

## *Activities and Games for America Reads Tutors*

### *All Ages*

#### **Alternate Endings**

Have your tutee write an alternate ending to a story, and then draw out the idea with markers or colored pencils.

#### **Plot Change Activity**

Read a book with a semi-complex plot. Talk about the plot and the characters with your tutee, asking whether or not your tutee like the characters and the choices they make, why and why not, etc. Either verbalize or write down what advice the tutee would give to the characters (i.e. "I think you should have gone on the bus. It is a lot more fun because you can talk to your friends and you get to school a lot faster than driving."). Draw pictures to accompany the advised plot change, including written text or verbal description of the content of the pictures, as appropriate.

#### **Role Reversal**

Pick a book and ask your tutee to read the book to you (using either the printed words or the pictures), and then ask you at least 5 questions about it, as though s/he was the tutor and you were the tutee.

#### **Rhyming Card Game**

Make cards with simple rhyming words on them. Next to the word draw a picture in case the kids cannot read it. Have them match the words that rhyme. If simple rhymes become too easy, make another set with more challenging rhymes (i.e. more syllables, similar rhymes)

#### **More Rhymes**

Read a book to your students that rhymes (Dr. Seuss is perfect for this!). Then practice words that rhyme with the student. Pick a word and have them think of one that rhymes with it. They can refer back to the book if they have trouble.

#### **Homemade Chose-Your-Own-Adventure Books**

Write a story that includes different options that allow the student to choose how the story will go. Leave some blank spaces for names of the characters so that the tutee(s) can fill them in, making connections and recalling earlier parts of the story.

#### **Observation Walk**

Take the kids on a walk around the school. Pick out things to draw and write short sentences about.

#### **Memory**

Make pairs of cards with letters on them. Put all of the cards face down and have the kids take turns trying to find matching letters. You can add some pictures so it is interesting and not too frustrating for younger tutees. For older kids, you can words that rhyme instead of letters.

### **Syllable Dance**

Have the kids stand in a circle. Go around the circle saying each child's name and tap the syllables on a drum and jump as you say his/her name. Have the kids say it and jump with you until you have gone all around the circle.

### **Telephone**

Sit in a circle with your tutees. Whisper a letter into the ear of the one sitting next to you and have them pass it on. The last child to hear the letter says it aloud and points to it so everyone can see it.

### **Increasing Vocabulary**

Have your student pick a book from the school library that he/she has never read before. As you read it with him/her, write down words that are unfamiliar on a separate sheet of paper. When you have finished reading the book, use the words on the list to make up a fun and silly story of your own.

## *Preschool*

### **Letter Days**

Take one day to focus on each letter of the alphabet. For example, talk about the big and small versions of the letter (A versus a), draw both kinds of A's and have the students try to make A's with their bodies. Then, read a story and ask the students to find the A's and a's on the page.

### **Leaves**

Find some books about leaves. After reading them with your kids, take them on a mini "field trip" outside to gather leaves. They can create leaf collages by gluing their leaves on to paper.

## *Elementary*

### **Poetry**

Introduce your tutees to some simple poetry like haiku poems. If they are advanced enough, you can discuss syllables. If not, talk about how the middle line is generally longer than the first and second lines. Have them write a haiku about something they enjoy.

### **Geography Facts**

Bring a globe or map in to the classroom. Write names of well-known states and/or countries on cards. On the other side write a simple trivia question or fact. Have the kids find the place on the globe, give the card back, and tell you what they have learned.

### **Tic Tac Toe**

Design a bunch of tic tac toe crosses that have words inside each box instead of being blank. In order for the student to put an x down, he/she must read the word that is in the box.

### **Writing a play**

If plays appeal to your tutee more than narrative books, try writing one! Brainstorm ideas for setting, characters and plot one day, and script it out the next. Ask your teacher if you and the student(s) can present the finished product to the class. Use classroom supplies, found objects, and supplies from the America Reads office to make props.

### **Word Hunt**

Read a book to your tutee or have him/her read it to you. Then, according to his/her level, either open the book to specific pages and ask him to point out a certain word or let him/her find it anywhere in the book. After finding the word, have him/her spell it.

### **Writing Stories with Spelling Words**

To practice spelling words or just spelling in general, put the kids in groups of three or four and give them twenty minutes to write a story using as many spelling words as possible. When they are finished, read each of the stories to the class, keeping a tally of which group used the most words.

### **Word Battle**

Make a dictionary-like board with each square denoting a different vowel (a,e,i,o,u or a combination of those). Also put a different consonant on each square in parenthesis. When the player lands on a square s/he must make a word using both the given vowel and the given consonant. For example, landing on a square E with (l), the tutee could spell bell, let, etc. After the player names a word, s/he must spell it and use it in a sentence.

On the board, there are also word battles. When a player lands on this square, both players must come up with as many words that rhyme with the first word as possible. After a player successfully wins a word battle or a square, s/he rolls the dice again, for a minimum of three times. Each word can only be used once, except to be used in word battles. The first player to reach the last square must select a consonant at random and form five words with all five vowels.

### **Sentence-Building Card Game**

Write words (words the student misses or misunderstands consistently, some easy words like a, the, an, cat, dog, your and your tutee's names and the names of some of his/her friends) on index cards and ask your tutee to make sentences using the word or words. To make it more of a challenge, ask in or her to build a sentence containing four or five of the words. After using the cards you've made for a while, ask the student to make some of his/her own using troublesome words.

### **Word Uno**

Instead of numbers, make Uno cards that have words on them. The player can put down a card if it is the same color or word as the card on the top of the stack. Throw in some “Draw Two” and “Wild” cards to spice things up. The goal is to get rid of your cards first.

### **Phonetics and Fun Board Game**

Make a board game that contains questions about pronunciation of tricky spellings (-cha, -ia, phone, etc.) and other fun questions.

### **Word-Definition Matching Game**

Make cards with new or difficult words from a given story on them, and other cards that contain the definitions of these words. Have the student(s) match the words with the definitions, and don't be afraid to give hints and help when it's needed.

### **Chutes and Ladders**

Create a game board like chutes and ladders. By rolling a die, the kids advance to different words. When they get there, they must stop and pronounce the word. If they get it right, they get to stay there. If not, they go back to where they were and (of course) there are chutes and ladders scattered across the board.

### **Cooperative Story Writing**

In a small group of students, give each a blank piece of paper. Have them write one sentence then pass their paper to the next person. The next person adds a sentence to the story. As you pass the papers, fold them down so that only the previous sentence can be seen. This results in some very funny stories for you to read aloud.

### **Word Hangman**

Pick a word (alternately from a story you have read with your tutee or from their list of trouble-words) and have them guess at its meaning/pronunciation. If they miss it, start drawing the parts of a hangman. Then switch and have him/her ask you a word, and draw your hangman for the words you miss.

### **Book Crossword**

After reading a book, help your tutees remember the meanings and spellings of certain words and the events of the book by taking main characters or thematic words from the book and turning them into a crossword puzzle. Have the tutee link words that start with the same letter and refer back to the book for ideas and correct spelling.