GAMES FOR THINKING

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Games help us to practice skills, to develop concepts and strategies.

Games add variety to what is being taught and learnt.

The success of teaching depends on the active involvement of the learner…playing games demands involvement.

Games offer cognitive challenge, but also opportunities to develop moral understanding and practice social skills.

Questions for thinking

During:
- What strategy / way of playing will help you in this game?
- How are you doing? What have you done successfully / less successfully so far?

After:
- Were you successful? Why or why not?
- What strategy did you use? What might you try differently next time?
- What did you think about / learn during the game?

1. CONNECTIONS

- Ask the class to suggest interesting nouns (total of 10-12).
- Individuals / teams try to pair as many nouns as possible with a connecting idea.

Can you think of two words that cannot be connected by an idea?

What was the most interesting / imaginative connection?

❖ Extend the game to trios.

❖ Given topic: Learning Quest, spelling words, maths vocab…

2. CATEGORIES

- Players / teams must list as many words within given categories within a time limit.

- Could be general categories (animals, sports, colours…) Or linked to Learning Quest, books read as a class, a Unit of Learning.

- A letter is chosen at random. All words in the lists must begin with that letter.

What strategy was helpful?

Do some words fit into more than one category?

3. GUGGENHEIM

- List of categories down the left hand side of a grid. Key word *(e.g. name of player)* across the top row.

- Players / teams complete list of as many words as possible under each letter of the keyword.

4. CALL MY BLUFF

- Groups of 3 find an unusual word in the dictionary.

- They create 2 false definitions and record the real definition.

- Can the rest of the class work out the real definition?

- Can a word have more than one definition?

- Who decides on the true definition of a word?

- Can you think without using words?

5. SCRAMBLED POEMS

- Give groups a poem where lines (or groups of lines) have been cut up and scrambled.

- The group should reassembly the poem in the order that makes the best sense.

- Is the meaning of a poem in the words, or the mind of the writer or reader?

- Which order works best for you and why?

❖ Write a well known story in a few sentences and scramble it for a younger child.

6. 3 IN A LINE POEMS

- Stimulus could be a theme, a picture, a character…

- Split a page into 3 columns. The first person writes nouns connected to the stimulus in the middle column.

- The second person writes adjectives in the left column.

- The third person writes verbs in the third column.

- The fourth person reads, writes, creates lines of the poem.

- What makes a good poem? A good line of poetry?

- What was your favourite line and why?

- ❖ Second person: expanded noun phrase. Third person verb and adverb.

7. RHYMING TENNIS

- Can play in pairs or teams. Take it turns to say words that rhyme.
- Start with a 3-5 letter word.

- Does every word have a rhyme?
- When is it useful to know rhyming words?

❖ Play mime the rhyme. Each player / team takes it in turns to mime a word that rhymes with the first word.

8. HOW MANY QUESTIONS?

• Present an object / picture and ask players or teams to write down as many questions as they can about it. (Learning Quest / P4C link).

• Categorise: physical features, construction, function…

• Which was the most interesting question for you and why?

• Which question would you most like the answer to?

• Good questions, or lots of questions? Which is better?

9. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Each player / team writes down the answer to a question.

- The papers / boards are shuffled and shared out.

- Each player / team creates as many questions as they can that would give that answer.

10. STORY CHAIN

- A player begins a story. At the end of any sentence they can stop.

- The next player continues the story. They stop at the end of any sentence…

- What is a story? Can you give a definition?

- Do you know any stories made up by more than 1 person?

❖ Write your own version of the story told in the game.

11. PICTURE STORY

- Pairs / groups are given a picture. Can you make up a story linked to the picture.

- Pictures are collected. Pairs / groups tell their story and the rest of the class have to match the story to the picture.

- Does every picture tell a story?

- How many stories could your picture tell?

- What makes a good picture to make up a story from?

❖ Give pairs / groups 2 or 3 pictures. Can they create a story that links the pictures?

12. SQUARE WORDS

- Each player draws a grid that is 5 x 5.

- The first player calls out a letter. Each player writes that letter in any square on their grid. The second play calls out a letter…

- Once 25 letters have been chosen, players have to find as many words on the grid as possible (the letters have to be in a line)

5 points for a 5 letter word.   4 points for a 4 letter word…

- Which letters are easiest to make words with?

- Are there any strategies for placing letters which helped?

❖ Try a 6 x 6 grid. Then a 7 x 7.

13. JOTTO

- Either play in pairs, or as a whole class.

- One player writes a secret word (4 – 6 letters long).

- The other player(s) write a word of the same length. The first player says how many letters are the same as the secret word.

- The other player(s) keep repeating with new words of the same length to work out the secret word.

- What kinds of words would be hardest to discover?

- What letters are the least common?

- What can you learn from this game?

14. ACROSSWORD

- Players / pairs choose a long word *(it could be a Learning Quest, Success Criteria, or spelling word)*.

- They write the word down the left hand side of their page. Then they write the word backwards down the right hand side.

- Players / pairs must then write words that fit between the pair of letters on each line *(i.e. the first and last letters of the word)*.

- *What is your longest word? What does it mean?*

- *Are longer words harder to spell? Why?*

15. PLACE NAMES

- A letter is chosen at random.

- Pairs / Groups must create a list of place names starting with that letter.

- You could be given a globe, map or atlas to help.

- What is a place?

- Where do names of places come from?

- Do you know the names of any imaginary places starting with this letter?

16. THE NAME GAME

- 1 player chooses a first name. All players / pairs write this name down the left hand side of their page.

- Players / pairs must write down as many first names as they can starting with each of those letters.

- Does everyone have a name? Why or why not?

- If you had a different name, what name might you choose and why?

- Why do classes choose a new class name each year?

❖ Create as many words as you can out of the letters in your full name.

17. WORD HUNT

- Choose a long word *(could be a Learning Quest word, a grammar term…)*

- Pairs use the letters to make as many shorter words as they can. Letters can be rearranged.

- As a class, how many words can you find altogether?

- What is a word? How are they created?

- How can you check you have found all the possible words?

- Can you make a word that is as long as the original word?

❖ You are only allowed words that are 3 letters long or more. 4 or more…

18. SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

- Sentences are written on a piece of paper / card, and then split into single words.

- Each player or team is given a set of single words and have to reconstruct them into a sentence.

- Or give a scrambled sentence as a whole, and ask players or teams to write the unscrambled sentence.

- What is a sentence? What is the shortest sentence you know?

- Can every sentence be rewritten in other words?

- Can there be a meaningless sentence? Can you give an example?

19. SENTENCE BUILDING GAME.

- Each member of a team writes down a word.

- The team then collect all the words and try to make sentences out of them by adding extra words.

❖ Can the team make up a sentence without adding any extra words?

❖ Teacher gives groups a 4-6 letter word (*e.g. summer*). Can the team create a sentence with words beginning with those letters in order?

20. MISSING WORDS

- Prepare a text, but delete 10 adjectives (or other words).

- Players / pairs write in the words they think might be missing.

- How could you change your choice of words to add in to have a particular effect on the reader? Intrigue, amuse, scare…them

21. FIFTEEN

- The aim is to be the first player to make 15. Play in pairs

- The game starts with the numbers 1-9 on cards.

- Each player takes it in turns to take a card.

- The winner is the first player whose chosen cards add up to 15.

- How many different ways are there of making 15 with these cards?

- What are good strategies which might help you win the game?

❖ Try playing to 25, with the cards 2-15.

22. UP TO ONE HUNDRED

- Play in pairs.

- The first player chooses a number between 1-10 and writes it down.

- The second player write another number between 1-10, and adds the two numbers together.

- Players keep taking turns until the winner makes exactly 100

- Can you think if a strategy to help you win every game?

- Does it matter who goes first?

- Is 100 an important number? Why or why not?

23: SECRET NUMBER

- One child chooses (and records) a secret number.

- The rest of the group / class have 10 questions to try to discover the secret number.

- The child who has the secret number can only answer "yes" or "no".

- What questions will best help to narrow down the possible answers?

- Are some numbers harder to guess than others?

- Is this a game of luck or skill or both? Why?

24: GRAB

- A pile of about 200 small objects in placed between the players.

- Each player grabs a handful of objects in turn.

- They calculate their scores as follows:

2 points = sets of 2 with no remainders

3 points = sets of 3 with no remainders…

- Is it better to pick a smaller or larger number of objects?

- What number of objects would give you the highest number of points? How could you prove it?

25: TARGET

- Pack of playing cards with Jacks, Queens, Kings, Jokers removed. Ace counts as 1.

- A target number is chosen (1-100).

- Each player or pair is dealt 5 cards. Combine some or all of them to make (or get as close to) the target.

- What kind of game is this?

- What do you think would be a hard number to get? Why?

- Have you found any target number that was impossible?