**Tips to keep kids on task in breakout rooms**

My top tip for keeping kids on task in in breakout rooms is to keep the activities short and sweet. To that end, I recommend trying an activity known as a "Three Color Quiz." This activity can be done in breakout rooms in Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams.

A Three Color Quiz doesn't have to be a graded quiz activity. In fact, it's hardly a quiz at all, but that's the name that was given to it in [this paper published by the University of Nebraska Digital Commons](https://click.convertkit-mail.com/r8uol7q7gkfohd23rmb2/e0hph7hkp4l5mkb8/aHR0cHM6Ly9kaWdpdGFsY29tbW9ucy51bm9tYWhhLmVkdS9jZ2kvdmlld2NvbnRlbnQuY2dpP2FydGljbGU9MTA2NSZjb250ZXh0PXRlZGZhY3B1Yg==" \t "_blank) (link opens a PDF) which is where I learned about it a couple of years ago.

I started using a modified Three Color Quiz with my students as in-classroom assignment last year then transitioned to using it as an in-Zoom assignment this year (you could also do it in Google Meet or Microsoft Teams). Here's how I run the Three Color Quiz in Zoom.

**Step One: First Color**

I give students a question or prompt and have them spend two minutes writing responses on their own in a Google Doc or Word Doc. This should be done in one font color.

**Step Two: Second Color**

After writing on their own for a few minutes put students into breakout rooms to talk to a classmate or two for two minutes to get their ideas in response to the original question. While talking they should also be adding to their original answers. What gets added to the original response should be written in a second font color different from the first.

**Step Three: Third Color**

Bring the group back together then send them into new breakout rooms where they again talk to classmates for two minutes. This time they can also consult web resources and their notes as they talk. Again, while talking they should be writing and adding to their original answers. The writing in this step is done in a third font color.

**The Three Color Quiz in breakout rooms accomplishes a few things for me.**

* First, it gets students who might not otherwise talk to each other a chance to talk.
* Second, when they turn in their documents I can see how much help a student needed from classmates or the Internet based on the use of color (by the way, I don't grade the documents).
* Third, by only making the breakout sessions a couple of minutes students don't have time to get off-task for too long if at all before I bring the group back together.