

What are Anchor Activities?

Anchor activities are purposeful activities that extend and review skills. They also deepen student understanding of content and enrich the skills students need to acquire. Anchor activities offer meaningful self-directed activities for students.

When and how can Anchor Activities be used?

Anchor Activities may be used:

- • as students enter the classroom in the morning (morning work).
- • as students complete an assignment or learning task earlier than other students.
- • when students complete a learning center activity.
- • as whole class assignments
- • as small group or individual assignments while the teacher is instructing small groups of students.
- • with all students, but may be tiered to meet the different readiness levels.
- • interdisciplinary for use across content areas.
- • any other time during the day that the teacher feels appropriate.

How are Anchor Activities managed?

Anchor Activities may be managed with:

- • point values
- • rubrics
- • checklists
- • random checks
- • on-task behaviors
- • as a percent of the student's final grade
- • as a portfolio check
- • a teacher and student conference
- • peer reviews
- • anecdotal records

How can Anchor Activities be organized?

Anchor Activities can be organized in many ways such as:

- • Colored bins (according to complexity levels, by subject, etc...)
- • Pocket charts that have spaces large enough for papers, file folders, etc...
- • On shelves or in drawers that students have easy access to.
- • In backpacks or shoulder bags

Implementation of Anchor Activities in order to teach small groups of students:

Step 1:

Teach the whole class how to select an anchor activity and work independently and quietly on anchor activities.

Step 2:

½ of the class works on Anchor Activities

Flip
Flop

½ of the class works on a different activity

Step 3:

1/3 of the class works on Anchor Activities

1/3 of the class works on a different activity

1/3 of the class works with teacher: Direct instruction

Examples of Anchor Activities



Independent Reading	Learning Packets for a Specific Subject or Skill	Crossword Puzzles Word Search Puzzles
*Spelling Activities	Listening Center (Book on CD)	Web Quets
*Vocabulary Work	Research Questions Research Projects	*Extension Activities related to a content area
Math "Problem of the Day"	Online Interactive Games	File Folder Games
Learning Center	Content Related Games	Logic Puzzles
*Journal Response to a Question	Write a story using vocabulary words	*Various activity cards and manipulatives with a problem solving task

* Indicates specific examples are provided below



Journal Response to a Question: A few examples may be: If you could go anywhere, where would you go? What invention would you devise in order to make the world a better place? Two of your friends are arguing. What would you do to help them solve their problem?

Vocabulary Work: Provide multiple sentences (or a paragraph) but leave out some of the words. Students will fill in the blank using vocabulary words in order to complete the sentences. (Ex. The ____ sat on the log and ate ____.) Easier Level: Provide the words at the top or bottom of the page. Difficult: Do not provide the words on the page.

Spelling Activities: Students will fold a piece of paper into quarters. In box A, they will write the word. In box B: They will write the word in a sentence. In box C, they will write synonyms/opposites of the word. In box D, they will draw the meaning of the word.

1 <u>Write your word.</u>	2 <u>Write word in a sentence.</u>
3 <u>Write synonyms and antonyms.</u>	4 <u>Illustrate the meaning of the word.</u>

Various activity cards and manipulative with a problem solving task: These cards can be organized in different ways such as:

- ***In an index card file box according to the content area or skill.*** Make sure to also organize them in a way so that the tasks are leveled according to ability level. As the cards accumulate, a separate card file could be made for each content area. Students will select an activity card and solve the problem.
(+ Minimal storage space required. – Manipulative are not with the card.)
- ***In a backpack or shoulder bag.*** To differentiate, include multiple task cards with various levels of questions in the bag.
(+ All contents are in the bag. – Ample storage space will be needed.)
- ***On a metal ring.*** Each ring can contain multiple activity cards. The cards can be leveled, and students can flip to one that they are interested in solving.
(+ Minimal storage space required. – Manipulatives are not with the card.)

Extension activities related to a content area

A few examples:

- ***Language Arts*** (The Three Little Pigs): Design a house that would keep the wolf away. Describe how the house would keep the wolf away.
- ***Math*** (Addition): Select a number 3-10. Show the different ways your number can be made. Illustrate story problems to show the combinations.
- ***Science*** (Habitats): Choose an animal and draw it in its natural habitat. Label the different features in your picture that are found in the animal's habitat.
- ***Social Studies*** (Community Helpers): Create a song about community helpers. Possible tunes: 3 Blind Mice, Mary Had a Little Lamb, etc...

Drop Everything!

Drop Everything is a visual *elaboration* game. The unexpected shapes and patterns created by ‘dropped’ items is the impetus to creative thought.

First, select appropriate small items to drop onto blank papers. Distribute the items to students. Decide if all will drop the same items, or vary them so no two neighbors have the same items.

Have students hold the items about 8-12 inches above the paper and then let go! Explain that once dropped, the items may not be moved. They will be glued or taped in place. Items that land partially on and partially off the edge of the paper should remain as they are. This only adds to more creative possibilities as boundaries are extended!

Once the dropped pieces have been secured, the students then need to turn and twist the paper, looking at it from all angles. They are to imagine what these pieces could be. *Are they many pieces of the same thing or are they parts belonging to one larger thing?*

Pencil, colored pencil, chalk, and marker can all be used to add details to the paper to show the vision created by these dropped items. The final picture should **not** be the original items representing what they **really** are. For example, if buttons are dropped, the final picture should **not** be clothing items with buttons appearing as they would on a real garment. Instead the buttons might be eyes, wheels, balloons, or turtles! Ideally have students use the entire paper to create a detailed picture. Have students add a creative title.

Suggested materials for ‘drops’:

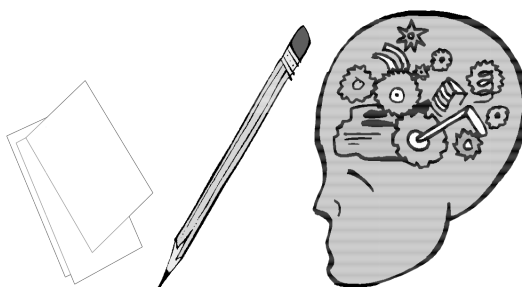
Toothpicks	Sequins, small and large	Paperclips
Buttons	Dried beans	Pennies
Pasta		

Feeling Naturally Creative? Drop:

Small leaves	Twigs	Pine straw
Seeds	Flower petals	

THREES Game

Supplies needed: a piece of paper, pencil and a flexible, creative mind!



THREES

In the game of **THREES** each participant must list **THREE** items that fit within the given category. Usually played with five categories, the game can be lengthened or shortened depending on the amount of time available or the number of players. More players will increase the time needed to score the game answers.

The main goal is to brainstorm unusual answers that fit, but that no one else will think to record. Wacky answers are encouraged, as long as they can be justified.

1. List the categories on the board. Suggested categories are:
kinds of flowers, girl's names, vacation spots, favorite book characters, sports played with a ball, things made from metal, messy foods, card games, kinds of berries, school supplies, winter activities, etc.
2. Give students a time limit to fill in **THREE** answers per category. (If they can only think of one or two – that's all right; they will score less in that category.) One to two minutes per category is an acceptable time limit. They must be specific with their answers. (see scoring) Inventive spelling is OK.
3. No talking! Let the game begin.