



Introduction

Nothing motivates students to practice skills more than a game. These twelve whole-class games for the overhead will help students apply what they've learned in a playful and interactive manner. When using these reading activities, you'll know that you're providing reinforcement of essential reading skills. All your students need to know is that they're having fun!

These games may be played cooperatively or competitively. Variations of each game are provided to help you meet the ever-changing and individual needs of your class.

May the games begin!

—Jennifer Richard Jacobson

What Makes Game Play So Effective?

As you may recall from your own experiences, game play creates an optimal state for learning. Students are relaxed and receptive, and yet exhibit intense concentration. When leading a game, you're likely to find that your students become completely absorbed! Here are some of the other benefits:

- ✓ Students are more likely to pursue goals that they find intrinsically motivating. Tell students that they need to practice skills and their shoulders drop. Tell them that you're going to play a game to practice important skills and their eyes brighten! Games, which are related to play, increase motivation.
- ✓ Game play is social. When working in isolation, students are limited to their own way of thinking. During game play, students are more likely to examine the strategies of classmates and try new approaches. Games allow students to test new ideas.




- ✓ Many games (including all of the games in this book) require students to use critical thinking skills—particularly the skill of classification, which aids retention.
- ✓ Children grow in cooperative-learning skills: listening, speaking, identifying one's approach, considering the approaches of others, and working towards a common goal.
- ✓ Team play values the positive contribution of all members. Students are rewarded for their participation. Their confidence grows with repeated plays—and so does their skill level.
- ✓ Game play helps students to realize that working hard and reaching a goal can be fun.

Why Use the Overhead Projector?

Every classroom has some well-loved games on the shelf. But by using games designed for the overhead projector, you can involve the *whole class* in game play. There are some wonderful benefits to using games with your entire group.

- * Leading games on the overhead allows you to quickly assess student knowledge in a relaxed atmosphere. Playing a game after introducing new material allows you to determine whether students understood and can apply the new concept.
- * As everyone participates, knowledge is shared. Students' understanding grows and concepts build upon one another.
- * When you lead games on the overhead (as opposed to having children play games independently), you are able to jump in with explanations and words of support. If children are unclear about a concept, you can address the confusion immediately.
- * As you record student responses on the overhead, their input is made widely visible and hence, valuable. Reinforcement of ideas is immediate.

- 
- * As long as overhead projectors have been around, there is something magical about the way text appears on the screen! Students often find the overhead more engaging than worksheets, writing on the chalkboard or chart paper.

Competition in the Classroom

Please note that most of the games in this book can be played cooperatively. With cooperative games, the entire class works together to reach a common goal. The class may work together to beat you or the clock.

Depending on the age and size of your class, you may want to introduce competitive play. In competitive games, students play on teams, compete as pairs, or as individuals. Many students love competitive play (winning is fun). Others dread it (losing is hard). If you feel that your class can rise to the occasion of competitive play, here are some ideas to consider:

- ☉ Six-year-olds typically have some difficulty with competitive play. If you teach first grade, you may want to wait until the second half of the year before playing the games competitively.
- ☉ Always place more importance on learning and discovery than on the rules of the game or on winning. Recap a game by acknowledging new insights and strategies, the acquisition of skills, and participation and risk-taking.
- ☉ Engage in discussions before and after play that help students focus on individual goals as well as team goals. For example, individual students might record how many times they offered an answer during the game and try to increase that number. Losing the game won't seem quite so bad if one has met a personal goal.
- ☉ You might suggest that students work in pairs when they are members of a larger team. Having a partner provides more opportunity for discussion and extended thinking, as well as security.
- ☉ Remember, *all* students should feel good about their participation. If students aren't having fun, cooperative games may be more appropriate for your group.

Connect a Word

Skills

- ✓ Letter-sound recognition
- ✓ Short vowels

Materials

- * Overlay Sheet #1
- * Dry Erase Pen
- * Punch-out Letter Markers

Purpose

- to provide students practice in identifying short vowel sounds and creating words

Directions

- 1 Place the *Connect a Word* overlay on the overhead.
- 2 Place a vowel in the center of the board. Choose consonants to place on the other eight boxes. (See below left for possibilities.)
- 3 Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a name (or have teams select names) and write the names on the player lines.
- 4 Using your dry erase pen as a pointer (cap on), demonstrate how to connect letters in adjacent boxes to make a three-letter word. Letters must touch one another in order to be “picked up.”
- 5 Ask students to raise their hands when they can create a word. Alternate calling on teams, and record words in the correct column. Teams cannot use a word created by the other team.
- 6 When a team can no longer provide a word on its turn, that team’s play has ended. The other team continues until players can no longer create words.
- 7 Tally each team’s score by giving 1 point for three-letter words, 2 points for four-letter words, and 3 points for five-letter words. (Writing an s in one of the squares provides students a greater opportunity to create five-letter words.) The team with the most points wins.

Variation

- Allow individual students or pairs to use all the letters in the grid (without having to connect adjacent letters) in order to create as many words as they can. Encourage students to use blends and digraphs to create longer words.

g	p	w
n	e	h
m	t	b

r	n	t
c	i	p
k	s	w

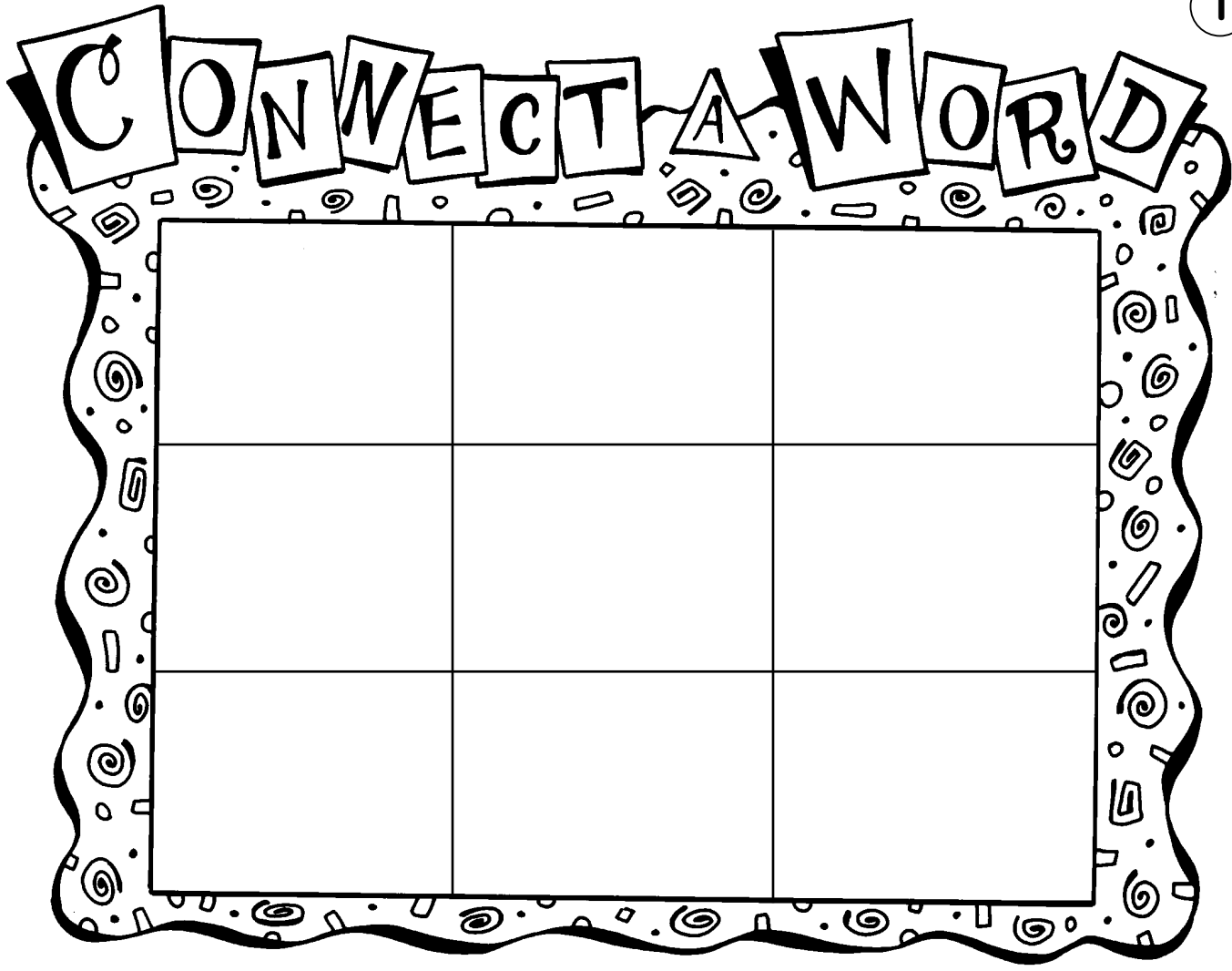
c	p	s
l	o	t
n	d	r

p	t	l
s	u	b
n	c	k

CONNECT A WORD

c	t	r
h	a	m
f	n	p

Player ³ Red Team	Player ³ Blue Team	
3 letters 1 point	4 letters 2 points	5 letters 3 points
cat hat fat can car ram mat	trap ramp cart farm	champ tan man far pan rat ham Pam
Score 7 + 8 + 3 = 18	Score 7 + 6 + 6 = 19	



Player _____

Player _____

3 letters 1 point	4 letters 2 points	5 letters 3 points

3 letters 1 point	4 letters 2 points	5 letters 3 points

Score _____

Score _____

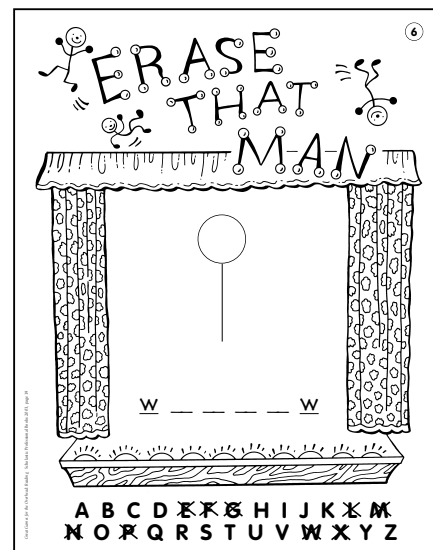
Erase That Man

Directions

- 1 Place the *Erase That Man!* overlay on the overhead.
- 2 If you do not have a word wall with frequently used words, write sight words (perhaps one for each child) on separate cards. Or, use recently-learned vocabulary words.
- 3 Using a dry erase pen, draw a stick figure on the stage on the overlay. The figure should have nine parts (head, two eyes, mouth, body, two arms, and two legs).
- 4 Invite one student to come to the overhead. Ask him or her to choose a card, silently read the word, and make one line above the “stage lights” for each letter of the word. Or, have students choose a word from the word wall.
- 5 Have classmates raise their hands to suggest letters that might be found in the word.
- 6 The leader crosses off the letter in the alphabet at the bottom of the overlay. If a letter is in the word, the leader writes that letter on the correct lines. If the letter is not in the word, the leader erases one body part from the man.
- 7 Challenge students to guess all the letters in a word before the man is erased.

Variation

- Play the game in the same way, except the leader provides the first letter and the rest of the letters must be provided in the correct order, with the end result being a real word. After a child suggests a letter, the class decides if it is a possible combination. For example, *to* is a possible beginning combination, *tl* is not. Erase a piece of the man whenever an impossible combination is suggested.



Skills

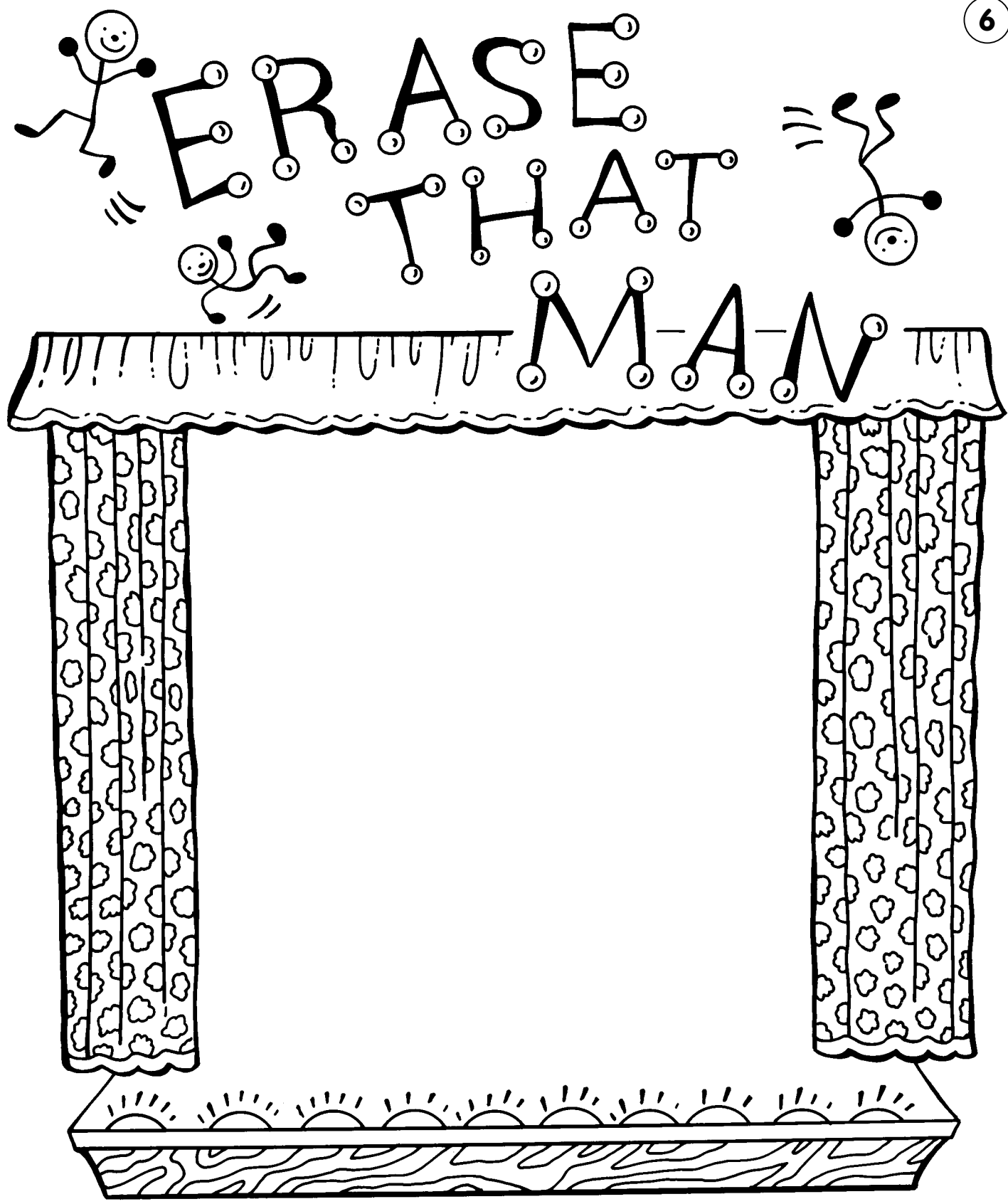
- ✓ Letter-sound recognition
- ✓ Phonemic awareness

Materials

- * Overlay Sheet #6
- * Dry Erase Pen
- * Index Cards (cut in half) or a Word Wall
- * Tissue

Purpose

- to help students identify frequently used words



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