**​Five Ideas for Online Breakout Room Activities​**



Breakout rooms in Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet provide a good way to get students talking and working in small groups. For some students, talking to a couple of classmates in a small breakout room is a lot less intimidating that talking to you "in front" of the whole class. Small breakout rooms give students a chance to talk and test ideas with a couple of classmates before subjecting their ideas to the silent or spoken criticism of the whole class. There are lots of other ways to think about using breakout rooms, here are some of my ideas for using breakout rooms with students.

**1. Digital Scavenger Hunts/ Digital Breakout Games**

Get students working together to solve problems as part of a digital scavenger hunt that unlocks little rewards. If you have a [Breakout EDU](https://click.convertkit-mail.com/5qudzo0ogns7hqe9g2b6/owhkhqh4k4en47av/aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYnJlYWtvdXRlZHUuY29tLw%3D%3D%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) account, you might find some good digital challenges there. Otherwise, consider using [Flippity's online scavenger hunt template](https://click.convertkit-mail.com/5qudzo0ogns7hqe9g2b6/z2hghnho4oz7odsp/aHR0cHM6Ly9mbGlwcGl0eS5uZXQvc2gucGhwP2s9MXViRFZ1bEpwVzdCMk5ERHVITUExQ3RCd1J4R2llaFFRWnplSnBFeGRjd1E%3D%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) to create a game in which students solve problems to unlock each part of the game.

**2. Peer Review**

We often associate peer review with writing. There are plenty of other areas in which peer review is an appropriate activity. I'm having students conduct peer review of the apps they're designing in my class. You might have students conduct peer review of short videos they've created.

**3. Three Color "Quiz"**

A couple of years ago I was doing some reading on formative assessment methods and came across a [paper published by the University of Nebraska Digital Commons](https://click.convertkit-mail.com/5qudzo0ogns7hqe9g2b6/p8heh9h939ed99uq/aHR0cHM6Ly9kaWdpdGFsY29tbW9ucy51bm9tYWhhLmVkdS9jZ2kvdmlld2NvbnRlbnQuY2dpP2FydGljbGU9MTA2NSZjb250ZXh0PXRlZGZhY3B1Yg%3D%3D%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) (link opens a PDF of the paper). In that paper was the outline for an activity called a three color quiz. I started using that activity in my classroom and found it quite useful in determining which of my students knew material on their own and which ones needed help. The premise is that students spend a few minutes writing about a topic on their own in one color. Then they spend a few minutes writing while consulting a couple of classmates. That writing appears in a second color. Finally, they spend a few minutes writing while consulting classmates, their notes, and textbooks/websites. That writing appears in a third color.

**4. Project Planning/ Progress Monitoring**

One of my classes is working on year-long independent and small-group projects. I use a [SMART project planning and monitoring framework](https://click.convertkit-mail.com/5qudzo0ogns7hqe9g2b6/x0hph6hnrnmznwi5/aHR0cHM6Ly9lbi53aWtpcGVkaWEub3JnL3dpa2kvU01BUlRfY3JpdGVyaWE%3D%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) with them to try to keep them moving on the projects. Using breakout rooms is a good way to give students a time and place for discussions about their projects.

**5. Virtual Social Time**

One of the things that a lot of kids are missing right now is the experience of social interactions with classmates. Yes, many of them are Snapping, TikTok-ing, and texting their friends. But that doesn't replace having a conversation with classmates who aren't in their current circle of friends. Consider giving your students 5-10 minutes for casual conversations to interact with classmates they might not otherwise be communicating with.