

tes

101

Brilliant Ideas

A TES Essential Guide
on lesson tips



guide

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101 Brilliant Ideas

A TES Essential Guide

Anyone who does not appreciate how creative, practical and downright funny teachers can be need only flick through the pages that follow.

This collection of 101 Brilliant Ideas is a treasure trove of tried and tested ways to liven up lessons. Reprinted because of its popularity, it features ideas for classes of all ages in all the major subjects, with extra ones for those at the core of the curriculum.

Who would have thought of teaching infants maths by dancing the Macarena? Or using hairgel as fake snot in science and putting tea through a Liebig condenser? And what kind of mind thinks the best way to explain the safety limits of prophylactics to teenagers is to hold “a condom Olympics”.

The answer, of course, is teachers. Too often their most creative work is hidden behind classroom doors. This guide is a testament to the imagination and innovation of all the teachers who have sent in their ideas.

Michael Shaw
TESpro Editor

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1. Number games

Ages 7 to 11

I've used this activity with children of different ages and abilities and it has never failed to motivate them. Explain to the class that every letter of the alphabet is worth money: a=1p, b=2p, and so on to z=26p. This can be displayed on the board or on paper for reference. Then write a shopping list and ask pupils to work out the cost of each item by adding together the values of the letters. For example: bread costs $2p+18p+5p+1p+4p=30p$.

This is a good opportunity to discuss strategies for adding mentally or you could provide calculators if appropriate. Then challenge the class. What is the cheapest item they can find? What is the most expensive? Can they find an item worth exactly £1? You can vary this to reinforce any concepts that you have taught recently. Pupils could use words relating to the Tudors, or the coast, or poetry – I've never yet had a child point out you couldn't buy these things in a shop. You could make this seasonal by asking for words relating to Christmas or Easter. The children enjoy the competitive element and are practising their spelling, addition and problem solving skills in a fun way.

Mel Heale IS A PART-TIME TEACHER AT ST ANDREW'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL IN WIRRAL, MERSEYSIDE.

2. Rope and role

Ages 7 to 11

To help pupils understand shape and space, stand them in a circle, holding a long loop of rope. Call out the names of three to 10 pupils to hold the rope while the rest drop it. Then get them to pull tightly to form a 2-D shape. Pupils can identify the shape and discuss its properties. Problem-solving skills can be developed by asking pupils to organise the rope into a particular shape, such as an irregular nonagon. As an extension, ask more able pupils to make a 3-D shape (a cuboid perhaps) with the rope. Talk about the properties of 3-D shapes including the difficulties they encounter when using materials such as rope to model them.

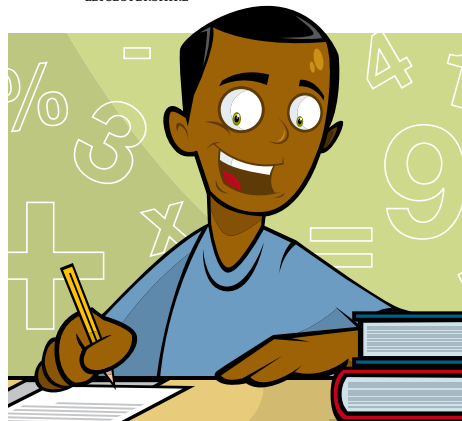
Benjamin Westley TEACHES YEARS 3 AND 4 AT MELDRETH PRIMARY IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

3. Perfect combination

Ages 7 to 11

Draw a grid with numbers in each square that are complements of 100 (complements are numbers that when combined add up to 100, such as 70 and 30). To make it easier, you can use only multiples of 10. The first pupil to play "serves" a number by standing at the front of the class and calling it out to fellow pupils. Their classmate must shout out the number's complement. If they are correct, the rally continues and the first classmate "serves" another number to a different pupil. If they get the answer wrong, the first pupil wins points according to the rules of tennis scoring: love, 15, 30, 40. Complete a few rallies then ask the class what the problem is with the game – they will probably reply that only the pupil at the front can win any points. Then change the rules so that when the responding pupil gets an answer right, they can ask a question back to the "server".

Paul Ainsworth IS DEPUTY HEAD AT BELVOIR HIGH SCHOOL IN BOTTESFORD, LEICESTERSHIRE





4. Smart moves

Ages 4 to 11

Pupils dance the Macarena (instructions below) as they drill their times tables or count up in tens. I used this with the 1, 2, 5 and 10 times tables.

1. Practise the dance, arm movements only.
2. Practise saying the 1 times table, arm movements only.
3. Repeat with other tables.
4. Combine tables and dance; for example: times 1, jiggle/jump/turn to the right, times 2, jiggle/jump/turn, times 5, jiggle/jump/turn, times 10, jiggle/jump/turn, and then you're all facing forwards again.

The Macarena

1. Right hand straight out in front, palm down.
2. Left hand out, palm down.
3. Turn right palm up.
4. Turn left palm up.
5. Right hand to left shoulder.
6. Left hand to right shoulder (both arms crossed over the chest).
7. Right hand to back of your head.
8. Left hand to left of head (you should now look like you're doing sit-ups).
9. Right hand touches left hip.
10. Left hand crosses to right hip.
11. Right hand to right hip.
12. Left hand to left hip.

Geoff Harman IS A TRAINEE TEACHER IN COUNTY DURHAM.

5. Bean counter

Ages 7 to 11

Stuck for a way to revise times tables besides reciting them in unison? This bingo activity motivates pupils of different ages and abilities. Give each pupil an A5 sheet of paper or a whiteboard. Find out how many times tables they have learnt and decide from there. Ask pupils to draw a square grid, divide it into nine parts and write the answers from two different times tables, any between two and 10, into each square. You can help by giving them some examples orally. Call out a number sentence such as "six times six". Pupils with 36 in their grid cross out the number. The first person to cross out all the numbers says "Bingo". Then play it again. Make sure that the winners are rewarded. It's also a good idea to prepare some nice stickers or a variety of other rewards in advance.

Weiqing Zhu IS A SUPPLY TEACHER IN GLASGOW

6. Time to play

Ages 9 to 11

Pupils love this activity, and it is always a huge success in terms of knowledge and understanding. To teach the topic of ratio and proportion, put the pupils in pairs and then give them a tube of Smarties. Ask them to record the ratio of each Smartie colour to every other colour. Once they have grasped this, move on to calculating the proportion of each colour within the tube. Encourage them to work out how to write these as fractions and percentages, then simplify the fractions and round decimal numbers to the nearest whole number. Once they have completed the task, they can eat the Smarties. It's funny how motivated they become with the lure of chocolate. This may not fit in with the Healthy Schools agenda, but as a once-a-year motivational tool, you'll find it works a treat.

Louise Payne TEACHES AT COLLINGWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ESSEX

7. Crowning glory

Ages 9 to 11

Invite a child to be the king or queen and sit in front of the class, wearing the crown. Write a number on a Post-it note and stick it on the crown. The children in the class use number fans or the whiteboard to give the child the clue to what the number is. For example, put number 7 on the crown. The children calculate what must be added to the number to make 10 and show this on their number fans. The king or queen look at their numbers and can then work out the number on the crown. The class is learning, the child is under pressure and learning, and the teacher can differentiate easily during a maths mental starter, which is often not easy. It can be used for almost all the mathematical concepts you are teaching. I have used it for fractions and percentages in Year 6, describing shapes (using whiteboards), times tables, subtractions and additions. The children love it.

Clare Higgins IS A YEAR 2 TEACHER AT ST MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY IN HIGH CROMPTON, OLDHAM, LANCASHIRE

8. Up and down

Ages 8 to 11

Do you find that teaching — or even using the vocabulary of fractions — can somehow be fraught with hazards? Try twisting your tongue around “thirteen-fifteenths”, “three-sixths”, “six-sevenths”. Do you get numerator and denominator mixed up and the wrong way around? Children do this all the time. Yet their positions can be easy to remember — simply say each key word aloud while simultaneously pointing to them. Use mnemonics: “Nice Doggy”, “Notre Dame”, “Numerator Up, Denominator Down”. My favourite is an activity involving building bricks with enough letters to make both words. These are used to build a two-word tower. The children know a tower should reduce in size as it rises. They will soon discover the obvious: NUMERATOR goes above, DENOMINATOR goes below. Alternatively, make it a class activity using drag and drop letters on an interactive whiteboard. You could also make this into a wall display with brightly painted bricks.

Richard Coles TEACHES MATHS AT FYNDOUNE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN SACRISTON, COUNTY DURHAM

9. Chop chop

Ages 8 to 11

Here's a fun but “chop chop” approach to numeracy lessons named Straight Line Kung Fu. It was inspired by a kung fu lesson I watched in China. With the class, decide on actions for parallel, perpendicular, diagonal, horizontal and vertical (adding on the angle vocabulary in further sessions). Pupils stand up straight with their arms by their sides waiting for the first command. The caller shouts “Parallel” and the pupils make the corresponding movement and call out “Huh”. Then the caller shouts another command and so on. You could even end with a courtly bow.

Kate Cullen TEACHES AT TURNFURLONG JUNIOR SCHOOL IN AYLESBURY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



10. Ready to be converted

Ages 10 to 13

Whiteboards converted my pupils into maths enthusiasts. Use the corridor or playground, or clear a space in the classroom, for this kinaesthetic activity to practise converting between fractions, decimals and percentages. Give each pupil a mini whiteboard. Form three queues of pupils, positioning them at the left, middle and right side of the classroom.

Name one row fractions (pupils A), one decimals (pupils B) and the last one percentages (pupils C). Call out various fractions, decimals and percentages with various conditions. Here's an example using a fraction: Pupils A in the fractions queue must write down a fraction with a denominator of 10. Then they run to the decimals queue (pupils B) to convert the fraction into a decimal. Next, pupils B run to the percentages queue (pupils C) to convert it into percentages. The first team to sit down with a correct conversion gets a point. An example of a correct conversion would be: $\frac{8}{10}$, 0.8 and 80 per cent.

Mark Ingham TEACHES MATHS AT BISHOP'S STORTFORD COLLEGE JUNIOR SCHOOL IN HERTFORDSHIRE



11. Number tumble

Ages 7 to 11

This activity is good for problem-solving, mental maths and practising times tables. Using your Smartboard, go into the notebook and, from the gallery, paste on two or three tumbling dice. Pupils come up and touch the dice to change the numbers. Ask them, "What is my answer?" and allow time for them to decide what it will be. For example, dice showing two, three and five could give you the answer $13: (2 \times 5) + 3 = 13$, or $2 + 3 + 5 = 10$, or $(3 \times 5) \times 2 = 30$. Pupils need to demonstrate how they worked out their answer. As they become more confident, you can add more dice. It can be done as a whole-class activity or, if you wish to make it competitive, do it in teams for points. You can use ordinary dice if you do not have a Smartboard.

Valerie Stoddart IS A P5 PRIMARY PROBATIONER AT ABOYNE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ABERDEENSHIRE

12. Unlock that maths head

Ages 8 to 11

Here's one to improve those times tables. Completing a weekly grid test can help key stage 2 children learn. Get them to draw a 6×6 square in their maths books and give them six numbers to write outside the grid across the top, and six to write down the left-hand side. The children must multiply the numbers to complete the grid. They work against the clock, calling out when they've finished so you can give them their time, which they record. Stop the test after two minutes and mark the answers together. Incorrect or missing answers should be circled. The following week, get them to compete against their personal best time and number of correct answers. Reward those who improve. Over a term, they should be able to see some real improvements in their scores. Differentiate by changing the size of the grid or the numbers used.

Elizabeth Smith TEACHES AT BADSWORTH C OF E VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL IN WEST YORKSHIRE

13. Find new angles

Ages 14 to 15

To help pupils overcome difficulty in learning trigonometry, try starting with a practical investigation. Give pupils a worksheet with three similar right-angled triangles. Ask the pupils to measure each side of each triangle. From this, they should be able to work out the ratios: adjacent: hypotenuse; opposite: hypotenuse and opposite: adjacent. Taking experimental error into account, the pupils should get each of the three ratios correct to two decimal places. Ask them to explain what they would expect to find for three other similar triangles, if each of them has a different angle. Explain that each ratio has a special name — cosine, sine and tangent, with each ratio for any right-angled triangle having the same value. This method allows pupils to go on with confidence using trigonometry in current and future lessons.

Graham Green IS A PRIVATE TUTOR IN CHESHAM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

14. Throw of the dice

Ages 11 to 14

Teaching probability can be a nightmare. So much of the vocabulary is used in everyday life that it can be difficult for pupils to make the connection between theoretical and practical probabilities. I didn't want a difficult Year 10 set throwing dice around all lesson, so I devised a way to get the spreadsheet program Excel to show how, on a fair die, the relative frequency of a six being thrown is 1 in 6. The spreadsheet "rolls a die" 1,000 times, then calculates the relative frequency of the sixes. A graph shows the tendency towards 0.166 recurring. The number of rolls or the die face number can be altered if you want to convince them that a six is just as likely to come up as any other number. Press F9 to get a new selection of random rolls.

Rob Percival TEACHES AT HABERDASHERS' ASKE'S BOYS' SCHOOL IN HERTFORDSHIRE

15. Missing number

Ages 11 to 16

Never be stuck for a starter again. I got my pupils into a routine by writing the date and the lesson number in their books. If there are three lessons a week, you'll probably get up to more than 100 lessons by the end of the year. We had two numbers to discuss. Pupils looked for connections between them; for instance, on September 25 it was lesson nine, so both were square numbers. On October 8, it was lesson 13, so both were Fibonacci numbers. You might encourage pupils to find the lowest common multiple and highest common factor of the two numbers, or one as a percentage of the other. It all depends on the ability of the group. This also helped me to see from their books if a pupil missed a lesson — it's easier to see if any numbers are missing, rather than looking at dates.

Joyce Brown TEACHES MATHS AT DURHAM JOHNSTON COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL IN WHINNEY HILL





17. Start making money

Ages 14 and over

Design your own gold coins, worth different amounts of money. The only rule is that the measurements must be precise because gold is expensive and, if lots of the coins are to be minted, they need to contain the exact quantity of gold. Pupils can find the up-to-the minute price of gold per gram at www.lbma.org.uk/statistics_current.htm, or the teacher can check that morning. Discuss why the price varies even though other relevant factors, such as the density (19.3g/cm^3), are fixed. Questions include: 1. What denominations are possible/desirable? 2. How thick should coins be? 3. What shape is best? 4. Why aren't coins made out of gold any more? Able pupils might design coins consisting of two different components (eg gold and silver), like the UK £2 coin, or coins with holes in the middle. Making a coin in the shape of the UK 50p piece is a significant challenge for a GCSE pupil with a knowledge of trigonometry and sectors of circles.

Colin Foster TEACHES MATHEMATICS AT KING HENRY VIII SCHOOL IN COVENTRY, WARWICKSHIRE

16. Walk the line

Ages 11 to 16

Would this starter amaze your pupils? Choose a three-digit number such as 856, multiply it by 1,001 (allow low-ability pupils to use a calculator).

Try this three more times.

What do you find and can you explain why this is? When you multiply any three-digit number by 1,001, the answer looks like the original three-digit number repeated twice: $362 \times 1,001 = 362\ 362$. Go for a four-digit number multiplied by 10,001: $4,270 \times 10,001 = 4270\ 4270$. Ask pupils what they would have to multiply a five-digit number by to make the answer look like it is the original number repeated twice (answer: 100,001).

Heidi Hartley IS A TEACHER AT MAGICAL MATHEMATICS AND ENCHANTING ENGLISH, A PROFESSIONAL TUITION CENTRE IN STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

18. Multiply the fun

Ages 11 to 14

The ability to graph data correctly is important. Building a human graph is a kinaesthetic and effective approach before putting it on paper. All you need are: three long pieces of rope (x-axis, y-axis and the graph line); A4 paper for titles, labels and numbers; Blu-Tack; and the corridor or playground. One pupil holds two pieces of rope at the origin that extend outwardly as the x and y-axes. Two pupils pace out the scale on each axis, Blu-Tacking the numbers and labels to the floor. The remaining pupils are divided into an x co-ordinate queue and a y co-ordinate one. The first x, y pair stands at the origin. A co-ordinate is read out; they walk along their axis to the correct value, turn and join at the specified coordinate. They cross hands to show x marks the spot. This continues until all co-ordinates are plotted. A third rope is used to join the points. The success criteria and pupils' plotting skills are then used to graph data on paper.

Yvonne Davies IS AN ADVANCED SKILLS TEACHER FOR SCIENCE AT THURSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN BURY ST EDMUNDS, SUFFOLK

19. Piece of cake

Ages 8 to 11

A good, accessible way to explain genre is through making a cake. I bring in recipes and we talk about how different ingredients, combined together, make different types of cakes. Having established this, we move on to different types of books and that we recognise these by their different ingredients. There only remains the terminology of genre and conventions to be mentioned to replace type and ingredient. As a class, we then have a go at “baking” different genres.

Pupils write, in the format of the exemplars, recipes for different types of writing. For instance, a gothic cake might require 10g of ghosts, 5ml of blood, a spoonful of vampires and a mix in a graveyard. Drawing what these genre cakes would look like can be fun, too.

Chris Bond TEACHES AT WARWICK SCHOOL, WARWICKSHIRE



20. Top Score

Ages 5 to 7

Teach syllables using football. Ask children to suggest two teams, such as Chelsea and Liverpool. The result here would be Chelsea 2 — because there are two syllables in the name. Liverpool scores 3. Once you put that idea in front of a class, they start devising their own games. They even start announcing it like the results on the radio. Extensions involve exploring how the use of syllables can help us spell the names of teams. Manchester United, Wigan and Everton all provide good examples — though it galls me to see Man U notch up so many syllables. Children can search for the team that scores the most. If you include the Scottish divisions, you can find high scorers. Searchlights for Spelling by Chris Buckton and Pie Corbett, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), explains multi-sensory ways of teaching spelling. The website www.bbc.co.uk/football is a good resource for team names and news. Children can also bring in league tables from newspapers.

Huw Thomas IS HEAD OF EMMAUS PRIMARY, IN SHEFFIELD

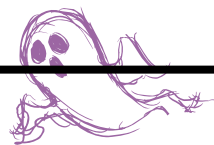
21. Under cover

Ages 4 to 11

The great trunk mystery took a writing project to a new level by developing pupils' questioning and writing skills. A battered trunk was filled with various unusual objects, ranging from a feather boa to a carved walnut. In Monday assembly, the school secretary interrupted normal proceedings to announce its mysterious arrival. The trunk was brought into the hall and excited debate ensued as to whether we should look inside. Eventually, it was opened and classes later took turns to examine its contents closely. The local press covered the story and tension mounted about the identity of the trunk's owner.

Meanwhile, a wide variety of text types were produced across the school in excited response. Finally, the mystery person appeared in another assembly in the form of a “Swiss Countess” and her chauffeur, courtesy of the local amateur dramatic society. She gave a convincing account of her life through the objects and the children listened spellbound — even the cynics in Year 6.

Nadia Stanbridge IS A YEAR 4 ASSISTANT HEAD AT STEEPLE MORDEN PRIMARY IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE



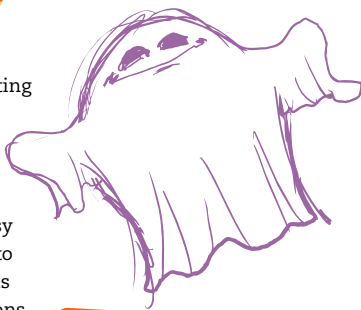
22. Free expressions

Ages 7 to 11

As children develop storywriting skills, an additional element we seek is the inner voice of characters — insights into their thoughts and feelings. Gather newspapers and glossy magazines and ask children to hunt through them, finding as many diverse facial expressions as they can. Then ask them to make cloudshaped thought bubbles, like those in a comic strip. Their task is to write what their chosen faces are thinking or feeling, but stress that they should be imaginative and unpick the feeling in a few sentences. So “I feel happy” needs developing. It could become, “I feel happy because I won the lottery”. Or “That means I can make my dream come true and sail round the world.” This enriches the children’s narratives.

Scary Stories: Writing Guide by Huw Thomas (Scholastic) explores feelings further. www.hansonphoto.co.uk is a great collection of contemporary faces. In comics, faces and thought bubbles work together to express the character’s inner voice.

Huw Thomas IS HEAD OF EMMAUS PRIMARY, IN SHEFFIELD



23. Vim and verb

Ages 7 to 11

Acting can help reinforce the idea of what an adverb is, and how it can complement an accompanying verb. Ask the class to write down the present participle of a verb secretly on a slip of paper, then to do the same with an adverb of their choice. Fold the pieces of paper and put all the verbs in one box and all the adverbs in another. Invite a child to come up and pick a verb and an adverb from the boxes. Their job is to act out the random combination; speaking is not allowed. Thus they may pretend, for instance, to swim sadly. Other pupils are invited to guess the verb and adverb. A point could be gained both for a correct guess and a convincing piece of acting from the child. This activity is great fun and adaptable, and could be used as a regular lesson starter or “spare time” game.

Paul Warnes IS A SUPPLY TEACHER IN KENT

24. Bard language

Ages 7 to 11

Shakespeare’s language is often an enormous barrier. I used an online “Shakespearean insult generator” to help inspire the children. We are studying *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, culminating in a visit to a Shakespeare4Kidz production. We began with three short extracts from a scene in which Lysander, Helena and Hermia are quarrelling. I read this as dramatically as possible, then asked for volunteers. Pupils practised in pairs before acting in front of the class. I then gave out the insult generator: a three column list of nouns and adjectives from Shakespeare which the children could combine and preface with “thou” to produce phrases such as: “Thou droning, hell-hated foot-licker.” In pairs, they chose favourite phrases and stand up and insult another pupil. This pupil retaliates with his or her own phrase. Finally, the children created written phrases which they extended into sentences or short paragraphs, using the extracts from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as models. See www.pangloss.com/seidel/shake_rule.html

Joanne Jones IS LITERACY CO-ORDINATOR AT GIPSEY BRIDGE PRIMARY IN LINCOLNSHIRE



25. Tangoed

Ages 8 to 11

Dance auditions and literacy don't normally mix, but it's certainly one way to liven up a lesson on prefixes. Divide pupils into groups of four and assign a prefix to each group member: dis, un, mis and im. Ask everyone to write a word beginning with their prefix. Check spellings, then copy the word on to card and cut it in two, separating the prefix from the rest of the word. Ask groups to shuffle their eight cards before moving to the hall. There, every group swaps card packs. Start the music as pupils deal their cards and then skip around hunting for their partner until all are paired up. Hold a final audition when all the cards have been collected, shuffled and dealt. How long will all the partners take to be matched? To finish, partners should tango to the front of the hall with a flourish and announce their combined word.

Eileen Jones IS A LITERACY SPECIALIST IN WARWICKSHIRE

26. Kitchen sink drama

Ages 7 to 11

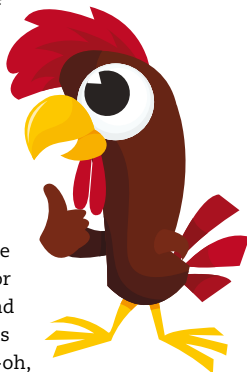
Newspaper articles can be a good source of stories for literacy. *The Times* ran a story about a hamster called Henry, who got stuck behind the kitchen sink. A neighbour tried tying hamster ladders together, then two community wardens used a wire with cord spiralled around it for him to climb. Finally, they cut the base from a yoghurt pot and lowered it on wire to scoop him out. Nothing worked until the vacuum cleaner was called for and put on its lowest setting. Henry was sucked gently on to the end of the nozzle. I produced an annotated copy for teacher use, highlighting unfamiliar vocabulary and noting adverbial clauses and a mind map of all the directions in which we could take this story. The poem structure was to select a preposition under, over, above, next to or across, then pair it with a noun such as sofa, curtains or toy box. Finally, add an exciting or powerful verb. The result was lines such as: "Under the sofa Henry scuttled. Up the curtains Henry scrabbled. Inside the toy box Henry nibbled."

Michelle Gregory IS AST/LITERACY LEADER AT OAKFIELD FIRST SCHOOL IN WINDSOR, BERKSHIRE

27. Farm fun

Ages 8 to 11

Young spellers struggling to tell you why you add an "s" to "key" or "toy" but change the "y" in "baby" to "ies" clearly need a helping hand — so why not enlist the help of Old MacDonald? Pupils can have great fun setting nouns ending in "y" to the tune of "Old MacDonald had a farm". A shop makes more sense than a farm for example, "And in that shop he had some toys." The class then sing the question Y or I-E-S? instead of the chorus ee-ay-ee-ay-oh, and each time a different pupil completes the verse "with an A-YS" or "with an I-E-S", as appropriate. Give them a couple of moments' thinking time to consider their options and remember the rule (vowel before the y, just add s; if there is a consonant before they, change to ies). Then on cue, each pupil should – hopefully – have reinforced the spelling rule and set it memorably to music for an increasingly varied and imaginative set of words.



John Gallagher IS HEAD OF ENGLISH AT STRATFORD-UPON-AVON GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IN WARWICKSHIRE

28. Boxing clever

Ages 14 to 18

Put your pupils into the ring for a round of verbal boxing to assess their oral skills of arguing, discussing and persuading, in English and other subjects. Divide into teams of three to six. Set up home and away matches and give each home team a motion to argue. Give pupils time to prepare their arguments for both the home and away matches. Each match begins with two teams sending one of their members into the ring, the classroom, for the first round. After two minutes of robust debate, in which each “boxer” tries to out-argue their opponent, the round ends and the boxers return to their respective corners for one minute; either to tag a fellow team member into the ring or collect new ideas to use in the next round. The best argument over three rounds decides the winning team. This series of lessons soon runs itself, leaving you time and space to listen, assess and record pupils’ achievements.

Josephine Smith IS HEAD OF ENGLISH AT CASTERTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN RUTLAND

29. The king is dead

Ages 14 to 18

Have you ever reached the end of a Shakespeare tragedy to discover that, despite having an overview of the plot and a grasp of the major themes, even your brightest and keenest A-level English pupils are unclear about some of the finer details? To remedy this, have pupils establish the causes of death of the pile of corpses at the end of *King Lear* by setting them the task of writing a brief – and possibly humorous – obituary of each character. This encourages pupils to look again at the text and helps consolidate what happens to whom and why. My Year 13 group produced fruitful discussions about Shakespeare’s intentions and audience sympathies, as well as responses to the tragic ending of the play.

Heather Owens IS DEPUTY HEADTEACHER AT KING EDWARD VI CAMP HILL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, BIRMINGHAM



30. Step into their shoes

Ages 11 to 18

“I’ll do it too.” Pupils may become more motivated in a timed or independent assignment if they see that you, their teacher, are doing the same thing. Set out the instructions for the task and put yourself in their shoes. For example, begin with: “Before we start, let’s discuss what’s worrying us — for instance, we don’t know how to start.” (This is a common one in the English classroom.) Or that “we won’t have enough time” (possibly leading to some collaborative planning before embarking on the task). Once you understand the instructions, undertake the same task as your pupils, and under the same conditions. As you do the task (for example, a set of comprehension questions or piece of creative writing), jot down any problems you encounter and use them as a basis for a plenary summing up. This technique can be extended by copying your work for the class for the next lesson and, if you are feeling brave, allowing them to critique using their knowledge of what constitutes success in this type of activity.

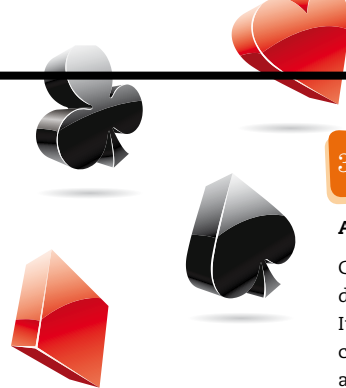
Kerry Hopkins IS HEAD OF ENGLISH AT THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN LEEDS

31. Top of the pack

Ages 11 to 14

A resurgence of interest in Top Trumps, the card game, helped my pupils think about characterisation and setting in relation to a text as a whole. I explained the conventional appearance of a Top Trumps card with its picture and table of values and showed some examples. The children's task was to design a small pack of Top Trumps for their text. Their first task was to decide, as a class, on the list of "ratings" that would appear on every card, which had to be relevant to the text. For example, "Evilness" might be included in *Macbeth* (cards can have any character from the text and any key setting from the text on them). Pupils then decided which characters and settings they were going to put on their cards, then thought about the respective profiles they were going to create. Provided with some card, pupils were set homework to make their Top Trumps. The follow-up activity was to bring the cards in to play the game. However, before starting, pupils had to justify to each other why their profile on each card was as they had decided. The game allows all to interact on a basic level with key aspects of the text.

Chris Bond TEACHES AT WARWICK SCHOOL IN WARWICKSHIRE



32. Sweet rewards

Ages 12 to 16

This lesson works well as preparation for creative writing. Produce a box of wrapped chocolates (much to the pupils' delight) and give one to each pupil. They then have to write down adjectives, similes and metaphors related to each sense. They must start with the feel and colour of the wrapper, as well as the anticipation of the taste and smell of the chocolate. Once they have done this, they should unwrap the chocolate and describe how it smells and feels. By this time they are desperate to eat it.

However, as they slowly chew the chocolate, they must write about how it tastes, as well as its texture. We discuss the descriptions, which are added to an imagery bank to help with creative writing.

Valerie MacInnes TEACHES ENGLISH AT INVERGORDON ACADEMY IN HIGHLAND

33. Grammar games

Ages 11 to 16

Grammaticus is a card game I developed to teach grammar. It consists of a set of 110 playing cards, with words on one side and their word class (verb, noun, adjective) on the other, and a colour for each word class. You can adapt card games – rummy, racing demon, snap – aiming to structure sentences or collect words of a certain word class instead of collecting suits or making straights. Although developed with A-level pupils in mind, the games would work well lower down the school.

David Kinder TEACHES AT ALTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE IN HAMPSHIRE

34. Colour me happy

Ages 15 to 16

To encourage my pupils to use a wider range of punctuation, I tell them to highlight all the full stops with one colour. They then choose a new colour for different punctuation. By the end, they might have used yellow for full stops, red for commas and blue for semicolons. Those who use a good range of punctuation have colourful drafts, while others have not. This gives pupils immediate feedback and a sense of fun about developing their writing.

Anne Carman TEACHES AT RIPLEY ST THOMAS C OF E HIGH SCHOOL IN LANCASTER

35. Teenage kicks

Ages 14 to 16

Here's a sure-fire way to get the first piece of written coursework done with a new GCSE English group and get to know the pupils. It's based on the long-running celebrity Sunday newspaper magazine feature "A Room of My Own". Teenagers are often equally proud of their own space at home and, with the right prompts, can turn this into an original piece. Questions that get them thinking include how the room reflects their personality, clues about their past and future, and the thing they'd save if the room was on fire. Getting pupils to map their room at home is a vital first step. They see things they took for granted. And the map then forms the basis for individual oral assessment as they describe it. Some less adventurous pupils tend towards listing the room's contents, so why not give them a different perspective? How would the room seem to a detective searching for clues about the occupant? I have even had a piece narrated by one pupil's PC as it was unpacked and set up. The written piece can qualify as explore, imagine, entertain, as well as personal description.

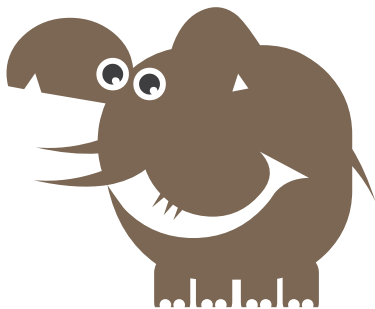
John Gallagher IS HEAD OF ENGLISH AT STRATFORD-UPON-AVON GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IN WARWICKSHIRE

36. Talk show

Ages 11 to 14

Here's a simple game designed to help pupils understand the importance of adjectives. English Pupil A sits with their back to a screen (a large card or an electronic whiteboard, for example) showing a picture. Without explicitly naming it, Pupil B describes the image in such a way that Pupil A can guess what it is. To encourage more subtle and imaginative descriptions, each picture could be accompanied by a short list of "banned" words. For instance, a picture of an elephant could have "trunk" and "tusks" banned. Guessing a picture gets the players a point and moves them on to the next picture. Teams have two minutes to score as many points as possible. This game is great for speaking and listening and encourages pupils to be thoughtful and creative with their use of descriptive words.

Irfan Shah TEACHES AT LAWNWOOD HIGH SCHOOL IN LEEDS



37. Musical memories

Ages 14 to 16

"Our castaway today has been lost in Sainsbury's and successfully destroyed all the aliens in Halo 2." This is a typical introduction to my Desert Island Discs lesson, a speaking and listening activity for GCSE. (The idea came from the BBC Radio 4 programme). Pupils write some autobiographical material for me and I interview them. I ask about family, early experiences, memories, hobbies, achievements and ambitions. The interview is interspersed with selections of their favourite music. They are allowed to take three pieces to the island and are permitted a book and a luxury item, in addition to a religious text and the works of Shakespeare. The pupils explain their choices. This is an excellent way for them to gain a mark for an extended speech in front of their class.

rancis Farrell TEACHES AT SALE HIGH SCHOOL IN CHESHIRE



38. Ask more, learn more

Ages 8 to 11

Stuck for ideas for an investigation? Try question cards. Make a set of question starters in speech bubbles – for instance: “Which? What if? or How does? And laminate them. Place the object for investigation in front of the pupils. Let them choose a question card, one between two. They have two minutes to talk in order to generate a question about their object. Of the 15 questions, there will be at least six that can be easily investigated. Hey presto! The pupils have generated investigable questions and have ownership of the investigation. Imagine the endless uses of these cards in all aspects of the curriculum.

Pauline Armitage TEACHES AT
WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GRIMSBY,
LINCOLNSHIRE

39. Your mission possible

Ages 8 to 11

To help pupils enjoy science investigations, tell them that they will be working for a secret agency on a mission. To kick-start a lesson on thermal insulators, hide envelopes under the chairs of a few pupils and explain what they will be doing. One envelope explains that canisters containing liquid have become detached from their holding cells. Another says that the liquid needs to stay warm. On each of the group tables, set up a tray with different materials, measuring equipment, thermometers and other science equipment that will help the children carry out their investigation. Each time an agent opens an envelope, time is given to discuss how they can keep the liquid warm, at which point play the Mission Impossible film music. Once pupils come up with a plan, open a briefcase complete with canisters and allow them to carry out experiments. I filled canisters with water and green food colouring, and my pupils came up with a range of ideas to keep the liquid warm; the common method was insulating the beakers. One group wrapped foil around it because they had seen it used at home.

Martin Van Hecke IS A YEAR 6
TEACHER AT HIGHER LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL
IN BURY, MANCHESTER

40. Ice 'n' easy experiment

Ages 7 to 11

Enliven teaching about the insulating properties of materials by filling a pair of washing-up gloves with water, knotting the ends and freezing. Take the frozen hands into school and remove the gloves. Tell the pupils they were left on your doorstep by an iceman. Explain you are worried that the hands will melt. There is no room in the school freezer, so ask the class to suggest what you should do with the hands. You want to put the hands in the same place and have one wrapped in something and one unwrapped. Ask the pupils which will melt first. They will probably say the wrapped hand, as we tend to equate “wrapped” with warmth. Ask pupils to check on the hands throughout the day to take photos and discuss what is happening and why. Then you can surprise them: the wrapping insulates, keeping the heat out, so it's the wrapped hand that melts more slowly.

Elizabeth Smith TEACHES AT
BADSWORTH C OF E VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED
JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL IN WEST
YORKSHIRE

41. The yuck factor

Ages 7 to 11

This activity is an imaginative introduction to a topic on micro-organisms. Just before you start the lesson, take some hair gel (preferably green) and place a large amount on your hands. Ask the children to stand in a circle. Once they have done this, pretend to sneeze loudly into your hands. Immediately after this, turn to the pupil next to you and shake their hand. This should get a laugh. They in turn shake the hand of the person next to them, while you turn to the person on your other side.

See how far the hair gel goes. Ask the children for their ideas about what the activity demonstrates. I always use this as an opportunity to remind them just how far germs can travel and link this to hand-washing routines. They could then produce some hand-washing posters to go around the school.

Louise Payne IS YEAR 5/6 CLASS
TEACHER AT COLLINGWOOD PRIMARY IN
SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS, ESSEX

42. Watch what you waste

Ages 8 to 11

A way of getting pupils to think about their impact on the environment is to do an audit of the waste in their lunchbox. Working in pairs and wearing plastic gloves, ask them to sort it into containers labelled: reusable, recyclable, landfill and compost. Weigh the containers and instruct pupils to work out how much waste there would be for a week, a year and for every class in the school. Discuss ideas to reduce the waste. Perhaps it would be possible for your school to obtain a compost bin. However, waste is only a small part of the environmental problem. For homework, pupils can look at the country of origin of their food.

Elizabeth Smith TEACHES AT
BADSWORTH C OF E JUNIOR AND INFANT
SCHOOL IN PONTEFRAC, WEST YORKSHIRE

43. Fountain of knowledge

Ages 10 to 11

Why not take a chocolate fountain into your science lessons? You will be surprised at how much your pupils can learn from it – and have a lot of fun. Children are often hindered by a lack of scientific vocabulary at the end of their key stage 2 assessments. To embed much of that used in our science unit (QCA Unit 4D solids and liquids), I took a chocolate fountain into the classroom and we enjoyed the delights it can bring. As a healthy school, we served strawberries on skewers dipped into the chocolate. Naturally, the pupils had immense fun, but it was a wonderful opportunity to show chocolate in its solid form, apply heat to produce a liquid form and let it solidify once it had cooled. We repeated the process to show it was reversible. The scientific vocabulary flying around the classroom was amazing, as one pupil pointed out: “Oh no, the chocolate has solidified on to the chair.”

Kari Anson TEACHES AT LADYGROVE
PRIMARY SCHOOL IN DAWLEY, SHROPSHIRE

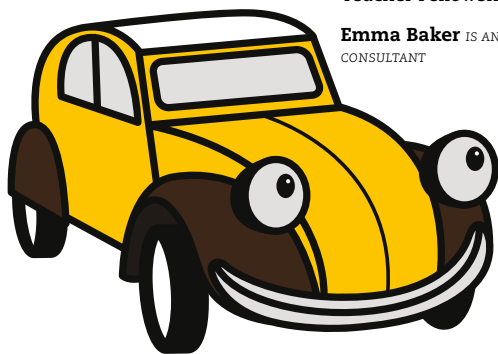
44. Team spirit

Ages 11 to 16

Working in groups is important, but some pupils find it difficult. Science practical work, in particular, needs a bit of co-ordination of this kind, otherwise things can get rather messy. Each table or bench is a group with one rotating “leader”. The leader comments on the group’s progress and behaviour in a group diary at the end of the lesson. The leader can nominate one or more pupils to ask and answer questions during the lesson. The group comments on the leader in the diary, and the make-up of the group is changed occasionally.

The contents are fed back in class to initiate discussion about behaviour and attainment. This strategy encourages pupils to be aware of and take responsibility for learning.

Kevin Brookes IS A RETIRED TEACHER
IN CLEVELAND



45. A soft cell

Ages 14 to 18

Sometimes at the end of a practical lesson pupils do not have complete or expected observations. Try using videos and photographs of results to summarise the practical. For example, in chemistry, halogen displacement test tube reactions are conducted. Pupils will not always make the expected subtle observations.

I have a video clip to show the experiment and photographs in a PowerPoint slide to summarise the results. Once the practical is complete, pupils can watch the video, look at the slide and check that they have recorded the correct observations. They can then study their results to enable them to recognise and explain the pattern using their scientific knowledge, followed by the writing of ionic equations. To view video and photographic resources of chemistry experiments go to www.chemistryvideos.org.uk, produced as part of my Gatsby Teacher Fellowship.

Emma Baker IS AN EDUCATIONAL
CONSULTANT

46. Circuit training

Ages 11 to 14

Teaching electricity can sometimes be difficult because pupils can find it hard to visualise what you are talking about. So when I introduce the concept of potential difference, I use a toy garage with a windup car lift to represent a cell. A car represents one of the charges (current) in the circuit. I place it at the bottom of the lift and slowly move it up to higher levels. As this happens, I explain to the pupils how a chemical reaction is taking place in the cell (in this example, in my arm) and raising the charges to a higher potential energy level. If we raise the car to the first level, it has gained energy but not as much as if we raise it to the second level, etc. I explain that the voltage is the amount of energy needed to raise each car (unit of charge).

At the top of the lift, the car can run down the ramp, like the charges flowing around the circuit. The only thing to be aware of and explain is that when current flows, it doesn’t start in the cell, but all of the charges start moving throughout the circuit as soon as it is connected.

Andrea Mapplebeck IS A
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADER AT
THE NATIONAL SCIENCE LEARNING CENTRE
IN YORK

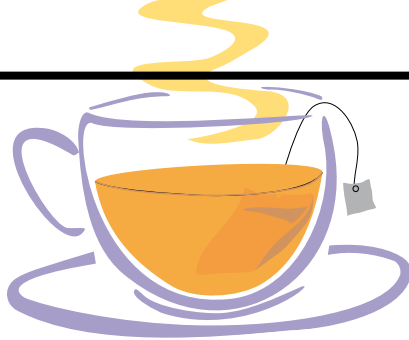
47. Bare bones approach

Ages 11 to 18

Why not turn your evening meal into a teaching/learning tool? I did, and my pupils loved it. After cleaning and bleaching the bones, I took them to school and presented them to my class for the topic of evolution. We examined the similarities in the arm and leg bones of a number of animals. This inspired pupils to look at shared features with the human skeleton. From this, we decided to set up an “evidence for evolution” circus. We made sets of “bones” from plaster of Paris of animals such as bats, chimpanzees and dogs. Each pupil prepared a commentary to help explain their evidence for evolution. Some pupils made models of butterflies and flowers with slight differences due to regional variations. Some made plaster models to represent the changes to the bones of the lower legs of a horse over time.

Other pupils prepared a PowerPoint presentation on Darwin. We arranged the classroom to have a wildlife feel and invited other classes to view our displays and discuss our evidence. This was a superb opportunity for pupils to research and appreciate the ideas behind evolution in a more hands-on way.

Stuart Bennett IS HEAD OF SCIENCE AT THE ROBERT MANNING TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE IN BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE



48. Tea time

Ages 11 to 14

For teaching distillation in Year 7, the standard experiment involves distilling ink to get the water back, but I distil tea. Simple. Take a tea bag and kettle and brew tea in a beaker — no milk or sugar — then ask pupils how to get the water back. They really don't know how, but when you do ink they don't seem to find this a problem. You then distil the tea the usual way in a Liebig condenser and hey presto — it's water! The best bit is discussing whether or not you could add the water back to the residue and make tea. Yuk! You can talk about tannic acid and why coffee is OK kept hot, but tea tastes foul. You can also talk about tannic acid in peat bogs preserving so-called bog bodies and the process of tanning leather (and tanning your stomach).

I find the pupils are far more engaged with this than with distilling ink — and they remember it.

Carol Ashby-Rudd TEACHES AT THE BURGATE SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE IN BURGATE, HAMPSHIRE

49. New view

Ages 11 to 14

Pupils know from experience that drops of liquid act as lenses. They may have sneezed near a computer screen and seen pixels magnified by the water droplets. Challenge pupils to make a simple “microscope” using a drop of liquid from a pipette and keep it in place for viewing. Bent paper clips and holes of various sizes in card and plastic can be used. Pupils will note a problem using a water drop: it soaks into the card after falling from the paper clip, and the small hole makes viewing very difficult — water is too runny. Provide a range of more viscous liquids such as olive oil, washing up liquid and glycerine. A 2mm drop of glycerine on a strip of clear plastic works well, and magnifies about five times. Two lenses, one above the other, make a more powerful compound “microscope”.

Also, try reading *Micrographia* by Robert Hook, who first used the word “cells”.

Julian Silverton TEACHES AT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN GENEVA

50. Tune in

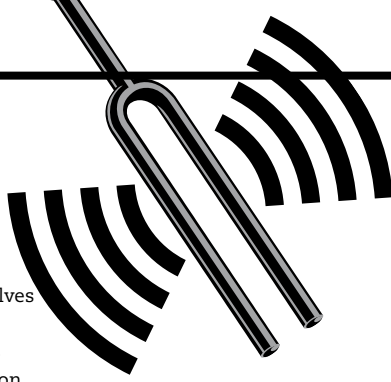
Ages 11 to 16

Teaching sound at key stage 3 or 4 invariably involves the use of tuning forks. Discussing how the prongs move to produce compaction and rarefaction of air molecules, thus producing the longitudinal waves that we hear as sound, can be awkward as the prongs cannot be seen to move. Their movement can be detected by touching them on to a glass or the surface of water. But I developed a way to show the movement directly during my teaching practice. This involves a tuning fork and strobe light.

The strobe is set to about the frequency of the tuning fork – it is usually best to set the frequency before the pupils enter unless they are high ability, in which case the process may interest them. When the vibrating fork is held in front of the lamp and the flash frequency is gradually adjusted, the full movement of the prongs can be seen in apparently slow motion. This also works if the strobe light is pointed towards the users so the tuning fork is backlit.

The frequency for middle C is over 200Hz, so there is no problem in using the lamp with pupils who are sensitive to flashing lights.

Alan Hedges IS A SUPPLY TEACHER IN LANCASHIRE AND CUMBRIA



51. Pop culture

Ages 15 to 16

To help pupils understand radioactive half-life, I give everybody in the class a party popper and a regular dice. We discuss how the popper is like a radioactive nucleus: we cannot tell just by looking at it when it will go off, and once it has done so it cannot pop or release its radiation again. Everybody in the class rolls their dice. If they throw a six, they let off their popper; this is therefore a random event. We count how many poppers remain unpopped and record this. We repeat the process until all the poppers have been popped. The whole process makes the plotting of the half-life curve much more real. The sample is a bit small, but this can be extended by giving each pupil a number of party poppers, as long as they throw the dice once for each popper.

This also serves to keep everybody in the class interested for longer periods of time.

Tony Sinton IS DEPUTY HEADTEACHER AT DOWDALES SCHOOL IN CUMBRIA

52. Squaring up

Ages 14 to 16

Debating ethical issues is a key part of science GCSE. It is a high-level skill for pupils to think from someone else's perspective and scrutinise ideas, so I have come up with the idea of "box heads". Three boxes have faces drawn on them: one smiling, one frowning and one questioning. Three pupils put these on their heads. The smiling one must agree with a particular idea, and the frowning one disagree, giving reasons for their positions. The one with the questioning face must query the evidence. Other pupils can also contribute to the discussion. The pupils wearing the boxes then choose which pupil to hand their box on to.

Less confident children thus have a structured way to contribute to and be included in the debate and cover their blushes.

Laura Seabright TEACHES AT ADDEY AND STANHOPE SCHOOL IN LEWISHAM, LONDON

53. Date with destiny

Ages 14 to 16

Turn an ordinary revision lesson into a “speed dating in science” event. Ask the pupils to prepare an ID card with some interesting facts about themselves. Divide the class in two, with half as the “dates” and the remainder as “speed-daters”. Both need to do some preparation. The speed-daters have to learn the whole topic (such as humans) and come to the event with a list of relevant questions and answers from each section of it. Each date is given three sections (such as the heart) to learn, the choice based on areas where their homework suggests they need to work harder. Send out invitations. On the day, arrange the chairs and tables in a semi-circle, give each table a number, and set up a board at the back where pupils can post their verdict. Greet them with flavoured water, chocolates and mood music. They have five minutes to mingle and can only mention relevant facts such as: “Did you know the heart has four chambers?” Give the speed-daters a score sheet and sit them opposite their date for three minutes. Then they rate their date for knowledge and understanding and move on. Provide drinks and chocolate throughout.

At the end, allow pupils to read all the score sheets posted on the board.

Khatma Bibi IS HEAD OF SCIENCE AT BARTLEY GREEN TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE IN BIRMINGHAM

54. Picture this

Ages 11 to 14

Reading images is a versatile technique to use in science. It gets pupils to extract information collaboratively from a picture or photo, rather than from text. It makes a great opener for new units, or as a revision lesson. First, find an image that relates to your classwork. Reproduce the image on A4 and stick it on an A3 sheet. Give small groups the image; ask them to spend 15 minutes annotating it; writing around it; thinking of vocabulary they associate with the image; science links they are seeing; questions it raises or laws they see illustrated. They then give it a title. The class can have one image or several. Groups give feedback and take questions.

The technique works by fixing their understanding to an image for easier recall and consolidates their scientific vocabulary.

Suzie Phillips TEACHES AT BUNGAY MIDDLE SCHOOL IN SUFFOLK

55. My science space

Ages 14 to 16

Using a familiar method can help pupils struggling with difficult subjects. So I get pupils to create a Facebook or MySpace profile on paper, about hydrocarbon when teaching the topic of alkanes and alkenes. By creating worksheets with a similar layout to these websites, pupils remember more information, and in a logical order. For example, the profile picture is the structural formula, “status” can be solid, liquid or gas, AIM screen name can be the molecular formula (for example, CH₄), activities can be “cooking, camping”, groups can be alkanes or alkenes and under a “family pictures” heading, pupils can draw the other hydrocarbons in the family.

The idea can be used either as a main teaching activity to introduce hydrocarbons or as a revision aid.

Jacquelyn Long IS A TRAINEE SECONDARY SCIENCE TEACHER ON PLACEMENT AT St PETER'S SCHOOL IN HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE





56. Turning new ground

Ages 8 to 11

Let's play archaeologists. Here is a timeline activity that will add fun to learning about ancient civilisations and give your pupils a feel for archaeology. Bring some plastic bags, each filled with a smashed clay flower pot (one for each group of three). Ask pupils to reconstruct each pot using drafting tape, so they can take it apart to put in the difficult pieces. An outdoor variation of this activity is to cordon off three or four patches of field (or use sandboxes) and have them excavate the broken pots using simple digging tools such as spades and brushes to gently remove dirt from the pieces.

Once back in the classroom, pupils can proceed with reconstructing the flower pots.

John Skinner IS A TEACHER AT ST AUBYN'S SCHOOL IN WOODFORD GREEN, ESSEX

57. Set a date

Ages 8 to 11

Pupils will love this outdoor, visual and kinaesthetic activity to learn chronology. Give 15 pupils a card with a range of different dates written on each one, ranging from 2000BC to 2007AD. Include key dates such as 0, 1066, 1665, 1939 (and any others that relate to your topic). Take pupils to the playground and ask them to arrange themselves in date order. Give the more able the BC cards as this can lead to higher order questioning, such as why their numbers go "backwards" and what the 0 represents. Give the rest of the pupils A4 cards with pictures of famous people on and the dates when they lived. You could include Winston Churchill, Florence Nightingale, or people from their current topic.

Ask them to position themselves on the human number line where they think their character should be. This can lead to a further discussion of dates and the order things happen in.

Helen Towler TEACHES AT RYE OAK SCHOOL IN LONDON

58. Hold the history page

Ages 8 to 11

History and literacy teachers, make use of your pupils' keenness to show off their technology skills. Let them demonstrate how new technology can be used to highlight the so-called old technology of newspapers. Get pupils to complete background research on Boudicca's revolt during a history lesson about the Romans, in pairs or groups. A useful site they can go to is [www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_fip/client_fip/ks2/history/boudicca/index.htm](http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_ftp/client_fip/ks2/history/boudicca/index.htm). Ask them to report their findings back to the class. Pupils can then be introduced to the features of newspaper writing in literacy through the Roman section on www.headlinehistory.co.uk.

You can choose the level of text to be presented to the pupils and watch film interviews with characters, which help to bring the period alive. Finally, get pupils to use what they have learnt to write their own newspaper account of the revolt.

You can also send finished articles to www.headlinehistory.co.uk – and they may be published on the internet.

Elizabeth Smith TEACHES AT BADSWORTH C OF E VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL IN WEST YORKSHIRE

59. Gene therapy

Ages 14 to 16

After teaching determining sex chromosomes, invite the class to write a letter to Henry VIII explaining that it is his fault that he hasn't had a son and nothing to do with his wives. The letters need to be tactful if the pupils are to avoid being beheaded. I usually give the openings of a number of sentences to start them off, such as: "While I must acknowledge the superiority of your royal genes..." Computers allow pupils to use old-fashioned fonts. Then, get them to age the paper with old tea bags for homework.

Judith Green IS A SCIENCE AST AT THE ROBERT SMYTH SCHOOL IN MARKET HARBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE

60. Compete with pupils

Ages 11 to 14

I used this for a review session of the Black Death with Year 7s. I displayed and read a prepared paragraph about the causes and consequences of the Black Death. This included 10 deliberate mistakes. Pupils were provided with a grid sheet on A4 paper and the paragraph on another. They wrote the mistakes on one side, and the correct information on the other. They spotted my mistakes and produced a corrected version.

David Alford TEACHES AT YSGOL UWCHRADD TYWYN IN GWYNEDD, WALES

61. A drop of action

Ages 14 to 16

Having given up history to teach science, I could never resist bringing up a company of eclectic, inspirational and bonkers scientists. Newton was a rich source. A devout woman-hater (his mother left him at two), he spawned vast amounts of ground-breaking research and then lost them for years. His feud with Robert Hooke, the self-aggrandising first describer of a "cell", was legendary. Newton became a Member of Parliament, but said nothing beyond, "Can you close that window?" Humanising science with past giants brings empathy and context. The tragic tale of how Marie Curie lost her husband and co-worker, Pierre, under the wheels of a Parisian carriage raised a laugh – maybe it was the way I told it. It seems poetic justice that the man who invented CFCs and sent us down the road to global warming was struck down with polio. He invented a mechanised bed that strangled him. Galileo remained my favourite. He was the first scientist to experiment. And despite a row with the Church, which usually saw scientists being crisped at the stake, Galileo held on. It helped that his old school chum had become the Pope. As a lesson in sticking to your principles, it worked for me.

Katy Bloom IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADER AT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE LEARNING CENTRE

62. Guess who

Ages 11 to 18

A great way to introduce a new topic and to break the ice for pupils who don't know each other very well is to hold a cocktail party. Allocate each pupil a person they will be learning about in the new topic – for example, Alexander Fleming and Florence Nightingale. Have each pupil research that character for homework and encourage them to find props/simple costumes that link to their characters. The next lesson is the party. As each character arrives at the party, give them a chart that they must complete as they meet other party guests. For each guest they must find out their name, date of birth, family background, what they contributed to the history of medicine and links they may have to other characters at the party. Acting as the waiter, the teacher circulates the room, ensuring everyone is on task and finding out information.

Helen Towler TEACHES AT RYE OAK SCHOOL IN LONDON



63. Model plan

Ages 16 to 17

A modelling game has been voted the “most popular activity” by students. Place a set of cards containing the name of a landscape feature on each group’s table. One student per group takes a card and makes a model of it. The first student in each group to name the feature gets the card and begins modelling the next landscape. You can take turns so that everyone gets to model. Remarkably, two of the features on my cards came up in the next exam.

Janet Hutson TEACHES AT SOUTH HUNSLEY SCHOOL IN YORKSHIRE

64. Tikka look at this

Ages 10 to 11

In geography (QCA Unit 10 – a village in India) pupils learn about traditional Indian cuisine by exploring the village of Chembakolli. We achieved this by approaching a local Indian restaurant – in exchange for a photograph in the local newspaper, the staff are generally more than happy to provide traditional Indian cuisine free of charge to help in the practical element of this unit. My class of 33 pupils was able to sample poppadoms, naan bread, rice, dahl and four varieties of curry with a range of spices (mild to hot).

Kari Anson TEACHES AT LADYGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN DAWLEY, TELFORD

65. Place value

All ages

Use photos and images at the start of a lesson to introduce pupils to a place of study. This encourages them to interpret the image as opposed to looking at it at face value. Placing themselves inside the image, pupils notice more details as they connect with and use their senses. On a small piece of paper, pupils sketch a small stick drawing to represent themselves, pair up, swap the portraits, take it in turns to place each other in the image and then ask some questions: what can you hear? What can you see? What can you smell? The other responds. The task can be adapted for use with images shared on the interactive whiteboard. Use bigger pieces of paper, though.

Sarah Watts IS A TEACHING AND LEARNING CONSULTANT FOR THE CHILDREN’S SERVICE DEPARTMENT AT HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL



66. Climbing to the top

Ages 10 to 11

Topics on mountains get pupils learning outside the classroom. But a trip to the Andes is costly, so why not bring the mountain to them? Use two 50-metre climbing ropes and lay them across the school field. Set up a series of physical team activities – these can be anything that involves working together – leave signs with base camp, second base camp and so on, giving the idea of climbing a mountain. Split pupils into teams and talk about working as a team. Make sure that when they are walking along the rope they always hold it in two hands. Get them to form a circle each time they get to a base. Along the way, stop and talk about what the weather conditions and climate may be like. This lesson stimulated questions about mountains and provided a good level of physical activity without the cost or long plane journey.

Martin Van Hecke IS A YEAR 6 TEACHER AT HIGHER LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BURY, MANCHESTER



67. It's all about atmosphere

Ages 10 to 11

If a lesson gets off to a good start, it is easier to maintain that atmosphere. Putting a smile on pupils' faces as they enter the room also has an impact. When my geography pupils enter the classroom and sit down, most are immediately captivated (or amused) by the starter images placed on my whiteboard. These are normally unusual images linked to the topic we will study. As a result, they are in a better frame of mind to begin the lesson. This activity works particularly well with lower ability groups and those with behavioural issues. Go to www.google.com and select "images". In the random searches box type "unusual weather images". I have collected many useful pictures to use as starter images.

Inga Irvine IS HEAD OF GEOGRAPHY AT THE WESTWOOD SCHOOL IN COVENTRY, WEST MIDLANDS

68. Look up for inspiration

Ages 11 to 16

I was looking for a way to improve the quality of written responses, especially for examinations and assessments. In particular, I noticed that pupils' responses could be quite vague where they needed to be specific. The introduction of the "banned word" board and "heavenly words" display has worked wonders. The banned words include "stuff", "things", "it" and "people". There are also semi-bans on words that require qualification, such as "pollution" – air pollution. The idea is that pupils are not allowed to use these words in writing or in verbal contributions, but substitute them for a specific term. This is supported by the heavenly words, which provide alternatives such as "local residents" instead of "people". The idea can be easily adapted for any subject. Useful websites include www.daviderogers.blogspot.com or www.olliebray.com. These blogs have a list of similar sites. I have found these an invaluable source of continuing professional development. These blogs are usually maintained by geography teachers and are used to communicate with other teachers, students and parents.

David Rogers IS A TEACHER OF GEOGRAPHY AND OUTDOOR LEARNING AT PORTCHESTER COMMUNITY SCHOOL IN FAREHAM, HAMPSHIRE

69. A new angle

Ages 11 to 14

Help pupils master basic skills by making your local Ordnance Survey map come to life in class. All you need is the map, muscle for moving furniture, chalk, shoe boxes, toy cars and Action Man figures. First, move the tables to make a frame around the outside of the room. Then draw the OS map in chalk on the classroom floor, to a larger scale but including the grid lines and main symbols. Make buildings and key places out of shoe boxes and raid a toy box for cars and figures. It's definitely worth the preparation. Then invite your pupils into the room (I did this with a small but challenging group of Year 7s) and surprise them by asking them to stand on their table. Looking down on the map, they begin to spot things they recognise – their school, the local park, the station. Then ask one pupil to jump into the map. The others can then guide him or her on a route using only the compass points or grid references for directions. Next, they can construct routes to school that avoid busy or unlit roads, and discuss the safest routes.

Nicky Reckless IS SECONDARY PROJECTS LEADER OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION'S ACTION PLAN FOR GEOGRAPHY

70. Chunks of fun

Ages 11 to 16

"A verb is like a bar of chocolate." This is my lesson title when I introduce tense in French or German. Pupils need to understand about "breaking up" the verbs they will need (avoir and être in French or haben and sein in German). A great way to demonstrate this is with chocolate bars. I label one bar avoir and another être. I then tear off the wrapping and break off the first piece.

I say: "j'ai" and the second piece "tu as". Pupils are all ears and by the end of the lesson can form sentences.

Sara Sullivan IS HEAD OF LANGUAGES AT WOODLANDS SCHOOL IN BASILDON, ESSEX



71. A new angle

Ages 8 to 11

Psssst... pass it on. Play Chinese whispers to pass on newly learnt target language. Teach the pronunciation of simple vocabulary or phrases to the class. This may be recapping work you have already covered or introducing new material. Once pupils have absorbed the new information, divide them into teams of seven. Have each team form a line standing one behind the other. All but the first pupil must turn and face the opposite direction with their fingers in their ears. The pupil at the front will be the first one to pass on the message after you have whispered some of the target language in their ear. They must wait until each first pupil in each team has the message before passing it on. They tap the next pupil's shoulder so they know to take their fingers out of their ears and listen to the message. The last person to get the message runs to the front and shouts it out. Points can be awarded for the most accurate message. Begin again with the last person for the new messages so all pupils get a turn. Vary each team's message or use the same one.

Make the task difficult by using more than one word or a phrase.

Lindsay Slack TEACHES AT QUEEN ELIZABETH GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN WAKEFIELD, WEST YORKSHIRE

72. Getting the message

Ages 11 to 14

Estupido. This is a game that requires a sense of humour on your part and a sensible class that won't get carried away with the opportunity to insult you and question your intelligence. Estupido is, of course, Spanish for stupid. Small groups or a divided classroom listen attentively to you speaking in the target language. Adapt the rules to suit the learning point, but you are asking the pupils to recognise certain triggers, at which point they will call out "estupido". Leave deliberate gaps or mistakes in your sentences for pupils to pick up on. Have the language written out because doing this from memory can cause scoring dilemmas. Have a log of all missing verbs, unconjugated verbs, missing adjectival agreements, wrong genders etc, so when each team calls out "estupido" you can award them a point, or take one away if they are mistaken or cannot tell you why something was wrong. At the end of the game, the scores from all of the teams should add up to the number of mistakes you had planned in your speech. If there are discrepancies, you can give a transcript to the teams so that they can sort out the remaining errors for bonus points.

Andrew Bruton IS A COVER TEACHER IN HEREFORDSHIRE

73. Strong language

Ages 14 to 16

I play “The Weakest Link” with my language pupils. They sit in a circle and play for sweets or merit marks. Each pupil is given a statement or asked a question. For instance: “How do you say: ‘How do I get to the railway station?’” After you have five correct responses, the fifth child must say “Bank” and they bank a sweet or point. We play until we have banked enough for the class. Anne Robinson-style insults can be a bonus.

Sara Sullivan IS HEAD OF LANGUAGES AT WOODLANDS SCHOOL IN BASILDON, ESSEX

74. Speaking out

Ages 5 to 13

If I am practising, say, weather phrases, I hold two flashcards behind my back, one saying “Il fait froid”, the other “Il fait chaud”. A pupil plays “La Marseillaise” on the CD player and I march around the room swapping the flashcards between each hand. The pupil pauses the music and I stop and ask another child, in French, “What have I got in my right hand?” If correct, the class shouts, “Bravo!” and “Oh l... l...!” if wrong. I do this until everyone has answered. Pupils get to practise speaking, hear the French national anthem, and learn to congratulate and commiserate each other.

Margaret Riley TEACHES AT RUMWORTH SPECIAL SCHOOL IN BOLTON, LANCASHIRE

75. Welcome to toon town

Ages 7 to 18

Gorseville is an imaginary French town situated on my dining room table. It features characters and locations bought at the Early Learning Centre (Happyland range). My pupils record the voices of the characters in French and, at the weekend, my own children bring them to life with stop-motion animation. At this early stage, the project features a purchase at the market, a pedestrian asking directions, and the arrival of an English tourist who sends a video postcard. The process is time-consuming, but inspires and motivates pupils – they all want to appear animated in Gorseville. It is a resource I have made available to other teachers. The process is as follows: I record monologue/dialogue at school, save it on a pen drive and take it home. My children then set up the characters on Saturday. Using my standard digital video camera, I take a still picture. We move the people a bit and take another snap. On the PC, we import the pictures and sounds to Windows Movie Maker. Patience is required to synchronise the movements and music/sounds. It is saved as a movie file and uploaded to YouTube or similar.

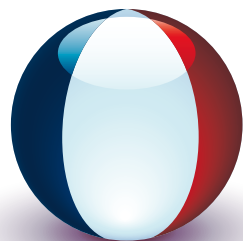
Stuart Gorse TEACHES AT LANCASTER ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL, LANCASHIRE

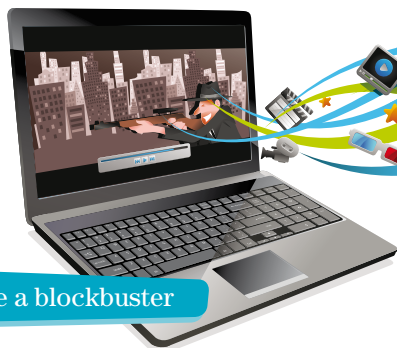
76. Play with words

Ages 11 to 14

Give each pupil a small piece of paper and ask each one to draw a specific picture representing an activity – a football, a TV screen or iPod. Fold the paper in four to conceal the picture, and place in a bag. Shuffle and ask pupils to pick one each. They mustn’t show the picture to anyone. They must pick another if they get their own. Give them 10 minutes to get up and find who has the picture they drew by asking everyone the question: Tu as regarde la television samedi dernier?/Tu as joue au foot samedi dernier? Forbid any use of English. Answers might be: Non, je n’ai pas joue au foot, etc/Oui, j’ai joue au foot, etc. Once they find what they are looking for, they sit down. When everyone is seated, the game is over. Pupils have now practised the perfect tense, negative construction, je and tu forms and their accent.

Ana Anstead TEACHES AT QUEEN ELIZABETH’S GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN ASHBOURNE, DERBYSHIRE





77. Be a blockbuster

Ages 8 to 11

Using film is a great way to capture pupils' imaginations. I have made my own films to introduce new topics, with the help of Windows Movie Maker. I created a video of myself as a secret agent who pupils needed to contact to obtain information for a mission. The video showed me (in black tie and jacket, of course) explaining the mission to them. When the person on screen asked a question, I would answer it from the classroom. Pupils thought this was great fun, and they produced some excellent newspaper reports based on the mission.

Although using Movie Maker can take a little time at first, quality short films can be produced in the classroom with a little practice.

Martin Van Hecke IS A YEAR 6
TEACHER AT HIGHER LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL
IN BURY, MANCHESTER

78. Delve into data

Ages 7 to 11

Data collection can be difficult to arrange as a full-time class teacher and subject leader. Try adapting the key stage 2 database units of work so the pupils collect and analyse the data with you. Explain the type of data you need – for example, pupils' opinions on reading and writing. Have them work in mixed ability groups to design a questionnaire, conduct the survey by interviewing pupils across the school, create a database with their own fields and enter the results. I arranged for Year 3 to investigate reading while Year 4 gathered information about writing. The pupils then analysed the data and created bar graphs and pie charts of the results.

The work was displayed in a central location to be shared with the other pupils.

Catherine Caldwell IS DEPUTY
HEADTEACHER AT WESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
IN HERTFORDSHIRE

79. X marks

Ages 7 to 11

I use an interactive whiteboard for all lessons and have developed the following idea as a plenary fun game or mental oral starter to revise previous work – the children all love it. I've made a large noughts and crosses grid and display on it what we are doing. We have two teams of boys vs girls who can only claim their square if they complete the challenge correctly. I ask a pupil to come to the board, pick a square and complete the challenge, and they then drag the appropriate symbol into place on the board. Just as in noughts and crosses, the winning team is the first to get three in a row.

This is a simple game with endless possibilities.

Sharonlisa Freeley TEACHES AT
WILLIAM AUSTIN JUNIOR SCHOOL IN LUTON,
BEDFORDSHIRE

80. Go create

Ages 11 to 14

Why not have a display board that pupils can design themselves and publish on the popular myspace.com website? The idea is simple but effective (and free!) and helps boost social interaction, creative thinking, and organisational and technology skills.

At the end of the week, I take a digital photo of the display which might include posters, original designs and decorations, and add it to the gallery. Each pupil has ownership of the board for a week and can also choose the song that plays when internet users visit the site. The pupils get a real buzz when I beam their display live from the internet on the projector.

For obvious reasons, I manage the webpage myself and do not disclose personal details such as names or contact details.

Justin Talbot TEACHES AT WEST MOORS MIDDLE SCHOOL IN FERNDOWN, DORSET

81. X marks

Ages 14 to 16

I have recorded a five to six minute monologue of useful quotes and arguments for each topic pupils have covered in RE to help them revise for exams. These tracks are uploaded on to the school's virtual learning environment. where pupils can download them on to their iPods and MP3 players. It was pleasing (if slightly amusing) to hear pupils had been listening to my voice on the way to and from school. The pupils liked this idea and, with next year's cohort, they will design their own revision podcasts, with their best ones replacing my attempts. With any Windows package there is a sound recorder option. This is found in the accessories folder under entertainment. For under £10, you can buy a microphone headset that plugs into the back of the computer. The only problem is that the files can be quite large, as they save as Windows Media Audio (WMA).

You can easily download a converter, such as iTunes, which allows you to convert them to MP3 files.

Chris Wheeler TEACHES RE AND PSHE AT ASHTON ON MERSEY SCHOOL IN CHESHIRE

82. Ring the changes

Ages 14 to 18

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em... The rule in general is to switch off your mobile phone in the classroom. But these sometimes cursed gadgets can have an educational purpose. An exploration of your mobile's menu will reveal copious tools to help with learning, and the following activities work well in English. They can be done individually, in pairs, in groups or as a class activity if you have a data projector and speakers. Everything can be checked by the teacher. Voice recorder: use this to practise talking at length about an exam topic, to compare pronunciation with a teacher's, to check speech volume and to simply hear what conversations sound like. No mobiles in the exam room, though. Photos and video: these are excellent for learning tenses and descriptive language. Pupils can choose what to film and photograph. Notebook: pupils can enter problem spellings that can be practised anywhere without using paper and a pen.

This can also be done by saving a text to your outbox.

Ben Cope IS AN ESOL TEACHER IN NORTH-EAST LONDON



83. X marks

Ages 8 to 11

One of the biggest problems children have with writing stories is the ability to empathise with their characters enough to understand and describe how they are thinking, feeling and reacting to events. One way of overcoming this is to use paintings in combination with drama techniques, such as freeze frame or thought tracking. Paintings, such as *An Experiment On A Bird In The Air Pump* by Joseph Wright of Derby, help to solve the thorny problem of structuring a story. By analysing and describing the different reactions of each of the characters to the cockatoo's suffering in the air pump, with the help of drama children can structure and write powerful narrative with plenty of emotion and rich use of vocabulary. The description of each character also helps them to plan paragraphs and the foreboding setting in the background provides many opportunities for powerful word sketches about settings as well.

Libby Lee IS A PRIMARY TEACHER AT NORTH MYMMS ST MARY'S C OF E IN WELHAM GREEN, HERTFORDSHIRE

84. Painting by number

Ages 5 to 11

Creating a "wow factor" mural enables pupils to appreciate an artist's work and apply different techniques as they create an original piece of art. Select a picture by an artist you are studying and make a coloured copy. Measure your display space, then divide the coloured copy into enough squares for each pupil. Number the squares. Each pupil reproduces the details in their square using art materials as appropriate – for example, thick paint or oil pastels are effective for the swirls in the work of Vincent Van Gogh. Sugar paper is also a strong base. Encourage pupils to fill their paper with detail and watch their responses when it's time for the assembling of the finished work.

Lesley Higginson IS A PRIMARY TEACHER ON A SHORT CAREER BREAK



85. Success on the cards

Ages 11 to 16

In our art department we have devised a set of review cards that we use as our "pass the puppet" plenary game. The cards have questions such as:

1. Explain your use of colour in your work (comprehension).
2. Tell us the properties of PVA glue (knowledge).
3. Argue why your work should be chosen to hang in the staff room (evaluation). The music plays and when it stops the pupil with the puppet puts it on, chooses, reads out and responds to a review card. If they answer confidently they keep the card and the pupil with the most cards wins.

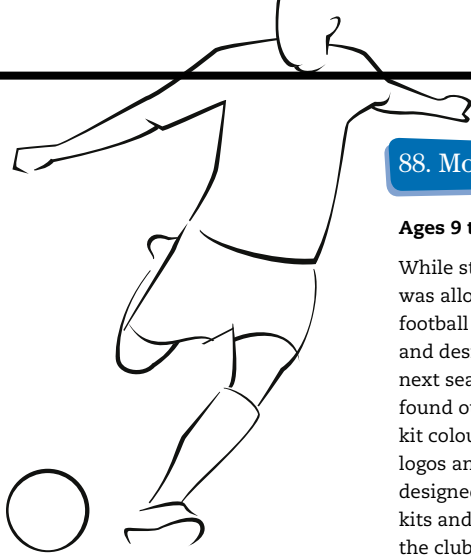
Liz Stevens IS HEAD OF ART AT FRANKLEY HIGH SCHOOL IN BIRMINGHAM

86. Message for mum

Ages 4 to 6

For Mother's Day my Year 1s make cards and photo frames. 3D flowers are nice. Cut the card into a flower shape, then fold the petals into flaps. My reception class like a teapot-shaped card with a tea bag inside, plus a poem about mum. Or make a photo frame of card, with art straws to cut, twist or bend and decorate the border. Spray with silver or gold paint. Then each child sticks a photograph of themselves in the frame.

Lianne Boyce IS A YEAR 1 TEACHER AT MORNA INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE IN IBIZA, SPAIN



87. Snow far, so good

Ages 7 to 11

Your pupils can produce masterpieces from simple items: a sheet of paper, black and white crayons and a pot of blue paint mixed with a lot of water. Ask them to sketch the outline of a large old house that almost fills the page, colour in the walls of the house with black crayon and the roofs with white crayon for snow. Have them paint over the entire page with their wash of blue paint. Combine their pictures and the result is a stunning display of an old village of snow covered houses with a background of clear blue sky. Lack of perspective helps to make the buildings appear full of character. Every pupil can be proud of their contribution, and may become the next Pieter Brueghel, a painter of landscapes such as *Hunters in the Snow*.

Rosemary Westwell IS A TEACHER IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

88. Morris major

Ages 9 to 11

While still in Year 5, each child was allocated a Premiership football club. In Year 6, their art and design brief was to design next season's kit. The children found out about the traditional kit colours (home and away) and logos and designs. They then designed a range of possible kits and sent their designs to the club chairmen for their comments. Eighteen out of the 20 clubs responded, many with letters from the chairmen. Some clubs, though, went further: Everton sent a signed first team shirt and said it plans to put the young boy's work either on its website or in its club magazine. Manchester United sent goody bags and footballs as well as a signed shirt. Middlesbrough sent its own kit manufacturer's design portfolio along with three replica shirts (this season's actual kit and two designs that were ultimately rejected). Fulham gave the boy in question tickets for his family (and thankfully me) to go and watch the recent match against Reading from a directors' lounge. We plan to continue the project and for the children to make up sample shirts of their designs.

Many of the clubs have expressed an interest in seeing the results.

Mark Gilronan IS A DEPUTY HEAD AT ELAINE PRIMARY IN ROCHESTER, KENT

89. Well matched

Ages 8 to 11

To start our art topic on the Victorians in Year 4, we looked at the William Morris website, www.morrissociety.org. This shows a range of the great craftsman's work in various media and, in class, pupils discussed which wallpaper, tapestries and tiles they preferred. I explained that Morris was fascinated by patterns in nature and wanted to reflect this in his art. Pupils made close observational drawings of leaves, flowers and natural objects collected locally. They designed their own Morris-style tiles on card using felt-tips and pastels, based on their original drawings. They then copied their designs on to plain ceramic tiles.

The result was a beautiful display of Victorian tiles and happy pupils who had gained insights into 19th-century refurbishment and the ideas of an innovative Victorian.

Charlotte Dowling TEACHES AT ST MARK'S C OF E FIRST SCHOOL IN DORSET

90. Just beat it

Ages 11 to 16

“Rhythmic hopscotch” works well as a starter activity or can be developed into a whole lesson. Write a 6 x 6 grid on the whiteboard and ask six volunteer pupils to write a combination of the numbers 3 and 2 in any order on each row. This will be the basis of rhythm activities using even quavers (“cof-fee”) or triplets (“am-bulance”, keeping each syllable even). Have pupils perform this grid as a class, gently striking the desks with the part of the hand where the fingers meet the palm. Perform each row twice. Work forwards on one row and backwards on another. Work the horizontals or the diagonals. It is good for concentration, drawing out concepts such as cross-rhythm and is a starting point for whole-class performance.

The activity can be extended. Try splitting the class into two, with one group beginning in the bottom right-hand corner and working right to left going up the grid, while the other group works in the opposite direction. In theory, you should finish together.

Any rings worn by pupils can also be used (with care) to add some syncopation or off-beats. Leave some squares blank for further interest.

Anthony Anderson IS HEAD OF MUSIC AND AN AST AT BEAUCHAMP COLLEGE, LEICESTERSHIRE

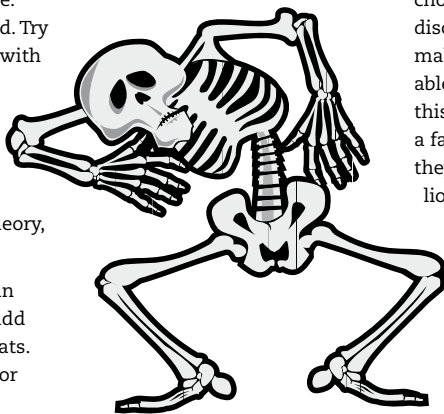
91. Tap into it

Ages 8 to 11

Liven up your science lessons with music, song and dance. To remember scientific words related to the body, my Year 4 pupils made up their own words to “Dem Bones” and created movement to the song as memory aids. This became a dance and was performed as a rap song. Pupils were so enthused that they even learned the Latin names of bones, and voted this the most enjoyable part of the topic.

Using several learning strategies helped all the pupils, and music and dance brought a lot of fun to science.

Diane Murray TEACHES AT BROADWAY EAST FIRST SCHOOL IN NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE



92. Perfect pitch

Ages 7 to 9

To help pupils understand pitch, try involving them in this listening skills activity. Collect pairs of objects that can be made to make a sound. They need to be of the same type but significantly different sizes – large and small saucepans to bang, bottles to tap or blow into, or wind chimes to shake. Include some official musical instruments, such as tambours or triangles, but anything will do, as long as you can find examples of each. In small groups, ask pupils to have a turn on each “instrument” (kinaesthetic). Their challenge is to decide which of each pair makes the lower (or higher) sound (auditory). They could colour differently sized pictures of the items to indicate their choice (visual). Pupils should discover that larger objects make lower sounds. The more able could be asked to think why this is. Has the experiment been a fair test? What pitch would they expect to hear from, say a lion and a kitten? A lorry and a Mini.

If you have access to a string quartet or a drummer with a full kit, this would bring the activity to life.

Catherine Legg IS A NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHER BASED IN SUFFOLK

93. Highly trained ears

Ages 14 to 16

Part of the challenge of teaching music is enabling young ears to listen, rather than just to hear. So try these three “listening focus” tasks: 1. Play “Volksliedchen” by Schumann (New Edexcel GCSE Anthology of Music, CD 1, track 4), then ask the pupils to describe the differences throughout the piece – for example minor/major or fast/slow. 2. Play “Dance of the Reed Pipes” from *The Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky (Edexcel GCSE Anthology of Music, CD 1, track 26). Get them to describe the way the instruments and rhythms create contrast. This can serve as a simple introduction to the orchestra as pupils often have difficulties identifying instruments, but it remains an important skill right up to A2-level. 3. Play “The Girls so Fair: Romanian Folk Dance” from *Fortissimo* (CD 1 track 29). This allows a good opportunity to observe differentiation, as it contains changes of mood and a variety of musical elements. Some of the areas you might expect comments on include style, tempo, dynamics and instruments, including percussion.

Anthony Anderson IS HEAD OF MUSIC AND AN AST AT BEAUCHAMP COLLEGE IN LEICESTERSHIRE

94. Picture this

Ages 11 to 16

Try this as a way into expressionism in music. On a sheet of blank paper, ask pupils to express an emotion in the form of a pattern, caricature, series of colours or a picture of an object. List emotions to help everyone get started – anger, hate, love, jealousy and depression. Discuss the pictures and how they link with the emotions they are expressing. Then look at expressionist art and talk about the emotions behind these pictures. Munch's *The Scream* is a good one to use, although there are many others. What do your pupils make of these pictures and why? Then introduce and play examples of expressionist music and ask pupils for their reactions to the moods and emotions they associate with what they have heard. Try extracts from Berg's *Wozzeck* or something from Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*. This scaffolded approach gives pupils a way into the music and enables more focused listening.

Anthony Anderson IS HEAD OF MUSIC AND AN AST AT BEAUCHAMP COLLEGE IN LEICESTERSHIRE



95. Rhythm and cues

Ages 8 to 11

I have used this music activity on rhythm across key stage 2. Choose “musically interactive” from the music section of the KS2 resources on www.ngflycmru.org.uk/vtc-home.htm. Select warm-up clapping games from the site to suit the age and ability of your class. Split the class into four groups. Tell the first group to say the word “tea” and hold it for a count of four. Get the second group to say “coffee”, holding each syllable for a count of two. Give the third group “pop” to say on each count, and the fourth group can say “Coca-Cola”, with each syllable counting as a half-beat. Introduce each group one at a time and try to get them all to keep in time. For the plenary, allow some of the children to come out and conduct the class. You can extend this activity by letting each group devise its own word rhythm piece on different themes.

Elizabeth Smith IS A PRIMARY TEACHER

96. Getting off the ground

Ages 11 to 14

When setting targets for pupils, there are all manner of forms to complete, which can be unappealing. I use a simple picture-based approach. I give each pupil a sheet of paper with an outline drawing of an aeroplane on it. There is a box in the sky labelled “Destination”, where pupils write what they want to achieve. But they can only get there if the plane is working, so they label the key parts of it (wings, engines, rudder, pilot) with what they are going to do to ensure the plane gets off the ground.

Once pupils have tried out a few ideas, it's easy to transfer them on to the official school paperwork.

Chris Bond TEACHES ENGLISH AT WARWICK SCHOOL IN WARWICKSHIRE

97. Consensus rules

Ages 11 to 14

Allow pupils to set the classroom rules. They have two minutes to talk to a partner about what rules they would like and justify them, then move into groups of four and write five rules. Finally, ask them to move into groups of eight and agree on five rules per group. This ensures pupils have thoroughly discussed the reasoning behind the rules they have set. Group representatives then give feedback to the teacher and select five rules for the whole class. They will usually come up with similar rules to the ones you would like, such as only one person speaking at a time, and not laughing at other people's opinions.

This gives the pupils ownership of the rules, and they begin to govern their own behaviour.

Linda Asquith IS A LECTURER AT HUDDERSFIELD UNIVERSITY

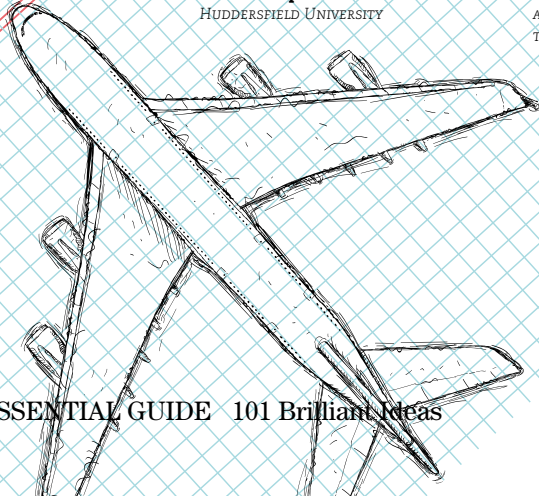
98. Barbie dole

Ages 5 to 9

She's pink, she's fluffy. He's cool and debonair. They are Barbie and Ken. Use these celebrities in your classroom to teach about “judging others” and build self-esteem. Dress Barbie and Ken in smart clothes first. Make up a case study: “This is Barbie and Ken. They are X years old.” List all their positive attributes such as kind, caring and friendly. Next, swap their clothes for shabby ones. Ask pupils what they notice about Barbie and Ken. Then ask the pupils: “Have they changed as people because of the clothes they are wearing?” and: “Are they no longer kind because their appearance has changed?”

This is a particularly useful lesson for pupils who bicker about expensive trainers and designer labels.

Cindy Silvester IS A SUPPLY TEACHER AND TEACHES KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 THROUGHOUT GREATER MANCHESTER



99. Bang on target

Ages 16 to 18

Pupils have a hammer of a time in this revision activity. Write several themes/key words on A4 sheets of paper and pin them up at the front of the class. Bring two pupils up to the front and issue each one with a cheap inflatable hammer and begin firing questions, for which the answers are already pinned up. For a revision session on growth and development, write the six life stages on the sheets and ask: during which life stage do secondary sexual characteristics develop? (adolescence); which life stage would you be in if you're 49 years old? (middle adulthood); during which life stage do you develop your first locomotive skill? (infancy). The first pupil to hit the right answer wins a point and the first one to reach five points wins the game. The answers are fairly spread out, which gives struggling pupils more of a chance of winning if questions with answers nearer where they are standing are chosen. This can be done as a team or an individual exercise.

Pupils can design the questions if you're short of time.

Karen Lancaster TEACHES A-LEVEL PHILOSOPHY AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE AT LOUGHBOROUGH COLLEGE IN LEICESTERSHIRE

100. A labour of love

Ages 11 and over

The condom Olympics enable pupils to learn about the safety limits of prophylactics in a novel way, and can be suitable for secondary year group. Use a circus of experiments, such as the exploding condom demonstration. Ask pupils to rub different substances onto the surface of a blown-up condom. Give some oil-based and others water-based lubricants, and others moisturising creams. After a minute or so, the condoms covered with oil-based lubricants should burst, but those with waterbased ones will not. This shows that water-based lubricants are safe for use with condoms. Try challenges such as how many paperclips can you pick up with a condom over your hand? (This shows how much you can feel through a condom). How much water can a condom hold before bursting? (This shows how strong they are). And how fast can you put a condom on a condom demonstrator after being spun around and blindfolded? (This shows how you need to be sober to use a condom effectively). A fun lesson with a serious message.

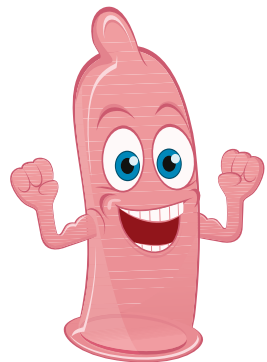
Alice Hoyle IS HEAD OF PSHE AT A NORTH LONDON COMPREHENSIVE

101. Accentuate the positive

Ages 7 to 11

This is a useful activity to introduce work on bullying and self-esteem. The children trace the outlines of their outstretched hands on a sheet of A3 paper. After a class discussion on what constitutes a positive statement, children are asked to write a series of positive statements about themselves on to one of the hands. The prompt for this is: "The thing I like about me is..." Then the children move around the room quietly to record a positive statement about each other on the blank hands. It is important that all statements are positive. The prompt for this is: "The thing I like about you is..." Class discussion can then centre on issues such as: "What do you write if you don't really like the person? How can you respond if a person has only a few statements?"

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