



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Back Pocket Program Hints for the Learning Center

**A Collection of Fun High-Yield Learning Activities to Support
Project Learn and Other Academic Enrichment Programming**

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview of Project Learn

Research studies have shown that youth perform better in school when they spend their non-school hours engaged in fun, but academically challenging, activities. Developed specifically to enhance members' learning success, Project Learn offers a variety of approaches to reinforce the skills and knowledge youth learn at school. By integrating fun, educational activities throughout the Club, Project Learn creates an environment that builds on members' strengths, fosters independent learning and encourages discovery. Youth at the Club can continue their learning while enjoying the other benefits of Club life.

Project Learn fosters members' continuous learning - both in and out of the classroom - through five educational enhancement components:

- *Homework help and tutoring.* Two different tracks within the Project Learn strategy allow Clubs to provide the level of help members need most. Club staff and dedicated adult or teen (peer) volunteers supervise the homework process and keep track of members' progress. For youth who need additional help, tutors are recruited to work one-on-one with members to address areas that need special attention or improvement. With homework help and tutoring, members are better prepared for classes, are more confident and feel good about their hard work and accomplishments. In addition, youth often gain a deeper understanding of the work, learn valuable organizational skills, become self-directed learners and experience long-term improvements in grades and test scores.
- *High-yield learning activities.* A diverse range of projects and experiences extends members' learning beyond the time they spend doing homework and receiving tutoring. High-yield learning activities include leisure reading, writing activities and games like chess or *Scrabble*® that develop young people's cognitive skills. A high-yield learning activity is one in which youth use skills, information, behavior and values needed for successful homework completion. These activities enable members to use and practice developmentally appropriate words, sentences, ideas and problem-solving strategies. Most importantly, high-yield learning activities are fun. They are inherently motivating to members and provide incentives for them to explore, develop, create and learn.
- *Parental involvement.* Communicating with parents about members' educational needs and achievements increases young people's chances for success in school and in future learning opportunities. Parents play an important role in determining a young person's attitude toward learning. They can make a major contribution to a youth's educational achievement by reinforcing the importance of homework, answering questions, providing a setting conducive to study, drilling the youth in spelling and math, accompanying the youth to the library, rehearsing presentations, helping select and design science fair exhibits, shopping for project materials and praising a young person's efforts and accomplishments.
- *Collaboration with schools.* Connecting with local schools to share information and resources is a big part of Project Learn. Teachers and other school representatives can

offer insight into members' needs, learning styles, behaviors, academic performance, assignments and attitudes about education.

- *Recognition and incentives.* Recognition is an important part of any program, but is particularly vital to keeping youth motivated to learn. By acknowledging the skills youth have developed and the knowledge they have gained, Clubs can help youth become more capable and competent. When used effectively, recognition and incentives can build members' self-esteem, confidence and belief in their ability to succeed.

These strategies work together to support Club members in reaching their full potential - by helping them become proficient in basic academic skills and encouraging them to become lifelong learners.

Purpose of Back Pocket Program Hints for the Learning Center

Because high-yield learning activities are at the heart of the Project Learn strategy, Club professionals need to integrate them whenever possible into all areas of Club life. This guide provides ideas for high-yield learning activities to enhance members' learning in key areas:

- reading;
- writing;
- math and science;
- helping others;
- cognitive skills; and
- discussions with knowledgeable adults.

Tips on Conducting High-Yield Learning Activities

When conducting high-yield learning activities, keep the following tips in mind:

- *Keep it fun.* Although skill development and knowledge enhancement is the ultimate goal, fun is a key element of the high-yield learning activities. To keep youth motivated and engaged, make sure activities are fun and contain an element of surprise.
- *Use a theme.* A theme can help excite, inspire and motivate members while keeping them focused on a specific learning goal you are trying to achieve.
- *Have a variety of materials handy.* Make sure you have a variety of supplies on hand: art materials, paper, pencils, pens, markers, crayons, reference books, colored construction paper, poster board, scissors, tape, glue sticks, magazines, newspapers, calculators, flashcards and games.
- *Tailor activities to the age group.* Because youth at different ages have different needs, interests and abilities, be sure to tailor the activities so all youth have the chance to learn, practice and succeed in learning new skills.

- *Give examples.* When asking members to do a new activity or try a new skill, give an example first to show them what is expected.
- *Vary the types of activities.* Activities in this guide are designed to enable youth to work individually, in pairs, in small groups or teams or together as a large group. Although group collaboration may be more fun for youth, some activities are designed to develop individual skills. Decide which type of activity best meets your members' needs.
- *Use technology when appropriate.* Many activities are enhanced by the use of computers if they are available. Doing paper-and-pencil activities in Microsoft Word builds members' word processing skills; using Excel for math activities familiarizes youth with graphs and spreadsheets; and using the Internet builds research skills and helps youth expand their knowledge of any subject matter.
- *Focus on learning goals.* Ideally, Club staff should work with each member to set specific learning goals and, once these goals are met, revise and expand them. It also is important to be aware of the lessons and homework assignments youth are working on so the high-yield learning activities will enhance that learning.
- *Involve peer leaders.* Recruit older youth as experts to help younger or less experienced members with new skills and learning.
- *Conduct field trips.* Integrating field trips into the Learning Center program not only is fun for youth but extends the learning of any high-yield learning activity.

Education program planning hints

Programming for youth involves paying attention to the specific interests and needs of members in your group. However, some general programming guidelines also apply:

- *Respond to developmental needs.* Youth at every age have unique developmental needs - physical, cognitive, emotional and social - and effective programming is designed to meet youth where they are in their development and lead them to the next stage.
- *Address male/female differences.* Take into account the differences between females and males in physical maturation, learning rates, ways of processing information, internal motivations, standards for evaluating themselves and ways they experience the world. Make sure activities are not biased toward activities that are easier for boys.
- *Engage youth with experiential learning.* For all youth, doing is more meaningful and memorable than simply seeing or hearing. They need hands-on activities that help them build competence and confidence, keep them involved and engaged and give them ample opportunities to apply and practice new learning and skills.

- *Create pathways for leadership.* Give youth opportunities to lead in a variety of ways through: organizing, giving guidance, instructing, taking charge, speaking out, making decisions, solving problems, pioneering and trailblazing or taking a public stand.
- *Make programming progressive.* Because some Club programs are designed for use with a wide range of age groups - programs in which youth may have already participated - it is especially important to make sure that programming is progressive, that activities change to reflect the age and developmental levels of youth as they mature.
- *Integrate mentoring.* Making mentoring a part of programs gives youth the chance to learn from those who are older and wiser without having their growing independence threatened.
- *Build in goal-setting.* Youth benefit from learning how to set goals, keep the goals in mind and work toward meeting them. Programs that build in opportunities for setting and meeting goals help youth with long-term goal setting.

Strategies To Make Homework Fun

To make homework more fun for youth, consider the following ideas:

- Let youth work together as study buddies. Try to match members' who have complementary strengths so they can help each other.
- Make learning an adventure by fostering young people's natural curiosity and challenging them to learn more about topics that interest them.
- Use innovative learning aids such as candy or goldfish crackers to make learning more fun.
- Engage all the senses to reach youth with varying learning styles. Using finger-paints, texture, physical motion or scent can reach some members better than traditional methods and can engage all youth by giving them a different way of approaching learning.
- Create a visual map of a member's learning, a chart to show where he or she is, the goal and how long it will take to get there.
- Use fun Web sites to assist youth and develop their curiosity. The variety of fun, online games and activities can spark members' interest in otherwise difficult subjects.
- Consider playing classical or other instrumental music to create an environment where concentration is enhanced.
- Use flash cards and other visuals to reinforce basic skills and make learning into a game.
- Talk to and engage youth in the subject they are studying to demonstrate your enthusiasm and interest. Give encouragement and feedback.

- Allow youth to personalize a learning spot or station - even if temporary - so they have a space where they feel comfortable working anytime.
- Create a stimulating environment. Especially for boring or repetitive tasks, get kids up and moving with dance, charades or any active movement.
- Allow breaks every 15 to 20 minutes and allow youth to do something fun and rejuvenating. A walk outside or a five-minute "filler" activity can give youth energy to stay engaged.
- Have youth quiz you. Having a member teach you a skill or concept he or she has learned will be a fun change and improve his or her understanding and retention.
- Provide snacks at breaks; having something to look forward to provides motivation and incentive for youth.
- Display well-done work in a prominent place. Whenever youth do something well, be sure to display it for Club members and staff to see. Recognition always makes learning more fun.

Using Technology To Support Learning Center Activities

The Internet is an excellent medium for conducting research on any given subject, but only if members already know enough about the subject to differentiate between helpful, reliable information and useless information from unreliable sources.

Anyone who has conducted searches on the Web knows how easy it is to get lost in a never-ending succession of pages. Because the primary goal of any activity is learning, time spent on the computer must be directly focused on completing an activity or assignment. Volunteers and staff should guide members as they conduct searches on the Internet and let them know that Internet surfing for fun is a reward that must be earned.

As members begin to use the Internet, make sure they are aware of Internet-based BGCA programs in graphic design, digital arts and Web development:

- *ClubTech* is an initiative designed to bring a range of technology immersion and training programs to members and staff of BGCA Clubs in such areas as basic computer skills, digital movie making, music making, photography, graphic design and Web development.
- *NetSmartz* is an educational resource for teaching youth how to safely use and enjoy the Internet. The program makes use of colorful, age-appropriate animated characters and is available to all Clubs nationwide or via the site www.netsmartz.org.

PART TWO: READING

Alphabet Soup

Begin by dividing the large group into two teams; give each team a set of alphabet cards. Explain that each team will be given a word to spell using the cards. Say that team members must hold up the letters, in the proper order, so the word reads from left to right. Explain that teams earn points for each word spelled correctly. Tell youth that if a word has two of the same letter in it, they can turn over another card and use it as a blank to represent the duplicated letter. Allow teams a few minutes to decide how they will work together. Choose words appropriate to the group's age level and vary the points according to difficulty. For each word/round, award points to the team that gets the correct spelling most quickly.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Two sets of alphabet cards
- List of spelling words

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Scrambled Eggs

Youth learn to recognize words and think critically with anagram puzzles. Explain that the letters in each phrase can be rearranged to spell a word or name. Challenge youth to figure out the four words in each set *and* what the words in each set have in common.

- SAD MA
- A NIGHT SNOW
- JEFF SNORE
- RESOLVE TO

Answers: Adams, Washington, Jefferson and Roosevelt were all U.S. presidents.

- A MALL
- A GROAN OK
- PATIO PUSH MOP
- RICHER SOON

Answers: llama, kangaroo, hippopotamus and rhinoceros are all mammals.

- A CAT RAT INC
- MARTIAN CHORE
- ASIA ULTRA
- OMAHA CURES IT

Answers: Antarctica, North America, Australia and South America are all continents.

- FORTS
- STEEL
- A TRUE TEMPER
- MRS NOT SOW

Answers: frost, sleet, temperature and snowstorm are all words related to weather.

- TEMP RUT
- ROBOT MEN
- SO A SNOB
- CAT LINER

Answers: trumpet, trombone, bassoon and clarinet are all musical instruments.

Activity Type

Individual, pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Around-the-Club Trivia

Ask youth to form two teams. Explain that teams will compete in rounds of trivia, answering questions related to common items found around the Club. Give an example: "What is the brand and model number of the printer in the Learning Center?" Ask one question of one team; if they answer correctly, award a point. If they do not answer correctly, the other team gets a chance at the same question. At the end of all rounds, the team with the most points wins.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Trivia questions related to items and objects in the room and Club

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Balderdash

Teams compete against each other to guess the meaning of words they do not know. Begin by choosing a word from the dictionary youth are unfamiliar with. Ask each team to write a made-up definition of the word and write it on a slip of paper. Encourage youth to make their definitions sound as much like a dictionary definition as possible. Write the correct definition on a slip of paper. Instruct all teams to give their slips of paper to you. Read the definitions aloud one at a time, including the correct one. As you read them through a second time, ask each team to vote on the definition they believe is correct. Teams score points when someone votes for their made-up definition and when they vote for the correct definition. The team with the most points wins.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Slips of paper (cut to the same size)
- Dictionary

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Spy Vs. Spy

Assign each letter of the alphabet a different value, a number from 1 to 26. Write several sample words in number form on a white board or flip chart. For example, C=17, A=22 and T=4, so *cat* would appear as 17, 22, 4. Ask members to write a "coded" message to a friend using the coding system you have listed. Instruct them to switch with each other and de-code each other's messages.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Most Valuable Player

Tell members they will create original "sports" cards based on their achievements. Review the components of a traditional sports card:

- a photo of the athlete on front
- a team logo
- statistical/biographical information about the athlete
- name of the team the athlete plays for

Explain to youth that they will use the computer to create the cards, print out the information and cut and paste it onto poster board. Give the following guidelines for creating the cards:

- Create a two-sided Word document approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches tall.
- Create a self-portrait using Paint. (If the Club has a digital camera, youth can take photos of themselves.)
- Design the front of the card, placing the self-portrait and using text boxes to insert the name and team logo.
- Using Excel, create a spreadsheet, chart or graph with autobiographical or statistical information.
- Print out all pieces, cut and glue onto poster board.

Encourage members to be as creative as possible with the information they include and their presentation.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Index cards or poster board
- Glue sticks
- Paper
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Detective Spellcheck

Write 10 words on a white board or flip chart; if possible, use spelling words members are currently studying. Give youth a few minutes to look at the words. Ask them to close their eyes, erase one of the words and rewrite it with a spelling error in it. Instruct members to open their eyes and try to figure out which word is misspelled. Have youth write the correct spelling of the word on a piece of paper.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

15 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Dream Jobs

Distribute classified ad sections from the newspaper to members. Ask them to read the ads and choose a job they would like to do. Explain that they are to write a "commercial" about themselves telling the potential employer why they should be hired. Encourage members to think of all their positive qualities, strengths and talents and how they might use them in the job they chose. Invite volunteers to present their commercials to the large group.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Newspapers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Five-Hundred Dollar Windfall

Begin by asking members to imagine that they have been given \$500 that they can spend any way they want. Distribute newspapers to all members and ask them to review the ads and decide what they will buy and how they will spend their money. The one who is able to get the most items for \$500 is the winner.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

15 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Newspapers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health and Life Skills

Fraggle Rock Fragments

Divide the large group into pairs. Distribute magazines to the pairs and instruct them to find ads that use sentence fragments. Give a couple of examples of the types of fragments that are used as ad slogans:

- Lots of shine
- The top ranked car in the world
- A world of possibilities

Give youth time to find the ads and identify the sentence fragments. Instruct them to find a way to correct the fragment and make it a complete sentence. Ask each pair to explain to the large group what the ad is for, read the fragment and then read the corrected sentence.

Activity Type

Pair

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Magazines

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Headline Match-Up

Youth build reading and summarizing skills in this simple activity. Organize members into five teams and distribute copies of the same news articles to each group. Give each group copies also of the headlines that have been separated from the articles. Give teams three minutes to match as many stories as possible with their headlines. The team that correctly matches the most headlines and stories is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

15 minutes

Materials

- At least 10 news articles (five copies of each, headlines separated)

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Rippin' Rhymes

Distribute one cut-up poem to each team. Challenge teams to put the poem in order so that it makes sense. Ask youth to glue the strips together on construction paper when they decide on the correct order. Explain that the winning team is the one that puts their poem in order fastest. Suggested poems include:

Alone (excerpt), Maya Angelou

*Lying, Thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out there alone.*

We Real Cool, Gwendolyn Brooks

*We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.*

We Wear the Mask, Paul Laurence Dunbar

*We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,--
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be overwise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
 We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.*

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Construction paper
- Glue sticks
- Simple poems, cut into strips so each line is its own strip

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

*We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!*

Dream Variations, Langston Hughes

*To fling my arms wide
In some place of the sun,
To whirl and to dance
Till the white day is done.
Then rest at cool evening
Beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently,
Dark like me--
That is my dream!*

*To fling my arms wide
In the face of the sun,
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!
Till the quick day is done.
Rest at pale evening . . .
A tall, slim tree . . .
Night coming tenderly
Black like me.*

The Tropics of New York, Claude McKay

*Bananas ripe and green, and ginger root
Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,
And tangerines and mangoes and grape fruit,
Fit for the highest prize at parish fairs,*

*Sat in the window, bringing memories
of fruit-trees laden by low-singing rills,
And dewy dawns, and mystical skies
In benediction over nun-like hills.*

*My eyes grow dim, and I could no more gaze;
A wave of longing through my body swept,
And, hungry for the old, familiar ways
I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.*

Runners and Writers

Ask members to form into pairs. Explain that one of them will be the "runner" and one will be the "writer." Place as many copies of the short paragraph as there are pairs outside the room. Make sure the writers on the teams have paper and pencil. Make sure youth have enough room to run without getting hurt. Tell members that the runner goes out of the room, reads a bit of the short paragraph and comes back into the room to relay it to his or her partner (the writer) as fast as possible. Remind them to relay the words quietly so other teams cannot hear. Runners should continue until the entire paragraph is written down. The first team to finish is the winner.

Activity Type

Pair

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Short paragraph (that all youth are able to read)

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

The Road Not Taken

Instruct members to form four groups. Ask one volunteer from each group to read aloud a stanza from the poem by Robert Frost. Give group members a few prompts to help them think about their own experiences:

- One time, I decided to . . .
- When I did that, what happened was . . .

Tell them to talk together about situations in which they took a direction different from what was expected. Ask a spokesperson from each of the four teams to tell the group's story to the large group.

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Scrabble Scramble

Begin by dividing the large group into two teams; give each team a set of alphabet cards. Have teams line up facing each other with their cards on the floor in front of them. Call out a category - such as food, colors, sports, etc. - and challenge players on each team to find letters to spell a word in that category. Award points to each team that spells a word correctly in each round.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Two sets of alphabet cards

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Read All About It!

Youth work in pairs or small groups to select the most interesting news story they can. Ask members to read the news story together, find the main idea of the story and write it down. Instruct them to find four details in the story and record those as well. Tell them to prepare to share the story with the large group in the most interesting way possible, using visuals they prepare or acting out portions of the story.

Optional: Members can search for news stories online.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Newspapers
- Flip chart
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Bases Loaded

Divide the large group into two teams. Explain that they will play a baseball game in which they score bases and runs by correctly spelling words. When a player steps up to "bat," he or she is given a word to spell. During the first two innings, teammates are allowed to help the "batter" with the correct response, but the batter must provide the correct response. If correct, he or she proceeds to the base. As players round the bases and return home, runs are scored. If the player at bat spells a word incorrectly, it is considered an out. After three outs, the team must forfeit their turn at bat to the other team. The team with the most runs at the end of the designated time is declared the winner.

Optional: If a batter misses a question, a player already on based can attempt to answer. If the base runner is correct, he or she advances; if incorrect, it counts as another out.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Bases arranged in a baseball diamond
- List of spelling words

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Spelling Hot Seat

Begin by placing three chairs near a white board or flip chart, but facing in the opposite direction. Select three players to sit in the chairs. Write a word behind them on the board and do not let the three members in the "hot seats" see the word. Allow other members in the room to give clues to the youth in the chairs. When one of the three knows the word, he or she rings a bell (or shouts out) and is given a chance to say the word and spell it correctly. If correct, that player picks someone else to be in the hot seat.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Chairs
- Bell

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Spelling Ping Pong

Divide the large group into two teams and have them line up in relay race fashion. Try to have members of similar grade level or ability opposite each other so they can compete fairly. Explain that the first two players on a team will spell a word together, alternating letters. If the word is *scratch*, for example, player A says "s," player B says "c" and so on until the word is spelled correctly or until one team makes a mistake. If the word is spelled correctly, no team gets a point and the first two players go to the end of the line. If one team makes a mistake, the other team gets one point. Play resumes with each new word and the two next players in line. Continue playing until one team gets 10 points.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- List of spelling words

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Spelling Tic Tac Toe

Draw a tic-tac-toe grid on a white board or flip chart. Divide the large group into two teams, the "X" team and the "O" team. Explain that teams will take turns spelling words correctly, either out loud or by writing them on the board. If team members spell a word correctly, they put an X or an O in the tic-tac-toe grid; if a team misspells a word, their opponents get to put an X or an O on the board. The first team to get a line wins the game.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- List of spelling words

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Story Pyramid

Ask youth to think of a story they are familiar with - from a favorite book, short story or movie. Ask them to use the "Story Pyramid" format to write down some details about the story.

Story Pyramid

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Instruct them to write the following information on each line of the story pyramid:

1. name of the main character
2. two words describing the main character
3. three words describing the setting
4. four words stating the story problem
5. five words describing one event in the story
6. six words describing a second event
7. seven words describing a third event
8. eight words describing the solution to the problem

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Word Jumble

Ask members to form into teams. Explain to members that you will write a word and teams will compete against each other to see how many words they can make from the original word given. For each round, write the word on a white board or flip chart where all teams can see it. Give them three minutes to create their list of new words. Award a point for each new word; two points for complex words. Give an example to get teams started:

- original word - prefabricate
- new words - ate, eat, craft, create

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Word Safari

Distribute newspaper sections to pairs or small groups. Ask youth to choose a page and circle as many new vocabulary words as they can find on the page in five minutes. Call time and give members another five minutes to look up the meanings of the words in the dictionary. Award points to the team with the most new vocabulary words and definitions.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

15 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Newspapers
- Dictionary

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

This Land Is Your Land

Ask members to think about what they know about where they come from: their family members, their place of birth or origin, where they currently live. Tell them that each of them will make a collage to represent "Where I Come From." Encourage youth to use the Internet to find information about their birthplaces or countries of origin, or to research information about the community in which they're currently living. Members can compile their collages by hand, using art supplies on hand, or by using the drawing function in Word.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Colored markers
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Gimme an A!

Divide large group into two smaller teams and give each team a set of alphabet cards. Explain that teams will compete to come up with as many words as they can in five minutes (or the time you specify). Tell youth that if a word has two of the same letter in it, they can turn over another card and use it as a blank to represent the duplicated letter. The team with the most words - spelled correctly - wins.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

15 minutes

Materials

- Two sets of alphabet cards

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Hot Potato

Review the reading material quickly before the activity to identify the "poison" word, a word that appears often in the text (at least once every few paragraphs). Ask youth to sit in a circle and explain that they will be reading aloud from a story you selected. Ask a member to begin reading the story and, when he or she reaches the "poison" word, to pass the story to the next reader to take over. After the reading has gone around the circle, select another "poison" word and continue reading.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Age-appropriate book or story

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

PART TWO: WRITING

A-B-C...Easy as 1-2-3

Members work individually to write phrases or sentences that describe them - or an event, place, person or object of importance in their lives. Explain that they should write 26 phrases or sentences, each one beginning with a different letter of the alphabet. Give several examples to spark members' ideas and get them started:

- apple-eating
- a new bike
- Anne's sister
- All my friends live near the Club.
- Alabama is where I was born.

Optional: In subsequent meetings, members may copy each phrase or sentence on a separate page and draw an illustration for it. When they have completed the alphabet, show them how to bind the pages into a book using yarn, string or colored ribbon.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Juicy Foods

Members work in small groups to re-design a restaurant menu. Begin by giving group members a basic restaurant menu (either one from an actual restaurant or one that you created). Make sure the menu lists only food choices, without descriptions. Have youth brainstorm adjectives to describe the foods, and then write short descriptions for each one using the adjectives they came up with. Ask members to consider adding healthy sides to round out each selection. Offer an example of a possible menu item:

Hamburger Plate

Try our juicy, mouth-watering burger, served with tangy coleslaw, crisp carrot sticks and a fluffy baked potato.

Optional: Have members illustrate their menus using construction paper and colored markers or by using the drawing functions in Microsoft Word.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Restaurant menu

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Auto-Bio Poem

Members write an 11-line autobiographical (bio) poem. Introduce the idea by explaining the format of the poem and modeling your own example as you go:

- Your first name Nancy
- Three descriptive traits Honest, caring, curious
- Sibling/friend of Donna
- Lover of (people, ideas) Laughter, learning
- Who feels . . . Happy when traveling
- Who needs . . . Sunshine
- Who gives . . . Friendship, smiles
- Who fears . . . Pain, hunger
- Who would like to see . . . Peace in the world
- Resident of (your city) Cleveland
- Your last name Fisher

Encourage members to use descriptive words and adjectives as part of their Auto-Bio poem.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Tag-Team Stories

As members practice writing skills in a "relay" activity, they also get a chance to see how others write. Begin by asking members to think of something they would like to write a story about. Explain that the story can be about anything they choose, as long as it is made up. When all are ready, give the following directions, calling time at appropriate intervals:

- Take your place at the computer and open a new Word document. Wait for my signal to begin writing your story. You have two minutes.
- Quickly move to the computer to your right, change the font color to red, read what was written and continue writing the story. You have three minutes.
- Move to the right again, change the font color to green, read what was written and continue writing the story. You have four minutes.
- Move to the right, change the font color to orange, read what was written and continue writing the story. You have five minutes.
- Move to the right, change the font color to blue, read what was written and continue writing the story. You have six minutes.
- Return to your original computer. Change the font color to black and read what was written. Correct spelling and grammar.

Ask youth to read aloud the jointly-created chain stories.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Common Props

Members can complete this activity individually, in pairs or small groups. Ask youth to select a common item (or "prop") from a basket of items you have gathered or from a list of items you have written on a white board. Instruct them to consider a use for the object other than the one it is intended for, and then to write a brief paragraph describing this new, alternative use.

Allow 15 minutes for members to write their paragraphs. Ask them to read aloud what they have written or do a brief demonstration of the alternative use they invented for their chosen object.

Activity Type

Individual, pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Common items such as sunglasses, bowl, rope, fork, Frisbee, brush, clothespin, shoe, toothpick, matchbox, ear muffs, coffee mug

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Fun With Funnies!

Have members create their own characters to be introduced as newcomers to their favorite comic strips. For example, they might develop a new kid in the "Peanuts" gang or a new pet in Garfield's house. Give youth a few minutes to look at comics in the newspapers provided, and then begin by having each member draw a picture of a new character and write a description of that character's personality. When ready, ask members to draw their own three-frame comic strip, using both new and regular characters. Instruct them to write the dialogue in bubbles above the characters' heads. Members may design their comic strips to begin a new story or pick up where the current strip left off.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Colored markers
- Construction paper
- Newspapers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Don't Dis' It!

Members critique a movie, restaurant, song, book or work of art. Ask youth to begin by thinking of a piece they would like to review in one of these categories:

- movie
- art
- restaurant
- music or song
- book or story

Instruct members to write a response to the piece they selected offering either criticism and/or praise based on their experience. Remind youth that they may select a famous work of art - such as the Mona Lisa - if they feel they are familiar enough with it to write a review. Point out that reviews or critiques are subjective; each of their opinions is valid as long as youth can back it up with details about their experience and viewpoint.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Dear Character

Youth learn to understand characters' personalities in this writing activity. Begin by having members think about two characters from a movie or television program they have seen lately or from a book or story they have read recently. Explain that the characters can be from two different stories, two different places, even two different times in history. Ask youth to think about the two characters they chose - what they are like, how they might get along, what they have in common and what they might say to one another if they met. Instruct members to write a letter from one character to the other, taking into account the different personalities of each.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Fill-in-the-Blank Poetry

Members practice writing a simple poem without having to create a new structure. Write the following poem on a white board. Next to the poem, write it again, leaving blank spaces for key words in the poem (in bold below). Instruct members to first read the poem in its original form, and then write their own version by filling in the blanks with words they choose. Explain that they can be as creative as they like, but should use the appropriate parts of speech in the blanks provided. To give members help in getting started, you may want to write the appropriate part of speech in each blank.

Winter Poem (Nikki Giovanni)

*once a snowflake fell
on my brow and i loved
it so much and i kissed
it and it was happy and called its cousins
and brothers and a web
of snow engulfed me then
i reached to love them all
and i squeezed them and they became
a spring rain and i stood perfectly
still and was a flower*

Fill-in-the-Blank Poem

*once a (noun) fell
on my (noun) and i (past tense verb)
it so much and i (past tense verb)
it and it was (adverb) and called its (noun)
and (noun) and a (noun)
of (noun) (past tense verb) me then
i (past tense verb) to (verb) them all
and i (past tense verb) them and they (past tense verb)
a (adjective) (noun) and i (past tense verb) (adverb)
(adverb) and was a (noun)*

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Headline Poems

Members write poems using headlines from multiple news stories. Begin by distributing newspapers to group members. Instruct them to skim for headlines, looking for a theme or topic, such as politics, crime, disaster or the environment. Ask them to select a topic or theme (they may combine topics if they choose) and collect 10 to 15 headlines on it. Tell them to arrange the headlines in any order that makes sense or states a message. Explain that they may use all the headlines, omit some or search for others as needed. Ask members to add punctuation and select titles for their headline poems.

Optional: Members may search the Internet for news story headlines to use in this activity.

Activity Type

Individual, pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Paper
- Newspapers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Hershey's Kisses® Discovery

Members use their imagination and writing skills to describe a piece of candy. Tell youth that they are to pretend they are from another planet, one exactly like Earth but without chocolate. Explain that they are going to receive an unknown object and that they are not to touch the item until you say they should. Give each youth a Hershey's Kiss and remind them that, since they live on another planet, they have no idea what it is. Tell them that they are to write a descriptive paragraph about the object - *without* touching it. Next, allow youth to use their sense of touch to feel the object, and then to write a few sentences about their observations. Next, have members unwrap it and use their nose and eyes to write a few sentences about what they notice. Next, ask them to place the candy in their mouths - but *not* to chew. Ask them to write about the taste and the feel. Finally, instruct them to write a few sentences about how much they like this object and to give it a creative name.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Hershey's Kisses®

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Journal Writing

Members can do a quick journal-writing activity to practice their writing skills and consider how they might respond in certain situations. Make up your own question or choose from one of the following:

- What if you could trade places with a friend for a day?
- What if you had to choose the quality most important to you in a friend?
- What would you talk about if you could talk to the President?
- What if you could be any age than the one you are now?
- If this group were on a new version of "Fear Factor," who would outlast all the others?

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Mad Libs

Members work as a group to write a "mad libs" story. Begin by asking the large group to quickly come up with one word for each of the bold-faced categories in the story below. As they come up with words, write them on a white board in list form. Once the group has come up with 21 words - in the appropriate parts of speech - read the story aloud, filling in the words the group came up with.

There once was a _____ (**animal**) on the loose. _____ (**name**) and I tried to catch him, but had no luck. Then, the unexpected happened. While _____ ("**ing**" **verb**), I noticed a rustling in the _____ (**noun**). I _____ (**adverb**) called the neighbor. As he peeked _____ (**preposition**) the corner, he _____ (**past tense verb**). I ran quickly to see what was wrong. There swam a/an _____ (**animal**) in the pool. Slowly I turned toward _____ (**name**) and said, "It's an _____ (**adjective**) one. Maybe you should try _____ ("**ing**" **verb**) it first?" _____ (**name**) agreed reluctantly. As he made his move, the _____ (**animal**) _____ (**past tense verb**) _____ (**preposition**) him. _____ (**name**) screamed so loud and high. I started laughing and said, "_____!" (**interjection**) I didn't know you could scream that high. Of course, _____ (**pronoun**) did not find my comment _____ (**adjective**), but chuckled anyway. The moral of this story is never try to catch a/an _____ (**animal**) while screaming like a/an _____ (**noun**).

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

None

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Magnetic Poetry

Members brainstorm creative stories while practicing basic formatting in Word. Begin by having members work individually at the computer to come up with 20 different words and phrases. Instruct them to type the words or phrases in a Word document, using different fonts and colors, making sure they are large enough to cut out and place on the bulletin board. Print members' words and phrases and ask them to cut them out and attach in random order to the bulletin board using push pins. Provide articles (such as *a, an, the*) and conjunctions (such as *and, but, or*) and any other words necessary to a story. Ask members to work together in the large group to create a story using all the words provided.

Activity Type

Individual and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Computers
- Printer
- Paper
- Scissors
- Push pins
- Bulletin board

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Every Picture Tells a Story

Youth work in pairs or small groups to create a story about a newspaper photo. Have each pair or group choose an interesting, funny or unusual photo from the newspapers provided. Ask members to write a story about what happened before, during and after the photo was taken. Explain that stories can be completely made up or members can try to recreate what might have happened. Encourage youth to use humor, imagination and creativity in their stories.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Newspapers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

One-Breath Haiku

Begin by telling members about haiku poems and explaining that they are very short poems, only three lines long, usually about nature. Tell youth that they are going to write their own haiku poems. Explain that they can write about anything they want; if they want to write about nature, they can choose to write about birds, trees, lakes, flowers, mountains, rain or snow. Tell them that there is only one rule when writing haiku; the poems must have a specific number of syllables:

Line 1: five syllables

Line 2: seven syllables

Line 3: five syllables

Give the group an example of a haiku poem:

*Rushing waterfalls
Splashing on the jagged rocks
Sound like buzzing bees*

Allow members to decorate their haiku poems and share them with the large group if they wish.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

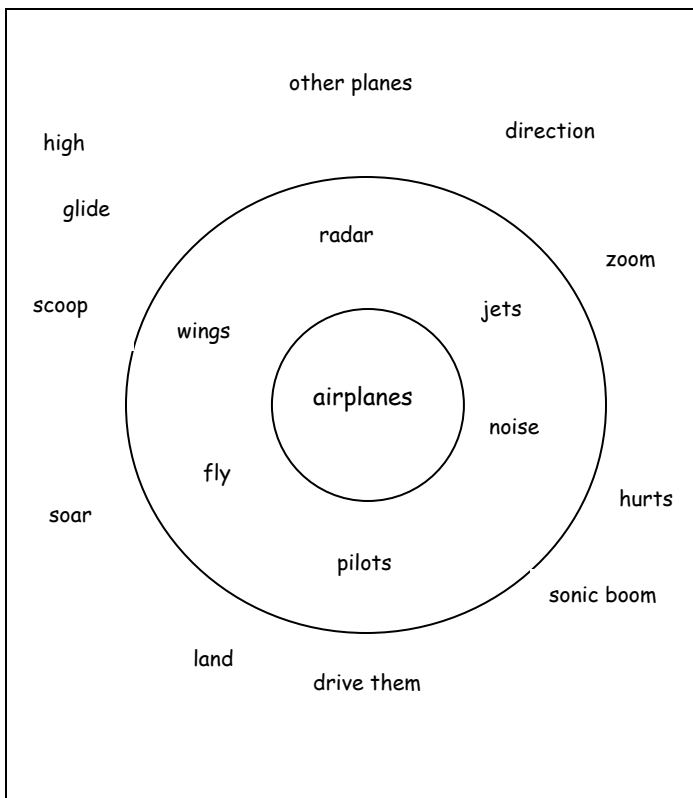
- Pencils/pens
- Construction paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Story Maps

Members work in small teams on a "story map" to help them develop ideas for writing or storytelling. Draw an example of the diagram below on a flip chart or white board and instruct group members to draw their own. Instruct them to select a topic - such as airplanes - and write the word in the center circle. Next, they write five or six related words in the outer circle, things they know about the topic. Finally, outside that circle, they write what they know about each of the words in the second ring, a few words for each. Give the following example:



Optional: Ask members to write a few sentences related to their topics and share them with the large group.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

To Be Or Not To Be

Members create one-act plays to practice their writing skills and explore ways to respond in certain situations. Tell members that they are to work together in their groups to create a simple, one-act play. Explain that any good story has a **beginning** - in which the situation is introduced, a **middle** - in which a conflict or a problem happens and an **end** - in which the problem is resolved and the story concludes. Tell youth that they can come up with any situation they choose for their plays. Give a few examples to spark their ideas:

- arriving home from school after failing a test
- having a fight with your best friend
- losing track of a neighbor's pet while dog-sitting

Distribute index cards and encourage them to make notes about the beginning, middle and end of their plays. Allow members time to prepare, and then ask them to present their plays to the large group.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Index cards

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

If You Were a Shoe...

Youth choose another member of the group to write a poem about. As you read through the following list, ask youth to write one word or phrase in response:

- What time of day is this person?
- What kind of shoe is this person?
- What song describes this person?
- If this person were a car, what kind would he/she be?
- If he/she could live in another time, when would it be?
- List something this person owns.
- If he/she were an ice cream, what flavor would it be?
- What sound do you associate with this person?
- What land form would he/she be (mountain, lake, etc.)?
- What color is this person?
- What kind of pizza would this person be?
- List one word to describe this person.

Ask youth to use the words and phrases they have written to create a poem about the person, using additional words if they need to. Remind them that they may share the poem with the other person if they like.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Sausage Poems

Youth work in pairs or small groups to see how many "sausage" poems they can create in 15 minutes. Explain that in a sausage poem, the letters at the end of a word match the letters beginning the word following. Give members a couple of examples to get them started:

- Dad **drives Sara and Dana** around Dallas.
- **Good dogs shouldn't tell** lies.
- **Twenty yellow wildflowers sat to our** right.

Encourage youth to have fun and be creative. Instruct them to begin when you give the signal and stop when you call time. Explain that the pair or group with the greatest number of sausage poem wins.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Secret Pen Pals

Members practice their writing skills by composing secret messages to others in the group. Begin by writing all group members' names on index cards and asking youth to select one card each. Ask members to choose a secret code name for themselves. Instruct them to compose a letter to their secret pen pal (the person whose name is on the card they chose) using their code name and trying not to reveal who they are. Explain that they should point out one good quality of their secret pen pal in the letter. After youth have written their letters, collect them and distribute them to the appropriate members. Give youth a chance to guess who wrote their letters; those who can guess the letter-writers and those who can successfully conceal their identities win a prize.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Index cards

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Saturday Night Live

Members work in small groups to create and perform a spur-of-the-moment skit. Ask members to select at random three items (or "props") from those you have gathered. Allow groups 15 to 20 minutes to create a skit based on the props they have chosen. Encourage groups to be as original and humorous as possible, even silly! Call time and ask each small team to present its skit to the large group. Vote on the best skit and give a reward to the team members who created it.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Random items such as a banana, pair of glasses, basketball, drinking cup, book, baseball cap, shoe, mouse pad, keys, newspaper, etc.

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

You Write the Songs

Youth create original song lyrics to a well-known song. Introduce the activity by asking how many members know the song, "This Land Is Your Land." Review the lyrics:

*This land is your land.
This land is my land.
From California
to the New York islands,
from the redwood forests,
to the gulf stream waters
this land was made for you and me.*

Ask youth to work in small groups to write new lyrics to the song, substituting information about their city, town, area or region. Give an example:

*This DC is your DC.
This DC is my DC.
From the White House
to the Smithsonian,
from the political speeches,
to the museum tourists
this DC was made for you and me.*

Tell youth not to worry if the meter doesn't match the original song exactly, and encourage them to have fun thinking up funny details about where they live.

Optional: Members can use the Internet to search for more detailed information about their region or area.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Talking Vegetables

Youth practice writing and thinking skills in this “what if?” activity. Ask members to work in small groups to brainstorm ideas related to these scenarios:

- vegetables could talk
- water in the oceans evaporated
- all clocks stopped
- everyone looked alike
- trees began growing money

Instruct teams to write a paragraph summarizing group members' ideas. Encourage youth to use as much humor and creativity as they can in describing their scenarios.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Tongue Twisters

Small-group members practice writing and thinking skills by composing tongue twisters. Begin by reminding youth of the well-known tongue twisters, "She sells seashells down by the seashore" and "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." Instruct youth to think of as many tongue twisters as they can in the time allotted. Ask them to use this format as they write tongue twisters:

1. What is the person's name (those beginning with b, d, l, m, p, s or t are easiest)?
2. What did she/he do?
3. Where?
4. When?
5. Why?

Tell youth to make funny tongue twister combinations, creating as many as they can and deciding which one is funniest. Explain that the group that comes up with the most tongue twisters will win a prize, and the group that comes up with the funniest tongue twister wins a prize.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Destination Unknown

Youth work individually to create brochures for travel destinations. Have members choose any place they would like to visit. Explain that their destination can be a real place - such as New York City, Hawaii, Paris - or an imaginary place - such as heaven, friendship-land or Monopoly-ville. Instruct each member to fold a piece of paper into three sections, with the outside two sections folding in over the center. Tell them to draw a picture of their destination on the cover, and include on the inside a brief description and details about things to do, places to stay, where to eat, directions, deals or special coupons.

Optional: If time allows, youth can use the computer to research information on their destinations. You may also want to have members create their brochures using the drawing functions in Microsoft Word.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Treasure Maps

Youth create a map that leads to a "treasure" in their future. Have each member write their name at the top of a sheet of construction paper. Ask them to think of a dream job or long-term goal for their future. What would they like to do or be when they are older? Have them write this goal at the bottom of the page. Discuss with them - or have them search the Internet - what things they would need to do in order to reach this goal. Give some examples: finish high school, go to college, save money, etc. If necessary, help members break these down into more short-term goals, such as: work hard in school, get good grades, graduate from high school. Instruct youth to write these short-term goals on the paper, scattering them around the middle of the page. Ask them to draw a line showing the "path" to the treasure, from their name through the short-term goals to the big dream at the bottom of the page. Allow time for youth to decorate their maps so they look like maps that lead to a hidden, buried treasure.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Up-and-Down Poems

Members work in pairs or small groups to create up-and-down poems. Instruct members to think of a topic to write a poem about; explain that it can be anything they choose, including ideas such as friendship, tolerance, freedom, education, vacation, communication, etc. Ask them to choose a focus word, making sure it has enough letters in it to build a poem around. Instruct group members to brainstorm a list of words related to the focus word. Tell them to write the focus word down the middle of a flip chart page, leaving room to write and connect other words to it to create their poem. Give an example, using the focus word *homework*:

Horrible stuff
completely disgusting, in fact!
Makes
mE
Want to
gO and find a
Real job.
Nah, I don't thin**K** so!

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Hip-Hop Verbs

Teams challenge each other in coming up with as many "vivid" verbs as they can. Place members into four small groups and give each group one of the following lists:

Team 1: say/said/tell

Team 2: like/love/want

Team 3: movement (walk, run, play, jump, etc.)

Team 4: feelings (happy, sad, angry, etc.)

Explain that each team is to find as many vivid verbs as they can for the words in their category. Tell them they can use a dictionary and/or thesaurus to compile their lists. Once the groups have their lists ready, explain that each team will challenge the others to use one of their words in a sentence and that the team writing the best sentences wins the challenge. Instruct Team 1 to begin by giving a vivid verb. Give the other teams a minute or two to come up with a sentence using that vivid verb. Ask groups to say their sentences (or write them on a flip chart). Give Team 1 a chance to vote on the best sentence. Continue with the other teams' words. After a few rounds, tally the score and declare a winning team.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Dictionary or thesaurus

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Colorful Words Relay

Youth form into five teams to practice vocabulary skills in this relay activity. Place five sheets of flip chart paper several feet apart on the same wall and assign each team one sheet on which to write. Place each team's chairs in rows directly in front of that team's flip chart page. Ask all members of each team to sit in their assigned row, from front to back. Begin by asking the first member on each team to write the first word from the list below (or any other word you choose) on the team's flip chart page. Teams race each other to see which can come up with the most descriptive adjectives for the word in three minutes. Possible words include:

- pizza
- motorcycle
- lake
- mountain
- elephant

Call time at appropriate intervals and award points to the winning team in each round.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Chairs
- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

What If?

Youth work in teams to create simple presentations using PowerPoint. Begin by distributing index cards and asking members to write down a decision or choice that he or she is facing. Tell them to think about the things they must decide every day concerning school, friends, family, their future, etc. Collect the index cards. Ask youth to find a partner and distribute an index card to each pair. Tell youth that they will work together to create a story board, using PowerPoint, that shows the decision-making process for the choice they selected. Give an example:

Choice: Staying out past curfew or coming home on time

- I want to stay out past curfew because . . .
- The reasons I shouldn't stay out past curfew are . . .
- The consequences of staying out past curfew will be . . .
- If I choose to stay out past curfew, how will the consequences feel?

Explain that the goal is to create a slide presentation showing the pros and cons of the choice to be made. Tell members they can use ClipArt or other pictures to illustrate their presentations. Have teams take turns showing their PowerPoint presentations.

Activity Type

Individual and pair

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Index cards
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Sounds Like...

Members play a charade-type game to review the concepts of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Explain to members that they will be acting out various words using hand signals and gestures used in Charades. Agree on a set of signals for the four parts of speech: pointing for a noun; a plus sign for an adjective; a V for a verb and an A for an adverb. Divide the large group into two teams and call one member from each team. Show only these two members the word and ask the first team member to act out the word for both teams. Allow three minutes; if a team guesses the word, that team receives a point. If neither team guesses, the other team member acts out the same word for both teams.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Index cards

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Word Pyramids

Youth practice their vocabulary and word skills in this simple activity. Ask each member to select an initial from his or her name and write it on paper. Tell members to do the following:

- Think of a **three-letter** word that begins with the letter and write it below the letter.
- Think of a **four-letter** word that begins with the letter and write it below the three-letter word.
- Continue **adding** one letter at a time until you can think of no more words.

Tell youth that the person who has the most words - with the correct number of letters - under his or her initial is the winner.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

15 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Word Taboo

Similar to the popular game "Taboo," this one helps youth review and practice vocabulary and word skills. Ask youth to form into four teams. Ask one member of each to choose an index card, and instruct him or her to give up to five adjectives to describe the subject of the sentence (for example, *small, young, cute, fair-haired* or *sweet* to describe the word *child*). Explain that the goal is for the team to guess the subject and, if correct, earn a point. The clue-giver then gives up to five adverbs to describe the verb (for example, *happily, humorously, gleefully, sweetly, joyfully* to describe the word *laughed*). If team members guess correctly, the team earns three points. If the team misses either the subject or the verb, the next team has an opportunity to "steal" the points by having one of its members give a clue. Clue-givers are disqualified if he or she gives a noun instead of an adjective or a verb instead of an adverb or gives more than a one-word description.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Index cards with simple subject + verb sentences written on them

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Writing Slam

In this simple activity, members practice writing quickly and following directions. Deliver one direction, as listed below, every 60 seconds:

- Write a nine-word sentence in which the word animal is in the fifth position.
- Arrange the following ideas in one sentence: old man, tractor, rain, coal mine.
- Arrange the following ideas in two related sentences: bouncy, clear, glass, weather, street.
- Write a sentence that contains at least 13 't's.

Call time and award points to members who successfully followed the writing directions.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

PART TWO: MATH AND SCIENCE

Texas Hold 'Em Relay

Begin by writing "lose a turn" on all the face cards. Divide the large group into two teams; make a column on a white board or flip chart for each team. Draw a card and write that number in each team's column. Explain that the first player on Team 1 draws a card and writes that number under the number you wrote. That player then adds the two numbers together. If the answer is correct, the next person on the team draws a card and continues until a "lose a turn card" is played. If the answer is incorrect, the answer and number are erased and the other team gets a turn. Begin play, declaring the first team to reach 100 points the winner.

Optional: For older members, assign each card suit a math function (hearts = addition, spades = subtraction, diamonds = multiplication, clubs = division).

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Old deck of cards

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Math Hangman

Begin by dividing the large group into two teams. Draw the basic hangman platform and rope. Select a math problem (such as $9 + 13 = 22$) and draw blanks to indicate where the operation sign and numbers belong (_ _ _ = _). Give members on the first team a chance to guess one of the numbers/operations in the math problem. If Team A guesses correctly, they get another turn. If they guess incorrectly, a part of the victim to be hung (such as the head, arms or legs) is drawn on the hangman and the turn goes to the other team. The first team to guess the problem without being "hung" is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

No Smoking Section

Begin by writing the questions below on two sheets of flip chart paper taped to the wall. Divide the large group into two teams; have them line up in front of the questions. Play begins when a player on each team goes to the chart and writes an answer to the first question, then goes to the back of his or her team's line. The first team to answer all questions correctly wins. Questions include:

1. What are the top three reasons teens start smoking?
2. A cigarette smoker's life is shortened by how many minutes per cigarette smoked?
3. Three million kids under what age currently smoke?
4. What three diseases can result from smoking?
5. Almost 90 percent of adult smokers began at or before what age?
6. Asthma, bronchitis and respiratory illness in non-smokers often are the result of what?
7. Still-born birth, low-birth weight and respiratory problems in infants often result from what?
8. More than a third of kids who try smoking become regular, daily smokers by _____?
9. The addiction rate for smoking is higher than the addiction rate for what (name one)?
10. Strong urges to smoke or difficulty quitting smoking appears how quickly after young kids begin?
11. A third of all kids who become regular smokers before adulthood will eventually do what?
12. What are *immediate* effects of smoking? (name one)

Answers:

1. Peer pressure, cigarette ads, friends/relatives smoke
2. Eleven minutes
3. Age 18
4. Emphysema, bronchitis and cancer
5. Age 19
6. Secondhand smoke
7. The mother smoking during pregnancy
8. The time they graduate from high school
9. Marijuana, alcohol or cocaine
10. Within weeks or days
11. Die from smoking
12. Persistent cough, respiratory problems, susceptibility to illness and decreased physical performance

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Blue Plate Special

Ask members to form into groups of two or three.

Explain that they will be opening an imaginary restaurant and that their job is to develop a healthy menu. Youth will work in teams to do research on the following Web sites:

- www.kidshealth.org
- www.dairycouncilofca.org
- www.mypyramid.com

Tell members that the focus of the research is to find out what makes a healthy meal and identify nutritional information on foods they might want for their menus. Instruct youth, once they have completed their research, to develop menus with choices for two appetizers, four entrees, two desserts and beverages.

Optional: Youth can hand-draw their menus using art materials or use Microsoft Publisher to create them.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Art materials
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts
- Health & Life Skills

Quiz Bowl

Ask youth to form into groups of four or five. Allow group members to choose team captains. Explain that teams will compete against each other to answer correctly as many of the math problems as they can. As you read each problem aloud, players on each team quietly tell the answer - if they know it - to the team captain, who writes it down. At the end of the game, collect all the answers from the team captains and declare the winning team the one with the most correct answers.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Math flash cards
- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Math Bingo

Create or find math problems appropriate to the age level of the group (for example: addition and subtraction for younger members, multiplication and division for older members). Distribute bingo cards and candy markers to each member. Tell youth that you will read a series of simple math problems and if anyone has the answer to the problem on the bingo card, he or she uses the candy marker to cover that spot. Explain that the first person to get a line across the card or diagonally wins. If there is a tie, read a bonus math question to determine the winner for that round. After the game, allow youth to eat the candy markers.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Bingo cards
- M&Ms® or Skittles® candies
- Math problems

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Out of Order!

Ask youth to form into teams of six members each. Give each team a set of cards numbered from zero to nine. Explain that you will call out a number and team members will line up, holding the numbers in the correct order. For example, if you say, "one-hundred, three thousand, four-hundred and seventy-two," team members should line up holding their cards in the following order: 103472. The first team to line up correctly gets 10 points, the second team gets five points and the third team gets one point. The winning team is the one with the most points at the end of the game.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Several sets of cards numbered from 0 to 9

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

The Va Dinci Code

Write the following problems (without answers) on a white board or flip chart and ask members to solve them. Instruct them to first solve the math problem and then use the answer to unscramble the accompanying sentence.

Problem 1

$$\begin{array}{r} 6,479,820 \\ +336,397,131 \\ \hline 342,876,951 \end{array} \text{ (answer)}$$

1-thing, 2-having, 3-trustworthiness, 4-means, 5-right, 6-do, 7-to, 8-courage, 9-the (*Trustworthiness means having courage to do the right thing.*)

Problem 2

$$\begin{array}{r} 827,098,307 \\ +18,593,020 \\ \hline 845,691,327 \end{array} \text{ (answer)}$$

1-the, 2-of, 3-feelings, 4-involves, 5-being, 6-considerate, 7-others, 8-respect, 9-of (*Respect involves being considerate of the feelings of others.*)

Problem 3

$$\begin{array}{r} 560,732,832 \\ +32,449,842 \\ \hline 593,182,674 \end{array} \text{ (answer)}$$

1-before, 2-act, 3-thinking, 4-consequences, 5-responsibility, 6-and, 7-considering, 8-you, 9-means (*Responsibility means thinking before you act and considering consequences.*)

Problem 4

$$\begin{array}{r} 626,895,026 \\ +55,522,333 \\ \hline 682,417,359 \end{array} \text{ (answer)}$$

1-and, 2-taking, 3-to, 4-turns, 5-others', 6-fairness, 7-listening, 8-requires, 9-opinions (*Fairness requires taking turns and listening to others' opinions.*)

Problem 5

$$\begin{array}{r} 164,703,992 \\ +783,400 \\ \hline 165,487,392 \end{array} \text{ (answer)}$$

1-caring, 2-need, 3-people, 4-compassionate, 5-being, 6-means, 7-helping, 8-and, 9-in (*Caring means being compassionate and helping people in need.*)

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Times Takeout

Divide the large group into two teams. For each round, write on a white board or flip chart a string of five numbers. All of the numbers should relate to one of the multiplication tables *except* one number. For example, you might write the numbers 2, 3, 9, 12 and 24. All the numbers are products of three and the number that members should “take out” is the number two. Award points to each team that calls out the “take-out” number the quickest. The first team to reach 10 points wins.

Optional: This activity also can be conducted as an individual, paper-and-pencil practice.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

None

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Multiplicity

Ask members to sit in a circle and name a number between two and nine. Choose a member to begin the game by saying the number one. The next member says the number two and so on around the circle. Each time the number called out is a multiple of the number chosen, the member must raise his or her hand rather than calling out the number. If a member fails to raise his or her hand or raises it at the wrong time, he or she is out. Continue until the group reaches the last multiple of the number times nine.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

None

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Super Saver

Cut store coupons from the Sunday newspaper or from mailed advertisements. On each coupon, write in bold marker the *original* price of the item pictured (a guess is fine). Divide the coupons into stacks of five and place each stack of five coupons in a separate envelope. Ask members to form into small groups and give each team an envelope. Explain that each team must calculate how much money they save by using the coupons (by subtracting the reduced price of each item from its original price and then calculating the total savings). The first team to figure out the total savings represented by the coupons in their envelope is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Store coupons (from Sunday paper or ad mailings)
- Envelopes
- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Around the World

Ask members to sit in a circle on the floor. Instruct one youth to stand behind another member in the circle. Explain that the goal of the game is to answer math problems and see how far one member can "travel" without making any mistakes. Say a math problem aloud or display a flash card with a math problem on it. Ask both members (seated and standing) to figure out the answer. The first one to call out the correct answer within five seconds moves to stand behind the next member in the circle. Only the two youth are eligible to call out an answer; anyone else who does is disqualified. If one member calls out a wrong answer, the other member gets an extra five seconds to answer correctly. If neither member answers correctly within five seconds, both sit down and two new youth are chosen.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Math flash cards (or set of math problems)

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Survey Says...

Begin by placing five sheets of flip chart paper around the room, one to represent each of the sample survey questions below (any question with a yes or no answer will work). Pose the first survey question and instruct youth who answer "yes" to the question to come and get an index card or post-it in one color and place it on the first flip chart so that each card or post-it rests directly above the one below it. Ask members who answer "no" to do the same but with a different colored card or post-it. Explain that the cards have formed a simple bar graph that illustrates members' responses to the questions. Continue with additional survey questions. Possible questions include:

- Do you have an older brother?
- Are leash laws for pets a good idea?
- Do you have a TV in your bedroom?
- Have you been a Club member for more than one year?
- Have you ever lived in another state?

Optional: With older youth, you might ask questions that have more than two responses. If so, be sure to have cards in as many colors as there are possible responses.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Colored index cards or post-it notes
- Tape

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Animal Crackers

Distribute animal clue strips to all members and ask them to sit in a circle. Explain that one member will read his or her animal clue and the person who has the animal described by the clue will then read his or her clue, and so on. Instruct the first member to begin and continue the game until the animal described gets back to the first member. After one round, ask members to give their strips to the person beside them and play the game again. Members may want to beat their time on each successive round. Animal clues are as follows:

- I have a butterfly, who has an animal with eight legs?
- I have a spider, who has an animal living in the ocean?
- I have a starfish, who has an animal with gills?
- I have a fish, who has an animal with stereo vision?
- I have a human, who has an animal with feathers?
- I have a bird, who has an animal with webbed feet?
- I have a duck, who has a mammal that lives in water?
- I have a whale, who has a marsupial?
- I have a kangaroo, who has a feline?
- I have a tiger, who has an animal that lays eggs?
- I have a lizard, who has an animal that has a queen?
- I have a bee, who has an extinct animal?
- I have a dinosaur, who has an animal that hibernates?
- I have a bear, who has an animal that lives in a cocoon?

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Animal clues (cut into strips)

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Now You See It...

Instruct members to work in pairs to research animals that use camouflage to fit into the natural world. Give examples such as moths, butterflies and snakes. Ask pairs to select an animal to camouflage and to create a model of it using art materials. When they have finished, instruct pairs, one at a time (with others not in the room) to place their animal somewhere in the room where it will *not* be immediately visible. Explain that members may not hide their animals or place them behind something; instead animals should be visible when one looks closely. Once all the animals have been placed, invite pairs to try to find other teams' camouflaged animals. Award points for the teams finding the most animals.

Activity Type

Pair

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Art materials
- Construction paper
- Tape
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Blackjack

Begin by asking members to form into small groups of three and to select a team captain. Distribute a set of number cards to each team. Explain that in each round, you will write a number on the board. Team members will quickly figure out which card they have that, when added to the number on the board, equals 21. The team captain then holds up the appropriate card for the team. The first team holding up the correct card is awarded a point. The winning team is the one that reaches 15 points first.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Several sets of cards numbered from 1 to 20

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Snake Eyes

Have each member write the word "SNAKE" in large letters at the top of a piece of paper, making a column under each letter. Roll the dice and announce the two numbers. Depending on age level and ability of youth in the group, have them add, subtract, multiply or divide the two numbers. Be sure to tell members to do this *quietly* in their heads (or on paper) and enter their answers in the first column headed "S." As you continue to roll the dice, members continue to record their answers in the "S" column until they choose to sit down and play it safe or until the round ends. When a youth has chosen to sit down, he or she can no longer collect points and must wait until the next round to stand up and rejoin the game. A round (or column) ends when one of the following occurs:

- All members have chosen to sit down.
- You roll a "1" on one of the dice. All members who are still standing lose all their points for that column.
- You roll "snake eyes." All members still standing lose all points in each completed column and current column.

After a round ends, all members may stand up again and begin collecting points for the next column. After all five rounds have been played, members add up all the columns to determine their final score. The one with the highest overall score wins.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Calculator
- Set of dice (six-sided)

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

High-Card Draw

Instruct members to draw three lines on their papers to represent three digits of the mystery number. Shuffle the set of number cards. Select the first card and ask members to write this digit on any of the three lines. Continue this process until all lines have been filled in. Select one member to arrange the three selected cards from greatest to least. Any member with that number gets a point for that round. Reshuffle the number cards and repeat the process for each round. The member with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Set of cards numbered from 0 to 9
- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

High Low

Begin by drawing on a white board or flip chart two parallel lines, then two intersecting lines to make a grid of empty boxes, with three boxes in three rows. Place a "+" or "-" sign next to the left of the second parallel line. Have members copy the grid onto paper. Explain that you are going to roll a die and the number rolled should be placed into one of the squares in the top two rows. You will continue to roll the die until the empty boxes in the top two rows are filled, leaving the bottom row for the answer. Tell members that the object of the game is to get the highest number, if adding, or the lowest number, if subtracting. Roll the die, and while members are placing the numbers into their grids, place the numbers into your grid on the board. Ask if anyone has beat your answer; write the best answer on the board and give a point to that member. The winner is the one with the most points at the end of the game.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- One die

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Great Paper Airplane Contest

Instruct members to spend some time researching different types of paper airplanes and different strategies for making them. The following sites are good ones to check out:

- www.paperairplanes.co.uk/
- www.wannalearn.com/Just_for_Fun/Making_Paper_Airplanes/
- <http://phoenix.gov/AVIATION/kids/airplanes.html>
- http://teams.lacoe.edu/documentation/projects/math/airplane_sites.html

Explain to youth that they will make their own paper airplanes using the instructions they found online. Tell members that their planes will be judged on the basis of three criteria: distance, tricks and appearance. Award prizes for the winner in each category.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Paper
- Scissors
- Paper clips
- Tape
- Art materials
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Hot Air Balloon Race

Tie two strings from a raised surface to another (the length of string can vary from short to long, depending on how far you want the balloon to travel). Place a straw on one end of each string. Instruct youth to blow up balloons (without telling them how large or how small to make them). Make sure that they do not tie the ends of the balloons but instead hold them closed with their fingertips. Have two members compete against each other by wrapping tape around each straw onto their balloon. Remind them to hold the balloon tips so they do not lose air. When you give the signal to begin, have members let go of their balloons and see which one reaches the end of the string first. Help members see that balloons with more air in them travel faster and further than those with less air.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Balloons
- String
- Straws
- Tape

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Math Ball

Have members sit in a circle. Explain that they will toss the ball to each other while working a math problem. Tell them that you will begin by stating a problem - such as "multiplication tables - two." The first member must say "two," then pass the ball to another member who says "four," on to another who says "eight" and so on. If a player does not have the correct answer, he or she is out. Play continues until a member misses, then a new round is begun with a new math problem.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Any soft ball

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Rainbow Skittles®

Begin by putting a selected number of candies in plastic cups and placing one cup near each computer. Ask each member to open an Excel spreadsheet and, in column A, to enter the different names of each color of candy from top to bottom. Instruct them to count the number of each color in their cup and enter it into the appropriate row in column B. Ask them to highlight both columns and hit the graph wizard button on the toolbar. Tell them to choose a bar graph and follow the steps outlined by the graph wizard. Encourage youth to try different types of graphs and allow them to eat the candy when finished.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- M&Ms® or Skittles® candies
- Plastic cups
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Math Relay

Divide the large group into two teams. Place two sheets of flip chart paper several feet apart on the same wall and assign each team one sheet on which to write. Ask all members of each team to line up in front of that team's page. Explain that you will state a simple math problem and teams will challenge each other to answer the problem as quickly as possible. The player who writes the correct answer most quickly wins a point for his or her team and goes to the back of the line. Players who answer incorrectly are out. The team with the most points at the end of all rounds is the winner. Make sure that problems are simple enough for players to compute in their heads, but difficult enough to challenge players.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Math problems

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

McHealthy Food

Ask members to form pairs. Instruct them to visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site for nutrition information (www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome) and, after finding out what a healthy diet is, compare what they have found to nutrition information for popular fast-food restaurants:

- McDonald's
- Taco Bell
- Wendy's
- Burger King

Encourage youth to compile the nutrition information into a spreadsheet, comparing the amount of fat, calories, carbohydrates, etc. in fast food to the amount recommended by the USDA.

Activity Type

Pair

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Candy Graphs

Give each member a sealed plastic baggie containing a random number of M&Ms® or Skittles® candies. Ask them to estimate how many of each color candy there are in their bag. Instruct them to record their estimates on paper, using colored markers to indicate how many of each color. Ask members to set up an Excel spreadsheet with columns or rows labeled "Estimate" and "Actual." Have them record their guesses in the "Estimate" column, count the actual number of each color of candy and record those numbers in the "Actual" column. As each color is counted and recorded, instruct members to change the text color in their spreadsheets to correspond to the color of candy. Instruct youth to convert their spreadsheets into a bar graph. When the activity is completed, allow youth to eat the candy.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- M&Ms® or Skittles® candies
- Plastic baggies
- Paper
- Colored markers
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Power Shopping

Divide the large group into several teams. Have each group call out numbers, beginning with one, and instruct each team member to remember his or her number. Call member number one from each group and give each an identical shopping list. Give youth a money limit and set the timer for one to two minutes. When you give the signal, members select their items from the "store" and purchase as many items as they can without going over their limit. Allow members to take items back to their groups so they can help estimate the total. If a youth has money left and time allows, they can purchase additional items. When the timer rings, have members return to their groups and add up their purchases. If they estimated carefully and did not go over their limit, they may give themselves one point for each item they purchased. No points are given for teams that go over their limit. Begin the process again with number two members. Continue the activity until all have had a chance to participate. Keep a running tally of each team's points.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Empty packaging from grocery items (milk carton, cereal box, frozen food package, etc.)
- Timer
- Calculators

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Candy Coins

Divide the large group into three teams. Explain that each team will be given candy worth a certain amount of money. Point out that the candy represents "commodities" traded on the stock market. Tell teams that their goal is to trade with other teams to get the candy with the highest value. Distribute candy to the three teams in the following quantities and write their value on a white board or flip chart:

- M&Ms® - **10¢** each
(Give Team A **100** M&Ms)
- Reese's Pieces - **25¢** each
(Give Team B **40** Reese's Pieces)
- Hershey® Bars - **\$1.00** each
(Give Team C **10** Hershey Bars)

Give youth a few minutes to calculate the value of their candy (each team has candy worth \$10.00). Point out that, although the value of each team's "investment" is currently the same, it may change over time as a result of various factors. Ask members to consider what would happen, for example, if all of a sudden M&Ms became rare - if it was difficult to find and buy M&Ms. Would people pay more money or less money for the M&Ms if this happened? Write these new values on the board:

- M&Ms® - **15¢** each (Team A's new value = \$15)
- Reese's Pieces - **15¢** each (Team B's new value = \$6)
- Hershey® Bars - **80¢** each (Team C's new value = \$8)

Instruct team members to trade with other teams to try to increase the value of their candies. Allow teams to complete their trades and then change the value again:

- M&Ms® - **8¢** each (Team A's new value = \$8)
- Reese's Pieces - **30¢** each (Team B's new value = \$12)
- Hershey® Bars - **\$1.00** each (Team C's new value = \$10)

Allow team members to trade again to try to increase the values of their holdings. Instruct teams to record their transactions in an Excel spreadsheet, showing the gains and losses as they traded with other teams.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- M&Ms®, Reese's Pieces and Hershey® Bars
- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Treasure Hunt

Ask members to form pairs. Explain that youth will work together to research a topic of interest, develop three questions about the topic and create a treasure map that others can follow to find answers to the questions. Tell members that they may choose any topic they like, as long as it is related to science. Here are a few ideas:

- volcanoes
- natural wonders
- oceans
- spiders
- hurricanes
- dinosaurs
- Mars

Distribute index cards and tell members to make notes about their topics, identify useful resources and Web sites for information and come up with three basic questions related to their topics. Once they have completed their research and gathered information, ask youth to develop a treasure map to show others how to find information on the topic. Encourage them to create their own icons and other symbols to illustrate and personalize their maps. When everyone is ready, have pairs exchange maps and follow the clues to the treasure.

Activity Type

Pair

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Construction paper
- Colored markers
- Art materials
- Index cards
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

You Are What You Eat

Tell members that this activity will give them the chance to compare what they eat every day with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's recommendations for healthy eating. Instruct youth to visit several Web sites for information on nutrition and healthy eating:

- www.mypyramid.gov
- www.eatright.org
- www.nutrition.gov

Have youth create an Excel spreadsheet to evaluate their eating habits based on what they have learned. Explain that they can estimate the quantity and type of foods they eat in a typical day. Help them set up their spreadsheets by suggesting they create **columns** for "My Choices," "Food Group," "What I Eat" and "Goal Amount."

Food Group What I Eat Goal Amount Difference

Suggest that they create **rows** for each meal of the day:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Snack
- Dinner

Encourage youth to consider where they need to make some changes to their eating habits in order to find a more healthful balance.

Optional: You may want to download a copy of the MyPyramid Worksheet from www.mypyramid.gov and let youth use it to evaluate their eating habits.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Clue-Less

This is a team activity in which members solve problems to find out where clues are hidden. Before beginning, identify spots within the Club where you can hide clues. You will need quite a few locations because there are five clues and four need to be hidden in a different spot for each of three teams: purple, red and green. (For example, with three teams, you will need 12 different locations.) Print three copies of the clues below and fill in the blanks with the locations you have identified. Cut the clues into strips and place them in separate envelopes, with the appropriate team color on the outside. Keep the envelopes with Clue #1 and hide the others in the locations associated with the correct answer to the problems (make sure these are *different* for each team).

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Clue strips
- Envelopes

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Clue #1

Sam has 45 marbles. He wants to put them in cups, but he wants the same number in each cup. If he has five cups, how many marbles can he put in each?

4 marbles - go to the _____

9 marbles - go to the _____

40 marbles - go to the _____

5 marbles - go to the _____

Clue #2

Suzy has eight boxes of donuts. Each box has 12 donuts in it. How many donuts does Suzy have?

92 donuts - go to the _____

96 donuts - go to the _____

20 donuts - go to the _____

86 donuts - go to the _____

Clue #3

Billy has five dogs, Sally has three cats, Isaac has two dogs and one cat, Tom has one dog, two cats and one parrot. Jessica has eight dogs and one turtle. How many dogs are there?

16 dogs - go to the _____

24 dogs - go to the _____

14 dogs - go to the _____

17 dogs - go to the _____

Clue #4

The third-grade class is going on a field trip. It takes two hours to drive to the museum from the school. The bus stops for lunch for 30 minutes. What time will the students get to the museum if they leave the school at 10:00 a.m.?

1:00 p.m. - go to the _____

12:30 a.m. - go to the _____

12:30 p.m. - go to the _____

1:00 a.m. - go to the _____

Club #5

It costs \$.35 for a can of soda, \$.50 for a bag of chips, \$.60 for a candy bar and \$.75 for a bottled drink. If Logan buys two cans of soda, one candy bar, three bags of chips and one bottled drink, how much will he spend?

\$3.00 - go to the _____

\$4.00 - go to the _____

\$3.55 - go to the _____

\$2.20 - go to the _____

Divide the large group into three teams: purple, red and green and give each team an envelope with Clue #1 in it. Explain the scavenger hunt to them and let them solve the problems to find the next clue. Place a reward for each team at the end of the scavenger hunt.

Game of Life

Divide the large group into teams of four or five. Instruct team members to work together to develop a profile of an individual, detailing that person's profession or job, marital status, children, etc. Give the group a few examples to get them thinking creatively:

- A female college student in St. Paul lives off campus with a roommate and works part-time at McDonald's.
- A married father of three lives in North Dakota and works full-time as an electrical engineer.

Instruct team members to set up a budget for this individual using an Excel spreadsheet. Ask them to include a column for the person's monthly income and columns for basic expenses such as rent, electricity, water, cable, telephone, groceries, medical bills, car payments, gas, insurance and savings. Once teams have their spreadsheets set up, have members research real-life income and real-life expenses. Ask them to find out what a typical salary is for a person in the job and area they have outlined. Instruct them to research basic monthly expenses as well. Have them enter the income and expenses in the Excel spreadsheet and consider what choices this person might have to make in order to stay within a budget.

Optional: If time allows, have members brainstorm unexpected situations that might affect the budget - events like getting a speeding ticket, needing surgery or receiving a cash gift from a relative.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Shop 'Til You Drop!

Ask members to imagine that they are a music or sports star who has just received a \$1,000,000 signing bonus. Have youth think about the types of things they would like to buy with the money. Point out that taxes on this amount of money would be approximately \$300,000 so that leaves \$700,000 for members to spend. Write the following list on a white board or flip chart:

• House	200,000
• Penthouse	400,000
• Private jet	80,000
• CDs	17
• Books	40
• Sports equipment	25
• CD player	1,000
• Snowboard equipment	1,000
• ATVs	7,000
• Food (for one month)	300
• Home furnishings	10,000
• Trip around the world	20,000
• Live animals	200
• Trip to Disney World	7,000
• T-shirts	20
• Automobiles	40,000
• Nintendo 64	150
• Scooter	120
• Shoes	40
• Toys	35
• Computer	5,000
• Bikes	150
• Cell phone	300
• Movies	20
• Video games	30
• Coat	200
• Jeans	30
• Stuffed animals	20
• Ski equipment	1,000

Instruct members to create an Excel spreadsheet showing the items they have chosen, the cost of each item and the total amount they have spent. Give a prize to the member who spent exactly \$700,000.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

PART TWO: HELPING OTHERS

ABC...Action!

Place three pieces of flip chart paper together on a wall and draw a horizontal line in the middle across all three sheets. Mark off 26 vertical points and write in a letter of the alphabet above each:



Divide the group into teams of five to six members each and distribute 26 paper strips to each team. Make sure each team has a different color. Explain that you will call out a letter of the alphabet and team members will think of an action for helping others that begins with that letter and write it on the strip of paper. Give the group a few examples:

- E: Encourage a friend to volunteer with you.
- H: Help clean up your neighborhood.
- N: Notice if someone needs help.
- R: Remember to say please and thank you.

Explain that the goal is to think of an action for each letter of the alphabet. As you call out each letter, the first team to write an action holds up the strip of paper, reads the action aloud and gets to place it near the letter on the flip chart. If two teams think of an action at the same time, they both get to place their strips on the chart. The team with the most paper strips on the chart at the end of the game is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Strips of colored paper (different color for each team; 26 per team)

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Tell Me a Story

Have youth work in teams to decide on a story they would like to make into an audio recording for someone in need. If the Club does not have an extensive library, team members can search online for a short story of their choosing. Ask members to decide also who they think might benefit most from having a recorded story. Encourage youth to think about a possible audience:

- blind people
- elderly people
- children in a pediatric hospital
- veterans
- soldiers deployed overseas

Instruct youth to divide the story into segments, one for each team member, and practice reading it one time before recording. Give each team a tape recorder and have them tape their reading of the story; one team member can work the recorder while another reads. When they are finished with their audio stories, help each team identify the best way to get copies made and sent to their selected audience.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

60 minutes

Materials

- Selected book or story
- Tape recorders

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

People in the News

Have youth form into small groups. Instruct them to visit Internet news sites and choose several news articles of particular interest to them. Ask team members to discuss the individuals in the news articles they chose, and think about which one they would like to interact with or write to. Point out that the goal is to select someone who is making a difference in the world and then write to that person to express the group's views on the subject of the news article. Instruct team members to compose a brief letter to the newsmaker explaining why they are writing, acknowledging the individual's work in making change and detailing the group's ideas for ideas that might bring about further change in this area. Once their letters are written, encourage youth to search on the Internet for ways to reach the individual, either by e-mail or regular mail.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Dear Abby

Ask youth to form into pairs or small teams and discuss what issues they think most people their age are most concerned about. Instruct them to decide on the one that is most important to them and write one question to Dear Abby on an index card. Collect the cards and place them in a container. Have each pair or team select a question and search the Internet for information that might help them answer the question. Encourage teams to write an advice-column style letter in a Word document and print it out. Post teams' responses on a bulletin board for all members to see.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Index cards
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Clean Up Your Act!

Divide the group into teams. Instruct team members to think about problems in their community that they would like to do something about. Encourage youth to consider issues such as the following:

- litter
- discrimination and prejudice
- gang violence or vandalism
- drunk driving
- illiteracy

Instruct teams to come to a consensus on the topic that most concerns them and brainstorm ways people - including them - might be able to help address it. Ask them to create posters to promote their idea. When the posters are completed, encourage youth to ask local merchants, libraries and other establishments to put up the posters in their places of business.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Poster board
- Art materials

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Imagine

Hang a long piece of newsprint paper on the wall. Remind members of the song "Imagine" by John Lennon and ask them to think about the ideas in the song. Write the lyrics on a flip chart if members are not familiar with them. Encourage youth to envision what their perfect world would look like and what it would have in it. Instruct youth to work together to create a mural on the newsprint, combining all of their ideas to create an "Imagine" mural.

Lyrics:

*Imagine there's no Heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today*

*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace*

*You may say that I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one*

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world*

*You may say that I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one*

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Newsprint paper
- Markers
- Art materials

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

International Pen Pals

Begin the activity by telling members about a recent survey of foreign teenagers by Boston University. Point out that a study of youth in 12 countries showed that "the majority of teenagers viewed Americans as violent, materialistic and greedy, lacking family and religious values." Explain that one way to combat this prejudice is to communicate with people in other countries. Encourage members to write letters to another young person in a country very different from the U.S. Point out that they can write about their everyday lives and will learn about everyday life in another country. Members can find international pen pals through online sites such as Penpal International or International PenFriends.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Let Your Voice Be Heard

Promote good citizenship by encouraging youth to write letters to the editor of the local newspaper about an issue that affects them as well as other members of the community. Members may want to write about topics such as the following:

- a new bike path for safer bike-riding
- law enforcement patrols in certain areas
- clean-up of parks or vacant lots
- flower- or tree-planting near schools
- benches and shelters at bus stops
- fire safety presentations for residents
- a blood drive
- increasing recycling among residents

Encourage members to send their letters by e-mail or regular mail or, if possible, to hand-deliver them.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Anti-Cruelty Society

Divide the group into small teams. Ask teams to talk about ways they have seen youth inflict cruelty against each other through hazing, bullying or outright violence. Encourage them to come up with examples and then to brainstorm some ways to counter this type of violence. Instruct each team to come up with one form of cruelty they have witnessed or experienced and then to identify three different ways to address or combat it. Give each team a sheet of flip chart paper and ask members to use it to record their ideas. When teams are finished, ask members to move to the next team's flip chart and add any new ideas to that topic.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

One-for-All Candy Hunt

Tell members that they are going to participate in a candy hunt. Explain that you have hidden candy throughout the room (or Club), enough for each member to have one. Tell youth that there are special rules for the candy hunt:

- Each member may pick up only one piece of candy.
- If a member finds more than one piece, he or she may not pick it up, but may help others who have not found one by giving hints.
- Pointing or leading is not allowed.
- No one may eat the candy until everyone has a piece.

Begin the candy hunt, making sure members are following the rules. When all members have found a piece of candy, congratulate them on making sure everyone had a chance to enjoy the game.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- One candy bar or piece per member (hidden throughout the room or Club)

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Good Deeds...Good People

Have youth work in pairs to search the Internet for people who have done something for the common good. Point out that there are many ways for people to help others. Give an example by talking about Bill Gates - through his company - equipping Clubs with computers. While youth are completing their research, distribute two index cards to each pair and ask them to write the person's name on one index card and, on the other, a brief description of what the person did for the common good. Collect all the cards from pairs and distribute them at random to all members. Ask members who have the description cards - one at a time - to read aloud what the person has done. Ask those who think they have the matching card to read theirs and determine the correct match by group consensus.

Activity Type

Pair and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Index cards
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

The Giving Game

Explain to youth that they will play a game called "The Giving Game." Say that the goal of the game is to do an act of kindness or a good deed for someone else. Ask members to think about something nice they can do for someone else in the group - something they are willing to do without telling the other person who did it. Distribute several cards to each member and ask them to make two or three good deed cards. Instruct youth to:

- Write a good deed on each card.
- Decorate the cards.
- Make a symbol or an icon that identifies the cards as made by them (*not* their name).

Collect the cards and distribute several at random to each member. Have youth walk around the room and pass along their cards to other members. (Have a few extras on hand to make sure everyone receives one.) Encourage members to think about how it feels to receive a card. Allow youth to continue to pass along the cards for a few minutes. Ask members if any of them received their own good deed cards back.

Activity Type

Individual and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Colored card stock (cut to 3" x 2" cards, several per member)
- Art Materials

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Pocket Poems

Have members work in pairs or small groups to find poems and decorate them to send to soldiers deployed overseas. Explain that during World War II, soldiers were often given "pocket poems" to carry with them for courage, inspiration and comfort. Encourage youth to think about the kinds of messages that might be uplifting to soldiers. Have them search the Internet to identify several poems they think would be good, decorate them and write an appreciative message. If any member knows someone personally who is in the armed forces overseas, he or she can personalize the poem and message.

Activity Type

Pair or small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Paper
- Art materials
- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Secret Pals

Have each member write a positive comment about every other youth in the group. Instruct members not to write their names on the cards, but to write the name of the person the comment is for. Collect the cards and distribute them to recipients. Give youth a few minutes to read their comments to themselves. Encourage youth to keep their cards and read them from time to time to remember their positive qualities.

Optional: Have youth make a colorful collage of the cards they received.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Index cards

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Send Your Love

Ask youth if they know a song by Sting called "Send Your Love." Write selected lyrics on a white board or flip chart. Instruct youth to brainstorm ways they can "send their love into the future." Explain that the group will be making a time capsule for future Club kids. Challenge youth to think about their hopes and dreams for the future - ways they think the world will be better, particularly for young people. Ask members to write each of their ideas on a piece of construction paper and decorate it. Have them roll the papers into scrolls and tie with ribbon. Place all of youths' hopes and well wishes for the future into the box with the lid and seal it. Tell youth that the box will be kept for future Club members to open in the future and receive the wishes.

Lyrics:

*Inside your mind is a relay station
A mission probe into the unknowing
We send a seed into a distant future
Then we can watch the galaxies growing*

*This ain't no time for doubting your power
This ain't no time for hiding your care
You're climbing down from an ivory tower
You've got a stake in the world we ought to share*

*You see the stars are moving so slowly
But still the earth is moving so fast
Can't you see the moon is so lonely
She's still trapped in the pain of the past*

*This is the time of the worlds colliding
This is the time of the kingdoms falling
This is the time of the worlds dividing
Time to heed your call*

*Send your love into the future
Send your precious love into some distant time
And fix that wounded planet with the love of your healing
Send your love
Send your love*

Activity Type

Individual and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Small box with lid
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Art materials
- Colored ribbon

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Kindness Quilt

Tell members that the group is going to make a "kindness quilt" to remind them of ways to be kind to others.

Explain that each patch in the quilt will contain a drawing and words describing an act of kindness. Give examples:

- Say thank you when a friend helps you out.
- Be a buddy to someone.
- Open the door for another person.

Distribute construction paper and art materials. Ask youth to cut the construction paper in different colors into 5" x 5" squares. Instruct them to write and draw their acts of kindness on the squares. When everyone has finished, piece them together on the floor into a quilt. Hang on a bulletin board or wall in the Club for all members and staff to see.

Activity Type

Individual and large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers
- Art materials
- Scissors
- Tape

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Share a Smile

Have youth "share a smile" with others who need it. Explain to members that each of them will be making something special to send to someone who could use a boost, such as:

- elderly people
- children in a pediatric hospital
- veterans
- soldiers deployed overseas

Ask youth to use their creativity to make one of the following items:

- an illustrated letter
- bookmark
- door hanger
- holiday greeting card
- placemat

When youth have finished their gifts, help them figure out the best way to deliver them to the recipients.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers
- Art materials
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Show Me the Money!

Have youth work in teams. Read them the following story and ask them to brainstorm ideas about how they might respond to this situation. Instruct members to come to a consensus and then write their idea on a flip chart page.

A wealthy uncle has passed away and left you a large sum of money. You know that your uncle would have liked the money to go toward something useful, something for the common good. What will you do? Will you donate the money to a foundation, create your own non-profit organization, use the money to support yourself so you can devote your time to volunteering or use it for your own education so you can tackle some of the issues facing society? Which do you think will have the most impact?

When all teams have finished, ask them to share their ideas with the large group and explain their reasoning.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Talent Pool

Instruct youth to draw a nine-box grid on their papers, with three rows across and three rows down. Ask members to think about the things they can do, talents and strengths they have. Give a few examples:

- draw
- write
- play basketball
- sing
- speak

Instruct youth to write one of their talents in each of the nine squares. Have them write one sentence for each telling how they can use their talents to help others.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Sticky Situations

Write several hypothetical situations on index cards. Situations should require some thought on the part of Club members:

- A close friend is thinking about using drugs.
- You go to a party with a driver who drinks and then wants to drive home.
- A classmate asks you to give him the test questions to a test you've already taken.
- A popular girl at school is nice to you but treats your best friend poorly.

Divide the large group into teams and give one situation to each group. Instruct team members to come up with a skit or one-act play to illustrate how they would respond to the situation they have chosen. Ask teams, one at a time, to perform their skit for the large group.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Hypothetical situations (one for each group)

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills
- The Arts

What Gives?

Divide the group into four teams. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper and markers. Assign each group one of the following four words and have them write it in big letters in the middle of their flip chart page:

- giving
- goodness
- human
- spirit

Instruct each team to work with its assigned word similar to a crossword puzzle, using words that represent acts of kindness, caring, sharing, positive spirit, etc. They will build on the original word, one letter at a time, broadening up and out with each word connected to another by a common letter. Challenge team members to come up with as many words as they can. The team that builds the puzzle with the most words is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Step Into the Future

Have youth work in teams to brainstorm ideas about what they think the future will be like. Encourage them to envision a future where there is peace, no violence, people are kinder and take care of the environment. Ask teams to write a creative depiction of this future world in a descriptive paragraph. Instruct them to write three steps that they could take personally that would move us toward the desired future. For example, if team members want elderly people in the future to be treated better, a team might commit to doing a service project in an assisted-living facility.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

PART TWO: COGNITIVE SKILLS

Like Meets Like

Divide the large group into three teams. Place three sheets of flip chart paper several feet apart on the same wall and assign each team one sheet on which to write. Ask all members of each team to line up in front of that team's page. Explain that you will state a simple analogy and teams will challenge each other to select the right ending as quickly as possible. The player who writes the correct answer most quickly wins a point for his or her team and goes to the back of the line. Players who answer incorrectly are out. The team with the most points at the end of all rounds is the winner. Here are some basic analogies to use (with the correct answers in bold):

1. Fast is to quick as loud is to _____ (speedy, **noisy**, concert, rush).
2. Green is to go as yellow is to _____ (stop, speed, **slow**, bright).
3. Seed is to tree as egg is to _____ (breakfast, **bird**, sprout, dozen).
4. River is to land as veins are to _____ (blood, **body**, lake, highways).
5. Rich is to money as well is to _____ (water, deep, **health**, wishes).
6. Jam is to toast as gravy is to _____ (**potatoes**, cheese, salad, French toast).
7. Dog is to paws as horse is to _____ (gallop, shoes, **hooves**, pony).
8. Trunk is to tree as stem is to _____ (**flower**, grass, ladder, branch).
9. Train is to freight as ship is to _____ (water, **cargo**, deck, shipment).
10. Sun is to rise as day is to _____ (dawn, **break**, set, dream).

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Scattergories

Draw a grid on the white board or flip chart to show members what to draw on their own papers. The grid should have 25 squares (five squares on the vertical and five horizontal). Instruct youth to leave the first square blank on the top left and in each of the other squares going across to list four categories. Any categories will work, for example:

- types of pets
- author names (last names)
- names of cities
- types of sports
- games
- book titles
- famous people (last names)
- things found in the kitchen
- baseball words
- types of snacks

Ask members to write four different letters going down the left column of the page. They can be either random letters or a simple word such as "S-T-O-P." Once the grid is ready, give members a set amount of time (three to four minutes) to fill in the chart, writing a word under each category that begins with the letter in the left column. The winner is the one who gets the most words in the time allotted.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Concentration

Ask youth to form into pairs and give each pair a set of alphabet cards, Scrabble® tiles or flash cards with vocabulary words written on them. (Each pair needs two of each letter or word.) Have members turn the cards upside down, mix them up and spread them randomly on a flat surface. Pairs take turns trying to turn over a pair of cards that have the same letter or word on them. If one of them makes a match, that player gets another turn; if a player does not make a match, play goes to the other. At the end of the game, the player who has made the most matches is the winner.

Optional: For older students, you might provide blank cards and read off a series of words that they have to write on two cards.

Activity Type

Pair

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Several sets of alphabet cards, Scrabble® tiles or flash cards with vocabulary words

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Seeing Spots

Begin the activity by placing a colored dot or sticker on the forehead of each member. Be sure not to let the youth see what the dot/sticker looks like. When you give the signal, members move about the room connecting with other youth who have matching dots or stickers - but *without* talking. Emphasize to members that all communication must be non-verbal.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

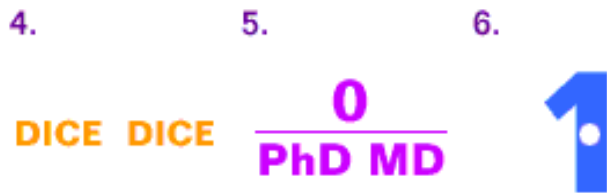
- Self-adhesive dots (in several colors)

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

PixPuzzles

Divide the large group into several teams. Write or draw the following puzzles on a white board or flip chart. Challenge youth to study the puzzles to see if the words - and the way they are written - give them clues to the common expressions the puzzles illustrate. The team that is first to get all puzzles correct is the winner.



Answers: 1. long underwear; 2. split level; 3. circles under the eyes; 4. paradise; 5. two degrees below zero; 6. hole in one 7. tricycle; 8. batter up; 9. easy on the eyes

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Mystery Pictures

Cut a sheet of paper that fits exactly over the pictures you have cut out *except* that there is a small circle or square cut out of the paper so only a small part is revealed and members see only a hint of the picture. Tape the edges so youth are not able to peek. Divide the large group into teams and give each team a set of five "mystery" pictures. Team members write their guesses about what the pictures are and then switch with another group to get an additional five pictures. Award points to teams that guess correctly. The team that guesses the most pictures correctly is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Pictures cut from magazines (at least 20 images)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

You Win!

Begin the activity by explaining that the group will do a team activity but that all youth are on one team and you are the only member of the second team. Tell youth that you will read a passage from a book (vary the length of the text according to the age and abilities of members). When you finish reading, you will ask questions about the passage. Members win a point for every question answered correctly; you win a point each time youth answer incorrectly.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Book or story passage

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Total Recall

Collect a variety of items and place them in a cardboard box. Be sure not to let members see the contents. Gather the group together. One at a time, remove items from the box, show them to members, name them and place them nearby on a table or desk. Let youth study the items for one minute, then return them to the box. After you have gone through all the items in the box, ask youth to write down how many items they can remember. Give them two minutes and then ask youth to exchange papers with another member. Once again, remove the items from the box one at a time. As you remove them this time, members make a checkmark next to the items their peers have written. The member who remembers the most items is the winner.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Variety of items (20 to 25 items)
- Cardboard box
- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Split Personality

Prepare by using a small, sharp blade to cut the Styrofoam cups in half along the horizontal. Allow some cuts to be jagged in shape, others more rounded. Make some cuts high and some low. Include some that are combinations of different kinds of cuts. Give each youth one half of a cup. Allow them five minutes to find the person who holds the other half of their cup. Remind them that cup halves must fit together perfectly.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

10 minutes

Materials

- Styrofoam cups (one for each pair of youth in group)

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Survivor

Divide the group into several small teams of two or three each. Instruct team members to choose a record keeper for the group. Have them brainstorm a list of items they might need to survive in the wilderness. Ask them to agree on 20 items and list them in order of importance of necessity. Instruct group members to then narrow the list down to 12 items. When they have finished their lists, instruct youth to create - using art materials - a replica of the items in their kits.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Art materials

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills
- The Arts

Mystery Drawing

Give a marker and two blank papers to each member. Tell youth that they will be drawing a "secret picture" on their papers, following the instructions as you read them. Point out that they must follow the instructions as carefully as possible and that they may not ask questions, talk or make any hand gestures at all. Explain that they must simply draw their own interpretation of the instructions. Read the following instructions, pausing after each one:

1. Draw a short line.
2. Draw another line touching the first line you drew.
3. Put your pencil at the other end of the second line and draw half a circle.

After all members have finished their drawings, post them on the wall. Ask members what questions they wanted to ask as they were drawing. Ask them what words or phrases would have helped them draw the picture more accurately. Have members make another drawing, this time following these instructions:

1. Starting in the middle of your paper, draw a horizontal line about one inch long.
2. Place the point of your pencil on the place where the horizontal line begins, on the left. From that point, draw a vertical line down. The vertical line should be about one inch long.
3. Starting where the second line ends, draw a backwards "C," going down. The tips of the backward C should be about one inch apart.

Have youth display their second drawings on the wall next to the original ones. Most pictures should be similar and resemble the number five.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Word Search

Explain to youth that they will be creating word search puzzles to exchange with other members. Distribute index cards to all members (some members may have the same topic). Instruct youth to use the Internet to search for information about their topic and to look for new words related to the topic. Ask them to find 10 new words to use in a word search puzzle. After 15 minutes, instruct members to write in a Word document the words they found with a simple definition. Next, have them create a grid of same-sized cells, using either the table function in Word or an Excel spreadsheet. Explain that they are to fill in the new words they found - horizontally, diagonally and vertically - and then fill in the other cells with random letters. Instruct members to paste the list of words and definitions under the word search puzzle as a key. When youth have completed their puzzles, ask them to print and exchange with others.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Index cards with one of the following topics on them:
 - > environment
 - > animals
 - > numbers
 - > stars and planets
 - > world history
 - > body and food
 - > government
 - > geography
 - > computers
 - > sports
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Look It Up

Select a word from the dictionary but do not let members see it. Write the word on a white board or flip chart so all can see it. Challenge youth to race each other to find the word in the dictionary. The first one to find it should raise his or her hand and read off the definition. Award a point for each word found first. Keep track of points and give a prize to the winner.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Dictionaries (one for each member)

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Where In the World Is?

Explain to youth that they are to find a common object somewhere in or near the room (leaf, penny, pencil, floppy disk, etc.). Tell them that they are to hide the object so only a portion of it can be seen but not easily or immediately seen. After they have hidden their objects, they take turns photographing it with a digital camera. Help them transfer the photos to the computer, access the file and print it, preferably in color. Once the pictures are printed, ask members to cut and paste them to construction paper and place them on a bulletin board. Have them write a sentence about what they want others to find and place it under the picture on the bulletin board. Challenge youth to find the hidden objects in other members' pictures.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Digital camera
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

The Mighty Wind

Ask youth to sit in a circle with one member in the center. The member in the middle of the circle is to say a sentence describing a quality or characteristic related to members of the group. For example, he or she might say "The mighty wind blows for those who speak two languages." All members who speak two languages must stand and find another seat (they cannot sit to the left or right of their own seats) before all seats are taken. The one left standing is now the member in the middle saying the next sentence.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

15 minutes

Materials

None

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Name Game

Ask youth to sit in a circle so they can see everyone else. Start at the beginning of the circle and have each member come up with a word that begins with the same letter as his or her first name. For example, if a member's name is Anna, her word could be "amazing." After all youth have come up with their words, start again and have one member introduce himself or herself to the next person, saying their word and their name. For example, Anna turns to the person beside her and says, "Amazing Anna." That person does the same with the next person but has to repeat all the names that have come before.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

None

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Mystery Busters

Explain to youth that they will solve a mystery using 20 questions. Make sure all youth are familiar with this game and they understand that they can ask only 20 yes-or-no questions in order to solve the mystery. As youth ask you their 20 questions, keep track of the number on a white board or flip chart. Challenge them with the following mysteries and award a point for each they can solve:

1. Two men walk into a restaurant and order the exact same drink. The first man gulps his down while the second man drinks his slowly and dies shortly after finishing it. Why did the first man live but the second man die?
2. There are two victims lying dead on the floor. The only clues nearby are some rocks, broken glass and water on the floor near them. How did they die and who is the killer?
3. "The driver and the conductor were on the opposite ends of the train, but both were shot at the same time", reported a policeman who was at the center of the train at the time. The policeman had heard both gunshots at the same time. The train was traveling 100 miles per hour. Elliot immediately realized that the driver and the conductor were not killed at the same time. How did he know this?

Answers:

1. There was poison inside an ice cube in both men's drink and when the ice melted in the second man's drink, he drank the poison. 2. The victims are fish and the rocks, water and glass were from the fishbowl, which was knocked over by the cat, the murderer. 3. Since the train was traveling at 100 miles per hour, the sound of the gunshot in the front of the train would reach the policeman's ears faster than the gunshot from the back of the train - so the conductor was shot first.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

High-Speed Connection

Divide members into several teams and have them come up with team names. Explain that teams will race each other to complete a task using the computer. The game begins with teams lined up on one side of the room and computers on the other. Point out that only one team member at a time can be at the computer and as each player works, other team members waiting on the other side of the room may call out assistance. The first person on the team must run to the computer following the given directions, complete the assigned task and then go back to the line and tag the next person in line, who then runs to the computer to complete the next task. The following are some sample rounds:

Round 1 (crabwalk)

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Go to Disney.com.
3. Go to Google.com.
4. Search for Boys & Girls Clubs of America.
5. Find a Web site on giraffes.
6. Go to NetSmartz.org, then close Internet Explorer.

Round 2 (walking backwards)

1. Empty the recycle bin.
2. Go to "All Programs," then "Games," then open "Hearts."
3. Type in team name.
4. Go to "Help," open "Tip of the Day."
5. Close "Hearts" and open Microsoft Word.
6. Type in the "Tip of the Day."

Round 3 (hopping on one leg)

1. Erase the "Tip of the Day" and type in your team name and each player's name.
2. Close Microsoft Word and open Internet Explorer.
3. Go to NetSmartz.org.
4. Exit Internet Explorer and open "Pinball."
5. Score 1,000 points.
6. Close "Pinball" and shut down the computer.

As team members complete their tasks, remind them to sit down to show that they are finished.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Eight-Ball

Divide the large group into two teams. Explain that teams will compete against each other to use the cue ball to hit numbered balls into the pockets. One player on Team A begins and, if he or she makes the shot, gets the points on that ball. The next player on Team A shoots and, if the ball goes into the pocket, adds that number to the earlier points earned. If he or she misses the shot, those points go to Team B, whose players now get to shoot in turn until one of them misses. The points on the ball the last player misses then go to Team A and Team A players get to shoot again. Teams keep a cumulative running score of all rounds and play continues until one team reaches a pre-determined score.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pool table
- Pool balls
- Cue sticks
- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Match 'Em

Divide the large group into two teams and ask them to line up at one end of the room. Scatter two decks of cards, face down, on one end of the room - one deck for each competing team. One player from the each team runs to the cards designated for that team and attempts to pick up two that match. If the cards match, the player returns to his team with the pair. If the cards do not match, the player places the cards back on the floor and returns to the team line where a teammate is tagged and attempts the same process until all the cards are matched and returned to the team line.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

20 minutes

Materials

- Two decks of playing cards

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Tic Tac Trivia

Set up nine chairs in the form of a tic tac toe grid. Divide the large group into two teams. Give players on one team the index cards you have prepared with "Xs" and the other team the index cards with "Os." As you ask trivia questions, whoever answers correctly takes a seat on the grid. The first team to get three in a row gets five points. Rounds continue until a team reaches a pre-determined number of points.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Nine chairs
- Index cards (half with "Xs" and half with "Os")
- Trivia questions

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Free Throw

Line the two trash cans up against a wall. Place masking tape on the floor three feet out from the trash cans; put another line of tape three feet further out and a third line of tape three feet beyond that. Divide the group into two teams. Each team will be asked a trivia question and they can work together in a group to decide the answer. If the team answers correctly, the player gets to shoot the "basketball" into one of the trash cans. If the team does not get the correct answer, they challenge the other team to answer. If the challenged team answers correctly, they get the free throw; if not, the original team does. Play continues until one team reaches a pre-determined score. Suggested scoring is as follows:

Large trash can:

From the first line: one point

From the second line: five points

From the third line: 10 points

Small trash can:

From the first line: five points

From the second line: 10 points

From the third line: 25 points

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Two empty trash cans (one large and one small)
- Ball made from newspaper
- Masking tape
- Trivia questions

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Brain Teasers

Copy the following brain teasers on three separate pages and distribute one page to each of three teams. Ask teams to select a recorder. Give teams a set amount of time to discuss the questions and write their responses. The team with the most correct responses wins.

Team A

1. Do they have a Fourth of July in England?
2. How many birthdays does the average person have?
3. Can a man living in Phoenix, Arizona be buried east of the Mississippi River?
4. If you had a match and entered a room in which there was a kerosene lamp, an oil heater and a wood-burning stove, which item would you light first?
5. Some months have 30 days, some have 31, how many have 28 days?
6. If your doctor gave you three pills and said to take one every half hour, how long would they last?
7. A hunter left his house and walked three miles south, walked three miles west, shot and killed a bear and walked three miles north to his home. What color was the bear?
8. How far can a dog run into the forest?
9. There are two U.S. coins that total 55 cents. One of the coins is not a nickel. What are the two coins?

Team B

1. What is the minimum number of active baseball players on the field during any part of the inning?
2. A farmer had 17 sheep. All but nine died. How many does the farmer have left?
3. Divide 30 by one-half and add 10. How much is it?
4. Two men were playing chess. They played five games and each man won the same number of games, with no ties or stalemates. How can this be?
5. How many animals of each species did Moses take aboard the Ark with him?
6. Take two apples from three apples and what do you have?
7. An airplane crashed on the border of Arizona and Utah. All but three aboard were killed. In which state would the survivors be buried?
8. How much dirt can be removed from a hole that is three feet deep, two feet wide and 10 feet long?
9. An archaeologist found some gold coins dated 46 B.C. How is this possible or not possible?

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Brain teasers printed on three sheets of paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Team C

1. A woman gave a beggar 50 cents. The woman noted that the beggar was not her brother, yet the lady is the beggar's sister. How is this possible?
2. Is it legal in Utah for a man to marry his widow's sister?
3. If your bedroom were pitch dark and you needed a matching pair of socks, what is the minimum number of socks you would need to take out of the drawer to guarantee a matching pair, if the drawer contains 25 white and 25 blue socks?
4. If it takes 10 men 10 days to dig a hole, how long will it take five men to dig half a hole?
5. Which has more value: a truckload of nickels or half a truckload of dimes?
6. There are 12 one-cent stamps in a dozen. How many two-cent stamps are in a dozen?
7. A monkey at the bottom of a well (10 feet deep) tries to climb out. Each day he jumps up three feet and slips back two. At that rate, how long will it take the monkey to reach the top?
8. Which is correct: eight and eight ARE 15 or eight and eight IS fifteen?
9. If three cats kill three rats in three minutes, how long will it take for one hundred cats to kill one hundred rats?

Answers:

Team A: 1. All countries have a Fourth of July; 2. one; 3. no, he is alive; 4. the match; 5. all; 6. one hour (6:00, 6:30, then 7:00); 7. white (hunter lives at North Pole); 8. halfway, then he is running out; 9. 50-cent piece and a nickel (one is not a nickel but the other is).

Team B: 1. 10 (nine teammates and batter from other team); 2. nine; 3. 70; 4. they did not play each other; 5. none, Noah was the one on the Ark; 6. two apples; 7. survivors are not buried; 8. none (otherwise the hole would be bigger); 9. not possible (no B.C. time because the future cannot be predicted).

Team C: 1. They are sisters; 2. no, he is dead; 3. three; 4. it is not possible to dig half a hole; 5. the dimes; 6. 12; 7. eight days; 8. neither; 9. three minutes.

River Riddle

Divide the large group into teams. Write the following riddle on a white board or flip chart. Challenge teams to find the answer to the riddle. The team that gets the correct answer to the riddle fastest is the winner.

Riddle:

A man has to take a dog, a cat and a mouse across a river. He can only take one of the animals across at a time. If he takes the mouse, the dog will eat the cat. If he takes the dog, the cat will eat the mouse. How does he get all three animals across the river?

Answer:

1. The man takes the cat across and then goes back to get the mouse.
2. The man then takes the mouse across and returns with the cat.
3. The man leaves the cat on the shore and takes the dog across. He leaves the dog with the mouse.
4. The man goes back to get the cat and all the animals have made it across the river.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

15 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

Stump the Staff

Instruct youth to form into teams. Ask each team to spend 15 minutes searching the Internet to find trivia questions to use to "stump the staff." Explain that teams will be asking you trivia questions and earning points if they can stump you. After teams have gathered their questions, ask them to sort them into three categories: easy, medium and difficult. Tell members that they will earn five points for stumping you with an easy question, three points for a question of medium difficulty and one point for a difficult question. They can choose to ask a difficult question - worth fewer points - or go for more points and ask an easy question. Point out that any player who cannot stump you is out. When team members are ready, begin the game, allowing one team at a time to ask their questions.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Computers

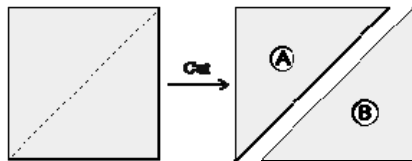
Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

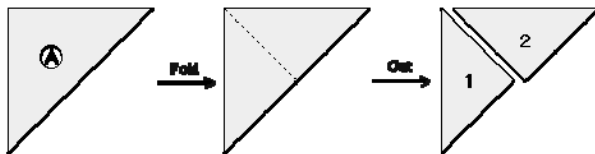
Make-Your-Own Tangrams

Help youth make their own tangrams by walking them through these easy steps:

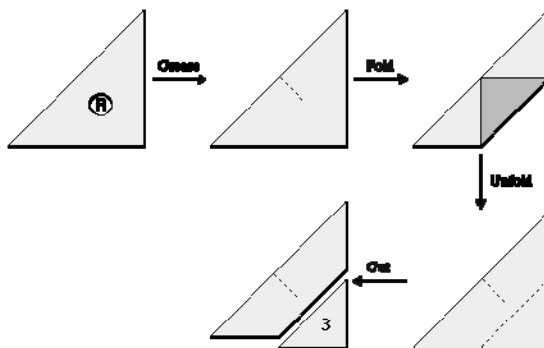
1. Fold a rectangular piece of paper to form a square. Cut off the extra flap.
2. Cut the square into two triangles.



3. Take one triangle and fold it in half. Cut the triangle along the fold into two smaller triangles.



4. Take the other triangle and fold the corner of the triangle that is opposite the long side so that it touches the long side and cut along that fold.



Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

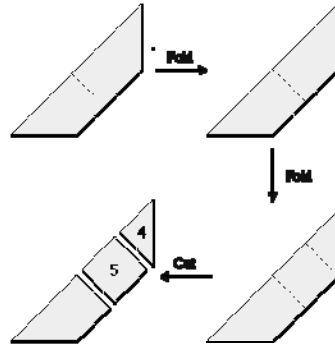
Materials

- Paper
- Scissors

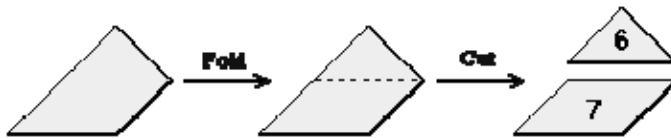
Core Areas

- Education & Career Development

5. Fold the trapezoid in half lengthwise and cut along the fold. Take one of the smaller trapezoids and fold and cut to make a square and a small triangle.



6. Take the other small trapezoid and envision the square shape within it; fold one diagonal half of the square toward the other and cut. The remaining shapes will be a small triangle and a parallelogram.



Encourage members to experiment putting the shapes together in different ways to make other interesting geometric shapes.

Step-By-Step

Clear a large playing area and mark off a finish line with masking tape at one end of the open area. Divide the group into two teams and ask them to line up, one person behind the other, at the other end of the area. The first player on each team will be asked a trivia question. If the player answers correctly, he or she gets to advance one step toward the finish line; if not, that player stays in the same spot. The team with all of its players over the finish line first is the winner.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Masking tape
- Trivia questions

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

PART TWO: DISCUSSIONS WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE ADULTS

Meet the Artist

Invite an arts professional from the community to speak or conduct a demonstration for the group. Possible outlets for **finding** speakers or presenters include:

- statewide artists' rosters
- university art, drama and music departments
- local art and music schools
- state and local arts councils
- local art galleries
- local theatres (especially children's theatres)
- local music stores
- actors' guilds (such as Screen Actors Guild)

When **planning** a visit to your Club by an artist, here are some things to remember:

- Decide on a focus and format for the artist's visit.
- Find out if he or she needs any special equipment.
- Make sure there is adequate space for the artist.
- Invite local school board personnel and/or local media.
- Make an agenda or schedule for the visit.

When **preparing** members for an artist's visit, be sure to do the following:

- Discuss expectations for appropriate behavior.
- Share background information about the artist.
- Brainstorm questions members might ask the artist.
- Allow youth to rehearse asking each other questions.

During the artist's visit, participate in the discussion and monitor youth's questions and behavior. After the visit, help youth reflect on the experience and encourage them to write thank-you letters to the artist.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Materials or equipment requested by artist

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- The Arts

Make a Difference!

Begin this activity by encouraging youth to think about needs in the community. Post a flip chart page with the following topics and instruct each member to come up and place a tally mark next to the topic they consider to be the most critical need in the community.

- _____ Alcohol/drug use/drunken driving
- _____ Community clean-up
- _____ Homelessness
- _____ Child abuse and/or domestic violence
- _____ Juvenile crime
- _____ Teen pregnancy
- _____ Adolescent suicide
- _____ Hunger/poverty
- _____ Racial, ethnic and/or gender discrimination
- _____ Illiteracy
- _____ Care for the elderly
- _____ Improper health care/safety
- _____ Transportation/road conditions
- _____ Meeting the needs of physically handicapped

After all members have voted, tally the marks to see which topic they consider most important. Have youth brainstorm ways to address this need and possible solutions to the problem. Encourage them to think about individuals who could make a difference in the areas they have identified or at least create awareness within the community. For example:

- local newspaper
- public officials
- mayor
- local social service agencies
- environmental groups
- MADD or other advocacy groups
- literacy organizations
- state department of transportation

Instruct each member to prepare a letter to an individual - one of these or someone they choose - to ask for action and to present the ideas brainstormed by the group. Help youth locate contact information and send the letters by e-mail or regular mail.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Monster.com

Ask youth to think about all the different occupations they have considered during their lives. Keep a list on a white board or flip chart as they brainstorm ideas. Ask youth to think about the career they would most like to know more about and encourage them to write a letter to find out more information about what the job is like. Give some ideas of individuals youth might contact:

- someone they know personally or who is known by family or friends working in this career
- the president or chief executive officer of a firm where they might like to work in this job or career
- a representative of an executive search firm or job placement agency
- someone in the placement office of a local college
- a professional career counselor

Encourage youth to spend some time researching the career of field that interests them and identify individuals who might be able to provide more information about the field. Youth might include questions such as:

- What are the general duties of this job?
- What are the physical surroundings, work hours and demands of this work?
- What training or education is needed for this career?
- What salary range is this job in?

Once they have identified a contact person, encourage youth to send the letters by e-mail or regular mail.

Activity Type

Individual

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Pencils/pens
- Paper
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Money Wizard

Invite a representative from a local bank or a money management counselor from a local firm to speak to the group about money and finances. Possible topics for discussion include:

- banking services, including ATMs
- handling a bank account
- debit vs. credit cards
- budgeting
- saving for the future

Before the speaker arrives, brainstorm with members about possible questions they might ask.

Optional: Invite a stockbroker or financial advisor to visit the Club and discuss how stocks are traded. Before the visit, have members learn more about investing through activities at www.younginvestor.com.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Materials requested by speaker

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

The Bod Squad

Invite a panel of individuals to come to the Club to be a resource for youth on fitness and health topics. Have each panelist spend a few moments speaking about their area of expertise, followed by a discussion of topics chosen by you and the group. Panelists might include:

- physical education instructors from local college
- athletic department chairpersons
- professional athletes
- coaches
- professional trainers
- nutritionists
- dieticians

Before the panel begins, brainstorm with youth about areas to focus on and possible questions to ask panelists. Come up with a list of agreed-upon questions before the panel begins and appoint a facilitator to moderate the panel, keeping everyone focused on the key topics.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Materials requested by panel members

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

It's Your Government

Invite a local government official - either from the city or the county in which the Club is located - to speak to Club members about how government works at the local level. Ask the speaker to give youth an overview of both city and county government and describe how they work together to keep everything running smoothly. Consider inviting the following individuals:

- mayor
- city manager
- city clerk
- county government official
- state senator or congressperson
- city council member

Prepare youth for the speaker by asking what they would most like to know about government and brainstorming possible topics for discussion.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

30 minutes

Materials

- Materials requested by speaker

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

Screenagers Today

Invite a media professional to speak to Club members about media literacy. Consider inviting the following individuals:

- newspaper publisher or editor
- magazine publisher or editor
- advertising or marketing representative
- television writer or producer
- radio or broadcast producer

Topics the speaker might cover include the following:

- information vs. entertainment ("infotainment")
- analyzing news stories
- detecting bias in the news
- propaganda techniques
- media messages
- the effect of media on youth
- media-saturated culture

Prepare youth for the speaker by asking what they would most like to know about media literacy and brainstorming possible topics for discussion.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Materials requested by speaker

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills
- Sports, Fitness & Recreation

Stop the Violence

Arrange for a Club conference or roundtable discussion on violence prevention. Invite representatives from all sectors of the community, including not only individuals working directly in law enforcement but also those who can help make the community safer. Try to include a representative from each sector of the community. Participants to consider include the following:

- law enforcement officers
- state and local government officials
- domestic violence shelter counselors
- gang prevention workers
- conflict resolution professionals
- school safety representatives

Prepare youth for the discussion by encouraging them to research topics for focus and discussion.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Computers

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Who Do You Want To Be?

Ask youth to form into small groups of no more than five members each. Have all groups but one spend time conducting research on potential careers of interest to them. Ask them to jot down some notes about jobs they would like to explore. Meet with the first group to discuss careers they are interested in and help each member develop a set of goals to complete in order to move them in the direction of the career they like. Spend time with each youth discussing his or her interests. Rotate groups and discuss the second group's career interests, helping them develop goals.

Activity Type

Small-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Computers

Core Areas

- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills

Fair's Fair!

Invite a representative from the local court system to come speak to the group. A judge from any of the following branches would be a good candidate:

- juvenile court
- magistrate court
- probate court
- state court
- superior court
- traffic court

Ask the speaker to give members an overview of the court system in your state, a brief history of each court and the purpose for each. After the overview, request that the speaker talk specifically about fairness, how he or she makes a fair decision in the courtroom and the factors that influence that decision.

Activity Type

Large-group

Age Group

Ages x to x

Time

45 minutes

Materials

- Materials requested by speaker

Core Areas

- Character & Leadership Development
- Education & Career Development

PART THREE: ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

Field Trip Ideas

- *Aquarium*. Most aquariums have special programs to familiarize youth with a wide variety of sea creatures and marine life.
- *Art exhibit or show*. Local art shows develop in youth an appreciation of various art media and expose them to working artists. Youth can talk to artists about their craft and about the business of being a professional artist.
- *Art museum*. Visits to museums are a wonderful way to introduce youth to the world of art. Art education develops young people's self-esteem, appreciation of the work of others, self-expression and critical thinking.
- *Bank*. A field trip to a local bank gives youth the chance to observe various banking processes and banking professionals on the job.
- *Bird watching area*. Parks, wildlife preserves and botanical gardens are excellent locations for spotting new bird species. Visiting such areas raises members' awareness of conservation through bird watching. The local Audubon Society or another environmental organization can provide an expert to act as a guide for the group.
- *Botanical or community garden*. Gardens give youth the chance to observe the color, texture, patterns, scent, structure and shape of various plants and shrubs. Many botanical gardens and arboreta provide special programs and field-trip guides for youth groups.
- *City hall/government center*. A tour of a city, county or state government office helps youth understand the structure and function of local government.
- *Cultural festival*. Youth learn about different cultures through a visit to a cultural festival where they can see and sample cultural arts, foods, dress, language and traditions.
- *Environmental education center*. Environmental education centers are designed to teach visitors about ecosystems, waste and recycling, the effect that humans, cars and industries have on the environment and the importance of conservation efforts.
- *Fire department*. Youth of all ages enjoy seeing the trucks, living quarters, maps and equipment at a fire station. Firefighters also may be willing to give a fire safety talk.
- *Hospital*. Many youth have never seen the inside workings of a hospital and enjoy seeing equipment like an X-ray or MRI machine. Hospitals often give tours for youth and explain the functions of the various departments.

- *Humane society.* Members enjoy visiting an animal shelter and hearing staff members talk about caring for and protecting pets.
- *Newspaper.* A visit to a local newspaper gives members a better understanding of how the news is gathered, produced and delivered. Tours acquaint them with all aspects of the process, including advertising sales, reporting and editing, production, printing and delivery.
- *Planetarium/observatory.* Observatories provide a wealth of opportunities for youth to learn about and explore the field of astronomy.
- *Power plant/water treatment facility.* Local electric, gas or water companies often give tours of the local facilities and can speak to youth about different sources of energy, how it gets to homes, the importance of clear water and tips for conserving water and energy.
- *Recycling center.* Although youth often participate in recycling efforts, they do not always know what happens to the recycled items. Touring a recycling center helps them see the process and gain a better understanding of the importance of recycling.
- *Science center.* Science centers allow visitors to explore, in an interactive way, light, sound, space, biology, physics, weather and the environment.
- *Senior citizen/assisted living center.* Activity directors in senior facilities welcome a chance to have youth visit and can arrange joint activities with residents and members.
- *State park.* State parks can allow youth to explore nature, including rocks, minerals and living creatures such as snakes, turtles, fish, birds, elk or deer.
- *Television station.* Local television stations give members an inside look at where and how the nightly news is broadcast. Youth can visit the anchor desk, try out a video camera and see workers in the control room.
- *Weather center.* Weather centers give visitors a glimpse of how the weather is predicted, including hurricanes, earthquakes, glaciers, watersheds and other natural phenomena.
- *Wildlife refuge/nature area.* Visiting wildlife refuges and nature areas helps teach youth the importance of nature conservation and preservation of the natural world.
- *Zoo.* Most youth have been to a zoo at some point, but a guided visit gives them a better understanding of animals, their history, habits and natural habitat. Most zoos have educational programs for youth groups.

Special Events for the Learning Center

Club members can get involved in planning, arranging, set-up and clean-up for a variety of special Learning Center events. These special events not only reinforce important learning but also provide opportunities for fun, sharing, competition, challenge, camaraderie, awards and recognition. Ideas include:

- Back-to-School Celebration
- Trivia Tournament
- Fitness Fair
- Career Expo
- Math Olympics
- Spelling Tournament
- Cultural Festival
- End-of-School Picnic
- Book Fair
- Anti-Smoking Day
- Theatre in the Round
- Science Fair
- Health Mini-Workshops
- Song Lyric Contest
- Diversity Fair
- Puzzle Triathlon
- Literacy Day
- Art Exhibit
- International Food Day
- Writing Tournament
- Amazing Race
- Travel Fair
- Poetry Slam
- Club News Broadcast
- Health Food Fair
- Holidays Around the World Festival
- Games Triathlon
- Wheel of Fortune
- Make-a-Mural
- Oral History Presentation
- Giant Monopoly
- Hobby Round-Up
- Survivor Island

Additional Resources

Publications for Club Professionals

25 Super Cool Math Board Games (Grades 3-6), Lorraine Hopping Egan, Scholastic Professional Books, 1999.

Best-Ever Vocabulary & Word Study Games (Grades 4-8), Lorraine Hopping Egan, Scholastic Professional Books, 2001.

Children's Word Games and Crossword Puzzles: Ages 7-9, Eugene Maleska, Random House Puzzles and Games, 2003.

Children's Word Games and Crossword Puzzles: Ages 9 and Up, Eugene Maleska, Random House Puzzles and Games, 2003.

The Dell Book of Logic Problems, Dell Mag Editors, Dell, 1996.

The Everything Kids' Crazy Puzzles Book: Wild and Wacky Puzzles To Mix Up the Fun! Jennifer A. Ericsson, Beth L. Blair, Adams Media Corporation, 2005.

The Everything Kids' Math Puzzles Book: Brain Teasers, Games and Activities for Hours of Fun! Meg Clemens, et.al., Adams Media Corporation, 2003.

Grammar Puzzles & Games Kids Can't Resist! (Grades 3-6), Karen Kellaher, Scholastic, 2000.

Great Word Search Puzzles for Kids, Mark Danna, Sterling, 1999.

Outrageous Crossword Puzzle and Word Game Book for Kids, Helene Hovanec and Will Shortz, St. Martin's Griffin, 2002.

Web Sites for Club Professionals

A+ Math. Games and quizzes for basic skills, <http://www.aplusmath.com/>.

AAA Math. Hundreds of pages of math skill drills, arranged by grade level and type of math, <http://www.aaamath.com/>.

Alfy.com. A collection of fun games to drill basic skills with younger children, http://www.alfy.com/brain_train/.

Brain Boosters. An archive of puzzles and skill tests from Discovery.com, <http://school.discovery.com/brainboosters/>.

The Grammar Gorillas. A site offering practice in parts of speech, <http://www.funbrain.com/grammar/index.html>.

Math Archives. A list of math drill sites for practice in basic math skills, <http://archives.math.utk.edu/topics/arithmetric.html>.

Math Baseball. Practice in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division on the baseball diamond, <http://www.funbrain.com/math/index.html>.

teachervision.com. Online games and resources, including homework help, <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-5816.html>.

Vocabulary University. Vocabulary and grammar puzzles, <http://www.vocabulary.com/>.

Web Sites for Youth

Animal Resources. Provides an array of information about animals from Sea World and Busch Gardens, www.seaworld.org/.

The Art Zone. Educational site of the National Gallery of Art Kids, www.nga.gov/kids/zone/.

Bartleby.com: Great Books Online. Contains a collection of free fiction and non-fiction books, short stories and poetry anthologies, www.bartleby.com/.

BAM! Body and Mind. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention site on activity, safety, food, nutrition and diseases, www.bam.gov.

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids. Information on government and lawmaking for youth in grades K-12, <http://bensguide.gpo.gov>.

Eat Smart Play Hard for Kids. Encourages and teaches kids and adults to eat healthy and be physically active every day, www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardkids/.

Enchanted Learning. Help pages and activities on science, languages, geography and other topics, www.enchantedlearning.com/Home.html.

Fact Monster. A handful of tools, including a searchable dictionary, word games, an encyclopedia and world maps, www.factmonster.com/.

Funbrain. A handful of educational and entertaining math games and exercises for youth in grades K-12, www.funbrain.com/.

Funology. Plenty of science information, games, trivia and other ideas, www.funology.com/.

History Channel. Offers multimedia experiences and video footage of important historical events, www.history.com/.

Homework High. Homework help for youth ages 6 to 16 years, www.channel4.com/learning/microsites/H/homeworkhigh/.

HomeworkSpot.com. A springboard to hundreds of hand-picked sites on the Web, www.homeworkspot.com/.

HyperHistory Online. World history with interactive lifelines, timelines and maps, www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/History_n2/a.html.

Jigzone.com. Online jigsaw puzzles in hundreds of shapes and sizes, www.jigzone.com.

Kids' Castle. Introduction to the Smithsonian Museums, www.kidscastle.si.edu/.

Kids' Food CyberClub Home Page. A site for kids and adults to learn about healthy eating, www.kidsfood.org.

Math Central. Mathematical help for youth in grades K-12, <http://mathcentral.uregina.ca/>.

Money Central Station. U.S. Department of the Treasury site on money and investing, www.moneyfactory.gov/kids/start.html

MyPyramid for Kids. U.S. Department of Agriculture site that details the food guide pyramid, www.mypyramid.gov/kids/.

National Geographic Kids. Fun science games and activities from National Geographic, www.nationalgeographic.com/ngkids/.

Think College Early. A U.S. Department of Education site to help youth begin planning for college as early as sixth grade, www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/thinkcollegeearly/edlite-tcehome.html.

Young Investor. Practical information about investing and saving, www.younginvestor.com.

Zoom. Interactive, engaging Web site for kids from Public Broadcasting System, <http://pbskids.org/zoom/index.html>.