



“What Do I Do Next...?” Chart

Few challenges are as daunting for teachers as when a student declares, “I’m finished,” with 30 minutes remaining in the class period. Without a structured plan in place, these students risk becoming disruptive and distracting others from meeting the learning objectives. Furthermore, it can inadvertently send the message to the class that speeding through assignments earns them unstructured free time.

One effective strategy to address this is implementing a “What Do I Do Next...” chart. This is a designated section on your board that provides a clear, rotating list of meaningful activities students can engage in once they complete their primary tasks. Below is an example of activities I used in my own classroom. The possibilities are endless, allowing for flexibility and creativity in designing activities that align with your objectives.

Suggested Activities for the “What Do I Do Next...” Chart:

1. CNN 10 Current Events: Provide students with a printed worksheet to complete while watching CNN 10, encouraging them to engage with the day’s news and think critically about current events.
2. Geography Puzzles: Incorporate interactive online tools like Seterra or printable geography puzzles to reinforce map skills and geographic knowledge.
3. Vocabulary Word Searches: Use word searches featuring essential class vocabulary to provide a fun, low-stakes review opportunity.
4. Jenga Review Game: Supply students with a Jenga set and a list of review questions. For each correct answer, a peer removes a block, creating a collaborative and engaging review session.

The key to the success of this strategy lies in preparation. I made it a point to update the “What Do I Do Next...” chart weekly, rotating activities to maintain student interest and ensure the tasks remained relevant. While this required some additional effort, it significantly reduced idle time, improved classroom management, and reinforced learning in an engaging way.