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Introduction

Of the many educational activities I offer my students, I have found that activities involving the creation of alphabetical lists to be the most popular. Students have also shown great enthusiasm for language-based quizzes where all of the answers begin with the same letter of the alphabet. A-Z thinking warm-ups is an idea I have used in my classroom in the last few years and in my role working with gifted and talented students of all ages. Both the alphabet lists and the alphabet quizzes have proved to be educationally beneficial for all students and they have certainly taken to the tasks with great gusto and produced some outstanding work. The results of this activity were beyond my expectations. The enthusiasm, enjoyment, involvement and student ownership of learning were easy for the students, parents and me to see.

Apart from the educational benefits, the collaborative effort and cooperation between class members was also a beneficial by-product of using alphabetical lists and quizzes. It would be easy to overlook these social benefits but they are a tremendous bonus in helping to create a positive educational environment in a classroom. This book is a compilation of many successful lessons using 'Alphabet lists' and 'Alphabet quizzes'.

I hope you find A to Z Thinking Warm-ups as successful in your classroom as I have in mine.

Steve Wayne

Alphabet lists

These activities are suitable for students from early primary through to early secondary.

The task of compiling alphabetical lists in itself is a challenging activity for students. Depending on the topic, it is easy to think of words for most letters, but to find a suitable answer for every letter often requires careful, logical thinking and research. Having to provide multiple responses for each letter increases the complexity and also the enjoyment of completing the task successfully.

Making alphabetical lists more educationally challenging is easy. Each list activity card in the book contains an extension activity that uses the student-produced lists in a specific task, designed to further develop and extend students' learning. Here is one sample activity from page 9:

Activity Think of two animals for each letter of the alphabet

Extension When you have finished design a map of a zoo that shows visitors where to find each animal on your list. Include all of the other features (shops, toilets etc.), that you might find at a zoo.

Alphabet quizzes

Also contained in this book are language-based alphabet quizzes where each answer begins with a particular letter of the alphabet. The A section has answers beginning with A; the B section has answers beginning with B; and so on. These activities are suitable for late primary to early secondary students.

The activity sheets can be used as an individual, partner or group activity, or as a whole class quiz. There is a word bank containing all of the answers plus a few extras to make students think rather than guess. The quizzes always prove an engaging strategy for developing vocabulary and dictionary skills.

Students can then use the words in a variety of extension activities, some ideas for which can be found at the beginning of the 'Alphabet quizzes' section on page 19. One of the ideas is to make the worksheet more challenging by giving the worksheet to students without the word bank at the bottom to encourage students to draw on their own vocabulary. Copies of these worksheets without the word banks have been included on the CD-ROM companion to the book.

Thinking skills

The thinking strategy behind creating alphabetical lists is a well-known 'Thinkers key', devised by renowned educationalist Tony Ryan. Thinker's keys are activities designed to engage and motivate learners in a range of thinking tasks. I have used this thinking strategy in many of the multiple intelligence units contained in my published books:

- *Creative and Practical Ideas for the Multiple Intelligences Classroom* (4518)
- *Practical Themes for Busy Teachers* (1394)
- *Studies of Society and Environment in the Multiple Intelligences Classroom* (3498)

Although the activities are initially language-based, they easily overflow into other curriculum areas and lend themselves well to being tools for curriculum integration. These activities can be extended to develop higher order thinking skills such as creative thinking skills and critical thinking skills, and use skills from Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences.

In the area of **critical thinking**, the activities set using alphabetical lists can help to develop the following skills:

Classification:	Organising information based on pre-set criteria.
Patterning:	Discovering rules or arrangements of parts. It is an essential part of problem-solving.
Sequencing:	Placing information in a logical order. It can be used to determine priorities and structures. It is a skill in developing action plans.
Labelling:	Affixing a name to an item. It requires classification and meaning to be established and helps connect mental images with words.
Planning:	Developing a step-by-step procedure to result in a specified outcome.

Inferencing: Drawing conclusions or possibilities from information.

In the area of **creative thinking**, the activities set using alphabetical lists can help to develop the following skills:

Fluency: Generating many responses or possibilities

Flexibility: Generating a number of different responses from a variety of approaches.

Originality: the generating new or unusual ideas.

Brainstorming: Combining the techniques of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration to produce a large number of ideas in a group setting.

Imagery: Visualising mental images. It is an essential tool of imagination and intelligence.

Curiosity: Wondering or puzzling. It motivates asking, how, what, why etc.

Forced relationships: Combining unrelated ideas or objects to create new ideas or products.

These are just a few of the higher order thinking skills that can be developed using extension activities to alphabet lists. There are many more and the purpose of this introduction is to show some of the educational benefits of using the lists that children create to extend their thinking.

There are also many social skills that are relevant when using activities. Individual students can certainly use the worksheets, but using them as a partner activity allows for successful cooperative and collaborative learning to occur. It often overflows into resource-based learning and ICT.

A CD-ROM has been included with this book that includes full-page worksheets for each alphabet list card. The CD is compatible with both PC and Mac environments. See the introduction to 'Alphabet lists' on page 7 for full instructions on how to effectively use the list cards.

A to Z

Alphabet lists

Instructions:

This section consists of a worksheet (p 8) on which students can compile their alphabetical lists, and a set of activity cards – several for each letter of the alphabet (pp 9–18). The alphabet cards can also be found already compiled into worksheet format on the CD-ROM, enabling teachers to print out a tailor-made alphabetical list sheets with their choice of activity.

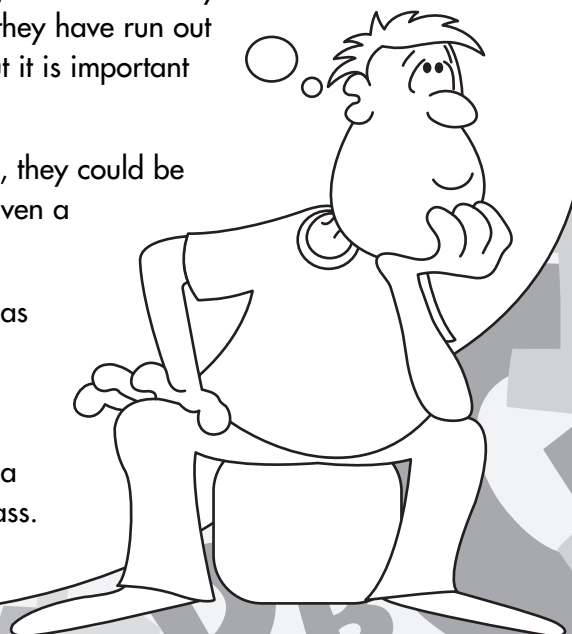
There are a variety of ways to use the activities in this section, depending on factors such as the ability of the students, the skill being focused on and time considerations:

- Each activity can be used as a quick warm-up at the beginning of a lesson. Using just the list-making activity, the teacher can write a topic on the board and have students quickly compile a list in small groups. The class can then judge the validity of each group's responses.
- The worksheet can be printed out from the CD-ROM featuring any activity card at the top. The activity can then be done individually, with a partner, in small groups or as a class.
- The activity cards can be laminated and kept in a box in a learning centre or classroom. As an extension activity or a reward for the early completion of other work, students can select an activity card and complete the task quietly at their desks, or in collaboration with other students.
- The worksheet on page 8 can be reproduced, one for each pair/group of students, and the teacher can simply write the topic on the board.

However you choose to conduct the activities, encourage students to only consult a dictionary or other reference materials when they have run out of ideas. Initially students should just fill in the sheet, but it is important that they correct any spelling errors later on.

To make the activities extra exciting and challenging, they could be conducted as a race against time where students are given a time limit, or as a race against each other.

The cards also contain the extension activities, as explained in the introduction (p5), that develop critical and creative thinking and encourage higher order thinking skills. Again, these activities can be done individually, with a partner, in small groups or as a class.



Title of your alphabetical list ...

A	_____	N	_____
B	_____	O	_____
C	_____	P	_____
D	_____	Q	_____
E	_____	R	_____
F	_____	S	_____
G	_____	T	_____
H	_____	U	_____
I	_____	V	_____
J	_____	W	_____
K	_____	X	_____
L	_____	Y	_____
M	_____	Z	_____



Alphabet animals

Think of two animals for each letter of the alphabet. When you have finished, design a map of a zoo that shows visitors where to find each animal on your list. Include all of the other features, (shops, toilets etc.), that you might find at a zoo.

Alphabet appliances

Think of electrical appliances found in your home for each letter of the alphabet. When finished, place your list into the following categories: Used for survival, Personal comfort, Making life easier and Amusement. Write a poem about how humans depend on appliances.



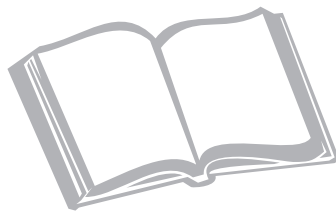
Alphabet Aussie

Think of a phrase or word for each letter of the alphabet using Australian slang terminology. When you finish, write a letter to a friend using the terminology and get them to translate your letter into 'everyday' English.



Alphabet authors

Think of a famous author and a title of a book they have written for each letter of the alphabet. You may have more than one book title. Use the Internet to track down your favourite author from your list. Write to them saying why you enjoyed their book.



Alphabet big

Start with the letter A and think of something that is bigger than you. When you have finished your list, order your list from smallest to largest.

Alphabet black

Think of things that are black. One for each consonant of the alphabet and two for each vowel. Using the words you found make a black collage to display in the classroom.



A to Z

Alphabet quizzes

Instructions:

This section contains language-based alphabet quizzes where the answer to each question begins with a particular letter. The A section has answers beginning with A, the B section has answers beginning with B, and so on. Each page consists of a reproducible worksheet featuring twenty quiz questions and a word bank from which students select their answers. Also at the beginning of this section (pp 20–23) are the extension activity cards that can be used to enhance and reinforce the knowledge acquired through the quiz.

There are a variety of ways to conduct the quizzes:

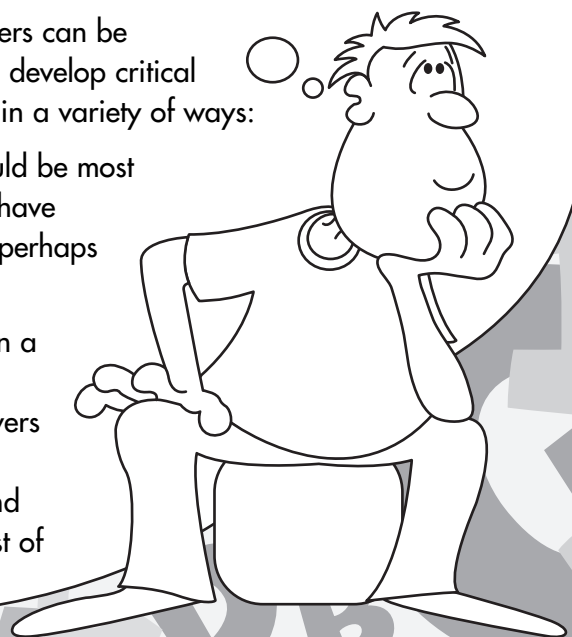
- The quiz can be done individually, with a partner, in small groups or as a class.
- The quiz can be made more challenging by giving the worksheet to students without the word bank at the bottom. This encourages students to draw on their existing vocabulary, and gives more opportunity for students to learn from each other as they compare answers. Worksheets with the word banks already removed can be printed out from the CD-ROM.

However you choose to run the quizzes, encourage students to only consult a dictionary after they have completed as many questions as they can with their existing vocabulary. Students can then look up the unfamiliar items in the word bank in order to match the new word with the correct definition. Answers can be checked by comparing with other students/groups, as a whole class feedback session or collected for correction by the teacher.

To make the quizzes extra exciting and challenging, they could be conducted as a race against time where students are given a time limit, or as a race against each other.

Once students have completed the quizzes, the answers can be employed in a variety of extension activities designed to develop critical and creative thinking skills. These activities can be used in a variety of ways:

- The teacher can select an activity they think would be most appropriate for the particular quiz the students have completed, and write the activity on the board, perhaps leading with an example.
- The activity cards can be laminated and kept in a box in a learning centre or classroom. As a reward for getting the most correct quiz answers or being the first to correctly complete the quiz, students can do a 'lucky dip' and select an activity card for the rest of the class to complete.



Extension ideas

Use the quiz answers in interesting sentences.

Write descriptive sentences that contain plenty of adjectives and adverbs. Remember you are trying to paint a picture in the reader's head using language. Give your sentences to your teacher and they will judge which is your best sentence, and then which is the best sentence in the class!

Write interesting sentences using two or more of the answer words per sentence.

With a partner, write descriptive sentences that contain plenty of adjectives and adverbs, plus two or more list words. Remember you are trying to paint a picture in the reader's head using language. When you have finished, give your best sentence to another pair and ask them to draw a picture illustrating your sentence!

Make a word find

Create a word find using all the answers from the quiz. Then give your word find to another student and ask them find the hidden words! When they have found all the words, test them on the definitions!

Make a word chain

Using as many of the answer words as possible, what is the longest sentence that you can make? Give yourself one point for every answer word you use, but take off one point for every word you use that isn't one of the quiz answers!

How many rhyming words can you find?

For each answer word, think of as many words as you can that rhyme with that answer. E.g. if the answer word is sheep, you could write sleep, cheap, heap, keep, leap etc. Find a partner, because two heads are better than one! Check your spelling using a dictionary and give yourself one point for every correct rhyming word!



Please answer the following questions. Each answer begins with the letter C. You may use the word bank below if you need to.

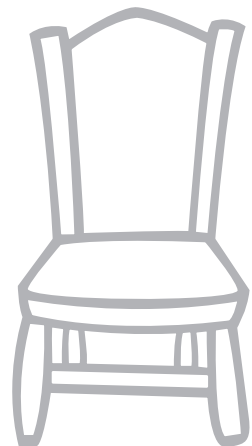
1. What is a hole in the tooth hollowed by decay called?

2. What colourful, transparent material made from cellulose is used mainly for wrapping? _____
3. What is a synonym for Centigrade? _____
4. What is a portable 'toothed' saw called? _____
5. What type of Swiss dwelling has a wide sloping roof? _____
6. What alcoholic sparkling wine originated in France? _____
7. What is a two-wheeled horse drawn vehicle called? _____
8. What name is given to a person who talks continuously? _____
9. What is the swiftest four-legged animal? _____
10. What title is bestowed on the head cook of a restaurant? _____
11. What is the science dealing with the composition, structure and properties of substances?

12. What green herb related to the onion is used for flavouring food? _____
13. What food is prepared from ground roasted cacao beans? _____
14. What waxy substance hardens the arteries of the body? _____
15. What is the name of the pair of slender sticks used to eat food?

16. Which religion is practiced by Christians? _____
17. What flower is associated with Mother's day? _____
18. What alcoholic beverage is made from apples? _____
19. What term is used to describe the distance around a circle?

20. What is a single reed woodwind instrument? _____



Cavity	Chalet	Chive	Chatterbox	Christianity	Clarinet
Chopsticks	Celsius	Chariot	Cheetah	Cellophane	Cloud
Chainsaw	Chocolate	Champagne	Chemistry	Cider	Chef
Cholesterol	Chrysanthemum	Circumference	Creative	Chair	Cook