

# Language Arts Adventures in Team Building

## Building Community in the Classroom

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## Selecting the Teams

Choosing the teams for these activities is very important, and it is vital that you put students together who may not normally associate with each other. Be sure to use a selection method that will combine students in a nonbiased manner. For example, have the class line up according to any of these examples:

1. Alphabetically by last name
2. Alphabetically by first name
3. By birthday
4. By height
5. Alphabetically by street name
6. In numerical order by street address
7. In numerical order by last four digits of phone number
8. By numbers drawn from a hat

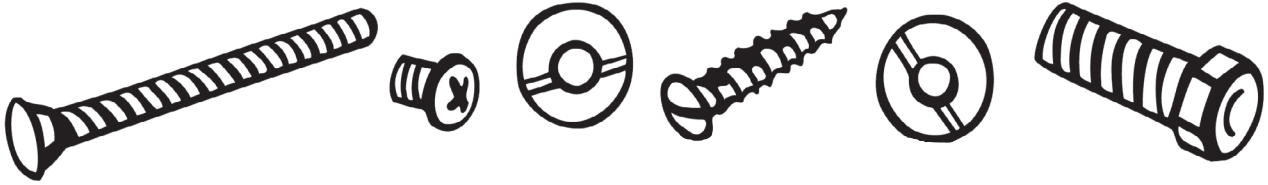
It is important to continually mix up the teams in every activity in order to build a more cohesive classroom. Feel free to choose your own criteria from the list above. But keep in mind that separating teams by gender or ethnicity could have a negative impact on the teams and thus should be avoided.

After students line up according to the selected criteria, have them count off in the number of desired teams. For example, if you want to divide the class into five teams, the first student would say “one,” followed by the second student with “two”, etc. After the fifth student says “five,” the counting starts over again with the next student. Continue counting until all students have a number. Students with the same number will make up a team.

Choosing an appropriate number of teams depends on the amount of time you have and how much interaction you want students to have. Students can play the games faster with large teams, but interaction between all team members may be reduced. It is also important to consider the total number of students—a 20-student class lends itself to teams of four, while a 21-student class would work well with teams of three. Teams of three to five students are ideal, but find what works best with your class.

Having the students discover their teammates can be a team-building activity in itself! For example, if you choose to divide the class based on birthday, the students need to communicate in order to find classmates with birthdays in the same month and then arrange themselves in the correct order by the day before counting off into teams.

Student-to-student interaction is very important in the classroom, not only for developing good communication skills, but also for helping students understand the importance of teamwork and respect. Team activities can be a lot of fun for the students, and they can also create a positive learning atmosphere for future lessons. Enjoy!

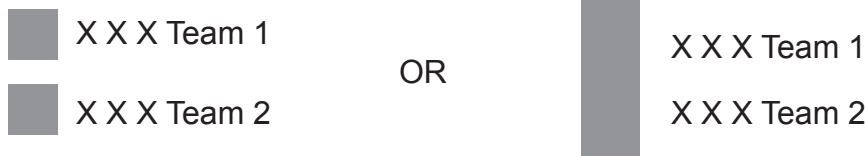


## ABC Shuffle

### Materials Needed:

- Two photocopied and cut out sets of the Alphabet Cards, pages 47-48

This activity is a good practice in alphabetization. Have each team form a line in front of a desk or table, as shown:



Mix up each set of Alphabet Cards, and place one set face down in front of each team. The object of the game is for each team to put the cards in alphabetical order. The first member of each team begins the game by turning over the cards at the same time. This player sorts through the cards to find the letter A card and sets it face up on the desk. This player then moves to the end of the line, and the second player finds the card with the letter B and places it next to the A card. This continues until the entire alphabet is in order on the desk.

Team members are allowed to speak to each other throughout the game to help out. Mistakes in the order may be corrected, but the team member whose turn it is may not add a new card from the pile on the same turn if he or she is making a correction. Once a team announces it is finished, the order of the cards cannot be changed. The first team to correctly order the cards is the winner!

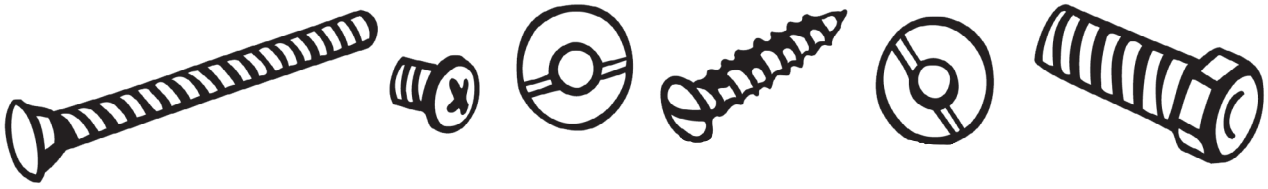
## Order in the Classroom

### Materials Needed:

- A list of the first and last names of all students in class for each team
- Paper and pencil for each team
- Optional: Scissors for each team

Alphabetization can be tricky, especially when it comes to names. Divide the class into teams, and provide each team with a list of students' first and last names. Challenge each team to put the list into alphabetical order by first name. Students can do this by cutting up the list and rearranging the names, or by rewriting just the students' first names on a separate sheet of paper. The first team to correctly alphabetize the list is the winner. For the next round, have the students alphabetize the list by the students' last names.

Students can also play this game using the names of teachers in the school, famous historical figures, sports players, world leaders, etc.



## Scrambled Letters

### Materials Needed:

- Photocopied and cut out set of the Alphabet Cards, pages 47-48, for each team

In this activity, the teams must work together to arrange letters according to your directions. Place a set of the Alphabet Cards face up in each team's workspace. Call a specific order for the arrangement of the letters. For example:

**Direction:** Arrange the letters in alphabetical order.

**Arrangement:** A, B, C, D, E, F, etc. When a team has finished arranging its cards, one team member raises his or her hand. The first team to correctly arrange the letters according to the given direction receives a point. The team with the most points at the end of the game is the winner!

### Suggested Directions for Arranging Cards:

- Reverse alphabetical order
- Alphabetical order starting at a specific letter
- *L* (or another letter) to the end of the alphabet
- Consonants in alphabetical order
- Vowels in alphabetical order
- Spell out specific words (but remember that the teams only have one of each letter)
- Letters that make the *th* (or another) sound
- Make the sound and give a word example—*th* as in *think*
- Separate by picture categories on the cards (animal cards, food cards, etc.)

## Rhyming Match Up

### Materials Needed:

- Photocopied and cut out sets of the Rhyming Word Cards, pages 44-45
- Paper and pencil for each team

This activity requires students to find their teammates and work together to solve a problem. Give each student one card. Each student must find all of the other students in the class who have a card with a word that rhymes with his or her word or who have the same word. Once these teams are formed, each team must generate as many other words as possible that rhyme with their words. Have teams write their words on a piece of paper; assist teams, as necessary, with spelling. Have each team share its entire set of rhyming words with the rest of the class. Can anyone think of rhyming words that may have been missed?