

The book cover features a vibrant pink background. A large, blue, stylized letter 'A' is positioned on the left side. To its right, a white rectangular box contains the word 'to' in a black, italicized serif font. Below the 'A', a large, green, stylized letter 'Z' is partially visible, overlapping the 'A'.

to

*of Active Learning
Boards*

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Active Learning Boards

(Show Me Boards, Mini-white Boards)

Types of Active Learning Boards

Commercially Produced

Active Learning Boards can be purchased in class sets from office or educational suppliers. They can also be printed with your logo on them.

Make your own Active Learning Boards

1. White card can be laminated. This is usually A4 in size but can be larger if you have access to larger laminating facilities
2. Coloured card can be laminated. Different coloured sets of active learning boards can be useful if you need to divide students into groups (by colour) to work together
3. Cards can have numbers discretely written on them before laminating. Similar to above students can be grouped by number to work together or after some initial work has been done they can form groups to compare, discuss, agree ideas etc.
4. Card can be pre-printed with a specific background and laminated afterwards e.g. lines, blank graphs and grids, blank music manuscripts, map outlines, web diagrams etc.
5. Active learning boards can be different on both sides e.g. white on one side and coloured on the other. Some learners may find it easier to work on a colour other than white
6. Cards that have 'true' written on one side and 'false' on the other can be laminated for true / false activities
7. Active learning boards can have 'Magnetic' or 'Velcro' strips applied to the reverse side to support displaying them following brainstorming sessions etc.

Advantages of Active Learning Boards

1. Brainstorming - great for recording ideas quickly. Boards can be held up or displayed on a table / wall and ideas discussed
2. Experimentation - lots of scope for writing things down and rubbing them out again easily, so more flexible than paper
3. Inclusiveness - gives all learners the chance to get involved and answer questions on their active learning boards rather than a few dominating. Gets the shy learners involved
4. Literacy - supports learners to engage with written and verbal communication
5. Insight - helps the teacher to see at a glance how many learners are understanding what is going on as all learners answers to a question are immediately visible when they hold up their active learning boards
6. Formative assessment - facilitates the teachers to see all learner's answers / responses and get a sense of their knowledge and understanding on a topic. It helps the teacher to easily identify learners strengths and weaknesses and support them appropriately

7. Portable and convenient - can be left out on the desk all the time or taken out when required. Small, light and easy to carry around.

What you Need for an Activity

1. Active learning boards - ideally one per learner (for some activities one per pair or group could work especially if they are A3 boards)
2. Whiteboard / dry-wipe markers ideally with fine tips
3. Whiteboard eraser e.g. old sock or kitchen roll

How to use Active Learning Boards in the Classroom

Some ideas...

1. Brainstorming - learners can write answers, ideas, questions etc. on their boards and they can hold them up to show the teacher or other learners what they have written.
2. Show and tell - learners can be invited to answer a question by writing their answer on their active learning board and then placing it face down on the table. Learners can then be invited to reveal their answers together by holding their boards up high.
3. Pair work - two learners can share an active learning board between them and work together
4. Group work - learners with different colour boards sit together to discuss / share ideas etc. e.g. all learners with yellow boards sit together, all green boards sit together and so on. An alternative is to invite learners with particular numbers or letters on their boards to sit together.
5. Group work - invite learners to form groups so that they have all colours represented in the group. Roles can be assigned to different colours e.g. all learners with a green board will report back on behalf of the group, all learners with a yellow board will be the time keepers etc.
6. Questioning - invite answers from learners with particular colour boards or boards with particular numbers or letters e.g. this time I would like someone with a 'green' board to answer the question, or someone with an odd number on their board to answer etc.
7. Questioning - students can write down their own questions on their active learning boards and then partner with another learner or group of learners and see if they can answer each others questions
8. Class snap shot of key points / answers - a teacher circulates around the room and picks up a selection of active learning boards from students with ideas, answers to questions etc. Boards are mixed up a bit and then discussed with the class.
9. What learners can / cant do - during a class invite learners to write on one side of the active learning board the things that they can do / understand and on the other side of the board the things they don't understand / are struggling with. It can be useful for this activity to have a board with a different colour on each side.
10. Think, pair, share - learners brainstorm on their own first and write their ideas on their board. Each learner then pairs up with another learner and they share with each other what they have written on their boards. Each pair then meets up with another pair to make a group of four and they discuss ideas on all four boards etc.
11. Creativity - active learning boards can be used for drawing and sketching rough ideas

12. Voting - where a class vote is being taken as part of a survey, learners can write who / what they are voting for on their active learning board, hold them up and they can be counted by a nominated learner or the teacher. Alternatively learners can be asked to move to different parts of the room e.g. everyone who voted for 'X' go to this side of the room with their board, everyone who voted 'Y' go to the other side of the room etc.
13. Explaining - useful to have active learning boards on learner's tables so that when a teacher is circulating he / she can use it to show a learner how to do something.
14. Jigsaw investigation - learners are divided into groups to explore different parts of an activity e.g. planning a holiday. When each group has recorded its work on the active learning board the groups share one by one and the boards are gradually put together and displayed to show the whole picture of the classes work.
15. Recall /Recap - the teacher poses questions to learners at the start of a lesson to check for recall and understanding from the previous lesson. Learners write their responses on their active learning boards so the teacher instantly sees where learners are at
16. Envoys - one person from a group visits another group to share their group's ideas with another group. The envoy has the groups ideas written on an active learning board as an aide memoire when he / she visits the new group
17. Rough work - learners can use the an active learning board for rough work before using a copy book. Great for trying out spellings of difficult words etc. first
18. Reflection - useful at the end of class to get students to write down on their an active learning board one thing that they learnt in the lesson, one thing they found challenging, or something they would like to learn more about etc. or ask the question - what do you think I wanted you to learn today?

Management of Active Learning Boards

- Be clear about when you want learners to use an active learning board and when they are to use their note books.
- If you work with a class set of active learning boards work out a system for distributing and collecting the boards, erasers and markers
- Check that the active learning board are clean before collecting
- Set some guiding rules for learners e.g.
 - Avoid doodling
 - No comments to be written on the back of the active learning board when holding up