

Easy to Use Whole Group Games & Activities for Teaching Math & Language Arts

Presented By Heidi Butkus Email: heidi@heidisongs.com

These are all activities that can be done with one teacher, with no help and a full class of approximately 20-30 students. I usually have 22-24 students in my full day Kindergarten class that I teach in Southern California in a Title One school. Some of these activities can be done with two classes at once, with double the amount of children!

The Quiet Game

This may be the silliest game ever! But I use it nearly every day; no teacher should be without it!

What you need:

1. Your teacher chair.
2. A DISTRACTION that pulls you away from teaching your class for a minute or two- like a child wetting his pants, or a parent that MUST talk to you right away, in private!

How to play:

1. Choose one child to be the "starter." This child gets to sit in your teacher chair and chooses the quietest person in the room.
 - * Boys must pick girls, and girls must pick boys. No "pick backs" allowed!
 - * No "stalling" allowed; (you can't just sit there and pick no one, or the teacher will choose for you.)
2. The person that gets chosen by the starter gets to be the next leader. He gets to sit in the teacher chair and picks the next quietest person to sit in the teacher chair.

The end of the game:

When you are done managing your DISTRACTION: have the person in the chair choose someone to start the game next time. Don't let the person in the chair be the starter next time, or kids may sit and "stall," refusing to choose someone- usually because they hope to be the starter next time!



Whole Group Bang

What you need:

Flash cards for any concept, some with the word, "Bang!" on them.

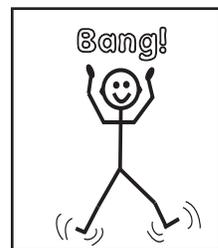
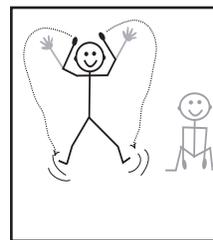
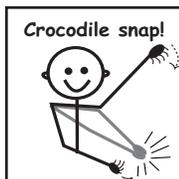
How to play:

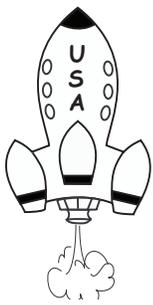
Drill the kids on the flash cards. When the word, "Bang!" comes up, they sit down. The next time it comes up, they stand up, etc.

Variations on Whole Group Bang:

Change the motion to something else, such as spin around, growl like a tiger, or snap like a crocodile.

Change the word bang to "Kablooie!" and have the kids explode and fall down.



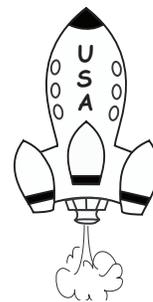


Blast Off!

This game plays similarly to Whole Group Bang, but you change the picture to a rocket and the word to "Blast Off!" Every time the card comes up, the whole class, including the teacher, turns 90 degrees to the right, and continues drilling in this new position.

The end of the game:

The game is over when you run out of cards. Whoever winds up in the "first" row is the winner!



Whole Group Memory

What you need:

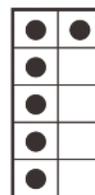
Flashcards for any concept, such as CVC words and matching pictures, and a pocket chart.

How to play:

Put the cards face down on the pocket chart and have the kids come up one at a time and try to match them up.

Variations on Whole Group Memory

- Match numerals and numbers. Use ten frames and flash cards.
- Practice sight words by matching two of the same sight words written in different fonts.



The ten frames are a free download on my website, heidisongs.com.

The Old Switcheroo

What you need:

A hundreds pocket chart, or numbers on a pocket chart up to 10, 20, or 30.

How to play:

Have the kids hide their eyes. Meanwhile, switch two numbers on the chart. Have the children guess which numbers were changed. Give the children clues to help find the correct numbers if they cannot figure it out.

Variations on The Old Switcheroo:

You could play this game with letters of the alphabet as well, or even by switching two children's seats!



Music and Movement to Review Academic Concepts

What you need:

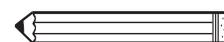
Music with an academic focus that you can move to, or DVD's of the same.

Whenever your kids cannot sit any longer, stand them up and keep teaching through music and movement! My favorite titles to try: Sing and Spell the Sight Words, (Look for specific words you need on vols. 1-5), Musical Math, Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds, Jumpin' Numbers and Shakin' Shapes, Vols. 1 & 2, Little Songs for Language Arts. (CD's and DVD's available at www.heidisongs.com)

You can also have the kids write the words while the songs play. We do this about every one or two weeks.



Draw a Story



Kids LOVE stories that you tell while you draw a simple picture!

What you need: Books by Richard Thompson, including Frog's Riddle and Other Draw and Tell Stories.

Kids will ask to hear these stories again and again! So it is worth the time to figure out how they go.

There is one free one that I made up posted on my blog. It's on the January 20, 2012 entry.

Audience Participation Stories With Sound Effects or Movements

For stories like this, google "audience participation stories, and you will find many choices. Or, add the sounds and movements to your own books that you read. Just pause when you come to those words, and wait for the kids to make those sounds or movements. This works well with any story that has repetitive sections.

Example: When you hear the word, "Mayflower ship," everyone say, "Splash!"

Example: When you hear the words, "sick," or "died," say, "Oh, no!"

Thanksgiving Sound Effect story free on my blog: <http://heidisongs.blogspot.com/> on the Nov. 19, 2010 entry. Martin Luther King Sound Effects Story: Jan. 4, 2011.



Erase a Rhyme

Draw a picture on a white board or chalk board, and then tell a rhyming phrase. A child comes up and erases the part of the picture that rhymes with that part.

Example:

Give a cheer! Erase the ____.

If you like to sing, erase a ____.

You can try; erase the ____.

If you can't stay put, erase a ____.

There is a free "Erase a Rhyme" download on my blog: <http://heidisongs.blogspot.com/> on the July 20, 2010 entry. And there are lots of these FREE at : <http://www.jmeacham.com/erase.htm>

... and MANY other websites! Just google it.



Rhyming Riddle Poems

This book, 201 Thematic Riddle Poems to Build Literacy, by Betsy Franco has lots and lots of cute little poems and riddles that use rhyme to help children guess the answer. Published by Scholastic.

Example:

"Which shape am I?

A pizza, a clock,

A bicycle wheel,

I have no sides,

But I'm for real. I'm a _____."

(Answer: circle)

I spy:

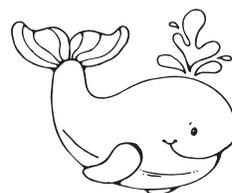
I spy with my little eye

a mammal with a spout.

It's bigger than my grandma's car.

It swims to get about.

I spy a _____. (Answer: whale)



The Queen Game

Kids

Queen

What you need:

A whiteboard, and flash cards for any concept, or even just a word wall, or questions in your head!

To keep track of points:

Draw some pictures of the kids on the board and label it, and a picture of you on the board with a crown on your head and label it.

How to play:

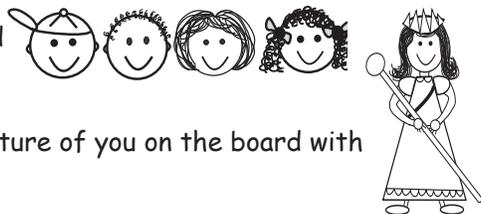
Drill the kids on the concept that you want to work on, one child at a time.

* If a child gets it right, the kids get a point. If not, the queen gets a point.

* The queen also gets a point if a child tells the answer when it is not his turn, or breaks any other rule.

* But the queen also gets a point if she is in a bad mood, or if her foot itches, or if she needs a drink of water!

* The queen always loses, and cries dramatically! The queen is a poor sport. The children usually find this to be quite hilarious! Optional: Wear a plastic tiara while playing. :)



Whole Group Hangman

What you need:

A whiteboard, a word wall, or words on a pocket chart.

Draw:

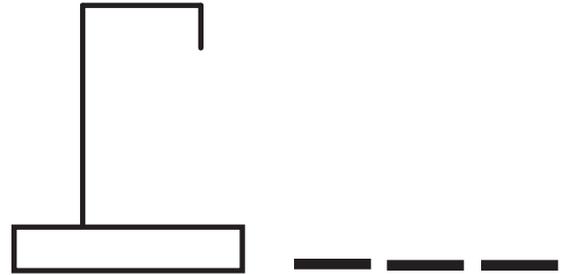
A gallows, and a line for each letter in your word.

Choose:

A word from your word wall or pocket chart.

Variations:

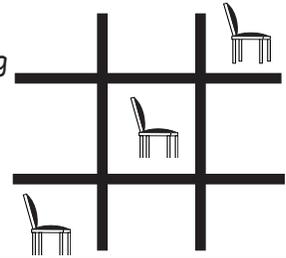
You can play a non-violent version by drawing the parts of a cat, pumpkin, snowman, bunny, pig, etc., instead of a dying man, of course!



Whole Group Tic Tac Toe

You can play this on a white board, and have the children read a word before placing an X or an O on the board. Kids love to play boys against girls!

You can also play this "live" by placing nine chairs in the middle of the room, and having the kids sit in the chair where they would want their X or O placed.

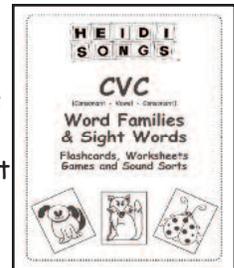


Whole Group Checkers

One year, some of my brighter boys were really "into" playing checkers during playtime. But many children did not know how to play. So I put self-adhesive velcro on a checker board and on the markers and taught the class to play! Just set the checker board on an easel and play boys against girls.

CVC Activities

There are many activities coming up that are demonstrated with resources from HeidiSongs CVC Word Families and Sight Words book, but can be played with any flash cards you have on hand. This book is available at www.heidisongs.com. There are flashcards that can be used for word matching and sound sorting, and other types of activities that can be practiced whole group. There are also small sized cards that can be sent home for homework practice, and matching worksheets for the same.



Hop To It

What you need:

Pairs of flash cards, like CVC words and pictures that match. You need one card per child. If there is an odd number of children, then you play, too.

How to play:

Each child holds his or her card on his chest and when the music starts, they begin hopping around the room, looking for the person with the card that matches theirs. When they find their partner, they stop hopping and hold hands with him or her.

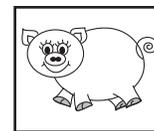
Variations on Hop To It:

* Use pairs of sight word cards and have the children find the person that has the same word that they have. Or, match pictures and letters, or numerals and dots.

(The "Counting to 100" song that they were hopping around to is on my Jumpin' Numbers and Shakin' Shapes CD from HeidiSongs.com.)



big



pig



dig

Guided Drawing

Guided drawing is a GREAT whole group activity, and can easily keep a group of four and five year olds happily engaged for a good 20-25 minutes!

What you need:

An easel, some simple drawings to copy, paper, black fine tip markers or crayons, and a place for everyone to work where they can easily see you while they draw. I save a sample of each year's lesson and refer back to it to help me remember what I drew and how I drew it. I have the kids sit on the floor and use large pieces of cardboard to write on. We do seasonal drawings and drawings of things that we were learning about.

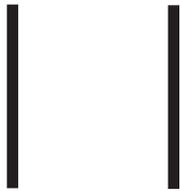
The trick to guided drawing is to relate what you are drawing to a shape they already know how to make.



* An arch is a "rainbow." An upside down arch is a "smile."



* A pointed top can be like a "capital A without a line in it."



* A half circle can be like a letter C.

* Two parallel lines can be a number 11.



I try to use the letters and numbers that the children already know to reference shapes that the children can use in their drawings.

How to Draw David Shannon's "No, David!"

* Draw a circle for the head, big enough for the eyes, nose, and mouth.

* Make a letter C on each side of the head for ears.

* Draw two dots for the nostrils. Then put a triangle around it. The triangle is like the big A, with the line on the bottom.

* Draw two dots for the eyes. Make two lines going in for his eyebrows. Draw little lines on his head for hair. Make a big smile with a lid on it for the mouth. Add triangle teeth.

* Make a number 11 for the neck.

* Draw a circle tummy. Draw two lines going down for each leg. Put a "lid" on each pair of lines for the bottom of his pants.

* Draw circle shoes. Put a number eight on the shoes for shoe laces. Make a line above the shoes for the socks.

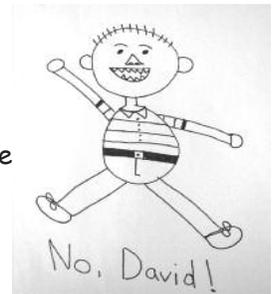
* Draw two lines going out for each arm. Put a lid on them. Make two circle hands. Put two lines on the arms for the sleeves of his striped shirt.

* Make two lines very close together on his tummy for the belt. Make a number 11 in the middle for the buckle. Now color in the belt with your black marker. Don't color in the number 11. That's the buckle.

* Make some lines on the shirt for the stripes. Don't make more than 3-4 lines.

Possible topics and titles for a class book:

David Goes to School, David Goes to the Library, David Visits the Computer Lab, David Goes on a Field Trip, etc.



CVC Word Sorting

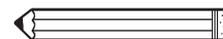
Sorting the words whole group is also a good activity, but is not really a game. Kids can sort by sound only by using just the pictures or by matching the words and pictures. I tried to do this at least once a week, and for sure every time I introduced a new word family.

Word Wall Word Whackers

Give two kids a word whacker. Tell them to find a word and whack it. The first person to whack it gets to choose the next two whackers. The kids choose a name by pulling a name stick. I use an old Nestle's Quik container to keep my name sticks in.



Write the Walls



What you need:

Each child needs a clipboard or a book to write on, and a piece of paper. Their job is to write as many words as they can and read them to somebody. The kids really love this activity! We had a special "Write the Walls" paper made up for them, but they really don't need one.

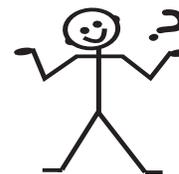
What's in My Pocket?

What you need:

Some small toys that can fit in children's pockets, and a bunch of kids!

How to play:

Have the children bring something from home that fits into their pocket, (or give them each something when it is their turn.) Ask them to give the class a hint as to what might be in their pocket without giving it away. The rest of the class should take turns guessing.



War: Boys Against Girls

What you need:

Number cards from 0-30 (or the number of your choice!)

How to play:

Choose a boy and a girl to come forward and take a number. Let the children decide which number is greater. That team gets both cards.

The game ends when:

One team has all of the cards.



Variations:

The winner of each round is the number that is LESS rather than more. OR, spin a spinner each time to see which is the winner: more, or less? (It will never be equal if you give them only one of each number.)

Count Around

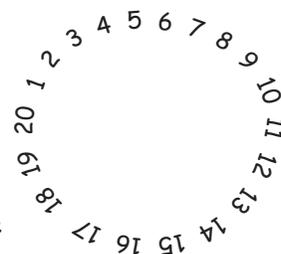
What you need:

Nothing! Just a bunch of kids, and you!

How to play:

Everyone stands in a big circle or square, and someone begins counting with number one. Every time a child gets to a multiple of ten, then he or she must sit down and is out. (When you get to 100, you can either keep counting or start over.) The last child standing is the winner.

To make the game go faster: Have the kids sit on the fives and tens.



The Bowl Game

What you need:

A bowl that you can't see through, and some blocks.

How to play:

Put some blocks under the bowl. Make sure the kids see how many you put under it. Then they hide their eyes. You move some of the blocks out from under the bowl, and put them next to the bowl. The kids must guess how many are left under the bowl.

Hint:

Make sure that you start with small quantities of blocks to ensure success, and then work up to the larger numbers slowly.



We have three balls.



How many are under the bowl?



Clothesline Number Line

What you need:

A rope, some clothespins, and some number cards. You also need a way to string the rope up in your classroom.

Variations on the Clothesline Activity:

Use alphabet or number cards and put them in order, or put word cards in alphabetical order.



More or Less Mix-Up

What you need:

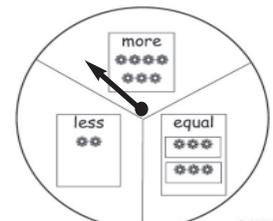
Some number cards in quantities of your choice, and a spinner with "more" on one side and "less" on the other side. This spinner is from ReallyGoodStuff.com. You can write on it with a dry erase marker, or use post-it note tape (as shown.)

To play:

Give every child a number and start some music. When the music stops, the children must freeze. Pull a name stick, and that child comes forward with his or her number. Everyone else must place themselves either to the right of the number if their number is more, to the left of the number if it is less, or next to the leader if it is equal. Then, spin to see if more, less, or equal is the winner!

Hint:

To make this game easier, keep the quantities smaller, and put the corresponding dots on the cards as well.



More, Less, and Equal Spinner

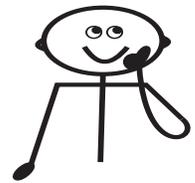
Guess My Rule

What you need:

Something that can be sorted, especially things that are larger, such as the children's shoes, lunch boxes, or backpacks. Fun to do with teddy bears on Pajama Day!

How to play:

Have everyone sit in a circle and silently watch you as you sort the objects into two piles. After a minute or two, ask children if anyone can guess how you are sorting. Have them explain their reasoning.



What Time Is It, Mr. Fox?



What you need:

-A big grassy field with lots of room to run, plenty of energy and good running shoes!

The set up:

The kids line up on one side of the grass, preferably along a fence. The teacher is on the other side of the grass.

How to play:

The kids call out, "What time is it, Mr. Fox?" The teacher answers, for example, "5 o'clock."

So the kids take five steps forward, towards the teacher. Again, the kids call out, "What time is it Mr.

Fox?" The teacher answers again, choosing any random number from 1-11 o'clock. AGAIN, the kids call

out, "What time is it, Mr. Fox?" Finally, the teacher answers, "12 O'CLOCK MIDNIGHT!!!!!!!" The kids all

scream and "try" to run past the teacher. The teacher tries to catch the children. Anyone who gets

tagged must join the teacher and help be a fox. **The game ends when:** the last child is caught.

I Have... Who Has...?

What you need:

"I Have, Who Has?" cards, and a bunch of kids.

How to play:

Have everyone stand around a circle or square. Pass out the cards so

that everyone has one. If there are extras you must take them, so that all the cards are passed out.

Hint: The children place the cards at their feet on the floor face up, so you can see them. That way, if the game stalls, you can help.

The object of the game: To see how fast the whole class can get through the deck.

I have 5. Who has 2?

I have 2. Who has 9?

I have 9. Who has 1?

The Calendar Book



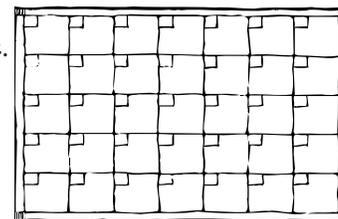
This is not a game, but a daily activity that can be done whole group. The chil-

children have their own calendar books that they fill in as you update the class calendar. The Calendar Book can have as few or as many pages in it as you like.

The general idea is that it starts out simple near the beginning of the year,

and then you add a new component each month. Of course, the more components you add to it, the longer it takes a class to complete it. So you can

"tweak it" to make it last as long as you want it to last.



Shari Sloane's website, www.kidscount1234.com, has lots of calendar book pages that you can download free! But since the her clip art is usually copyrighted, she had to strip most of the better artwork off.

There are some pages done for you that you can download from my blog at <http://heidisongs.blogspot.com>.

They are in several different entries, so search the blog under "Calendar Book" to find them. Some are also posted on the "Free Downloads" page of my website, www.heidisongs.com.

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