

Resources for Children’s Literacy Tutors

Summer Reads



Title: Tools for Student Engagement & Building Community in Virtual Classrooms

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Target audience: Middle school youth; Elementary school children

Topic(s):

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Fluency | <input type="checkbox"/> Phonics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Virtual tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alphabetics | <input type="checkbox"/> GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Pronunciation | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship | <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Prep | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking | Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> Math | <input type="checkbox"/> Standards Aligned | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enrichment | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teaching Techniques | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESL | <input type="checkbox"/> One-to-One Tutoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | |

Format:

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Video |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Worksheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handout | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tutor Tip | |

About Summer Reads:

This children’s literacy tutor resource was created by Summer Reads VISTA members. Summer Reads is an [AmeriCorps VISTA national service](http://www.americorps.gov/vista) program of Literacy Minnesota. For 8 weeks over the summer, Summer Reads VISTA members volunteer full-time as children’s/youth literacy mentors in schools, libraries and out-of-school-time programs across Minnesota. They bring literacy to life for low-income students through a variety of activities – one-on-one tutoring, creative enrichment activities like using arts and drama to explore language or practicing vocabulary and comprehension in science and other subjects. They also connect students and parents/caregivers to community resources through wrap-around basic needs support. At the same time, the VISTA members build their own leadership, explore career paths, pay for college and become lifelong advocates for the communities they serve due to the power of their experience. www.literacymn.org/summerreads

Tools for Student Engagement & Building Community in Virtual Classrooms

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Digital Tools for Student Engagement

Collaboration: *Use these platforms to brainstorm, discuss, reflect, and build community.*

★ **Google Slides:**

- Customizable presentations that can be shared via a link. Students learn to add pictures, text, and designs.

★ **Padlet:**

- Discussion boards for brainstorming or sharing out. Create a board, share the link with students, and encourage them to share their ideas, questions, and more. Participants post text to a “bulletin board” that everyone can see, and “like” and comment on others’ posts.

★ **Ziteboard:**

- A digital whiteboard that can be used and seen by the whole class. Share the link to your board to invite the class to add their creativity.

★ **Flipgrid:**

- A platform for recording and sharing videos that the whole class can see and comment on. Features include fun filters and stickers. Pose discussion questions for students to answer in a video, or have students demonstrate a project.

Quizzes: *Use these platforms to quiz students, review vocab, or play trivia games.*

★ **Kahoot:**

- Live quiz that can be used for fun or review. Questions can be true/false or multiple choice. Create a quiz and share the access code with students, who can participate on laptops or phones.

★ **Quizziz:**

- Similar to Kahoot, but students can complete quizzes at the same time or on their own time. Designed to work with Google Classroom.

★ **Fishbowl:**

- A live game using flashcards. Players guess the card that the leader is describing, taking turns as the leader.

Lessons: *Use these platforms to deliver content via videos or slides with interactive features.*

★ **[Nearpod:](#)**

- A tool for creating and delivering customized lessons. Features slideshows, polls, quizzes, and interactive practice. Use directly with students or send the link for students to complete independently.

★ **[Playposit:](#)**

- A website for creating interactive videos. Teachers can incorporate comprehension or reflection questions into educational videos.

★ **[Breakout EDU:](#)**

- Create or use an existing breakout room that can be explored together. Educational content can be incorporated.

Miscellaneous:

★ **[Online Stopwatch:](#)**

- Sensory timers, themed timers, and dozens of other fun timers. Scroll to the bottom of the page for options. Share this on your screen during independent work time or for wait time.

★ **[GoNoodle:](#)**

- Thousands of videos featuring actors/actresses as well as animation dancing to accompany songs that students can dance along with. A hit in many elementary classrooms! Play a video to get students up and moving, or use as a reward.

★ **[54 Online Teaching Tools](#)**

★ **[131 Tools for Distance Learning](#)**

- Links to online tools for student engagement, content areas, assessment, and more.

Hands-on Activities for a Virtual Classroom

(to use as part of a lesson in a virtual classroom and give students a break from their screens)

- ★ **Drawing:** Have students get out a piece of paper and colored markers, pencils, or crayons - and get creative! Students could draw something of their choice, design a robot, illustrate a story (and add narrative!): the options are endless. Students can hold their drawing up to the camera or upload a picture of their drawing.

- ★ **Interview:** Invite students to interview a family member or friend. Teachers or tutors could provide a list of questions or brainstorm questions with students. Students could report on their interviews through a presentation or written report.

- ★ **Origami:** This activity would strengthen listening skills, fine motor skills, language skills, and more. Provide lots of modelling and support for younger students, but let them experiment once they are more confident.

- ★ **Scavenger Hunt:** You can send students a list of items to find before class, and have them bring them to class or show pictures. Or play the game during class and race to come back with the item first. Providing general descriptions (“something green”) instead of specific items (“a cat”) opens the game up for creativity.

- ★ **Science Experiments:** There are many experiments that can be done using household items, like paper, water, kitchen items, etc. If the experiment could be messy, be sure to warn students and help them prepare a safe spot to work in.
 - Baking and cooking: the classic baking soda and vinegar, water and pepper (surface tension), food coloring fireworks, scientific method
 - Paper: paper airplanes, snowflakes, straw rockets,
 - Toys: heavy/light objects (mass), balls (gravity), making observations

- ★ **Engineering:** Find a problem, design a way to solve it, plan how to make it, and build it using household and/or recycled materials. Students could build robots, pencil holders, and more. Let them be creative!

Activities for Community Building

★ **Morning Meeting:**

- Can include greeting, sharing, and fun time
- Greetings: virtual high-fives, say hello like a pirate, Gonoodle...
- Sharing: fist to five, drop favorite emoji in the chat, share what you did yesterday...
- Fun time: telling jokes, show and tell, scavenger hunt, Simon says...

★ **Rose and Thorn/High and Low:**

- Share one rose (good thing), thorn (hard thing), and bud (hope)
- Share your high and low point from the day/week
- Appreciation, Apology, Aha: share something you appreciated, an apology, or aha moment

★ **Scavenger Hunts:**

- Send students a list of items to find before class, and have them bring them to class.
- Play the game during class and race to come back with the item first. Participants can turn off cameras while looking, and turn them back on when they are finished.
- Providing general descriptions (“something green”) instead of specific items (“a cat”) opens the game up for creativity.

★ **Show and Tell:**

- Have students find something that is special to them and share about it with the class.

★ **I Spy:**

- Use with students who are comfortable with having their cameras on.
- Pick a student and describe something you can see on screen behind them
 - “I spy a Batman poster.”
- Other students then have to figure which student you are looking at.

★ **Would You Rather?**

- Questions can be serious or goofy, but they help students find out what they have in common with each other.
- Ideas:

- Would you rather live at the beach or in the mountains?
- Would you rather be extremely funny or extremely smart?
- Would you rather work with a group or by yourself?
- Would you rather eat a rotten tomato or drink sour milk?
- More ideas here: <https://conversationstartersworld.com/would-you-rather-questions-for-kids/>

★ **Digital Community Agreement:**

- With students, come up with a list of 5-10 agreements to guide your classroom interactions
- Ideas for agreements: privacy, discussion rules, use of cell phones, microphones, turning cameras on...
- Link to lesson plan for setting agreements from National School Reform Faculty: [PDF link](#)

★ **Connectedness Activity:**

- Music or Gonoodle
- Stretching/yoga
- Taking deep breaths together

★ **Flipgrid:**

- Create a Flipgrid link where students can respond via video to an icebreaker question:
 - What is one special talent you have? Demonstrate!
 - What is your favorite joke?
 - What is your favorite book/movie/TV show/etc.?

★ **Host Social Gatherings:**

- Plan a social hour on Zoom/Google Meets outside of class time
- Host a game or movie night

★ **Virtual Field Trips:**

- Find out what your students are passionate about, and plan a virtual adventure to learn more about those topics.
- San Diego Zoo: <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/>
- Minnesota Zoo: <https://mnzoo.org/education/schools-teachers/educator-corner/>

- NASA - International Space Station:
https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/main/suni_iss_tour.html?mod=article
- Museum Tours: <https://www.purewow.com/family/virtual-museum-tours-for-kids>

★ **More Community Building Ideas Here:**

- <http://sharedteaching.com/online-classroom-community/>