

Twenty Questions

An oldie but a goody – I like to play Twenty Questions at the end of a session when you just have five minutes or so to fill in with any grade level. I mostly play this with animals as the subject, as you have a greater scope of choices, but it can be adapted to other themes such as food, transport, historical figures or events, and so on.

Twenty Questions is a great game to keep everyone involved. It is good for problem solving, following directions and working co-operatively to come up with the answer. The idea is for the person who is in first to select an animal and write it down on a piece of paper without the other children seeing it. Another child is selected to be the scorer. They write the numbers from one to 20 on the whiteboard and progressively mark off the numbers as the questions are asked.

The children then put their hands up with their questions, but at the same time they should be listening to the answers of the previous questions to build up an idea of what the animal could be (or thing, person, and so on). For example, if the first child asks, "Is it a mammal?" and it is, then other children should not be asking if it is a type of snake. The children that are guessing are encouraged to ask general questions in the beginning to get an idea before jumping in with random answers. You will find that the first few times you play, some of the children who have not been listening will ask questions that have been asked or that they should already know the answer to. Then the other children will tell them it can't be that because we know it has four legs (for instance), so they become better listeners and problem solvers.

Good ideas for questions (with other options bracketed) are:

- Is it a mammal (reptile, amphibian, insect, bird)?
- Does it live in/on the land (sea, water, snow)?
- Does it breathe air?
- Does it have two legs (four, six, eight, lots of legs)?
- Is it a carnivore (herbivore, omnivore, parasite)?
- Can it fly (swim)?
- Would I see it around my house (in a zoo, on a farm)?
- Is it small (medium sized, large)?
- Is it dangerous to humans (other animals)?
- Is it extinct (endangered)?
- Does it have scales (fur, spikes, spines, feathers)?
- Is it a fast (slow) moving animal?
- Does it use camouflage to hide (hunt)?

If a child uses the clues and works out the answer before 20 questions are up they are the winner and if time permits they can come up with their own animal. A new scorer can also be selected if you want or the other person can stay scoring. The more you play, the better the children's choice of tricky animals and the better the quality of questions asked.

Kerry Bird – Science teacher

Times Table Race

I have lots of favourite activities that I love at school. I like playing a game called Times Table Race. What happens is everyone stands in two lines and the teacher asks a multiplication problem of the first two in the lines. The first person to answer correctly goes to the back of the line and the person who doesn't answer is out. If the first person is wrong they are out. If they both get it wrong then both of the people are out. (Sometimes people say the answer at the same time. If that happens then the teacher will call out another problem.)

When two people are left, the teacher calls out the problem. Whoever says it first or gets it right wins the game.

Hannah – Grade 3