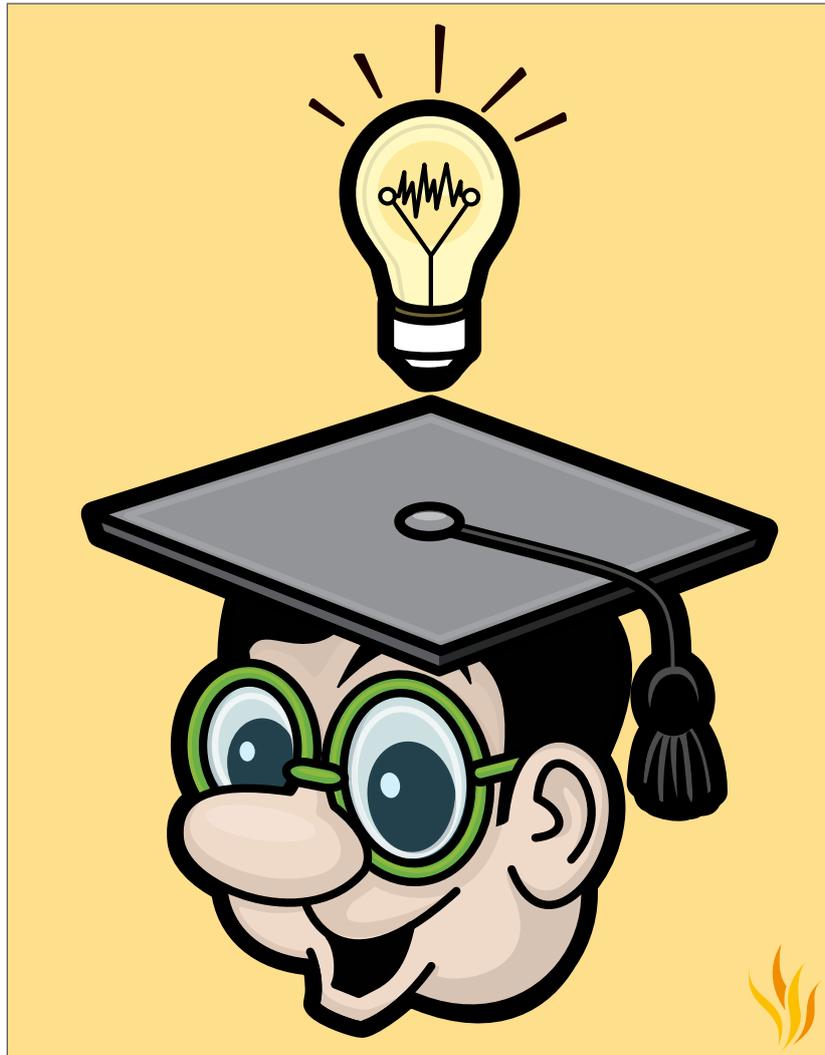# YOUR TOP TEACHING TIPS

Tips by teachers, for teachers

PROMETHEAN
LIGHTING THE FLAME OF LEARNING

YOUR TOP TEACHING TIPS
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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

We asked the users of Promethean Planet's forums to give us their top tips when using Activstudio or Activprimary. This guide was created from those tips.

Users from all around the world generously contributed their best ideas and although we have edited some replies, we've kept those voices intact.

Don't be surprised if you see an American spelling here, a UK teaching term there, or other voices from Australia and New Zealand – this guide is truly global!

THANKS!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in this guide. Visit Promethean Planet's forums, to see the original tips:
www.prometheanplanet.com

GENERAL TIPS

Learn how to use the software

Master at least one new Activstudio feature each week. The Activstudio software is very powerful, and building on your knowledge of it will benefit your students.

Rexboggs5, Queensland, Australia

Create interactive lessons, not just presentations

Plan your lessons so they are interactive and not just 'u-beaut' presentations. Often this takes more time and more thought, but your students will appreciate it.

Rexboggs5, Queensland, Australia

Everyone hates to sit through slideshows and lectures - even adults. When considering the role of the student in the lesson, attempt to create multiple opportunities for interaction, response and feedback. You want the students actively participating in the lesson, not just serving as a passive audience to a presentation.

LisaD, Atlanta, USA
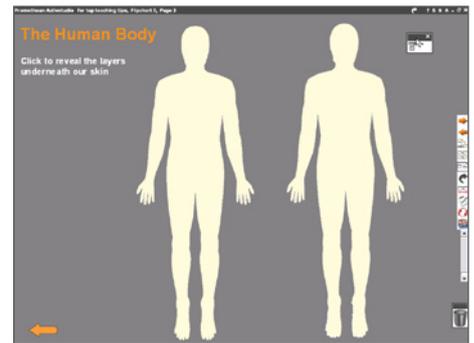
Take advantage of the resources out there

Promethean Planet has tons of lessons to download and try out. Even it you don't like certain pages or the order of the lesson, you can always change it and adapt it for your classroom and style.

LisaD, Atlanta, USA

Print out your flipcharts

Sounds obvious I know, but when designing interactive flipcharts, remember that they can be printed and used as worksheets.

My year one children have just been working on 'Barnaby Bear in Dublin'. I simply printed and photocopied some of the sheets and they were thrilled to have a Barnaby Bear workbook.

Simon34

I know before I had my Activboard and software, it was often difficult to give students an exact copy of the day's notes (because of them being absent or required by their IEP). With the use of the program, I am easily able to print off the notes for students.

This is a great asset for one of my students who has a disability which affects his note taking ability. Further, his aide can assist him in more beneficial ways, rather than just copying notes.

brianksee, USA
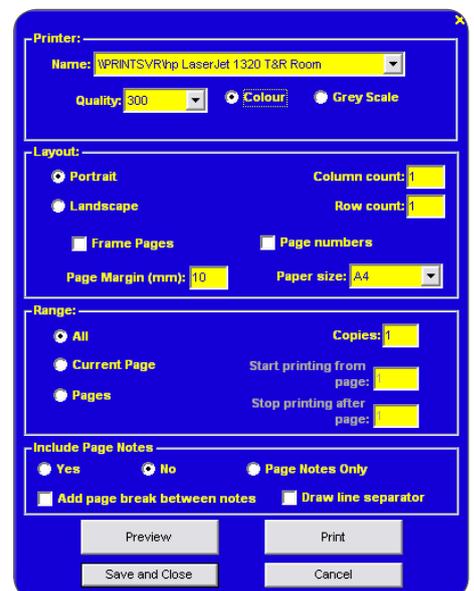
I print off the day's lesson and keep a paper record of what I did each day. Therefore, when students are absent, they can just come to my room during homeroom period and copy the notes.

I choose to print three flipchart pages per one sheet of paper to minimize ink and paper usage. I also print at the end of the lesson to make sure I get all of the annotations my students or I have written that day.

brianksee, USA

Prepare well, but don't over-prepare

The idea of having 'white space' (or any other colour space - whatever you fancy really) to encourage a spontaneous response from students is vital and such an easy thing to overlook.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

I'm working with many secondary teachers in my area and they have a tendency to 'over-prepare' flipcharts. This means that the flipcharts are used for presentation rather than to develop the understanding of a concept. I am encouraging them to prepare the 'bones' of the concept on a flipchart, then use the pen (and other tools) to develop it. It's much more interactive. This can then be saved and returned to at another time.
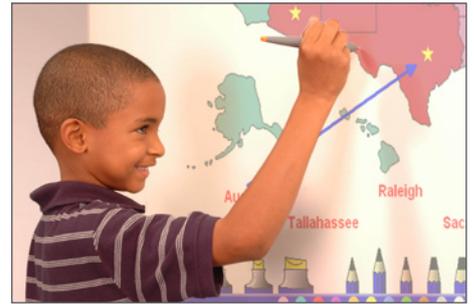
rgarden

INVOLVE YOUR STUDENTS

Mix up the interaction

Try to 'mix up' the types of interaction. Students can interact verbally, come up to the board individually, work from their seats with the Activslate, or participate as a group using Activotes.

LisaD, Atlanta, USA

Tailor exercises specifically for student participation

Adding pages that allow for student responses gives them an opportunity to share responsibility and ownership of the lesson. Create the activities so that you keep the individual interaction short enough so each student can have an opportunity, and the others keep paying attention!

LisaD, Atlanta, USA

Let your students make flipcharts

…for fun, for show and tell, for a lesson to give to peers or younger children.

Dug, Holmfirth, UK

Let your students use the Activpen

I find the children love to be in control of the pen and they are delighted to see their writing on the board. Even those that object to writing with a pencil will give the pen a go, and if the board 'recognises' their writing and converts it to type they are very proud of themselves. It is a great motivator.

caryn, Northern Ireland

Use your Activboard for group work

Plan for your Activboard to be used by small groups of children independently during group activity parts of lessons.

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK

BASIC TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Make the most of even the simplest tools

As a geometry teacher, I do not think that my Pen tool is ever down. It is constantly useful to me. I make everything with it from basic shapes to different point to point shapes. It gives me the freedom to add whatever to my flipcharts. I would not know what I would do with out it.

wilcogirl, Florida, USA

One idea for using the Pen tool

You can take a cereal packet and use the Activpen to draw its net. this is really effective and helps make sense of what is going on.
You can also draw round other things like a biscuit tin or indeed children!

markrobinson, UK

Make the most of techniques such as magic writing…

Magic writing is a great way to demonstrate interactivity. Use the same colour pen as the background and ask the children to watch very carefully. Write a number on the board and ask 'what number did I write?'. Then reveal the number by changing the background colour.

Marnie, Auckland, New Zealand

…and rub and reveal

Rub and reveal is very effective, as teachers hide the key vocabulary words and reveal them as they explain the definitions/significance of the term. This way students can guess the word before it is revealed.

Kathleen, New England, USA

[ED: Basic rub and reveal technique:
1. Type some text on the page.
2. Write over the text with a pen.
3. Then, in the lesson, you can use the eraser tool to erase the pen, 'revealing' the text beneath.]

LESSON PREPARATION

Colour code your pages

Use set page colours for certain tasks. My students now know that a blue screen with yellow writing means homework. The diaries are open and I never even need to say anything!

moree1

Make the most of links

Create links between pages. Don't go through them following the arrow on the side. This way students can dictate the section they want to look at, giving them more ownership of the lessons.

moree1

I include links in almost every flipchart I create! Sounds, video clips, music, and websites are easily incorporated into lessons by using links. I also use 'internal links' when I create more student-centered lessons. Students are able to check the accuracy of their work by linking to another flipchart page containing the correct answers. This trick is ideal in a classrooms in which centers or stations are used. Also, student-centered learning can be achieved by creating a non-linear flipchart using links. Now the students can truly drive the direction of the learning!

kguidry, USA

I make a flipchart at the beginning of a half term with the curriculum areas hyperlinked to pages that expand on what we'll be doing over the forthcoming weeks. Kids come out and explore.
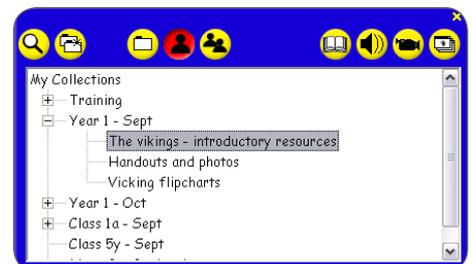
Dug, Holmfirth, UK
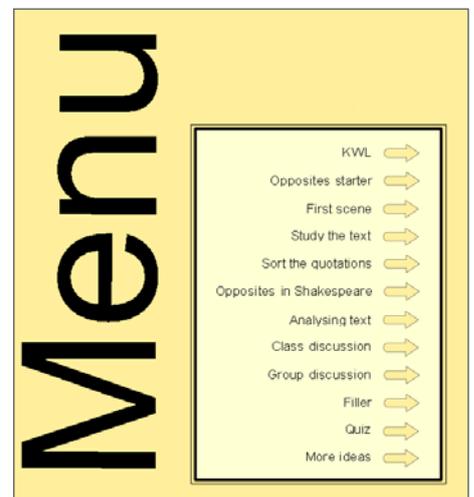
Use one folder of resources for one topic

If you are going to use a range of different images, web links, docs etc, and don't want to necessarily have these all on pages 'done', these could all be saved in one folder in your Resource Library and then accessed very efficiently.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

ORGANISING YOUR CLASS

Use the Activboard to help organise students into groups

I like to stack the names (each one created individually) of all the members of a class and then drag the whole group into a folder in My Collections. When groups need to be made this is really handy.

Marnie, Auckland, New Zealand

Use the Activboard from the beginning of the school year

At the beginning of the year children can have great delight in creating their own name using the Pen tool and Fill tool grouped to an image. This can then be used during the year, for example, when naming specific children to do an activity on the Activboard. Other resources surrounding the class can also be added into this folder.

Marnie, Auckland, New Zealand

During the first week of school our PreK and Kindergarten teachers take pictures of their students, edit them in to a thumbnail size and add them to their Resource Library. Students start using the board by dragging their picture to a daily graph prepared by the teacher. About a month later, student name buttons are then also made.

sdreyer, Texas, USA

Use the software as a scaffolding tool

I love the ability to embed videos, sounds and office documents within the flipchart. This means that one file keeps the whole lesson together, including lesson plans and worksheets. The ease with which this is possible in Activstudio is great!

moree1

I like to consider the flipchart, as well as being a presentation format, as a 'scaffolding tool' for a lesson - providing structure and organisation for all the various elements that make up a comprehensive lesson.

markrobinson, UK

Use the Clock tool for classroom management

I saw a high school art teacher in Forsyth County use the count down clock when the students were doing hands-on art.
She set the timer so that it went off ten minutes prior to the end of class. At that time, the timer sounded and I think it went to a new page where it told the kids to clean up their stuff and get ready to change classes.
She said it was a great classroom management tool because it freed her up to be working with the individual students instead of worrying about the time!

LisaD, Atlanta, USA

Use the Clock tool to create an activity circus

Use the count down clock (set on Repeat, with a sound prompt as the action) to manage the time for a number of activities during a period.
Students can see the remaining time for a task. Everybody knows when it is time to move to the next activity and all the time periods are equal.

Westlake, New Zealand

MORE IDEAS USING THE CLOCK TOOL

Use the Clock tool to help fast workers and slow workers

Set a task then start the count down clock. Challenge fast workers to justify their answer and think about their first (impulsive) answer in more depth.

Slower workers are 'protected' by the clock, which gives them sufficient time to complete the task rather than giving up when they see some hands shoot up immediately after the teacher has given the task. This fosters a more inclusive environment in the classroom.

Once the time is up, all students can contribute to the discussion.

Westlake, New Zealand

## Use the Clock tool's ability to include sound

It can be useful to get the clock to play a sound when it reaches zero, such as the theme tune for Countdown or Mission Impossible.

Dug, Holmfirth, UK

One idea for using the Clock tool and tickertapes at the start of a lesson

One teacher in Connecticut who is new to the Activclassroom uses the count down clock and tickertape together to assign a warm up activity for the 7th grade math class. The problems are posted on the Activboard with directions across the top of the screen as a tickertape. The clock counts down to mark the end of the warm up time. It is a great way to have students come in and engage in the lesson.

Kathleen, New England, USA
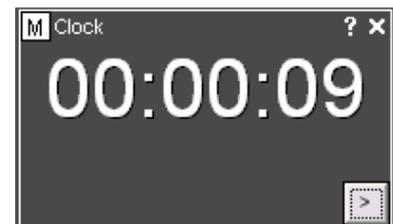
USING IMAGES

You have access to any picture

The Camera tool is my favourite tool. You can put any picture in any flipchart, whether it's a cut-out of a child or that perfect picture from Google Images.

Dug, Holmfirth, UK

Kids love seeing themselves on flipchart pages

Create a folder of 'portrait' type photos of the kids somewhere in your Resource Library. You can easily pop them on the page and add thought or speech bubbles. Kids love seeing themselves on flipchart pages!

Dug, Holmfirth, UK

Use photos of school trips

Use photos of a school trip so that the children have access to the photos to make an instant 'big book' of their trip by adding text on each page. They can also use the sound recorder to add a commentary.

caryn, Northern Ireland


Use the software's web browser

The web browser will stay on top of any flipchart you are working on - allowing you to drag and drop selected text and images directly from the web to the flipchart.

markrobinson, UK

Use the freehand camera snapshot tool to personalise characters in stories

Pull out the Three Bears, or Hansel and Gretel, and 'change' the face of the character by grouping a cut out of a child's photograph with the character. This would be a great way to initiate play script writing. To have three or four characters 'personalised' in this way would mean that the dialogue is more easily owned by the children. Hey presto, you have a play!

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK
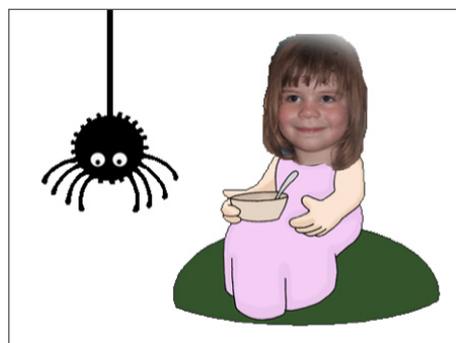
Make the most of the technology available

I used my cellphone in a demo to some English teachers. I snapped one of them 'doing a Juliet' on the stairs into the building.
Then I posted the image to the teacher's email address, ran inside and picked up the image from the network and placed it over a great image from Verona tourism of Juliet's balcony. A real wow moment.
We also used the sound recorder to have Juliet speak those immortal lines.

Westlake, New Zealand

Use images to model real-world situations

In science, take photos of equipment and use the Camera tool to put them into a flipchart. Use the pen to annotate or create labelling activities. I have found this to be particularly effective when teaching electrical circuits. Put the circuit diagram on the flipchart, then arrange the photos of the equipment and use the pen to draw the wires. Never have the students been so confident constructing electrical circuits!

rgarden

Take photos of plant growth, animal life cycles, dissections and leaf identification.

rgarden

Take photos of your students' work

Take photos of experimental setups/results. Great for showing students who have been absent.

rgarden

[ED: Also useful for revision later in the year].

Use images to link the outside world with your lessons

In maths, give the students the digital camera to take photos of angles in the school grounds. Download them and put them onto a flipchart, using the Protractor tool to measure the angles. Are wheelchair ramps all the same angle? What angle should they be? Do a 'geometry walkabout' and take photos of geometric shapes.

rgarden

Use images so you can show close-ups on the Activboard

Use images from your scanner. If you zoom the image on the Activboard it is amazing how much detail you can see.

Westlake, New Zealand

Scan fabrics to show the fabric structure and also garment construction details. Again, the Page Zoom tool reveals a lot of detail. Scan the pattern envelope to go through with the class all the combinations of fabric widths and pattern options.

Westlake, New Zealand

Associate images with rules

In math we try to have students 'discover' the 'rules'. I like to use digital photos of my students grouped with 'word balloons' saved in My Resource Library. That way when one of my students 'discovers' a math 'rule' the student's picture is dragged out, the rule is typed into the balloon, it is all grouped and stored in the Resource Library. Later in the year, when the 'rule' makes another appearance I open the library and out pops one of our resident 'rule makers' from earlier in the year. Students associate the rules with fellow classmates. It's great fun.

J Boucke, California, USA
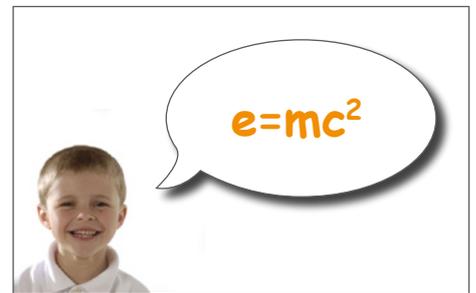
USING THE SCREEN RECORDER

The screen recorder is ideal for modelling

Use the screen recorder to record how to solve a maths problem. Show the video again as needed - you could do the same to model letter formation.

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK

Use the screen recorder for simple explanations

Use the screen recorder as an additional adult, to explain an exercise or a topic on screen; whilst you are dealing with individual queries in the class.

anon, UK
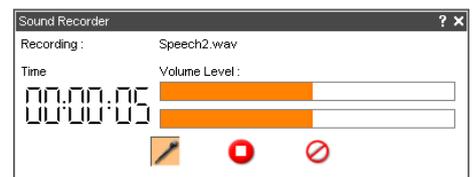
USING THE SOUND RECORDER

The sound recorder encourages children to speak

Children can use the sound recorder to add narration to stories presented on the whiteboard.

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK

When planning to use the Activboard for group activities, use the sound recorder for those children who find writing very difficult, allowing them to get their ideas down!

LouB, Hampshire, UK

Use the sound recorder to play many voices

When teaching foreign languages, teachers can record sounds as they should be pronounced, to help students perform listening exercises. The sound recorder gives language teachers the opportunity to play a range of voices in their lessons.

anon, UK

Use the sound recorder for listening skills

Another idea for the sound recorder is to record the question. This is great for listening skills as well as for students who are learning another language.
The question can be listened to (versus read) and the students can vote on the answer.
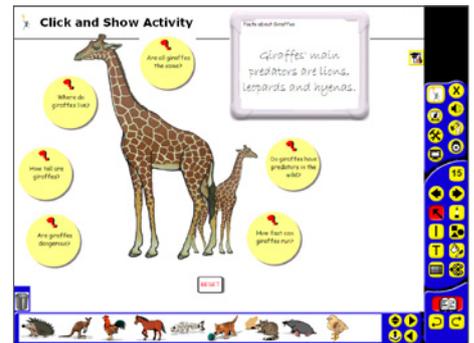
LisaD, Atlanta, USA

TECHNIQUES FOR USE IN LESSONS

Encourage your students to create connections between events

Show pictures of key events then get students to draw lines and explain how they think the events are linked. When you've got a few you can ask the whole group to vote which they think are the most important links.

ojsaunders

Choose when your students discover answers

'Hide' stuff by leaving it either just, or wholly, out of view off the sides/top/bottom of the flipchart. Then drag it in or change the page scale to reveal all the hidden stuff.

Dug, Holmfirth, UK

Put a series of events in the correct order

Put up a series of events in the wrong order and get students to put them into the order that they happened. Involve the rest by letting them add a running commentary on the ordering.

ojsaunders

Annotate images to encourage discussion

Show a key source like a painting or a cartoon and get students to come up and circle parts of the painting or cartoon, saying what they tell us about the source.

ojsaunders

Use the Lock feature to create magic effects

I love locking a shape or image onto the page and hiding a bank of words, shapes, coins etc behind it. I pull the items out as if by magic!
The awe and wonder never ends with this one!

LouB, Hampshire, UK

## Use the transparency options to go back in time

To do this, all you need is a before and after picture of the same thing.
Make sure the after picture is over the before image.
Then you double-click the after image, which pulls up the Object Edit toolbar. In version 3 of the software, it is really easy because the translucency slider is on the object edit box. Just move that slider, and you will be just like Marty McFly, going back in time!
This is great for showing global warming, before/after history pictures, maps, etc.

scaulfield
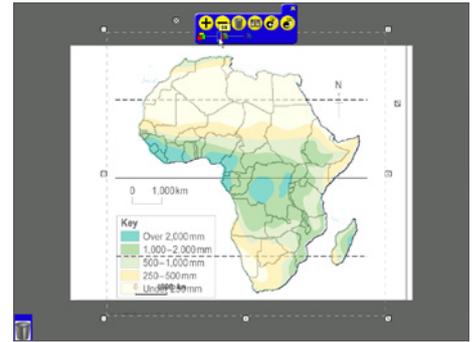
Build up pages from scratch

In some activities, allow for a more spontaneous building of a page. These activities can often have an additional quality which is difficult to quantify. If students help to build the page, it also gives them more ownership of their lessons.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

Use folders of relevant resources

Having a folder of images which confine students to a set of resources is a good way of focusing their attention. For example, building a story with a set 'choice' will help some children to be more effective in creating their characters/ setting etc.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

Use interactive techniques to making learning objectives fun

All my classes have enjoyed 'guessing' what the learning objectives are as they are gradually revealed by one of the children. I always have the learning objectives typed (so they're on the middle layer) and initially I covered them over with thick pen (top layer) that could be gradually rubbed out. I have also used shapes which I put onto the top layer (Design Mode - right-click on shape) and then I started using pictures from the Resource Library and then from the internet. That way, the objectives could be hidden under something to do with the lesson, thereby acting as another clue!
I always expected the children to get bored of this, but it's not happened yet!

Lara, Berkshire, UK

IDEAS FOR GROUP WORK

Let your students teach

In maths I often plan for children to use the whiteboard to reinforce an objective/activity I may have been teaching via a prepared flipchart. I do this by allowing them to teach each other using the methods and tools that I have used during my lesson input. It works particularly well in maths with the children using resources from the library such as money, blocks and shapes. The children add their pages to my flipchart and their work is often shared during plenary.

The whiteboard is also often a popular drawing 'media' if children are drawing pictures etc. and given a choice of tools to use. They love the huge scale of drawing on the board.

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK
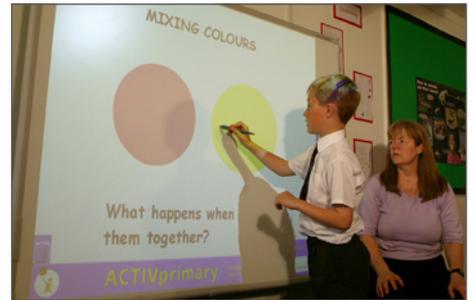
Let students create their own activities

As a treat, I will often let a group of children design a game of snakes and ladders using the resources. We then play 'their' game as a whole class activity.

caryn, Northern Ireland

USING PAGE NOTES

Don't forget page notes

Always put in page notes when making or adapting a flipchart - you may know what you are doing now but may not remember this time next year!

caryn, Northern Ireland

Add page notes to the page

Don't forget, you can have some text in your page notes, open it, select the part you want, and there is a button that will paste your selection on the flipchart page.

LisaD, Altanta, USA

This flipchart can be used to introduce some important final touches to flipcharts.

WAYS TO INTERACT WITH TEXT

Interact with words

Before the lesson, type or copy or drag a piece of text onto a flipchart. Students can interact with the text by finding rhyming words, words with a certain sound, key words, nouns etc.
They can ID these words by:
- Using the paint bucket to make them a different colour
- Using the Highlighter tool or Pen tool
- Dragging a piece of highlighter over certain words
- Circling them with the Ellipse tool
- Pointing them with the arrow
- Using the Callout tool to add notes about a text
- Underlining them with the Pen tool
- Using the deconstruct text feature to drag individual words out of the text.

wendyatschool, Perth, Australia
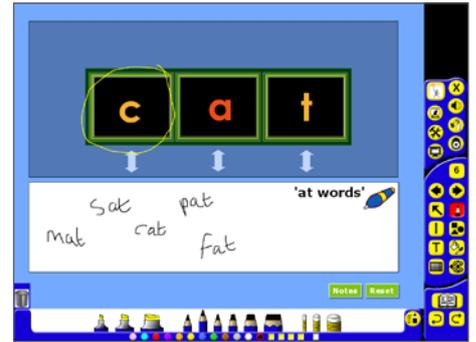
Create sorting exercises by extracting text

To drag more than one word onto the page (a phrase, sentence or definition) go into Text Edit. Select the words you want (they will appear highlighted).
Lift the pen off the board, then touch the highlighted group again and drag it out of the text box onto the flipchart page.
I think this is called 'extracting' text. Sounds painful!

Westlake, New Zealand

[ED: To go into Text Edit, double-click on the text, select the Edit Text button in the Object Edit toolbox].

[ED: This is useful when creating sorting exercises with text copied from the internet or other documents. Extract all the sentences in the text, delete the original text and then jumble them up.]

Another text strategy

Deconstruct the key words from a paragraph or article.
Use the Fill tool to colour those words in the paragraph with the background colour (this 'hides' them, creating a cloze exercise).
Shuffle the key words.
Students drag the words to the correct place in the text.
LATER
Have just the key words on the page. Students need to write sentences including those words in ways that show they understand the meaning. The original text can be available if they need to check that they are on the right track.
A good way to model that old favourite 'rewrite this in your own words'.

Westlake, New Zealand

RESOURCE LIBRARY TIPS

Explore the Resource Library

Make sure you investigate the assessments and activities supplied with the software (no point re-inventing the wheel).

caryn, Northern Ireland

Resource Library and introductory activities

If I am introducing a topic (eg spring) I use the resources to generate ideas. This is also useful for creative writing and history topics. I just drag relevant pictures up and let the discussion begin. A great way to discover what the children want to find out. *caryn, Northern Ireland*

The My Collections folder is the most flexible folder

I am not sure that everyone truly exploits the options that 'My Collections' in Activprimary or Activstudio offers. The ability to save a range of different types of stuff is amazing! Have you ever saved an image with the sound already attached, for example?

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

Save everything you create into the Resource Library

When I first started, I would constantly make all of my objects while I taught. I then started placing them in my library. It has made my teaching that much more efficient and smoother. *wilcogirl, Florida, USA*

Use and add to the Resource Library to share best practice. Don't just save flipcharts, save useful images, tickertapes, pointers, grids and backgrounds, etc.

CraigBaillie, UK

When designing your flipcharts, save yourself oodles of time by remembering to save your home-made resources in your personal resources. Things such as magnifiers, erasers, reset buttons and buzzers, can be quite fiddly to make, and time consuming, but lifting out of your personal resources and re-using, makes life so much easier. *Simon34*
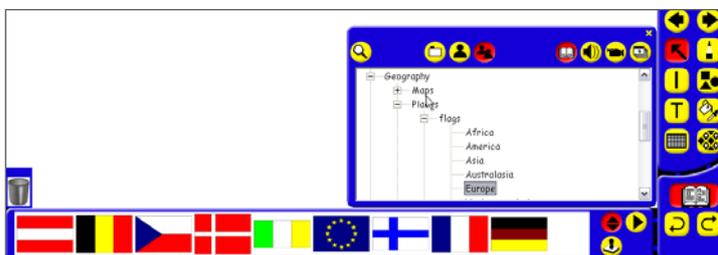
OTHER IDEAS

## Use the software to create worksheets

Since using Activprimary I very rarely make worksheets etc in anything other than Activprimary. It is great as your flipchart and resources look the same.

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK

Use dice to help make choices

I use dice if I have two or more students who offer an answer. I quickly ask them to pick a number and roll the dice. The closest wins. I currently have my Activotes numbered, and if I want to randomly call on students, I just roll the dice or say dice times two, so I can get up to 24. It helps me from calling on the same students.

brianksee, USA
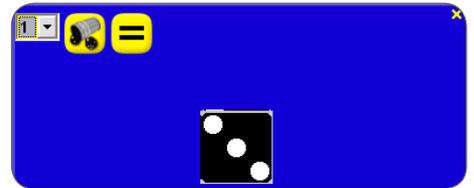
## Use the Reveal tool to help students focus

I prepare large words on a flipchart page and then use the Reveal tool to reveal the word from left to right at varying speeds to hear them blending the phonemes. They love it when I drag it very slowly on certain phonemes!

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK

Younger children can use the Activboard to practise handwriting

For early years children - let them practise large scale hand control movements by drawing letters and shapes on the board.

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK
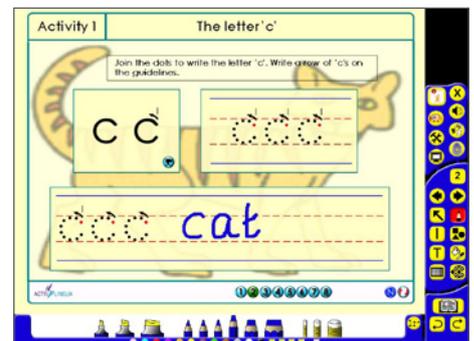
Make the most of backgrounds

Backgrounds are great for creating atmosphere.

davidbunting, Lancashire, UK

I too believe backgrounds can enhance a flipchart. I love the subliminal message backgrounds can send. I teach World History to 7th graders and use my backgrounds to introduce more information.

J Boucke, California, USA

Use the Page Reset button

The Page Reset button is the teacher's life-saver. As long as you have saved the flipchart at the appropriate moment, you can always click on the Page Reset button to restart an exercise or to have another go at explaining something.

anon, UK

Use Notes and Pointers

These are great to have a message or prompt on screen during a lesson. They float over all applications, and you can have a number of them open at once. Colour-code them for greater impact.
Stack them in order with the most recent one on top. Turn a Note into a Pointer so its text is hidden, then reveal the message again later. 'Shuffle' Pointers then pick at random. Some Ideas: Lesson objectives, assessment criteria (rubric), safety information, activity circus instructions, key words, vocabulary, warnings, reminders, group members, chemical formulae, equipment list, clean-up instructions, name of visitor, inspirational message, design brief, recipe.
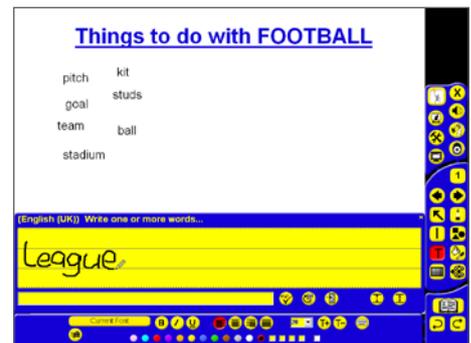
Westlake, New Zealand
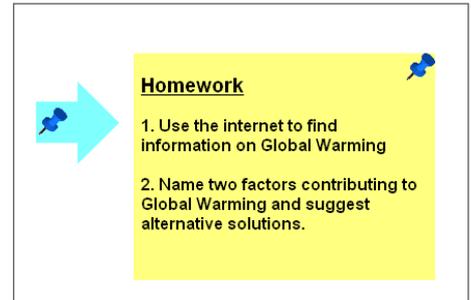
Use the Recognition tool

I switch the handwriting recognition on when recording suggestions and answers from the class during a whole group exercise.

It makes them more legible and allows me to move them around, rearrange them on the board etc, much more easily and quickly than leaving them as annotations.

leiafee, Swansea, Wales

Keep track of work

I have found an easy way to keep track of whether students have turned in their assignments or not. I made several pre-made flipcharts. Each flipchart has all of my students' images on them. For each assignment in the day I pull up a new flipchart and type a heading on it to match the assignment.

When the students complete the assignment they go to the Activboard and click on their picture. The word 'done' appears across the front of their picture. At the end of the day, I print a copy of the flipchart and can see exactly who still needs to complete assignments. This has made my students more responsible for their work and helps them to take ownership of it.

kellyandbrian

Use the Shortcut bar

I have found that when teaching specific topics, there are certain objects and annotations which I use frequently in class. These items usually wind up on the shortcut side of the toolbar.

At the end of a topic I create a flipchart containing items used frequently with that topic, by simply dragging them off the shortcut bar to a flipchart page. I then save the 'shortcuts' flipchart under that topic in 'My Resources'. The next time I teach that topic, all I'll have to do is open that flipchart and drag the commonly-used objects and annotations to the right side of the toolbar and I'll be set to go.

cappie, New Jersey, USA
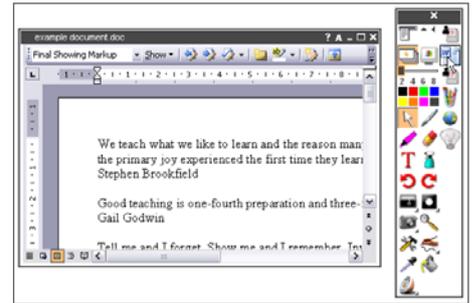
… for learning objectives and reminders

Use tickertapes to share the learning objectives or to share messages with parents in the morning when dropping the children off. The parents in my class often look at the board for messages now.

LouB, Hampshire, UK

REMEMBER: Bank Holiday Monday = no school!

Use tickertapes when sharing the success criteria/WILF for a lesson - a good reminder for those who were asleep when you shared it the first time!

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK

My personal favourites though are the messages to parents reminding them that their children do need their reading folders and PE kits in school everyday.

LouB, Hampshire, UK

… as part of an activity

Use tickertapes to display sequences of numbers. Children find the next number in the sequence - such as what is the next prime number - and can add it to the tickertape.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

… to display difficult words

A teacher friend of mine told me she used the tickertape for all the 'hard' spellings involved in the activity of the day. She had found that pupils continuously asked her 'how do you spell .?'. This was disrupting pace and also concentration of others. Once the spellings were scrolling across the screen the problem was solved.

Peter Lambert, Ribble Valley, UK

Use tickertapes for this week's spellings that have been set to be learnt for homework.

Dug, Holmfirth, UK

I use tickertapes for the key words I want students to know by the end of the lesson.

seabass

… for good news and updates

How about a 'Happy Birthday' banner running first thing in the morning for any child who has a birthday on that day?

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK

We have also used tickertapes recently to highlight any changes that have occurred in the tadpole tank.

LouB, Hampshire, UK

NEWSFLASH: Tadpole grows a leg!

… to highlight key parts of an article

You can make text on a flipchart into a tickertape by right-clicking.
You could, for example, cut and paste a key passage from an article on the web and turn it instantly into a tickertape.

markrobinson, UK

STUDENT EDITION

Get your students using Activstudio or Activprimary Student Edition

I teach our adult students how to use the Student Edition early in the course, then encourage them to download the class flipcharts from our server and add their own notes and annotations for revision and self study.

leiafee, Swansea, Wales

USE THE SPOTLIGHT TOOL…

… for games

My favourite game using the Spotlight tool is guess the shape or number.

Put a selection of different coloured shapes or numbers on the flipchart page, then, using the Spotlight tool, start looking for a shape or number. Look at a small part of it. What could it be? Why do you think that? What else should we see if it is?

LouB, Hampshire, UK
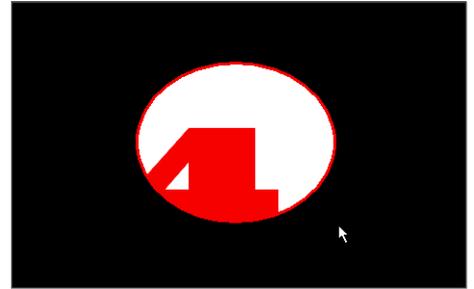
… for quick snapshots

In version 3 you can now right-click on the Spotlight tool and it will take a snapshot.

I think this would be good in English or art lessons with a photo or picture behind the spotlight. You could illustrate how the picture tells a story by capturing pieces of it, then you could arrange the snapshots you have taken in storyboard fashion on the next page.

Vicky-d, Kirkby Lonsdale, UK

I had a big picture of a glacial landscape in Activstudio 3. Using the spotlight, I then snapped pictures of things such as terminal moraine, hanging valley, cirque, crevasse, etc. These appeared as a stack of clips over the original image.

markrobinson, UK

This is also a quick way of making a quasi-jumbled up picture or jigsaw. Just take snapshots using the spotlight (a bit quicker than the Camera tool) and then delete the original.
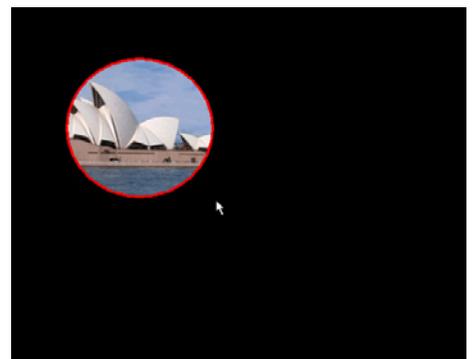Move around the stack of snapshots you have made - an instant puzzle!

markrobinson, UK

… to focus your students' attention

I've used it to focus children's attention on a small detail or part of a picture displayed on the interactive whiteboard.

Dug, Holmfirth, UK

… to build up a narrative

One idea I liked was a teacher who got their students to describe what they saw on the interactive whiteboard as they slowly moved and enlarged a spotlight over a huge image.
In the image, one person looking at something became a crowd looking at something, as the spotlight was enlarged. The 'something' turned out to be a house.
Students had to guess why the crowd was gathering and looking at the house.
As the image was fully revealed, it turned out that the crowd was looking at a house falling off the edge of a cliff.
I really enjoyed this idea of using the spotlight to help students build up a narrative.

anon, UK
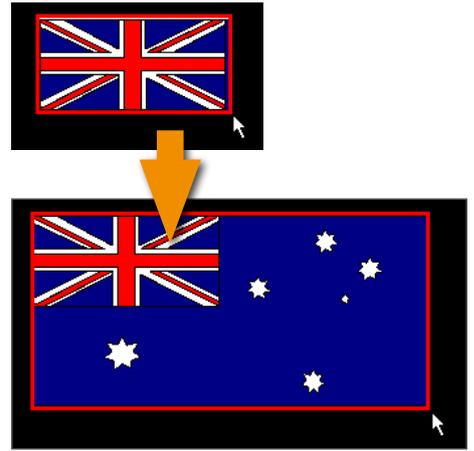
… to hide things

You could use the square solid spotlights together with grids in maths lessons to explain area by enlarging and reducing the spotlight to cover specific numbers of squares on the grid.

Vicky-d, Kirkby Lonsdale, UK

Put students in charge of the spotlight

When you start a topic, or even if you've just put a letter on the board that you're learning to sound, put the spotlight on and ask the children to direct it. What can they tell you about what is behind?

Alison, London, UK

Spice up subjects with the spotlight

I don't know about others but I sometimes find teaching recognition of key words quite boring. A good way to make it 'slightly' more exciting is to have a selection of words on a prepared flipchart page and then drag the Spotlight tool around revealing one word at a time. The children call out when they see a word - good with the Bond theme tune too!

Sarah Carpenter, Hampshire, UK

WELCOME TO THE WORLD

Use the world area to store extra resources

[ED: the world area is the area around your flipchart page. Use the Page Scale option to reduce the size of your flipchart and make the world area visible.]
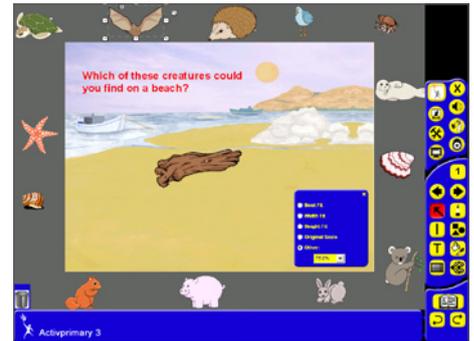
This area has all sorts of possibilities, storing extra images, extra vocabulary, preprepared anything really. Not only does this mean you have all that you need on one page, but it means that you can also limit students to options too. I know one primary school where they use this facility for children to create stories and the teacher limits their choice of character by only having a few available in the world area.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

Alternatively, if you don't want to reduce the page scale, you can have words/pictures just off the edge of the page, so you can just see them peeping in. Easily pulled in, onto the page. Adding an arrow and grouping this with the object is another way of making them available.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

I only found out about the world area relatively recently and it is such an incredible concept.
I often group items with a picture of a hand with a pointing finger and just have the fingertip showing on the edge of the page.

Dug, Holmfirth, UK

Use the world to hide further information off screen

I recently saw how a teacher had grouped an answer to a question to a thumbnail of a website. How cool is that? This means that you only go to the relevant website when needed.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

Use the world area for differentiated group activities

The world area is useful when using one page for differentiated group activities. For example, if your class is looking at a poem but each of the reading groups is doing a different task. Have the group name visible so when it is their turn the children can 'pull' on their activity.

Marnie, Auckland, New Zealand

ACTIVOTE

Keep students on task with Activotes

A great way to keep students on task it to keep the Activotes out all the time and ask students to agree or disagree with what an individual has contributed to the discussion, or lesson.

LisaD, Atlanta, USA

Use Activote to work towards the correct answer

I'll set a class a question without defining the correct answer. They vote and we look at the percentage for each option. They then have to discuss the possible answers and we vote again. The aim is to get 90% of the class to agree on a particular answer before I set the correct response. I like this because it encourages discussions - pupils have to persuade each other that their answer is correct. I'm still waiting for a '12 angry men' scenario where one pupil persuades the rest of the class to change their minds!

Dave Harrington, Stafford, UK
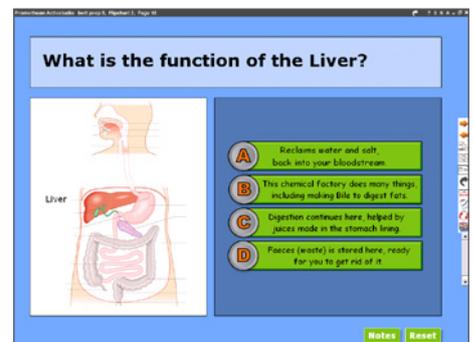
I never define the answers as I feel that it is great to talk about the possibilities.

LouB, Hampshire, UK

My Algebra 1 and 2 students, as they move through the curriculum, start to see different ways to solve different problems. Some, also, have issues deciding which method to use.

For example, with a system of linear equation, you have three ways to solve as an algebra 1 student: graphing, substitution, and elimination.

I present these options along with an 'I am not sure'. Once they have chosen and we see the class vote, I stick it to them to 'round table' their decision. Then we vote again and see the new results. At this point, I start asking the students what made them change. It is a great way to guide them to decide the best way to reach solutions. I also do this with solving quadratics as well.

wilcogirl, Florida, USA

USE THE PAGE ZOOM TOOL

…to discover hidden parts of a page

One of the ways I used the Page Zoom tool recently was to have a character 'hiding' on top of a hill. I had reduced this character to a tiny dot. Being able to do such fun things is so easy and can easily be part of an everyday starter, recognising something, revising something, looking at something.

Margaret Allen, West Sussex, UK

I love the idea about hiding your character and then zooming to reveal him.
A similar idea:
Since CSI (Crime Scene Investigation) is such a popular TV show in the US now, you could try the same type of thing by creating a scenario on a flipchart page that kids have to solve (doesn't have to be crime, though). Plant small clues around so students can use the Page Zoom tool to reveal a clue that helps them solve the bigger problem.

CPope, Ohio, USA

Things you may not know about the Page Zoom tool

My best tip is to remember how to get back to 'normal' view. I used to right-click to zoom back out but found that a quick 'double-click' on the board will take you back to normal 100%.
I also love that you can still write on the board when it is zoomed.
Finally, I love that you can pan around the image while zoomed by dragging the image left and right.

LisaD, Atlanta, USA

Promethean Learning

For more training ideas, visit Promethean's training website: http://www.prometheanlearning.com.

Promethean Planet

Promethean Planet is a free, online community designed with one goal - supporting teachers.

Visit: http://www.prometheanplanet.com

ACTIVBOARD   PEN   SOFTWARE   SLATE   VOTE   SUPPORT