

The Games We Play

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PERICULUM

USES:

-This game is a version of Jeopardy. It has several different categories in countless variations and therefore may be used to strengthen or review the students' mastery of numerous subject areas. Although it may be used on a variety of occasions, this broad spectrum makes this game ideal before major tests.

PREPARATION:

-Choose five to six categories with a good mix of topics and formulate inventive titles for each. Sample categories might include: "Translation Station" (phrases or short sentences for translation), "Devious Derivatives" (derivatives whose origin may not be immediately apparent), "Vocab Goes Solo" (vocabulary taken out of context), "Perilous Principal Parts" (principal parts of verbs that are especially tricky or easily confused) or "Cornelian Potpourri" (a mixed bag of questions about the Cornelius family and their exploits).

-Using 3x5 cards, write up five to six questions per category, one question per card, but this will vary depending upon the size of your class and the length of your game. Remember to write the category heading on the top of each index card. (N.B.: Unlike *Jeopardy*, the individual questions here do not carry different point values, and thus it is not necessary for you to construct questions of gradually increasing difficulty. However, do not feel as though you need to make all questions equally challenging. Part of the fun of this game is the unexpected, and students in my classes are very aware of the "luck of the draw".)

RULES OF PLAY:

-Having explained the rules to the class, divide the students into two groups, labeling the groups Team A and Team B.

-Have each group form their desks into a tight circle, making sure that the two groups are spread an ample distance apart.

-Select one student from each group to begin and explain that you will be moving clockwise around the circles.

-Beginning with Team A, address the first question to this "chosen" student. Before asking the question, share the category with the student. (To ensure a

random effect in the game, shuffle your index cards, but make certain that the various categories are mixed throughout.)

-Upon hearing the category, the student then elects whether she wishes to answer the question on her own or with the help of her groupmates. Note that she has not yet heard the question, only the category!

-Once the student has made her decision, ask the question. The student or team has one minute to formulate an answer and no writing instruments or supplementary materials may be used. If the student has elected to get help from the group, she nevertheless has final say and must be the one to deliver the final answer. If the answer is correct, the team earns two points for an individual answer or one point for a group answer, and then it is Team B's turn to play.

-At this point you would begin with the "chosen" student on Team B, reading the category, allowing him to make his choice, waiting for an answer, and then back to Team A, to the student sitting to the left (clockwise) of the "chosen" student.

-Play continues in this manner, moving clockwise around the circles and rotating between the two teams. Each student will have the opportunity to hear a question category and decide whether to ask his teammates for help or to go it alone. Depending on time and the number of question cards, you may move more than once around the circles.

-The only time that there is any change in play is when an answer is incorrect. Let us suppose that the third student on Team A answered his question incorrectly. If the answer is incorrect (whether the student answered this question alone or with his group), the question is then passed on to the opposing team, in this case, Team B. Team B now has the opportunity to come up with an answer as a group. If they are correct, they earn one point for their team; if they are incorrect, they have lost nothing. Regardless of the outcome, it is now player three on Team B's turn and play resumes.

-The "goal" of the game is to earn the most points, and the winning team receives some sort of prize, e.g. a piece of candy, a bonus on the test, etc.

BASEBALL

USES:

-This game roughly follows the idea of our great American pastime. It allows for a wide variety of questions, making the game quite adaptable and especially suited for review before comprehensive tests and exams.

PREPARATION:

-Find a fairly good-sized open space to play this game, either clearing all the desks to the sides of the classroom or moving to a more open area in the school.

-Using plain sheets of white paper, lay out your bases in the typical diamond.

-Ensure access to a board or newsprint to keep track of the score.

-Develop questions in any type of category that you would like, and divide them into five categories: single, double, triple, homerun, and base-stealer. (I suggest at least fifteen questions in each category, more for singles and base-stealers.)

-These categories are similar to point values in *Jeopardy*, i.e. singles would be the easiest questions and homeruns would be the most difficult (in fact, these should be very difficult questions that would challenge even your most capable students). The base-stealer category, however, should be somewhat of a hodgepodge, with questions of all levels of difficulty.

RULES OF PLAY:

-Having explained the directions, divide the class into two teams.

-Have the "at-bat" team arrange themselves in a batting line-up that will be maintained throughout the game.

-Assign the "fielding" team to the following roles: first, second, and third basemen and score-keeper. Clearly not everyone in the field will have a role, but positions will be rotated each "inning".

-Play the role of pitcher yourself, standing in the center of the room at the "mound".

-Have each player at bat select whether they would like to try for a single, double, triple, or homerun.

-Then read the question, giving her one minute to answer.

-If she gets the answer correct, she proceeds to the appropriate base. If she is incorrect, her turn is over and her team now has one "out". As in real baseball, there are three outs per team per inning.

-Play continues as usual as long as the at-bat players are answering questions correctly, and, as each player makes it to home base, his team earns a point.

-If an at-bat player is incorrect, however, the player or players on base must try to steal. Let us suppose that Team A has a player on first base. Their next batter gets the answer incorrect, and therefore this player at first base must now try to steal second. This is when your base-stealer questions come into play. Read one such question to both the player and the first baseman of Team B. Whoever answers correctly first wins. If it is the batter, he proceeds to second base and is one step closer to home plate. If it is the first baseman, his team (Team B) gets a "double-play", the batter from Team A is out, and Team A now has two outs. Every player on base must try to steal each time a member of their team answers a "pitch" incorrectly.

-Play continues in this fashion, rotating through the batting line-ups and field positions, through a set number of innings.

-The team with the most points at the end wins and receives an appropriate reward.

PILA CALIDA

USES:

-This game is a variation of Hot Potato. While it only reviews one grammatical concept at a time, it is adaptable for many different content areas. In addition to principal parts, this may be used with declining nouns, conjugating verbs, verb synopses, vocabulary, participle or infinitive charts, etc.

-The great advantage of this game is that, as it requires no real preparation, it may be played on the spur of the moment or in those last five or ten minutes of class

PREPARATION:

-Find a fairly good-sized open space to play this game, either clearing all the desks to the sides of the classroom or moving to a more open area in the school.

-Provide a small (preferably Nerf) ball.

-Provide a source for music. (optional)

RULES OF PLAY:

-Arrange the students so that they are standing in a good-sized circle.

-Choose a category for play, e.g. principal parts.

-Start the game by tossing the ball to a student and shouting out the definition of one Latin verb (e.g. to love).

-This student catches the ball and then must immediately say the first principal part of the verb (amo).

-He then chooses a new person to whom he will toss the ball, etc., moving through the four principal parts.

-The student who answers the fourth principal part selects the new verb.

-If a student hesitates, does not know an answer, or answers incorrectly, she is "out" and sits in the middle of the circle.

-When the next student gets "out", the student inside the circle can attempt to rejoin the group by answering this form correctly.

-You may simply play in this manner, or you may bring an extra twist into the game with the addition of music. In this instance, you will play music (somewhat softly) in the background during play. At random moments during the game, you will stop the music and whoever is holding the ball is "out". This adds a little extra challenge to the game and helps ensure swift answers and movement of the ball because no one wants to be stuck with the ball when the music goes off.