

STUMP THE EXPERTS*

Ruth Naud Tisdale

“Stump the Experts” is a game that will motivate intermediate and advanced level ESL learners to read a detailed text or passage more carefully. This activity is especially successful when used with students from 12 to 16 years of age.

Procedure

After presenting a text to be read, announce that a panel game called “Stump the Experts” will be played the next day. To prepare for this game, each student is asked to read the text carefully at home and to prepare 10 questions based on important points in the text. You should explain to your students that these questions will be used to try to stump the panel of experts in the next day’s competition.

Select the students who may be called upon to be the experts on the panel the day before the game in order to give them the chance to really try to become experts. On the day of the competition choose three of these students to form the first panel of experts who will attempt to answer the questions put forth by the remaining students in the group. Each student should have the opportunity to ask the experts at least one question. In addition, each expert is given a chance to answer questions which another panel member was unable to. Throughout the game, questions are rotated so that no one expert answers all the questions. When every member of the panel has failed to answer a particular question, the panel is retired. A new panel is then chosen among the students who have prepared to be experts, and the process is repeated for as long as the teacher and the students are enjoying the game and learning from the experience.

In most cases, once the competition has begun, the students become very involved with trying to stump the experts or making a determined effort not to lose expert status.

* Adapted from an idea found in *Ideas for Teaching: Successful Practices in the Junior High School—Grades 7-8-9*, edited by Ruth E. Reeves for the National Council of Teachers of English, 1966, p. 194.