

Activities for Small-Group Active Learning

Use the following chart to select a small-group active learning activity based on your goal for students, which might be to engage in discussion and thought, to work toward mastery, or to develop problem-solving and analytical skills.

Purpose	Activity
Discussion and thought	<p>Think-Pair-Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell students to think individually about a topic or question. • Have students pair up to compare notes. • Ask student pairs to share their ideas with the class OR have two pairs meet and compare notes (Think-Pair-Square).
Mastery	<p>Jigsaw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to class, divide your lesson into segments. • Assign each segment to a different group of students to become "experts" on the segment. • Groups prepare to teach a lesson on their segment to the class. • Each group teaches their segment. Other students listen and ask questions.
Problem-solving and analysis	<p>Analytic Teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a topic students have learned. • Form groups based on the "roles" you want addressed. Some examples of the roles might be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The proponent, who lists points of agreement with supporting evidence ○ The critic, who lists points of disagreement with supporting evidence ○ The illustrator, who identifies the most relevant and persuasive examples ○ The skeptic, who prepares substantive, challenging questions ○ The summarizer, who recaps the key points and crafts a conclusion • Set clear expectations for group work. • Provide class time for students to collaborate and prepare a presentation of the group's analysis.