

Five Ways to Brighten the School Day



Educator Barnes – 9/24/19

School is hard. The demands are higher than the demands teachers had on them when they were students. The school day can become overly rigorous and robotic, draining the fun for students, but educators are resilient. Despite letting high stakes testing and other demands completely dampen their classes, many educators have fun ways to add a little sunshine to their day. Below, are suggestions from educators across America that you can try in your classroom or at your school.

The Late Late Late Lunch Show

Valerie Carlisle – Indiana

My school has five lunches, and I supervise the last lunch. During lunch, I walk around with the other monitors collect jokes from students on post-it notes. During the last five minutes of lunch, I read the jokes while trash is being collected. The kids love it.

SNAPS

Allyson Robinson – Georgia

I recently tried a riddle game with my students. They were really engaged, and I was shocked. The riddle game is called SNAPS. You say, “Snaps is the name of the game; the name of the game is Snaps.” The first consonant of the next few phrases helps to spell the word and the snaps determine the vowels. So if I wanted them to guess cat, I would say “C’ome on; let’s get it.” Then Snap once for the letter ‘A’. Then I would say “T’ogether we can get it.” Vowels are: 1 Snap = A, 2 Snaps = E, 3 Snaps = I, 4 Snaps = O, and 5 Snaps = U.

Cryptoquotes

Dan McConnell – New York

My third-grade students are becoming code-writers and code-breakers. I start by giving them a chart that allows them to assign a different letter of the alphabet to the letters they want to include in a message. Then, they write their message in code to a friend who came up with the same code. Next, I show them how to work out a message when you don’t have the key by looking for common double vowel combinations or double consonant combinations looking for easy to solve short words. Then, by the end of the year, they will be doing the cryptoquotes out of the newspaper.

Tongue Twisters and More

Riina Hirsch – Missouri

My students always loved writing their own tongue twisters and then having me or their peers try to say them three times fast. Also, you can paper ball all kinds of assignments: review questions, book recommendations, sentence starters, etc...and kids love throwing paper.

The Art of Conversation

Shawnta S. Barnes – Indiana

The Art of Conversation is a game you can purchase on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). Each card has three questions on it. You can give each student a card to let them share one answer with a neighbor, or you could pick one question a day for everyone to answer during homeroom class or during morning meeting. I have even used this activity as an ice-breaker during professional development.

What would you add to this list?