



REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION
KANE COUNTY

Regional Superintendent Patricia Dal Santo

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

in the classroom

Inclusive Welcome Activities & SEL Openers



Overview

This resource was developed to support an Illinois middle school to increase a “sense of belonging” amongst students and staff. With the guidance of the school leadership team, it was decided that all classroom teachers would commit to one Inclusive Welcome activity during the 2nd period of the day, 3 times per week.

Team leads were trained on how to effectively create and implement Inclusive Welcome activities in classrooms and were responsible for supporting their teams in this initiative; the resource shared with team leads was CASEL’s 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019).

An inclusive welcome can be:

-An activity to foster whole-group connection.

-A routine, such as a morning circle.

-A ritual, such as warmly greeting every student or meeting participant at the door.

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After weeks of implementation, teachers requested more examples and resources of Inclusive Welcome activities. Because of this, we gathered a comprehensive menu of Inclusive Welcome Activities & SEL Openers that applied to a variety of subject areas with a specific focus on middle school grades as this was our target audience.

Instead of providing a large list, it was determined that a more “teacher friendly” version be created. You will find in this resource a list of categories located on the Table of Contents page with links to ready-to-use “one-pager” activities detailing which of the 5 SEL Core Competencies are being addressed through the activity. The image below provides a visual representation of the 5 SEL Core Competencies:

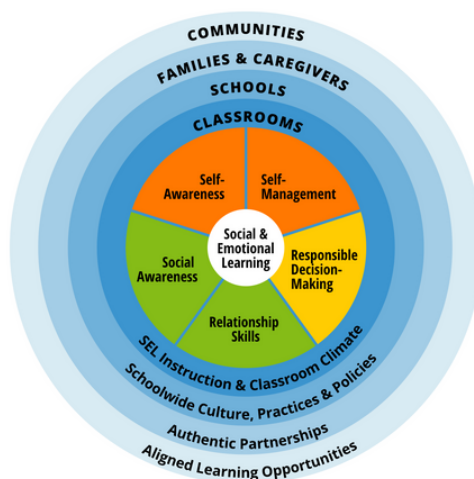


IMAGE: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) © 2024 CASEL.

We hope you enjoy this resource and see the benefits of using it within your classroom, school, or district.

-The Kane County Regional Office of Education Team



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Four Corners

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: Self-Management/Agency: Participants are encouraged to navigate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations to achieve goals and aspirations. Facilitators create an activity to help participants feel empowered to make choices and take actions for the common good.

Social Awareness/Belonging: Participants are encouraged to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. Facilitators create an experience that fosters acceptance, respect, and inclusion within a group or community.

STEPS

- 1. Reflect on the current contexts and demographics of your participants and the purpose of this engagement.*
- 2. Select a set of statements, images, or prompts that are engaging, diverse, respectful of participants' identities, and aligned to the content and context of the engagement. Mark four or more areas in the room and, in each, hang a large poster of one of the images or words from the chosen prompt.*
- 3. Preview the category and images/texts with the whole group (e.g., "Today we're going to look at four images and you'll choose the one that most closely reflects how you're feeling about your leadership, at this moment."). Participants silently reflect on all of the choices and select one that resonates with them.*
- 4. Invite participants to move to the corresponding "corner" of the room and take five minutes to share what drew them to that choice. Ask them to break into groups of up to four if there are more than five people in their 'corner.' If you end up with a solo participant in a "corner" or breakout room, join that person to hear their thoughts, using a timer to keep on track for bringing the group back together.*
- 5. Debrief with the whole group by inviting two or three participants to share their choice and rationale (or one person from each "corner"). If time permits, facilitate another debriefing question and then share why you chose this activity and how it is aligned with the purpose of this engagement. For example: Ask participants to reflect on their experience of doing the activity. What did they notice about their own thinking and feelings? What do they notice about the size and composition of the groups? What SEL competencies/focal constructs were evident during the activity?*

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Greeting Frenzy

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 1-5 Minutes

SEL Connection:

Social Awareness/Belonging: Participants are encouraged to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. Facilitators create an experience of acceptance, respect, and inclusion within a group or community.

Relationships/Collaborative Problem Solving: Participants have the opportunity to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships within the group and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. Facilitators create an activity where participants can build a shared understanding and work together to come to solutions by pooling knowledge, skills, and efforts.

STEPS

- 1. Reflect on the current contexts, demographics of participants, and the purpose of this engagement.*
- 2. Determine how the room can be set up to safely accommodate participants moving quickly around in the space.*
- 3. Participants will move around the room and greet as many people as possible within a set amount of time (determined by facilitator) with the invitation to:*
 - Make eye contact*
 - Share names*
 - Make a brief connection: handshake, high 5, fist or elbow bump (If not comfortable with a physical connection, participants can place a hand on their own heart).*
- 4. Invite participants who are not able to move easily to stay in place and others will come to them.*
- 5. Set the timer and use your previously agreed-upon attention signal to bring the room to full quiet before debriefing.*
- 6. Debrief by asking one or more of these questions: "How's your energy? Notice a lift in the room? (Elevate the physiological and emotional aspects noted by participants.) Why do you think that's the case?"*

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Name + Motion

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection:

Self-Awareness/Identity: Participants have an opportunity to understand their own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. Facilitators consider their own and participants' identities in the design of the practice.

Social Awareness/Belonging: Participants are encouraged to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. Facilitators create an experience of acceptance, respect, and inclusion within a group or community.

STEPS

1. *Reflect on the current contexts, demographics of participants, and the purpose of this engagement.*
2. *Determine how the room can be set up to accommodate everyone in a circle.*
3. *Share that the purpose of the activity is to learn each other's names and get to know one another while having fun. Mistakes, always a part of learning, are also part of the game.*
4. *Invite the group to form a circle and explain how the game works:*
 - Each person will take a turn saying their own name while making a motion that represents something they enjoy doing. (Facilitator models.)
 - Each participant in turn will repeat the names and gestures of those who have gone before, and then will add their own name and gesture. It's fine if what you choose happens to be chosen by someone else, too. We'll see if that happens!
 - Together, take a quiet moment to think of what we want to share and the gesture that will help people remember it.
 - Model again with your name and motion, e.g., "I'm Sara and I like to play basketball." (Pretend to throw a ball towards a hoop.)
 - Check for understanding. Then ask the person to your left to begin. Model by repeating their name and demonstrating their motion, and then adding your own.
 - When someone can't remember a name or motion, invite them to ask someone in the circle for help and thank that person for their assistance.
5. *Debrief by asking one or more of these questions:*
 - "What is important about knowing each other's names?"
 - "What was it like for you to participate in this?"
 - "Were there any surprises?"
 - "How did you feel when a mistake was made?"
 - "What's something you had in common with someone?"
 - "What is something several people in the group had in common?"

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1, 2, 3, CLAP!

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 7-10 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity builds skills in Self-Awareness (Accurate Self-Perception), Self-Management (Impulse Control), and Building Relationship Skills (Working Cooperatively), and demonstrates how making mistakes together can be a fast track to generous, creative collaboration.

STEPS

The same partners face each other during each of the three rounds.

Round 1:

- 1. Ask participants to find a partner (in any way that is appropriate).*
- 2. Explain that pairs will count to three over and over again, with each player saying the next number in the sequence.*
- 3. Model slowly with a partner.*
- 4. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the game to a close with your agreed upon attention signal. Ask, "How many of you made a mistake?" "What did you do when you made a mistake?" (Common answers: "Laughed" or "Said sorry" or "Pulled back.")*
- 5. Explain that these are all ways that people give cues to the group that say, "I've got this. I'll laugh at myself or apologize as my way of handling making a mistake."*
- 6. Tell the group that during the next round, whenever they make a mistake, they should raise their hands in the air and say, "Tah-dah!"*

Round 2:

- 1. Explain that for this round, pairs should replace the number "1" with a clap and then continue the number sequence "2-3" counted out loud (Clap-2-3, Clap-2-3, etc.).*
- 2. Model slowly with a partner. During the modeling purposefully make a mistake, such as saying "1" instead of clapping after "3." Raise your hands in the air and say, "Tah-dah!"*
- 3. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, use your attention signal to call the round to a close. Ask, "Was anyone glad that they weren't the one making a mistake?"*
- 4. Tell the group that in the next round when one person makes a mistake, both partners will raise their hands in the air, give each other a double high-five, and both say, "Tah-dah!"*

Round 3:

- 1. Explain that in this round, participants should clap for "1," replace the number "2" with a foot stomp, and say "3." (Clap, stomp, 3; Clap, stomp, 3; etc.).*
- 2. Model this with a partner and purposefully make a mistake, such as saying "2" instead of stomping. You and your partner now give each other double high-fives and shout, "Tah-dah!" together, and start over again.*
- 3. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the round to a close with your attention signal.*

Debrief by:

- Asking participants what they noticed (e.g., that they were taking care of each other, were learning to sync with each other, finding the right pace for everyone to succeed, etc.)*
- Noting aloud the positive energy that was created with each mistake in the group, explaining that they will be working together for the next [time period], and encouraging them to keep that same energy when mistakes are made. Tah-dah!*

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Mix + Mingle

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 1-5 / 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection:

Self-Awareness/Identity: Participants have an opportunity to understand their own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. Facilitators consider their own and participants' identities in the design of the practice.

Relationships/Collaborative Problem Solving: Participants have the opportunity to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships within the group and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. Facilitators create an activity where participants can build a shared understanding and work together to come to solutions by pooling knowledge, skills, and efforts.

STEPS

- 1. Reflect on the current contexts, demographics of participants, and the purpose of the engagement. Determine how the room can be set up to safely accommodate participants moving quickly around in the space.*
- 2. This is a lively activity featuring movement and conversation. You'll want to establish an attention signal before beginning the activity.*
- 3. Invite participants to think about or write down a response to a prompt that is related to the topic at hand. If the group is just getting to know one another, begin with low-vulnerability prompts such as, "What did you do for fun yesterday?", "What have you read or watched recently that you enjoyed?", or something connected to upcoming work like "What's one thing you know already about (or are interested in finding out about) _____?"*
- 4. When you announce, "Mix and mingle!" and turn on music, participants move around the room.*
- 5. When the music stops, participants will find a partner near them and share responses for two minutes. Encourage everyone to be mindful of equity of voice. (Assist with pairing as needed.)*
- 6. Partners each share their response to one of the questions, listen actively to each other, and then ask follow-up questions as time permits.*
- 7. Start the music again and repeat the sequence for another round or two, as time permits.*
- 8. Debrief with the whole group by asking one or more of these questions:
What were some of the things you appreciate about doing this activity?
What was challenging about it?
What SEL skills did you use?*

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Synectics

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection:

Self-Management/Agency: Participants are encouraged to navigate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations to achieve goals and aspirations. Facilitators create an activity to help participants feel empowered to make choices and take actions for the common good.

Relationship Skills/Collaborative Problem Solving: Participants have the opportunity to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships within the group and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. Facilitators create an activity where participants can build a shared understanding and work together to come to solutions by pooling knowledge, skills, and efforts.

STEPS

- 1. Reflect on the current contexts, demographics of participants, and the purpose of this engagement. Then select the image(s) that are a good fit.*
- 2. Images from nature (bodies of water, animals, geographic formations) can often be an effective neutral starting point. Images that are from the local area, have cultural significance, or are particularly relevant to your group may generate even more energy and interest.*
- 3. Share the image or set of images with the group. If offering a set of images, ask that each person select one image that resonates with them. Explain that the goal is to complete the sentence stem: "[Given topic] is like [selected image] because...".*
- 4. Participants generate and record as many comparisons between the image and the topic as possible in two minutes, in small groups or individually.*
- 5. If brainstorming is done individually, participants review their lists and choose one to share and discuss with a partner.*
- 6. In the whole group, invite several people to share their similes aloud.*
- 7. Debrief the activity in the whole group with some or all of these questions:
How did it feel to do this activity?
What did you learn?
How might what we learned impact our work together today?*

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What's the News?

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 1-5 / 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection:

Self-Awareness/Identity: Participants have an opportunity to understand their own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. Facilitators consider their own and participants' identities in the design of the practice.

Social Awareness/Belonging: Participants are encouraged to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. Facilitators create an experience of acceptance, respect, and inclusion within a group or community.

STEPS

- 1. Reflect on the current contexts, demographics of participants, and the purpose of this engagement.*
- 2. Decide on the amount of time you have and determine if participants will be sharing in a group or with a partner.*
- 3. Ask participants to find a partner or small group in a way that is appropriate for your group today.*
- 4. Give participants a moment to think of what they want to share.*
- 5. Explain that each person will invite their partner to share their news by first saying their partner's name and then asking them, "(Name), what's the news?" Speakers share their news while their partner (or the group) attentively listens, without comment or questions.*
- 6. Tell participants they have one minute to talk and that you will let them know when it is time to switch roles.*
- 7. Give pairs a moment to decide who will go first. Ask the starting partners to raise their hand to make sure everyone is ready, then give the go-ahead to begin.*
- 8. At the end of a minute, use your regular attention signal to bring the room to quiet and let participants know it is time to switch roles.*
- 9. After partners have shared, ask them to reflect with each other or with the whole group: "How was it to share and listen to one another?" (Remind before sharing starts that this is NOT sharing the personal story, but reflecting and commenting on the process.)*

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Fist to Five

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 1-5 Minutes

SEL Connection:

Social Awareness/Belonging: Participants are encouraged to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts. Facilitators create an experience of acceptance, respect, and inclusion within a group or community.

Relationships/Collaborative Problem Solving: Participants have the opportunity to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships within the group and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. Facilitators create an activity where participants can build a shared understanding and work together to come to solutions by pooling knowledge, skills, and efforts.

STEPS

1. Reflect on the current contexts, demographics of participants, and the purpose of this engagement.

2. Carefully select the prompt to match the group and anticipated level of engagement.

For example:

How ready are you to be here today?

How is your day going so far?

How are you feeling today?

What is your level of understanding about _____ (topic)?

3. Preview how the activity works, sharing that you are going to ask them a question and that they will have time to think before you ask them to silently show their response with fingers on a raised hand (MODEL) with five being the highest level of agreement and a fist being the lowest. (MODEL)

4. Ask the prompting question, invite participants to think silently for a moment about their response, and request that they respond in unison upon your invitation to "1, 2, 3, SHOW."

Invite participants to look around when all hands are in the air and note the range of responses. 5.

Reflect aloud how you will use this information to inform your facilitation. This might include

shifting the pace to match the energy in the room or checking for understanding more frequently.

Invite participants to reflect silently on how their contributions can support others based on the responses they see.

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Developing Your Own Activities

Source: CASEL - SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool That Supports Systemic SEL (2019) + SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook (2024)

Time: 5-10 Minutes

SEL Connection: Depending on the activity developed, participants have the opportunity to build: Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making, Relationship Skills, Social Awareness, or Self Awareness skills.

Possibilities abound for other activities that you can use, whether you find activities from other sources or create new ones. Keep in mind these goals for each activity:

Welcoming/Inclusion Activities, Routines and Rituals: Creating a climate of inclusion, belonging, and connection.

- *Everyone's voice is heard by at least one other person.*
- *There is an element of personal choice.*
- *The activity matches the purpose and needs of participants.*
- *Whenever possible, each person is welcomed by name.*

Establish a culture of agreement that it is always okay to pass. Encourage participants to verbally say "Pass" or "Please come back to me" if that is their choice today.

STEPS

Planning Template

Welcoming/Inclusion Activity

TITLE

Source

Time: 5-10 minutes

Overview:

When and Why:

SEL Focus:

Steps:

Debrief:

Modifications and Variations:

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Rapid Review

Source: Edutopia - 14 Effective Opening and Closing Routines for Teachers by Andrew Boryga on August 25, 2023

Time: 90 Seconds

SEL Connection: This activity encompasses all 5 of the SEL competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. Students have to be aware of themselves and their peers throughout the entirety of this activity, as well as collaborate with their peers to come to a consensus which requires agency.

STEPS

Have students quickly huddle with a classmate, summarize their learning from the previous class, and then present it to the larger group.

High school world history teacher Henry Seton recommends previewing a question—such as “what are John Locke’s views on private property?”—to get students going, and give them 90 seconds to turn and talk before each pair presents to the larger group.

The activity is a quick way to get students warmed up, to practice retrieval, and to give you a view into what they recall from the previous day’s lesson.

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Bait + Switch

Source: Edutopia - 14 Effective Opening and Closing Routines for Teachers by Andrew Boryga on August 25, 2023

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity allows students to practice Self-Management and Responsible Decision-Making as they determine the correct answers to questions and reflection on the choices that they made.

STEPS

Help kids confront—and debunk—common misconceptions about the topics they’re learning with a fun quiz activity used by education professor Curtis Chandler.

For a lesson about oceans, for example, Chandler says misconceptions might include statements like “all oceans have the same salinity,” or “nothing lives in anoxic mud.”

Give students a quick true/false quiz with these seemingly plausible, but incorrect statements. Unpacking the real answers after the quiz, Chandler says, is an effective way to preview the day’s lesson, and help students take on potentially tricky content without realizing it.

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Informational Hooks

Source: Edutopia - 14 Effective Opening and Closing Routines for Teachers by Andrew Boryga on August 25, 2023

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity builds Self-Awareness as many types of media can produce a variety of emotions within students. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on one's opinions and feelings about particular current events which shapes our identity.

STEPS

These can be any type of short, targeted media or text related to the topic at hand: YouTube videos, clips from a podcast, news headlines, or photos, for example.

The idea is that the material, presented without context, will “hook” students attention, but not distract from the lesson, Chandler writes.

Rebecca Alber, an instructor at UCLA’s Graduate School of Education suggests finding a provocative quote about one of the subjects of your study—a historical figure in history class, a scientist in science class, an author in English class, for example—and asking students to write responses to prompts such as: “What is the meaning of this statement?” or “How can you connect this statement to something happening in the world at the time it was said?” If the quote is sufficiently meaty, you can follow up with a five minute debate leveraging their thinking.

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Vocabulary Splashes

Source: Edutopia - 14 Effective Opening and Closing Routines for Teachers by Andrew Boryga on August 25, 2023

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity supports students to use Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making as they will be discussing with peers and supporting their decisions with opinions and evidence.

STEPS

Vocabulary splashes: Provide students with key vocabulary terms for the unit they're studying—you can mix terms from previous classes with new terms they're about to encounter—along with brief definitions, and have students sort the words in any way that makes sense to them.

Before you lead a discussion about the terms, students can turn and talk for a few minutes, or meet with a small group and discuss their sorting rationales and compare and contrast their respective methods. The activity, Chandler writes, allows teachers to preview “the most crucial” vocabulary terms they'll need to know, and also helps students establish connections between terms that will prove useful down the line.

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Low Stakes Quizzes

Source: Edutopia - 14 Effective Opening and Closing Routines for Teachers by Andrew Boryga on August 25, 2023

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity offers a safe place for students to practice Self-Management in what can be a stressful or anxious situation: testing. In addition, reflecting on strengths and areas of growth is a great way to build Self-Awareness.

STEPS

Low stakes quizzes (and pre-quizzes): Quizzes and practice tests help students gauge their understanding of recently learned material, and identify areas of strength and areas where they need to grow. To use quizzes effectively as openers, research suggests it's better to keep them low-stakes (or no-stakes!). This will reduce anxiety and allow students to focus on recalling information.

Although it sounds odd to test students on material before they've learned it, research shows that pre-testing students is surprisingly effective. According to the 2021 study, students who took a pretest outperformed peers who studied more traditionally by 49 percent on a follow-up test. Researchers concluded the mistakes students make on pretests prove useful in motivating them to "search for the correct answers" when they actually encounter the new material.

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Brain Dump

Source: Edutopia - 14 Effective Opening and Closing Routines for Teachers by Andrew Boryga on August 25, 2023

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity promotes Self-Management as students work to activate background knowledge within a specific time frame with the opportunity to practice Relationship Skills in groups.

STEPS

Giving students just a minute or two to write down everything they know—or think they know—about a specific topic or question you’re about to teach is a simple, flexible tool to test their knowledge. You can also use this approach to create longer term retention of material they’ve recently learned. To make group work out of it, ask students to compare their work and identify gaps, similarities, and differences, for example.

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Face the Music

Source: We Are Teachers - 25 Fun and Easy SEL Activities To Boost Social Skills by
Patty McGee, November 9th, 2021

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity promotes agency and creativity. It helps students make connections between their daily lives (through music) and the skills related to Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making in an engaging way!

STEPS

As many agree, music is the language of the soul. Challenge students to find songs that inspire positive coping skills, gratitude, accountability, conflict resolution, relationship building, self-efficacy, resiliency, and self-motivation to boost these essential skills through SEL activities. (Grades 6-12)

[Here is the link to access the templates.](#)

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Create a Peace Place

Source: We Are Teachers - 25 Fun and Easy SEL Activities To Boost Social Skills by
Patty McGee, November 9th, 2021

Time: 10-15 Minutes (initially)

SEL Connection: Establishing a Peace Place in your classroom gives your students a way to manage their feelings without your direct intervention. It helps them learn to recognize their feelings and empowers them to come up with strategies to calm themselves down which aligns to the SEL Core Competencies Self-Awareness and Self-Management

STEPS

Begin with a quick brainstorm and charting of feelings that children have when they are ready to learn (focused, curious, calm, etc.) and then when they do not feel ready to learn (anxious, angry, scared, etc.).

Explain that there are ways to calm down when you're feeling upset or angry that rely on mechanisms built into our bodies. Deep breathing, stretching, and tensing and releasing our muscles all help to bring calming.

Introduce Three Strategies for Calming Down

Practice each of these strategies a few times. Begin by asking students to rate how relaxed they feel on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being VERY relaxed and 1 being VERY tense). Check in after each activity again. Was there any change? (www.gonoodle.com has fun, free video content to use for these strategies)

- 1) Deep Breathing*
- 2) Stretching*
- 3) Tense and Release*

Brainstorm:

"What are additional ways, other than deep breathing, stretching, and tensing and releasing that you can calm yourself down when you're angry or upset? These may be things you can do in the Peace Place to help yourself calm down."

Write down all the students' contributions on chart paper. Some ideas to include are: draw, read, write in a journal, write to a friend, think of people you care about, distract yourself with a puzzle, hug a stuffed animal, squeeze a stress ball, close your eyes and picture a place you love to be, etc. (Note: as time goes on add to and refine this list. Post it in your Peace Place.)

Now brainstorm what should be included in the Peace Place.

"If the Peace Place is to be a good place to calm yourself down when you're upset, what things will we want to include in that space (stress ball, stuffed animals, pictures of nature, an hourglass timer, etc.)? Where should our Peace Place be? How should we decorate it?" Be sure to keep the discussion focused on how these decisions support the Peace Place being a good place for calming down.

Discuss: When and how will we know that it is ok to go to the Peace Place?

Here are some possible guidelines:

- Going to the Peace Place is voluntary and only for when you truly need it.*
- You have to tell the teacher you are going (this could be an agreed upon non-verbal signal).*
- One person at a time.*
- Set a time limit of perhaps five minutes and use a timer.*

Explain that someone does not have to be angry, worried, sad, or upset to go to the Peace Place. Sometimes a five minute break at the right time can be helpful in managing one's feelings or be a time to think about something that is bothering you before reacting.

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Perfect Picture Books

Source: We Are Teachers - 25 Fun and Easy SEL Activities To Boost Social Skills by
Patty McGee, November 9th, 2021

Time: 10 Minutes

SEL Connection: Read Alouds can be used at any age to teach skills to students in a non-threatening way as well as promote literacy. Depending on the text selected, Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, or Responsible Decision-Making skills can be built through this activity.

STEPS

Maria Walther, author of The Read Aloud Handbook, said, "What did we do when we all had to isolate ourselves at the onset of the pandemic? We read aloud books to one another." And she was right! Authors, teachers, celebrities, and more recorded themselves reading picture books. Why? Because [picture books help us deal with hard things](#). They also help us grow socially and emotionally. (Grades K-12)

[Link to 5 sample lessons](#)

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Empathy Learning Journeys

Source: We Are Teachers - 25 Fun and Easy SEL Activities To Boost Social Skills by
Patty McGee, November 9th, 2021

Time: 8 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity provides students with prompts to reflect upon in order to change their perspective and increase Social Awareness. Using the question guide, students are encouraged to discuss issues impacting their community which increases Relationship Skills.

STEPS

Created by Better World Ed, this resource seamlessly integrates SEL and global competence into academic learning. Through a trio of wordless videos, written story, and an accompanying lesson plan, Better World Ed has created a positively binge-worthy set of resources. (Grades 3-12)

[Shantanu Builds Community: Better Together Video](#)
[Shantanu Builds Community Lesson Plan](#)

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Just Breathe

Source: We Are Teachers - 25 Fun and Easy SEL Activities To Boost Social Skills by
Patty McGee, November 9th, 2021

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This short breathing activity that can be done anywhere, by anyone, at any time of day. The ideal tool when you find yourself needing a time out, some insight or just want a brain-break. Being over-stimulated, too busy or completely stressed out can hinder one's ability to be fully Self-Aware. Breathing mindfully and focusing on the natural flow of the breath offers a new way of relating to moment-to-moment experiences.

STEPS

A free, always available, ever-reliable resource to every human is their breath. Knowing ways to harness the breath is extremely helpful for self-management and building resilience. It may sound simple, and it is, but it is one of the most powerful tools we can teach students how to use. (Grades 6-12)

Activity:

Lead the Take Five breathing practice by playing the recording or reading the instructions [below](#). Once the activity has concluded, give the participant(s) a moment to reflect on how they feel. After a brief pause, engage the participant(s) in a dialogue, using the conversation starters as a jumping off point.

Take Five Practice Instructions

- 1. Sit in a comfortable position and allow both soles of the feet to connect to the floor.*
- 2. The intention of TAKE FIVE is to breathe in and breathe out, noticing the whole length of the breath for five times.*
- 3. Turn one hand palm up to the ceiling. This will be your counting hand.*
- 4. At the end of each breath cycle, which is one inhale and one exhale, you will fold one finger into the palm of your hand until all five fingers are folded.*
- 5. When you have completed five breath cycles, slowly bring your attention back to your surroundings and notice how you feel.*

Conversation Starters

- Describe your experience of TAKE FIVE with one word or image.*
- Name a situation in which the TAKE FIVE breathing practice would be a useful skill.*

<https://rethinkkit.org/pages/take-five>

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The Greatest Gift is Ourselves

Source: We Are Teachers - 25 Fun and Easy SEL Activities To Boost Social Skills by
Patty McGee, November 9th, 2021

Time: 10-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: This lesson focuses on what is called the “4 Awesome Questions.” These questions help students reflect on their interactions with others by building their Social Awareness and Relationship Skills.

STEPS

Folktales, including this one from Japan, continually remind us that each of us brings the greatest gifts to the world—ourselves. This timeless, ageless activity reminds us that through empathy and goodwill, we can all make the world a better place. (Grades K-12)

The Rabbit in the Moon is a Japanese folktale that teaches the importance of sharing with those less fortunate and the power of self sacrifice. It is an amazing story to foster empathy and good will.

The video introduces the 4 Awesome Questions:

Before we act, first ask . . . Is it True? Is it Fair? Will it build better Friendship and Community? Will it be Helpful to those involved? Audio follows the text for the story and ends with open ended questions to foster a relevant ethical discussion and critical thinking.

This is a complete social/ emotional learning lesson for all ages. More free story lessons can be found at <https://www.epicethics.org/lessons>

To aid with documentation, the form below allows students (perhaps with the help of an instructor) to demonstrate their Social/Emotional/ Ethical thinking. The form can be filled out individually or as a group. A copy of the document will be sent to the email address entered.

Rabbit in the Moon Assessment

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Mindfulness

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: As students practice mindfulness, they are increasing Self-Management; the ability to choose and act to improve conditions for ourselves and others. In addition, they are fostering a sense of Self-Awareness as they pause and recognize their thoughts and feelings.

STEPS

The [*benefits of mindfulness range from improved working memory to stress reduction*](#). Here are two ways Aukeem Ballard, an HCC teacher, facilitates mindfulness:

- *Visualization to release stress: Have your students imagine what stress looks and feels like inside their body, and then ask them to release it. "The mindfulness practice makes you think the stress is coming off your body," says Geoffrey, a 12th-grade student.*
- *Noise isolation: There are a variety of sounds that your students hear when they're in your classroom, from students walking in the hallway to outdoor construction noise. Have your students focus on one noise and describe it to themselves and recall the last time they interacted with it.*

To get more tips, check out Ballard's [*"When Mindfulness Feels Like a Necessity."*](#)

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Name the Emotion

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: As students share their emotions, it creates a safe place to contribute to the classroom community which increases Social Awareness.

STEPS

Have each student call out the emotion they're feeling. This helps each student know how they and other students are feeling, what different emotions look like, and how to better interact with their peers based on how they're feeling.

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Write it Down, Rip it Up

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 3 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity incorporates student voice at the beginning of class; when students have a voice, their sense of belonging increases and therefore Social Awareness.

STEPS

Have your students write down their expectations and insecurities, rip them up, and throw them away. This emotional check-in takes about three minutes. By acknowledging how your students are feeling at the start of each class, you'll acknowledge their barriers to learning and create a safe space for your students to overcome them.

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Growth Mindset Share Out

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity provides students with an opportunity to reflect on how their mindset has impacted their actions. When students have an opportunity to reflect and share out, it increases collaborative problem solving which is a component of Relationship Skills.

STEPS

Growth mindset vs. fixed mindset share-out: Have your students share moments when they have demonstrated a growth and fixed mindset.

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Quote of the Day

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity allows students to create a sense of community through shared experiences while also providing an opportunity to voice opinions and differences in a safe place. This increases identity, a component of Self-Awareness, and well as belonging, a component of Social Awareness.

STEPS

Introduce a quote relevant to what your students are learning or to a shared experience—for example, an act of violence in the community. You can facilitate a whole-class discussion, group students into pairs, or have each student share a one-word response to the quote. This gives students the space to reflect on their beliefs and experiences and whether they agree or disagree with the quote and other students' opinions, and it gives them insight into their peers' perspectives and feelings.

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Where We Came From

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: In this activity, students will get to share their identity (Self-Awareness) using a photo/memory from the past; this allows them to reflect on how our past shapes us and can also contribute to our future!

STEPS

Collect baby pictures from your students. Project one baby picture at the start of class, have your students guess who it is, and then have the featured student share something about their childhood.

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Starting Positive

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: As students participate in this activity, they get the opportunity to connect with others and hear feedback from their peers on positive character traits they possess. As a result, students will increase Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

Have each student tape a sheet of paper to their back and then walk around and write positive qualities about their peers on their backs.

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Motivational Moment

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity mimics “show and tell” but is used in the context of a different age group. It provides students with an opportunity to showcase their interests and hear about the interests of others to increase Social Awareness.

STEPS

Have two students start the class with a three- to five-minute presentation—and come up with two or three discussion questions—based on their interests. The presentation must be related to the course content in a real-world context. “Many students include a video for visuals and increased engagement, but it’s optional,” says Ching. Have the rest of the class partner up to discuss their questions for one minute and then give them the opportunity to share out to the whole class. This exercise gives your students insight into their peers’ interests.

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Circle Sharing

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: As students share in circles they will need to be aware of themselves and others throughout the entire process (Self Awareness and Social Awareness) as they listen and respond to one another. Depending on the topic discussed, Relationships Skills may need to be used as students collaboratively solve problems.

STEPS

To encourage active listening, create small groups. Have your students position their chairs in a circle so everyone can make eye contact. To strengthen empathy, you can facilitate deeper discussion around what a student shares by asking, “Why did that student share what they did?” or “What perspective is that student coming from?”

When discussing emotionally charged topics, it’s important to have guidelines to foster a safe space. Summit uses the [Courageous Conversation](#) protocol created by [Glenn E. Singleton](#) when discussing race. The protocol is guided by four agreements—stay engaged, experience discomfort, speak your truth, and expect and accept nonclosure. Here is an example of [elementary school discussion guidelines](#) from School 21.

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Poetry

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity is all about perspective-taking which can be challenging for students. Using poetry as a means to “walk in someone else’s shoes” is a great way to build Social Awareness.

STEPS

Write a poem from someone else’s perspective. Have your students choose someone they don’t know. This helps them to understand that they don’t “need to be best friends with someone to empathize with them,” explains Ballard.

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New Conversation

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity requires students to actively listen as they get to know their peers. They must practice interviewing one another and listening for understanding in order to be able to share the information with the rest of the class; it's a great way to build Social Awareness and Relationship Skills especially if students are paired with someone they don't know very well.

STEPS

Have your students pair up with a student they don't know and provide the pairs with five questions to ask each other. Each student introduces their partner to the class, speaking as if they were their partner, while the rest of the class looks at the student being introduced. "We don't see people sometimes," says Ballard, "and this exercise helps students to see each other more deeply."

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Interest/Identity Bingo

Source: Edutopia - 13 Powerful SEL Activities: Build social and emotional skills into any class by Emelina Minero, February 14th, 2017

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity creates an environment for students to talk with one another about their interests and qualities. Not only does it help to build students' Self Awareness, but it also increases their Social-Awareness as they learn more about their peers.

STEPS

Instead of squares filled with numbers or vocabulary words, create cards with information relating to your students. Summit's Bingo cards have things like "I like to read" or "I was born in a different country," says Armando, a ninth-grade student.

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2, 4, 6 Puzzle

Source: Math for Love - Openers © Copyright 2020 Math for Love.

Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity builds a sense of belonging as students work together to determine the pattern the teacher has posted on the board. Students will be building their Relationship Skills as they work together to solve a problem.

STEPS

The teacher challenges the class to guess a rule that she knows. To find it, they can offer triples of numbers and she'll tell them whether they fit the rule or not. To start, she puts forward the triple 2, 4, 6, and announces that it fits the rule. The class guesses for as long as they want. When everyone is convinced that they're sure what the rule is, they can guess. However, they're only allowed one guess per day, so if they're wrong, they have to wait until tomorrow to have another shot at finding out what the rule is. What's the rule? The numbers have to be in ascending order. So 8, 10, 12 follows the rule, but so does -1, 121, 130.5. On the other hand, 2, 2, 3 and 3, 2, 1 fail. Sometimes students will guess the rule in 10 minutes, sometimes it will take much longer, and sometimes people will be convinced that there's a much more complicated rule that explains their data. But once students get the idea to guess sequences that will break their theories rather than support them, forward progress becomes inevitable!

When students are ready to make their guess, let them. If it's right, tell them. If it's wrong, stop the game for the day, and say they can come back to it later. This will teach them to take their guess seriously. What this game shows is that we all have a tendency to avoid "wrong" guesses, and favor safe guesses, which will follow the rule. Having a discussion about which guesses were most useful can be fascinating. Often, it was the guess that seemed ludicrous at the time that actually proved the most helpful. Being willing to be wrong, and taking feedback as data rather than as judgment, in other words, lets us learn faster. This lesson is so valuable in a math class that it can be worth doing this game early to set a positive tone.

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Broken Calculator

Source: Math for Love - Openers © Copyright 2020 Math for Love.

Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity supports students to develop their math identity as well as use what they know to come up with creative solutions to problems; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Self Management as they develop answers.

STEPS

The teacher puts up a target number on the board. She tells students that they can come up with any way to make this number that they want on an (imaginary) calculator that has some broken buttons. They should come up with as many ways as they can, but any using the broken button won't count. The teacher gives the students a minute or two to think up and write down solutions, then calls on students to share their answers with the class.

Example problem. The target number is 21. The broken keys are 0, 1, and 2. That means students can use the keys 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, +, -, x, / to make 21. How will they do it?

Selected solutions. $(9 - 6) \times 7 = 21$ $98 - 77 = 21$ $33 - 7 - 5 = 21$ An example like $16 + 5 = 21$ is a faulty solution, since you entered the key "1" to make 16. The teacher can make up examples, or even roll dice to create the target and the restrictions.

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Counterexamples

Source: Math for Love - Openers © Copyright 2020 Math for Love.

Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: Throughout this activity, students are asked to share their answers with the class as well as explain their thinking. Because of this, Relationship Skills are built. Students must work together and build off one another in order to prove the teacher wrong.

STEPS

Counterexamples is a fun, quick way to highlight how to disprove conjectures by finding a counterexample. The leader (usually the teacher, though it can be a student) makes a false statement that can be proven false with a counterexample. The group tries to think of a counterexample that proves it false.

The best statements usually have the form "All _____s are _____" or "No _____s are _____." You can also play around with statements like "If it has _____, then it can _____."

For instance:

All birds can fly. (Counterexample: penguins)

No books have pictures in them.

All books have pictures in them.

If something produces light, then it is a light bulb.

If something has stripes, then it is a zebra.

No square has a perimeter equal to its area. (Counterexample: a 4 by 4 square.)

Multiply two numbers and you end up with a product greater than both the numbers you started with.

The factors of a number (not including itself) add up to less than that number. I.e., 16 has factors 1, 2, 4, and 8. Their sum is 15, which is less than 16. See here for more on this example. If a rectangle's perimeter is not an integer, neither is its area.

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Fraction Talks

Source: Math for Love - Openers © Copyright 2020 Math for Love.

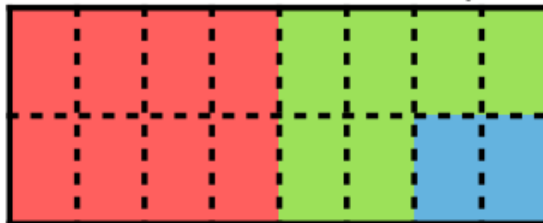
Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity requires students to think, discuss, and defend their answers to the class; this builds Self Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Skills.

STEPS

Display a picture that represents a fractional relationship or relationships. Students consider the fraction being represented, then, after a brief “think time,” argue why they think the fraction is what they believe it to be. The teacher can facilitate the student discussion, underline powerful ideas, and encourage students to share multiple ways to solve problems.

Example:



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Fraction Talks - Pattern Blocks

Source: Math for Love - Openers © Copyright 2020 Math for Love.

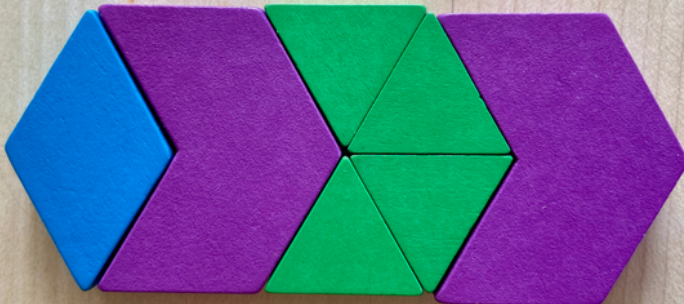
Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity requires students to think, discuss, and defend their answers to the class; this builds Self Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Skills.

STEPS

The prompt: "What fraction is each color of the whole?"
Students get 1 - 2 minutes to think and discuss.
Then take volunteers to defend an answer.
Ideally, there will be multiple approaches to find the same result.

Example:
This image is $\frac{1}{7}$ blue
 $\frac{2}{7}$ green
And $\frac{4}{7}$ purple



I might imagine covering the entire image with rhombuses to see it would take seven of them.



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Number Talks

Source: Math for Love - Openers © Copyright 2020 Math for Love.

Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: Throughout this activity, students are asked to share their answers with the class as well as explain their thinking. Because of this, Relationship Skills are built as the teacher does not give any indication that the solutions are correct or incorrect. Students must work together and build off one another instead of relying solely on the teacher.

STEPS

If you implement one type of activity into your class routine, Number Talks might be the most bang for your buck. In many ways, they're familiar. The teacher writes a simple problem down on the board, and students solve it mentally. The difference is that the students aren't just looking for the answer: they're trying to find as many different ways to solve the problem as they can. The key elements to number talks are a de-emphasis on speed and right answers and an added emphasis on process and communication.

- 1. The teacher writes a problem on the board. It can be as simple (like $9 + 17$) or complex ($500 - 24$) as long as it is appropriate as a mental math problem for the class.*
- 2. Students mentally solve the problem. They show the teacher whether they have the answer by (quietly) giving a thumbs up at their chest. This prevents a small batch of quick students from shutting everyone else down. If students can come up with a second way to solve the problem, they hold up a second finger at their chest. This means that everyone can keep thinking about the problem even after they have the answer.*
- 3. Students share their answers. After enough time has passed that everyone or nearly everyone has a solution, the teacher asks students what their solutions are. She writes down all solutions; none are given preferential treatment, and she doesn't say whether they are right or wrong.*
- 4. Students explain their thinking. Once all solutions are written down, the teacher asks students to explain how they got their solution. Students explain (from their seat) while the teacher writes the steps they describe on the board.*
- 5. Discussion and consensus. Ideally, by the end of the discussion, the class should have a list of 3-6 different approaches to the problem, plus a consensus as to what the correct answer is.*
- 6. Followup. The teacher then has the option to ask a follow-up question that builds on the last. (If $9 + 17$ was the first question, $9 + 27$ or $19 + 17$ might be good follow-ups.)*

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Target Number

Source: Math for Love - Openers © Copyright 2020 Math for Love.

Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: As students participate in this activity they will have the opportunity to advocate for their solutions which falls under the Self Management Component of the 5 SEL Core Competencies. Agency is promoted as students offer solutions to the problem presented.

STEPS

The teacher writes a “target” number on the board. The students try to write down as many different number sentences that have the target number as the answer. Then students share their favorite answers. For younger students, drawing different pictures or arrangements of ways to see/understand that number is an ok alternative.

Example:

The teacher writes 7 on the board, and lets kids write on their own paper for about a minute, then asks students to share what they found. Students raise their hands to volunteer solutions while the teacher writes them on the board. These equations may go from simple equations like $6 + 1 = 7$ to the more complex $(4 \times 3) - 5 = 7$. The great thing is, anyone can start, but the sky's the limit!

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Unit Chats

Source: Math for Love - Openers © Copyright 2020 Math for Love.

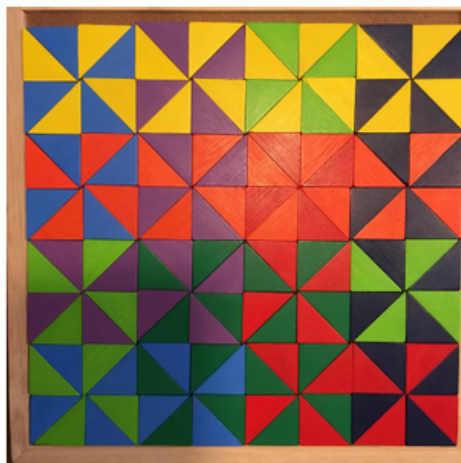
Time: 5-15 Minutes

SEL Connection: As students participate in this activity they will have the opportunity to engage in collaborative problem solving as a class which falls under the Relationship Skills Component of the 5 SEL Core Competencies. Students must listen to one another in order to find solutions to the problem.

STEPS

Post a Unit Chat image. It should have different kinds of objects to count in it, and be arranged in arrays or other structures as appropriate for the student level. Students get some time to look at what is in the picture, and how many of which objects they see. After they've had 20 - 60 seconds to look, ask students what they see. You'll receive different answers about what they saw, and how many. You can ask students to explain different ways of counting what they saw, and also different things that they see to count in the picture.

Example:



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AP + US Government Key Terms

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: As students participate in this activity they will have the opportunity to engage in collaborative problem solving as a class which falls under the Relationship Skills Component of the 5 SEL Core Competencies. Students must listen to one another in order to find solutions to the problem.

STEPS

(Full List: [AP U.S. Government Key Terms](#))

SAMPLE

Civic Engagement Statistics

The Center for American Progress and Generation Citizen hosted a panel discussion about improving civics education and preparing students to become more politically engaged. Former Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) delivered keynote remarks about his efforts on this issue.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?16931>

DESCRIPTION

Former Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) provides statistics from 2018 and trends of youth civic engagement. In this bellringer, students will be able to identify types of civic participation, use data to analyze trends in data, and discuss if lack of engagement is a concern.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

What examples of civic engagement does former Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) provide?

What trends does the data provided by former Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) suggest?

Did any of the statistics surprise you? How or how not?

Is lack of engagement a problem? Why or why not?

How can we increase youth engagement in civics?

[Worksheet](#)

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Bureaucracy + Regulation

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Bureaucracy & Regulation](#))

SAMPLE

Paid Sick Leave

Economic Policy Institute's Senior Economist Elise Gould talked about paid sick leave in the United States.

Videos: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21913>

DESCRIPTION

Economic Policy Institute's Senior Economist Elise Gould talked about her group's report on paid sick leave access and statewide legislative actions on the issue.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

CLIP #1: What is the "mission" of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), and why is the organization focusing on paid sick days?

CLIP #1: Based on the clip, describe the current access to paid sick days in the United States. What trend has occurred over the last 10-15 years, and why?

CLIP #1: Why is paid sick leave "good for businesses," and how do paid sick days compare to "other forms of leave?"

CLIP #1: When was there a "will" to expand paid sick leave?

CLIP #2: According to Elise Gould, which areas of the country have the most and least generous paid sick leave policies? Explain.

CLIP #2: Why is unpaid leave "not enough," and why is future federal legislation required?

EXTENSION: Access EPI's paid sick leave access report using the link below. Prepare a 3-5 minute presentation that details: (1) the problem, (2) the impact, (3) the solution, and (4) necessary steps.

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Campaigns + Elections

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Campaigns + Elections](#))

SAMPLE

Andrew Yang on public service and political power

Andrew Yang talks about what it is like to campaign for president and the impact it had on his mental health. He goes on to discuss how he believes the current process of running for public office alienates groups of people who may not be wealthy or outwardly extroverted.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?18244>

DESCRIPTION

Andrew Yang talks about what it is like to campaign for president and the impact it had on his mental health. He goes on to discuss how he believes the current process of running for public office alienates groups of people who may not be wealthy or outwardly extroverted.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

How does Andrew Yang describe the campaign process and attention that he received as a presidential candidate in the 2020 election?

Why do you think he states that the process makes candidates and others in the spotlight "less reasonable over time"? (Student responses will be speculative)

What do you think Mr. Yang means when he states his belief that any group of ordinary Americans with differing backgrounds and perspectives would make better decisions than presently elected officials? (Student responses will be speculative)

What role does Mr. Yang suggest personal wealth and personality-type play in a candidate running for public office?

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Civil Rights + Civil Liberties

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Civil Rights + Civil Liberties](#))

SAMPLE

2023 Edition of "Freedom in the 50 States"

Cato Institute Research Fellow William Ruger provides introductory comments about his report, "Freedom in the 50 States: An Index of Personal and Economic Freedom."

Videos: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21810>

DESCRIPTION

Cato Institute Research Fellow William Ruger and Adjunct Scholar Jason Sorens discussed the findings from their 2023 report, "Freedom in the 50 States: An Index of Personal and Economic Freedom."

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

CLIP #1: What does the report try to "measure?" Why?

CLIP #1: According to William Ruger, how many variables were used in the study?

CLIP #2: Based on the clip, how is the report organized?

CLIP #2: What is the "number one state" in the 2023 report?

CLIP #2: Is there a "through-line" among the top-five states? Explain.

CLIP #2: Which states are the "most improved" from prior reports? Why?

CLIP #2: Describe what the "bottom five" states have in common.

CLIP #2: What is the "relationship" between economic freedom and economic growth?

CLIP #2: According to Jason Sorens and William Ruger, how do 'red' and 'blue' states generally compare with regard to economic and personal freedoms?

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Comparative Government

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Comparative Government](#))

SAMPLE

The End of Ramadan - Eid al-Fitr

Raahima Siddiqi Recites Portions of the Quran

12-year-old Raahima Siddiqi of Virginia recites and translates the Arabic prayer, Surah Al-Fatiha, the first chapter in Islam's holy book, the Quran. She also recited Surah An-Nur, verse 35.

Videos: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?20653>

DESCRIPTION

12-year-old Raahima Siddiqi of Virginia recites and translates the Arabic prayer, Surah Al-Fatiha, the first chapter in Islam's holy book, the Quran. She also recited Surah An-Nur, verse 35. Then, President Obama speaks at a White House Eid al-Fitr reception to mark the end of Ramadan.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

CLIP #1: As Raahima Siddiqi reads from the Quran, review the text of Surah Al-Fatihah (verses 1 through 7) and Surah An-Nur (verse 35). Both portions of text are linked below. Summarize both excerpts.

CLIP #2: For what is Ramadan a "time of" for Muslims across the United States and around the world?

CLIP #2: From where does the word 'Islam' come, and what "common purpose" exists in Islamic values?

CLIP #2: According to President Barack Obama, when did the United States' connection to Islam begin?

CLIP #2: Summarize the contributions of Muslim Americans throughout history. What is "important" for children to see?

CLIP #2: What fears do Muslim Americans have and what does American 'stand for,' according to President Obama?

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Constitutional Foundation

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Constitutional Foundation](#))

SAMPLE

New U.S. Postage Stamp

U.S. Postal Service Unveils Justice Ginsburg Postage Stamp

The U.S. Postal Service holds a ceremony to unveil a new “forever” stamp honoring the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. USPS Board of Governors Chair Roman Martinez provides remarks.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21485>

DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) holds a ceremony to unveil a new “forever” stamp honoring the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC. USPS Board of Governors Chair Roman Martinez provides remarks, discussing the history of the USPS and the process by which new stamps are developed.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

What are being “honored” with the new stamp? Why?

Describe how the quote, “we can disagree, without being disagreeable,” relates to the new stamp. Based on the clip, summarize the early history of the United States Postal Service (USPS).

When and why were stamps “initially introduced,” and how have their use changed over time?

What is the requirement to be “considered” for a stamp?

According to Roman Martinez, how rare is it to be placed on a stamp?

How many “suggestions” are received each year, and what roles do the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) and Postmaster General play in the process?

Based on the clip, who else is involved in the creation of the stamp?

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Criminal Law + Justice

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Criminal Law + Justice](#))

SAMPLE

FISA Section 702

Former National Security Agency Principal Litigation Counsel George Croner talked about Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

DESCRIPTION

Former National Security Agency Principal Litigation Counsel George Croner talked about the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and the reauthorization debate for Section 702, which expires at the end of 2023.

Videos: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?20893>

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

CLIP #1: Who can the government "target" under Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA)?

CLIP #1: Based on the clip, which government agency is principally responsible for collecting information?

CLIP #1: According to George Croner, what is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court?

CLIP #1: How does Section 702 differ from "traditional FISA?"

CLIP #1: Why does Section 702 include procedures designed to "protect U.S. citizens?"

CLIP #2: Summarize Rep. Jim Jordan's (R-OH) proposed "solution." What is the "pro" and "con?"

CLIP #2: On which point does George Croner disagree with Rep. Jordan? Summarize his rationale.

CLIP #2: What has been a "thorn for a decade or more?" Why?

CLIP #2: On what two points is Rep. Jordan correct, according to Croner? Describe the process by which FBI agents access the Section 702 database.

CLIP #2: What is the negative consequence of requiring "probable cause" for Section 702?

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Economics + Financial Literacy

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Economics + Financial Literacy](#))

SAMPLE

Milton Friedman on Inflation

A portion of the PBS series titled "Free to Choose" is highlighted in which Milton Friedman explained inflation.

DESCRIPTION

A portion of the PBS series titled "Free to Choose" is highlighted in which Milton Friedman explained inflation.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21780>

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

How did Milton Friedman describe Britain's economy in the 1960s?

How did it change between the 1960s and the 1970s?

What was Milton Friedman referring to when he said, "Taxation without representation?"

What is the cause of inflation, according to Friedman, and what would happen to inflation if we "stopped letting the amount of money grow so rapidly?"

According to Lanny Ebenstein, how does Friedman's perspective apply to the funds that were distributed during the Coronavirus pandemic?

Explain what he means by "lag time" between inflation and deflation.

How does he describe the relationship between inflation and interest rates?

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Education

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Education](#))

SAMPLE

The Fire

This U.S. Forest Service film tells the story of the real Smokey Bear, including the related 1950 forest fire in New Mexico's Capitan Mountains. This short fire prevention film is hosted by Hopalong Cassidy, a popular mid-twentieth century Hollywood cowboy played by actor William Boyd.

Videos: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21872>

DESCRIPTION

This U.S. Forest Service film tells the story of the real Smokey Bear, from his rescue during a 1950 forest fire in New Mexico's Capitan Mountains to his life at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. This short fire prevention film is hosted by Hopalong Cassidy, a popular mid-twentieth century Hollywood cowboy played by actor William Boyd.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

CLIP #1: Based on the clip, where and when did the story of Smokey Bear occur?

CLIP #1: According to Hopalong Cassidy, how old was Smokey Bear at the time?

CLIP #1: Who got "careless?" Summarize the impact of the fire and what happened to Smokey Bear.

CLIP #2: Who was Ray Bell? Summarize his efforts to help Smokey Bear, as stated in the clip.

CLIP #2: To where did Smokey Bear travel on his second "trip" with Homer C. Pickens, and to whom was he given as a "gift?"

CLIP #2: Describe Smokey Bear's new life as a "living symbol."

CLIP #3: What "good" has Smokey Bear done in his new life, and how has his "message" spread?

CLIP #3: Review the song "Smokey the Bear" at this link:

https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_rec_kids_smokey_song.pdf. What lessons does it teach?

CLIP #3: According to Hopalong Cassidy, for what is Smokey Bear a living reminder?

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English + Literature

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [English + Literature](#))

SAMPLE

Zora Neale Hurston

University of Mary Washington English Professor Gary Richards talked about Zora Neale Hurston's family life, education and life experiences in her early years.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21701>

DESCRIPTION

University of Mary Washington English Professor Gary Richards talked about Zora Neale Hurston's family life, education and life experiences in her early years.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

When and where was Zora Neale Hurston born?

Describe the makeup of her family.

Describe their family life in Eatonville, Florida.

According to Gary Richards, what was one of the most important events in Zora's early life?

What did her father do following her mother's death?

Describe her experiences between 1905-1915 that Gary Richards discussed.

Describe her school experience in Baltimore, Maryland.

How did the death of her father affect her?

Describe her experience at Howard University.

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Environmental Policy + Land Use

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Environmental Policy + Land Use](#))

SAMPLE

2023 National Climate Assessment Report

The National Resources Defense Council's Strategic Engagement Director Bob Deans talked about the U.S. government's 2023 National Climate Assessment report and the impact of climate change.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21783>

DESCRIPTION

The National Resources Defense Council's Strategic Engagement Director Bob Deans talked about the U.S. government's 2023 National Climate Assessment report and the impact of climate change.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

How often is the National Climate Assessment completed, and what is the "point of it?"

Based on the clip, who conducts the Assessment and where does the data in the report come from?

What are the key "takeaways" from the 2023 Assessment?

According to Bob Deans, how does the 2023 Assessment compare to the 2018 edition?

Compare U.S. efforts to those of other countries, including the "climate triple play."

For what reasons does Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell think the Biden Administration is being "naive" with regard to its climate policy? Summarize Deans' response to McConnell.

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Executive Branch

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Executive Branch](#))

SAMPLE

The Lincoln Home in Illinois

Susan Haake, Lincoln Home National Historic Site Curator, talked about how Mary Todd Lincoln supported her husband Abraham Lincoln's political career in their home in Springfield, IL.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21962>

DESCRIPTION

Susan Haake, Lincoln Home National Historic Site Curator, talked about how Mary Todd Lincoln supported her husband Abraham Lincoln's political career in their home in Springfield, IL.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

How did Mary Todd Lincoln support her husband Abraham in his political career?

Explain the significance of the family dining room.

Describe the parlor and its purpose in the home.

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Federalism + State Issues

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Federalism + State Issues](#))

SAMPLE

Independent Redistricting Commissions

David Wasserman, House editor at the Cook Political Report, talked about redistricting commissions that states use to redraw congressional districts.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?17892>

DESCRIPTION

David Wasserman, House editor at the Cook Political Report, talked about redistricting commissions that states use to redraw congressional districts.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

Based on the map, which areas of the country (in red, blue, and purple) rely on state legislatures to redraw their congressional districts.

Based on the map, which areas of the country (in yellow) use redistricting commissions to redraw their congressional districts.

How do commissions vary in how they function?

How can commissions reduce the amount of politics involved in redistricting?

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Foreign Policy

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 7 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Foreign Policy](#))

SAMPLE

U.S.-Australia Alliance

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese provided remarks about the alliance between Australia and the United States from the Rose Garden, following a meeting with President Biden at the White House.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21636>

DESCRIPTION

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese provided remarks about the alliance between Australia and the United States from the Rose Garden, following a meeting with President Biden at the White House.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

Based on the clip, for how long have the United States and Australia been allies?

What is at the "heart" of the alliance?

For what do the two countries "work together?"

Into what two things does Australia invest? Detail Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's comments about AUKUS, new technologies, climate change, and clean energy.

How is the alliance "delivering for the Indo-Pacific region?"

What "position" does Australia hold regarding the Russo-Ukrainian War and the "situation in Israel and Gaza?"

Summarize Prime Minister Albanese's closing comments.

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Geography

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Geography](#))

SAMPLE

Convoys and Wolfpacks

University of Notre Dame military history professor Ian Ona Johnson described the tactics of the British and German navies during World War Two's Battle of the Atlantic (1939-45).

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21849>

DESCRIPTION

University of Notre Dame military history professor Ian Ona Johnson described the tactics of the British and German navies during World War Two's Battle of the Atlantic (1939-45).

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

What was the "basic idea" of British convoys?

Based on the clip, what were the costs and benefits of the convoy system?

What was Karl Dönitz's "antidote" to the convoy system?

Why was Dönitz's system successful, and what was its "vulnerability?"

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Gun Rights + Firearm Legislation

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Gun Rights + Firearm Registration](#))

SAMPLE

Legal Protections for Gun Manufacturers

Duke Center for Firearms Law executive director Jacob Charles talked about legal protections for gun makers and dealers for crimes committed with their products, including those protections in the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?19143>

DESCRIPTION

Duke Center for Firearms Law executive director Jacob Charles talked about legal protections for gun makers and dealers for crimes committed with their products, including those protections in the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

According to Jacob Charles, how much legal liability do gun manufacturers currently have? Why? How have recent lawsuits been able to "get around" the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) barrier?

Based on the clip, how "successful" are cases brought against gun manufacturers? Compare the two scenarios that Charles provides.

Using the Sandy Hook case "as an example," describe how individuals have been able to successfully sue gun manufacturers. What "carve out" exists in PLCAA?

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Health

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Time: 7 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Health](#))

SAMPLE

"Stress in America" Report

American Psychological Association CEO Arthur Evans discussed the findings of the organization's 2023 "Stress in America" report.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21689>

DESCRIPTION

American Psychological Association CEO Arthur Evans discussed the findings of the organization's 2023 "Stress in America" report.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

Based on the clip, what is the "Stress in America" report and why does the American Psychological Association (APA) produce one each year?

What "collective trauma" did the nation recently have?

Describe the "combination of things" discussed in the clip and their respective effects.

According to Arthur Evans, how long does it take for someone to recover from stress? Summarize his comments.

What does the "data" suggest about stress and age?

Which "subgroup" has a higher level of stress?

REPORT ANALYSIS #1: Access the 2023 "Stress in America" report using the link below. What are the "top significant sources of stress" for people ages 18 to 34?

REPORT ANALYSIS #2: Using the report, compare the stress that women experience with that of men.

REPORT ANALYSIS #3: Summarize the impact of "discrimination" on stress.

REPORT ANALYSIS #4: What "6 things" do the researchers want you to know about stress?

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Immigration

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Immigration](#))

SAMPLE

Latino American Immigration in the U.S.

Author Ray Suarez discussed some of the changes in immigration laws that occurred over time and the effect the Latino American population has had in the U.S.

DESCRIPTION

Author Ray Suarez discussed some of the changes in immigration laws that occurred over time and the effect the Latino American population has had in the U.S.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?18117>

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

Explain some of the changes in immigration law that occurred over time as Ray Suarez discusses. According to Ray Suarez, how has the Latino American population affected the political landscape in the US?

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Interest Groups + Lobbying

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Interest Groups + Lobbying](#).)

SAMPLE

Opportunity Zones

David Wessel talked about his book, [Only the Rich Can Play: How Washington Works in the New Gilded Age](#), on the promise and reality of Opportunity Zones, created in 2017 to attract investment to poor communities across the U.S. David Wessel is a Brookings Institution senior fellow and a former Wall Street Journal economics editor.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?18295>

DESCRIPTION

This bellringer features David Wessel talking about his book, ["Only the Rich Can Play: How Washington Works in the New Gilded Age,"](#) on the promise and reality of Opportunity Zones, created in 2017 to attract investment to poor communities across the U.S.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

CLIP 1: According to David Wessel, who can participate in Opportunity Zones?

CLIP 1: What does Wessel say was Sean Parker's role in the development of Opportunity Zones?

CLIP 1: How do Opportunity Zones allow individuals to "squeeze and stretch the tax code?"

CLIP 1: Why does the Opportunity Zone legislation require participants to pay taxes in 2026?

According to Wessel, how much may the United States lose in tax revenue?

CLIP 1: What does Sean Parker say were his goals in the development of Opportunity Zones?

CLIP 2: How many Opportunity Zones currently exist?

CLIP 2: According to Wessel, under what two conditions are investors able to avoid paying capital gains taxes on the funds they invest in Opportunity Zones?

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Journalism

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Journalism](#))

SAMPLE

Public Trust in the Media

Senior Vice President of Research and Design at the News Literacy Project Peter Adams talked about public trust in the media and efforts to combat misinformation as part of National News Literacy Week 2023.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?20449>

DESCRIPTION

Senior Vice President of Research and Design at the News Literacy Project Peter Adams talked about public trust in the media and efforts to combat misinformation as part of National News Literacy Week 2023.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

What is "news literacy?"

According to Peter Adams, what role does the free press play in the United States today?

Why is the job of the press "more complex than ever?"

How should people "evaluate the news?" Summarize the different methods that Adams describes.

What "buzzwords" should raise red flags for consumers of the news?

According to Adams, what is the News Literacy Project and what does the organization want?

Based on the clip, what is National News Literacy Week? Visit the website (<https://newslit.org/news-literacy-week/>) and list five resources that you find.

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Judicial Branch

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Judicial Branch](#))

SAMPLE

Thurgood Marshall and the Court

Georgetown University law professor Cliff Sloan, author of "The Court at War," talked about Thurgood Marshall's cases before the Supreme Court during World War II, including Adams v. United States (1943) and Smith v. Allwright (1944).

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21797>

DESCRIPTION

Georgetown University law professor Cliff Sloan, author of "The Court at War," talked about Thurgood Marshall's cases before the Supreme Court during World War II, including Adams v. United States (1943) and Smith v. Allwright (1944).

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

What highlighted the "brilliance" of Thurgood Marshall in Adams v. United States (1943)?

Based on the clip, what did the decision in Smith v. Allwright (1944) strike down?

What "enormous consequences" did Smith have?

According to Cliff Sloan, how was Smith reflective of what was occurring in the United States during the time?

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Legislative Branch

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Legislative Branch](#))

SAMPLE

The History of House Speaker Elections

Former House Historian Ray Smock on the history of House Speaker elections, and the current contest for Kevin McCarthy's replacement.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21534>

DESCRIPTION

Former House Historian Ray Smock on the history of House Speaker elections, and the current contest for Kevin McCarthy's replacement.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

- 1. According to Mr. Smock, what was unique to Kevin McCarthy's ouster as Speaker of the House of Representatives?*
- 2. Mr. Smock describes the longest and most contentious House Speaker election in history. What were some of the contributing factors as to why that vote was so contentious?*
- 3. Describe the first use of a "motion to vacate", as it happened in 1910 under Rep. Joe Cannon's speakership.*
- 4. Why does Mr. Smock end his initial remarks by stating we have to work (swiftly) to resolve a vacant speaker's position?*

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Media

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Media](#))

SAMPLE

Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH) on AM Radio

Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH) discusses the value of AM radio at a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?20963>

DESCRIPTION

In light of announcements that some vehicle manufacturers would phase out AM radio capabilities in newly produced electric automobiles, the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee held a hearing on the value of AM radio.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

BACKGROUND: [Review the following article from "The Hill:"](#)

POINT: Listen to the four video clips and record the arguments that are shared supporting the "value" of AM radio.

COUNTERPOINT: Search the internet for evidence of arguments against the future use of AM radio. Record what you find.

CONCLUSION: Considering what you have learned, should AM radio be used into the future? Why or why not?

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Political Parties

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Political Power](#))

SAMPLE

Motion to Vacate and Political Power

James Wallner, R Street Institute resident senior fellow and former Senate aide, talked about the motion to vacate and the impact of political polarization on the functioning of Congress.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21486>

DESCRIPTION

James Wallner, R Street Institute resident senior fellow and former Senate aide, talked about the motion to vacate and the impact of political polarization on the functioning of Congress.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

Based on the clip, how many members does it take to file a motion to vacate in House of Representatives in the 117th Congress?

Are Congressional rules a "constraint?" Why or why not?

What is the "good thing" about Congressional rules?

What does the 'motion to vacate' give to "rank and file" lawmakers, and what does the motion do?

What does James Wallner mean when he says the role of Congress is to "negotiate the non-negotiable?"

According to Wallner, where are decisions currently made in Congress? Why?

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Science + Technology

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Science + Technology](#))

SAMPLE

Creation of SpaceX and Tesla

Author Walter Isaacson explained the reasons for Elon Musk creating SpaceX and Tesla.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21552>

DESCRIPTION

Author Walter Isaacson explained the reasons for Elon Musk creating SpaceX and Tesla.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

According to Walter Isaacson, why did Elon Musk start creating rockets?

Describe Musk's process as he began this initiative as Isaacson explains.

What were Musk's goals for Tesla?

Explain the rationale for manufacturing the vehicles in the U.S.

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Social Services

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Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Social Services](#))

SAMPLE

Public Trust in Government

President and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service Max Stier talked about diminishing public trust in government and how to restore it.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?20532>

DESCRIPTION

President and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service Max Stier talked about diminishing public trust in government and how to restore it.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

What is the Partnership for Public Service and what is it "about," according to Max Stier?

Why did the organization decide to examine "trust issues?"

What "factoid" was shared in the clip? Summarize Stier's comments regarding the "insights" of the survey.

Based on the clip, what should be done to rebuild trust between the government and the public?

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State History

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Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [State History](#))

SAMPLE

Mason-Dixon Line

Author Michael Barone talked about the historical significance of this boundary.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21972>

DESCRIPTION

Author Michael Barone talked about the historical significance of this boundary.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

Who were Mason and Dixon?

According to Michael Barone, why was a boundary established between Pennsylvania and Maryland?

Why did this line become important?

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Supreme Court Cases

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [Supreme Court Cases](#))

SAMPLE

Japanese Internment Cases

Georgetown University law professor Cliff Sloan, author of "The Court at War," talked about three cases dealing with Japanese internment during World War II: *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943), *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), and *Ex parte Endo* (1944).

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21795>

DESCRIPTION

Georgetown University law professor Cliff Sloan, author of "The Court at War," talked about three cases dealing with Japanese internment during World War II: *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943), *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), and *Ex parte Endo* (1944).

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

Based on the clip, what was Executive Order 9066?

What was "upheld" in both *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943) and *Korematsu v. United States* (1944)? Compare the two rulings.

Who was Mitsuye Endo and what was her "claim?"

How did the Supreme Court rule in *Ex parte Endo* (1944)? Why is Endo a "hero?"

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U.S. History

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Time: 8 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [U.S. History](#))

SAMPLE

Former CIA Director David Petraeus on Warfare

Former CIA Director David Petraeus discussed the significance of strategic leadership and the evolution of warfare.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21803>

DESCRIPTION

Former CIA Director David Petraeus discussed the significance of strategic leadership and the evolution of warfare.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

What are the four tasks Gen. Petraeus discussed that people in strategic leadership roles have to perform?

Explain how actions that occur in one part of the world, can impact other regions as Gen. Petraeus discussed.

What are the two elements of deterrence that he described?

Summarize the evolution of warfare that Gen. Petraeus highlighted.

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World History

Source: C-SPAN Classroom: Bell Ringers - Teach Social Studies Curricula with Related C-SPAN Video © 2024 National Cable Satellite Corporation

Time: 6 Minutes

SEL Connection: Bell-ringers require students to think about their beliefs and opinions as well as consider the beliefs and opinions of others, depending on how the teacher prompts students; this requires students to use Self Awareness and Social Awareness.

STEPS

(Full List: [World History](#))

SAMPLE

Ex parte Quirin (1942)

Georgetown University law professor Cliff Sloan, author of "The Court at War," talked about the case Ex parte Quirin (1942), which resulted from two groups of Nazi saboteurs arriving in the United States in the summer of 1942.

Video: <https://www.c-span.org/classroom/document/?21794>

DESCRIPTION

Georgetown University law professor Cliff Sloan, author of "The Court at War," talked about the case Ex parte Quirin (1942), which resulted from two groups of Nazi saboteurs arriving in the United States in the summer of 1942.

BELL RINGER ASSIGNMENT

What happened in "early summer 1942?"

Who became "very involved" in the case, and what did he support the creation of?

Why was the Supreme Court approached to take the case, and what was the outcome of the "special" hearing?

What "problem" did the Justices now have? How has the ruling been viewed since?

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Preparation for the Day Bell Ringers

Source: Science by Sinai - 6 Types of Science Bellringers to Start Your Class by Karen Sinai © Copyright 2024 | Designed By Resolution Marketing LLC

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: These types of openers support students to build a sense of agency as they prepare for classwork; this builds Self Management as they are required to gather all necessary information and materials for the lesson.

STEPS

Choose 1 from the following list:

- *Single statement where the students predict the outcome of today's lab based on reading the lab procedure the night before.*
- *Students define keywords that will be used for the upcoming class.*
- *A list of the lab materials with a checklist for them to gather equipment and be ready for the lab.*
- *Ask a question that will determine the amount of previous knowledge students have of the concept.*
- *Break a pretest down into smaller sections.*

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Review Warm-Ups

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Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: These types of openers support students to become aware of their areas of strength as areas to grow; by reviewing content before the lesson, students are able to increase their Self-Awareness and determine what they already know / need to learn.

STEPS

Choose 1 from the following list:

- *Multiple choice questions about the information from the day before.*
- *Label a diagram. (example: [Label the Skeleton](#) plus many more in my [Science by Sinai store](#))*
- *Practice any equations or calculations from the last few days. (example: Take problems from this [acceleration practice worksheet](#))*
- *Recap the conclusion of yesterday's lab.*
- *Questions from previous bell ringers.*
- *Let students write test questions.*
- *Sentence on the board and students write a paragraph to support it.*

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Skills Practice Science Starter

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Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: These types of openers provide students the opportunity to work together and find solutions to science problems with the support of their peers; this builds Relationships Skills by actively listening to one another.

STEPS

Choose 1 from the following list:

- *Read and interpret a data chart.*
- *Read a paragraph and summarize the main points.*
- *Review Punnett squares or other processes.*
- *Graph data on different types of graphs.*
- *Measure something with a ruler, elapsed time questions, analog clock practice, find the mass, density, volume etc. ([measurement bundle](#))*

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Critical Thinking Bell Ringers

Source: Science by Sinai - 6 Types of Science Bellringers to Start Your Class by Karen Sinai © Copyright 2024 | Designed By Resolution Marketing LLC

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: These types of openers provide students the opportunity to work together and critically think about science problems with the support of their peers; this builds Responsible Decision-Making through curiosity!

STEPS

Choose 1 from the following list:

- CER *image prompts*- Students study a photograph and develop a claim, gather evidence and then support the reasons for their conclusions.
- Ask students to prove true or false statements.
- Short video with questions.
- Have you ever seen...? Tell me about it.
- Read a short story and they write multiple choice questions.
- Mystery photographs- observe and answer questions.

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Reflection Warm-Ups

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Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: These types of openers provide students with the opportunity to reflect and advocate for themselves through writing. It is important to build Self-Management skills in order to improve conditions for ourselves and others.

STEPS

Choose 1 from the following list:

- *Journal entry about yesterday's class. (student journal)*
- *Question of the day- this can be related or unrelated to your unit.*
- *Opinions about a current event topic. (Not political)*
- *A private note to the teacher about any needs they have.*
- *Let students write about something interesting they learned lately outside of your class.*

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Assessment Science Starter

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Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: These types of openers provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their abilities through assessment. It is important to build Self-Management skills in order to improve conditions for ourselves.

STEPS

Choose 1 from the following list:

- *Short 10 question quiz. (example: Use part of this FREE quiz on the [skeleton.](#))*
- *Fill in the blank quiz from yesterday's class.*
- *Have students explain the outcome of a recent lab.*
- *Questions from the State Standards practice tests.*

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Make it Personal

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity has wide-range of possibilities, all of which have the opportunity to increase Self-Awareness. Providing students with a chance to reflect on the content of the day by making a personal connection is a great way to engage students in their identity.

STEPS

- When have you faced a difficult journey or challenge?*
- What role do video games play in your life?*
- What do you know about your family history and ancestry?*
- Do you read or write poetry?*
- Have you ever believed in magic?*

We all work hard to help students make connections between school content and their real lives, and sometimes all it takes is a simple question.

For instance, to introduce an article about Henry David Thoreau and his experience at Walden Pond, we ask students if they liked to spend time alone, and what the benefits and drawbacks of solitude have been for them. For a piece about the science of dog behavior, we ask about their experiences with dogs and their observations about the special bond these animals have with humans. And to ease them into an article about redefining the quinceanera, we invite students to write and think about their own experiences with coming-of-age rituals of all kinds.

Students can explore these personal connections through writing in a journal, using sentence starters, talking with a partner, taking a temperature check, or sketching a concept or identity map.

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Start with an Image

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity increases Self and/or Social Awareness as students view photos or images that capture what words may not be able to; depending on the image selected, it has the opportunity to evoke emotions and increase perspective.

STEPS

Look at the picture and answer these three questions about it, in as much detail as you can:

What is going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can you find?

That's how a [lesson on an article about wild animals and the pandemic](#) begins. We borrowed the three questions from our weekly "[What's Going On in This Picture?](#)" protocol, because we know it invites students not only to speculate, but to provide evidence for their ideas — all of which help lead them seamlessly into the article.

In another example, we invite students to discuss the thoughts and feelings that come up when they view this illustration before reading [an article about self-harm](#):



Image Credit: Keith Negley

Sometimes we provide students with a group of images to explore, as we do in [this lesson based on the multimedia feature "How Black Lives Matter Reached Every Corner of America,"](#) or in [this lesson about Caribbean Carnival](#). In a physical classroom, these photos can be used in a [gallery walk activity](#).

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Start with a Video

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity increases Social Awareness as students view videos that capture what words may not be able to; depending on the video selected, the content has the opportunity to evoke emotions and increase perspective.

STEPS

We begin many of our Lessons of the Day with short videos — some from the article itself, some from related pieces in The Times and some from a reliable outside source, like National Geographic or the BBC.

Can street dance be a fine art? Before reading about [Lil Buck and his belief that Memphis jookin can be no less rigorous than classical ballet](#), students watch the four-minute video above, “Nobody Knows,” that showcases his breathtaking artistry and discipline.

We also use video to engage students emotionally with a news story that might feel distant or complicated. In our [lesson plan about China’s detention of Muslim minorities in the Xinjiang region](#), for instance, students watch a Times Opinion video featuring the voices and stories of young people whose parents have been imprisoned in the camps.

We often ask students to process what they view through journaling or in discussion with a partner, using prompts drawn from our [Film Club feature](#): What moments in this film stood out for you? Was there anything that challenged what you know — or thought you knew? What messages, emotions or ideas will you take away from this film? What connections can you make between this film and your own life or experience?

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Analyze a Graph or Map

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: When used in pairs or small groups, analyzing a graph or map is a great way to increase Relationship Skills. Students must work together to gather information and come to conclusions based on the information presented.

STEPS

Thanks to the excellent graphs and maps The Times produces on subjects as varied as [nutrition choices](#) and [music fandom](#), we often use this kind of multimedia to invite students to make observations and ask questions about a topic before they immerse themselves in it.

For example, before reading about how [LeBron James is leading a generation of athletes into ownership](#), students look at the graph of racial disparities between players of color and head coaches of color in sports.

For a warm-up to introduce [a Times article on past vaccine drives](#), including smallpox and polio, students look at maps of Covid-19 vaccination rates across the United States and in their own community.

And before learning about the [connection between the decline in Chinese restaurants](#) across America and the economic mobility of the second generation, students analyze a graph that uses data from the restaurant reviewing website Yelp.

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Draw

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Drawing is a creating way to promote Self-Management before a lesson. For some students, drawing is a great way to calm the nervous system and recenter before tackling academic content.

STEPS

What does the sun look like?

You have probably drawn a picture of the sun at some point in your life: a simple yellow circle with lines or triangles surrounding it. Do you think it really looks like that?

Based on what you know about the sun — its structure and makeup — what do you think its surface actually looks like? Is it perfectly round? Smooth? Rough? Uniform or varied? Is it the color of the yellow in a box of crayons? Or something more complex?

Take a few minutes and make a sketch of the surface of the sun.

We recognize that most warm-ups take only a few minutes at the start of class, so there usually isn't time to have students create an artistic masterpiece. But, as you can see in the activity above, used at the start of a lesson plan about [newly released photos of the sun's surface](#), sometimes it does make sense to have students make a quick sketch. By inviting students to draw, we're really asking them to think — perhaps about something they've never thought about before.

Drawing can also be a fun way to get students to share their own unique perspectives. Before reading an article on [sexist double standards facing women who run for political office](#), we prompt students to draw what they think an effective president looks like, adding words that describe the appearance, qualities and behaviors of a leader. A warm-up for an article on [machine design](#) asks students to sketch what they think of when they hear the word “robot.” For an article discussing possible [life on Venus](#), we prompt students to draw what they imagine extraterrestrial life in the universe to look like.

Drawing a “mind map” also counts. In [this lesson about a school for basketball careers](#), we invite students to visually brainstorm every job they can think of that is related to their favorite sport: management of players and teams, training, marketing, merchandising, keeping statistics and more.

The goal isn't to test students' illustration skills, of course, but to allow them to express their creativity and imagination, as well as to see the range of visual ideas in a single classroom.

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Ask for Predictions

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Students must take what they know about a topic, making sure to incorporate diverse perspectives, and apply Responsible Decision-Making before making a prediction.

STEPS

*Is it possible to bounce a water balloon off a bed of nails?
Do you think your N.F.L. team will make the playoffs this year?
If I touched the moon, what would it feel like?*

Sometimes asking students to anticipate what they're about to read by making guesses or advancing theories about the topic can give them a stake in finding answers. The three questions above, we hope, do just that.

Take the second question in the list above: Before exploring the math behind any N.F.L. team's playoff chances, we invite students to make their own predictions and then compare them with The Times's computer simulator.

Here's another example: We ask students to make predictions before reading an article about how distracted walkers can affect pedestrian flow: What do you think would happen if several people were walking while looking at their phones in a crowded school hallway or on a busy sidewalk? How might these distracted walkers affect the way the crowd moved, if at all? After students make those predictions, they are more prepared to understand the results of a recent study — and to do our “going further” activities that take those results and use them for real purposes in their own communities.

Making predictions in advance of reading a text can help to give students a purpose for reading, providing a “need to know” as they look for answers to their conjectures. For example, in this lesson, about teenagers and their social ties during the pandemic, we invite students to begin by making a list of all the roles their friends play in their lives. Then, before reading what experts on adolescent development and mental health have to say in the article, they compare their lists and try to predict some of the reasons the experts would give for why pandemic isolation has been particularly hard on teenagers.

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Take a Stand on an Issue

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: As students engage in debate, it is essential that they are Self-Aware and Socially-Aware when discussing potentially controversial topics. In addition, students are provided with opportunities to practice Self-Management as they agree/disagree with their peers.

STEPS

How do you feel about the following claims? With which do you agree, or strongly agree? With which do you disagree, or even strongly disagree? Why?

*Participating in sports builds valuable skills for young people.
The risk of long-term brain damage for professional football players is very high.
The risk of long-term brain damage for youth football is very low.
If I were a parent, I would not let my 13-year-old play tackle football.*

This is how we introduce students to an article exploring how a small Texas city is struggling over [the question of whether to allow 13-year-olds to play tackle football](#).

Beginning a class with this kind of [“Four Corners”](#) debate, which prompts students to show their position on a specific statement (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) by standing in a particular corner of the room, is a great way to get students out of the seats and to take a stand — literally and figuratively. Another version? The [“Human Barometer,”](#) which asks students to line up along a continuum based on their position on an issue. We often use one of these two protocols when tackling a nonfiction text exploring a topic with disagreement or controversy surrounding it.

In a warm-up to an article on [state cuts to food stamp programs](#), we ask students to take a stand on the statement: “The government has a responsibility to make sure no Americans go hungry.” And to introduce an article on [the lucrative opportunities enjoyed by some college “cheerlebrities,”](#) we ask students to decide where they stand on the statement: “College cheerleaders should be able to make money through things like endorsement deals, brand partnerships and sponsored social media posts.”

The idea is not that there is one correct viewpoint or perspective, but to begin to understand the contours of a public debate and start to unpack the arguments in favor of contending stances. After reading the featured article, students can return to the Barometer or Four Corners warm-up activities and revisit their stances to see if — and how — they and their classmates have revised their opinions.

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Invite Student-to-Student Discussion

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: What makes this activity unique is that it prompts students to engage in writing before they speak with one another; by reflecting on their beliefs, students become Self-Aware and engage in Relationship Skills as they share their thoughts.

STEPS

The *think-pair-share*. The *turn-and-talk*. Most teachers are familiar with these quick activities that invite students to talk with a partner — as tools to make sure every student in the class is involved. And when students use them to discuss ideas, reactions and experiences during a warm-up, they become active learners right from the start.

We generally ask students to do a little writing and thinking before conversing with a classmate so they're ready to enter the discussion with something to say. For example, to introduce a lesson *about the history of Black American Sign Language*, we invite students to first quick-write and then turn and talk about how they use language in different settings.

Before reading an article on *how to argue more productively*, we first invite students to engage in some “joyful disagreements,” debating such thorny questions as “Does pineapple belong on pizza?” and “How does the roll of toilet paper go on the holder?”

Sometimes we employ slightly more structured or elaborate discussion strategies, like the “*speed dating*” exercise in this *lesson plan about art appreciation*. In a face-to-face setting, students pair up to answer a question or to discuss a topic for three to five minutes and then quickly form new pairings to discuss a different question or topic — and continue that way for several rounds.

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Make Something or Do Something

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)
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Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Providing students with opportunities to be creative is a great way to increase Self Awareness. As students try new things, they begin to build their identity around their interests and abilities.

STEPS

Warm-up activities don't always have to focus on reading, writing or discussion. Often we try to make them literally hands-on.

In a lesson plan about [the art of origami](#), for instance, it just makes sense to invite students to experiment with origami before they begin reading. Afterward, we ask them to reflect on the process and describe what was challenging, what was fun and what techniques they used.

Sometimes a warm-up is less hands-on than lips-, teeth-, tongue-, jaw- and throat-on, as in this lesson plan [about beatboxers](#), which invites students to experiment with making different types of sounds and beats with their mouth and voice alone.

And for a [lesson on the complexities of language's origins](#), we ask them to choose one of the 26 letters in the alphabet and imagine they have to explain how to make the sound of that letter to a young child or someone who has never heard or spoken it before. To do so, they first have to experiment with saying the letter in different ways — at different speeds, for example, or by exaggerating the movement of their mouths and lips — while paying close attention to what their bodies are doing as they make the sound.

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Try a Mini Experiment

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: When used in pairs or small groups, experimenting is a great way to increase Relationship Skills. Students must work together to test and record their hypothesis; it is important that each student has a role and contributes to the activity in order to build skills.

STEPS

Try out a mini-experiment testing the way water reacts to different types of surfaces. First, gather a few surfaces with varying textures — rough, smooth, grainy, oily, soft, hard or bumpy. You might use a desktop, a sheet of textured paper, an aluminum can or pavement. Then, using a dropper, Pasteur pipette or straw, drip water on the different surfaces. Record your observations.

This is how we begin our [lesson about dancing water droplets](#) that reveals the startling ways water seems to dance. Students then watch the short video above and compare their observations with those of scientists.

For science-related nonfiction texts, you might try a mini-experiment that doesn't require a lot of materials and is quick and easy to do. For example, before reading [an article about how scientists use paper as a model](#) to study other crumpling challenges — such as how DNA packs into a cell, or how best to cram a giant solar sail into a small satellite — we ask students to ball up pieces of paper and take notes about patterns they notice.

Some experiments might be too long for a “hook” activity, but a short hands-on activity can be a great, interactive way to get early buy-in from students.

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Try a Thought Experiment

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Imagination is a great way to increase Social-Awareness and Self-Awareness. When we take the time to imagine ourselves or a world that is different from current reality, we open the door to new perspectives.

STEPS

Imagine a situation where all cars and public transportation suddenly disappeared — and all you had for travel was a bicycle: How would it affect you and your family?

Sometimes prompting students to imagine alternate realities can open their minds to a new way of seeing a problem or issue. For instance, the prompt above begins a [lesson plan about the most bike-friendly city in the world](#), Copenhagen.

For a [lesson about a library's exhibition on 5,000 years of writing](#), we ask students to imagine if humans had never invented a written language. How would the world be different?

And before reading about [why monkeys have tails while apes and humans don't](#), we prompt students to imagine their lives if they had this curious appendage — whether short, long, bushy or striped. What are at least five cool things they could do with it?

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Observe Nature

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Depending on the type of observations being done, this activity can increase student Self-Awareness and/or Social Awareness. As students pay attention and track their observations, they become more aware of themselves and others.

STEPS

Take five minutes and simply look at the clouds in the sky. This simple instruction begins our lesson on [the Cloud Appreciation Society](#).

Sometimes the best way to engage students can be the easiest and mostly readily at hand: Look around you, pay close attention to something, watch and observe.

To introduce the complicated topic of [the disrupted global supply chain](#), we ask students to look at the labels on their clothing, sneakers, electronics or anything else they own and find out where they're made. What trends do they notice as they share their data across the class or in small groups?

In a warm-up to an article on [a scientific experiment studying the blinking of birds](#), we ask students to take several minutes to study and observe their own blinking: Does the quality and the quantity of blinking change in different settings or lighting? When sitting versus standing? When looking at something nearby or far in the distance? When is your blinking voluntary and when is it involuntary?

Students can use their simple observations to form questions or a hypothesis, helping both to build engagement and to frame the reading.

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Activate Prior Knowledge

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Checking in with what students already know is a great way to build Self Awareness. This can be done through graphic organizers, journals, or discussion; when using collaborative methods, it can also build students' Social Awareness.

STEPS

Students approach any new topic with varying degrees of prior knowledge, so inviting them to consider what they may have already read, heard or watched on that topic can serve multiple purposes.

For starters, it can help classmates share ideas and information at the start of a lesson. It can also help to surface any misinformation that students might have. And it can give students an opportunity to ask questions before they dive into the reading.

Many teachers are familiar with the classic [K/W/L chart](#) — a graphic organizer that organizes what students “know,” “want to know,” and “have learned” in three columns — and we use them often, too, in lesson plans on topics like the [Harlem Renaissance](#), [women’s suffrage movement](#) and [presidential election process](#).

Sometimes we simply ask students to share in their journals or in pairs: “What do you know — or think you know — about a particular subject?” Our lesson about [the ways in which the British spy agency M15 promotes itself on social media](#) asks this to help students brainstorm what they might already know on the broad topic of spies and spying — but also, we hope, to get them excited to learn some surprising things about how espionage agencies operate today.

And sometimes we just want to show students they know more than they think they know. For example, in a lesson about [applying to college during a pandemic](#), we suggest that students brainstorm a list of all the steps, big and small, a high school student traditionally takes as part of the college application process. Then we ask them to go back through that list and put an X through each step that was somehow disrupted by the pandemic. This not only helps them see that they are coming to the Times article with a great deal of background knowledge already, but also helps them anticipate the issues they will be reading about.

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Respond to a Quote

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity increases Social Awareness as students read the words of others through quotes; these quotes can be from those within the classroom community, neighborhood, region, or world.

STEPS

Consider the following statement: "History is never neutral."

What do you think that means? Do you agree with its premise? Why or why not? Can you think of any examples that support or contradict this statement?

A particularly provocative or juicy quote or statement can often be an effective way to get students thinking deeply about a subject even before they read an article. The example above introduces our [lesson plan about state history textbooks](#).

Sometimes the most powerful warm-up quote comes right from the article. We begin [a lesson about a California homeless camp](#) with the following quote from Markaya Spikes, a woman who was living in the camp at the time:

Homeless people are treated worse than stray animals. When someone finds a stray animal they take it home and feed it. When someone sees a homeless person they call the police.

Where is the compassion?

We ask students, What is your immediate reaction to reading the quotation? What words stand out to you? Does the quotation bring up an emotional response? Do you have any desire to respond to Ms. Spikes? What might you say to her?

Or quotes can come from famous adages, mottos or sayings. For a lesson [profiling people who pursued deferred dreams later in their lives](#), we ask students to consider two sayings: "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" and "It's never too late to be what you might have been." Then, they reflect on which they find more accurate and true to life.

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Take a Quiz

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Ungraded pop quizzes are a great way for students to practice Responsible Decision-Making by sparking their curiosity for the lesson ahead. It allows students to learn more about the content to follow as well as reflect on what they already know.

STEPS

OK ... pop quiz!

1. How many bacteria can fit on the head of a pin?

a) 1,000 b) 1 million c) 1 billion d) 1 trillion

2. How many Earths could you fit inside our sun?

a) 10 b) 100 c) 1,000 d) 1 million

This is how we start [a lesson on the popularity of videos demonstrating relative size](#) on YouTube. We don't expect students to know the answers beforehand, but it is a quick way to introduce them to mind-boggling magnitudes in the universe.

Another example: For a [lesson about race and biology](#), we start with a short true-or-false quiz. True or false? "Race is determined solely by biology." In addition to piquing students' curiosity, a quiz like this can surface common misconceptions quickly.

We also use premade quizzes from The Learning Network, The Times or other reliable sources. If a lesson plan features a specific country, like [Myanmar](#) or [Cuba](#), we often start with a [Country of the Week quiz](#). And we occasionally send students to a Times science or news quiz, like we did for this [lesson about the danger of added sugars](#) in our diets or this [lesson on climate change solutions](#). These quizzes are always intended as learning "hooks," though, and never as graded assessments. We want them to get students thinking and to evoke their curiosity, not intimidate them.

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Make a List

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: When used in partnerships or small groups, this activity supports students to use Relationship Skills to work collaboratively to make a list before engaging in academic content.

STEPS

Whether it's generating pros and cons, causes and effects, arguments for and against, or problems and solutions, brainstorming a list can be an effective warm-up to get students' minds active. They can make a list individually or with a partner, and they can share examples with the class before jumping into the text. Then, as they read the related piece, they will often find their own ideas reflected.

For example, in a [lesson about Marvel's first Asian superhero film, Shang-Chi](#), we ask students to take a few minutes to make a list of common superhero stereotypes they have read in comic books or seen in movies.

Before reading the article, "[Here Comes the Bride. And the Bride. And the Bride. Mass Weddings Boom in Lebanon](#)," we invite students to make a list of the pros and cons for a young couple thinking about participating in a wedding ceremony that might include as many as dozens, hundreds or even thousands of couples.

To introduce an article on the discovery that [bird populations in the United States and Canada had fallen by 29 percent](#) since 1970, a loss of nearly three billion birds, we ask students to make two lists, one for possible causes of this loss and another for the possible effects. And for a lesson on [theater programs in prison](#), we challenge students to consider the purpose of prison: punishment, rehabilitation and deterrence, making a list of arguments for each.

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Preview a Text

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: When we preview a nonfiction text for students, it ignites their curiosity which is a tenet of Responsible Decision-Making. In addition this activity encourages engagement and sparks interest before reading.

STEPS

Sometimes an effective warm-up activity can simply be to give students a taste of the article they're about to read. If the opening lines or top images are engaging enough, then the article can serve as its own preview.

To preview [an article on the popular video game Among Us](#), we ask students to respond to a quote from a teenager:

"A few weeks ago I went from not hearing anything about it to hearing everything about it everywhere," said Judah Rice, 16, a high school student in Texas. "People are texting about it, I know people who are on dedicated Discord servers and Among Us group chats. I have friends who get together all the time and play it."

Then we invite them to pretend they are a Times reporter who has been assigned to write an article for a mostly adult audience about the popularity of this game among teenagers. What are all of the things they would want and need to include? Why?

*Previewing can also be done by having students read and react to a provocative first paragraph, like this one from a piece on the [spread of misinformation](#):
There's a decent chance you've had at least one of these rumors, all false, relayed to you as fact recently: that President Biden plans to force Americans to [eat less meat](#); that Virginia is [eliminating advanced math](#) in schools to advance racial equality; and that border officials are [mass-purchasing copies](#) of Vice President Kamala Harris's book to hand out to refugee children. Or it can mean inviting students to scroll through the images and text, enough to get them to notice and wonder about the article, and make predictions for what the rest of the article will be about. That's how we start our [lesson about the Tulsa Race Riots](#). It's also what we do with [a Twitter account "written" by Katharine the great white shark](#), who has a lot of teachings about shark behavior.*

Sometimes it might make sense for the teacher to read the article's opening lines aloud and for students to react. Often it works best when students do this preview activity individually or in pairs.

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Define Key Terms

Source: The New York Times - 18 Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts by The Learning Network (Published Nov. 8, 2021 + Updated Nov. 10, 2021)

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Learning new vocabulary is a great way to increase perspective and Social Awareness before reading non-fiction texts. This activity provides students with an opportunity to expand their language by defining unfamiliar words.

STEPS

Students will often run into unfamiliar words and terms when reading nonfiction texts, perhaps words like decolonize, divestment or gender-nonconforming.

A warm-up activity can introduce students to this key vocabulary in advance, so they can better understand the text they're about to read. One vocabulary-building strategy we sometimes use is a [Frayer model](#), a graphic organizer that guides students to note the definition, characteristics, examples and non-examples of the term.

For example, we invite students to define the word "decolonize" before reading the article ["Decolonizing the Hunt for Dinosaurs and Other Fossils"](#) and "divestment" before reading an [article about fossil fuel divestment](#).

And in a lesson plan about [remembering the lives of influential Latinos](#), we provide students with a list of 10 words from the article they may not know, such as ventriloquism and embargo, and encourage them to use [this list of words and their definitions](#) to learn what each means and to practice using the words.

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Rules Review

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Reviewing rules in PE fosters a sense of whole-group community while ensuring all students within the class hear the same message. This activity increases Self-Awareness and Social-Awareness as students engage in holding one another accountable to the expectations.

STEPS

For every K-2nd Grade class I always start by reviewing 3 important rules that my kiddos struggle with: https://youtu.be/vqGmm_5gix0

-The PE Specialist

*Modify for MS students.



Start Simple

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Having a warm-up routine in PE fosters a sense of whole-group community while completing a physical activity. This activity increases Self-Awareness and Social-Awareness as students engage in warming-up as a class.

STEPS

At the beginning of the year I usually keep the warm-up really simple and do walking lines and jogging lines (jog the sidelines and walk the end lines) to some upbeat music for about 2-3 minutes ([here are my PE Playlists](#)). As the year progresses we'll add some more locomotor movements on the lines like skipping, galloping, sliding.

Sometimes we also add in [some footwork ladders](#) on the lines or even going [over and under hurdles](#) while traveling around the room.

-The PE Specialist



Skill Related Instant Activities

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Challenges are a great way to build Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making; they require students to work as a team, support one another in their strengths and weaknesses, and meet a class goal.

STEPS

Once my kids are in a good routine I start to mix it up with some other instant activities. Sometimes we add challenges related to the unit or lesson we are working on that day – for example balancing a ball on a paddle or dribbling a basketball while you are traveling around.

Skill Formula = 4-5 Reps of any skill – Jog a Lap – Repeat

For an example, check out the video below for an instant activity that I use in [my Frisbee Unit](#).

<https://youtu.be/5MO4FP8Evb0>

The formula above works great for any unit that you're teaching. Just change the skill challenge to apply to your lesson, you can change the number of reps and change the skill, for another example in the video below we're working on throwing and catching off the wall and only doing 3 catches.

<https://youtu.be/Nnosl8emm5E>

You can also add more levels if you want them to work on more than one variation of the skill, see an example below for a format that I use often to allow students to self progress using animated GIFS to show skill specific instant activity challenges.

-The PE Specialist



Thunderstick Challenge

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Competitions are a great way to build Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making; they require students to work as a team, support one another in their strengths and weaknesses, and meet a class goal.

STEPS

This is a classic activity that I always do with my kids during our [Jump Rope Unit](#), but I also bust it out every now and then just for fun to switch things up for our instant activity.

Check it out below for an example: <https://youtu.be/no7UAWUTm5o>

Basically, I have the kids all come to the middle and if the rope hits their feet – they either head to the walk/jog lines, or grab a jump rope and practice until the 3 minute timer is done.

Another great Jump Rope Warmup if your students already know how to do it is doing the [“Whirlwind Challenge”](#) for 3 minutes, same rules as “Thunderstick” if you get eliminated (Shoutout to [J.D. Hughes](#) for showing me this awesome jump rope game).

I spend an entire lesson of our jump rope unit on the Whirl Wind challenge with my 3rd – 5th graders and then once they already know the rules we might use it for an instant activity in a following lesson.

-The PE Specialist



Switch

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Games are a great way to build Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making as they require students to work as a team, support one another in their strengths and weaknesses, and meet a goal as a class.

STEPS

Switch is a really fun no equipment game that's perfect for recess and can be played on a 4 square court or using 4 cones, spots or tape to mark the 4 corners of a square.

If you've never seen it, check out the video below: <https://youtu.be/ZKnT22bU7sg>

If you want more info about SWITCH you can [head over to this page for a more detailed breakdown of the game](#)

-The PE Specialist



The Cone Flip Mixer

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Games are a great way to build Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making as they require students to work as a team, support one another in their strengths and weaknesses, and meet a goal as a class.

STEPS

This is a game that I used for a Field Day Relay Race and the kids loved it so much that I started using it as a mixer or instant activity as well to talk about winning and losing and learning to be a good sport.

Check out the video below for an example: <https://youtu.be/oFdfQbvg5Bk>

If you want more info, [check out this page for a more detailed breakdown of the game.](#)

-The PE Specialist



The Fastest Class Challenge

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Competitions are a great way to build Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making; they require students to work as a team, support one another in their strengths and weaknesses, and meet a class goal.

STEPS

This is a fun class running challenge that I do with all my classes.

I run the challenge 3 times a year and it's been super motivating for students and allows for some healthy competition between classes.

You check out the video below for an overview of the Fastest Class Challenge:

<https://youtu.be/2mGe4hZzhk0>

All Links from the video linked on the page below: [Check Out Fastest Class Challenge Resources Page](#)

-The PE Specialist



YouTube Follow Along

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity has the opportunity to increase sense of belonging (Social Awareness) by choosing songs and warm-ups that connect with the classroom culture. It also increases Self-Awareness as students monitor their own abilities while engaging in exercise.

STEPS

After the year most teachers had in 2020 and many of us going virtual for at least part of the time, there are TONS of awesome follow along videos that would work great for kids warming up. Some of my favorite channels for quick warmups are [Go Noodle](#), [Fitness Blender](#), [Just Dance Videos](#) and [Get Kids Moving](#)

When I was teaching virtually I also made a cool resource for our Membership and TPT store with over 100 of my favorite follow along workouts and warmups – [you can check it out on TPT here: The Youtube Resource Guide](#) or if you're a member you can download it in the membership area.

Sometimes I even put my own Daily Warm Up Follow Along up for the kids if I am setting up for an activity.

<https://youtu.be/ctZmWxYHWZk>

-The PE Specialist



Follow the Leader

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity increases Self-Awareness as students monitor their own abilities while engaging in exercise. In addition, students practice Relationship Skills and Social Awareness as they “follow the leader” during the warm-up activity.

STEPS

After I got a TV installed in my gym I started creating follow the leader videos for each unit that I was teaching my students. I really loved having them warmup using skills that are specific to the lesson and would contribute to the overall focus of the unit.

It was a ton of work figuring out how to use a green screen and deciding what skills to use, but I'm so glad I did because it's been a great tool to use when teaching. In the videos I take students through different skills related to the unit and move to a new skill every 30 – 60 seconds depending on the video.

I also used the videos to create some great Animated GIF Slideshows that I use to progress students through a lesson and sometimes use as Instant Activity challenges as well, see the video below for an example: <https://youtu.be/kxmZcxoYw-k>

Or sometimes instead of having a sequence 1-4, I'll just throw up a few different skill challenges and let the students choose the one they would like to work on.

If you want to see the whole process I used to create these [Follow The Leader Videos and Animated GIF Packs](#), check out [this post](#)

-The PE Specialist



Sworkit App

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Providing students with a variety of workout choices promotes agency which is a component of Self-Management. This activity increases Self-Awareness as students monitor their own abilities while engaging in exercise.

STEPS

Sworkit is a great App and also has an online version as well now with a “Kids” section that is free for anyone to use. If you want to see a walkthrough of how to sign up and [what the workouts look like check out this video](#).

It’s an awesome tool for PE Teachers. You can create custom workouts with your own exercises and choose any length that you’d like.

The examples are all appropriate for elementary age students and the app has kids performing the exercises as well. Just plug your iPad, iPhone or computer into a projector or TV and have your kids follow along.

You can sign up for a free account at <https://sworkit.com/>

-The PE Specialist



Offer a Choice

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Providing students with a variety of options at the beginning of the lesson offers choice and agency which is a component of Self-Management. This activity increases Self-Awareness as students monitor their own abilities while engaging in exercise.

STEPS

Another fun and motivating thing to do is to offer your students an option to choose between 2 warm up activities.

For example sometimes I tell my students they can either do a Just Dance video in the middle of the gym jog and jump hurdles on the jogging lines.

Before I had a TV in my Gym, I would just offer students the choice to do a Line Dance in the middle or jog outside, [here's a fun line dance if you need an idea](#).

-The PE Specialist



Interval Timer Pro

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Providing students with a variety of interval workouts offers choice and agency which is a component of Self-Management. This activity increases Self-Awareness as students monitor their own abilities while engaging in exercise.

STEPS

No TV or Screen? Then this one's for you. I use this App any time we are doing a tabata style or crossfit style warmup. I use [station slips](#) to indicate a few exercises or activities for students to choose from at each station and then input what intervals I want to use – play some music and then the app rotates the kids around the room for a set number of rotations automatically.

If you do have a screen you can plug the app into the screen so students can see the countdown timer for each rotation as an added bonus.

You can use any exercises, but I created my own set of [25 Exercise Posters](#) that I use for interval workouts.

I usually do a 30 seconds on – 15 seconds rest/rotate – If you have 6 stations that means you have a 4.5 minute warmup activity (3 minutes of work, 1.5 minutes of rest/rotation)

This is also a great way to use stations to give a quick review of content you've already taught or give your students practice for something you are planning to teach soon.

-The PE Specialist



Workout Poster

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Providing students with workout posters offers choice and agency which is a component of Self-Management. This activity increases Self-Awareness as students monitor their own abilities while engaging in exercise.

STEPS

If you haven't taken advantage of the hundreds of free workout posters at Darebee.com you really need to check them out. You can also find posters homemade by some great Phys Ed teachers around on the internet... Like these [superhero posters](#) for example.

Workout posters are great – they give students a few options to choose from and are self paced. Just set a time limit and see how many times your kids can get through the workout before the time limit is up. I leave a few permanently up on my walls in the gym.

I also created some pretty cool One Page Workouts myself using the exercise posters I mentioned earlier, which you can [check out here](#) if you're interested

-The PE Specialist



Stretching Routine

Source: The PE Specialist: Awesome Resources for Physical Education Teachers -
Awesome Warmups and Instant Activities

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Having a stretching routine in PE fosters a sense of whole-group community while completing a physical activity. This activity increases Self-Awareness and Social-Awareness as students engage in warming-up as a class.

STEPS

After my students complete one of the instant activities I mentioned in this post we will head to our Home Base Spots which is how I do assigned seats in my gym. I will lead a quick stretching routine (or have a student lead) and take attendance while the kids are getting stretched out.

<https://youtu.be/5-qFbPhhS4E>

You can check out the poster from the video above by clicking the link here: [Daily Stretching Routine Poster](#)

I hope some of those instant activities and warmups are useful for you and spark some new ideas for you to try with your students!

-The PE Specialist



Check-In Journal

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity supports students to set aside time each day to reflect on who they are. Reflection on our current level of abilities and setting goals is a great way to build Self-Awareness.

STEPS

A check-in journal is a great daily activity to start with your class meetings when building SEL skills. Each journal day has a different way to check in with an SEL Question of the Day. Some of the topics included are gratitude, giving other compliments, emotional "temperature" check, and more.

Original Source: [Teach Create Innovate](#)



"I am" Self Esteem Builder

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Supporting students to come up with strengths not only builds self esteem but also identity (Self-Awareness). If time allows, this activity can incorporate peer-to-peer feedback which promotes Social Awareness.

STEPS

Looking at personal strengths can sometimes be hard for this age group. Use this simple "I am" activity for building students' self-esteem. They will clip on different positive words that describe them. Extend the activity by having peers add on clips.

Original Source: [Etsy](#).



Think, Say, Do

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Anxiety and stress are common among middle school students today. This activity guides students to take their anxious or stressful thoughts and reframe them to something more positive. This has the ability to directly impact conditions for ourselves and others which is a tenant of Self-Management.

STEPS

This is a proactive measure to help tweens and teens deal with anxiety and stress. They will come up with different stressful or anxious thoughts they have and then create positive messages of self-talk and actions they can take. Extend the activity by making this a gallery walk where classroom feedback can be given to help support their peers.

Original Source: [Myle Marks](#)



Paper Challenge

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This collaborative, engaging activity provides students with a chance to practice Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. By working together, testing a theory, and managing frustration alongside one another several SEL Core Competencies are being built.

STEPS

Challenging moments can be the best teachers! Use this paper challenge to support students' social-emotional skills. Students will use just paper and scissors to recreate a VERY difficult paper structure. Students will surely get frustrated and the teacher takes notes of frustrations and brings everyone back together for whole-class discussion around [growth mindset](#).

Original Source: [Musings From the Middle School](#)



Different Perspectives Scenario

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: By reading a variety of scenarios, students gain the opportunity to increase Social Awareness and Responsible Decision-Making as they collaborate with peers and draw conclusions within challenging circumstances.

STEPS

This is a great class lesson to teach about perspective and social skills. It gets students to think about what it is like in a certain situation and how different people may respond differently.

Original Source: [Boom Learning](#)



Growth Mindset Escape Room

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: SEL Connection: This activity provides students with the opportunity to engage in growth mindset activities with peers (Relationship Skills) while also participating in an escape room! Changing our mindset when approaching a challenging task is a great way to practice Self-Management.

STEPS

Escape rooms are fun classroom activities. In this activity, which can also be used as a classroom icebreaker, students will learn about growth mindset in groups as they try to work together to escape!

Original Source: [Think Thank Teacher](#)



Hurtful Words

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: SEL Connection: This activity provides students with the opportunity to engage in growth mindset activities with peers (Relationship Skills) while also participating in an escape room! Changing our mindset when approaching a challenging task is a great way to practice Self-Management.

STEPS

The activity is simple: the teacher discusses how words can hurt, even if that was not our intention. Students then write about times someone has said something hurtful to them or vice versa. Then they share and follow up with more discussion on the power of words.

Original Source: [Teaching Muse](#)



Compliments

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Supporting students to give one another positive feedback is a great way to build Social Awareness and belonging in a classroom. As a result of this activity, students may even become more Self-Aware as they hear compliments from their peers.

STEPS

In this group activity for students, they get to give and receive compliments. Students will learn what makes a quality compliment and how to receive one. It then leads to a chance for students to practice! Students share peer compliments with one another.

Original Source: [Counselor Keri](#)



Anger Dice Game

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Responding to others appropriately when emotions are high can be a difficult skill for students to master. This activity incorporates skills and strategies that promote Self Management and Relationship Skills as they practice ways to regulate their anger.

STEPS

The anger dice game gets kids thinking about how they can respond when they are angry. This gives students time to think of safe people they can talk to, self-soothing strategies, or a favorite breathing technique. The great thing is that it also promotes communication skills between peers and adults.

Original Source: [And Next Comes ESL](#)



Kind or Trash?

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: By reading through scenarios, students have the opportunity to engage in Social Awareness and Relationship Skills as they determine whether or not particular actions are kind. Students will work collaboratively to come to a consensus which promotes agency and Self-Management.

STEPS

Social-emotional learning skills include understanding kindness. Play "Kind or Trash" with your class. In this game, students will look at scenarios and determine if it is a "kind action" or "trash"...and the trash goes in the bin!

Original Source: [Coffee and Carpool](#)



SEL Cootie Catcher

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity provides students with the opportunity to engage in growth mindset activities while also playing a game! Changing our mindset when approaching a challenging task is a great way to practice Self-Management.

STEPS

The cool way to practice some SEL skills is through this cootie catcher choice board! Students create the catcher and then can play the game with their peers to determine which SEL-related activity they will work on.

Original Source: [Rock Your Homeschool](#)



Question Prompts

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity is a great way to embed SEL into academics! The questions can be used during literacy lessons to help students build any of the 5 SEL Competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making depending on the question asked.

STEPS

Bring social-emotional skills into classroom learning! We often focus on SEL in isolation, but it should be intertwined throughout the day in academic learning. Cards with questions are used in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom to relate social-emotional learning to what is being read in the classroom. The students use the discussion questions to learn more about the text and SEL!

Original Source: [The Small But Mighty Teacher \(TPT\)](#)



Circle of Control

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity is a community building activity centered around control. Students get the opportunity to discuss as a class what they can and cannot control and how to respond when circumstances happen; this builds Social-Awareness and Relationship skills as students connect on common challenges they face.

STEPS

A quick activity for the morning meeting on the first school day is this "circle of control" anchor chart. Students discuss what they can and cannot control. It will challenge students to focus more on what they can control.

Original Source: [Diane Romo](#)



In Someone Else's Shoes

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Helping students practice empathy is a great way to build Social-Awareness. This activity provides students with scenarios to act out in order to take the time to see from different perspectives.

STEPS

In this activity, read about and define empathy. Then give scenario cards to students to play in "someone else's shoes". They will see through each scenario what it is like to be in another's shoes and build empathy.

Original Source: [Learning for Justice](#)



Active Listening Inventory

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity supports students to reflect on their active listening skills. Reflection on our current levels of abilities and setting goals is a great way to build Self-Awareness.

STEPS

Active listening is not only a life skill but an academic one as well. Students take a self-assessment to see just how well they actually listen. It also helps to explain to students the difference between hearing and listening.

Original Source: [Stacey Lloyd](#)



Control Art Activity

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Through this art activity, students have the opportunity to reflect on different circumstances or feelings they may be holding on to. By taking the time to reflect and create, students have the opportunity to build Self-Awareness and practice Responsible Decision-Making.

STEPS

Any middle school teacher knows that sometimes our students like to hold a grudge. This art activity teaches students what to keep and what to let go of. It will help them differentiate between what is actually important to "hold on to".

Original Source: [Creativity in Therapy](#)



My Bubble

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Healthy boundaries are essential when developing a sense of agency (Self-Management) among students. This activity provides a helpful visual for students as they develop their values (Self-Awareness).

STEPS

This activity teaches about personal space and boundaries. A big part of emotional growth is being able to hold our personal boundaries. This worksheet helps students put it on paper to better understand that they have personal bubbles and they have the right to hold others to their boundaries.

Original Source: [Christine McNeill](#)



Perseverance and Positive Self-Talk

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: This activity uses a game to increase positive self-talk; the more students practice in the area of positive self-talk, the more likely they will develop a positive identity (Self-Awareness).

STEPS

Positive self-talk is great for middle schoolers to develop! To help support his skill, play a game of "I Have, Who Has" to teach students examples of positive self-talk!

Original Source: [Counselor Chelsey \(TPT\)](#)



Prevent Anxiety with Time Management

Source: Teaching Expertise - 20 Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Activities for Middle School by Jill Webb - June 14, 2022

Time: 5 Minutes

SEL Connection: Time management can cause stress among students. This activity guides students to make priority lists in order to better manage the activities around them; this promotes Self-Management and Responsible Decision-Making.

STEPS

Organizing your day is a functioning skill that we all need - without it, we can get anxious. A great way to teach students how to manage their time is this activity on prioritizing. Students can get bogged down with all the things they must accomplish during the school week. This activity focuses on categories the "to do" list into 3 sections: urgent, important, and it can wait.

Original Source: [Myle Marks](#)

