

QUICK



Ask your students about the significance of information. Here are some exercises to stimulate exploration of this theme.

S T A R T S



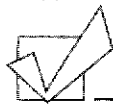
Have your class make a list of the sources of information within the school and have them rate those sources in order of importance and accuracy.

Examples might include bulletin boards, blackboards, PA announcements, written notices, flyers, teachers, friends, word of mouth, student representatives, student government, the school paper.

Have students discuss which sources they rely on for what type of information. For example, if you want to check on an assignment, whom do you ask? What factors color the sources you seek? What do you do when you think the information you receive is incorrect?



Play the gossip game. Write down a sentence on a piece of paper. First, hand it to one student with instructions to read, memorize, and then repeat orally to the next student. Students then pass the sentence around the class. Compare the last student's statement with the original sentence. What happens to information as it passes from person to person?



Play charades. Make the day's announcements without talking. How long does it take to convey information without a common language? What happens when the receiver doesn't make an effort to understand your gestures? How is the transmission of information a two-way process?



Write a chain story. Kick-start a collective story by writing an opening sentence in a notebook. It should be about an event students have seen or know about. Pass the book from student to student and instruct each person to write a sentence that builds on the information in the preceding sentence. After the book has made its way around the classroom, read the story aloud. Does it make sense? Does it have a point of view? Discuss the differences between individual and collective approaches to information gathering. (This exercise can also be done online.)



Go on an archaeological expedition. What will future generations think of us? Where will they get their information? Archaeologists study bones and broken pots and garbage. From these materials and other sources, archaeologists can develop ideas of how people lived millennia ago.

Put down a plastic sheet on the floor and bring in a big garbage can from the hallway. Dump the can's contents on the sheet. Wearing gloves, separate the trash into categories. Discuss what our garbage says about us. What will future generations think?



Money matters. The daily papers are flooded with economic indicators: Dow-Jones listings, futures, stock reports, foreign exchange rates, leading economic indicators, and other financial indicators. What do these mean?

How can you use this information? Break the class into small groups and assign each group a cost category to research:

- Food
- Housing
- Recreational goods: bikes, in-line skates, skis
- Transportation: cars, boats
- Leisure: vacations, travel
- Currency: dollars, gold, silver, savings

Ask the groups to research which factors influence the costs of the items in their categories. For example, how does the price of steel and the current value of the yen affect the cost of the new car that they are shopping for? How are these two pieces of information related? How does the cost of gasoline and the price of wheat futures affect the cost of a loaf of bread for people who live on an island? How does the NAFTA treaty and the cost of transportation affect the price of lumber and the cost of building a house? What is the effect of world politics on the exchange rates between countries? Ask the groups to create columns in which they list as many variables as possible that can affect the price of an item. Have the groups present reports, noting how much information is available via the financial pages.