

Story Jar Games

Without Paper and Pencil

What Are You Looking At?

Pair students up. Assign students to be "A" and "B." Student A finds an object on the Story Jar. Student B asks Student A a series of yes-or-no questions to figure out what the object is in Student A's view. Count how many questions it takes to get the correct one. The fewer questions, the better. Switch. If they get good at this, move onto ***Clues***.

Clues

Place students in small groups. The Guesser sits with a full view of the Story Jar items. The Clue Givers stand behind the Guesser. The Clue Givers secretly agree on an object. Then the Clue Givers take turns giving one clue at a time about the object. After each clue, the Guesser guesses. Afterwards, talk about which clues helped most, which clues helped least, which clues helped narrow down possibilities.

That Reminds Me . . .

Talk about what "reminding" means. In pairs or small groups have students take turns picking an object, afterward the other students tell something the object reminds them of. Have students talk about why different objects remind them of other people, places, things and ideas. (Chances are, they'll be telling stories as they talk.)

Categories

This can be played in a small or large group. Challenge students to find as many things as they can in one category. Categories could be: starting with a certain letter of the alphabet, having wheels, being a certain size or shape or color. Challenge the kids to think of another category.

Chain Story

Stand the entire group in a circle. Explain that as a group you are going to tell a story. Each person can only add one word at a time. Try it. Talk about what worked and what could be better for next time. (Usually challenges like "We need to listen to each other's ideas" or "We need to have more interesting word choices" are good responses. "Binky's word was good and Bunky's word was bad." isn't a very helpful bit of feedback. Work on group ownership. Once they get a feel for the flow, as a group, choose two objects from the story jar. Challenge the students to incorporate those two objects in to a quality short story within three rounds around the circle.

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Story Starter

Guide students to sit quietly and look at one object that catches their eye. Have them stare at it without talking, and think about a story that might include that object. Think of one sentence that might happen in the story that includes this object. Have students close their eyes and listen to themselves repeat the sentence in their heads—and change it if they like. Have students whisper their sentence to a neighbor, then listen to the neighbor's story. If there is time, have students who want to share their sentence aloud. Talk about whether this sounds like a first sentence, a middle sentence or an end sentence in the story and why. What else does it make you wonder about? (Later students could write their sentence and story on paper or in Tech Central on a computer.)

You Must!

Choose, or have students choose, three objects from the Story Jar. List them for all to see. Challenge small groups of students to create a paragraph that includes all three objects, makes sense and tells part of a story. When they ask, "do we have to use all three?" You reply: "You must!" This could be made easier or harder by varying the number and kind of objects. For example, a tricycle, soccer ball and baseball hat might easily suggest a playground setting—giving the kids a safe start. However, a hula skirt, a dozen eggs and a dog puppet present a different challenge.