

Brain Storming Activities:

I use a **beach ball** to help children begin to get their ideas flowing. Any unusual prop seems to keep children guessing- the more you can keep them guessing, the more you can keep them thinking. I use the beach ball to get them categorizing ideas. Writing a story is a lot like categorizing.

Procedure:

Teacher starts with the ball- names a category. Ex. COLORS, the ball is tossed to a student who can only name a color. The ball is then tossed back to the teacher, this continues as the category is changed often, the children have to listen and keep up with the changing category.

Categories:

Categories can be the following: delicious foods, disgusting foods, favorite music group, something to do in the winter, or something to do in the summer.

Keep the ideas and categories exciting and fresh. These activities will also allow children to stretch their minds. Use the ball as a prop to get children to answer other various questions such as: "What kind of animal would you become"? "What's your best friend's name"? etc.

Notes:

Mr. Potato Head

I like to use this prop to encourage listing skills and to also keep the children on their toes. They have to use teamwork in getting the potato head around the room appropriately. This object can be used to solicit strong verbs, adjectives, more specific nouns etc.

Notes:

Strong Verbs:

Strong Verbs can also get children moving in the classroom!!
TASK CARDS: Children can practice math skills, language arts, brainstorming skills, and physical skills all in this one activity!!
Write out task cards on index cards or sentence strips. Ex. I can pretend to hit a ball (8-1) _____ times. The student must get rid of the boring word “hit” replace it with an exciting

word (smack, whack, etc) and figure out the number of times(7).
Finally they act out the task.

Other Samples:

1. I like to walk (2+7) _____ times around my desk.
2. I try to eat (4+4)_____ hamburgers.

Notes:

Specific Ideas:

Line up two teams and let players face one another. The teacher or the leader is accessible to center. A topic is given and each player must respond quickly with a specific idea. Ex. SPORTS (topic) football, soccer, baseball, etc. The teacher proceeds down the middle alternating sides until someone stops or hesitates, at that point they must step back and their team line tightens. The team with the most players in the end wins. This will encourage students to think quickly and specifically. Writing means being as specific as possible. General ideas don't relay much, but specific thoughts can create great pictures in the readers mind. (A main idea is a general idea, but details help create specific ideas)
Example Topics: dogs, desserts, flowers, etc.

*** In order for readers to find main ideas in stories, they must first be able to distinguish between general and specific ideas.

Notes:

Word Webbing:

Using word webs/thinking maps can be lots of fun if you do it in such a way that sets the foundation for games. Allow a child to face a chalk board or chart paper(that student is the “reader”). Another student faces the audience and is the “writer”- an object is taken from the “Mystery Box”. Students begin thinking of sparkle words or adjectives that will describe what the object looks like. For example, if the object in the box were a bunny, the sparkle word would be “furry, long ears, huge feet, and lives in a hole”. A circle map is drawn on the board and is filled in as the students begin thinking of rich details.

Notes:

Reading Rich Text:

This is a great way to get children brainstorming. Ex. Book, Pickle Things by Marc Brown-The Adventures of Series by Kimberly P. Johnson. Ex. Questions, What are other “pickle” things that you wouldn’t see. Make up your own “things” stories. Itty Bitty books: If you were only two inches tall what are some things that you could do that you’re too big to do now? Finding rich text will allow your early readers to begin thinking about things that they could write about too. After selecting a great story allow the students to follow the pattern of the writer and create their own piece of work. Poems work great for these types of activities. Start off simple and build up to a great activity filled with rich and creative ideas.

Notes:

Poetry Club:

Give children a simple poem to learn by memory. Doing these kinds of activities will help keep the mind sharp. Though a lot of information is right at hand now, children need to still learn how to exercise their brain with memorization!!

** Have the children learn the poem, maybe 2-3 lines (more based on ability). Once the child learns the poem write it on a note card and have the students write their name on the top of the card. Keep it in an index file. Periodically allow children to break up into their “poetry clubs” and share new interesting poetry with their classmates. Give children a skeleton poem to start with, as they progress creatively, they can create their own poetry ex.

Happiness feels like _____, Smells like _____,
Tastes like _____, Looks like _____ ect.

*** Children love telling you what they don't like!! Capitalize on that by having them write or draw the things they don't like. Share the following poem to set up the activity:

I Don't like Don't, I Don't, I Don't!!!

I hear a million don'ts a day

No matter what I do, they say

“Now don't do this

And don't do that

Don't interrupt

Don't tease the cat

Don't bite your nails

Don't slam the door,

Don't leave those messes on the floor

Don't shout

Don't fight

Don't spill your food

Now don't talk back

And don't be rude”

I don't like don't, one bit

Look! Now they've got me saying it

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Sentence Completion Exercise

Finish each of the following sentences in any way you wish.
You will not hand this sheet in.

1. I secretly wish _____
2. What worries me _____
3. In the evening _____
4. I want _____
5. I fear _____
6. I get angry when _____
7. My best friend _____
8. If only I could _____
9. I would eventually _____
10. I wish I could forget _____
11. I don't know why _____
12. A decade from now I _____
13. The thing that bothers me about myself is _____
14. it is hard for me to _____
15. Compared to my friends, I _____
- 16 My looks are _____