

## Online Engagement Warm-Ups

These introductory activities bring all students' voices into the online learning space and help students connect to one another.<sup>1</sup> These activities are meant to be playful and give everyone an opportunity for much-needed laughter and a sense of connection. They reinforce the PoP stance<sup>2</sup> that everyone has something to contribute to the learning environment, and they give students an opportunity to practice listening to their peers and sharing their ideas and experiences.

### Activity: Joys and Oys

**Goals and Purpose:** The Joys and Oys check-in brings every student's voice into the "room" at the start of each class, helping to reinforce this PoP principle. It also reinforces the PoP value that we bring our full selves to our learning with others. The check-in is also a great opportunity to practice PoP learning practices of active listening and articulating<sup>3</sup> and following group norms.

#### Steps

- 1 Teacher introduces the activity:** "The goal of this warm-up is to make sure everyone's voice is heard, similar to when you are in havruta. It will also be a time for you to practice listening to one another and taking turns sharing one at a time. This activity is called Joys and Oys. When it is your turn, you will share your joy — something positive that has happened to you today — and your oy — something not so good that has happened to you today. For example, when it is my turn I will say, 'My joy is that the sun is shining today and my oy is that it's going to snow tomorrow.' When it is not your turn, your job will be to attentively listen to your classmates; you will not respond to each other. Are there any questions?" Teacher takes questions.
- 2 a. Activity through Audio Sharing Option:** Teacher calls on each student individually to unmute and share their joys and oys. Only you and the student will be unmuted at this time. This will ensure that the student is not interrupted by background noises from another student. They should just fill in the blanks in the above sentence so each student will take roughly 20 seconds. If the audio is not clear, you can type their responses in the chat box so the whole group can see.  
**b. Activity through Google Doc Option:** Teacher, "I have shared a Google Doc with each of you on Google Classroom. It is called \_\_\_\_\_(Date) Joy and Oy. You will see a chart for your name, your joy and oy. Please go ahead and open it up and fill in the doc. When you are done, take a few minutes to read through what your classmates have added."

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<sup>1</sup> These activities are based on known improv activities. They have been adapted based on PoP principles of learning and for online use.

<sup>2</sup> In PoP, *stance* refers to the attitudes or beliefs we bring to our learning. Learning in partnership calls for particular attitudes in order to be most successful. These are attitudes that we as teachers can help cultivate in learners over time.

<sup>3</sup> PoP teaches *practices* that help students learn in partnership. *Listening* and *articulating* are two foundational and reciprocal practices for learning together: students learn to listen actively, to ask for clarification, to think out loud and to express their ideas fully.

- 3 **Wrap Up:** The teacher shares: “The ability to listen to your classmates is an essential skill for building community and encouraging all voices to be present in all group activities. This was a good way for us all to practice listening to members of our classroom community.”

### **Notes for the Teacher:**

- This is a very quick share and typically takes 20 seconds/student.
- Students can always say “pass” instead of sharing.
- The teacher should put a ground rule in place that while the joy can be about a person, the joy CANNOT be about a specific person.
- The teacher may want to let students know that it’s okay to share things that are not school specific, especially as they are not physically in school.

### **Technology Notes:**

- This activity can be done via a shared Google Doc with a line for each student to write in their joy and oy, but it’s best to do this live on a video platform like Zoom, if you are able.



## Activity: This is not a x

**Goals and Purpose:** This activity creates opportunity for student voice, helps students connect to each other in a fun way, builds creativity, and calls upon students to come up with alternative perspectives. It is an enactment of the PoP move of, “Is there another way of understanding that?” Students will use their PoP listening skills to repeat what another student has said and then use their imagination and pantomime skills to transform a common object into something else. Students will need to see each other on video to do this activity.

### Steps

- 1 Before gathering with students, be in touch with them to let them know what household object they should have on hand. For example, tell students to make sure they have a pen with them.
- 2 Teacher starts by saying, “The object of this game is to transform this pen into something else. For example, you might say ‘This is not a pen, this is my favorite drumstick.’” Teacher will move the pen up and down as if it is a drumstick hitting a drum and make facial expressions to indicate enjoyment.
- 3 Confirm that students understand the object of the game by asking a volunteer to explain what you did with the pen. Highlight descriptive language, imagination, voice (can be silly with an accent), facial expressions.
- 4 Add one additional rule: “I will call on each of you for your turn and you should then unmute. When you start your turn, make sure to repeat what the previous person said. For example, ‘This is not my favorite drumstick. It is an awesome, shiny new surfboard going over waves.’”
- 5 Take clarifying questions.
- 6 Teacher will call on students one at a time to unmute and share the sentence, “This is not a pen, it is a \_\_\_\_\_.”
- 7 Wrap up: Ask student volunteers to share what was difficult with this activity and a strategy that they used to help themselves. For example, “I was stuck for a minute because the person before me said the same thing I was going to say. A strategy I used was to pause and give myself time to think of another idea.” Then the teacher can follow up by saying, “Now that you know how to use this warm-up, can you think of another strategy you could use?” An example strategy might be that students will think of at least two possibilities so if one is taken, they have a back-up. The teacher can close with the following: “This object was made into several different objects depending on the interpretation and perspective of each individual person. This helps remind us that when we work with others, we benefit from their different ways of seeing and understanding things.”

### Notes for the Teacher:

Every student needs to bring the same readily available household object. For this example, the teacher used a pen but it could be something else like a piece of paper, a spoon, etc.

### Technology notes:

This activity depends on everyone being able to see the person using pantomime to add context to the object. Therefore, this activity depends on both visual and audio tools in working order. If a student’s audio is not audible or the visual picture freezes, the teacher can write in the chat box and explain for everyone to read. The teacher should explain this ahead of time so students know what to do if the audio or video cut out.



## Activity: Fortunately, Unfortunately Game

**Goals and Purpose:** This activity gives students an opportunity to build a story together, sentence by sentence, alternating the words “fortunately” and “unfortunately.” The activity encourages cooperation in the moment (just like in havruta and small group work) to create a product (story) and helps students see that every single voice affects the story. This activity demonstrates the PoP stance, “If all the partners work together, we will come to learning and insights (or in this case a story) unique to us.”

Steps

1. Teacher says, “Today we are going to work together to create a story. Each of you will add one sentence to the story and will alternate using the words ‘fortunately’ and ‘unfortunately’ at the beginning of your sentence.”
2. Teacher will give an example. “Student number one says, ‘I bought a balloon at the fair.’ Student number two adds on by starting with the word ‘Unfortunately’ and says, ‘Unfortunately, the balloon popped.’ The third student adds on, starting with the word ‘Fortunately,’ and says ‘Fortunately, there was money inside the balloon to buy another balloon.’”
3. The teacher continues to explain, “I will call on you to unmute so you can add your sentence. The story continues until everyone has had a chance to contribute to the story.”
4. “This activity shows how we can draw on many voices and collaborate to create a complete story. Using different voices allows the story to evolve creatively. This activity reinforces listening because you have to pay attention to what the person before you said. Additionally, you have to pay close attention to what all your classmates are sharing because your sentence has to fit the context and sequence of the story.”

### Notes for the Teacher:

Have a list of students handy that you can check off so you do not forget anyone.

You might want to reinforce the concept of “one complete sentence” since some students may stretch their sentences.

### Technology Notes:

This activity depends on the teacher being able to mute/unmute students, and functioning student audio. If a student’s audio is not audible, the teacher can write in the chat box for everyone to read. The teacher should explain this ahead of time so students know what to do if the audio or video cuts out. Since this activity builds quickly on the sentence before it, the teacher should be ready to mute and unmute each student rather quickly.

