

THE FALLBACK BINDER

Simple **paperless** activities for crunch time, broken printers, expired copy codes & greener teachers.

*Adaptable for target language.

Inspired by the time I was a new teacher and my copy code stopped working right before class, before I was ever told we had periodic copy limits.

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CONTENTS

GAMES TO REMEMBER [pg. 1-6]

Vocab Hot Seat Variations
Hot Seat Sentence Variations
Stop the Bus Variations
Memory Loop
Related Word Circle
Letter Chain
Add a Word
Ball of Fire (Ice Breaker)
Spotlight (Ice Breaker)
Pointing (Ice Breaker)
Counting (Ice Breaker)
Team Hangman
Team Telephone

FLEX ACTIVITIES [pg. 7-15] **adaptable for target language*

Rotating Listener	Gossip (Reported Speech)
Talking Lines	What If... (2 nd Conditional)
3 for 3	Mixer
Slips Generator	Modals (Prediction & Speculation)
Apartment Design	
Roommates	
The Dictator	
Vocab Collector Variations	
Rotating Story	
Picture Story	
TED Circle	
Perfect Spouse	
Design a Hotel	
Plan a Ground Trip	
Culture Exchange	
Write a Complaint	
Phrasal Verbs & Idioms	

GAMES TO REMEMBER

VOCAB HOT SEAT:

Teams of 3-5. One student faces away from board. Teacher writes word on board. Group members describe word to student whose back is facing board. This student must guess the word. First team to guess gets a point.

*Teacher chooses random words or target vocab.

*Students may generate pool target vocab in groups.

Variations

1. One student faces the board, team members face away. Student describes the chosen word to group members using only one word and then answering yes/no questions from team members.
2. One student faces the board, team members face away. Student acts out the word.
3. One student faces the board, team members face away. Student freely describes the word.
4. Can alternate above variations in rounds.

HOT SEAT SENTENCE:

Teams of 3-5. Team faces board, one student with a piece of paper faces away. Teacher writes sentence on board with target language. Team explains sentence to student who must write the sentence correctly. If a team thinks they are correct, allow the others to keep working in case they are wrong.

Variation

One student sits in the center of class with a piece of paper. The whole class describes the sentence to this student who must write it correctly.

STOP THE BUS:

Teams of 3-5. Teacher writes 3-5 categories on board (i.e. country, food, sport, etc.) and chooses 1 letter of the alphabet. Teams think of one word per category starting with the assigned letter. First team to finish yells "Stop the bus!"

Variation

Categories written across top of board, team names written in column on left. One member of each team writes their words on the board as they think of them (going back & forth between team & board).

MEMORY LOOP:

Class arranged in circle. First student says one word. Next student must say previous word and a new word. Next student must say previous 2 words and a new word. Continue (will overlap 2-3 times). Students who forget any word are out. Can use target vocab or phrasal verbs for more difficulty.

RELATED WORD CIRCLE:

Class arranged in circle. 1st student says a word. Next student says a word related to the previous word (continue). Give time limit base on level (around 8 seconds). Students who repeat words, say unrelated words, or do not meet the time limit are out.

*May restrict to target vocab

LETTER CHAIN:

Class arranged in circle. 1st student says a word. Next student says a word starting with the last letter of the previous word (continue). Give time limit base on level (around 8 seconds). May also use the 1st letter of each word. Students who repeat words, say or do not meet the time limit are out.

If pronunciation/spelling problems, teacher may repeat the word and say the necessary letter. (Common problem: "PAPER...ROBSTER")

ADD A WORD:

Class arranged in circle. 1st student says one word, teacher writes on board. Each student adds a word or punctuation until the class forms a complete sentence. Students correct the sentence in pairs. Students may also write their words on the board.

Variation

Try separately in teams on sheets of paper, divide the board in half, or use more than one board in the room.

BALL OF FIRE (Ice Breaker):

Class arranged in circle. Ask a student for a sheet of paper and then ball it up. Toss it to a student. Everyone in the class can ask that student any questions they want (up to a few Q's or for a couple minutes). Student tosses ball to another student (repeat).

SPOTLIGHT (Ice Breaker):

One student sits in center of class. Class can ask any questions they want (restrict to a few Q's or a couple minutes). Center student chooses next student.

POINTING (Ice Breaker):

Class arranged in circle. A student points at another student while saying a different student's name. The named student must then do the same thing. Continue. Students are out if they speak when pointed at, say the name of the student they are pointing at, or forget to take a turn when their name is called.

COUNTING (Ice Breaker):

Students arranged in circle. Go around the circle counting numbers in order. If a student's number contains the digit 7 or is a multiple of 7, the student claps instead of saying the number. Students who mess up are out. May reverse direction on claps. May play "3/6/9."

TEAM HANGMAN:

Split students into 2-4 teams. Teams take turns deciding on each next letter. A team that guesses a letter correctly can have one more turn. The team that completes the word(s) wins the round and gets a point. Repeat.

*Can use target language

TEAM TELEPHONE:

Class split in 2 teams (lines or circles). Teacher gives the 1st member of each team the same or a different sentence to whisper along.

*Can use target language

*Adjust scoring or winning terms based on level. For example:

-1st team to finish a 100% correct sentence wins

-1st team to get target language correct gets a point, continue rounds

-Team who gets most words correct gets a point, continue rounds

FLEX ACTIVITIES

ROTATING LISTENER:

Groups of 3. Give students discussion topic. 2 students in each group talk while the 3rd only listens and may ask questions. 5 minute time limit. The listener of each group stands and moves to the next group. The listeners then explain what their previous group said and the new group asks questions and reacts. 5 minute time limit. Select new listeners and repeat.

- *Can use unit context or target language
- *If difficult, listeners may take notes
- *Listeners may monitor to correct group members language

TALKING LINES:

Students sit in 2 rows so each student faces 1 other student. If odd number, put a chair at 1 end. Teacher writes a word on the board. Students talk to the classmate in front of them about anything they think of related to the word. 3 minute limit. Students move to the next seat clockwise. Repeat.

- *Can use random or target vocab, or topics requiring target language (i.e. "your daily obligations")

3 for 3:

Each student chooses 3 classmates and writes 3 questions for each. They go to each student to ask the Q's. Good when there are new students.

- *Can restrict to target language
- *Can require 5W's & 1H
- *Do example on board 1st
- *Monitor to correct written Q's

SLIPS GENERATOR:

Groups of 3-5. Elicit some target vocab on board (i.e. jobs, home). Each group has 1 blank paper. Walk them through folding it in half several times, then ripping the creases to create 20-25 slips. Groups write a word on each slip (target vocab) while teaching each other unknown words. Monitor for spelling. Give each group's stack to a different group. One student draws a slip and describes the word to the rest of the group until they guess the word.

*Can restrict language i.e. describe using present perfect continuous only: "I have been helping patients (doctor)

*Can be a game for points

Variation

Put all slips in the front of the class face down. Students take one slip and walk around the room showing it to classmates without looking at it. Classmates must describe it to them until they guess the word.

APARTMENT DESIGN:

Elicit a list of 10-20 furniture/home vocab. Write on board but do not review meaning. In pairs or small groups, students ask & teach each other any unknown words on the board. Review pronunciation as a class. Draw an empty apartment layout on board (only walls & door openings). Ask students what objects should go where, and draw a few on the board. Groups design their own apartments, then share with other groups.

ROOMMATES:

Groups of 3-7. Students pretend to be roommates and make house rules together. Specify the situation (house, apartment, # of rooms, etc.). Start by discussing past experiences & preferences, eliciting ideas about rules, etc.

*Can give each student a different role written on a piece of their paper (i.e. "You don't like loud music" or "You don't like talkative roommates).

*Can follow from target vocab (i.e. personality, home, etc.)

THE DICTATOR:

Write down any 10 sentences containing target context or language (do not show them to students). Read each aloud one by one, and students try to write them. Adjust speed & repetition for level.

*Can be a quiz game for individual points with faster sentences worth more.

VOCAB COLLECTOR:

Students watch Travel Channel (or other) videos on YouTube. If they see an object they do not know the English word for, they write it down in their language (may also use adj/v/adv i.e. words that describe objects in the videos). Students return to class and translate, then teach those words to a partner.

Variations

Students walk around building, the city or the mall to collect vocab and may take photos to ask classmates about the meaning before translating.

ROTATING STORY:

Class arranged in circle, each student has blank paper. Provide a narrative topic/prompt (i.e. your last dream, or a picture). Each student writes the first sentence of the story. Time limit based on level (1 minute or less). Students pass their papers one seat clockwise. Students read the new sentence and add a second sentence to the story. Continue until each student receives their original paper. Give longer and longer time limits so students have time to read all the sentences.

Feedback: Choose a few students to read their stories aloud (monitor to find interesting ones). Students edit their own final stories. Choose sentences to correct on board.

*Can require target language

PICTURE STORY:

Show a Google image on board (related to unit context or search for movie stills). In pairs/groups, students create a basic plot written in bullet points. Each student keeps a copy. Students individually write a narrative based on those bullet points and then peer edit.

*Possible grammar focus: narrative tenses, present continuous, etc. Give students a question such as What happened?, How did they get here?, What has happened?, What is happening?, etc.

TED CIRCLE:

Groups of 5 listen to a TED Talk and each have a role for feedback:

Discussion Leader: Prepares Q's

Summarizer: Presents the gist of the talk

Culture Collector: Finds similarities/differences with their own

Connector: Finds connections to real life experience

Passage Person: Finds meaningful quotes from the talk

Recommended TED Talk:

Joseph Kim: The family I lost in North Korea. And the family I gained.

PERFECT SPOUSE:

Elicit ideas about what makes a perfect spouse. Write examples on board in a T-chart. Divide class into males & females. Male group makes list of 10 things that make a perfect wife, females 10 things for perfect husband. Groups re-write their lists ranking them 1-10. A member of each group writes results on board, class discusses. Males pair with females & discuss what they like/dislike or think is interesting about the lists.

DESIGN A HOTEL:

Give a travel anecdote warmer. Groups discuss questions about hotel experiences, hotel sanitation, food, prices, room service, stealing toiletries, etc. Groups discuss the features of their favorite hotels & what they wish could be in hotels. Elicit ideas for what to consider when designing hotels (furniture, entertainment, food, color, location, etc.). Groups design & share with class (drawing optional).

PLAN A GROUND TRIP:

Elicit ways to travel, and students discuss which they prefer and the advantages & disadvantages of each. Explain there is a Portuguese man who travelled around the world in 1 year with no airplane. Ask the class for advantages & disadvantages of traveling with no airplane. Students choose a country & use computers to plan a ground trip there. They document budget, time, which boats/trains/buses/etc. they can take, which hostels/hotels they can stay at, what they can see etc. Share in groups and vote on the best.

CULTURE EXCHANGE:

1. Elicit what students know about North America.
2. Write their ideas on board & arrange in a Bubble Chart/Web Chart/Mind Map.
3. Write more categories for the bubble chart (i.e. food, people, entertainment, night life).
4. Students complete their own bubble chart about North America
5. Share in pairs and add more to their charts.
6. Students create a bubble chart about their own country.
7. Share in pairs.
8. Choose a student & write a few ideas from their bubble chart on board.
9. Ask students how to visually combine all info on the board (Venn Diagram)
10. Start a Venn Diagram comparing/contrasting North America with the chosen student's country.
11. Students complete Venn Diagrams comparing N.A. with their country.
12. Share with a partner.
13. Pairs create a new Venn Diagram comparing their own 2 countries.
14. Share interesting results as a class.

*Can be compare/contrast writing prep

WRITE A COMPLAINT:

15. Pre-teach "service."
16. Elicit examples of good service, then discuss experiences in pairs.
17. Elicit examples of bad service, then discuss experiences in pairs.
18. Elicit what to do after bad service (complain).
19. Elicit ways to complain until they say writing.
20. Elicit type of language (formal).
21. Elicit steps: greeting, introduce self, state the problem, what happened, what you would like to happen next, closing (write on board).
22. Elicit appropriate language for each step (write on board).
23. Write a complaint based on real experience.
24. Peer edit.

* Start an example on the board if they need help

PHRASAL VERBS & IDIOMS:

Briefly review phrasal verb form and elicit a few examples. Give students a handful of new ones. You can keep some in your phone at all times. Groups create dialogues using the phrasal verbs. Can also use categorized idioms (i.e. idioms with animals).

* Can tailor dialogue to unit context.

GOSSIP (Reported Speech):

Pre-teach "gossip." Give students 1 minute to think of rumors they can tell about 3 classmates (can be true or false). Students go to any 3 classmates and whisper 1 rumor to each. Each student shares 1 rumor they heard (using reported speech), says whether they believe it, and the class can chime in.

WHAT IF... (2nd Conditional):

Write "What if..." on board. List hypothetical situations for students to discuss (i.e. ...you could meet one celebrity...you had to choose 1 city to live in forever, etc.).

Variations

1. Students make their own Q's in groups, then give their questions to another group.
2. Students write Q's individually to ask another student.

MIXER:

Students write 3 questions using unit context and/or target language. Each student goes to every classmate and asks the questions.

MODALS (Prediction & Speculation):

Write a few topics on the board (i.e. fashion trends, your job 10 years from now, your health, etc.). Ask students for more topics & write on board. Students make predictions about these topics in pairs or groups.

More topics:

Life on other planets, world population, human lifespan, communication technology, Facebook, McDonald's, Mac products, cure for cancer, pollution, computers, your love life, your children, your lifespan, your health, the environment, terraforming, surgery methods, world hunger, world language, your English skills, your best friend's career, your career, your city's crime rate, your location 10 years later, your child's behavior, your parenting style, your job 10 years later, your retirement age, your future travels, your spending this month, the next generation's lifestyle, next weekend, the weather this month

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