

Grades K – 5

Active Classroom Strategies

Strategy	Description
Act It Out!	Students pantomime or act out historical events, story sequences, or daily life behaviors without speaking while classmates identify or sequence the events.
Clue Me In	Students create a series of progressive clues (ranging from tricky to easy) about a historical concept, landmark, or figure for partners to solve.
Compare-Contrast Chart	Student pairs complete a structured graphic organizer following a reading, video, or performance to analyze key similarities and differences.
Create a Tagline	Students analyze a primary source document, historical speech, or lesson topic and synthesize its core message into a catchy, single-sentence summary.
Draw a Picture Book / Big Book of...	Students illustrate individual pages or multi-page booklets that are bound together into a shared class resource on customs, traditions, or civic rights.
Find and Point / Spin the Globe	Students physically interact with wall maps or a spinning globe by using sticky notes, pins, or pointing to locate geographical landforms, regions, or historical trade routes.
I Spy!	Students observe primary source artwork, photographs, or maps to identify specific visual details and analyze why the author or artist included them.
Make a Poster	Small groups collaborate to design visual displays featuring maps, captions, and artwork to present research on community rules, regions, or historical events.
Make a Speech	Students adopt the perspective of a historical figure or community leader and deliver a short speech outlining their beliefs, motivations, and experiences.
Make and Play a Game	Pairs or small groups design or play interactive matching and identification games (e.g., matching regional

	characteristics) to reinforce content concepts.
Puzzle It	Small groups create visual equations or picture-clue puzzles (e.g., combining natural resources and geography) for peer groups to solve.
Reading Circle	Students gather in a collaborative circle to read trade books or primary source excerpts together and connect story themes to unit concepts.
Round-Robin Story / Brainstorming	Small groups take turns contributing ideas or building a collaborative story sentence-by-sentence around a shared topic, historical dilemma, or rule scenario.
Substitute It!	Students apply questioning and active reading strategies to non-academic, real-world contexts (such as watching an instructional video) to practice critical thinking.
Three-Minute Pause	Small groups pause during instruction for three structured minutes to summarize key concepts, clarify points, and compare reflections with peers.
Thumbs Up and Thumbs Down	Students physically vote with hand gestures (thumbs up for agree/fair, thumbs down for disagree/unfair) to evaluate proposed classroom rules, laws, or civic choices.
Timeline Construction	Students construct physical floor or wall timelines using date cards, illustrations, and primary source images to sequence historical events, personal family histories, or national holidays.
Travel Back in Time	A student holds a historical photograph or adopts a past persona while classmates conduct a simulated historical interview to explore daily life in previous eras.
Turn and Talk	Student pairs engage in a quick, two-minute timed discussion to share initial reactions, answer a prompt, or brainstorm before opening up to whole-class sharing.
Twenty Questions	The class asks up to 20 yes/no questions to identify a secret historical landmark, leader, or geographic feature chosen by a peer group.
Vote for It!	Students cast votes using ballot cards or physical

	gestures to practice democratic decision-making on classroom rules, project genres, or civic proposals.
Watch It!	Students view advertisements, newsreels, or video clips and analyze persuasive elements, visual techniques, and intended target audiences.
What's My Message?	Student pairs examine folktales or primary sources with the central moral or lesson omitted, challenging their partner to infer the underlying message.
Where Am I? / Where Am I From?	Students use physical maps or globes to locate geographic regions or places of origin, giving location clues for peers to identify spatial relationships.
Who Am I?	Students present clues describing a historical figure, explorer, or community helper for classmates to identify based on their key traits and contributions.
Word Web	The teacher or students construct a visual graphic organizer on the board around a central concept (e.g., Hero or Culture) to map connected vocabulary and traits.
Worktext Treasure Hunt	Students hunt through their Student eText or print worktexts to locate, classify, and cite specific text features, primary sources, or map types.
3-2-1 Chart	Students complete a quick processing organizer listing 3 key facts learned, 2 new or interesting vocabulary terms, and 1 remaining question to swap and clarify with a peer.