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Picture Yourself

The Armada National
Outreach project

**Warm-up and starter
activities**



Classroom activity – Reaching a Consensus

'Thunks' are an excellent way of getting students talking, debating and having fun. There are no right or wrong answers, and they are a great mind warm-up exercise. For example, if we removed a zebra's stripes would the zebra be black or white? Would you rather be..., or live in...? Depending on the thunk, you could discuss the pro and cons. Example thunks can be downloaded from the internet or you could ask your students to invent some.

Take a list of thunks and ask your students to form small groups. Explain they must reach a consensus to each thunk and summarise their point of view in one sentence. They can only move on to another thunk when they have agreed and reached a consensus as a group. You could ask them to feed back to the rest of the class, taking it in turns to speak out loud. They should also describe how difficult or easy it was to reach a consensus.

Next, ask students in the same or different small groups to answer a provocation around the Armada Portrait, such as 'was Elizabeth's foundation of empire built on privateering?' (Piracy to us today.)

Give them time to think on their own and/or individually write down their responses. Then, in small groups, they should tell each other their opinions and reach a consensus. Once again, they should also describe how difficult or easy it was to reach a consensus.

Classroom activity – Making Connections

This is an excellent warm-up exercise and promotes concentration, teamwork, confidence, communication and negotiation skills. Ask your students to make small groups of three or four. They must tell each other a true short story, the funnier the story the better! After hearing all the stories in the group, they must agree on one story to report back to the class. Each group member must tell the story back to the class as if it's their own. As it is only true for one member of the group, the rest of the class must

guess who is telling the truth. Remind your students to think about how to tell the story as if it's their own. If the story is not their own, they should not laugh or look like they are trying to remember details. Remind your students to make eye contact with the audience and consider their body language and facial expressions.

Next, give the groups a topic to discuss. Once they have discussed the topic, one of the students presents their real opinion on the topic. The remaining students give an opinion that isn't their own but must speak as if it is. The rest of the class must consider which student is telling the truth.

Classroom activity – Unlikely Connections

This exercise stimulates the imagination and creativity. Ask students to form small groups and find a simple classroom object like a stapler, pen or board marker. Their task is to invent what the object signifies and symbolises and then to pitch it to the rest of the class. They must decide what the function is and how the object found its name. Why it is the best object in the world? ('Legend has it...') what unusual hidden function does it have that is not immediately obvious? The students should rehearse their pitch and present their concept back to the class. They should consider their body language, their voice and be enthusiastic about their object.

Classroom activity – Physical Introductions

This exercise could be an icebreaker for a new group and is an excellent way for them to consider how nonverbal communication conveys meaning and intent. Ask students to form small groups of equal numbers, so they can partner up. Give them a few minutes to find out as much as they can about each other, but without speaking or writing anything down. In their small groups they can mime back what they have learnt about each other to the rest of the class.

Classroom activity – Things in Common

This could be an icebreaker for a new group or a group who need to get to know each other. Ask the students to form pairs and find out at least five things they have in common, e.g. beliefs, hobbies, values or countries they have visited.

Classroom activity – Count to 30!

This exercise is all about teamwork and group dynamics. Ask your students to stand in a circle. Explain that as a group you are going to count to 30, but rather than go around the circle, any student can jump in and say the next number. If two or more students speak at the same time, the group must start again from the beginning. Ensure your students use eye contact to read the room and establish who is ready to speak. What's the highest number they can reach?

Classroom activity – Pass the Word or Phrase

Words and phrases can mean different things depending on how they are said. Ask your students to stand in a circle. Give the group a word or phrase, e.g. 'welcome!'. Explain they now have to go around the circle and say that word in as many different ways as possible to affect its meaning, considering their dynamics, speed and tone. Repeat the activity but ask students to add a gesture to consider their body language.

Classroom activity – Word Association

Ask your students to stand in a circle. One student picks a word, e.g. tree. The next person in the circle thinks of a word associated with that word, e.g. earth. If a participant hesitates, the round starts again.

Classroom activity – The Sun Shines on Who

'The Sun Shines on Who' is a warm-up game to celebrate similarities and difference. Arrange chairs in a circle with one less than there are people. Similarly, you could do this exercise by asking students to stand up or put their hands up, etc. One person in

the middle starts by saying the sun shines on anyone who (choose an attribute that the person saying it has, e.g., is wearing trainers, had breakfast, has long hair, etc.). All the people who share that attribute must swap places with someone across the circle (and not with their neighbour), leaving a new person left in the middle to repeat the process.

You can repeat this game with 'have you ever'. It must be something they have done themselves.

The Armada National Outreach project has been a partnership between Royal Museums Greenwich and Speakers Trust to support secondary schools in oracy and public speaking. The starting point and inspiration was the *Armada Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I* and her Tilbury speech.

