



Literacy Activity Center Planner

What to do: Set up rotating activity centers as a regular part of your program to support literacy all year long. Make the purpose, rules, and expectations clear to participants. Continue to build a collection of activity centers that participants can choose from. Experiment with making simultaneous activities available for students to move among freely.

Why it matters: Well-planned activity centers engage children and youths in hands-on exploration, allow for both independent work and collaboration with other students, and provide targeted learning on specific objectives.

Overview

Centers may be available at set times, or during homework time for those who have no homework or who finish early, or as a break. Centers may be an area of the room or simply activities kept in shoeboxes and worked with on a side table. Watch centers in use to see if they're effective. Determine if children seem engaged, distracted, or bored. Talk to students to get ideas for centers and involve them in the planning. Discuss with staff and make revisions as needed.

Center Starter Ideas

Decide on an overall theme for the centers, and how each activity will fit with the theme. Specify the learning objectives in the planning stage, and the materials and resources you'll need for each center. Check out these inspirations for center activities, organized by learning area and grade level.

Reading (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension)

K-2: Letter/sound match ♦ alphabet puzzles ♦ magnetic letters ♦ pipe cleaner letter making ♦ alphabet memory games ♦ alphabet flash cards ♦ letter blocks/manipulatives ♦ percussion/rhythm instruments (e.g., for syllable counting or matching a poem's beat)

Grades 3-5: Word cards ♦ word family strips ♦ puppets for retelling a story ♦ props for readers theater

Grades 6-12: Newspapers ♦ magazines ♦ dictionaries ♦ journals

All: Age- and level-appropriate reading library of informational and fictional texts

Writing (Pre-Writing, Drafting, Revising/Editing, Production)

K-2: Pipe cleaner letter making ♦ magnetic letters ♦ modeling clay to make letters or words

Grades 3-5: Dry erase boards ♦ chalkboards ♦ paint strips for storyboarding

Grades 6-12: Dictionaries or reference materials ♦ style guides

All: Writing utensils (e.g., crayons ♦ markers ♦ pencils ♦ colored pencils ♦ colored pens) and loose-leaf paper or stationary ♦ computers



Oral Language (Speaking, Listening)**K-2:** Fingerplays ♦ poetry ♦ rhyming games ♦ word games ♦ role-playing**Grades 3-5:** Audio-assisted reading or audiobooks ♦ audio recording devices ♦ props or costumes for skits or plays**Grades 6-12:** Scripts for skits or plays ♦ poems ♦ films ♦ music lyrics ♦ computers ♦ digital recording devices ♦ audio recording devices**Center Worksheet**

Complete separately for each center activity.

Description or Theme of Center: _____**Literacy area focus (check all that apply):**☐ Reading ☐ Writing ☐ Speaking and Listening ☐ Language ☐ Other**Learning objectives/purpose:** _____**Number of users at one time:** _____**Primarily for:** ☐ Individuals ☐ Pairs ☐ Small groups ☐ Any**Instructions:** ☐ Can be clearly written ahead of time
☐ Need to be explained or demonstrated by a facilitator
☐ Can be explained by peers**Availability:** ☐ Always ☐ Days/times: _____
☐ Homework ☐ By request**Supervision:** ☐ None, general only ☐ Periodic check
☐ Demonstrations and explanations needed
☐ Active supervision**Supplies needed:**

Instructions (instruction card or paper to include): _____

Materials, tools, equipment: _____



Observation Checklist:

- ☐ Actively used
- ☐ Instructions clear, little supervision needed
- ☐ Used by all participants
- ☐ Positive outcomes (e.g., engagement)
- ☐ Meets objectives

Comments, changes, extensions:

*Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child,
and one teacher can change the world.*

— Malala Yousafzai

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