



Senseless Solutions to Strange Situations™

Using the Game in Classrooms to Promote Creative Problem Solving

Lesson Plans

Recommended Grade Levels: 3rd grade and Up

Subjects Enhanced by Play: Language arts, science

Applicable Concepts, Skills and Strategies: Inductive reasoning, problem solving, evaluating choices, creative writing

Objectives:

Students will:

- Use creativity and inductive reasoning to connect sets of objects.
- Develop story lines based on a scripted story starter and a set of random object cards.
- Identify parts of speech in sentences they construct.

Components: Lesson plan

Materials Needed:

- Now What? game
- Notebooks
- Scratch paper

Warm-Up:

Select a Dilemma card that will resonate with your students. Use it as a story starter. Read the card aloud and direct students to write an ending to the story.

Activities:

1. Use item cards as prompts for story telling.

- Deal one card to each student. Instruct them to look at each side of the card. Give a few moments for imagining. Ask students to share a single sentence that uses both words.
- Deal two cards to each. Tell students to select three of the four words and write a short paragraph using all three words.
- Deal three cards per pupil. Ask them to tell a short tale using as many of the six words as they can.

2. Use the item cards in small groups to fill-in-the-blank in Mad Libs activities. Each time a noun is called for, draw a card from the stack of item cards to fill it. See if students can select other parts of speech to make a story logical one time and nonsensical the next. Many interactive versions of fill-in-the-blank storytelling are available online.

To learn more about **Now What?**,

visit www.patchproducts.com or call 1-800-524-4263

Try the links below or type the phrase *Mad Libs* into your web browser search box for more.

<http://www.madlibs.org/>

<http://www.itsamadlibsworld.com/>

<http://www.kidsart.com/kamadlb.html>

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Games/MoreGames/Funnyfillinturkeystory>

3. Practice parts of speech with item cards as the starting point. Keep out one card for your example, such as the strainer card. Deal three item cards to each student. Each selects their favorite item of the six on their cards.

- Ask students to carry out the following directions to review prepositions:
 - Put the rest of the cards *inside* your desk.
 - Hide your card *under* your hand.
 - Hold the card *in* your left hand.
 - Put your right hand *behind* your back.
 - Take out the rest of our cards and put this one *between* the other two.
- Solicit the information that items on the cards are all nouns.
- Show your retained card (strainer) and reiterate that it is a person, place or thing; so it is a noun.
- Ask what your item can do (strainer *drains* water from solid objects). Remind students that the action or state of being of a noun is known as a verb.

- Announce something about your item that describes it (this strainer is *leaky*). Define the word that describes the noun as an adjective. Solicit other adjectives that could illustrate something about your item (shiny, handy, convenient).
- Tell students how your item does the verb you selected (this leaky strainer drains quickly). Review adverbs as words that add some extra meaning to the verb.
- If you care to include pronouns in this part of speech review, substitute one for our item in the sentence you are constructing (it drains quickly). Discuss gender and number as they affect pronoun choice.
- Pair students and have them tell one another about their item, using a noun, verb, adjective and adverb. Ask them to repeat their sentence substituting a pronoun for the item.
- Instruct students to write each of the five remaining words from their cards on separate lines of a sheet of paper.
- Use the worksheet at the end of these lesson ideas for this assignment: Write the five remaining words from your set of item cards on the worksheet. Write a sentence for each item that includes a noun, a verb, an adjective and an adverb. When sentences are complete, students will mark them according to the following legend:
 - Underline nouns.
 - Circle verbs.
 - Put parentheses around adjectives.
 - Draw a square around adverbs.

4. When students need some unstructured time, play this game. Deal one card to each student. Instruct them to select one side to play. Challenge students to find another student with a card that is in some way related to their own. Be prepared to explain connection.

Share the connections. **SUPER CHALLENGE:** Now turn the cards over and see if you and the person who had a related card can find a connection between these new items.

5. Deal out an item card to each pupil. Read a dilemma card, and ask students to imagine a way to use one of their items to help the situation. Encourage sharing these solutions.

Stretch this activity into one that gets kids out of their seats: Resolution Railroad. Read a new dilemma card and then place it on one edge of the chalk tray. As students think of solutions using either of the items on their card, they can state the action and place their card on the chalk tray, as a car behind the dilemma engine. **CHALLENGE:** Add Solution Pollution to the action. Count off. Select either odds or evens to return to the Resolution Railroad and remove the solutions that are garbage—too silly to consider.

6. Now What? can add lots of excitement to small group instruction.
- Deal one item card to each participant. Read a dilemma card and ask students, one at a time, to describe a solution with their own item card or to draw another item card from the deck to solve the problem. Alternate oral and written solutions for practice in storytelling and speaking in a group, as well as writing skills.
 - Play the game as a reward in small group instruction. At the end of a session, place an array of item cards within sight of the group. Read a dilemma card. Have students write their responses in a section of their reading notebook. Score as the game directs and keep a running tab of scores over the course of a unit of study or marking period.

7. Play Now What? as a group game, dividing the class into two teams. Read the dilemma and ask four from each team to come to a table with the array of item cards and write the three items they will use to solve the issue slips of paper. After one (or two, depending on skill levels) minutes, players state their solutions. Score as the game directs, but enter the scores on the board. Continue with a new dilemma and the next four members of each team to play another round.

Bibliography

Here are some titles that encourage creative storytelling.

If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write...You've Gotta Have This Book by Marjorie Frank, published by 1995.

Kids Write! Fantasy & Sci-Fi, Mystery, Autobiography, Adventure and More by Rebecca Olien, published by Williamson Books, 2005.

Magic Story Starters by Linda Polan, published by Good Year Books 1997.

Make Me Giggle: Writing Your Own Silly Story by Nancy Loewen, published by Picture Window Books, 2009.

Show Me a Story: Writing Your Own Picture Book by Nancy Loewen, published by Picture Window Books, 2009.

Stones, Bones and Stitches: Storytelling through Inuit Art by Shelley Falconer, published by Tundra Books, 2007.

Storytelling Discoveries: Favorite Activities for Young Tellers by Vivian and Barbara Dubrovin, published by Storycraft Publishers, 2002.

The Storytelling Princess by Rafe Martin, published by Puffin, 2003.

WordPlay Café: Cool Codes, Priceless Punzles, and Phantastic Phonetec Phun by Michael Kline, published by Williamson Books, 2005.

Assignment to accompany activity #3

Name _____

Parts of Speech

Write the five words from your item cards that you did not use in the class exercise below. Write one sentence for each word, making sure that your sentence includes a noun (this will be easy—it's the word you write down), a verb, an adjective and an adverb.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Now, Underline the nouns, circle the verbs, (put parentheses around adjectives) and draw a square or rectangle around adverbs.