

Teaching with Desmos activities

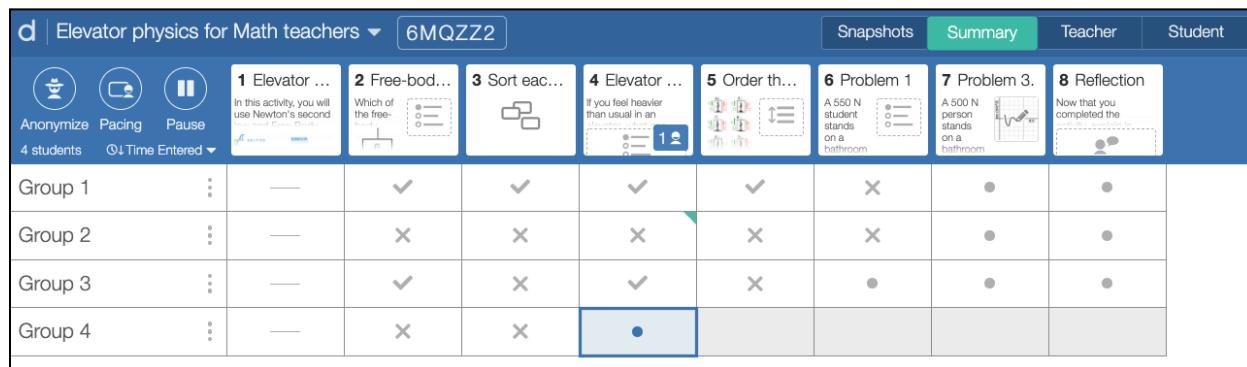
Overview of Desmos activities

Desmos Activities allow for the easy creation and distribution of interactive activities. The activities are built by using premade modules for card sorting, graphing, multiple-choice, short answer questions and more. There is also the possibility to push the interactivity by adding a computational layer with basic coding skills.

To me, the strength of the Desmos activities resides in the teacher summary view which shows real-time student progress in the activity. It allows the teacher to both set the pace and provide feedback using the built-in chat.

The link below shows a short clip detailing why I think Desmos activities are so good to handle classroom management in synchronous classes.

<https://youtu.be/vzXm2gpjD98>



The screenshot shows the Desmos teacher summary interface. At the top, there's a header with the activity title 'Elevator physics for Math teachers' and a code '6MQZZ2'. Below this are tabs for 'Snapshots', 'Summary' (which is active), 'Teacher', and 'Student'. On the left, there are controls for 'Anonymize', 'Pacing', and 'Pause', along with a student count of '4 students' and a 'Time Entered' dropdown. The main area displays a progress table for 8 activity steps across 4 student groups. The table uses icons: a checkmark for completed, an 'x' for not started, and a dot for in progress. Group 4 is currently in progress on step 4.

	1 Elevator ...	2 Free-bod...	3 Sort eac...	4 Elevator ...	5 Order th...	6 Problem 1	7 Problem 3.	8 Reflection
Group 1	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	•	•
Group 2	—	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	•	•
Group 3	—	✓	✗	✓	✗	•	•	•
Group 4	—	✗	✗	•				

Exploring existing activities

You can try and explore existing activities from the main page of the teacher Desmos site.

Teacher Desmos: <https://teacher.desmos.com/?lang=en>

There is a search function available on the Desmos site, but it only searches the titles of the activities. All the showcased activities seem to be in math. Collections can however be created and shared with colleagues with a web link.

Existing activities for Math:

Use the search engine!

Collection for differential calculus:

<https://teacher.desmos.com/collection/5ffdc327761b6d0d54e83412>

Existing activities for Physics:

Mechanics at the cegep level:

<https://teacher.desmos.com/collection/5f63ba070c1d112771f1d439>

Physics at the freshman level:

Part 1: <https://teacher.desmos.com/collection/5f29b0d4f191a016b880dc94>

Part 2: <https://teacher.desmos.com/collection/5f2d3af1918fb8539c787718>

Existing activities for Chemistry:

None that I know of (sadly)!!!

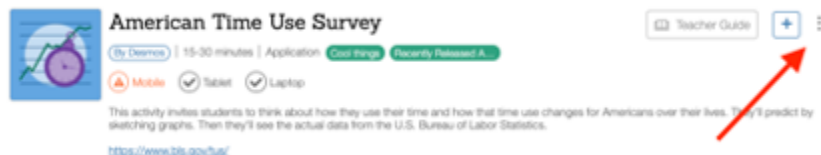
Existing activities for Biology:

None that I know of (sadly)!!!

Using an already made activity in your class

It is easy to get set up and learn the ropes to use a pre-made activity in your class. Just follow the eight steps below, and you should be ready to rock in half an hour!

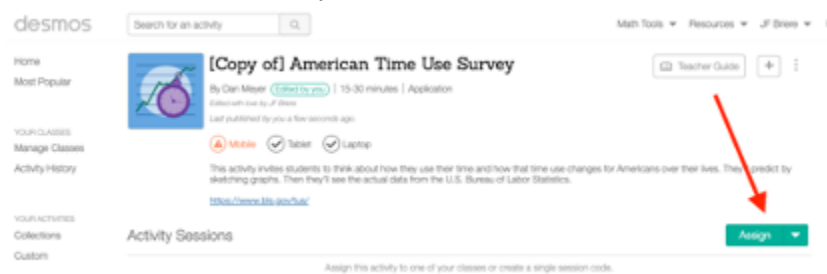
1. Go to Desmos teacher: <https://teacher.desmos.com/?lang=en>
2. Create an account.
3. Go to an existing activity.
4. Click the 3 dots on the top right and choose 'Copy and edit'.



5. Make changes if you want to. Then click 'Publish' on the top right.



6. To distribute to students, go to the page with the activity. There is an 'Assign' button, select 'Single Session code' from the dropdown menu.



7. Hit the 3 dots for the session to copy the link you need to send to students. Et voilà!



8. You can then see the students' progression by clicking 'View Dashboard'.

More Resources

The Desmos website offers great support to learn to use, create and refine activities.

Getting started: <https://learn.desmos.com/activities-get-started>

For all the rest: <https://learn.desmos.com/>

If you want to be fancy: <https://teacher.desmos.com/computation-layer/documentation>

Enjoy!