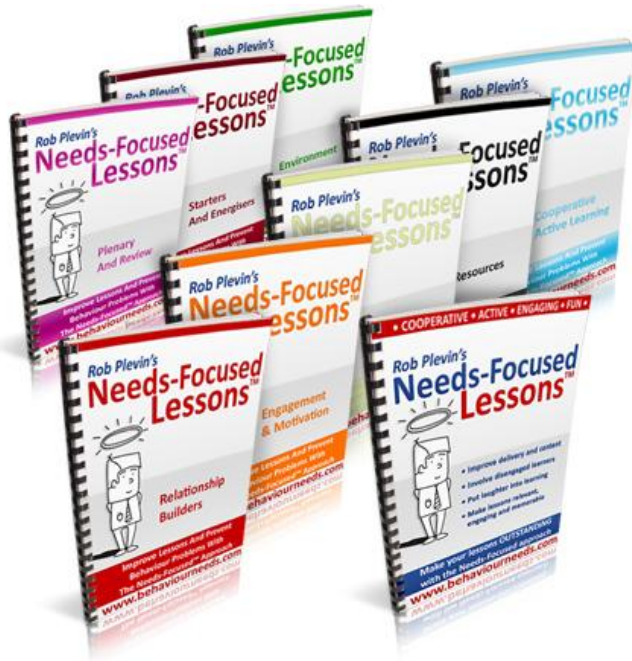


Needs Focused Lessons™

Sample Pack



**Activities & resources to make lessons ACTIVE,
COOPERATIVE, ENGAGING & FUN**

Hello,

We've put this sample pack together to give you a taste of the materials and resources we provide in our full **Needs Focused Lessons™** resource pack and to give you a range of handy ready-to-go ideas to brighten up lessons. On the back page we'll tell you all about the full pack and give you a special code to get a discount on the full price.

I hope you and your students enjoy the activities - just as thousands of others already have.

Best wishes,

Behaviour Needs Team

www.behaviourneeds.com

Other available products

Needs-Focused Lessons

<http://www.needsfocused.com/needsfocusedlessons>

Take Control of the Noisy Class

<http://www.needsfocused.com/noisyclass/noisyclass.html>

Take Control of the Noisy Class LIVE UK WORKSHOP

<http://www.needsfocused.com/noisyclassworkshop>

Team Maker

<http://www.needsfocused.com/team-maker>

Needs-Focused Classroom Management

<http://www.needsfocused.com/distance-learning/>

Everyone Wins Bingo

<http://www.needsfocused.com/every-one-wins-bingo/>

MOTIVATE Your Disinterested Students

<http://www.needsfocused.com/motivating>

Free Classroom Management Mini-course

<http://www.behaviourneeds.com>

Starters and Openers

It doesn't take much to ensure a lesson fails. In fact, you can do it before the pupils get through the door. A frown, some harsh words and over-the-top warnings are usually sufficient to send the mood of your typical pupil plummeting and have them conclude that the next 50 minutes are going to be a thoroughly miserable experience for all concerned.

But let's assume you've worked hard to establish a warm and welcoming tone at the door and the students trudge through to their seats with a reasonably positive outlook. They sit down full of hope and expectation – eager to discover what you've got planned for them.

“What are we doing today Sir?”

The success of the lesson now depends largely on your starter or opening activity and it could go one of two ways. If you manage to hook them and arouse their natural curiosity about some new concept you have a good chance of leading them into a successful learning experience, cementing your already-positive relationship with them and chalking up another 'win'. On the other hand, if your choice of opener fails to grab them, it is likely you'll spend the next hour doing nothing but sort out problems.

You need a strong opening or starter activity

Remember the saying 'You never get a second chance to make a first impression'? Whoever wrote it was obviously aware of the sheer carnage often created as a result of a poor lesson opener.

If you lose your pupils in the first 2 minutes you'll spend the next 58 minutes trying to get them back. Lose them half way through the lesson and it's a bit easier to re-focus them but unless you get their attention from the outset, the rest of the lesson is going to be, at best, very difficult. In the full version of **Needs Focused Lessons™** we include **more than FIFTY** engaging generic starter activities which can be applied to any lesson topic. Just like the following samples...

Generic Starter 1:**‘What’s in the Bag?’**

Number of people: Unlimited

Age group: Any

Materials: Prop related to the lesson content together with a suitable bag or container.

Time: 10 minutes

Overview: A lesson-related prop is hidden in a bag or container. Pupils have to guess what’s inside. Younger pupils may enjoy this as a regular routine (“What’s in the bag **today?**”) but older pupils also enjoy it as an occasional warm up. It relies on intrigue and may fall flat if the prop doesn’t live up to the hype which the game naturally generates – so take care to choose a suitable prop.

Directions:

1. Write on the board *‘You have 20 chances to guess what’s in the bag’*.
2. Explain to pupils that they can volunteer to ask a question to try and determine what’s in the bag. Questions can only be those which have a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, ie they can ask “is it blue?” but not “what colour is it?”
3. Write their questions down on the board one at a time to keep track of the total number asked and to avoid repeated questions. Answer them “Yes” or “no” and put a tick or a cross next to the question. (I always like to have two noise effects for right and wrong answers to add to the humorous atmosphere... a kazoo or duck call for wrong answers and a bugle horn or quiz master’s bell for right answers. Be sure to carry an even-tempered duck if you choose this route.)
4. Tension mounts once their questions are into double figures as they realise they might not succeed – particularly when you tell them they will get extra homework if they don’t get the right answer!

Generic Starter 37:**Box BINGO**

Overview: A great way to keep students focused during the lesson.

Number of people: Groups of two to four.

Materials: One empty cardboard box per group, paper, tape and pens.

Time: Around 5 minutes to start – carrying on through the lesson.

Directions:

1. Teacher writes the lesson title on the board and presents students with a list of twenty to thirty simple questions about the topic which are likely to be answered during the lesson. The questions are pre-written – either on a slide or sheet of paper, and given to each group to look at.
 2. Each student in each group must pick ONE question (to which they don't know the answer) from the list and write it on his/her sheet of paper. They then stick their question to one of the box sides. As there are six sides to a box, some students get to write more than one question.
 3. The teacher should try to keep the question sheet in front of them during the lesson to monitor which questions are asked as the lesson progresses, but the idea is that as soon as a question is answered, any student who has written this down on their team's box should write the answer on the box, under their question.
- When a team's questions have all been answered they can stand and shout "Box!" (or any other suitably-entertaining word).
4. A joke trophy could be awarded to the winning team (eg, a gold, spray-painted box mounted on a plinth) to create a ceremony and this could be used as a regular way of keeping students focused on the lesson topic.



Generic Starter 38:

Question Bags

Overview: Continuing with our packaging theme, here's a nice little activity to stimulate group discussion in an active format.

Number of people: Groups of up to 5 students.

Materials: Paper bags, pens and 'answer slips' (strips of card or paper).

Time: Around 5-10 minutes.

Directions:

1. Write a question on the outside of a paper bag and have enough bags for groups of four to five students – a different question on each bag. The bags should be sealed – with tape or staples – leaving a small slit wide enough to 'post' an answer slip into the bag.
2. One bag is issued to each group and students discuss their answer to the question. A designated member of the group writes the group's answer on a piece of card or paper with the group's name at the top so as to identify their answer later.
3. Bags are rotated between groups through three or four 'rounds'; ie, bags are passed from table to table so that each group gets a new bag with a new question to answer. They repeat the process of 'posting' their answer into the bag so that there are three to five different answers in each bag.
4. In the final round, each group rips open the bag they are given and they decide, as a group on the best answer before reading it out to the rest of the class. (If you have time to spare, you can leave a few days between steps 3 and 4 to simulate Royal Mail first-class post.)



Generic Starter 11:

Anagrams

Number of people: Unlit dime.

Materials: None essentially required although mini-whiteboards add an element of interaction to the game.

Time: 5-10 minutes.

Overview: A very quick and easy-to-set-up 'settling starter'. Students can work individually or in pairs to unravel keywords and phrases relevant to the lesson topic.

Directions:

1. Decide on a number of keywords and phrases and write them on the board in a scrambled format.
2. Given students a set time in which to decipher the letters and write down the answers.
3. When the time is up go through each puzzle in turn and ask students to write down their answer on their mini whiteboards and hold them up.

Early finishers could make up their own anagrams.

Here are a few to inspire creativity:

The meaning of life = ***The fine game of nil***

Mother-in-Law = ***Woman Hitler***

Eleven plus two = ***Twelve plus one***

Dame Agatha Christie = ***I am a right death case***

Desperation = ***A Rope Ends It***

The Morse Code = ***Here Come Dots***

Dormitory = ***Dirty Room***

The Earthquakes = ***That queer shake***

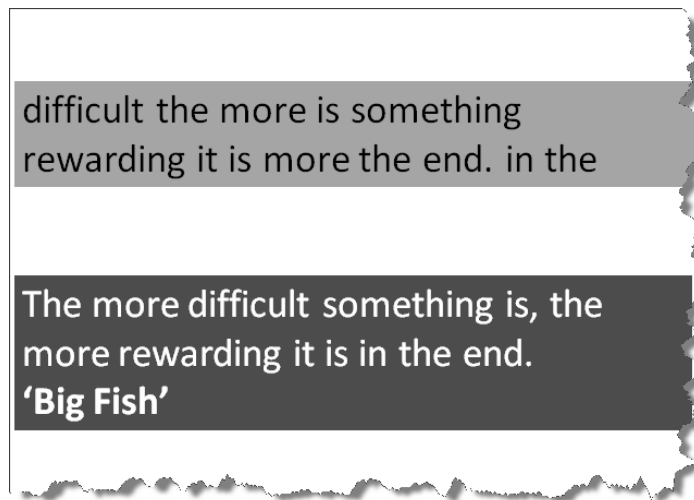
Slot Machines = ***Cash lost in 'em***

Snooze Alarms = ***Alas, No More Z's***

The Public Art Galleries = ***Large Picture Halls, I Bet***

That's One Small Step for a Man, One Giant Leap for Mankind =

Thin man ran; makes a large stride, left planet, pins flag on moon. On to Mars!

Generic Starter 29:**Jumbled Quotes and Phrases**

Number of people: Any number.

Materials: 'Jumbled Quotes and Phrases' game in your '**Interactive Whiteboard Downloads**' (full version of **Needs Focused lessons™** only)

Time: 10 - 15 minutes.

Overview: A very quick and easy to set up starter or fill-in which can easily be adapted to lesson content by changing the phrases in the game template slides. Students have to unscramble the words to find the hidden motivational phrase. The sample phrases/quotes in the download are suitable for use as discussion starters.

Directions:

1. The game is best played in teams of three-five.
2. Load the Power Point presentation – teams race to unscramble the phrase on each slide and write them down.
3. Phrases are discussed in turn.

Fill-ins and Fun Stuff

Fill-ins and games are an *incredibly* important part the Needs-focused™ Approach. During live training sessions on Classroom Management I always make the point that the best way to ensure engagement and minimize disruption during lessons is to have your students turning up for class in a *positive* frame of mind – actually looking forward to your lesson.

It's a lot easier *keeping* them in a positive state than it is to *make* them enjoy a lesson if they have already made their minds up that they are going to hate it. The **only** way to do this is to consistently give them a satisfying & rewarding lesson experience – by making appropriate/achievable tasks, cooperative/active learning and FUN an integral part of every lesson.

In the full version of **Needs Focused Lessons™** we include a highly exciting and novel collection of quirky 'puzzles', 'on-the-spot' games, 'fill-ins' and 'fun tips' which you can use with any group to fill five minutes, enhance learning, teach social skills or simply bring some hilarity to the lesson.

A resource bank of 'fill-in' activities can be a life-saver during those daunting times when a lesson starts to go wrong. At times like this, to avoid classroom chaos, you need to quickly change the tone of the lesson, grab every pupil's attention and collect your thoughts. Fill-ins are also a great way to infuse a lesson with positive emotions and cement teacher/pupil relationships.

Here is a small sample of the materials from this, my favourite, section...

Fun Tip 1**‘Puppets & Ventriloquists’ Dolls’**

Puppets are not only a great way to add humour to lessons - they can also help teach social skills, solve disagreements and enhance learning with any age group. Here are some ways to use puppets and ventriloquist dolls in your lessons...

1. Use specific puppets or dolls to teach the topic that they relate to.

The puppet can deliver an introduction, perform a demonstration, act as ‘host’ for a class quiz, take part in a Q & A or ‘Ask the Expert’ session etc.

- A doctor or nurse puppet can teach about human biology, diet, vitamins etc
- A ‘mad scientist’ puppet can teach science
- A farmer puppet can teach about the environment
- An alien puppet can teach about planets and the solar system
- Puppets from different countries or religious groups can talk about their life and beliefs

2. Use puppets as a classroom management aid

Young children often respond much more easily and positively to requests from a puppet. A puppet can also provide much-needed humour in highly charged, emotional situations. Think ‘Mr Punch’. ☺

3. Use puppets to solve disagreements between pupils

A puppet can be a very effective mediator in restorative practices asking questions such as:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking?
- How were you feeling?
- Who else has been affected by this?
- What do you need now so that the problem can be resolved?

4. Use puppets to develop pupils’ presentation and social skills

It can be far less daunting for a pupil to make a presentation by speaking ‘through’ or ‘to’ a puppet. Similarly, social skills can be practiced by ‘acting out’ or role-playing and using a puppet as one of the characters.

Fill-in 7:

Crazy Lists

Overview:

Creating lists is a great way to develop thinking skills, and when you make the lists a little crazy you add a little humour to the classroom too. As a quick fill-in, settling starter or relationship-building activity, this is a winner.

Number of People: Any group size – pupils work in pairs.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Materials: Paper/pens and a copy of the list headings for each learning pair.

Directions:

1. Divide the group into learning pairs and issue the materials.
2. Each pair is to pick two headings from the list and produce a 'Top Ten' under each heading.

Variation:

Stick three copies of each list heading on the board on separate pieces of card. Have one person from each learning pair come up to the board and select ONE heading to work on. When the learning pair have completed their first list they can then go back to the board to get a second heading.

List headings:

Crimes committed by Santa Claus
Things Homer Simpson would never do
Meals you would never find in a posh restaurant
Causes of broken biscuits
Things you can't buy
Flavours of crisp you can't buy
Interesting words beginning with 'J'.
What you shouldn't wear at the beach
Things you would miss if you were stuck on a desert island
Alternative words for 'money'
Ways to say 'Thank you'
Ways to show you're sorry

Fun Fill-in 16:

Caption Competition

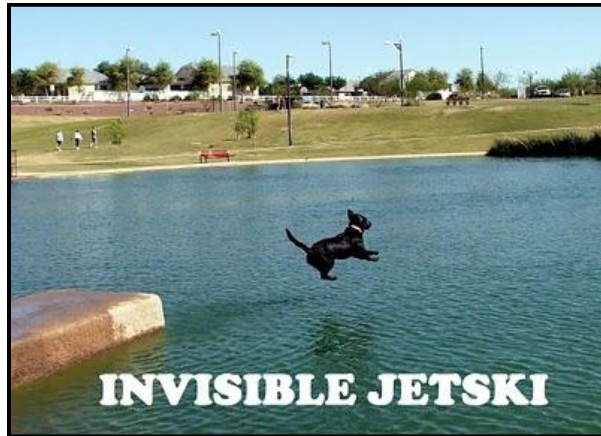
Number of people: Any.

Materials: A variety of funny pictures, easily obtainable from the billions on the web.

Time: 10 minutes.

Overview:

Some pictures are simply crying out to be adorned with speech bubbles, thought bubbles or silly titles. Students love to take part in this and the finished results can be a good way to decorate a tired area of wall space.



Directions:

1. Source suitable images from the net, newspapers or magazines. Doing a search for 'funny captions' using Google's 'image search' facility threw up the one above together with 660,000 others. The caption can easily be covered up or digitally removed if you prefer 'Hybrid dog/hovercraft launched' and have suitable software.
2. Put the image up on the board/wall and give students five minutes to work in pairs or groups to come up with the best caption and then share as a group.

Fun Tip 5:

A Touch of Magic (Mind Magic Part 1)

I first started using magic in lessons as a result of a unit of work I was doing with my class on Shakespeare. We had been studying Macbeth and their interest in the witches led to discussions on the paranormal, which naturally led to a lesson on magic and illusions which they enjoyed tremendously.

As a treat I decided to show them a few simple tricks I'd learned from a friend who ran a corporate entertainment business, and the response was just amazing. I couldn't believe how much interest there was in the group in tricks and illusions so I tried to show them at least one new trick each week. In time students were bringing their own tricks in to show the rest of the class and it became something of a ritual to have a (excuse the pun) 'magic moment' each week.

Invoking demons and making schools disappear are for advanced magic class only, but here is a suitable selection for the amateur practitioner.

Mind Trick 1: OTHER PEOPLE IN SCHOOL

Students of all ages love this first form of magic in which someone apparently reads the mind of another, or foretells events yet to come. You don't need to be psychic to do these tricks - you just need to know a few sneaky tricks. 😊

The illusion:

Hand out three slips of paper, and ask for three volunteers to help you. Two are to write the names of two students in the class on their slip. The third person is asked to write the name of a student from another class/year group in school.

The three slips are folded and placed in a hat, (without you touching them). You are then blindfolded, or the hat is held high over your head so that you cannot see into it. You are able to reach in and bring out the slip with name of the person in another class written on it.

How it's done:

This is a very easy trick. Take a sheet of note paper, and tear it into three pieces. The top and bottom pieces will have one smooth edge and one rough edge, but the centre piece will have two rough edges.

Make sure the person who is writing the name of the missing person writes on the centre slip while the other two students write the names of a student in their class on each of the other two slips. Have the slips folded and dropped into the hat.

When you reach into the hat, all you need to do is feel for the slip with two rough edges. When you have found it, don't bring it out right away. Have the students concentrate on the names they have written. Bring out the slip, still folded, and hold it against your head. Build up the suspense until you have created a mystery. Then reveal the slip in your hand as the one with the missing student's name. For added showbiz flair, leave the room while the names are being written (so that all the spectator students are aware of the names chosen), and then be led in blindfolded for a dramatic presentation.

Mind Trick 2: FAMOUS NAMES

The illusion:

Have members of the audience call out the names of about ten famous people, past or present. You can adapt this trick to curriculum by having students choose key words.

Each name/word is written on a separate card. The cards are then well mixed and you make a prediction on a pad of paper as to which card you think will be picked. A student selects one of the cards. He reads his selection aloud and the name you wrote on the pad is the same as the name read.

How it's done:

You will need ten small cards or a small pad of paper to write the names on and a hat. With everything at hand, ask someone to call out the name of a famous person/a key word associated with the lesson topic. Write this down on one of the cards and drop it into the hat. Ask for another name/word. This time do not write the name/word that is called, but write the *first* name/word that was called. Now both cards in the hat have the same name written on them. As different names/words are called you continue writing the original word on each card until you have about ten cards in the hat, all with the same word on them. Now write this word on the pad so that the audience does not see it.

Place the pad where it can be seen, but with the writing away from the audience. Invite a student to come up and assist you. Shake the hat to mix the cards. Ask the student to reach into the hat and select one of the cards, and read the word written on it, aloud. After he does this, turn the pad around to show that the name selected was the same as the one that you predicted on the slate. Be sure to destroy the slips after the trick, so that no one may see them.

Fun Fill-in 16:

The Golden Ticket



Number of people: Any.

Materials: A shiny, glittering, well-designed Golden Ticket and a book of raffle tickets.

Time: 5 minutes.

Overview:

The Golden Ticket creates the very moment of buzz, intrigue, excitement and expectation which gets students talking, puts a smile on their faces and has them returning to lessons in a great mood - thus doing no harm at all to your status as their favourite teacher.

I'm not a great fan of rewards because there is a danger of them being relied on as a behaviour management cure-all. When they are promised in advance of desired behaviour outcomes - 'do this and I'll give you this' - they are nothing more than bribes, and as such are worse than ineffective. But as a spontaneous, unexpected treats, they can be tremendous mood changers and motivators.

The Golden Ticket can be used to represent a huge variety of pleasurable experiences for your students, with the proud winner being even luckier than young Master Charlie Bucket himself. The lucky ticket holder could be entitled to:

- early lunch
- five minutes of a preferred activity such as: PC time, drawing, playing a game, eating a snack, having a cup of tea, watching a film etc. Texting is a surefire winner.
- a no-homework night!

Directions:

1. Issue a raffle ticket to every student then draw one from a hat. The winner gets the ticket.
2. If you prefer, give tickets out in return for good behaviour/participation. Try to make sure every student gets at least one raffle ticket before you make the draw. Obviously, the more raffle tickets an individual has earned, the more chance they have of winning.

Energisers

Energisers are generally quick activities designed to stimulate thinking, raise flagging energy levels or to spark motivation in an activity. They can be used at the beginning of a group session or class, as well as in the middle or at the end. They are also a wonderful way to build group cohesion and stimulate interaction because they depend on the group's cooperation, participation, and interest to complete the activity.

Please don't make the mistake of discounting energisers as a waste of time. You will waste far more time by having to deal with students who are bored, listless, lacking in energy and in need of an activity change. Energisers, when used appropriately, can maintain the attention of an otherwise troublesome class.

They also have the added bonus of helping boost memory. Physical activity – even in very short bursts - increases production of the memory fixatives norepinephrine and epinephrine, and triggers the release of glucose (which also supports memory functions) from glycogen stores in the liver.

Where possible, we try to include activities which will suit both a 'normal' class size (25-40 pupils) as well as smaller nurture/special groups (2-8 pupils). For a guideline as to the suitability for different group sizes refer to the 'Number of people' heading in the activity intro.

Please note:

It can be useful to outline the **purpose** of each activity to your pupils (as stated in the activity introduction) and to ask them **processing questions** at the end.

Questions such as 'How did you feel about that?', 'Did the activity help you feel more comfortable with the group/relax/warm up/have fun?', 'What did you get out of that exercise?' or 'did you feel uncomfortable in any way?' help participants see the activities as a **learning experience** as opposed to just 'game playing' although too much emphasis on these questions can frustrate pupils and make them feel very negative about what they previously felt to be an enjoyable experience. Use with caution and be sensitive to their reactions.

Finally, it may be helpful to bear in mind the following points when selecting an activity:

- Time of day and weather (younger children in particular are affected by extreme weather and may become over-excited with some of the activities).
- Room restrictions. 'Health and Safety'
- The way participants are dressed.
- 'Mood' of the group or individuals within the group.
- Special Educational Needs of pupils

Fun Energiser 1**‘Write Your Name’**

Number of people: Unlimited

Materials: None

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To create fun and stimulate humour. To re-focus a group who have lost interest with an activity.

Directions:

The group stands in front of the leader. The leader instructs the group to take their right hands and write their first names in the air with an imaginary pen/pencil.

Next, they are asked to write their last names in the air with their left hands. (Usually that's more difficult.)

Next they have to write their first and last names; *but...* they have to put their hands behind their backs and pretend they have a pen/pencil in their mouths to write their names.* Remember to dot every "i" and cross every "t".

* Explain that they must write 's-l-o-w-l-y' and make them aware of the danger of sharp head movements. (Health and Safety, remember ☺)

Alternatives to 'pen in the mouth':

Place pen in ear, in elbow, in belly button, on end of shoe, in the middle of back etc.

NB// pen in the belly button always gets a laugh but be prepared for vulgar gestures from older students.

Fun Energiser 11:

Horseplay

Number of people: Groups up to 40 maximum.

Materials: Imaginary horses, as long as they aren't too frisky.

Time: 5 minutes.

Purpose: A physical energiser which raises energy levels whilst having fun.

Directions:

1. Students form one large circle facing inwards and are told to imagine they are going on a horse ride.
2. Teacher mimics the sound of horses' hooves by slapping his/her knees alternately in 'fours'. Everyone joins in and once a rhythm has been established, the teacher leads a change in pace – getting students used to the commands 'gallop faster', 'canter' and 'trot slowly'.
3. The teacher introduces various new commands and actions:
 - 'Jump a big fence' – everyone stops slapping and holds their hands in the air until the horse lands again
 - 'Jump a little fence' – everyone jumps in the air and shouts 'hup!'
 - 'Gallop through water' – slap sides of face
 - 'Watch out for Indians' – make 'whooping' noises
 - 'Under the whip' – slap self vigorously on behind

Note:

This activity is best suited to groups in which students know each other quite well and work well together. It will result in chaos if used with fragmented groups or with individuals prone to silliness.

Fun Energiser 13:**Mini/MAXI Stretches**

Number of people: Any.

Materials: None required.

Time: 4-5 minutes.

Overview: An injection of physical movement to either energise a lethargic group or settle and focus a lively one. This has the benefit of being related to the lesson content.

Directions:

1. Ask the whole class to stand up.
2. Demonstrate a 'mini' stretch (move a small part of your body: curl a lip, twitch a finger etc) compared with a 'MAXI' stretch (reach for the ceiling, lift a leg etc). Whilst demonstrating the stretch, simultaneously state out loud one fact that is topic-related.
3. Everyone then copies the stretch whilst repeating the same fact and the teacher then nominates another student to model a 'mini' or 'MAXI' stretch whilst stating another topic-related fact. This student must then call on another to do the same.
4. Perform four or five stretches before continuing with the lesson (or pulling a muscle, whichever is the sooner).

Instant Connections

Throughout the course of my work as both mentor and private coach I have observed countless lessons and noticed that the majority tend to start in a very similar way, with two distinct phases. During Phase 1 students wander in and spend time getting settled, chatting, getting equipment out, taking coats off and putting bags away. In some lessons this phase takes longer than others. Phase 2 begins with some sort of introduction from the teacher and/or register call. Again, the time spent on this second phase varies but there is an interesting correlation: the more time spent on these two introductory phases, the more restless, bored and unsettled the students become, with less likelihood that they'll be engaged in the ensuing lesson activities.

Prevention, if you'll excuse the cliché, is better than cure - so engage them from the moment they walk in the room to maximise the lesson's chance of success.

In 'Engagement and Motivation sessions 1 and 2' we presented several 'attention grabbers' - the main difference between those strategies and the following activities is that there is often no link between the attention grabber and the lesson topic. Attention Grabbers do exactly what the name suggests but no more. Imagine a rabbit transfixed by car headlights. Its attention has been grabbed, but it has nowhere to go - except, alas, bunny heaven.

By contrast, with an 'instant connection' you will grab attention and steer students on to connect with the lesson topic. Here are some activities designed to engage students as soon as they walk through the door, and make that connection.

Instant Connection 3:

Walk About Survey

Overview:

Instantly gets students involved in the lesson topic in an active and cooperative manner. This is a great activity for implanting key lesson questions in the students' minds through repetition, and for discovering prior knowledge/areas of weakness.

Number of people: Whole class.

Materials: Index cards for each student. List of questions relating to the lesson content posted on charts/posters around the room or on a Power Point slide.

Time: 10 minutes.

Directions:

1. Each student is given an index card on entry to the room and told to write the seven questions from the wall charts/Power Point slide on their card (leaving room under each one for the answer). Students of lower ability may need pre-written lists of questions.
2. Students move round the room trying to find someone who knows the answer to any one of the questions. When a student answers a question they write the answer and their initials/name under the question on the card.
3. Students return to their seats and the teacher reads through the list of questions. Students raise their hands if they managed to find an answer to the question and the totals are noted. Questions with few answers are those which need to be answered during the lesson.

Relationship & Community Builders

This section of **Needs Focused Lessons™** concerns one of the most important aspects of effective teaching and classroom management – building positive, trusting relationships with students and creating supportive peer communities.

The '**Getting to Know You**' activities will be ideal for the start of term (or when presented with a new group) while the '**Relationship-Builders**' and '**Team-Builders**' can be used throughout the year as a strategy for maintaining and strengthening both peer-peer and teacher-student relationships as well as generally building a general sense of 'community' in the whole group.

'Relationship-Builder' 2

'Roles and Responsibilities'

Overview:

Our most challenging pupils often benefit from being given some sort of responsibility in the school or classroom. These are the ring-leaders, other pupils follow them and they are motivated by a need to feel recognised and to be in control.

One of the best ways to enable them to gain power and recognition legitimately is by finding them responsibilities or assigning them roles.

Number of people: Individuals. People responsible & roles themselves may change from day to day or week to week. More than one pupil can be assigned the same role – on a 'job-share' basis.

Directions:

1. Think about roles and responsibilities your classroom needs. Also think about particular strengths & weaknesses of individual students and how they would benefit from a particular role. If a child is particularly untidy or disorganised, for example, they would benefit from being responsible for keeping a certain area of the room in order.

Ideas for roles include:

- Gofer – a pupils selected to run errands
- Board monitor – a pupil responsible for cleaning the board and ensuring the surrounding area is tidy
- Objective writer- if you like to have your lesson objective written up at the start of the lesson, this pupil will do it for you.
- Gardner – a pupil/group of pupils responsible for upkeep of indoor plants in the classroom
- Equipment monitor – responsible for keeping equipment trays tidy and complete
- Noise controllers – responsible for maintaining orderly working environment
- Motivators – responsible for encouraging slow workers
- Registration monitor – responsible for taking the register

'Relationship-Builder' 4

'The Staffroom Praise Board'

Number of people: Unlimited

Materials: N/A

Time: Ongoing project

Overview: This is a whole-school approach to building a positive atmosphere and positive relationships between staff and pupils. Understandably, individual pupils' efforts often get overlooked – particularly in a large setting. This strategy ensures that even the smallest improvements made by a particular pupil are noticed and acknowledged by EVERY member of staff.

Directions:

1. Assign an area of wall in the staffroom for the praise board. There should be room for five to ten A4 sheets and it should be an area which staff will see whenever they enter the staffroom.
2. Each week, pupils are nominated for a place on the praise board (pupils aren't told about this). Staff put forward a pupil and give reasons for their nomination. After a vote, a photo of each chosen pupil is put on the board together with a brief summary of why they have been chosen.
3. The idea is that every member of staff will see this board regularly throughout the course of the week. When they next see one of the pupils from the board – either in the classroom, in the dinner queue or out on the yard - they can mention how impressed they are with the pupil's achievement. Over the space of a week, a pupil will receive a huge amount of positive, and often much-needed, reinforcement with several members of staff acknowledging the same achievement.

"Hey, I hear you were very good in maths this week Jonny. Well done mate, keep it up!"

"Damien! A little bird told me you managed to get through a whole lesson without being sent out. Brilliant, isn't it better when you're not getting detention every day?"

'Getting to Know You' Activity 9:

Dicey

Number of people: Unlimited

Materials: Pair of numbered dice

Time: 10 minutes approx.

Overview:

In pairs or groups of three students volunteer personal information about each other using the dice as a prompt.

Instructions:

1. Students are placed in Learning Pairs (see '**Pair Up/Speak Up**' –in full version of Needs Focused Lessons™), or in groups of three (see '**Five Creative Ways to Form Random Groups**' – in full version of Needs Focused Lessons™).
2. Explain that the activity is a bit of fun to accelerate the process of getting to know each other. Throw the dice against the wall and call out the number shown from two to twelve.
3. Students discuss with their partners/group members a piece of information about themselves which corresponds with the number shown on the dice, eg 'I had two eggs for breakfast', 'when I'm older I want to own four cars', 'when I was three I fell down the stairs and broke my arm' etc.
4. Each team member records their answers before volunteering to share with the rest of the group.

Team Builder 1:

52 Card Pick-up

Overview: This team-building activity allows students to experience, first hand, the benefits to be had from cooperating with each other rather than working alone or arguing.

It's hard-hitting yet great fun and ideal for small SEN groups with behaviour or social problems.

Number of people: Small group split into teams of 3-4

Materials: a pack of playing cards for each team

Time: 10 minutes.

Directions:

1. Split the group into teams of three or four.
2. Take out the playing cards from the pack, shuffle them and lay them face down on the floor in a mess.
3. Tell the team you are giving them a challenge – simply to gather up all the cards and put them back in order in the pack (Ace through to King for each suit). Let them know you'll be timing them.
4. The team (particularly if it is a group of boys) will almost certainly fall apart and students will argue with each other as they attempt the task as individuals. Record the time taken as soon as they have finished.
5. Ask why it took them so long and if they could suggest ways to improve. How could they work together to get a quicker time? Talk through and help them summarise their suggestions – usually they realize it will be better if they nominate who is going to be responsible for each suit and then agree to pass relevant cards to each other as they pick them up. They may also suggest working within strict areas instead of everyone trying to pick up *all* the cards.
6. Repeat the exercise – they will be astounded at how quickly they complete the task this second time by cooperating with each other.
7. Ask each student to reflect on what happened and to state what they've learned.

Team Builder 11:

Shepherd

Time: 10 minutes.

Number of People: Any even number.

Materials: Per pair - 1 piece of string or tie, and 1 blindfold.

Directions:

1. Students work in pairs.
2. One student wears the blind fold while the other leads this first student through, under and over a series of obstacles.
3. Students swap roles.
4. Students give feedback, talking about how they felt about the other student before the exercise and how they feel about them after it.

Variation:

Students guide each other round the room but this time from behind – one being the ‘car’ and the other the ‘driver’.

Students are *not* allowed to speak during this exercise and so the first time they try it they will invariably end up ‘crashing’ into obstacles. Stop the exercise and ask them how they can avoid this without speaking. Encourage them to develop their own ideas for communicating or, alternatively, provide them with very simple signals such as:

Tap left shoulder to ‘turn left’
Tap right shoulder to ‘turn right’
Gently tap top of head to ‘stop’

As the exercise develops students will naturally develop additional ideas for useful control signals such as: Gently kick seat of pants to ‘gesticulate rudely at other drivers’ etc.

Cooperative Learning Activities

Cooperative and active learning activities provide a means for your students to 'take part' in the learning process – both physically and mentally. In the full **Needs Focused Lessons™** pack we provide **more than twenty** cooperative/active learning formats and activities, five Teach-Backs and six Student Involvers. The following samples give an idea of the type of activities included in the pack and can be used for any subject matter to enliven lessons and deepen learning and retention.

Active/Cooperative Activity 6

Speed Dating

Overview: If you can get past the name this is a very useful activity which enables all pupils in a group to have brief contact with each other. The uses include offering feedback to each other, sharing views and ideas, swapping and comparing data, getting to know new members very quickly etc.

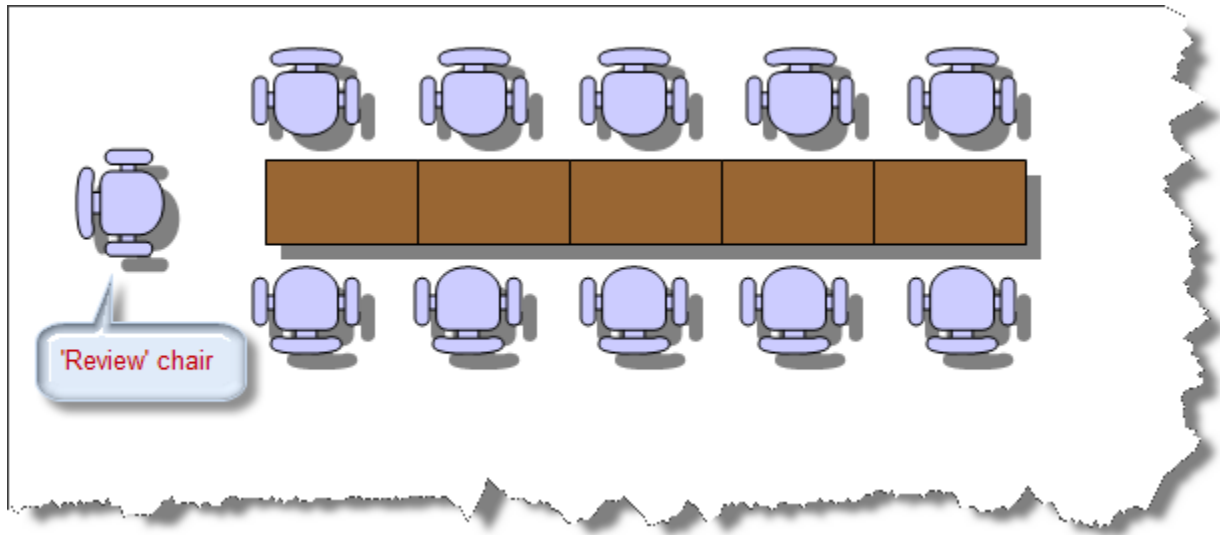
Number of people: Any group size.

Materials: A clipboard for each pupil, a horn or buzzer to signify the end of each 'date' and a large timer on display. (There is a suitable Timer in your Whiteboard Tools & Resources folder as part of this program). Templates and/or writing frames may be required for slow workers who may have difficulty recording information quickly.

Time: Various, depending on situation – from 15 to 55 minutes

Directions:

1. Explain the questions which are to be discussed/answered throughout the activity. A list of questions or suitable data could be provided for each pupil.
2. Arrange a line of tables with rows of chairs either side, facing each other. Larger groups may require two or more lines of tables. An extra single chair is placed at the end of the line of tables. (Each person must take a turn in this 'Review chair' otherwise partners 'meet' each other too quickly so in the case of even numbers in the group, the teacher must also take part).



3. With students seated opposite each other across the tables, the hooter signifies the start of the activity and each pair has three minutes to share information. A second hooter signifies the end of the 'date' and each person moves one seat to their left to face a new partner.

4. The process is repeated until students meet up with their original partner.

Note:

Each cycle will see a different person sitting in the 'Review chair' without a partner. This time is to be used to review notes.

Active/Cooperative Activity 12**Terror Cards**

Number of people: Particularly useful with large groups

Materials: Index cards – one for each student

Time: N/A

Overview:

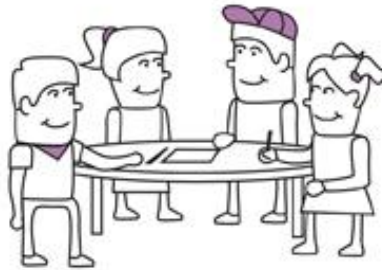
Terror cards provide a great way of making sure that all students are included in a lesson. They are particularly beneficial in large groups where individuals may get 'missed' or 'forgotten' during Q & A sessions and other activities. The teacher randomly picks a terror card to identify who will participate in a given activity.

Directions:

1. Have students write their first name and initial on an index card.
2. Teacher shuffles the deck of cards and stores them in a box on his/her desk.
3. Whenever a response is required from a student a Terror Card is drawn from the deck and the named student is called on to answer/participate.
4. The card is returned to the box of cards.

Active/Cooperative Activity 14

Four Musketeers



Number of people: Of particular use with large groups

Materials: Pre-written questions. (Questions which promote discussion or require more than a 'one word answer' are most suited to this activity). Terror Cards for students (see above)

Time: 10-15 mins per question

Overview:

The motto of the Three Musketeers was 'All for one and one for all.' This activity has a similar principle in that team members work together for the good of the group. It's different in that students form groups of four rather than three. 😊

Directions:

1. Students form groups of four where possible.
2. Teacher reads out a question and gives a few minutes for students to work individually and write an answer down.
3. Teacher gives 'discussion time' for students to discuss their answers with the rest of their group members. Students are encouraged to help each other during this phase so that everyone's answer is improved and everyone has a good understanding.
4. Teacher calls 'time' and draws a 'Terror Card'. The relevant student answers the question using the combined knowledge of his/her team mates.

Student Involver 1:

Focus Cards

Overview:

The following ideas are aimed at involving students in the teaching and learning process.

Whenever you *actively involve* students you will:

- Hold their attention and interest in the subject
- Improve retention rates
- Deepen learning and comprehension
- Keep them awake

Years ago I saw the stage version of 'Whose Line Is It Anyway', the popular improvisation comedy show. For the first half of the show the cast did their thing, and we in the audience did ours, happy to sit back and be entertained. And then one of the performers turned to us and said, with wicked grin, "And now it's *your* turn..." If he'd wired us up to the electricity grid he couldn't have charged the atmosphere faster. From that point on, we weren't audience, we were *all* part of the show. This was active involvement in action!

'Active involvement' takes the teaching process one step further by removing the invisible line between teacher and students. The following ideas are designed to help you get your students become active participants in their own education.

This particular activity is particularly useful during lengthy, didactic teacher-talk/lecture sessions.

Directions:

1. Give each student several (say five or six) index cards on entry to the room, or split students into groups and give each group a pile of cards in the centre of the table.

At the start of the teacher-talk session the teacher gives the following instruction:

"Take one of your index cards and write down three things you want to learn about this lesson (topic). Put a big 'number 1' at the top of the card and then put it on one side."

Give the students a few minutes to complete these cards.

2. About ten minutes into the session, once the first concept has been covered, give students the following instruction:

"Take another card from the pile and write down a simple quiz question based on what we've just covered. (Suitable questions could be suggested for low ability students). Put a big 'number 2' at the top of this card and pass it to the person to the right of you - but don't read the new card you receive just yet."

Give students time to write and pass their cards. Once they receive a new card (someone else's 'number 2' card) they write an answer under the question, sign it, and pass this card along the line. Each person should now have a 'number 2' card with a quiz question and an answer.

3. The process is repeated after each new key concept has been covered so that students build up two, three or four (or even more) cards in addition to their 'number 1' card with questions and answers on. At each stage of the session, key points are thus reviewed.

4. At the end of the session during the plenary, students are asked to read out the answers on the cards they have accrued for each of the key concepts, together with the statements they wrote on their 'number 1' card. Answers are discussed as a group.

Variations:

Instead of writing quiz questions, students could:

- Compare their past knowledge about the concept with new knowledge learned.
- Write down how they would apply this new knowledge to a practical activity or real-life situation.
- Write a TRUE/FALSE statement – the student who receives the card indicates whether they feel the statement is true or false.

Teach-Back Activity 1:

Ready, Steady... Teach!

Overview:

Teach-back activities are fun ways to encourage students to cement their learning by teaching others what they have been taught – by demonstrating, explaining and... yes...*teaching!* Remember the saying 'You never really learn anything until you teach it'?

As well as helping students learn new information, Teach-Back activities are great for the teacher too because they let you check for understanding and see how much your students have learned. They also give you a bit of free time to catch up on some sleep.

Directions:

No materials required. This is a ritual or routine to build up with your students which can be used as a quick, (often extremely lively), review at the end of any phase of teacher-talk or explanation.

It is as effective as it is simple.

You explain to your students that whenever you call out the words (in your best Ainsley Harriot voice) "Ready, Steady... TEACH!", they are to work with their allotted learning partner for thirty seconds to a minute to Teach-Back what they have learned moments before.

Learning partners should be numbered one and two because this Teach-Back has three phases.

Phase one: After teaching the group the new information the teacher asks if there are any questions before moving on in order to clarify the learning and eliminate misunderstandings during the next stage.

Phase two: The teacher calls "Ready, Steady... TEACH!" and partner one immediately starts teaching partner two the new concept. It is important that they are encouraged to over-emphasise the key points with facial expressions and big hand gestures – humour makes learning stick – and that they move through the information quickly. For a difficult concept students are given up to a minute to teach back the key points of the new information but it is best to keep the activity brief – once partners lose interest, the effect is lost. This should be a fast-paced brief review, nothing more.

Phase three: The teacher calls 'Come in Number one, your time is up' (or something similar) to bring the first session of teaching to a close and have partners swap roles. On the second call of "Ready, Steady... TEACH!" partner two teaches partner one.

Partners then thank each other for being wonderful teachers and then the lesson continues.

Review Activities

One of the surest ways to make your lesson material 'stick' is to build review and plenary activity time into lessons. Yet, despite the obvious fact that reviewed material is much more likely to be retained than material that has not, few teachers actually plan sufficient time in their lessons to run an adequate plenary.

A rushed "What did we learn today?" as pupils are packing away or standing to leave does not constitute an effective review session. What will they learn from this? What will anyone gain? Can you really gauge the effect your teaching has had on your pupils from one quick question as the bell rings? Can you really determine who has met your objectives and who has not? If you can't, what criteria will you use for adjusting tomorrow's lesson content?

At least ten minutes needs to be included in your lesson plan for a good, interesting review activity and the more engaging, active and fun the activity, the better. If we can link positive emotions with the material being reviewed there is more chance it will be remembered.

In Needs Focused Lessons there are **more than FIFTY** fun, engaging, active review formats to make information 'stick' and help cement learning.

Review Activity 40:

Review Relay

Number of people: any group size up to 40 max.

Materials: Coloured pens and flipchart paper

Time: 10-15 minutes

Overview: A high-energy physical review – good for engaging unmotivated students.

Directions:

1. Divide the class into three or four teams, depending on numbers, of up to ten students.
2. Give each team a different coloured marker (red/blue/green/black) and get teams to think of a team name for comedy value.
3. Put three or four pieces of flipchart paper on the board/wall with team names written at the top in the relevant colour.
4. One person from each team starts by writing on their team paper one thing they have learned during the lesson. They come back, hand the pen to another person in their team and then the second person writes something they have learned (It must be different from the previous ones). The winning team is the one with the most new things learned.

NB: Teacher can differentiate by making sure less able children are at the front of each line and more able towards the end – it obviously gets harder to think of additional facts as the game progresses.

Review Activity 22:

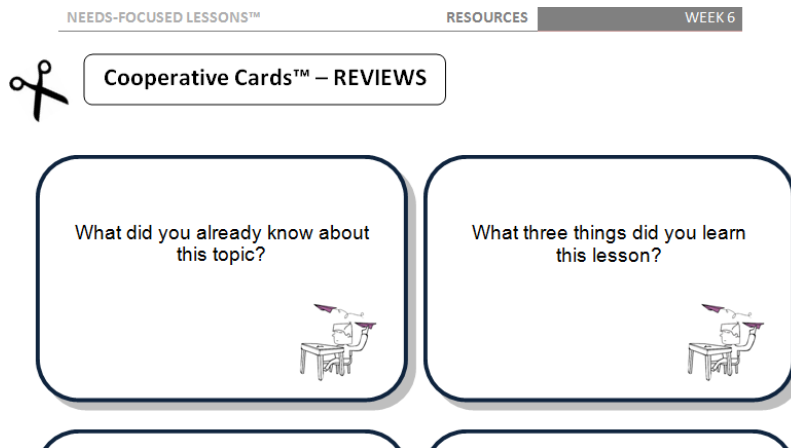
Cooperative Cards™ - REVIEWS

Number of people: Teams of three to six

Materials: A set of cooperative review cards for each team. (You can make your own but we provide ready-made, editable templates in the **resources** folder of the [Needs Focused Lessons](#) full version).

Time: 10 minutes.

Overview: Students work in their learning teams to review the lesson content by taking turns to answer questions on the review cards.



Directions:

1. Split class into groups of 3-6.
2. Give each group a set of Cooperative Review Cards.
3. Use cards in one of the following ways...

A) Take-A-Turn

Cards are placed in a stack, face down in the centre of the group's table. Students in each team take turns to pick a card and respond to the question.

B) Pick-A-Card

The cards are spread out, face upwards, in the centre of the table. The first student chooses a card and responds to the question. Play then passes to the other students. Once a card has been chosen it must be turned face down.

C) All Respond - Team

Cards are placed face down on the team's table. One student picks a card and reads out the question. Each student in the team must then respond by writing their own answer to the question. Students then share/compare their answers before the next student picks another card.

D) All respond – Whole class

As a whole class activity a student is chosen to pick a random review card. The teacher reads the question and each student responds by writing their answer on a small white board or piece of paper. Answers are shared and compared.

E) Delegate

Cards are placed in the centre of the team's table. Each student is given a 'DELEGATE' card and may use it to pass play to another team mate if they are unable to answer the question.

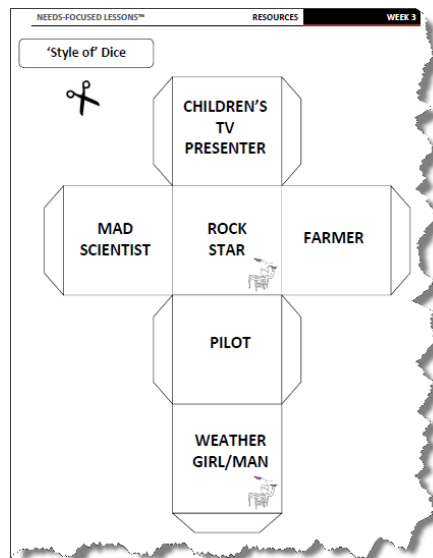
Review Activity 44:

In The Style of...

Overview: A very quick-to-set-up and often hilarious review activity. Can be used at any stage of a lesson during question/answer phases to inject some humour and develop confidence in students.

Number of people: any group size.

Materials: None required although the activity can be taken a stage further by including '**Style of...**' Dice (Found in the '**Resources**' section of full version of Needs Focused Lessons).



Time: 10 minutes.

Directions:

1. Ask a review question about the lesson topic
2. Ask students to either respond in a nominated style (see below) or roll the 'Style of..' die.

Suggested styles:

- Newsreader
- Monk (Gregorian chant)
- Builder
- Dracula
- Very happy person (lottery/speedboat winner)
- Miserable person (lottery loser)
- Angry person (lottery winner who has had his/her ticket stolen)
- Very boring person
- Superhero
- Farmer
- Mad scientist
- Weather girl/man
- Pilot
- Rock Star
- Children's TV presenter
- Mime

Review Activity 42:**Txt Spk**

Overview: Very simple review which will appeal to your students – especially the little darlings who insist on using their mobile phones in class.

Number of people: any group size.

Materials: None – they bring it!

Time: 10 minutes.

Directions:

1. Students work independently, writing two or three main points learned during the lesson using TEXT shortcuts.
2. Pick some of the most creative attempts and have students write them up on the board or add to a continual 'What we are learning' display.

Review Activity 38:**On air!**

Number of people: small /medium groups of 6-20 participants are best purely because of the amount of time taken to 'show back' to the rest of the group.

Materials: Suitable props can transform this into a full lesson activity although with practice, once students know what is expected of them, the activity can be completed relatively quickly.

Time: 15 minutes

Overview: A high-energy closing activity to finish on a high after a lesson with a small to medium sized group. Relates best to social studies-type lesson topics as students will be relaying how they will use new skills information in future.

Directions:

1. Split the class into groups of four and number each member of the group from one to four.
2. Teacher gives each group a main topic from the lesson on which to present a very short news item.
3. Roles are as follows:

Ones: Announces the headline (ie. the particular stage of the cycle/chapter summary/character description that their group will be reporting about). A 'News at Ten' gong could be sounded between each headline.

Twos: Reads a summary of the groups 'news' (Chapter/sequence stage/character review etc.) in the style of a studio newsreader before handing over to the 'roving reporter'

Threes: Roving reporter – sits in another part of the room and gives more details on the groups 'story' and also interviews the 'witness' or 'subject expert'.

Fours: Witness/subject expert – gives further information to embellish the groups knowledge of the topic.

Review Activity 6

‘LESSON FOR SALE’

Overview: A quiet, settling review activity which appeals to small groups and gets pupils to reflect deeply about what they’ve learned.

Number of people: Any class size


Time: Approx. 10-15 minutes

Directions:

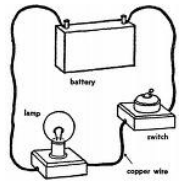
Ask pupils to design an advert for today’s lesson

Demonstration may be needed to explain and show the key features of an effective advert. Less able pupils could be given a template to fill in such as the one below.

Explain that their adverts may be used to ‘sell’ the lesson to other students and should include at least three things they have learned.



FOR SALE



“EXCELLENT ELECTRICITY”
SCIENCE LESSON

Learn the difference between Series and
Parallel Circuits in just 50 minutes!

Yes, that’s right! In just 50 minutes you will know all about two types of simple electrical circuits including...

- There is only one path for the current in a series circuit
- If a series circuit is broken, the current can’t flow
- In a parallel circuit there is more than one path for the current to flow

Call 000-000-000 to grow your brain NOW!

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Rob Plevin is a behaviour management specialist and relentless optimist. He runs the website www.behaviourneeds.com and presents training courses internationally on working successfully with challenging young people for teachers, lecturers, care workers, prison officers and parents.

His live courses and INSET sessions are frequently described as '**unforgettable**' and he has been rated as an 'outstanding' teacher by the UK's Office for Standards in Education.

"I found Rob Plevin's workshop just in time to save me from giving up. It should be compulsory - everybody in teaching should attend a Needs-Focused workshop and meet the man with such a big heart who will make you see the important part you can play in the lives of your most difficult pupils."

Heather Beames, Teacher, London course attendee

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