

# SPOTLIGHT ON STRATEGIES

A variety of simple instructional strategies that incorporate the use of digital media in meaningful, effective, and practical ways.

## MYTH BUSTIN!



### BACKGROUND

MythBusters, a popular show on the Discovery Channel, tests popular myths in order to confirm or bust them. This strategy takes the idea of myth busting and applies it to content students explore through digital media. By providing students with a list of statements to “bust” or “confirm”, we are providing explicit cues about what students are about to learn. These cues help students focus on the important information we want them to walk away with, as well as help trigger what they may already know about the topic.

### EXAMPLE

- Explain to students that they will be learning about our [Sense of Taste](#)
- Have each student take out a blank piece of paper. On one side they need to write “Confirmed”. On the other side they need to write “Busted”.
- Display the following statements. Have students discuss in pairs why they feel each of the statements are “busted” or “confirmed”.
  - Our sense of taste can help save our lives
  - The average adult has 20,000 taste buds
  - Without saliva, we would not be able to taste our food
  - The five types of taste buds on our tongue detect hot, cold, bitter, sweet, and salty
- Play [the video segment](#) for students
- Have students work individually to confirm or bust the myths by stating evidence from the video segment to support their response
- Review the statements whole group and allow students to vote using their “confirmed” or “busted” paper. Have students share their evidence
- Have students come up with their own statements about the video they can have their peers bust or confirm

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## MYTH BUSTIN! CONT.



### CHALLENGE

- Select a video segment that matches your current curriculum.
- Preview the video to come up with a list of busted and confirmed statements.
- Show students the statements and have them discuss the statement in pairs
- Watch the video segment and have students “bust” or “confirm” the statements by stating evidence from the video
- Allow students to come up with their own statements to stump their peers.

### BONUS

If you have access to Discovery Education’s Science Techbook, be sure to check out the MythBusters episodes! Here is an episode on [Sound Energy: Can a Singer Break Glass](#)? Many of these episodes also include student [Peer Review Sheets](#) which allow students to analyze the MythBusters’ use of the scientific method to bust or confirm the myth.



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## 1/2 THE STORY



## BACKGROUND

How many of us have ever struggled to begin student conversation around a particular topic? They say pictures are worth a thousand words. If this is true, why wouldn't we use images as a springboard to discussion? Whether we are trying to show students that we need the whole picture to make an opinion or we are trying to encourage their minds to begin processing and making connections, images provide a quick and easy way to build a foundation for learning.

## EXAMPLE

### \* Option 1

- \* Pull up the image [Turkey Adopting a New Alphabet](#) (CDN Subscriber) and select the large image preview.
- \* Zoom in to the upper left corner, so only the image displayed above is visible.
- \* Ask students to guess what this picture is about (often students will say "farming.")
- \* After discussion, zoom out to display the entire image. Ask students how seeing the entire picture changes their perception.

### \* Option 2

- \* Pull up the image [Great White Shark Opening Mouth](#) (CDN Subscriber) and select the large image preview.
- \* Zoom in on the upper right hand corner, so that you can only see part of the shark's tail fin.
- \* Ask students what they think they are studying today?
- \* Scroll down on the image, displaying the different sections and repeat the question.
- \* Finally scroll all the way to the left so the teeth are displayed and repeat the question.
- \* Students may say "sharks," but explain "Today we are learning about multiplication and estimation. We can estimate how many teeth a shark has by multiplying the number of rows...."

## CHALLENGE

- \* Search for an image that matches your current curriculum.
- \* Select the large image preview and zoom in on part of the image.
- \* Ask students to share what they believe is the connection to the image and what you're studying.

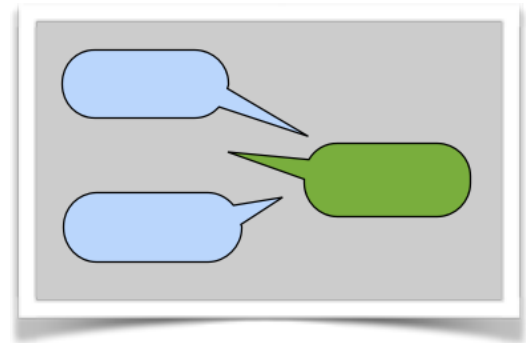
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## TABLE TOP TEXTING



### BACKGROUND

According to a report by [Pew Internet and American Life Project](#), "...texting ranks as the number one mode of communication among teenagers. Kids between the ages of 12 and 17 text a median of 60 times a day -- up from 50 in 2009." It is important that educators find creative ways to utilize kids' preferred mode of communication.

### EXAMPLE

- \* Distribute one piece of blank typing paper to each student and ask that they take out their pens, pencils, and/or markers.
- \* Inform students that they will be watching a video about the deforestation of the Amazon and that approximately every minute you will pause to give them a moment to process, reflect, and respond to the content being presented.
- \* Explain to students that each time you pause, they will be allowed 60 seconds to answer a question, make a statement, and ask a new question. They will do this by pretending they are texting their neighbor. They can draw conversation bubbles, use different colors of pens, or anything else that might add creative flair to their 'texting thread.'
- \* Play the video segment [Deforestation of the Amazon](#) ([CDN Subscribers](#))
  - \* Example
    - \* Pause at 0:43... allow students to write their texts, being certain to include a statement and a question.
      - \* Sample Student 1: People use the Amazon River to travel to their location. It acts as a type of highway. Do you think the people of Peru like all the oil drilling?
    - \* Pause at 1:23. Have each student pass his or her text to the student to his or her left. Students should respond to the questions provided by their neighbors, make a new statement, and ask a new question.
      - \* Sample Student 2: I think that if the oil drilling allows them to have more jobs, they may like it. They may be worried that people are using them for their land. I was surprised to hear that several square miles of rainforest are cut down everyday and that they even burn the little trees instead of allowing them to grow back. Do you think the people in Brazil realize the impact this could have on the environment?
    - \* Play through the end. Have students either pass their texts back to the right or continue passing the texts to the left. Students should respond to the questions provided by their neighbors, make a new statement, and ask a new question.
      - \* Sample Student 3: I am not confident that the people of Brazil realize the deep environmental impact deforestation is making. I think they are desperate for money and see that planting the crops in place of forest for food and cattle outweighs the bad. I was surprised that Brazil is one of the leading producers of soy and cattle.

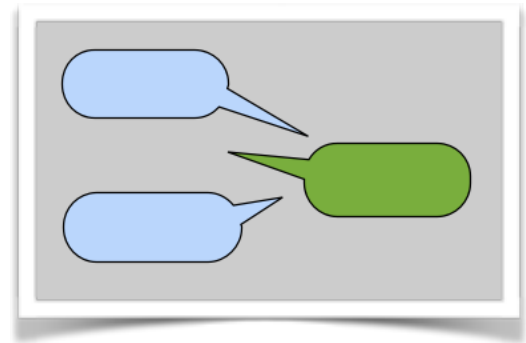
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## TABLE TOP TEXTING CONT.



### CHALLENGE

- \* Select a video segment that matches your current curriculum.
- \* Distribute one piece of blank typing paper to each student and ask that they take out their pens, pencils, and/or markers.
- \* Inform students that they will be watching a video and that approximately every minute you will pause to give them a moment to process, reflect, and respond to the content being presented.
- \* Explain to students that each time you pause, they will be allowed 60 seconds to answer a question, make a statement, and ask a new question. They will do this by pretending they are texting their neighbor. They can draw conversation bubbles, use different colors of pens, or anything else that might add creative flair to their 'texting thread.'
- \* Play video segment.
- \* At first pause, have students write a statement about something they learned and a question.
- \* At second pause, have students pass their papers to the right. They now need to provide a response to the question, write a new statement, and ask a new question.
- \* At third pause, either have students pass their papers back to the left or continue passing to the right. Repeat process until the segment has ended.



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## FOUR CORNERS



### BACKGROUND

The Four Corners teaching strategy is a cooperative teaching and learning strategy that empowers students to take part in group activities. It is a helpful strategy to use when students have been sitting and need some physical movement in order to refocus. The Four Corners strategy helps students develop listening, critical thinking, and decision-making skills in the classroom. According to [eHow](#), this strategy “works well to engage all students in conversations about controversial topics.”

### EXAMPLE

- \* Write the words “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree” in bold words on separate pieces of poster paper. Post each of the four posters in the corners of the room.
- \* Have students watch the video segment “[Our Federal Government: The Legislative Branch](#)” ([CDN Subscribers](#))
- \* Read the following statement to students: “The House of Representatives should have an equal number of representatives from each state.” Have the statement written on the board for students to refer to as they ponder the statement.
- \* Students listen to the statement and must decide if they agree, disagree, strongly agree, or strongly disagree. Give students a few minutes to think about their answers as they move to the appropriate corner of the room.
- \* At each corner, students will discuss their positions. It is important for students to collaborate with each other before it becomes a class discussion.
- \* Facilitate a group discussion to share their views on the statement. Students may say things such as:
  - \* Strongly agree: They should have an equal number so that each state gets the same amount of votes.
  - \* Strongly disagree: It would not be fair for a state with more people living there. If they have higher populations, they should have more representatives.
- \* After the group discussion, students may change their positions in the room. If a student chooses to change positions, he or she must defend his or her choice.
- \* Have students write a paragraph in their journals about their positions on the statement.

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## FOUR CORNERS CONT.

### CHALLENGE

- \* Select a topic that matches your curriculum.
- \* Find an audio file, video segment, reading passage, or image for students to explore.
- \* Write “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree” in bold words on separate pieces of poster paper. Post one in each of the corners of the room.
- \* Share the video, audio, image, or reading passage with the students.
- \* Read a statement that pertains to the content.
- \* Students listen to the statement and must decide if they agree, disagree, strongly agree, or strongly disagree. Give students a few minutes to think about their answer as they move to the appropriate corner of the room.
- \* At each corner, students will discuss their positions. It is important for students to collaborate with each other before it becomes a class discussion.
- \* Facilitate a group discussion to share their views on the statement.
- \* After a group discussion, students may change their positions in the room. If a student chooses to change positions, he or she must defend his or her choice.
- \* Have students write a paragraph in their journals about their positions on the statement.