4 Squares

This activity is versatile and can be used as ‘do now’ activities at the beginning of class, as ‘checks for understanding’ throughout the lesson, as SEL check ins, or as peer feedback. You determine what the four prompts are and have students respond.

For example: if this is a peer reflection activity each square can be a prompt for possible feedback. Students can answer each of the questions as they are reviewing a product a peer has created.
#1 What do you love?
#2 What isn’t working?
#3 What questions do you have?
#4 How can it be better?

4 SQUARES

Have participants divide their page into four quadrants. For each quadrant, give them a distinct prompt or question to respond to through writing, drawing, key words, etc. Either have them write down all the prompts at once or deliver them sequentially. In both cases, provide ample time for participants to respond to all four. State your intentions for sharing before they start.

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5 Whys

This activity helps students understand the depth of a problem, concept, or topic. This activity can be completed individually or in pairs. Present a question to students and then ask “Why” five times.

For example: Ask students, “What are the factors that create an imbalance of power in a culture”? For each of the 5 Whys have students write down their response.

5 WHYS

Provide each participant with five sticky notes, then ask a big question or highlight an important sticking point. For example, "What makes a great _____?" Everyone is to write their answer on a sticky note. Keep answers short. Next, have them stick a new note on top and answer "Why?" Repeat that process and ask "Why?" 3 more times.

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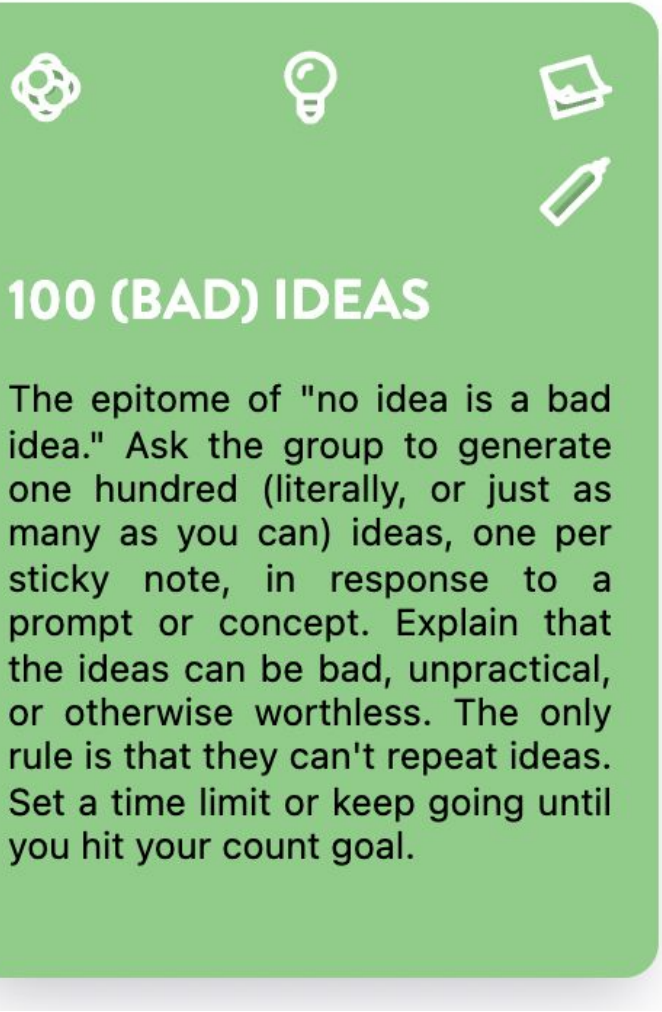
100 (BAD) Ideas

This activity can be used for unique brainstorming. Students will think about BAD ideas in this exercise. It could be a fun way to think about how NOT to follow lab safety protocols, all the wrong decisions a character in the book could make next, or predicting all the ways you could incorrectly solve a math problem.

For example, think about how important digital citizenship has become and how determining all the wrong decisions could let students work out possible outcomes.



Airport Signs

This activity can be used for sharing a bit about themselves using a sign to tell a silent story. Which sign might a character or a plot choose to exemplify their story? The signs could be premade or students could make their own.

For example, students could share their thoughts on a historical event only using signs and then talking about what they each may mean to the students.

Anonymous Q&A

This activity can be used for having challenging conversations. Students may prefer being anonymous when asking questions about politics, health, history, culture, etc.

For example, could students predict the next election. What do they think will happen before the election, who will be elected, and how will the process have ups and downs along the way.

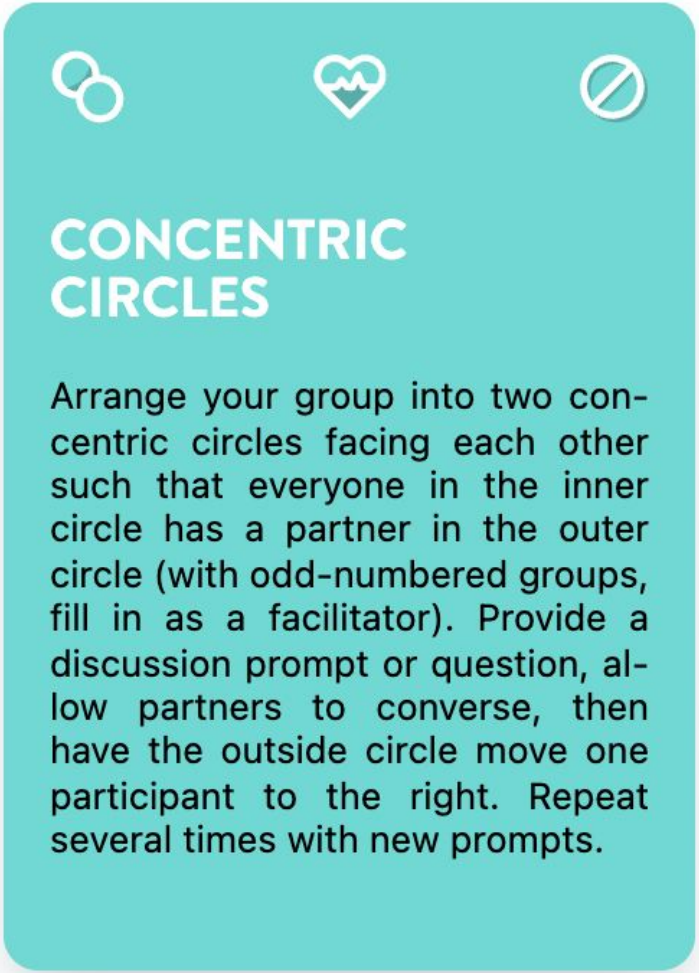
ANONYMOUS Q&A

Ask the group to write any questions they have on their index cards (instruct them to scribble something else if they don't have a question), then collect all the cards. Optionally, sort the questions prior to answering them (to remove duplicates, sequence them, filter questions out, etc.). Read each question aloud, answer it, repeat.

Concentric Circles

This activity can be used for class discussion so that students can talk to a variety of students throughout the activity. The discussion prompts can be from any subject area. I have also seen this done with pair work where you work together on a problem or response and rotate for each one until you finish the assignment.

For example, students could use a review sheet for math and partner with different students each rotation to solve the problems.



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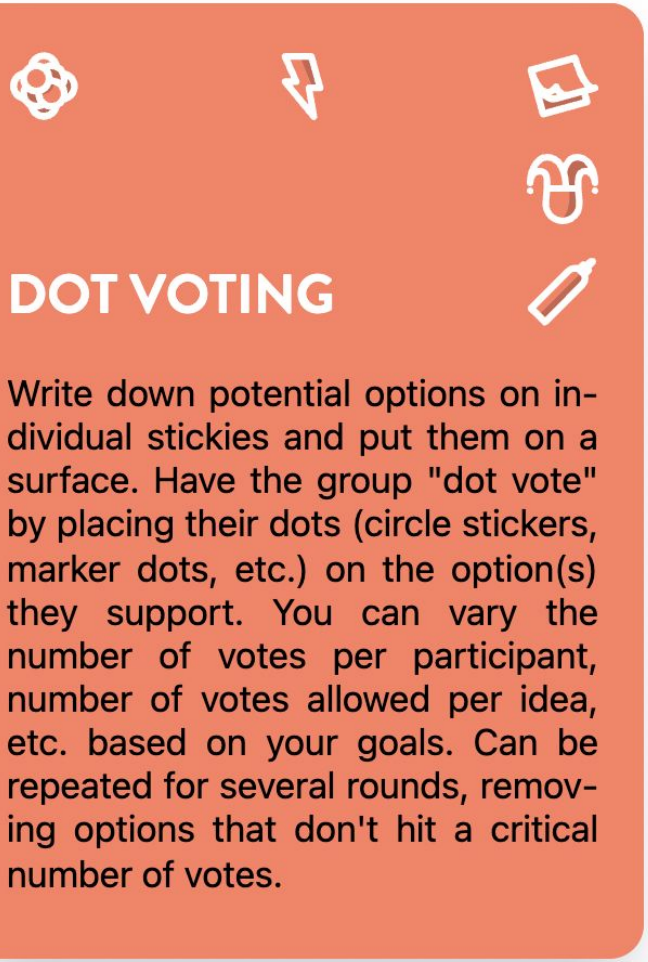
Dot Voting

This activity is a great way to help students have a voice in your classroom. You can use stickers, markers, or digital stickers on a slide deck or Jamboard. This activity can be done when you are trying to pick a new novel, discussing project ideas, brainstorming in class, or trying to select a class reward.

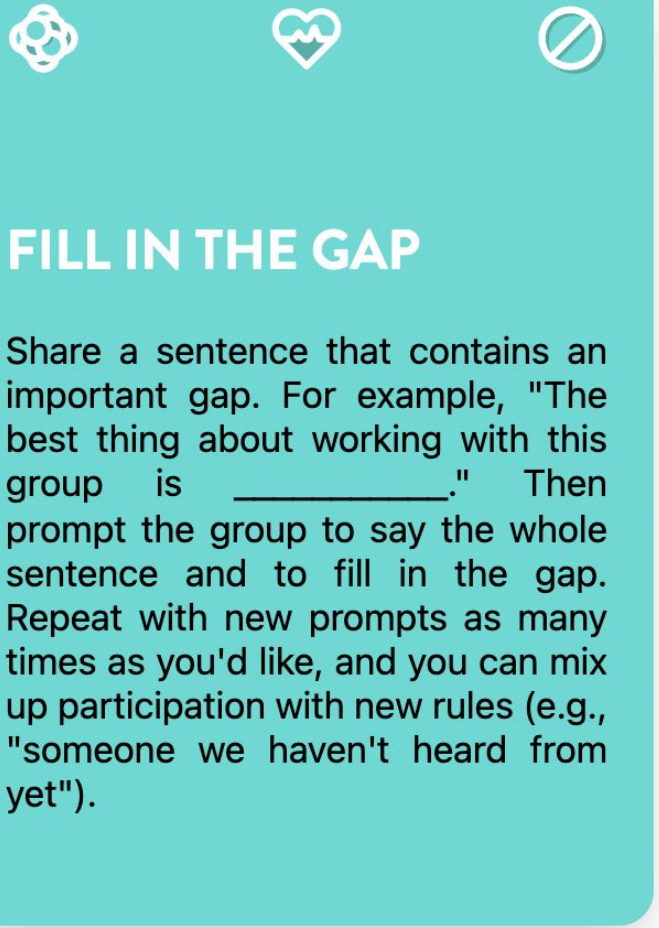
For example, here are six novels that we can read about as a class. Everyone will get two votes in the first round and one vote in the final round until we have selected our next book.



Fill in the Gap

This activity is versatile and can be used as ‘do now’ activities at the beginning of class, as ‘checks for understanding’ throughout the lesson, or as SEL check ins. You can ask any type of question as long as you leave a blank that can be answered by students. The questions can help students determine prior content knowledge or focus on student feelings.

For example, have students fill in the gap for the question: “What I find challenging about multiplying fractions is _____”.



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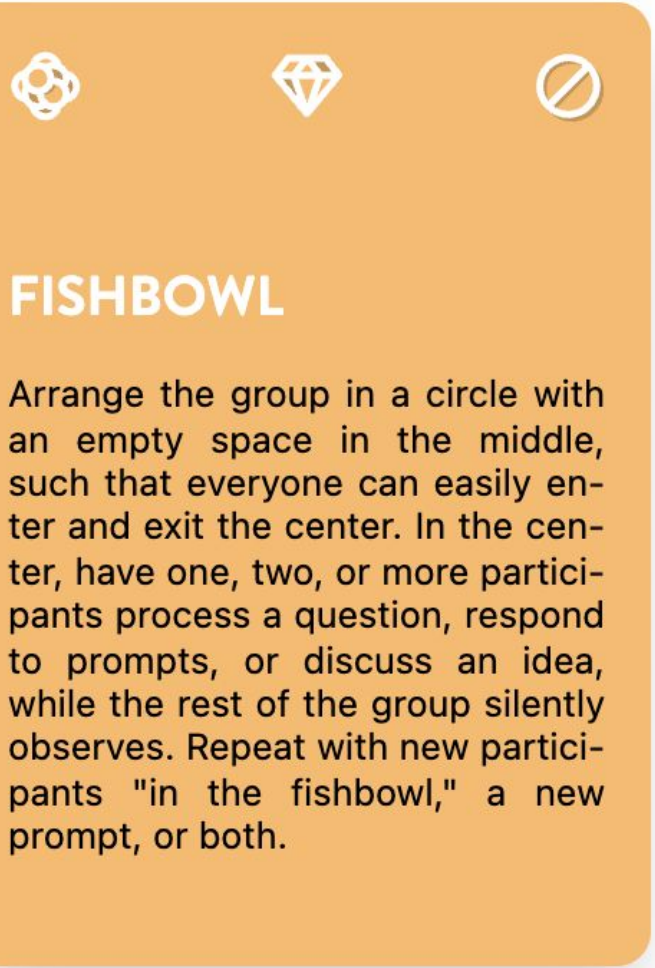
Fishbowl

This activity is great for students to observe a discussion while it is happening. This helps to model the activity and let smaller groups engage in a chat while others process the information. It also allows students to practice their listening skills which can be a challenge in a conversation when the focus is on what you might say or do next.

For example, you can grab a historical article and divide it into different sections and ask each group to respond to a unique prompt in their fishbowl.



Gallery Exhibit

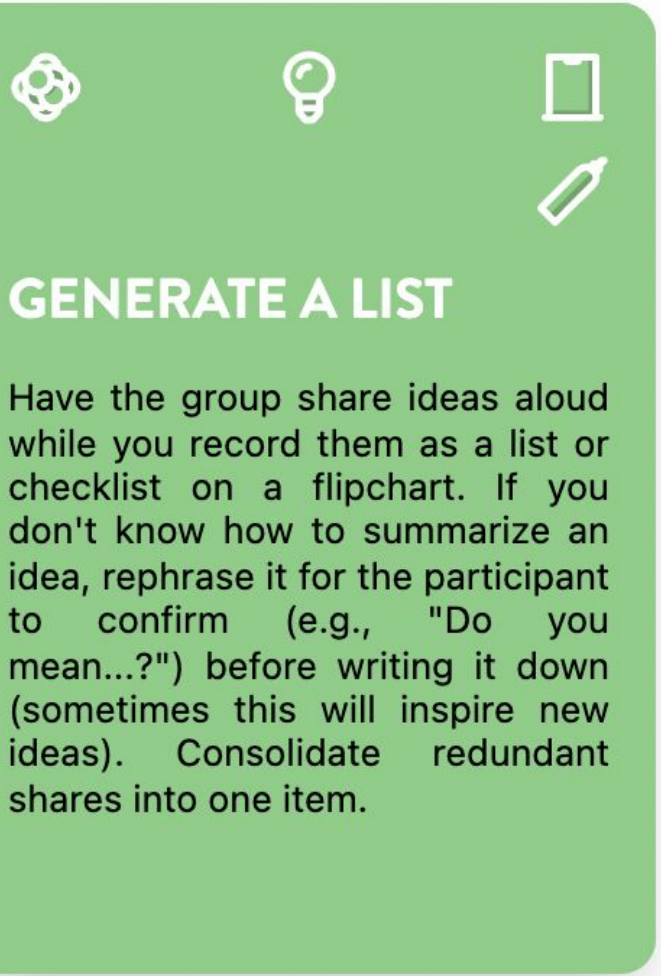
This activity can be used at the end of a project to let students exhibit their final work. This is a great way to bring in outside people to preview the work and give feedback. You could also set up a gallery wall for students to get feedback on work they are still developing.

For example, students could develop a plan to tackle the climate crisis and share that in a gallery walk. Other students could review their work and offer I like, I wish, I wonder feedback to help students design their work.

Generate a List

This activity can be used for the brainstorming process in the classroom. Students can work independently, in pairs, or in small groups to make lists that can be used to get lots of different ideas. It could be a list of the best books to read, ways to maintain a healthy lifestyle, or possible connections between a subject area and

For example, could students make a list of their goals for the month, year, five years. Or a list of things they would like to learn more about in class. A list of their favorite foods for their culinary class.



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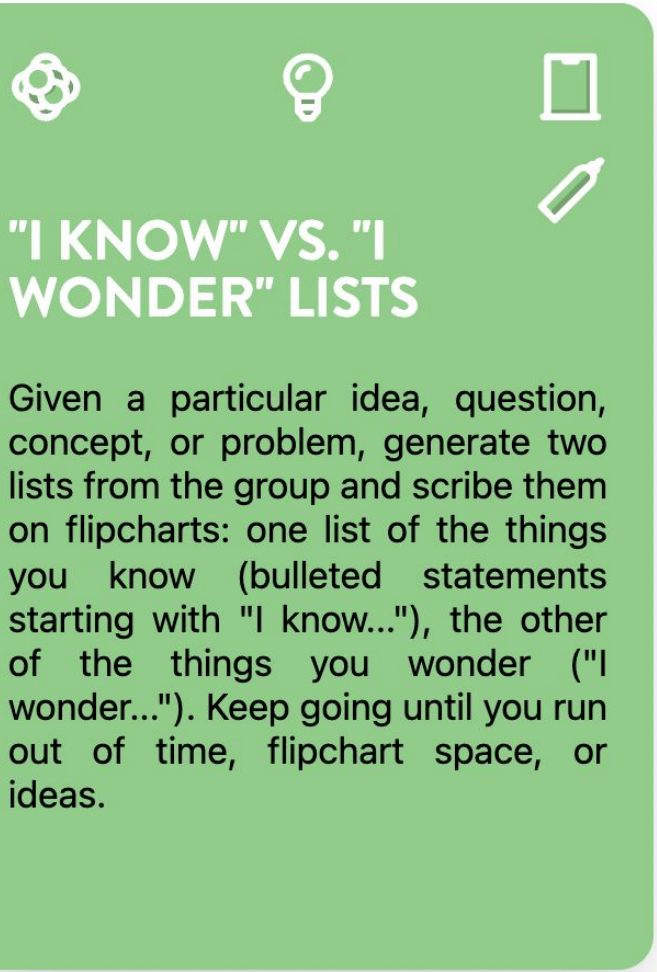
I Know vs I Wonder

This activity is a great way to assess what students know in the moment and generate a list of questions they have about a concept. This activity can help to assess prior knowledge and gauge student interest levels in the current concept.

For example, ask students what they know & wonder about force in motion. You will have two lists on the board, what they know about force and motion (named by Newton, allows items to move, etc) and what they wonder (how does a skateboard move, how do we know how fast items move, etc).



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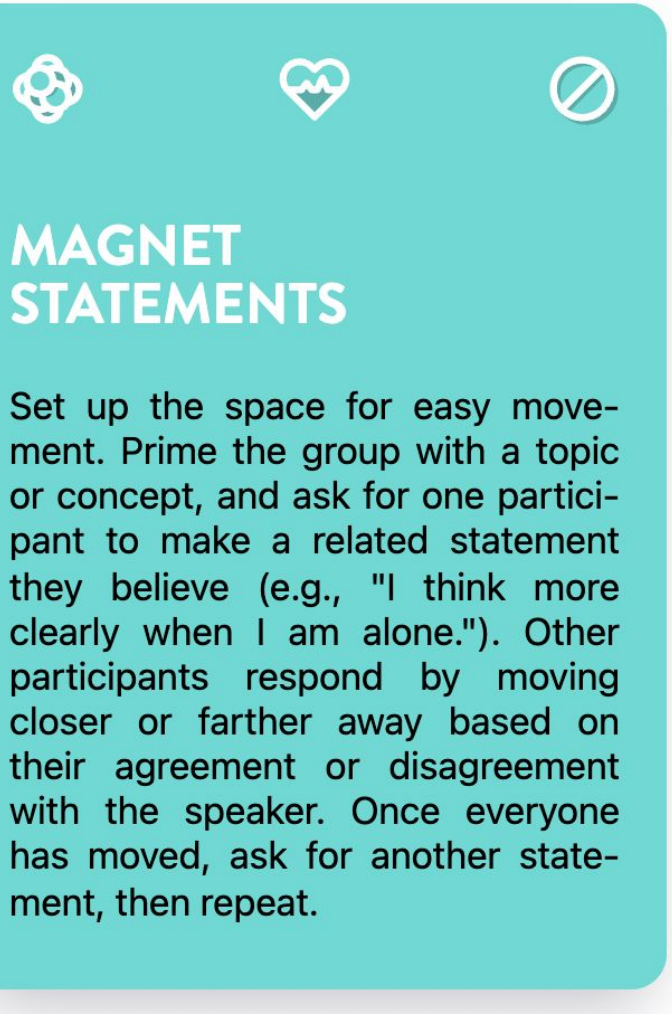
Magnet Statements

This activity is a great way to understand where students stand on an issue or determine what students believe about a certain topic. If movement is allowed in your space, create a center line and begin asking questions. Students can move closer to or farther away from the line depending on how they answer the question. If movement is not allowed, you can draw the line on the board and have students come up one at a time and draw a star to represent where they would stand (or you can place the star for them). Once students have moved (or placed their star) allow students to say why they chose their location.

For example: ask students “I believe an individual should take a stand against what I believe to be an injustice”.



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Minute Papers

This activity is a great way to assess student knowledge whether prior or current. It is also a great way to allow students time to collect their thoughts about a concept or topic. Students can then share their minutes papers out loud or they can turn them in to you as they leave class.

For example: “What do you know about Henrietta Lacks”? Give students 1-3 minutes to write their response and either ask students to share out loud or turn them in to you.

MINUTE PAPERS

Provide a prompt (or several) and give participants a short amount of time (e.g., one minute) to write their responses. The papers can be collected by the facilitator, shared among participants, or neither. State your intentions for sharing before they start writing.

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Opposite Thinking

This activity is a great way to get students comfortable responding out loud. Students often fear answering incorrectly out loud and this activity puts them at ease because you are asking for all the wrong answers.

For example: Ask students, “Why does it rain”? Have students answer using only wrong answers.




OPPOSITE THINKING

Prompt the group to come up with ideas (regarding a given concept) that are the opposite of what you're actually looking for. You might ask for the worst examples of something or how we know when we're failing. Scribe all unique suggestions. Rephrase any positive (non-opposite) suggestions to be the opposite, or negative.

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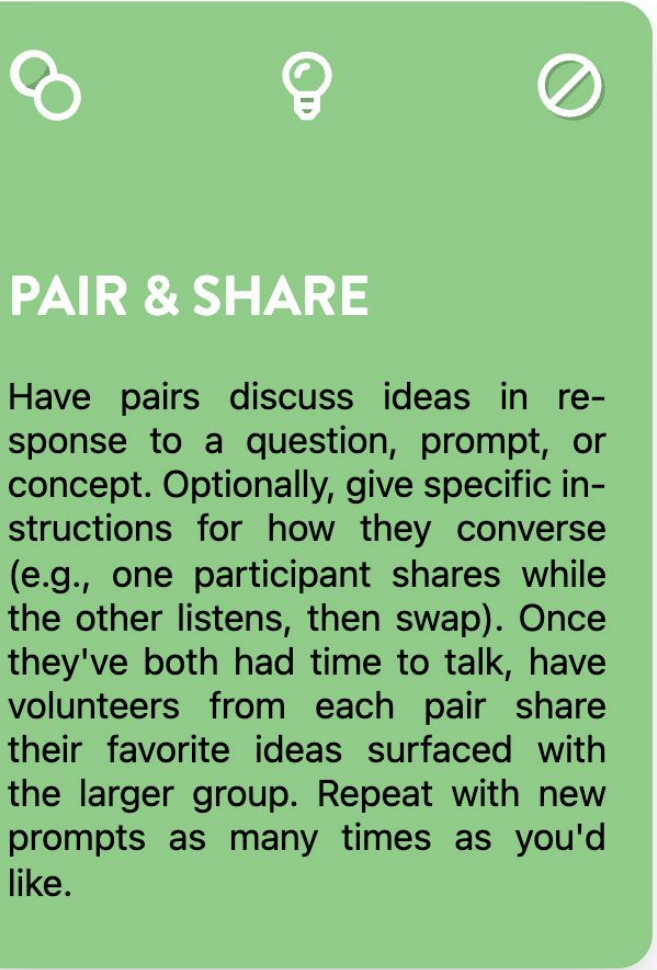
Pair & Share

This activity is versatile and can be used as ‘do now’ activities at the beginning of class, as ‘checks for understanding’ throughout the lesson, or as SEL check ins. You can present any type of question or prompt and have students pair up to discuss it and then share their response out loud. You can combine this activity with Minute Papers and allow students to first write down everything they know about the topic and then complete the Pair & Share activity.

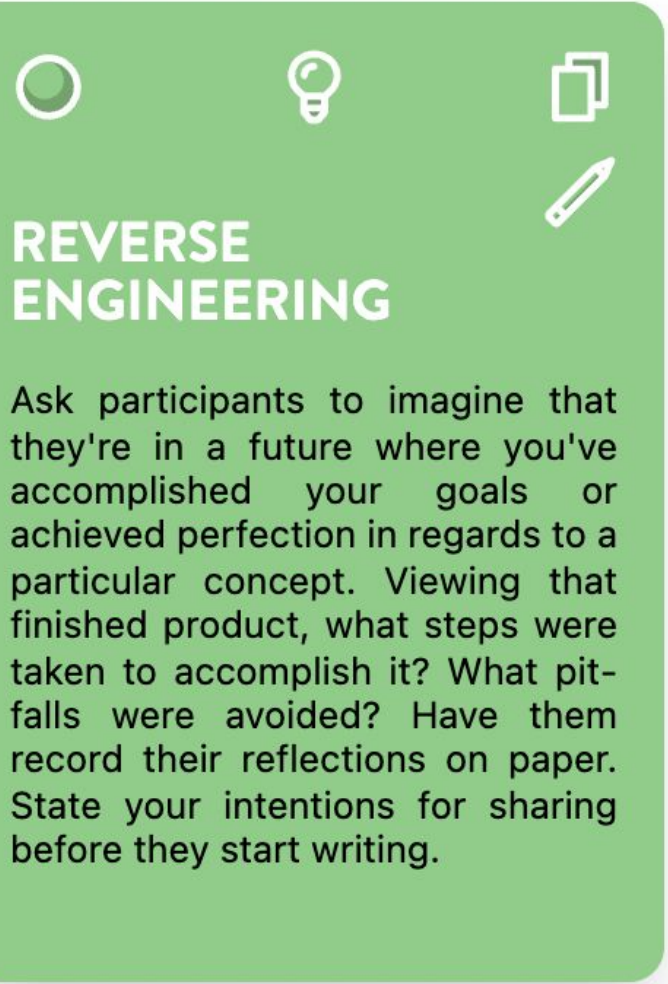
For example: ask students “How do you values and beliefs shape who we are as individuals and influence our behavior”?



Reverse Engineering

This activity can be used for writing essays, making scientific predictions, or planning a project. Starting with the end in mind is a great way to have a successful project. This is also a great way to bring others in on the process by thinking about all aspects of the road ahead.

For example, could students predict the next election. What do they think will happen before the election, who will be elected, and how will the process have ups and downs along the way.



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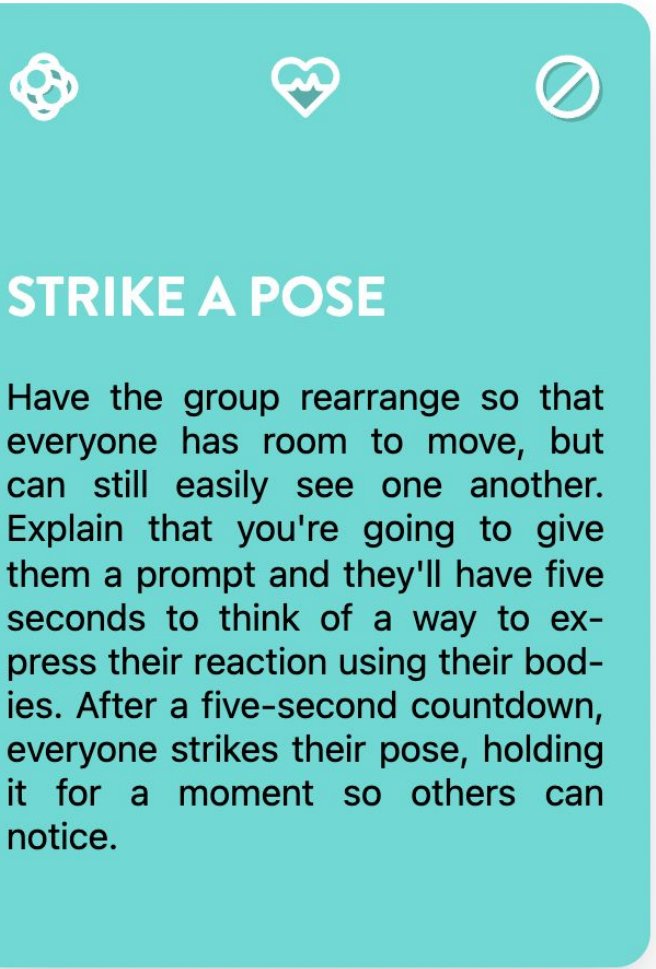
Strike a Pose

This activity is a great way to get students moving! If movement is not allowed, you can complete this activity with students sitting in their desks. You say a statement, phrase, or word out loud and students can only use their bodies to express their reaction.

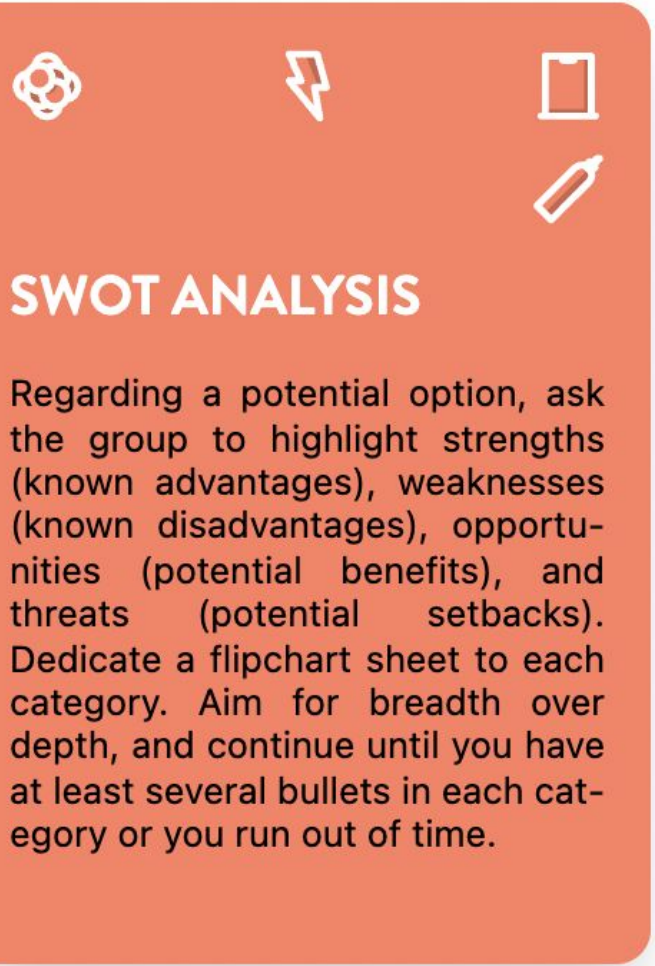
For example: Have 5-7 prompts ready to go and ask them one at a time giving students a brief countdown to strike the pose.
#1 Favorite emoji
#2 Favorite hobby
#3 Favorite movie genre
#4 Favorite sport



Swot Analysis

This activity can help students process and analysis how something is functioning. It could be used in Science class to illustrate functions of a cell, help students reflect on digital citizenship, discuss personal plans for transition, and analyze characters in a novel.

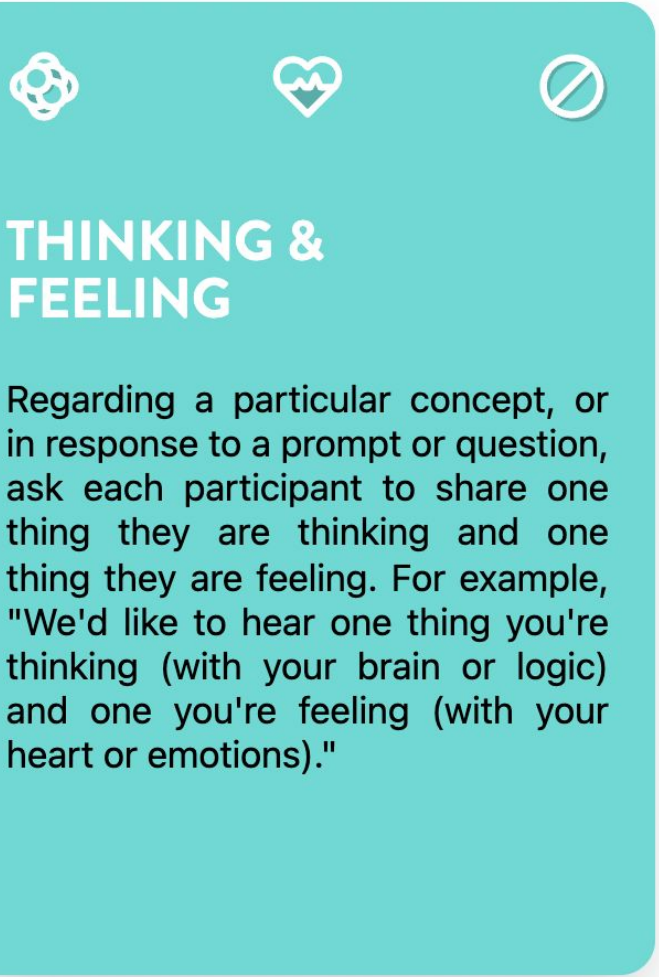
For example, imagine you are returning to your home school. What are some of the strengths you will bring, some weaknesses you are concerned about, some opportunities you should take advantage of and some threats you should try to avoid.



Thinking & Feeling

This activity is a great way to check in with students after teaching a concept or at the beginning or end of class. It allows you the change to check in with what's going on with them personally at the moment. This can be a do now activity that students complete and turn in to you (on paper or digitally). If digitally, this is a great way to keep track of how students are doing mentally over a long period of time.

For example: as students arrive in class, have them complete the digital do now with three questions.
Question 1: What are you thinking about right now?
Question 2: How are you feeling right now? (students might struggle with this question so use emojis to make it easier for them to pinpoint their feelings).



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