Scattergories

Preparation...

The game that my students will be playing is Scattergories. Before class, I will make sure I have enough games in order for each group to play. The class period before we play the game, I will take about 10 minutes at the end of class to explain the game to them. I will teach them the basics on how to play and the object of the game. I will also type up and print out a more basic instructions sheet for each group that goes over the main points of the game for reference if they need it so they do not have to go back and look over the full instructions sheet. Along with the instruction sheet, I will type up my own "category" card listing the different parts of speech. Before my students come into the classroom, I will move the desks into groups of 5 and place a game and instructions sheet at each desk to save time once the class period has started. As the students walk into the classroom, I will ask them to start lining up on the wall in the alphabetical order of their first name so that it is easy to assign them to groups when the period has started.

What I Was Thinking...

Scattergories is a game designed around creativity and imagination. When designing this mini-lesson, I wanted to come up with a way to teach my students how to expand their word choice and help develop their knowledge on the different parts of speech as well as teach them a different way to brainstorm ideas for their writing.

Along with playing the game and learning about the parts of speech in a different way, I would also use my students' responses to the game for future lessons. For example, after the students finish playing the game, I would ask them to then use one of their lists of words to write a story that must contain each of the words they came up with from one round of the game. Doing this, the students would further develop their sense of creativity and be able to play around with a more creative writing style since there are no boundaries to this writing.

As students start to finish, I will let them move onto playing the game as written, how it is supposed to be played.

Script...

The class period before gameplay day…

“Okay class, for the last ten or so minutes of the period I want to talk to you about the game we will be playing tomorrow. We are going to be playing a game called Scattergories, has anyone played it before?”

Allow time for students to respond. Assuming someone has played it before…

“That’s awesome! You guys can help me lead then! So today I just wanted to go over the rules and how to play the game so we save time tomorrow and we can go straight into playing at the beginning of class. Is that okay?”
“So, when you get assigned into your groups tomorrow, I will also assign you to a group of desks where the game will already be set up with a set of instructions in case you have questions while you play and a category card that is going to look a little bit different. When you sit down, you will need to make sure everyone has the category cards, a folder, and the sheet of paper where you write your answers down.”

Use one of the board games as an example and physically show the class what I am talking about. Then use the overhead doc camera to show the kids how to play while I am explaining it. I will ask for a volunteer to help me demonstrate it. “Betty” in my script.

“Betty will start by reseting the timer and roll the dice to determine which letter we will be using for the first round. You will then use the special category card I have come up with for this lesson, not the provided category cards. Once each player is ready, Betty will start the timer and everyone will start to write down one word starting with the letter on the dice for each of the different parts of speech I have provided on the special category card. You will have until the timer runs out to complete each of the parts of speech.”

“Once the round is over, Betty and I will each take turns sharing what word we had for each part of speech. If one of the other group members has the same word as you, you cross the word off of your list. If your word is unique to everyone else’s, you get a point. You will do this for each of the different parts of speech and then total up the points for that round.”

“YA different group member will reset the timer and roll the dice for a new letter. You will repeat this process for the second and third round using the same parts of speech category card and the player with the most points after all three rounds wins.”

“Does anyone have any questions?”

Use this time to answer any questions the students may have, stop when there are 2 minutes left in class.

“Okay, we are running out of time. If you still have more questions or are confused on what is going on, please write your question down and drop it in the question bin. I will finish answering your questions and clarify this more tomorrow at the beginning of class. I hope you have a great day. Feel free to pack up but please don’t leave until the bell rings!”

The next day

As students are walking in…

“Good morning! As you guys start to walk in, don’t sit in your normal seat, I want you to line up in alphabetical order of your first name!”

Once the bell has rung and all students are in the classroom…

“Hello everyone! Please make sure you are lined up against the wall in alphabetical order so I can put you guys into your groups. Once you guys are in your groups and at your table, please sit there and do not touch the game or its materials until I have told you to do so.”

I will then go down the line separating the students into groups of 5 assigning them to a group of desks. (A group or two may have more or less depending on the number of students in the class but that is okay). Once everyone has sat down at their desks, I would go over the questions that were left in the question bin but for the sake of the script I will assume there were no questions in the question bin.

“Alright, after looking in the question bin, there were no questions left in there at the end of class yesterday. Does anyone have any questions or need me to clarify anything before we start playing the game? I have left a simplified instructions sheet with each group in case you have questions while you get started.”

“Since there are no questions, feel free to get started. I will be walking around the room helping each group as necessary. Please be appropriate and thoughtful in your answers as we will be using the words on your lists for another activity later.”

From here I will let them get started on playing. I will let them play for about 15 minutes.

After 15 minutes…

“Everyone please pause if you are not in the middle of a round and if you are keep going until the timer runs out and put your pencils down.”

Once everyone is ready…

“Okay, when you are finished with all three rounds of your game and have determined a winner, You may use the provided category cards in the box and keep playing the game how it is supposed to be played until everyone is done. Does anyone have any questions? Thank you, you may keep playing!”

I will let them continue playing and I will keep walking around the classroom helping when needed.

When there are 15 minutes left in class…

“Alright PAUSE, pencils down, even if you are in the middle of a round, stop the timer!”

“I would like for each of you to take out your writing notebooks. For the next 10 minutes of class, I would like for you to write a short story about a topic of your choosing. However, you must pick one of the lists of words that you created and incorporate each of those words into your story. Does anyone have any questions? Get started!”

I will then be walking around the room cleaning up the games while they write and answering any questions they may have while I am walking around.

With 5 minutes left in class…

“Alright class, there are 5 minutes left. Would anyone like to share the story they were able to write? It’s okay if it isn’t finished.”

Allow time for any students to read their stories.

“Okay everyone, I will give you the first 5-10 minutes of class tomorrow to continue developing your story so PLEASE do not lose your word lists. After that, I will give more of you time to share your stories if you would like. Thank you all for being so wonderful today, I hope you have a great rest of your day!”