

Great Games That Motivate

Ideas from teachers at Nash Central High School

Games can be used to review content or introduce new ideas. Many popular board games and television shows can be adapted for use in the classroom. These examples are often-employed favorites from current classroom teachers:

Checkers can be used in three-person teams. Follow the traditional rules of checkers. The big changes in this game are that you must earn the right to move, and you can also gain the power to make the other person make a move, even when they do not want to (although you may not direct them what exact move to make – that is still their decision). Student A reads from a list of vocabulary words, their own notes, or a questions a teacher has prepared for the game. Students B and C write down their answer to the question on a sheet of paper. Student A checks the answers. If both are incorrect, no one moves. If one is correct and the other is incorrect, the student with the correct answer may either make a move, or direct the other player to take a turn. If both are correct, both will take a turn and neither can direct the other to move. In that case, black moves before red. The winner of the game is the last player with one or more checkers still on the board. You can make your own checkerboards using a laminating machine and any word processing program.

Survival is another game that can stimulate and empower students. Divide students into groups of four or five. Give each group seven to ten Post It® Notes. They disburse these among all the students in the group. Every student must have one note, and no student may have more than three. Have students write their names on their slips and put the slips on the front of their desks.

Then ask a question to the entire class. Give them 15 seconds to consider or look up the answer. Then, roll a counting cube to determine which group gets to answer. If that group is correct, they get to take one Post It® Note from anyone in any group in the class and discard it. When a student runs out of notes, they leave their team and sit in a designated part of the class. They may no longer help their team. The last group with any members wins.

Student creativity can really come alive when students play the **CYO Board Game**. Short for Create Your Own, this activity can be used as review or assessment. The teacher supplies construction paper, white paper, tape, glue, scissors, rulers, markers, and crayons. Instruct students to create their own board game based on an existing one or a novel idea. Require instructions, a board, at least 15 content questions, and all the pieces players would need to use the game. Have students create the games one period, then play other groups' games the following period. Students love to show their creativity and are proud when others find enjoyable the games they created.

Bingo can be easily changed to review for a test. Have students create a Bingo card with 25 columns and 25 rows. Mark a FREE space in the center square. The teacher writes a list of terms, people, ideas, titles, or the like on the board. The list should be of at least 35 items so that not everyone scores Bingo at the same time. Students select 24 terms they think they will know the definitions to when read by the teacher. Each student's board will look slightly different. A student's completed board might look like this in a geometry class:

Symmetry	Congruent	90 degrees	Acute	Parallel
Perpendicular	Transversal	Rotation	Flip	Slide
Quadrilateral	Area	FREE	Volume	Circumference
3.14	180 degrees	Perimeter	Pythagorean Theorem	Square
Circle	Similar	Chord	Radius	Diameter

The teacher calls in random order the definitions for each of the thirty-five terms in this example. Students either mark through a term, if they know they have it on their card, or do not mark through it if it is not called, or if it is called and they do not know the answer. When manufacturing their cards, students are selecting the terms they think they will know if the teacher calls them. At the end of a few rounds of Bingo, have them write the terms they were not confident they had mastered as a very efficient study guide that leaves off the content they have demonstrated they know.

A popular maritime bombardment game called **Ships of War** reminds some students of a popular board game. In *Ships of War*, two teams try to give correct answers to questions to get a chance at hitting and sinking their opponent's battle ships. Use slips of paper like this to keep track of each team's ships and scores:

Team ____ Copy	Applesauce	Bolivia	Castle	Disco	Eskimo
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Instruct them to choose a team leader who will decide where to place the team's three ships of war, and who will also act as a group voice giving the teacher the group's response to each question. The team leader decides where to place on the grid

- One aircraft carrier composed of four blocks (red in the example below) running horizontally or vertically
- One battleship composed of three blocks (blue) running horizontally or vertically, and
- One cruiser composed of two blocks (green) running horizontally or vertically

Tell students that their ships of war may touch, but not overlap. They make two copies so the teacher can use one in the role of game facilitator. They retain the other so they can follow the progress of the game. Taking turns, the teacher then presents questions to each group. Correct answers earn the right to guess where the opponent's ships of war are located on the grid. Students make guesses such as "Applesauce Four" and "Disco Five" rather than "A-4" or "D-5" simply as a change of routine. The teacher holds privately the locations of each team's ships of war on the grids they turned in to her. She marks their progress by using Os as "misses" and Hs as "hits."

The game ends when one team sinks all the other team's ships of war!