

# Stepping In

A HANDBOOK FOR YUKON SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS



**Yukon**  
Education  
Éducation

# Stepping In

a handbook for Yukon substitute teachers



Yukon Department of Education, P.O. Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 2C6

Compiled in August 2008 by Dave Hobus

The Yukon Department of Education acknowledges the contribution of the following organizations.

Yukon Teachers' Association

British Columbia Teachers' Federation

Nova Scotia Teachers' Union

Merrillville Community School Corporation, Merrillville, IN

Thanks to the following who helped in the planning of this booklet.

Terry Markley, Gilbert Lamarche, Bev Avano, Paul Davis, Kristine Lachance, Shea Newnham

Photos – YG Photography, Dave Hobus





*Education, to be successful, must not only inform but inspire.*

**T. Sharper Knowlson**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to the wonderful opportunity of substitute teaching in Yukon. You, as a substitute teacher, are an important part of our school system. It would be extremely difficult for us to operate our schools on a satisfactory basis without substitute teachers. Teachers get sick. Teachers need time to attend professional development to improve and update their skills. It is here that the substitute teacher steps in. Your daily work makes an important contribution to our Yukon schools.

What job could be more important than one which helps young people learn, grow and become active citizens in our democratic society? Challenges, demands, and opportunities abound for children and youth in today's rapidly changing world. Because of this, schools and teachers play an increasingly critical role in the lives of young people.

Your role as a substitute has both challenges and rewards. Never underestimate the impact that you potentially have on the lives of the students who will be part of your many classrooms.

It is hoped that this booklet will provide you with useful information, tips and ideas to make your experience in the classroom an enjoyable and successful time for both you and your students.

We wish to extend to you a most cordial welcome as a substitute teacher.



## Contents

Welcome .....	2	Story Writing Ideas .....	13
What is a Substitute Teacher? .....	4	Adventure Story Starters .....	14
Becoming Known as a Substitute .....	4	Thinking Activities .....	15
When You Get a Call .....	4	Discovery Activities .....	15
Before You Leave Home .....	5	Ideas for forming partners .....	15
Clothes .....	5	Dividing into teams randomly .....	15
Lunch and Coffee .....	5	Trivia Games .....	16
Should there be no Lesson Plan .....	5	Question Box .....	16
Arriving at the School .....	6	Letter Writing .....	16
When You Get to the Class .....	6	Scrambled Ladders .....	16
Before Class .....	6	Fact Versus Opinion .....	17
As the Students Arrive .....	6	A Hundred Ways .....	17
During the Day .....	7	What's My Word? .....	17
At the End of the Day .....	7	A Subs Version of Pictionary .....	18
Substitute Teaching in the NL classroom .....	7	Word Wizards .....	18
Substitute Teacher Report .....	8	I Was There .....	18
Classroom Management .....	9	Place Value Scramble .....	19
What Works .....	9	Word Searches & Crossword Puzzles .....	19
What Does Not Work .....	10	Number Squeeze .....	19
Three Basics to Remember .....	10	Slider .....	19
Strategies .....	10	Newspapers and Magazine Articles .....	19
Accident Procedures .....	12	Teaching Our Children to Think .....	19
Your Pay Record .....	12	Happy to Meet You .....	20
Your Super Sub Kit .....	12	Resources and Material .....	21
Ideas for Your Super Sub Kit .....	12	Yukon Schools .....	22
Book Time .....	13	Notes .....	23



## What is a Substitute Teacher?

To start with, you are not “just a baby sitter” or someone to merely hold things together until the “star performer” returns to his/her classroom. Yours is a professional position as part of the educational team in that school.

While in the classroom you are the teacher. You are expected to carry on the program and learning experiences of the classroom as if you were the regular teacher. When you are with your students you are responsible for maintaining the positive learning climate of the school, managing students and expectations of the classroom and the school and communicating with other educators who may be working with some of your students. In short, you have all the authority and responsibility of any teacher in that school.

Your time in the school may be as brief as half a day or as long as a number of months. Regardless of the length of time, you are a professional, fulfilling a professional role and you are required to conduct yourself in the same manner that is expected of all teachers.

It is equally expected that you will be treated with dignity and professional respect by students, staff and administration.

The advantages of being a substitute teacher are that you are able to observe a variety of classroom and school environments: it's often the route to a full-time position; it has a flexible working schedule; it is interesting and challenging work with the chance to exercise knowledge and creativity; and it provides the opportunity to experiment with different teaching strategies and to become familiar with a variety of resources.

## Becoming Known as a Substitute

Once you have completed the application and documentation at the Yukon Department of Education it is a good idea to visit the schools that you are most interested in being called to.

Introduce yourself to some of the key people.

- the secretaries
- the principal
- the person whose responsibility it is to call substitutes
- other staff members

Let them know what your strengths and interests are and offer the school a copy of your resume.

## When You Get a Call

When you are phoned and asked to work you need to get as much information as you can. To do this you need to have your calendar and a notebook handy.

First of all, check that you are available for the dates that you are being asked to work.



*Good teachers never teach anything. What they do is create the conditions under which learning takes place.*

**S.I. Hayakawa**



Next, gather as much of the following information as you can.

- name of the person contacting you
- principal
- school
- school phone number
- directions to the school
- who to report to on arrival
- teaching assignment
- name of teacher
- phone number of teacher
- date(s) of assignment
- grade level

If you are being offered a one day assignment

- school hours
- PE or outdoor activity today?
- supervision today, if so, what?
- am I in one classroom or do I have to move around?

The more information you can gather, the easier it will be for you to plan a successful experience. It would therefore be a good idea to make yourself a sheet with the questions you want to ask and keep a supply of them by the phone.

## **Before You Leave Home**

### *Clothes*

Choose your clothes carefully. You want to look professional as it sets a tone of respect. You may want to identify several outfits that you will use for subbing and hang them together in your closet.

Your assignment might influence your choice - P.E., outdoor activities, shop class, etc. You may want to pack an extra set of clothes to cover these contingencies. Most schools have a policy of having indoor and outdoor shoes so you need to consider packing a set of shoes for the classroom.

### *Lunch and Coffee*

It is not likely that you will have time to go out for lunch so make sure you have a variety of lunch type things on hand. You might want to make sandwiches in advance and freeze them, ready for that last minute call.

It is a good idea to bring your own coffee cup. It saves having to ask around in the staff room for a spare one and eliminates using and throwing away a styrofoam one.

### *Your Super Sub Kit*

This will be discussed later in this booklet but make sure you have it ready to go with you.

### *Should there be no Lesson Plan for the Day*

There will be times (rarely, it is hoped) when there is no daybook or lesson plans. Sometimes, the proposed material may be too difficult to cover adequately with no prior preparation, or the plan may be too sketchy to be understood. Here are some suggestions:

- Check with the office; the regular teacher may have phoned in instructions, or asked for you to call her/him for direction.
- Consult with the principal and/or another teacher teaching the same subject.
- Refer to the last completed day in the daybook, if available, and then do a reasonable follow-up to the previous lessons. Student notebooks may be checked if the day book is not available.
- Accumulate a set of your own prepared materials - the Super Sub kit.
- Younger students may become disturbed by a departure from the routine. Explain to them that some things will be done differently that day. Ask students for their patience and co-operation.
- A substitute teacher is often enjoyed by the students - they are glad for the break from the normal routine. Capitalize on this by providing activities that have an element of fun.



## Arriving at the School

- try to get to school at least a half hour early so that you have time to prepare
- check in with the secretary or principal
- ask about medic alerts, custody orders, emergency procedures, etc.
- ask for the classroom key
- locate the teacher's daybook or lesson plans and look them over
- make sure you have all the material you need for the day, including making any necessary copies

It helps if you get to know the names of the students - name tags, desk labels, etc. Try to use the students name every time you speak to him or her.

## When You Get to the Class

### Before Class

- introduce yourself to the teachers nearest you - they will usually be willing to help you if needed
- enter the class with confidence and your Super Sub Kit
- write your name on the board and an outline of what the regular teacher had planned for the day
- make sure you have an activity that will start the day quickly and engage the students immediately

### As the Students Arrive

- greet the students at the door
- defer questions about their teacher's absence until the whole class is settled
- introduce yourself and explain to the class that you are going to follow the lessons that their regular teacher has left

- go over the classroom rules and your expectations (keep them brief - three or four rules)
- tell the students a bit about yourself so they will see you as a person and not just a body

If there are other adults working in the room (EA, Tutor, etc.) introduce yourself to them and seek their assistance.



"Always deal with the behavior, not the person. You leave a persons dignity intact when you deal only with the behavior or the issue."

**Harry Wong**



## During the Day

- have students address you by your proper name (Mr., Ms, Miss, Mrs.)
- use a positive approach
- constantly wander around the room to assist students at their desks as needed
- carry out the lesson plans to the best of your abilities
- correct any work that you assign
- improvise using material from your Super Sub Kit to fill extra time, enhance activities, or supplement lesson plans
- be fair and carry out the rewards and consequences you establish
- be positive and respectful in your interactions with students and school personnel

## At the End of the Day

Allow things to wind down a few minutes early, to tidy up and put things away. Challenge students to recall projects and topics they have studied that day and remind students of homework. You may wish to play a game or other fun activity to finish off the day. Thank the students for their co-operation - you'll tell their teacher how co-operative they were. Organize and label the students' work. Mark what you can. Make sure that all classroom books and materials are accounted for.

Leave a note for the teacher at the end of the day with your name and phone number so the teacher can contact you. Let the classroom teacher know how the day went. Did the students struggle with a lesson? If so, let the teacher know. If you were unable to complete a lesson, let the teacher know how much you were able to cover. Remember to include the positives of the day as well as the negatives. You may want to use something like the Substitute Teacher Report form on the next page. Remember to make a copy for your own records.

Close windows, turn off lights and equipment, and make sure the room is in good order, before you lock the door. Turn in keys and any money collected at the office.

Check to see if you will be needed again the next day. Jot down a few notes to yourself about what was accomplished and how things went for future reference in case you return to that school and class.

## Substituting in a Native Language Classroom

Meet with the Native Language teacher. She will show you where the Daily Lesson Plan book, curriculum guide, attendance records and language lesson booklet and cassette are kept. The name of the curriculum guide is **Teaching Yukon Native Languages**. There are sample lessons that can be easily found in the curriculum section. There are oral language lessons on the cassette tapes and a written version in a booklet. You will require a tape recorder. There are also language lessons on the Yukon Native Language Centre website: [www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca) The Native Language teacher might select a student to help you in asking questions in the native language. Most Native Language Programs are team taught so you would assist the Native Language teacher or trainee.

If you have any questions ask the Native Language teacher or contact the Native Language Centre, toll free phone at 1- 877-414-9652



## Substitute Teacher Report

Substitute \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Substituted for \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Notes regarding lesson plans:

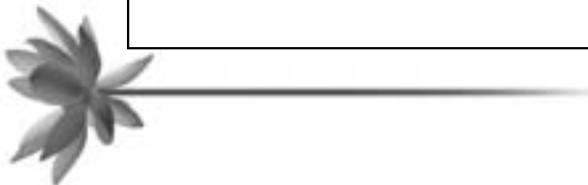
I also taught:

Notes regarding behaviour:

Terrific helpers:

Students who were absent:

Messages for the teacher:



## Classroom Management

Wondering how to maintain a positive classroom environment with few disruptions, distresses many substitute teachers. Some students regard the substitute as having less authority than the regular teacher, and thus attempt to take advantage of him/her.

Classroom management focuses on prevention and problem solving rather than on punishment. Discipline and good behaviour are learned, and they must be constantly reinforced.

Even after you take steps to create a positive atmosphere, some students' behaviour may be unacceptable. Here are some suggestions.



### What Works

Tell students what you expect, provide a model for good behaviour, check for understanding, and allow for practice and follow-up. Don't assume that students know how to act appropriately. They need to be taught and coached to manage their behaviour.

Create a classroom environment that provides structure and support and reinforces positive behaviour. Set your standards high; be clear and realistic in your expectations. Classroom conflict is more likely to be reduced if you:

- arrive in the classroom before the students do
- assist children to make appropriate choices
- be fair and consistent in all your procedures and make conditions and alternatives clearly understood
- use realistic, logical consequences, and enforce them
- give clear instructions in an audible, quiet, friendly tone of voice
- have a low-key, consistent, and matter-of-fact manner
- show faith in each student and build on strengths
- believe that all children are capable and lovable
- help children to increase self-esteem by using praise and positive reinforcement
- teach students decision-making and problem solving skills
- help students to live with mistakes and take them in stride
- insist that everyone be treated with a wholesome respect
- listen to students' opinions and consider their feelings
- maintain your sense of humour and tolerant attitude
- make sure the class is paying attention when instructed to do so



- move around the classroom
- organize and be ready before each lesson
- write the day's agenda on the blackboard
- try to adapt lessons to make them as interesting as possible to the students
- try to spend one-on-one time with each student, even if only for 30 seconds

### What Does Not Work

Teachers who have discipline problems often:

- accept excuses, bargain, or blame
- act hastily without knowing the implications of their actions
- offer “bribes/rewards” for behaviour
- preach, nag, criticize, shout, and threaten
- punish the whole class for the misdeeds of a few
- use put-downs, sarcasm, embarrassment, or humiliation

Even with the most tact and careful preparation, you will be tested. Let the students know that while you disapprove of their actions, you still value them. If you are going to show that you are angry, do it because you have decided it is appropriate, not because you are “out of control.” Be aware of the legal rights and responsibilities of both teachers and students. If you have any concerns or questions, contact your principal.

*You will make the difference in how your classroom “feels.”*

## Three Basics To Remember

### 1. Be Consistent

Have the same expectations of all students for appropriate behaviour. Your students should know that you will enforce rules consistently and apply an appropriate consequence. Your goal is to be fair, but that might mean not applying the identical consequence to all students.

### 2. Monitor Student Behaviour

Use an “active eye.” See what is going on. Don't become preoccupied with someone or something and ignore the rest of the class. In terms of discipline and effective teaching, one teacher on his/her feet is worth two in the seat. Simply looking the student directly in the eye for prolonged contact while you continue your lesson sends a nonverbal message that says, “I saw what you did, and I want it stopped!”

### 3. Promptly Manage Inappropriate Behaviour

Effective classroom managers know that if they don't handle misbehaviour immediately, they risk a snowballing effect. To provide maximum time for learning and to reduce minor behaviour problems, you can employ strategies that deal with behaviour in the least time, with the least disruption and the least negative feeling.

## Strategies

### Proximity

Continuing your lesson while you move about the room, pausing near “trouble spots,” can let the students know that even though they aren't near the teacher's desk, they are still expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviour. Your getting “boxed in” behind your desk or podium encourages misbehaviour in the far corners of the room.

### Pausing

Continuous teacher talk may give students a noise screen for their own conversations. An occasional pause, just a few seconds of silence, brings an off-task student back.

### Asking for a Response

Working an off-task student's name into a question can often bring the student back into the lesson. Remembering the student's dignity, say



the student's name first in order to allow him/her to hear the question to be answered. The purpose is to get the student back into the lesson, not to embarrass him/her.

### *Active Participation*

Sometimes having the student respond to a question or become involved in an activity can eliminate the undesired behaviour. Asking for a show of hands, having students perform a physical activity, or having each student write a quick answer to a question can make all students accountable for an immediate response.

### *Eye Contact*

As already mentioned, make direct and prolonged eye contact with the students. This lets the student know that you are aware of what he/she did and that his/her behavior is not acceptable.

### *"The Look"*

You have one! Use it! It works best during independent work.

### *Praise*

Praise desirable behaviour quietly. Thank a student quietly, and thank the class for getting their books out so quickly. This will often cue a student to his/- her attention.

### *Cueing*

Change direction; for example, a group of chatting students may be quieted by announcing an impromptu quiz on the subject at hand.

### *Goals and criteria of the lesson*

Involve students in the process of learning; discuss in kid's language the goals of the lesson and what are the criteria to show learning. There is more student commitment to a lesson and less management problems when students understand

why they are doing it and what they hope to be learning.

### *Humour*

When all else fails, you might have to stop instruction to remind the class of appropriate behaviour. Keep it light.



*It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.*

**Albert Einstein**



## Accident Procedures

If a child is hurt ...

- do only what you are qualified to do
- notify the office
- ensure that a responsible adult stays with the child
- ensure that your class is properly supervised - ask another teacher for help
- complete an accident report form in the office

## Your Pay Record

You may be working in several schools during any two week pay period and each school will have to submit a time sheet for you. It is therefore a good idea for you to keep careful track of your work assignments and check them against each of your pay stubs.

Keep a calendar on which you write for each day you work, the name of the school and teacher that you substituted for and whether it was a full day, morning or afternoon assignment.

For each day that you work, check with the school secretary to make sure that a time sheet has been prepared for you for that day.

## Your Super Sub Kit

It is a wise idea to prepare a kit with the sorts of material that you will need to have your day in the classroom run smoothly. Preparing in advance can save you time at home in the morning and at school. It will also allow you to enter the classroom with confidence.

You may want to include all or some of the following items in a bag or briefcase that you take with you to each assignment. Add other items that you feel will be useful.

- paperclips
- marking pens
- name tags
- seating chart forms
- literature selections to read to the class (for various age groups)
- really good picture books
- your “emergency” lesson plans
- whistle
- sun hat or sun screen
- jogging shoes or flats for P. E. and recess duty
- change of clothing (in case teaching assignment changes after your arrival)
- copies of instructional materials that you wish to use with the class
- stickers or ink stamp and pad (primary and elementary levels)
- Compact Disk of classical or easy listening music
- copy of your own discipline plan (laminated and ready to post if needed)
- special objects or items that you would like to use with the class that may motivate them during the day
- latex gloves for blood or body fluids
- photo I.D.

## Ideas for Your Super Sub Kit

If the lesson plans don't seem to be working, or there is extra time, try some fun activities. It makes time go by faster, and the kids will less likely to try to bury you. Start your own collection of “never fail” activities for different grade levels. When you see a good idea that a teacher is using ask if you can borrow it for your own “Super Sub Kit”.



There are books of ideas that have been published for substitute teachers. Check Amazon.ca or Chapters.ca for titles. Look under the heading of “substitute teachers”.

To start your collection you might consider some of these.

#### *Book Time (all levels)*

This is one of the best of all activities. Bring some of your favourite children's stories or picture books and some short stories for older groups. Have the students work on a drawing or writing project connected to the story you have just read.

- draw a scene from the story
- draw what you think was the most interesting part of the story
- draw a map showing all the places mentioned in the story
- write an alternative ending to the story
- write an imaginary dialogue between 2 or 3 characters in the story
- retell the story from the point of view of one of the characters

## **Story Writing Ideas**

#### *Starters (all levels)*

A great way of doing creative writing painlessly is to provide students with story starters. Each student can then continue the story with a middle and end. Groups of three or four can then exchange stories and you can select some to be read to the class.



An alternate way would be to do chain writing with three or four students on each chain each adding to the story with the last student writing the conclusion.

If you have access to the Internet, you can find several sites with story beginnings –

for upper elementary grades try:

<http://www.kimskorner4teachertalk.com/writing/sixtrait/ideascontent/prompts.html>

for primary grades try:

<http://www.meddybemps.com/9.700.html>

Similar ideas can be adapted for high school grades. You might start with the opening line from a well known novel (Dickens, “A Tale of Two Cities”). Discuss what kind of a story would flow from such a line and then let the students write their own short story to go with it.

#### *Enders (all levels)*

Read the class a short story until you reach a high point in the action and have the students write their own ending. Share some with the whole class.

#### *Pictures (all levels)*

Collect some amusing/incredible pictures to use as story starters or enders (How did we arrive at this situation?). Allow 5-7 minutes of free writing and then share in small groups.



## Adventure Story Starters

### Story #1

Sam shouted loudly so that I could hear. He yelled that he thought I was a chicken for not wanting to go into the haunted house. Sam went on in and began climbing up the broken staircase. I came to the doorway and said I thought the stairs were going to break. Sam just said I was afraid of stairs, ghosts, and haunted houses. Then Karen came up and tried to get me to go in. She said that she would go with me, and that way Sam wouldn't think I was a chicken. I decided not to go in. Karen went on in to follow Sam. I sat and waited for over half an hour. Suddenly . . .

### Story #2

The noontime blast of the firehouse siren announced the start of the town's bike race. For months, Meg had been practicing. She wanted to win first prize. The first place winner got a brand new ten-speed bike. At first, the hours of practice seemed to pay off as she sped ahead of all the other bikers. Then, from out of nowhere, George whizzed past. There were only a few laps to go . . .

### Story #3

Martha and Kathryn had been hiking all day in the woods. Now they were miles from nowhere. The sun was starting to set, and Martha suggested that they head back. Kathryn agreed that it was a good idea. The girls looked around for some trail markers. They couldn't find any. "Oh, no!" said Martha, "We're lost! And we don't even have a flashlight!"

### Story #4

Kristen ran into the stable and threw her arms around Ginger. Ginger was Kristen's very own horse. "They can't sell you," sobbed Kristen. She clung to Ginger's mane and stroked it gently. She cried over and over again. All of a sudden, she jumped on Ginger's back and they raced out of the stable.

### Story #5

Emily jumped out of bed and quickly put on her robe. She ran down the stairs in such a hurry! Was she going to be late on the first day of school? She was so nervous about going into second grade. She had heard that mean Mary was going to be in her class. She was scared of her. Emily ate her breakfast and ran up to get dressed. Just then the phone rang. Emily could hear her mom talking on the phone. She was talking to Mrs. Marsh, her teacher! What could this mean? Emily's mom yelled, "Emily, it's for you!"

### Story #6

The snake came slithering out of its cage. Not one of the students in Mr. Schmidt's class even noticed. Soon after the snake slithered off the counter, the lunch bell rang. All of the students ran to get their lunches and then lined up at the door. When the bell rang again for the students to come back from recess, they opened the door. Anne was the first one back to her seat. Suddenly, she screamed.



## Thinking activities

(plus writing and discussing) (all levels)

- Think of all the things that come in pairs
- Think of all the things with buttons or bundles or zippers...
- Think of what you could eat if there were only purple or yellow things for dinner
- Draw the dashboard of your parent's car.
- Think of all the things that are pointed or red and hard or cold and soft
- What are some things to smile about?

## Discovery activities (all levels)

Assign the following questions for discussion and on-line research if computers are available in the classroom. Advise students that there will be a sharing of creative responses.

- Are there two kinds of rainbows?
- Where do wood knots come from?
- Why are furs warm?
- Can seaweed predict the weather?
- Why do aging things turn yellow?
- Do plants sleep?
- Why do stars twinkle?
- Does oil calm troubled waters?
- Why does a glowworm glow?
- What do blind people dream about?
- Why does an egg harden when it is boiled?
- What is 24 carat gold?
- Why does salt make us thirsty?
- What is Fool's Gold?
- Why does tea run up through a lump of sugar?
- What is the origin of blue jeans?
- Does the sea freeze?
- What makes fabric shrink?
- Why is the sky blue?
- What makes the holes in Swiss cheese?
- Why will a rotten egg float?

After discussion, the writing may begin...

## Ideas for forming partners (all levels)

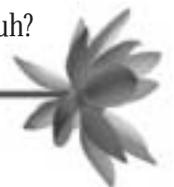
Ask students to become partners with the first person they meet who:

- Enjoys the same sport as you do.
- Gets up on the same side of the bed as you.
- Rolls out of bed on a different side than you do.
- Has a birthday in the same month as you.
- Has a different favourite TV show/film than you.
- Has a different hobby than you.
- Has on the same colour socks as you.
- Has the same favourite colour as you.
- Has the same first vowel in her/his first name as you.
- Has the same last digit in her/his home phone number as you.
- Has the same number of brothers and sisters as you.
- Has the same number of letters in her/his first name as you.
- Was born in the same province or territory as you.

## Dividing into teams randomly (all levels)

Counting off:

- arm positions - Example: For two teams, players count off by alternately raising both arms up high or holding them close to the sides. Arms up high are one team; arms close to the sides, another.
- Colour - For three teams, try counting off with red, white, and blue. Select familiar groups of colours, such as school or those in a flag...
- Days of the week - For seven teams, you can count off by the days of the week.
- Exclamation - For five teams, count off with Oh No!, Ahhh, Wow!, HmMMM, and Huh?



- Motions - For six teams, count off by motions, such as clap hands, snap fingers, pat thighs, wiggle fingers, circle arms, raise elbows.
- Food Favourites - Count off with food combinations, such as the ingredients for a great pizza. Example: sausage, pepperoni, cheese, mushrooms, and onions. All “sausages” then come together as a group, Do the same using ingredients for a favourite ice cream sundae or for trail mix.

## Trivia Games (all levels)

Trivial Pursuit and similar games can be exploited easily in the classroom. Regular classroom teachers use homemade trivia games to liven up Friday afternoons and to review course content.

## Question Box (all levels)

Set up a question box, and call it “Dear Funny Bones” or another humorous name. Encourage students to write humorous questions and jokes and put them in the box. Set up some criteria with the students. At various moments during the day, invite a student to read a question from the box and invite the class to answer it.

## Letter Writing (all levels)

One of the easiest types of writing assignments is letter writing. Students can write letters as an exercise in many subjects. Discuss with the students what a powerful letter looks like and build criteria with them on how the letters will be assessed. Try not to leave the marking for the homeroom teachers.

- History - Students write a letter to a world leader (past or present)
- Geography - Students write a letter describing another country or region.
- Languages - Students write a letter to an imaginary pen pal in the language being studied.

- English - Students write a letter to their parents, to their future child, to a best friend, or to another student in the class who may then respond.

## Scrambled Ladders (all levels)

Directions: Using the number 1 to indicate the *highest abstraction*, the number 2 the next highest, and so forth, unscramble these ladders.

*Example:*

livestock	3
hamburger	6
animal	2
ground beef	5
beef	4
living creature	1

forest  
maple wood  
maple table  
tree  
plants  
living things

army weapon  
grenade  
equipment  
M15 anti-tank grenade  
army battle equipment  
anti-tank grenade  
army equipment  
military equipment

cooking equipment  
pan  
frying pan  
copper bottom pan  
cooking utensil  
household item

Marge likes to sew.  
Marge sewed a button on my blouse.  
Marge makes all her own clothes.  
Marge is very capable.

Have the students create their own scrambled ladders.



## Facts Versus Opinions

(upper elementary, secondary)

The following is a variation on a theme used most often by History and English teachers. Students are given a number of sentences and asked to identify which are fact and which are opinion. Social Studies and English teachers use similar exercises, in which the students examine a short newspaper or magazine article/editorial and separate the facts from the opinions.

Directions: If the following statement is fact, circle the F. If, on the other hand, the statement is an opinion, an inference, or a judgment, circle the O. Discuss why each is fact or opinion.

- F  She goes to church only to show off her new clothes.
- F  Russia really wants to establish a world communist dictatorship.
- F  It was a wonderful car.
- F  She really thinks a lot of herself.
- F  Jerry was convicted of theft and served two years in prison.
- F  Look at that drunken driver.
- F  For sale: 1995 two-door Ford Mustang.
- F  A crowd of suckers came to listen to Prime Minister Smith last night.
- F  A man was killed and two teen-agers injured in an auto accident.
- F  The performance began at 8:30 sharp.
- F  Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.
- F  He is un-Canadian.

You can add to this list or have students suggest additions.

## A Hundred Ways

(upper elementary, secondary)

Have the class select four numerals from 1 to 9 and write them on the board. Have the students write the numbers from 1 to 100 on a sheet of paper. The idea is to use all four numerals and any math function to create equations that will result in all the numbers from 1 to 100. For example, if the selected numerals are 2, 5, 8, 9 then  $2+5+8+9=24$  and  $2+5+8-9=6$ , etc. This can work well with groups of 3 or 4 students working together.

## What's My Word? (secondary)

Suitable for teenagers. Break class in teams of around 4 or 5 so you end up with an even number of groups. They have to think of a five letter word and compete against another team. They have to guess the word by writing a five letter word down. The opposition tells them how many letters are correct in the word, but not which ones. Example: Your word is "clash". They guess "beach". There are 3 letters the same. Next they may guess "bingo". No correct letters. They keep going till they get the correct word. Each team takes a turn. The first team to guess the word wins. It makes it easier if they keep a note on impossible letters and probable letters. This can take ages to play and really gives their brains and logic skills a work out.



## **A Subs Version of Pictionary**

(upper elementary, secondary)

Write current movies, books, cartoon characters, and songs on slips of paper and place them in a paper bag. Divide the class into two groups, and allow one student from Group 1 to come up. Hand him/her a slip with one of the pre-made ideas on it. Then have him/her go to the board and try to draw it. Allow either group to guess what their classmate is drawing.

Old fashioned **Charades** is always popular with all ages. The class is divided into two groups and students think up titles like in Pictionary. Titles are put into two separate containers, one for each group. Students then mime the other team's titles out for their group (in front of everyone) and each group is timed for the correct response. Teams alternate turns. Usually there is a time limit of two or three minutes for each title.

## **Word Wizards**

(upper elementary, secondary)

Think of a word or words that have to do with something your students are learning or an up and coming holiday. Say the words are "Old Crow, Yukon". Don't tell the class the word(s) yet. First, break the class into groups of four and explain that you are going to give them a word or a phrase and they need to make as many words as they can using only the letters in the word(s) you are going to give them. Write the word(s) on the board and let them begin. After a predetermined time, have the groups turn in their paper to check or verify the words as a class to determine which group had the most words.

## **I Was There**

(upper elementary, secondary)

This is a good exercise for a Social Studies class. Review an event in history that the class is studying. Each student is to assume the persona of an eye witness to the event(s). They then write a series of diary entries or a letter to a friend in which they describe what they saw, what others around them were saying, and what they think all this means. Share with a small group and have several read their piece to the whole class.



## **Place -Value Scramble**

(elementary)

Write three numerals on the board. Ask students to rearrange the numerals to make the lowest possible number, the highest possible number, a number with the largest number in the tens place, and other, similar placements. Complete the activity by asking students to help you in arranging the resulting numbers in order.

## **Word Searches and Crossword Puzzles**

(upper elementary, secondary)

Word Searches are always popular depending on the grade. You can download a reasonably priced program to make your own crossword puzzles and word searches at <http://www.solrobots.com/>. Make them based on a story you plan to use, a seasonal theme or an aspect of work you covered yesterday.

## **Number Squeeze** (elementary)

Pick a number between 0-100 (or early in the year 0- 50). Draw a line on the board. At the top, on the left side print Too Little, and then Too Big on the right side. As students give their guesses record their number on the appropriate side of the line. They should be able to "squeeze" out the number. This can be played using a number line. Have students cover the too little and too big guesses. The class can see the "squeezing" as they narrow their choices.

## **Slider**

(upper elementary, secondary)

You've invented a new sport called "Slider". You need to ...

- a. Explain how the game is played.
- b. Make a list of rules to play the game correctly.

To bring the sport to public attention, design the following.

- a poster
- a magazine ad
- a t-shirt
- a bumper sticker

Write a 30 second radio ad.

## **Newspapers and Magazine Articles**

(upper elementary and secondary)

An interesting article from the newspaper can be put to good use in the classroom, especially with older students. Cut a short article from a magazine or newspaper, or download one from the Internet. Students can analyze, dissent, and criticize the article. They can debate a controversial topic raised by the article, then write their own letter to the editor with their personal opinion.

## **"Teaching Our Children to Think"** (all levels) by John Langrehr

This delightful book is in the professional library in schools. It is filled with problems that ask students to create meaningful answers.

Can you think of three ways of getting a Ping Pong ball from the bottom of a 3-foot-long vertical pipe whose end is stuck in concrete? The pipe is only slightly wider than the ball. You cannot destroy the pipe, the concrete or the ball.



Why do pencils have 6 sides rather than 3 or 10?

List four things that you could not photograph.

List four ways in which a tree and a car are the same.

List three possible reasons why a man might be observed reading a newspaper in the park with the paper upside down.

Write down one reason for and one reason against allowing people in different countries to cut down thousands of trees from their forests.

A circle has a radius of 3 metres. Make up three or more questions using this information.

## Happy to Meet You

(elementary grades)

At the start of the day write questions like the ones below on the board when you arrive. Then have each student answer the questions on a piece of paper. Finally, have all the students share their answers with you and the class. Make sure you share your own answers so the students get to know you as well.

- What is your favourite animal?
- What is your favourite colour?
- What's your favourite TV show? video? video game?
- What's your favourite song?
- What's your favourite school subject?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What are your favourite sports?
- What is your favourite outdoor activity in summer? In winter?

Hopefully, this will give you a much better understanding of your students and will help the day run smoothly!



## Resources and Materials

From Resource Services, Yukon Education

Survival Kit for Substitute Teachers (Saskatchewan Teachers' Association, 1980)  
371.14 SUR

Substitute Teachers' Lesson Plans (National Council of Teachers of English, Illinois, 1989) 372.6 SUB

In school Professional Libraries

Teaching Our Children to Think, by John Langrehr, 2001

The internet is full of resources for substitute teachers,. A search for “substitute teachers resources” turns up more than a million hits. Not all of them will be useful (not that you have time to read them all anyway) but there are many sites that provide lesson plans and activity ideas to fill in extra time where needed. The following are some sites that you might wish to check. Note that some of the material is free while some is for sale.

resources from the Yukon Department of Education  
<http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/staffroom/index.html>

tips and resources for substitute teachers  
<http://www.education-world.com>

educator's reference lesson plans  
<http://eduref.org/Virtual/Lessons>

K-12 various subject lessons  
<http://www.ceismc.gatech.edu/busyt/>

lessons for subjects and grades  
<http://teachers.net/lessons/posts/posts.html>

lesson plans and activities for various grades  
<http://www.mcrel.org/connect/sslessons.html>

lesson ideas for various subjects and grades  
<http://www.teachnet.com/lesson.html>

substitute teachers chatboard - ideas and discussion  
[http://teachers.net/mentors/substitute\\_teaching/](http://teachers.net/mentors/substitute_teaching/)

generate math sheets for elementary grades  
<http://www.armoredpenguin.com/math/>



## Yukon Schools

<b>Whitehorse</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Christ the King Elementary	20 Nisutlin Drive	667-3527
Ecole Emilie Tremblay	20 Falcon Drive	667-8150
Elijah Smith Elementary	1399 Hamilton Boulevard	667-5992
F H Collins Secondary	1001 Lewes Boulevard	667-8665
Grey Mountain Primary	186 Alsek Road	667-5189
Hidden Valley Elementary	5 McPherson Road	667-8164
Holy Family Elementary	55 Wann Road	667-3500
Jack Hulland Elementary	1404 Fir Street	667-8496
Porter Creek Secondary	1405 Hemlock Street	667-8044
Selkirk Elementary	5 Selkirk Street	667-3688
Takhini Elementary	526 Range Road	667-3625
Vanier Catholic Secondary	16 Duke Street	667-5901
Whitehorse Elementary	4181 4th Avenue	667-8083
Wood Street Centre	411 Wood Street	667-8413

<b>Rural</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Chief Zzeh Gittlit School	Old Crow	966-3151
Del Van Gorder school	Faro	994-2760
Eliza Van Bibber School	Pelly Crossing	537-3231
<i>Ghùch Tlá Community School</i>	Carcross	831-2929
Golden Horn Elementary	Carcross Corner	667-8130
J V Clark School	Mayo	996-2275
Johnson Elementary School	Watson Lake	536-7333
Kluane Lake School	Burwash Landing	841-4506
Nelna Bessie John School	Beaver Creek	862-7250
Robert Service School	Dawson	993-5435
Ross River School	Ross River	969-2216
St Elias Community School	Haines Junction	634-2231
Tantalus School	Carmacks	863-5371
Teslin School	Teslin	390-2570
Watson Lake Secondary	Watson Lake	536-2501



**Notes**

