word that best describes something under study. Then ask students to argue for or against the word as a good word to describe the topic of study. It doesn’t matter what they choose, they are still isolating critical attributes of the topic and learning about it. It’s okay to brainstorm three different words, if that’s easier, and allow students to pick one on which to chew.
“The new government regulations for the meat-packing industry in the 1920’s could be seen as an opportunity.”
“Manufacture is not the best word to describe photosynthesis.”
“Picasso’s work is an argument for increasing funding for the fine arts programs in our schools.”
“NASA’s battle with Rockwell industries over the warnings about frozen temperatures and the O-rings on the space shuttle were trench warfare.”

Point of View

Manipulating information for an alternative viewpoint requires students to distill and review critical attributes of a topic. For example, students can tell the story of digestion from the points of view of the bolus passing down the esophagus, the villi in the small intestine that have capillaries receiving and carrying nutrients to the bloodstream, or a muscle in the body that finally receives the nutrients from the food ingested earlier. Students can retell a historical incident from a biased participant’s point of view. They can reveal the truth behind a pronoun being a subject or an object based on which one did the action and which one received the action. No matter which one they choose, students review important features of the topic, and by looking at them from a different angle, they internalize more information for a longer period of time.

Changing perspectives on an event no matter how small is illuminating. Students can retell a story or account of a scientific, mathematical, or manufacturing process, a moment in history, a chemical’s reaction, a concerto’s performance, or a comma’s position in a sentence (from the ending quotation marks’ perspective). In each, students incorporate essential facts and concepts just learned.

Save the Last Word for Me

Ask students to read the intended passage either the night before or in class prior to discussion. If possible, ask them to make reading notations in light pencil. Once students have read the material, ask them to identify three or more sentences they deem worth discussing. These sentences might anger them, pose conflict, cause confusion, support something they believe, or beg further confirmation from students’ own lives; it doesn’t matter. Remind them that they will only choose one of the three sentences to offer the group, but they are choosing more than one in order to have alternative choices in case their first and second choices are taken by someone else.

Following the reading and identification of talking point sentences, divide students into groups of three to five, and ask one member of each group to read a line that he or she marked. It doesn’t matter whether or not it was marked with one of the standard reading notations. It should be one of the three or more they identified as worth discussing. This first person reads one of his sentences aloud only; he doesn’t add any comments or in any way responds to it.

After the first sentence is read, each person in the group other than the first person who made the statement reacts to that one line – agreeing, refuting, supporting, clarifying, commenting, or questioning. After everyone else has had a chance to make a personal response to the statement, the originator of the line gets to offer his or her commentary – “getting the last word” on the topic.

When this round of discussion is done, the next person in the circle calls out his or her chosen line from the text, and everyone responds to the line before this second person
offers his or her commentary, and so it goes with each member of the group. Watch your time – This can take any where from 15 to 45 minutes to complete, depending on how experienced your students are.

**Sorting Cards**

Once you’ve taught something that has multiple categories like types of government, multiple ideologies, cycles in science, systems of the body, taxonomic nomenclature, or multiple theorems in geometry, you’re ready to do a Sorting Cards summarization. On a chalkboard, posterboard, or bulletin board, place the titles of the categories studied. Then provide students with index cards or Post-it notes with individual facts, concepts, and attributes of the categories recorded on them. Allow them to work in groups to place each fact, concept, or attribute in its correct category.

The conversation among group members is just as important to the learning experience as the placement of the cards, so let students defend their reasoning orally and often. If it’s hard to set this up vertically, don’t be afraid to push back the desks and tables and do it on the floor, in the hallway, or in another room entirely.

If you would like students to do this individually, then it’s wise to ask students to cut out little pieces of paper (one for each fact, concept, or attribute) in advance. You can give them the terms to record on each piece of paper as well. If they make their own pieces like this and place everything in an envelope or Ziploc baggie, then students can practice the activity at home, too.

The summarization occurs every time a student lifts an individual card and makes a decision on where to place the card. He’s weighing everything he’s been taught as he considers his options. If others question his placement, the discussion furthers the impact. If there is great dissent, and it results in students referencing their notes and textbooks for more information, it’s teaching Nirvana.

**Unique Summarization Assignments**

- A comic strip about the mantissa (the decimal-fraction part of a logarithm)
- A mysterious yet accurate archeological map concerning the quadratic formula
- A field guide to the asymptotes of a hyperbola (the diagonals of the rectangle formed by the lines \(x = a, x = -a, y = b\) and \(y = -b\) in the hyperbola: \(x^2/a^2 - y^2/b^2\))
- A coloring book about Amendments 1, 2, 3, 4, and 10 to the Constitution
- A rap song that expresses the order of Presidential succession
- A grocery list for Taiga biomes
- A mural that accurately expresses the “checks and balances” nature of our Federal government’s three branches: judicial, legislative, and executive
- A sculpture or mobile that teaches observers about latitude and longitude
- A pop-up book on liquid and dry measures
- A soap opera about valence among chemical elements
- A “Wanted: Dead or Alive” poster about prepositions (“He was last seen in the OverHill’n’Dale Saloon, at the table, in the dark, under close scrutiny of other scalawags…”)

Imagine the great review of information if students were asked to summarize by doing the following:
• Blend the two concepts into one unifying idea.
• Compose a ballad about the cautious Massasoit tribe coming to dinner with Governor Bradford and his colony in 1621.
• Interpret the Internet for Amazonian inhabitants that have never lived with electricity, let alone a computer.
• Argue for and against Democracy as a healthy way to build a country – Provide at least two arguments for each position.
• Classify the Greek gods and goddesses according to three different criteria.
• Predict the limiting factors for this habitat twenty-five years from now.
• Retell a fairytale of your choosing with one of the following concepts as its central theme:
  a. Making healthy decisions
  b. Teamwork
  c. Take positive risks
  d. “If you’re not a part of the solution, you’re a part of the problem.”

Word Splash

Identify content you want students to know, and make a list of key vocabulary and concepts associated with the content. The terms can be new words or commonly known words, but they must be purposeful for the day’s lesson.

"Splash" these words across a sheet of paper by writing them at cockeyed angles all over the sheet. You might want to provide the words in little envelopes at every desk cluster or table group – that’s fine, too.

Now ask students to help you put them in logical order. Wild connections are often made, especially since it’s new material and students have no frame of reference. Once groups finish, ask them to share their thinking. Note the varied and occasionally entertaining interpretations. Then ask students to zero in on what it is they’re going to study and what they will be looking for as they read or learn. Then get to it.

Pass out the content reading material, conduct your lesson, do your demonstration, watch the video, and whatever else you were going to do to teach the material. Once done, ask students to go back to the words splashed on their papers or desks. Working as a group, ask them to place the words in a logical order that creates a summary of the material they just learned. They must be accurate and complete. Each group will mix and match terms, physically moving them around the page or desktop. They will discuss what belongs with what and what should be moved to the next sentence.

Once they have the words arranged, ask them to fill in around the terms with phrases and transitions that create full sentences and finally a well-constructed paragraph or two summary. Before asking groups to share their paragraphs, ask student groups to revisit the lesson or reading. Ask them to make sure their summary incorporates all that they learned, and that it is accurate and clear.

After they’re done, ask each group to share their rendering of the information for class critique. While one group presents, the other groups evaluate the accuracy, completeness, and clarity of the presenting group’s summary. If you have five groups in your room, the whole class will listen to five different summaries, critiquing them all. By the time you’re done, students know the information very well. Ask the class to vote on the best summary of the batch and have that one photocopied for the whole class, if possible.

Take the time to debrief with students. Ask them if their initial understanding was correct. If not, what changed for them? If it was correct, what background did they have
prior to the lesson that enabled them to make those successful connections among the words?

Debate

Ask your students to prepare and conduct a debate on a topic you are studying. Divide them into four opposing teams, two teams per debate. Two teams of students each take a position regarding a question or a statement: affirmative or negative. Each team spends time gathering data and research to support their position and to counter arguments from their opponents. Remind students that it is not a war of opinions; everything must be backed by data, research, and logic.

Suggested Sequence for Middle and High School Classes:

[This is a suggestion. Change the sequence and timing to suit your needs.]

1. Statement of the General Debate Topic and Why it’s Important – 1 min.
3. Negative Position Opening Remarks – 3 min.
5. Negative Position Arguments – 5 min.
6. Caucus – Students on both teams consider their arguments and rebuttals in light of what has been presented. – 3 min.
7. Affirmative Rebuttal and Questioning of the Negative’s Case – 3 min.
8. Negative Rebuttal and Questioning of the Affirmative’s Case – 3 min.
10. Closing Arguments Negative Position – 2 min.

Steps 7 and 8 are interactive. Both teams are allowed to respond. Positions can be given by one person or several.

An alternative format allows each position to make one major presentation of its arguments for no more than 6 minutes, then the opposing side cross-examines the arguments of the presenting team’s position for three minutes immediately afterwards.

**Journalistic vs Expository Writing**

Ask students to write the journalistic (narrative) version of expository text, or to write both versions of information they are studying. Examples:

**Journalistic Style:**

“The breathing of Benbow’s pit is deafening, like up-close jet engines mixed with a cosmic belch. Each new breath from the volcano heaves the air so violently my ears pop in the changing pressure – then the temperature momentarily soars. Somewhere not too far below, red-hot, pumpkin size globs of ejected lava are flying through the air.”

-- *National Geographic*, November 2000, p. 54

**Encyclopedic Style:**

“A volcano is a vent in the Earth from which molten rock (magma) and gas erupt. The molten rock that erupts from the volcano (lava) forms a hill or mountain around the vent. Lava may flow out as viscous liquid, or it may explode from the vent as solid or liquid particles…” -- *Global Encyclopedia*, Vol. 19 T-U-V, p. 627
Synectics was designed by William J. Gordon who defines it as, “The joining together of different and apparently irrelevant elements,” or put more simply, “Making the familiar strange.” Using the basic sequence, students:

1. Learn a topic.
2. Describe the topic, focusing on descriptive words and critical attributes.
3. Identify an unrelated category to compare to the descriptions in #2. (“Think of a sport that reminds you of these words. Explain why you chose that sport.”)
4. Write or express the analogy between the two: “The endocrine system is like playing zones in basketball. Each player or gland is responsible for his area of the game.”

Important: Students are very creative. Just because we cannot see the analogies right away doesn’t mean the students can’t either. They often see connections and differences we do not see.

In 4-Square Synectics, the class brainstorms four objects from a particular category (examples: kitchen appliances, household items, the circus, forests, shopping malls). Then, in small groups, students brainstorm what part of today’s learning is similar in some way to the objects listed. Finally, they create four analogies, one for each object, then share their analogies with the class.

Example: How is the human digestive system like each household item below? Sink, old carpet, microwave, broom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kitchen sink</th>
<th>Old carpet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microwave oven</td>
<td>Broom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: How is the Pythagorean Theorem like each musical instrument below?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Piano</th>
<th>Full drum set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electric guitar</td>
<td>trumpet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creative Ideas for Practicing and Using Vocabulary Terms

1. **Forms** – Get blank copies of any form students will encounter in the real world of adults and have them fill out the forms using the vocabulary terms. Examples: a will, a checkbook, tax forms, employment applications, hotel registrations, loan applications, wedding applications, car registrations, medical insurance forms, accident reports, time sheets.

2. **Restaurant Menu** – Make it look real! Names of items include the vocabulary word, descriptions of items convey the term’s meaning. Example: **Antecedent Apple Pie** – A dessert so good, it’s best served **before** the meal.

3. **Game Clues** – Choose familiar board games, car games, or t.v. game show formats.

4. **Taboo cards** – based on the popular game. Students write the word at the top of an index card, then list the five terms most associated with the word. Students try to get their teammates to say the word without using any of those terms.

5. **Art collage** with all the words in the list.

6. **Shape Spellings** – Students write the words in such a manner as to convey the meaning of the word. Examples: “Tall” written in tall, skinny letters, “Conflict” written with each half of the word leaning toward each other or breaking apart, “Germination” written with each letters sprouting from soil, “Fraction” written as Fraction.

7. **Vocabulary Rummy** – Play it just like the card game, except the cards are the vocabulary terms written on index cards. Make up combinations that groups of students are striving for in each hand – Words that express all steps in Mitosis, nouns and pronouns, words associated with a pentagonal prism (five, edges, faces, vertices), words that describe the Industrial Revolution. When someone calls out “Vocabulary Rummy,” he or she must defend his choices with his or her playing partners.

8. **Wanted Dead or Alive Poster** – all descriptions and images of the criminal or ruffian include the proper uses of the words and reveal the words’ meanings.

9. **Conversation** – dialog between two famous people in which they both use the vocabulary terms.

10. **Rap or Folk Song**.

11. **Newspaper Article**.

12. **Rules to a new Board Game**.


14. **Movie Poster**.

15. **CD-Rom cover and insert**.

16. **Eulogy**.

17. **Bumper stickers** – Different slogans that are similar to structures found on bumper stickers. You can display these on a real car bumper in your room or in the school. Make sure the meaning of the word comes out, or use them purely for spelling practice. Example with the word, “environment”: “Clean up the environment – Our surroundings are borrowed from our children!”

18. **Letter of rebuttal**.

19. A **new cereal box** for a new cereal.
SHOW, DON’T TELL

Your readers want to be treated with respect. They also want to be drawn into your story. You want them to be active readers, not passive. Let them come to their own conclusions. SHOW your reader what’s happening, don’t tell him or her. Do this with creative and detailed descriptions.

**Strategies:**
- Try an interesting verb (use your list of movement words!)
- Avoid clichés
- Focus on what is smelled, tasted, felt, heard and seen
  - Use thoughts in the character’s head
- Look at it from an unusual point of view
- Compare it to something else
- Use dialog to reveal emotions and actions

Here’s an example of a description turned into something more interesting that SHOWS readers what it was like instead of simply telling them...

Change, “The rainforest was humid” to:

“Moisture dripped from the large banana leaves and fell upon the damp soil. Every few minutes he had to peel his shirt away from his stomach. The sweat on his face gathered in great droplets and rolled downward, following the curve of his eyebrows cheekbones. Breathing was like sucking mud through a straw -- he hoped at least once he’d get a pocket of clear, fresh air, but each inhale was the same -- wet and full of mildew. Hiking up the steep incline toward the Mayan ruins turned his leg muscles to well-boiled noodles. He stopped and unfolded the map for the seventh time and noted his fingers were wrinkled, like they were after a long shower or swim.”

**Directions:** Write down any three of the following descriptive phrases, leaving ample space between them. Then in each space, write descriptions (of three or four sentences) that SHOW the reader what it was like instead of telling them, similar to the example above. Use the strategies listed above as much as possible.

Descriptive Phrases to Re-write:

A. It was raining.  
B. I was afraid.  
C. She was excited.  
D. It was a boring afternoon.  
E. The light was bright.  
F. The car was really old.  
G. The jewel was pretty.  
H. The room was a mess.  
I. She was a good problem solver.  
J. It was a difficult decision.  
K. The desert was dry.  
L. The river was full.  
M. The fog was thick.  
N. The classroom was busy.  
O. The house needed an owner.  
P. The map was ancient.  
Q. The dog looked dangerous.
Journey to the Land of...

**S H A P E S C A P E S**!

What is a shapescape? It is a landscape of geometric solid figures made out of folded paper patterns. They are placed on a larger flat surface as buildings in a futuristic (or current time period) city or colony. For instance, you could create a lunar base for the space shuttle, an undersea city, school, or center for scientific study, or it could be a new town located somewhere nearby or in a fantasy country. The purpose is to use all the shapes in a 3-dimensional way and to be creative. The design of the city is up to you.

What do you need to do? Look at the shapes listed in our textbook. Consider how to make each shape. Then, design your city on the paper, marking where each building will be placed and what shape will be used for each building.

Once this is done, you need to draw the pattern for each shape on paper, cut it out, fold it together, and tape or glue it closed. You may want to decorate your shapes with windows and door designs or names of companies, etc., to make it appear more like a city. Once created, you can glue the shape to the right spot on the paper. Also, consider what color you want your building or structure to be. Use that color of paper.

Finally, give your city a name.

What shapes will be expected to be on your shapescape? Use the following:
(All shapes can be used more than once!)

- cube
- rectangular pyramid
- rectangular prism
- triangular pyramid
- triangular prism
- cone
- cylinder
- pentagonal pyramid
- pentagonal prism
- sphere*

* This is a difficult shape to make out of paper. You may use another material if it will be easier for you. Tinfoil? Clay?

**Your shapes must have the correct number of faces, edges and vertices!**

Use regular large size construction paper or posterboard as your base. MAKE IT FIRM! You may decorate it with streets or tramways if you wish. If you want to make some geometric vehicles you may. These are ideas to add to your fun, but they are not required.

**Language Arts Integration (Choose one):**

Create a Tourist brochure for your shapescape. Make it similar to the ones with three panels describing points of interests, a brief history, hotels and restaurants available, pictures of the sites, a small map, a city motto, and anything that makes it look like a real brochure.

Create a Constitution for your new colony.

Create two legends or folktales about former residents of your colony.

This will be an enjoyable activity if you let your imagination dream a little. What would a base on the moon, a city under water or your own fantasy city look like? Ask, if you need help!

Due Date: ___________________________
It's time to work backwards: The following paragraph was written from a web. Read the paragraph and look for its structure. Then, draw and label the web from which it was made.

Paragraph:

Skydiving is a really cool sport. There are many different areas, however, you have to know about before you try it. First, the cost is very high. It might run you $200.00 for your first time. You have to pay for your ground training, your instructor, the gas for the plane and rental of the equipment itself. The equipment includes your chute, the flight suit, your spare chute, and the fee for packing your chute. Second, you need to pay attention to your ground training. It will save your life. Most training sessions are eight hours long. You learn to land under different conditions, and you learn how to roll so that you don't smash your knees or spine when you land. You also learn how to control your parachute and maneuver into the wind so you don't crash. How to handle emergencies while in the air is also a part of your training. One emergency is when you have a "streamer," in which your chute comes out but never inflates with air. Another one is when the parachute never opens. You can also crash into another skydiver. After all the training, however, you usually get to make your first jump the same day. The first one is thrilling! You sit on the edge of the airplane's doorway 3,500 feet above the ground. The air rushes along side of the metal skin of the plane. When your jumpmaster says, "Go," you leap into the wide emptiness and pray your parachute will open. When it does, and you realize you're safe, sometimes you begin to laugh because of sheer joy. The farmer's fields below look like a checkerboard and you're the King. Everything is silent and you feel terrific. Finally, you land (hopefully not on the back of cow) and go back to the airstrip, ready for another leap. Though it is expensive and requires a lot of training, the excitement of skydiving is worth it.

Your Web of the Paragraph: [Use the back or another sheet, if necessary.]
In a 300 to 500-word essay, determine the authenticity of an historical fiction book with regard to one of the following areas:

A. Setting  B. Character Actions/Conflicts  C. Language

In doing your determination of authenticity in the category of your choice, identify three examples from the book that you can find evidence for being realistic to the time period. For instance, if soldiers describe fighting in trenches, find diary entries of trench soldiers or experts which prove that the real fighting in trenches was just as it was described in the book. Show how those descriptions compare to the novel that you’re trying to prove authentic.

In the structure of your analysis, make an opening statement about the book’s authenticity regarding the area you chose (setting, character action, or language), then proceed with your examples and evidence. Finish with a well-crafted conclusion. Make this the best writing you’ve ever done. Focus on:

• Intelligent and clear organization
• Good word choices
• Varied sentence structures
• No extraneous thoughts
• Enough material to support your points
• **Accurate information**
• Intelligent use of conventions (punctuation, transitions, grammar, spelling)
• An effective writer’s voice

You must include a bibliography of all sources you use. Review the list of possible authenticity sources we made in class. Just to clarify: The 300 to 500-word limit refers to your writing and analysis, NOT the text samples you use.

**Due Date: ______________________________**
Crash Island Projection

Divide students up into groups of 4 to 6 members. Provide them with a large sheet of white or manilla paper, and make sure they have plenty of pencils, markers, and/or crayons.

Explain that a jet airliner has just crashed on a deserted island. There are only 20 survivors. The island is robust with natural resources, but it is too remote for any communication with the civilized world. The survivors are on their own, using only the natural resources and what’s left of the plane wreckage.

Here’s the task: The group is to draw what the island will look like 100 years after the crash. Assuming no visits from others and the survivors and their descendants have been there without any other aid the entire time, what will the survivors have created in the way of culture and civilization? There is no taking the easy way out with this by simply claiming that they died or they found a vast treasure trove of food and water in a cave.

Other considerations: You can ask the student groups to first describe the 20 people and require that the civilization reflect those people and their strengths/attributes. You can also require that some of the survivors be people from the period of history you are studying. The subsequent culture/civilization must reflect the interests and attributes of those famous people. For example, what would a civilization look like if it was heavily influenced by Albert Einstein, Cleopatra, Ghandi, or Leonardo da Vinci? In another twist, you can require that some of the survivors are characters from a novel you have been reading with the students. What role will they play and what will their culture/civilization look like?

Practice Narrowing the Topic

Ask students to practice developing great focus or research questions from a given general topic. See the next page for an example of this. What’s written in the caption cloud is what students are to be thinking. They don’t record that however. Once students have the idea, give them six or seven general topics for which they narrow the focus to a one or two-page paper. Suggested topics include: the universe, sports, the oceans, music, school, themselves, our culture, movies, books, the solar system, language.
Research Question:
What was the “Fishhook” strategy used in the Battle of Gettysburg?
Quickwrites

Some of the best Quickwrites are based on specific skills within a larger topic: Great opening lines, a piece of evidence, or one claim in a thematic essay; samples of well crafted and not-so-well-crafted hypotheses in the scientific method; patterns in verb conjugations; opportunities to state multiple rises-over-runs before determining slope of a line; finding latitudes of multiples locations around the Earth before adding longitudes. Sure we can add flavor to some of these [“Give me a great opening line to this thematic essay if Captain Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp in Disney’s Pirates of the Caribbean movie) were writing it.”], but they always come back to meaty content and skills.

Remember to look at Quickwrite ideas in other subjects, too. Many of them are adaptable to more than one subject. For example, we can write an ode to the Euro, but we can also write an ode to graphing inequalities and to the almighty verb.

Additional Quickwrites:

- If someone were stuck finding the lowest common multiple between two numbers, what two pieces of advice would you give him?
- Draw a quick mindmap or flow chart of the steps needed to reduce a fraction to lowest terms.
- Identify two situations in which it is better to turn fractions into decimals before adding them.
- What’s a quick way to tell whether or not 88,050 is divisible by 6, and is it?
- Give evidence to support or refute “capitalist” as an appropriate description of the main character.
- Create two great test questions on this topic we could use for tomorrow’s test.
- Categorize the 26 elements in three ways with no one category consisting of less than three elements.
- Rewrite these four measures to express a different dynamic.
- Explain to someone two grade levels below you why integers are also rational.
- With a partner, identify three arguments against what I just taught you.
- Ask students to respond to concepts posted on newsprint posters around the room. They write their reactions on the posters themselves.
- Collect feedback from students about a recent test, unit, lesson, or experience.
- In the lull after a test, ask students to identify content/skills that weren’t on the test, or ask students to come up with a great additional question for the test and to call on someone to answer it.
- Ask students to come up with alternative titles to a book or event, or, “If [insert a real person under study] were to write a book, what would its title be?
• Ask students who they would cast in the role of ________ in this book and why?
• Use a new term in two situations, one correct and one incorrect. Students discern which is which.
• Ask students to generate as many words as they can think of that mean the opposite of ________.
• Give students an answer for which they have to generate a dozen or more sincere questions.
• Ask them to rewrite one verse of a popular song to express content being studied.
• Give students five vocabulary terms but make sure one of them doesn’t fit the category or theme of the terms, and ask students to identify which word doesn’t belong and a reason why it doesn’t belong.
• Ask students to identify one word that best describes something under study and to defend that word as a good word to describe it. Ask others to argue against the word as a good word to describe the topic.
This is where you ask students to record a statement for or against something, then they must spend individual time listed all the positives, the minuses, and the things that are neither positive or interesting – they’re just interesting to consider. Once they’ve done this, they share with a neighbor, then with the whole class. For the first one, do something interesting, such as, “All vehicles on the whole planet should be painted yellow,” or “All students should be paid $50 per week to go to school.” These are from Edward de Bono, who invented the approach. Once they done this with these other statements, ask students to analyze statements involving whatever you’re studying in class this week. It’s amazing how many students change their opinions once they analyze the statements in this manner.

Edward de Bono’s P-M-I Activity
Statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Plusses]</td>
<td>[Minuses]</td>
<td>[Interesting]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Somebody-Wanted-But-So

This is short, easy to use template for summarizing fiction (there’s also one for non-fiction below). Ask students to practice filling in the blanks in this template using short stories, cartoons, movies, and television shows, then to do whole books or novels.

For Fiction:

Somebody *(characters)*…

*wanted* *(plot-motivation)*…,

*but* *(conflict)*…,

*so* *(resolution)*… .

For Non-Fiction:

Something *(independent variable)*…

*happened* *(change in that independent variable)*…,

*and* *(effect on the dependent variable)*…,

*then* *(conclusion)*… .
Summary Pyramid:

Great prompts for each line: Synonym, analogy, question, three attributes, alternative title, causes, effects, reasons, arguments, ingredients, opinion, larger category, formula/sequence, insight, tools, misinterpretation, sample, people, future of the topic
Becoming a Better Writer: Writing Concisely


Avoid Redundant Phrases and Repeating Yourself (): [P. 185-188]

More additions, absolutely certain/essential/necessary, added bonus, add up, advance forward, all done, alternative choice, a.m. in the morning, and also, annual birthday, baby puppy/kitten, blended together, brief moment, but however, close down, combined together, continue on, deliberate lie, empty space, end result, exact match, extra bonus, fall down, fatal suicide, first discovered, foot pedal, forecast the future, foreign imports, free gift, general public, interpret to mean, large-sized, later on, major breakthrough, map out, may/might possibly, mental telepathy, natural instinct, necessary requirement, never before, new beginning, new record, old antique, orbiting satellite, pair of twins, past achievement/experience/performance, physically located, plan ahead, p.m. in the evening, possible candidate, preliminary draft, proceed ahead, raise up, refer back, repeat over, rise up, same identical, separate individual, stack together, stand up, switch over, tiny particle, true facts, unexpected surprise, violent explosion, visible to the eye, weather conditions, while at the same time, wink an eye, x-ray photograph, young child/puppy/kitten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loose, Wordy Writing</th>
<th>Concise Writing [Preferred]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A small number of people</td>
<td>Three people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appear on the scene</td>
<td>Arrived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In back of</td>
<td>Behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backwards, forwards</td>
<td>Backward, forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a plan on the table.</td>
<td>A plan is on the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m amazed by the fact that you took the last cookie.</td>
<td>I’m amazed that you took the last cookie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For this exam, you need to use a pencil.</td>
<td>For this exam, you need a pencil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955 A.D.</td>
<td>1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was doubtful whether or not he would participate.</td>
<td>It was doubtful whether he would participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid quotes unless you “really” need them.</td>
<td>Avoid quotes unless you really need them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In order to get the job done, keep at it.</td>
<td>To get the job done, keep at it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I left work at 5:30. Later, when I unlocked the front door at home…</td>
<td>I left work at 5:30. When I unlocked the front door, ….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Thanks” and Bobby was slamming the screen doors and pedaling off to the grocery store.</td>
<td>“Thanks.” Bobby slammed the screen door and pedaled off to the grocery store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A new shopping center will be build this summer.</td>
<td>A shopping center will be built this summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The book devotes an entire chapter to…</td>
<td>The book devotes a chapter to…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His whole speech bothered me.</td>
<td>His speech bothered me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Wilkes Booth was the person who shot President Lincoln.</td>
<td>John Wilkes Booth shot Abraham Lincoln.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The situation still remains the same. The situation remains the same.

To Practice: Write ten sentences that are wordy, then write their concise versions.

### Alternative Summary Formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correspondence</th>
<th>Museum Map and Tour Guides</th>
<th>Oral Histories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>Radio Plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>Scripts</td>
<td>Historical Fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercials</td>
<td>Picture Books</td>
<td>Journal/Diaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>Mystery Stories</td>
<td>Romances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Autobiographies/Biographies</td>
<td>Animal Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How-to Books</td>
<td>Alphabet books</td>
<td>Pop-up Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Guides</td>
<td>Mini-textbooks</td>
<td>Friendly Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletin Boards</td>
<td>Choose-Your-Own Adventures</td>
<td>Timelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murals</td>
<td>Coloring Books</td>
<td>Calendars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Catalogs</td>
<td>Travel Brochures</td>
<td>Manuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Recipes</td>
<td>Personal narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folktales/legends/myths</td>
<td>Information Reports</td>
<td>Persuasive essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book/Movie Critiques</td>
<td>Wills</td>
<td>Yellow pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather forecasts</td>
<td>Wanted posters</td>
<td>Vitas/resumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satire/spoofs</td>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>Songs/raps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD covers</td>
<td>Soap operas</td>
<td>Slogans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermons</td>
<td>Sequels/prequels</td>
<td>Schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab instructions</td>
<td>Protest letters</td>
<td>Post cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlets</td>
<td>Flipbooks</td>
<td>Odes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiems</td>
<td>Rebuttals</td>
<td>Play programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel posters</td>
<td>Movie posters</td>
<td>Thank yous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Telegrams</td>
<td>Sports accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scary stories</td>
<td>Quizzes/tests</td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Monologues</td>
<td>Jokes/riddles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menus</td>
<td>Metaphors</td>
<td>Job applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indexes</td>
<td>Headlines</td>
<td>Grocery lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>Comic strips</td>
<td>Constitutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>Conversations</td>
<td>Spreadsheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>Epilogues</td>
<td>Evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortunes</td>
<td>Comparisons</td>
<td>Character sketches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificates</td>
<td>Cereal boxes</td>
<td>Captions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bumper stickers</td>
<td>Advice columns</td>
<td>Epithets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Informal/formal observation</td>
<td>Musical score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True or False Book</td>
<td>Cookbook</td>
<td>Wedding vows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almanac</td>
<td>Inauguration speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Family Tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Action Words to Jump-Start Great Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyze...</th>
<th>Summarize...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain...</td>
<td>Construct...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide between...</td>
<td>Argue against...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did...</td>
<td>Argue for...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare...</td>
<td>Examine...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast...</td>
<td>Modify...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify...</td>
<td>Plan...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classify...</td>
<td>Critique...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define...</td>
<td>Evaluate...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retell...</td>
<td>Organize...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret...</td>
<td>Interview...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand...</td>
<td>Find support for...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predict...</td>
<td>Develop...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase...</td>
<td>Categorize...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show...</td>
<td>Criticize...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplify...</td>
<td>Deduce...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infer...</td>
<td>Outline...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulate...</td>
<td>Blend...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose...</td>
<td>Revise...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invent...</td>
<td>Imagine...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devise...</td>
<td>Compose...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combine...</td>
<td>Rank...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend...</td>
<td>Defend...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justify...</td>
<td>Describe...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose...</td>
<td>Assess...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create...</td>
<td>Write...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Samples:

- **Blend** the two concepts into one unifying idea.
- **Compose** a ballad about the cautious Massasoit tribe coming to dinner with Governor Bradford and his colony in 1621.
- **Interpret** the Internet for Amazonian inhabitants that have never lived with electricity, let alone a computer.
- **Argue** for and against Democracy as a healthy way to build a country – Provide at least two arguments for each position.
- **Classify** the Greek gods and goddesses according to three different criteria.
• **Predict** the limiting factors for this habitat twenty-five years from now.
• **Retell** a fairytale of your choosing with one of the following concepts as its central theme: Making healthy decisions, Teamwork, Take positive risks, If you’re not a part of the solution, you’re a part of the problem.

**MORE MOTIVATING AND SUBSTANTIVE WRITING IDEAS**

**Rap Song**

Ask students to write a rap song incorporating accurate content from the lesson. The word play and rhythm serve as mnemonics for retaining the information when it is performed. The most effective learning, however, occurs in the song’s creation. Students have to manipulate the words into rhymes and beats that are accurate to the topic and subject. As they say the phrases over and over, they memorize the facts. In addition, when students can follow a beat, they can remember long passages that would rival Homer’s *Iliad*. During tests, they can recall the words to the rap and the facts will pour forth. Here’s what one student wrote about the alkali metals in the Periodic Table of Elements:

“**You know I don’t lie, I said, al-ka-li.**
You ask me why, here I say al-ka-li.
They’re metal with the mettle, they go into action,
they’re soft and white with volatile reaction.
You know I don’t lie, I said, al-ka-li.
You ask me why, here I say al-ka-li.
**Quick with temper, high velocity,**
**Watch the low melting and density.**
They’re al-ka-li, they’re al-ka-li.
Like Hansel and Gretal, it’s alkali metal,
Soft and white with a volatile reaction
Soft and white with a quick infraction
They’re Hansel and Gretal, alkali metal,
1, 3, 11, 19, 37, 55, 87
**Numbers to alkali heaven**
Their al-ka-li, they’re al-ka-li
They’re brothers and sisters, be careful you see ’em:
There’s lithium, sodium, potassium, rubidium,
cesium and francium. Man, you’ve had enough of them.
Say, al-ka-li, give it a try,
Say al-al-ka-li, al-al-ka-li.”

Web site:

Ask students to design their own Internet site based on the topic. Students must present all information accurately on the site, and they must make it interactive so visitors can learn as well.

RAFT

R = Role, A = Audience, F = Form, T = Time or Topic

Student to take on a role, work for a specific audience, use a particular form to express the content, and do it within a time reference, such as pre-Civil War, 2025, or ancient Greece. An example assignment might be a candidate for the Green Party (role), trying to convince election board members (audience) to let him be in a national debate with Democrats and the Republicans. The student writes a speech (form) to give to the Board during the Presidential election in 2004 (time). Within this assignment, students use arguments and information from this past election with third party concerns, as well as their knowledge of the election and debate process. Another student could be given a RAFT assignment in the same manner, but this time the student is a member of the election board who has just listened to the first student’s speech.

RAFT assignments are fairly easy to put together. Consider a variety of people associated with the content (roles), a variety of people for whom or to whom the students are to communicate in those roles (audience), multiple ways in which to communicate the content (form), and a variety of settings (time). Once you have a list of each, mix and match, looking for combinations that suggest interesting and substantive interactions. After a while, of course, it’s great to let students create their own RAFT assignments based on the content. Here’s an example RAFT list that took me about ten minutes to generate. These ideas are applicable to general subjects, not a specific subject:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Formats</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scuba diver</td>
<td>Coast Guard</td>
<td>court testimony</td>
<td>modern day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ballet dancer</td>
<td>patrol board</td>
<td>Advice column</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comic strip character</td>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>scale model</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aborigine</td>
<td>principal</td>
<td>autobiography</td>
<td>post-war Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coach</td>
<td>parents</td>
<td>bookmark</td>
<td>pre-CivilWar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zoologist</td>
<td>young adolescents</td>
<td>constitution</td>
<td>Potato famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>nursing home</td>
<td>CD cover</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayor</td>
<td>doctors</td>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td>2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>archeologist</td>
<td>zoo visitors</td>
<td>Lyrics</td>
<td>while swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dotcom CEO</td>
<td>Thomas Edison</td>
<td>Hieroglyphics</td>
<td>while downsizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soldier</td>
<td>ancient Sumerians</td>
<td>Field guide</td>
<td>at graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disenfranchised citizen</td>
<td>sharecroppers</td>
<td>Jigsaw puzzle</td>
<td>on a field trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>custodian</td>
<td>manager of Pizza Hut</td>
<td>Ship's log</td>
<td>school board mtg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSYNC (boy band)</td>
<td>museum curator</td>
<td>Monument</td>
<td>late at night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Math

Have students produce a love story between two geometric shapes, incorporating all attributes of each. Students can also write about math discoveries that changed the world. Let them draft a proposal to the city council for a bridge structure and explain why they believe it would be the sturdiest and most cost-efficient option. How about a speech advocating the value of math in today’s society? Math is a writing-friendly subject. Once you get started, it easy to summarize creatively:

• A paragraph about what the world would be like without numbers
• A report on the geometry of a basketball court
• A story about an underwater or lunar colony in which all architecture reflects three-dimensional solids. Students can write building descriptions, folktales, a constitution, and a travel brochure, all emphasizing math concepts in the colony. A sample set of directions for this activity is included in the appendix.
• A summary of cash transactions for a business over ten years and advice for the business owner based on the data.
• Directions for solving a problem
• A “Dear Abby” column for math-phobic students
• An autobiography of a right angle
• Jump rope rhymes
• A math dictionary
• A consumer letter of complaint
• A math autobiography (a student’s experiences with math over time)
• Make a schedule of ____________
• Publish a math newspaper or magazine with the latest from the world of math in your classroom. If you choose a newspaper, students can write for different sections, incorporating facts into each. Imagine the sad letter to advice columnist Jane Scalene, the play-by-play sports column about last night’s slope and y-intercept game — was that rise-over-run a legal move? Not to mention the front-page stories about the possible corruption of number theory by irrational numbers, or an editorial about the confusion over Celsius and Fahrenheit temperatures.

Art

• Write autobiographies to go with portraits
• Sculpt with clay while using writing process terms
• Explain how the feelings evoked by a particular painting or photograph can be created through the written word
• Answer the question: “If a picture could talk, what would it say?”
• Develop synthesis writings: “What does blue sound like?” “Describe red through other senses and experiences not associated with what we can see.”
• Explain what a particular piece of art tells us about a particular time period

Science:

• Write the life story of a ____________
• Make up a tongue twister about ____________
• Write the instructions for ____________
• Write a consumer’s guide to ____________
• Write a myth that reveals the origin of ____________
• Create a science calendar in which the picture for each month conveys ____________
• Write a science fiction story that cleverly uses the following information ____________
• Examine a common science misconception, how it is perpetuated, and what can be done to correct it
• Explain why another student obtained certain lab results
• Create a board game focusing on the basic steps of (insert science cycle or principle)
• Research and write a report about a scientific discovery that changed the world

Social Studies

• A tall tale about a current event
• A prediction about ____________
• A conversation between two famous people, using vocabulary from the era
• A comparison of two different forms of government
• A description of how a piece of literature changed an era
• An analysis of a political cartoon
• A biography of a famous person from history
• Notes for a debate preparation
• A comic strip that retells a famous incident
• A response to the question, “If someone from the time period under review were around today, what would he or she say about such modern world issues as gun control, censorship, women’s rights, public education, or global warming?”
• A pledge/anthem/symbol/flag/constitution for a new country
• A movie poster with eye-catching graphics, titles, sound-bite reviews from movie critics, and a list of the cast and crew responsible for the film about (fill in the appropriate vocabulary term, such as “democracy”)

A Great Summarization Technique – oral or written: “Give me 12 questions”

Ask students to give you twelve thoughtful questions to which the answer is ___________ (concept or item from the lesson).

Great Assignments with Bloom’s Taxonomy
-- Wormeli, 2005

COMPREHENSION – This level asks students to demonstrate whether or not they understand a topic.

• Translate the passage from French to English.
• What’s the difference between osmosis and diffusion?
• Give a clear example of each system: socialism, communism, capitalism, tyranny, democracy, republic.
• Classify the items according to their origin.
• Explain how any whole number with an exponent of zero equals one.
• Summarize the contract.
• Which part/word doesn’t fit?
• Why did the material retard the flames?
• Which comments support the President’s position?

APPLICATION – This level asks students to use their knowledge and skills in a different situation.

• Predict what would happen if we changed the temperature in the terrarium.
• Use the formulas for area to determine the surface area of the object.
• Given what we learned about the factory labor atrocities in the early 1900’s, create a proposal for a new business law in Chicago that protects the rights of workers ages 10 to 14.
• Explain how music changed the tone of the film.
• Offer resolutions to the conflict.

ANALYSIS – In this level, students break down topics into component pieces. Students analyze those pieces and how they fit together to create the whole of something.

• Identify the mistake the student made as he solved the math problem.
• What is the function of the carburetor?
• In the news article, which comment seems politically motivated?
• Determine which variables will impact the experiment’s outcome.
• How did the writer arrive at his conclusion?
• Defend the character’s decision to sell guitar.
• Justify your answer.
• What’s the relationship between big business and politics during this time?
• What’s the logical fallacy in his argument?
• Rank the arguments in order of impact.

SYNTHESIS – This level asks students to bring together seemingly contradictory aspects or topics and form something new.

• Add Harry Potter to the conflict in the novel. How would it change?
• Write a song that teaches students the differences between subjective and objective personal pronouns.
• Create and present a television commercial that convinces viewers of the value of good personal hygiene using the persuasive techniques we discussed in class.
• Propose an alternative plan of action.
• Create a cartoon that depicts two choices.
• Write a constitution for your new underwater city that reflects the politics of ancient Rome.
• Design a better inventory system.

EVALUATION – This is the most complex level because it requires students to use all the other levels in its execution in addition to their own opinion. Evaluation asks students to judge the value of something given specific criteria.

• Which persuasive essay is most convincing and why?
• According to the standards set forth by the Treaty, is the country in compliance? Explain.
• Which inconsistencies appear in their argument, and are they important?
• Judge the value of the character’s contributions.
• Which decision is more ethical?
• Which algorithm is the most efficient and why?
• Criticize the performance.

Frank Williams’s Taxonomy of Creative Thought

There are eight levels, the first four are cognitive and the last four are affective. All levels make great stimuli for homework assignments. Here’s an example from Imogene Forte and Sandra Schurr in their book, *Integrating Instruction in Science*:

**Fluency** – Think of the characteristics that distinguish a living thing from nonliving thing. List as many of these characteristics as you can.

**Flexibility** – Devise a classification system for living things based on the fact that some of the characteristics of living things show themselves in different ways in different kinds of organisms.

**Originality** – Write a description of life as if you had to explain life to a nonliving thing.

**Elaboration** – Explain how scientists in the field of biology rely on methods and discoveries of scientists in other fields in order to do their work.

**Risk Taking** – Tell how you feel about the possible benefits and the potential dangers of modern advances in genetic engineering.

**Complexity** – Discuss the issues involved in the work of a scientist whose discoveries improve some lives, but whose work also harms some living things through experiments on which the work is based.

**Curiosity** – What questions would you like to ask a biologist in order to learn about a typical day in the life of a biologist?

**Imagination** – Write a brief imaginative account of Marcello Malpighi’s first view of the movement of blood through capillaries with a microscope.

*(Integrating Instruction in Science, p. 46)*
A Reading Autobiography is the story of how you came to be the reader you are today and what roles reading and books play in your life. There’s a lot to say in a reading autobiography. Here are some ideas to get you started, in no particular order:

**Background questions:**

- Who taught you to read? Do you have any specific memories of these experiences?
- What kinds of books do you like to read now? Did you used to read other kinds of books?
- Did (and does) anyone read aloud to you? How did (or do) you like it?
- Did you ever read a series of books (Harry Potter, Hardy Boys, Babysitter’s Club, Goosebumps) in which the same characters re-appeared in subsequent novels? Any comment on series books?
- Do other members of your family read for work or enjoyment?
- Have you ever read a book recommended to you by an adult? What was the result?
- Has reading ever led to something else important in your life?
- What authors do you like (from childhood through today)?
- Do you have time to read for enjoyment? If so, when? If not, why not?
- Predict: What kinds of books will you be reading in high school and as an adult?

**Thoughts on Reading questions:**

- What does reading enable you to do?
- Do you like to read? Why or why not?
- How do you find a good book?
- Why do you read?
- Why do schools teach reading?
- Do you read because you have to or because you want to?
- What makes you more inclined to read something instead of passing it by?
- Do you struggle when you read?

Answer all of the questions. You’ll find that some of your responses are detailed enough to answer more than one question. That’s fine. If you’ve mentioned something once, you don’t have to mention it again. Feel free to add more information if it seems important.

**Assignment:** Write your reading autobiography based on your responses to the questions above. Organize it in whatever structure creates a clear picture of your background, capabilities, and preferences as a reader, but do not use question-answer style. Successful students will be thoughtful, describe some reading experiences in detail, offer opinions (back them up with examples), and they will take care of mechanics such as proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

**Due Date:** _______________
This activity can be done as it is written, or integrated with content, such when describing a ziggurat, a political system, a type of cell, or a math formula:

### Descriptions without Adjectives Activity

1) Brainstorm a list of interesting 10 interesting objects.

2) Choose one object and describe it without using adjectives (words or phrases that modify nouns or pronouns). Instead use feelings, uses, experiences, comparisons, and anything you can think of to describe the object. The idea is to look at things from more than the obvious angle.

   Example for describing an ocean:

   “It’s the embodiment of antithesis, capable of destroying and nurturing, with more than a few parts, but it can function as a whole. We think we know it by playing at the beach, but we find how little we know when we explore the bottom of an iceberg, or a shipwreck entombed in its silt. There are answers it has still to give us. Stories yet to be told about its mystery. It’s power and nutrients give hope to humans.”

3) Once done, exchange descriptions with a friend to make sure there are no adjectives in your description, except for pronouns and articles that are functioning as adjectives. For example, in the phrase, “the car,” “the” is an article modifying “car” (a noun) so technically it is an adjective. Don’t worry about these, however. You can have them in your descriptions.

4) Turn it in to the black basket.
Learn MEMORIZATION TECHNIQUES!

• Write the lines on paper several times.
• Practice reciting them while looking at your eyes in front of a mirror.
• Practice reciting them while standing in front of your family or friends.
• Memorize the lines backwards
• Memorize in phrases, not individual words, as well as “bridges.”
• At every waiting time in your life, practice your lines.
• Use different voices to recite the lines.
• Have someone call the cues for you.
• Repeat the lines over and over by reading them first, then look away from the page and repeat them, then read them aloud again.
• Use memory devices (mnemonics). Example: for the order of operations in math (parentheses, exponents, multiplication, division, addition, subtraction) we use “Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally.” Another example: You can also use a familiar structure in your life. Imagine yourself walking into your home.
• Have a crazy conversation with someone, in which each time one of you speaks, you have to use one of the words/concepts/lines you’re trying to memorize.
• After memorizing for a while, go do something else. Let some time pass. Then, recite your lines/concepts again.
• Make sure your mind is awake:
  • Get plenty of sleep for the two or three nights prior to the performance or test
  • Eat a good breakfast
  • Hydrate
  • Get fresh air/movement/exercise
  • Read something interesting or intellectual, that you understand.
  • Listen to classical music -- the rhythms, emotions, and mathematical patterns enable your brain to process information better. It really works!
• Draw and color a picture of the concepts/lines.
• Use props if allowed.
• Practice reciting the lines or concepts in the same place you’ll be asked to remember them. The familiarity will make it easier to recall the lines.
• Make an outline of the lines or concepts, and memorize just that.
While you’re gone, ask your students to select and memorize an already published poem as well as one of their own creation. Then ask them to practice performing the two poems with each other. Here is a suggested evaluation sheet for your mini-festival of poetry – provide it or something similar to it on the first day you announce the idea.

**Poetry Festival Evaluation**

*Circled items are areas for improvement.*

4.0

- Excellent Audience Poise (confidence, eye contact, no distracting movements)
- Excellent Dramatic Interpretation (correct, expressive, vivid)
- Very Smooth recitation (how well ‘knew the lines, didn’t stumble in their delivery)

3.0

- Good Audience Poise (confidence, eye contact, no distracting movements)
- Good Dramatic Interpretation (correct line interpretation)
- Smooth recitation (Stumbled only once or twice in delivery of poem’s lines)

2.0

- Fair Audience Poise (some eye contact, only a few distracting movements)
- Fair Dramatic Interpretation (somewhat correct line interpretation)
- Mostly Smooth Recitation (Stumbled a few times in delivery of poem’s lines)

1.0

- Poor Audience Poise (little eye contact or confidence, distracting movements)
- Poor Dramatic Interpretation (incorrect line interpretation and/or monotone)
- Rough Recitation (Stumbled many times in delivery of poem, left out words)

0.0

- Unscorable – did not present, presented something other than poetry
Welcome to Shakespeare's Globe theater of Adjectives! Prepare ye, Prepare ye! Sir [or Lady] <Insert your name> approaches along the trail near this castle. Gather your adjective insults and propel them forward upon his arrival! The following words all come from the writings of William Shakespeare. Combine one word from each of the columns below; add "Thou" to the beginning, and there is an insult fitted for hurling at your English teacher. Let yourself go; mix and match to find that "perfect" barb from the Bard!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column &quot;A&quot;</th>
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<th>Column &quot;C&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bawdy</td>
<td>bunch-backed</td>
<td>canker-blossom</td>
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<td>brazen</td>
<td>clay-brained</td>
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<td>churlish</td>
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<td>crutch</td>
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<td>distempered</td>
<td>empty-hearted</td>
<td>cut purse</td>
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<td>fitful</td>
<td>evil-eyed</td>
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<td>gnarling</td>
<td>eye-offending</td>
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<td>greedy</td>
<td>fat-kidneyed</td>
<td>gull-catcher</td>
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<td>grizzled</td>
<td>heavy-headed</td>
<td>hempseed</td>
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<td>haughty</td>
<td>horn-mad</td>
<td>hedge-pig</td>
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<td>hideous</td>
<td>ill-composed</td>
<td>jack-a-nape</td>
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<td>jaded</td>
<td>ill-nurtured</td>
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<td>knavish</td>
<td>iron-witted</td>
<td>malkin</td>
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<td>lewd</td>
<td>lean-witted</td>
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<td>peevish</td>
<td>lily-livered</td>
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<td>pernicious</td>
<td>mad-bread</td>
<td>minimus</td>
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<td>prating</td>
<td>motley-minded</td>
<td>miscreant</td>
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<td>purpled</td>
<td>muddy-mettled</td>
<td>moldwarp</td>
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<td>queasy</td>
<td>onion-eyed</td>
<td>nut-hook</td>
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<td>rank</td>
<td>pale-hearted</td>
<td>pantaloon</td>
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<td>reeky</td>
<td>paper-faced</td>
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<td>roynish</td>
<td>pinch-spotted</td>
<td>remnant</td>
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<td>sottish</td>
<td>raw-boned</td>
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<td>saucy</td>
<td>rug-headed</td>
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<td>unmuzzled</td>
<td>shag-eared</td>
<td>scantling</td>
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<td>vacant</td>
<td>shrill-gorged</td>
<td>scullion</td>
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<td>waggish</td>
<td>sour-faced</td>
<td>snipe</td>
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<td>wanton</td>
<td>weak-hinged</td>
<td>waterfly</td>
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<td>yeasty</td>
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Are ya' lost? Heck no, we've got...

MAP and GLOBE SKILLS!
As a way to remember you learning, let’s design a country of your very own! Yes that’s right, you are the creator of a brand new country, complete with geographic forms, a government, a history with heroes and legends, a constitution, industries and points of interest.

**Expectations/Objectives**

A. You are to draw, color or somehow create an original country on a map that includes these items as part of the map:

- a legend showing towns, airports, industries, rivers, railroads, etc.
- a scale showing how many miles and how many kilometers there are per inch
- a compass rose
- a grid around the edges, using letters and numbers, and a separate listing of the cities and points of interest and their reference code. (Example: Hang-glider’s Leap, G - 8) If you would like to set up a latitude and longitude map instead of a grid, you may. Remember to use the correct cardinal directions and degree values  (Example: Hang-glider's Leap 25°N, 115°W)
- a smaller elevation map off to the side that shows the elevations of your country in different colors. Make sure that if you have a mountain of a certain height, you have matched your elevation color key to the same height. Set-up the color key then draw a miniature map of your country next to it with the colors in the appropriate places.
- a smaller climate map off to the side that shows the climate of your country in different colors. Make sure that if you have any kind of geographic form that would affect the weather patterns (like tall mountains, volcano, ocean, desert, etc.) you have the right climate for that area. Again, set up the color key then draw a miniature map of your country next to it with the colors in the appropriate places.

Finally on the map, your country should include one clearly labeled (on map or separate listing) example of each of the following land forms: peninsula, bay, fjord, island, plain, canyon, gulf, isthmus, plateau, cape, harbor, lake, river, delta, inlet, mountain range, sea, strait, valley

You may make your country out of clay, paper mache, or salt and flour paste, or you may draw and color it on large-size posterboard.

B. In addition to the physical formation of a new country, you need to consider the history and culture of your country. In the presentation of your country, have a written history of your country that includes the following parts:

- a brief explanation of how this country came to be (independence won, legend, etc.)
• a description of at least 3 famous people of your country that somehow contributed to its growth or culture in some way, i.e. heroes, inventors, leaders, etc.
• a Constitution of the country that includes 10 laws by which it lives and governs current exports and imports
• a description of the various types of peoples living in your country.
• An explanation of where you see your country in the year 2050. In other words, what will the future bring for your country?

Garbalogy Archeology

[Students will need to bring in or find 10 items of trash for this activity – ‘nothing that is sticky or wet or likely to mildew, of course!’]

1. List the contents of your trash bag on a piece of paper. Describe each item clearly so that your reader knows what the pieces are. You should have twelve items described. Finally, briefly describe the trash bag itself.

2. Lay out the items on your desk or table (or even the floor) and look for stories. Some of the pieces might connect in some way. For instance, an old shoe splattered in yellow paint laying next to an old soap wrapper might suggest someone who was painting his house last Saturday, had an accident and spilled paint all over himself. He was such a mess, he had to open a brand new bar of soap in order to wash thoroughly. It would be great if there was also a gum wrapper in the pile – he could have been trying to find a
place to put his worn out, stale gum when he leaned over a bit too far and fell off the ladder — the bucket of paint following right behind him. Spend more than 10 minutes just thinking about possible connections until almost every trash item has been connected in some way. Feel free to write brainstormed ideas down on the same piece of paper as the list of trash.

3. Next, using skills learned in our lessons on “Show, don’t Tell,” write a character description of the person or family or group of friends in whose dwellings this trash was excavated. You’re pretending to be an archeologist or a detective trying to piece together a picture of this person, or persons. The only ideas about which you are allowed to write are ideas that are generated by your trash items. You’ll be tempted to turn this into a story, but avoid the temptation. Stick to the pure description of one person or a group of people. You’re trying to make your character so vivid that your reader would recognize this person if he saw him on the street, or talked to him on the phone. If you need a story line, you have permission to describe the character and then cleverly weave in a major conflict of the story, but no further.

4. Remember, be creative – don’t tell us about the way someone is, SHOW us how he is through the character’s actions, words, clothing, conversations, comparisons, tone and other strategies listed on the “Show, Don’t Tell” sheet. Don’t forget those interesting movement words, both implied and real movement!

5. Finally, this is also an exercise to develop your ability to synthesize ideas. This means you’re bringing together unrelated things, finding connections, then creating something new from that association.

Now, sit back, look over your trash bag items and begin creating the picture in your mind of what this person was doing on the day this trash was placed into the bag...

Due: _____________________________

Special Assignment:

Write a Letter to Yourself

In June of next year, you will receive a letter addressed in familiar handwriting – your own! It was written by you a year ago (right now). It will make predictions about your future self and it will tell you who you were a whole year ago. In a way, it’s a bit of time travel for yourself as well as being an interesting record of growth. It’s a great experience to write one of these.

To do this assignment that will not be completed for one year, write a letter to yourself that includes the following information:

- Date
- Greetings
• Predict the weather and what clothing you’ll be wearing when you read this letter
• Predict one book you’ll probably have read and what you thought of it
• Describe a movie you saw during the year.
• Predict who won the presidential election.
• Make a prediction for one discovery that will have been made during the year.
• Name a school subject you enjoy and why.
• With whom do you “hang out” at school?
• What specific advice do you give yourself for a successful 8th grade year?
• What do you do after school on a typical day?
• What do you consider to be a fun time with friends?
• What do you have planned for the summer?
• List 3 of your favorite sports teams and/or music groups/singers
• Describe what you like about yourself.
• If you could change one thing about yourself, describe what it would it be.
• Describe an accomplishment you are proud of this year.
• Briefly describe your family.
• List three things you wonder about.
• In the larger country or world, what issue(s) do you worry about?
• Is there anything else you want do add?
• Farewell and Signature

Don’t forget to address the envelope given to you with your home address. I’ll pay the postage to get it to you. GIVE THE LETTER AND ENVELOPE TO ME WITHOUT SEALING THE LETTER INSIDE THE ENVELOPE.

Have fun with this, but be as sincere as possible in your statements. In the past, students who have treated it seriously have reaped the greatest rewards, while those who were silly felt foolish when they received their letters. Choose the greater reward. That’s it!
All letters are due Wednesday, June 21, 2000.

Create Your Own Written Language

Directions: Design a new language. It has to be organized, logical and creative. Have fun -- put a little of your own style into it. The following aspects should be included in your written presentation:

• A name for your language
• A complete translated alphabet or symbols
• Example words and phrases
• Demonstration of how you pluralize words
• Demonstration of how you show past, present, and future tense
• Demonstration of how you punctuate
• Completion of five illustrations of the five most important contributions made to civilization with a written description of each, written in your new language, accompanied by an English translation. Explain why you chose the contribution as important.
• An attractive cover

Taboo

While you’re gone, ask students to design a deck of Taboo cards based on terms you supply. Here’s how you might introduce the game before asking students to make their own cards:

• Make up forty or more Taboo cards about a unit of study or several units of study. To make a Taboo card, turn an index card vertically and write a vocabulary word at the top. Place a thick line underneath that word. In the remaining space under the line, write four or five words/concepts your students would normally associate with the vocabulary word. Place all the cards in a stack face down.
• Call a representative up from each of two teams. The two sit at a table in the front of your room. Set a clock for one minute (two minutes, if necessary). Ask one player flip over the first card and give clues to her teammates. Her goal is to get them to say the vocabulary term at the top of the card without using any of the related terms listed below the line on the card. She is not allowed to use any
gestures, rhymes, sound effects, or any portion of the vocabulary word or Taboo words below. If an teammate says one of these words, however, the player can use the term in her clues.

- The team can call out the answer at any point. If the team members guess correctly, their representative puts that card to one side, pulls up the next one, and starts giving clues. The process continues until time is called.
- The opposing team has a buzzer (or squeaky toy) which team members can use if the person accidentally uses a Taboo word or any portion of the intended vocabulary term in her clues. When that happens, the card is given to the opposing team’s card pile and a point is awarded to the opposing team (the one with the buzzer). If a player can’t communicate a term successfully, she can pass on the card, but a point is awarded to the other team for each card passed. Keep playing until both teams have had the same number of opportunities to give clues or time runs out. Throw in a few cards relating to students’ interests, just to add a little more pizzazz.

Even if you haven’t gone through this with students ahead of time, you can ask them to make up the cards while you’re away. You’ll have to supply ample index cards, however. I’d suggest 10 for each student, if possible, the first time you do it.

**Cleavor Endeavor**

This is a game in which students create clue cards and then use them with each other to move a marker around the board. While you’re away, they can make the clue cards, and if they’ve made them ahead of time, they can play the game. Here’s a card – can you guess the topic?

| 1. There’s no need to write substitute teacher plans or travel to a conference |
| 2. One of the probable futures of teacher professional development |
| 3. Can be archived |
| 4. Interactive experience with a national presenter who doesn’t need to leave his own home |
| 5. Requires the use of a computer hooked to the Internet |
| 6. A spider’s home tossed like a fisherman would do |

Answer: A “Webcast”

You can make up ones for the subject you teach. It’s played like the board game of the same name. Players are given six clues, one at a time and in any order that the clue-giver wishes to give them. If a player guess correctly in the first clue or two, he earns more points. The total points earned is 7 - # of the clue given. Example: If a player guesses by

...
the second clue, he earns 7-2 or 5 points. You can play by points or the player gets to advance that number of spaces on a board you design.

**The Dot Game**

This is just a lot of fun as you explore logic, and it’s easy to learn. Draw a set of dots that looks like this (7 dots, 5 dots, 3 dots):

```
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
● ● ● ● ● ● ●
● ● ● ● ●
● ● ●●
```

Taking turns, players circle 1, 2, or 3 dots horizontally only. The player that circles the last dot loses. The more they play, the more students discover patterns that lead to wins. They must anticipate their opponents’ moves.

**In the Manner of the Word (Adverb Game)**

One student leaves the room. The rest of the class chooses an adverb secretly. Student returns and asks classmates to perform certain tasks, “in the manner of the word.” Student tries to guess the word. Example adverbs: *clumsily, angrily, nervously, sleepily, romantically, happily, fast, intermittently, tenaciously*

**Line-up**

- Groups of students line up according to criteria. Each student holds an index card identifying what he or she is portraying.
- Students discuss everyone’s position with one another -- posing questions, disagreeing, and explaining rationales.
Students can line-up according to: chronology, sequences in math problems, components of an essay, equations, sentences, verb tense, scientific process/cycle, patterns: alternating, category/example, increasing/decreasing degree, chromatic scale, sequence of events, cause/effect, components of a larger topic, opposites, synonyms.

Password

- Choose a player from each of two teams. Ask these players to turn around and face their respective teams while you write the Password on the front chalkboard. Let the audience see the word, then erase it.
- Choose a player to start and ask if he wants to pass or play. If he passes, he will have the benefit of two clues before guessing the word, if the other team doesn’t guess the word in the first clue. If he chooses to play, he can guess the word in the first clue, earning a higher number of points.
- Allow all seated team members to use their notes/textbooks to look for one-word clues. The clues cannot be proper nouns, sound effects, or gestures. Each player takes turns calling upon members of his team as they offer one-word clues to the Password. If a player cannot guess the word after his team’s clue, then the other team can offer another clue to their own player – but the point total is now lower.
- Let whichever team misses the word earn five points by spelling the word correctly.

[See next page for scoring sequence. Note that after the 5th word, the word is thrown out and two new players and a new word are selected.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clues Number</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st clue</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd clue</td>
<td>9 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd clue</td>
<td>8 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th clue</td>
<td>7 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th clue</td>
<td>6 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic Rummy
• ‘Played just like Rummy card games. Instead of a straight such as the four, five, six, seven of spades, however, students get the components of a sequence or set you’ve taught. Examples: steps in photosynthesis, process for dividing fractions, all the elements for an animal’s habitat, four things that led to the Civil War, four equivalent fractions, four verbs in the past perfect tense

• Students work off a central pile, drawing cards, discarding cards, just as in they would do in a Rummy or Gin Rummy game until they achieve a winning hand.

• ‘Alternative: Each hand requires a different configuration -- a winning hand could be a set of three and a run of four, two sets of four, a run of six and a set of three. Decide the escalating configurations before beginning the game.

• While your away, ask students to make up their own decks of cards in preparation to play the game, or if they already have decks of cards, ask them to play the game.

Frozen Tableau (Statues)

Students work in small groups and create a frozen tableau that uses every groupmember’s body in the tableau to symbolically portray concepts given to them. They design the tableau in hushed tones so no one can hear them, then the class guesses what they are portraying. There is nothing so abstract that students can’t portray it like this!

One of these is Wrong

‘Can be used as jigsaw experience, getting-to-know-you game, or to summarize information. In small groups, students share two accurate statements about a topic and one inaccurate statement. The rest of the group guesses which one is inaccurate.

Cornell Note-taking Format

Teach students to use this format and give them practice using it while you’re away.

Reduce

[Summarize in short phrases or essential]

Record

[Write your notes on this side.]
Review -- Summarize (paragraph-style), list questions and your responses to them. Reflect and comment on what you learned.