

# Zoom Games!

These games help **build community, teach Zoom skills, review course content, and teach metacognitive & study skills.** They all take relatively little prep time.

These games have been curated/collected/scavenged from educators across the world by Jen Sacklin and in no way belong to me or [LaneOnline](https://laneonline.com), but I'm happy to share them with you.



Image from <https://storyset.com/online>

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## Games for Building Community: Week 1

*These games build students' Zoom skills, help them memorize their classmates' names, and learn a tiny bit about their classmates. They take very little prep time and take 5-20 minutes of class time.*

### One-Question Jeopardy

*From Tim Krause & Davida Jordan (PCC)*

**In-class time required:** 5-10 minutes

**Number of students:** Any number; with a huge group, you might put them in breakout rooms

**Instructions:**

1. **Prep Ahead:** None!
2. **Host Zoom Settings:** Make sure you have the "Allow participants to rename themselves" feature turned on in your [Zoom settings](#).
3. **Zoom Skill:** Teach students to put their first/preferred name and pronouns as their Zoom names.
4. **Give Instructions:** Each student thinks of a one-word or short phrase. That word or phrase is an answer to a question about themselves. One at a time, students share their word or phrase with the class, and the class must guess the right question. Tell students the goal is to get to know each other *and* to use each other's names.
5. **Start:** The teacher starts by giving an example. Jen's example: "Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming." Correct question: "Where did you grow up?" Then the teacher calls on a student by name to say their answer, and the class has to guess the question. That student next calls on another classmate by name. If the student mispronounces a classmate's name, the classmate should correct the pronunciation so everyone can hear names multiple times.

## One-Question Gallery View Bingo

From Tim Krause & Davida Jordan (PCC)

**In-class time required:** 5-10 minutes

**Number of students:** Must have a minimum of 8 students in attendance; every student must have a large-screen device (this game won't work with students on phones)

### Instructions:

- 1. Prep Ahead:** Choose 3-5 questions ahead of class -- here are several questions that can be answered in a few words where multiple people are likely to have the same answer:
  - a. What is your favorite food?
  - b. What city are you in now?
  - c. What generation do you belong to? (Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, Gen Z/Zoomer, choose not to identify)
  - d. What type of animal was your first pet?
  - e. How many children do you have?
  - f. How many languages do you speak?
  - g. Coffee, tea, either, or neither?
  - h. What is your favorite sport (to watch or play)?
- 2. Teacher Zoom Control:** Make sure you have the "Allow participants to rename themselves" feature turned on in your [Zoom settings](#).
- 3. Zoom Skill:** Teach students how to change their Zoom view and put it in "Gallery" view (vs. "Speaker" view). Everyone's Gallery view will be in a different order, so it's as if everyone has a different "Bingo" card on their screen.
- 4. Zoom Skill:** Ask students to turn their cameras off, and show students where to change their Zoom names. Do a practice round of everyone changing their Zoom name to their favorite color NEXT TO their first/preferred name.
- 5. How to Play:** Ask one question; each student writes their response in their Zoom name next to their first/preferred name. Everyone tries to find a row, column, or diagonal with all the same response -- unlike "regular Bingo," each question should generate a "Bingo."
- 6. How to Win:** The student shouts "Bingo" and then has to read the names of the row, column, or diagonal that has the same response. If the student mispronounces a classmate's name, the classmate should correct the pronunciation so everyone can hear their name correctly.

## Worst Class Ever

From Diana Boro-Boswell, LBCC

**In-class time required:** 20 minutes

**Number of students:** Any number

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** Set up a [Google Jamboard](#) for the activity. Make sure the sharing settings are set to “anyone with the link can edit.” Make a page for each group (groups can be of 3-4 students, so estimate the # of groups & pages you’ll need). Put a sticky note with the instructions on each page: “Think about the WORST class you’ve ever been in. What did the teacher do to help make it the worst class ever? What did the students do to help make it the worst class ever?” ([Here’s an example of what this Jamboard could look like.](#))
2. **Zoom/Tech Skill:** Teach students how to use Google Jamboard. Show them how to draw a line down the center of the page and write “Students” on one side and “Teacher” on the other (as in [the first slide in the example](#)). Teach students how to find the number of the breakout room that they’re in (it’s at the top of their screen once they enter a breakout room), because that number corresponds to the Jamboard slide that they should go to.
3. **Start:** Send students to breakout rooms in groups of 3-4. Have the breakout rooms set to automatically close in 5 minutes, with a 60-second countdown. Students discuss the question and everyone can participate by writing/drawing on the Jamboard.
4. **Debrief:** Bring everyone back to the main room. Explain that you’d like to make a group understanding of how WE can make OUR class the worst class ever. Ask people to call out ideas quickly for “how our class can become the worst class ever.”
5. **Best Class:** Switch the topic to the “best class ever.” You could put students back into breakout rooms and have them discuss the best class they’d ever been in, or if time is running short, just discuss “how we can make our class the BEST class ever” as a whole group.

## Activities for Building Community: Weeks 2 and Beyond

*I hesitate to call these “games” -- they’re synchronous activities that work on Zoom that have the specific purpose of fostering trust and building community.*

### One-Question Breakout Room Partner Interviews

**In-class time required:** 15-20 minutes

**Number of students:** Any number; if there’s an odd #, the teacher can participate. If there’s an even #, the teacher can sit out.

#### Instructions:

- Prep Ahead:** Choose 5 questions ahead of time -- here are several questions that help students get to know each other:
  - If you could have a superpower, what would it be? Why?
  - Tell me about a great movie/TV show/book/video game. Why is it awesome?
  - If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be? Why?
  - What’s one thing on your bucket list? When do you think you’ll accomplish that thing?
  - Which historical figure would you want to invite over to dinner? Why?
  - Where is your favorite place in the world, and why?
  - What are some things that you dislike that other people seem to enjoy? (For example, what’s your least favorite food that other people like?)
  - What ideas do you have to improve your favorite sport? Why?
  - If you could make your own podcast, what would it be about? Why?
  - Do you want to travel in space? Why or why not?
  - What habits have you started or left behind since the pandemic started? Why?
  - Have you experienced (or seen) any embarrassing moments on Zoom? What happened?
  - How do you express yourself creatively?
  - What is one thing you’ve done this week that you’re proud of?
- Host Zoom Settings:** Make sure you have the “Allow meeting and webinar participants to send chat messages” feature and the “Non-verbal feedback” feature turned on in your [Zoom settings](#).
- Zoom Skill:** Put 1 question in the chat and make sure everybody can see it.
- Set up Breakout Rooms:** Tell students they’ll have 1 minute to answer 1 question with a partner in a breakout room. Send everyone to breakout rooms with 2 students per room (random selection is fine). Have the rooms close automatically in 1 minute (set a 10- or 15-second countdown before students are kicked back into the main room).

5. **Zoom Skill:** After students come back to the main room after their 1st question time, ask students if 1 minute was enough or if they'd prefer 2 minutes. Ask students to choose the "Yes" reaction if 1 minute was enough, or the "No" reaction if they'd prefer 2 minutes. *(If a student hasn't updated their Zoom app for a while, the "yes" and "no" reactions might be found under the "Participants" menu. In newer versions of Zoom, they're under the "Reactions" menu.)*
6. **Continue:** Put the next question in the chat, then close all breakout rooms and create new ones so students are automatically shuffled around and get different partners. Set them to automatically close in 1 or 2 minutes. Repeat for 5 questions or so.
7. **Jen's Note:** The activity gets old if you drag it out too long -- you can repeat activity the next class period with different questions if students liked it enough the first time. Also note that this activity can be quite intimidating for shy students, so I really wouldn't recommend it for Day 1 of class. Build up some trust first and make sure to establish an understanding that yours is a safe classroom space, and then try this activity during Week 2 or 3.

## 10 Things in Common

**In-class Time Required:** 15 minutes

**Number of Students:** Any number

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** None!
2. **Give Instructions:** Tell students the goal is to find as many interesting things that they have in common with their group as possible. Try to skip over the obvious and the boring (e.g., "We're all in Oregon; we all are students," etc.). The goal is to find 10 things in common in 10 minutes; if they finish early, they should try to find more interesting things in common than what they already have on their list.
3. **Start:** Put students into randomly-assigned breakout rooms for 10 minutes with a 60-second countdown timer; groups of 4-6 work best.
4. **Finish:** When all the groups come back, ask them to tell the whole class 1-2 very interesting things that they share in common.
5. **Variation #1:** Instead of focusing on interesting things in common, try to simply find as many things in common as possible and the breakout room with the longest list "wins." If you want to award a "prize", try giving out special emoji (such as 🏆) by pasting it into their Zoom display name using the host's "rename" function.
6. **Variation #2:** Instead of starting with groups of 4-6, start with pairs. Give each pair 3-4 minutes, then combine breakout rooms so the groups now have 4 people and give the new, larger groups 4-5 more minutes. Then, merge groups together until there are 8 people per room for a few minutes, then merge the whole class together and see if there's anything that everyone has in common.

## Roses & Thorns (or Good Things & Challenges)

**In-class Time Required:** 2-5 minutes each class period

**Number of Students:** Any number; if you have a particularly small class, try the “Variation.”

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** None!
2. **Asynchronously** (E.g., in a Moodle forum, not during Zoom class time): Students post one “rose/ 🌹” (a good thing) and one “thorn/ 🌿” (a challenge) in their life.
3. **In Zoom Class:** Bring up any common challenges that you noticed students mentioning, or celebrate any victories that students shared.
4. **Variation:** You could have every student share verbally in class, of course, but that takes *a lot* of class time. It can be worth it to do once or twice during the term, but if you’d like a more regular check-in, having students post asynchronously and doing a quick verbal check-in is more reasonable.

## Daily Dedication

from [Edutopia](#)

**In-class Time Required:** 2 minutes each class period

**Number of Students:** Any number; if you have a particularly large class, try the “Variation.”

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** None!
2. **Give Instructions:** Tell students you’d like them each to dedicate their learning to a person that inspires them (anyone living or dead, real or fictional).
3. **Start:** The teacher gives the example (see [the Edutopia article](#) for an example). Ask for a volunteer for the next class.
4. **Continue:** Every day, a student gets to spend 1-2 minutes dedicating the day to someone inspiring for them.
5. **Variation:** If you have more students than class days, you could have two students present per day, or students could record their dedication on [Flipgrid](#) and other students can view them asynchronously.

## Games for Reviewing Course Content

*These games help students review course content (especially items that students need to memorize) and are great ways for the teacher to do formative assessment prior to tests/quizzes. You can make these games even more “game-ish” by adding in [sound effects](#) such as “Ta-da!” and “Sad trombone” to highlight students’ answers.*

### Racing Annotations - Find the \_\_\_\_\_

**In-class Time Required:** 20-50 minutes (it’s very flexible)

**Number of Students:** Any number

#### Instructions:

- 1. Prep Ahead:** Find or create an image, diagram, or list of vocab words related to your course content. (E.g., in an Anatomy class, you might have a diagram of various muscles; in a History class, you might have a list of Chinese dynasties; in a Writing class, you might have a list of types of figurative language, etc.). Ideally, the image/diagram/list should have enough items or parts for half the class to answer (i.e., if your class has 30 students, you should have 15 words on the list or a diagram with 15 parts to label, etc.).
- 2. Host Zoom Settings:** Make sure you have the “Annotations” feature turned on in your [Zoom settings](#) and make sure “Only the user who is sharing can annotate” is turned *off*.
- 3. Zoom Skill:** Share your screen showing your desktop, a blank Google doc, or something random. Teach students how to annotate over your shared screen.
- 4. Give Instructions:** Tell students you’re going to call on them 2 at a time -- only those 2 students are allowed to annotate, and everyone else can shout out the answer or just watch.
- 5. Start:** Share your screen showing the image/diagram/list. Call on the 2 students and make sure they’re ready. Then, give them the prompt. (Anatomy example: “Circle the Rhomboid Major!” History example: “This dynasty was famous for \_\_\_\_\_” Writing example: “‘Life is a rollercoaster’ is an example of what type of figurative language?” The 2 students race against each other trying to circle the correct answer as fast as possible; everyone else in the class can shout the answer, shout encouragement, etc.
- 6. Continue:** If the students struggle with finding the right answer, feel free to help them or take a minute to explain the concept again so the whole class can understand. Call on 2 more students and give them a new prompt. You can erase the first 2 students’ annotations if you want, or leave them. Ideally you’ll have enough prompts so that everyone in the class can participate at least once.

## Zoom Taboo

**In-class time required:** 20-30 minutes

**Number of students:** Works best in groups of 6-25 students

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** Create a list of class vocab words or phrases related to class content. Have the list ready in a Google Doc or Google Sheet that you can easily copy and paste from.
2. **Give Instructions:** Tell students you're going to send a private chat to one student with a vocab word / class concept. That student needs to then explain the vocab word or class concept *without saying the word or phrase*. Everyone else in the class needs to guess what the word / phrase is.
3. **Play:** Send the private message to a student; let the student explain the word/phrase; everyone else shouts out answers. When someone guesses the word/phrase correctly, tell the whole class what the correct answer was, then call on another student and send that student a private message with a new word/phrase. Ideally you'll have enough prompts so that everyone in the class can participate at least once.
4. **Variation #1:** Instead of only giving 1 word to each student, set a 1-minute timer. Give the student 1 word, and if someone guesses it before the 1 minute is up, quickly give that student another word. If the words/concepts are fairly easy to explain, students can usually get through 3 words/concepts in 1 minute, so this variation is ideal for a small class with lots of concepts to go over.
5. **Variation #2:** If you have students with high social anxiety, you can put them in breakout rooms in pairs to do a much calmer version of "Zoom Taboo." Start by giving all the students the list of words, and then have students take turns choosing a word from the list and explaining it to their partner in breakout rooms.

## Zoom Pictionary

**In-class time required:** 20-30 minutes

**Number of students:** Works best in groups of 6-25 students

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** Create a list of class vocab words or phrases related to class content. Have the list ready in a Google Doc or Google Sheet that you can easily copy and paste from.
2. **Give Instructions:** Tell students you're going to send a private chat to one student with a vocab word / class concept. That student needs to then draw the vocab word or class concept *without writing any letters of the alphabet*. Everyone else in the class needs to guess what the word / phrase is.
3. **Teacher Zoom Control:** Make sure you have the "Allow host and participants to share whiteboard during a meeting" feature turned on in your [Zoom settings](#).

4. **Zoom Skill:** Teach everyone how to share their screen and access the Whiteboard.
5. **Host Zoom Control:** If a student prefers drawing on real paper instead of the whiteboard, they can find paper and a pen/pencil at home and then just hold up their drawing to the camera. You as the teacher should “Spotlight” the student so it’s easier for everyone else to see what that student drew.
6. **Play:** Send the private message with the word/phrase to a student; let the student draw the word/phrase; everyone else shouts out answers. When someone guesses the word/phrase correctly, tell the whole class what the correct answer was, then call on another student and send that student a private message with a new word/phrase. Ideally you’ll have enough prompts so that everyone in the class can participate at least once.
7. **Variation:** Instead of only giving 1 word to each student, set a 1-minute timer. Give the student 1 word, and if someone guesses it before the 1 minute is up, quickly give that student another word. If the words/concepts are fairly easy to draw, students can usually get through 3 words/concepts in 1 minute, so this variation is ideal for a small class with lots of concepts to go over.
8. **Jen’s Note:** Do NOT put any people’s names on the list; drawing people is difficult without using caricatures, and despite drawers’ best efforts, people can resort to drawing racial stereotypes when trying to quickly draw a person in Pictionary.

## Zoom Charades

**In-class time required:** 20-30 minutes

**Number of students:** Works best in groups of 6-25 students

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** Create a list of class vocab words or phrases related to class content. Have the list ready in a Google Doc or Google Sheet that you can easily copy and paste from.
2. **Give Instructions:** Tell students you’re going to send a private chat to one student with a vocab word / class concept. That student needs to then act out the vocab word or class concept *without making any sounds*. Everyone else in the class needs to guess what the word / phrase is.
3. **Host Zoom Control:** You as the teacher should Mute the student who is acting so if they accidentally say anything, no one can hear; you should also “Spotlight” the student so it’s easier for everyone else to see the student who is acting.
4. **Play:** Send the private message with the word/phrase to a student; let the student act out the word/phrase; everyone else shouts out answers. When someone guesses the word/phrase correctly, tell the whole class what the correct answer was, then call on another student and send that student a private message with a new word/phrase. Ideally you’ll have enough prompts so that everyone in the class can participate at least once.

5. **Variation:** Instead of only giving 1 word to each student, set a 1-minute timer. Give the student 1 word, and if someone guesses it before the 1 minute is up, quickly give that student another word. If the words/concepts are fairly easy to act out, students can usually get through 3 words/concepts in 1 minute, so this variation is ideal for a small class with lots of concepts to go over.

## Zoom Taboo-Pictionary-Charades!

**In-class Time Required:** 50 minutes minimum; ideally 90 minutes

**Number of students:** Works best in groups of 6-25 students

### Instructions:

1. **Play:** Play the three games above (Zoom, Pictionary, and Charades) back-to-back in one class period. Use the same set of words for all 3 games. The games will go faster and faster because by the time the 3rd game (Charades) comes around, students will be familiar with the list of possible answers. Make sure to play with the “Variation” listed in each game: give each student 1 minute to go through as many words as possible.
2. **Jen’s Note:** This is easily my favorite “Zoom party” game to play with friends, where hilarity usually ensues. It’s usually slightly less funny in class because the list of class concepts likely won’t include a lot of silly words, but it still can be more entertaining than a non-gamified review day.

## Jamboard Pictionary

**In-class time required:** 10-25 minutes

**Number of students:** Any number

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** Create a list of class vocab words or phrases related to class content, ideally one for each student or one for every two students. Set up a [Google Jamboard](#) for the activity. Make sure the sharing settings are set to “anyone with the link can edit.” Make as many pages as there are students in your class, and put two sticky notes on each page: 1) the instructions: “Choose a word or phrase from this list. Draw the word/phrase without writing the word/phrase or any letters of the alphabet.” 2) the list of words/phrases.
2. **Zoom/Tech Skill:** Teach students how to use Google Jamboard. Teach students how to find the number of the breakout room that they’re in (it’s at the top of their screen once they enter a breakout room), because that number corresponds to the Jamboard slide that they should go to.
3. **Start:** Send each student to their own breakout room. Have the breakout rooms set to automatically close in 5 minutes, with a 60-second countdown. Each student draws the word/phrase that they choose on the Jamboard slide with the same number as their breakout

room. You can have students draw anonymously if they want, or sign their drawings if they prefer. If they get stuck, they can always scroll through the other Jamboard slides to get inspiration from how the other students are drawing.

4. **Continue:** After students come back from the breakout rooms, explain that they should click through each of the Jamboard slides and try to guess which word/phrase was drawn. They should circle the word/phrase from the list. (Students can do this in the main Zoom room or you can put them back into breakout rooms if you want.)
5. **Finish:** Review all the drawings as a whole class.
6. **Jen's Note:** This "Jamboard Pictionary" is much calmer and slower than the "Zoom Pictionary" game listed above, and is better for a class that has students with high social anxiety. It's also better for reviewing more difficult topics that require more complex drawings. You definitely don't NEED to use individual breakout rooms here -- everyone can stay in the main room if you want them to -- but it can give shy students a nice break to be in a breakout room alone for 5 minutes.

## Shout When You Hear the \_\_\_\_\_

**In-class time required:** Depends on the video

**Number of students:** Any number

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** Find a video you want students to watch in class (*teacher tip: try to keep any videos to 4 minutes max!*). The video should have many examples of some vocab word or concept that students have been trying to learn.
2. **Give Instructions:** Tell students that they should be NOT on Mute. They're going to watch a video, and every time they hear an example of \_\_\_\_\_ (whatever your focused concept is; it could be "el pretérito" in a Spanish class, or heteronormative standards in a Gender Studies class, etc.) they should SHOUT.
3. **Start:** Play the video. Pause every time students shout. Re-play the part of the video that held the example so that everyone can hear it. Continue playing the video, pausing and re-playing as needed.

## Line 'em Up

**In-class time required:** Depends; 5 minutes for easy topics, 20 minutes for difficult ones

**Number of students:** Any number

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** Choose a list of items that students need to put in order: it can be a simple thing like steps in a procedure or stages in a biological process, or it can be a complicated analysis question without an obvious correct answer. Set up a [Google Jamboard](#) for the activity. Make

sure the sharing settings are set to “anyone with the link can edit.” Make a page for each group (groups can be of 3-4 students, so estimate the # of groups & pages you’ll need). Put a sticky note with the instructions on each page: “Line up the \_\_\_\_\_ (the yellow stickies) from left-to-right according to \_\_\_\_\_” [blanks are your class topic]. Add yellow stickies with the things that students need to line up. (Here’s [an example of a very simple activity](#) related to the topic of evaluating the credibility of online sources; here’s [an example of a very complex topic](#) for students to practice evaluating the political bias of online sources from headlines)

2. **Zoom/Tech Skill:** Teach students how to use Google Jamboard. Teach students how to find the number of the breakout room that they’re in (it’s at the top of their screen once they enter a breakout room), because that number corresponds to the Jamboard slide that they should go to.
3. **Start:** Send students to breakout rooms in groups of 3-4. Have the breakout rooms set to automatically close in 3 minutes for a simple topic and 10 minutes for a complex topic. Students discuss the question and everyone can participate by moving the sticky notes around on the Jamboard.
4. **Debrief:** Bring everyone back to the main Zoom room. Share your screen and review the Jamboard slides as a whole group. Have students bring up any questions or doubts they had during the activity. Discuss the right answer (if there is one).

### Using Premade Game Platforms: Kahoot, Quizlet Live, Booklet, Jeopardy, etc.

**Kahoot:** I haven’t had good luck using [Kahoot](#) with Zoom, mainly because students either need 2 devices or need to be able to successfully “split” their screen (i.e., have the Zoom window and a separate browser window open on their screen), which can be difficult to manage.

**Quizlet Live:** I have to be honest that I’ve never tried [Quizlet Live](#) and I’m not sure if it works on Zoom... someone let me know ([sacklinj@lanecc.edu](mailto:sacklinj@lanecc.edu)) if you’ve had success, please!

**Booklet:** I haven’t tried it in class yet, but Booklet seems to be a good way to go! [Read about using Booklet here.](#)

**Jeopardy:** There are a million Jeopardy templates out there if you want to set up a Jeopardy game; I’ve stopped playing Jeopardy because it takes a ridiculous amount of prep time ahead of class. One way to make it less onerous would be to have students come up with good Jeopardy answers & questions and submit them to you, so you could just plug them into a template.

**Horsepaste** (i.e., customizable [Codenames](#)): You can make your own set of Codenames cards on [Horsepaste.com](#) (type in each word in the “custom” box at the bottom separated by a comma, then deselect the other languages above). It’s fun enough to play with a friend group, but I haven’t tried it in a class yet. Taking the time to create a horsepaste/codenames game would likely only be worth your time if students have a set list of 100+ vocab words they need to memorize.

## Activities for Teaching Metacognitive & Study Skills

*These activities are not quite “games” -- they’re synchronous activities that work on Zoom that have the specific purpose of teaching students how to learn. Many metacognitive skills are probably best reflected on asynchronously (for example, having students watch videos on Growth Mindset and having them reflect on what they’re “good” and “bad” at; or using [Cognitive Wrappers](#) after exams, etc.), but these synchronous activities can work well, too.*

### Course Outcomes Review

**In-class time required:** 15 minutes

**Number of students:** Any number

**Instructions:**

1. **Prep Ahead:** Put a list of your course outcomes in a Google Doc, Google Slides file, or Google Jamboard, with one outcome listed per page/slide.
2. **Give Instructions:** Ask students to work with a partner. Think of and take notes on 1-2 things that we have done in class that have helped them work towards the following course outcomes. Each pair will start with an assigned outcome, and once they’ve written 1-2 things or run out of ideas, they can move on to other outcomes and write their own ideas below what other teams have written.
3. **Zoom/Tech Skill:** Teach students how to find the number of the breakout room that they’re in (it’s at the top of their screen once they enter a breakout room), because that number corresponds to the Google Doc/Slides/Jamboard page/slide that they should start on.
4. **Start:** Put pairs of students in breakout rooms for 10 minutes with a 60-second warning before the rooms close.
5. **Debrief:** Share your screen going through the outcomes on each slide/page and see what students wrote. If the class has forgotten some prior activity/lesson that you did to help them meet an outcome, remind them. If you’re doing this activity at midterm, tell them which outcomes you haven’t worked on yet, and tell them what is going to come in the next 5 weeks that will help the class work towards those outcomes.
6. **Jen’s Note:** I strongly recommend doing this activity both at midterm and at the end of the class.

## Help Me Understand

From [OneHE](#)

**In-class time required:** 15 minutes

**Number of students:** Any number

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** Make a Google Slides file and make one slide for each student in class. Make sure the sharing settings are set to “anyone with the link can edit.” On each slide, put the question “What is a challenge that you are having learning or studying this term?”
2. **Give Instructions:** Tell students they should each go to their own slide (you can assign them slides or have them just figure out how to start typing on a slide that no one else is on) and spend 3 minutes writing a sentence or two (*not* a novel) about something they would like help with learning or studying. Lay ground rules for responses: only give advice that you would want to get, use the “golden rule,” etc.
3. **Start:** Each student gets an initial 3 minutes to write their challenge. Put everyone on Mute so no one distracts other students. Give a 30-second warning before the 3 minutes is up.
4. **Response round 1:** Each student moves from their original slide to the slide directly below them in the deck (the person with the final slide moves to the top slide). Everyone then gets 3 minutes to give advice or a response to the challenge that is on their card.
5. **Response round 2:** Each student moves down a slide again. They get 3 minutes to read the initial challenge, the first response, and provide an additional response.
6. **Debrief:** Each student returns to their original slide, and reads the responses they have received. Ask for volunteers to share how the responses they received helped them, or what patterns they observed by getting to see what challenges other participants are dealing with. Discuss that students can do this *all the time* without needing the teacher to tell them to do it. “Your classmates are your resources!”
7. **Jen’s Note:** I’ve never done such a formal version of this activity before; usually spontaneous conversations happen where students ask for advice from their classmates. However, if your group isn’t prone to spontaneity, I think this formal advice-giving activity would work well. Be warned that you’re likely to have students who share that they’re dealing with a personal trauma, so be prepared with how to deal with that.

## Characteristics of Successful Learners Interviews

From [OneHE](#) / Stéphanie Wahab (PSU)

**In-class time required:** 45 minutes

**Number of Students:** Any

### Instructions:

1. **Prep Ahead:** None

2. **Practice Round Instructions:** Tell students they're going to interview each other and they are *not allowed* to give their own reaction or feedback to their partner. Instead, they just have to *listen*. They *are* allowed to ask questions if they're confused or to encourage their partner to expand, such as "why do you think that is?" or "tell me more." The question they'll ask each other is: "Think of a time when you successfully learned something new. What made that experience successful?"
3. **Practice Round:** Put pairs in breakout rooms for 5 minutes, with a 60-second countdown before rooms close. Only ONE partner should share their story for the first 5 minutes; they should NOT switch halfway through the time. Then, bring them all back to the main room, and tell them that the next partner is going to share for the next 5 minutes.
4. **Next:** Share your screen and show students this list of ["Characteristics of Successful Learners"](#). Let students read the list and comment on various words they find interesting, if they want.
5. **Real Round Instructions:** This time, students will go into NEW breakout rooms with NEW partners to share the same story (or they can choose a different story to tell if they want). Again, only ONE partner shares and the other partner *just listens* and asks probing questions WITHOUT giving judgement/praise/advice. This time, however, the listening partner also has to identify 2-3 characteristics from [the list](#) that they hear in their partner's story. Tell students to *not* interrupt their partner's story; just make a mental/written note of the characteristics they hear.
6. **Real Round, Part #1:** Put new pairs in new breakout rooms for 5 minutes, with a 60-second countdown before rooms close. Only ONE partner should share their story for the first 5 minutes; they should NOT switch halfway through the time. Then, bring them all back to the main room, and tell them that the next partner is going to share for the next 5 minutes.
7. **Real Round, Part #2:** After both partners have shared, bring everyone back to the main room again, and tell them they'll now have a total of 10 minutes to discuss each other's stories and tell each other the characteristics they heard in each other's stories. Together, they should make a list of elements of success that they can try to take forward.
8. **Jen's Note:** I've done a version of this exercise in a training on motivational interviewing. It's a wonderful exercise, but it's also chaotic because the instructions are so complicated, which is why you really can't skip the practice round. The goal is for each speaker to hear their strengths as reflected by the listener.

## Games for Higher-Order Thinking Skills

It's hard to think of generic games for helping students **apply, analyze, evaluate, and create** (the highest levels in [Bloom's Taxonomy](#)). If you have any ideas, please share them with me ([sacklinj@lanecc.edu](mailto:sacklinj@lanecc.edu)) and I'll add them here!

Instead, you'll likely have to find a discipline-specific game or prompt, or better yet, use project-based or case-study-based learning. Here are a few ideas:

1. Search [EmergingEdTech](#) for "simulation" to find discipline-specific simulation games.
2. Go to ["What's Going On in this Picture"](#) to get inspiration, then try to find an engaging picture that represents a class concept for students to analyze and think creatively about.
3. Look at [TeachThought's list](#) of Project-Based learning ideas.
4. [Edutopia has a list](#) of lots of game-based learning resources.
5. See the [National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science's](#) great website.

## End That Scene

From Martha DeCosta (LCC)

The teacher reads a book, story, or article and stops mid-scene (you could even watch a YouTube video and pause it). The students (individually or in groups) must creatively end the scene by either 1) drawing it, 2) verbally explaining it, or 3) acting it out. It's a fun ice-breaker type of a game and students come up with imaginative endings. This might be more of a community-building activity, but you might somehow weave in content review...