

# Fill in the gaps: substitution time



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A colleague is absent for the day and you have been asked to fill in. On such occasions what does a teacher do? What can he/she do for just that one period that is both meaningful and at the same time fun for the students? I list here a few activities that you can do with your students to turn that one period into an enjoyable teaching-learning time. Please note that these activities are suitable for students across levels and don't cater to any one level or class. Some of these activities I have developed myself, others I have learnt from workshops, various books and magazines and of course my colleagues.

## Social studies

**Hangman:** Think of a word from any chapter of your subject. Make as many small dashes as the letters in the word on the board. Divide the class into teams. Now ask one team to guess the letters of the word one at a time. If they guess correctly write the letter in its place in the dash. If they are able to guess the word within a certain time then their team gets a point. Draw a hangman's noose on the board. For every wrong guess draw one part of the hangman (first the head, then torso, then left arm, right arm, left leg and finally right leg). If the hangman is completed before they get the word they lose. Continue with another word for the next team.

**Tambola:** Students make a tambola ticket in their notebooks as shown


Then each student selects 15 words from the list of words given below and writes one in each box of his ticket.

Altitude	Plain	Axis	Satellite	Galaxy
Cartography	Map	Comet	Planet	Astronomy
Globe	Sketch	Crater	Asteroids	Orbit
Scale	Conventional Signs	Constellation	Astronomer	Hachures
Key	Atmosphere	Nebulae	Meteors	Contours

Now give the meaning/definition of a word from the list. If the students know the meaning and if they have the word on their ticket they cancel it. When a student cancels five words in a row he is a winner. A student is a full house winner if he is able to cancel all the words on his ticket.

- This game can be adapted to any subject – English, math, or science. In English one can have synonyms, antonyms, verb-forms, noun-forms, etc.
- In mathematics, students can write down numbers from the ones you have written on the board. Now call out the questions:  $25 + 30$ ,  $15 \times 4$ ,  $566 - 90$ . The students quickly calculate and if they have the answer on their ticket they cancel it.

## Atlas activities

- With the help of a map of India make a list of all the places with names ending with 'pur'. For e.g. Nagpur, Kanpur, Ferozpur, etc. Then try finding places ending with 'bad' and 'nagar'.
- Make a list of countries/cities beginning with each letter of the alphabet.

**Tar baby:** Divide the class into two teams. This game can be played with the names of famous personalities or places. A student from one team comes forward and gives clues for the word that he has in mind. For e.g., Mumbai.

Clues which he can give: My tar baby is a city in India.  
 My tar baby's name has six letters  
 My tar baby is the capital of Maharashtra.

The other children try and guess the name.

**Tic-Tac-Toe:** Make the following grid on the board:

History	Prehistory	Edict
Epigraphy	Monument	Archaeology
Inscription	Numismatics	Chronological

Divide the class in two teams. For Team one use 'x' and for Team two use 'o'. Team one selects a word from the grid. If they give the meaning/definition of the word correctly then put an 'x' on the word they selected. If Team two is able to correctly define the word they have selected, put an 'o' on their word. The game then continues and the team that gets any three words circled or crossed in a line vertically, horizontally, or diagonally wins.

- This game can be played in all grades for history, geography, and science with definitions and in English with word meanings, synonyms, opposites, verb-forms, noun-forms, or adjective forms.

**Make as many words as possible** using letters from the word 'Constellation'.

- (Any big word from any subject can be given like Constantinople, representation, pronunciation, acknowledgement, commercialization, etc.)

**Figure me out:** Each student writes five sentences about a famous personality or a country on a card. The cards are then collected by the teacher. She reads the clues one by one from the card and the children try to guess who the person is or which country it is.

Clues which can be written on the card:

- I am an island.
- I am a continent too.
- My name has nine letters.
- I am also called Last of Lands.
- I am the flattest continent.

(Answer: Australia)

- This game can also be played with each child writing five sentences about himself on the card. The teacher then reads the clues and the children try to guess who their classmate is.
- This can be played with names of animals, birds, or chemicals too.

## Composing a poem

Compose a **Cinquain Poem** on 'Australia' using the following format:

- Title – one word (subject)
- Two words that describe the subject
- Three words that describe the activity of the subject
- Descriptive phrase (four words)
- Another name for the subject



## English

**Coffee-pot:** Two students go out of the class. Write any activity on the board for the other students to see (for e.g., writing, swimming, sleeping, dancing, shouting, etc.), then rub it off. Call the two students back inside. They have to ask questions to the others and try to guess the activity with the help of the answers provided. The same question can be asked to a number of kids. They get three chances to guess the activity correctly. The students answering don't have to act. They just have to answer using words.

**Word building:** Divide the class into teams. Write the letters of the alphabet on small square cards and put them in a bag. Since the students have to make words with these letters, like scrabble, ensure that you have sufficient numbers of each letter in the bag. Each team then picks up 15 cards from your bag. The team that makes the longest word with the cards wins.

Make a **list of words** which have 'pl' in them.

- They may also try with words which have 'ng' Or words with **silent letters** in them.

**Fun with tongue twisters:** Write tongue-twisters on jenga blocks. Each child then pulls out one block and tries saying the tongue-twister. They may also make their own tongue-twisters. There are websites that guide you on how to make your own tongue twisters.

**I have....who has?:** Make cards as follows:

I have tall.	Who has the opposite of high?
I have low.	Who has the opposite of big?
I have small.	Who has the opposite of light?
I have heavy.	Who has the opposite of short?

Make the same number of cards as the children in the class. Then distribute the cards at random. One child stands and reads out only the question (on the right) from his card. Then the child with the answer to this question stands and reads out the answer and also the question on his card. The child with the answer to the second question reads out his answer and asks the question on his card. The game continues like this until the first child stands up to read the answer on his card.

- This game can be played for geography with capitals of countries or states, with history and also with science. It can be played with the names of books and authors, kings and their contributions, inventions and their inventors, etc.

**Messages in codes:** Pair up students. Let one of the pair write a coded message for his partner. The partner then tries to decipher the code and read the message aloud.

Codes which can be used:

- Omit the vowels and write the message.
- Write each word of the sentence spelt backwards.
- Use the number corresponding to the alphabet (a = 1, b = 2, c = 3 and so on)
- Jumble up the spellings of the words.
- Use a drawing instead of the word.

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