

50 STRATEGIES

Lessons and Activities

50 Strategies for Summer School Engagement Grades K-8

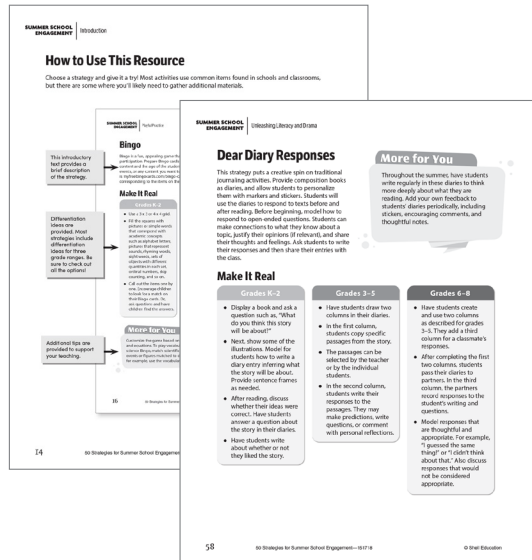
Table of Contents

Cover (1 page)

Table of Contents (1 page)

How to Use This Resource (1 page)

Strategies Pages (5 pages)





STRATEGIES

for

SUMMER

School

Engagement

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Welcome	4
Teaching Summer School	6
Creating a Supportive Environment.....	8
Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning	10
Resources for Virtual Field Trips	12
How to Use This Resource	14

Strategies

Playful Practice	15
Hands-on Learning	23
Cultivating Community	30
Multimedia Adventure.....	39
Beyond the Classroom.....	46
Unleashing Literacy and Drama.....	52
Assessment Quick Checks	68

Appendices

Appendix A: References	76
Appendix B: Student Activity Pages	77
Appendix C: Accessing the Digital Resources.....	88



How to Use This Resource

Choose a strategy and give it a try! Most activities use common items found in schools and classrooms, but there are some where you'll likely need to gather additional materials.

This introductory text provides a brief description of the strategy.

Differentiation ideas are provided. Most strategies include differentiation ideas for three grade ranges. Be sure to check out all the options!

Additional tips are provided to support your teaching.

**SUMMER SCHOOL
ENGAGEMENT**

Playful Practice

Bingo

Bingo is a fun, appealing game that reinforces knowledge and concepts while promoting active participation. Prepare Bingo cards with a grid of boxes. The size of the grid can vary based on the content and the age of the students. Fill the squares with vocabulary words, math problems, historical events, or any content you want to review. Or create a class set of Bingo cards online (one free website is myfreebingocards.com/bingo-card-generator). Develop a list of questions, prompts, or definitions corresponding to the items on the Bingo cards. Use these questions to play the game.

Make It Real

Grades K–2	Grades 3–5	Grades 6–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a 3 x 3 or 4 x 4 grid. Fill the squares with pictures or simple words that correspond with academic concepts such as alphabet letters, pictures that represent sounds, rhyming words, sight words, sets of objects with different quantities in each set, ordinal numbers, skip counting, and so on. Call out the items one by one. Encourage children to look for a match on their Bingo cards. Or, ask questions and have children find the answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a 4 x 4 or 5 x 5 grid. Fill the squares with academic concepts such as vocabulary words, math problems, historical events, or science terms. This is an opportunity for cross-curricular questions. Cards do not need to be limited to just one subject. For a math challenge, call out questions students must solve. They find and mark the answers on their cards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a 5 x 5 grid. Students this age can make their own cards: Place students in two groups. Have each group create Bingo boards and calling cards based on content the class has studied. Have the two groups exchange calling cards and boards. One group plays the game first, then the other group.

More for You

Customize the game based on the subject and grade level. For math Bingo, use math problems and equations. To play vocabulary Bingo, have students match words with definitions. For science Bingo, match scientific terms and concepts. Play social studies Bingo using historical events or figures matched to descriptions. Extend the game by using the content in another way; for example, use the vocabulary words in sentences or explain the importance of an event.

16

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3D Models

Unleash students' imaginations as they bring story settings to life with 3D models. Visualizing the settings and time periods of fiction and nonfiction texts enhances reading comprehension. Students have an opportunity to look at a text in more depth, paying attention to descriptive adjectives and studying locations and their geographic features. Students are not only learning about a place, they're also using recycled materials to represent features of a setting. Add a writing activity to extend the learning.

Make It Real

Grades K–2

- Choose a story that takes place in a specific habitat—for example, a forest, island, or city.
- Have small groups create their own versions of the setting, or do this as a whole-class project.
- Provide art supplies for students to design a replica of the habitat.
- Students can write or dictate descriptions or labels for their 3D models.
- For a variation, provide butcher paper and have students make maps of streets, including buildings and any landmarks.

Grades 3–5

- Choose a text that has vivid descriptions of one or more settings. Read the text with students.
- Have small groups each create a model of a different setting described in the story.
- This also works for geographic locations connected to content learning. For example, have students read text sets on habitats and then recreate them.
- For a variation, have groups work together to create maps. If appropriate, introduce the idea of scale.
- Have students include compass roses.

Grades 6–8

- Have students produce a project similar to the one described for grades 3–5, but add the creation of a slide presentation.
- The presentation should give information about the setting, such as important features, historical facts, local history, and other details.
- Extend this into a writing project by having students research the location and develop an informative travel brochure about it.
- Have students take photos or make videos to document the process they go through to design and create the 3D model settings.

More for You

A story set in an area such as Washington, DC, provides an opportunity to combine language arts and social studies by including famous landmarks, museums, the history of the United States, U.S. symbols, and so on. Another option is to have students create 3D models of their local community or their state capitol. Have students bring in recycled materials to build the projects. A cereal box can be a building, an old DVD case could be an ice-skating rink, a small carton of milk from the cafeteria can be reimagined as a historic landmark, and dough works for sculpting. Have students present their projects to their classmates and explain the process used to create them.

Building Community

Intentional time spent building community in the classroom is integral to students' progress during the summer. Community building helps create a positive learning environment, strengthens motivation and engagement, supports social and emotional development, reduces bullying and negative behavior, improves academic performance, and prepares students for real-world experiences.

More for You

Casual opportunities for group collaboration such as working on puzzles help build classroom community. Set aside time periodically for brain breaks when students can tackle puzzles together.

Make It Real

Grades K–2

- Help students learn one another's names. Have them sit in a circle and take turns saying their names. After each child says their name, everyone repeats it together.
- Have students share about themselves by making Heart Maps. Provide activity sheets that have a heart outline. Students divide their hearts into sections and draw things that are important to them. Have students dictate or label their drawings.
- Create a class "Friends Wanted" poster. Discuss how children can be good friends to one another and the character traits students would like their friends to have.

Grades 3–5

- On Fridays, have each student send an anonymous note to a classmate to tell them something nice about them or compliment them on a goal they reached that week.
- Daily or every few days, ask students to share a "rose" and a "thorn." A rose is something positive that happened, and a thorn is a challenge. After allowing time to reflect, begin by sharing your own rose and thorn.
- Have students make Heart Maps. Provide an activity sheet that has a heart outline. Students divide the heart into sections and write about things that are important to them.

Grades 6–8

- Create a kindness wall with sticky notes available. Any time a student sees a classmate do something kind, they write about it on a sticky note and place it on the kindness wall.
- Play the "Snowball" game. Each student anonymously writes about something stressing them on a sheet of paper. They then crumple the paper into a ball and toss it into the center of the room. Each student takes a "snowball" and reads what is on it. At the end of the activity, students can relieve stress by tossing the balls at one another.

Picnic Day

Take your students outside for a book picnic! Fill one or two picnic baskets with high-interest books and head outdoors with the class. Or, have students bring their own choices from the classroom library or their independent reading books if they prefer. Allow students to read their books and exchange them for new ones if they finish or would rather read something else. This encourages students to enjoy reading as a relaxing activity.

Make It Real

Grades K–2

- In the baskets, include many different topics and various genres such as picture books, wordless books, poetry, beginning chapter books, and so on.
- This is a good opportunity for a read-aloud. Choose a story and read it to the class; it will be a bonding moment.
- Allow students to bring stuffed animals to class and take them outside to read aloud to them.

Grades 3–5

- Have students pick partners and read each other a favorite book.
- Students can also partner up and take turns inventing new endings to a story they read together.
- If you can, bring devices that play audiobooks. Have students gather in small groups and listen to books together.

Grades 6–8

- Allow students to select novels, comics, manga, poetry, or magazines from the classroom or school library.
- Before going outside, have students share about texts they enjoyed reading recently to spark one another's interest.
- Give students time to freely read in peace. Encourage them to find a good place to sit and read on their own or to take turns reading aloud with a partner.

More for You

This doesn't need to be limited to reading. Students can take their journals outside and write creative stories inspired by the nature around them. They can draw and write about their observations in sketchbooks. Sharing highly enjoyable experiences is important during summer when there is a brief window of time for building community.

Dear Diary Responses

This strategy puts a creative spin on traditional journaling activities. Provide composition books as diaries, and allow students to personalize them with markers and stickers. Students will use the diaries to respond to texts before and after reading. Before beginning, model how to respond to open-ended questions. Students can make connections to what they know about a topic, justify their opinions (if relevant), and share their thoughts and feelings. Ask students to write their responses and then share their entries with the class.

More for You

Throughout the summer, have students write regularly in these diaries to think more deeply about what they are reading. Add your own feedback to students' diaries periodically, including stickers, encouraging comments, and thoughtful notes.

Make It Real

Grades K–2

- Display a book and ask a question such as, "What do you think this story will be about?"
- Next, show some of the illustrations. Model for students how to write a diary entry inferring what the story will be about. Provide sentence frames as needed.
- After reading, discuss whether their ideas were correct. Have students answer a question about the story in their diaries.
- Have students write about whether or not they liked the story.

Grades 3–5

- Have students draw two columns in their diaries.
- In the first column, students copy specific passages from the story.
- The passages can be selected by the teacher or by the individual students.
- In the second column, students write their responses to the passages. They may make predictions, write questions, or comment with personal reflections.

Grades 6–8

- Have students create and use two columns as described for grades 3–5. They add a third column for a classmate's responses.
- After completing the first two columns, students pass their diaries to partners. In the third column, the partners record responses to the student's writing and questions.
- Model responses that are thoughtful and appropriate. For example, "I guessed the same thing!" or "I didn't think about that." Also discuss responses that would not be considered appropriate.

Inside/Outside Circles

Using inside/outside circles gives students the opportunity to interact with many classmates. These circles can be used to discuss or review content. Place students in two groups; students in one group form an outer circle, and students in the other group form an inner circle facing the outer group. Ask a question and give students time to think of a response. The students on the inside answer the question; then the students on the outside answer. When you give the signal, students on the outside circle move to the left. Students now facing each other can discuss the same question, or you can ask a different question.

Make It Real

Grades K–2

- Give students on the inside circle small whiteboards. Each student writes a problem on the whiteboard and shows it to the student across from them on the outer circle. The student on the outer circle solves the problem. Outside-circle students rotate to the next person. After several turns, students switch circles so the roles are reversed.

- Use inside/outside circles for oral language practice. Ask students questions such as the following:

What is your favorite meal?

What do you like to do on weekends?

Who is one of your favorite story characters?

Grades 3–5

- Provide students with sets of flash cards with a question on one side and the answer on the other side.
- Students take turns asking one another the questions on the cards and answering.
- The teacher gives a signal, and students on the outside rotate to the next person to ask and answer questions.
- Continue for as many rounds as you wish.
- Have students create their own flash cards with answers on the back.

Grades 6–8

- Create question cards with text excerpts and open-ended questions such as the following:
What did the character mean when they said . . .
How do you think they felt?
What in the text made you think that?
- Students scan the text excerpt to find evidence to justify their answers.
- This is an effective way for students to practice scanning text quickly and finding evidence.
- Allow students to develop their own question cards to use for inside/outside circles.

More for You

Citing text evidence can be challenging. Practice with responding to these types of questions in a relaxed atmosphere is an effective way to help students build critical thinking skills while having “academic” fun.