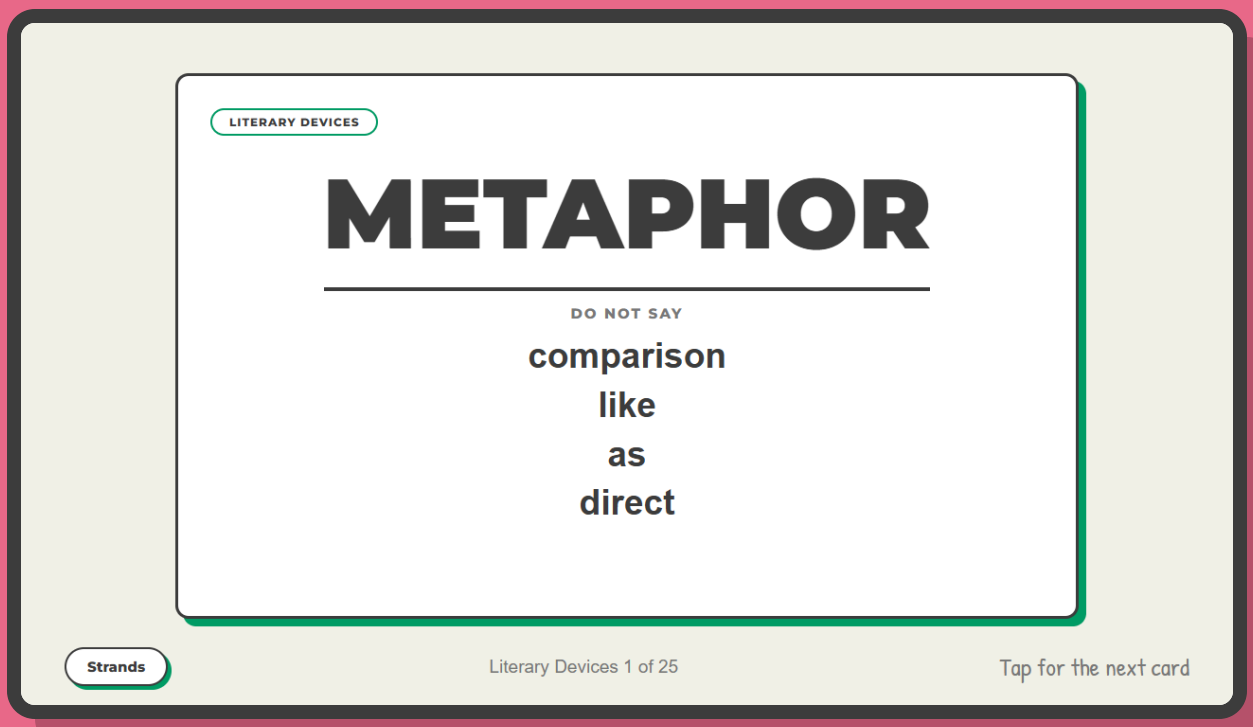
CLASSROOM REVIEW GAMES

ELA TABOO GAME

Describe It Without Saying It · Grades 6 to 12 · 100 cards · 4 strands



Play on one tablet per table, or print the cards. Both are included.

How the game works

This is a table game, not a whole-class game. The card has to stay hidden from the guessers, so it is never put on the board. A table of 6 splits into 3 pairs and shares one tablet, or one pile of printed cards.

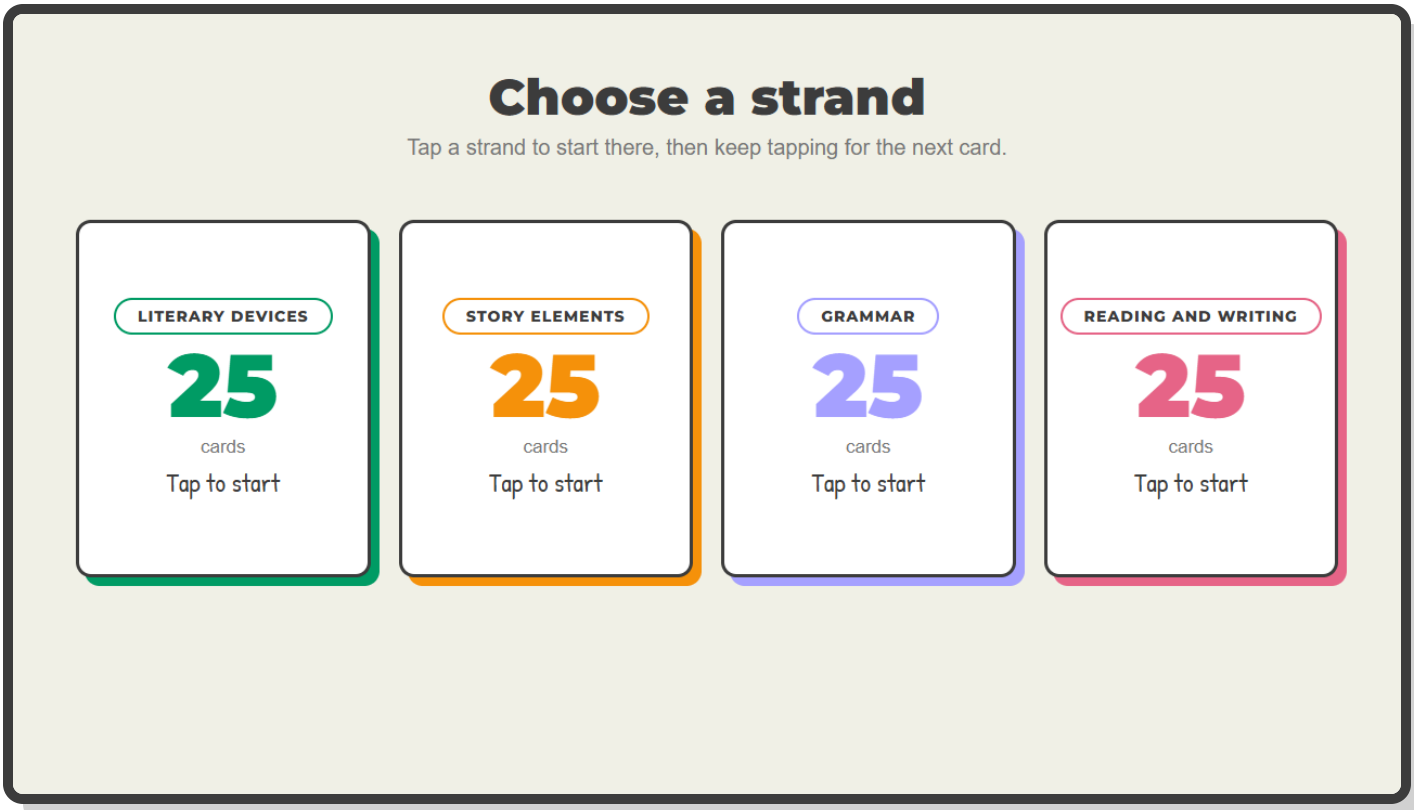
1. **The describer takes the tablet or the top card. Only that person looks at it.**
2. **A checker from another pair reads the same card. Their only job is to catch banned words.**
3. **The describer talks and their partner guesses. Every word guessed is one point.**
4. **A banned word means that card scores nothing. Move on to the next one.**
5. **After 60 seconds, write the score on the table's sheet and pass the tablet along.**
6. **Partners swap who describes each round, so everybody talks.**

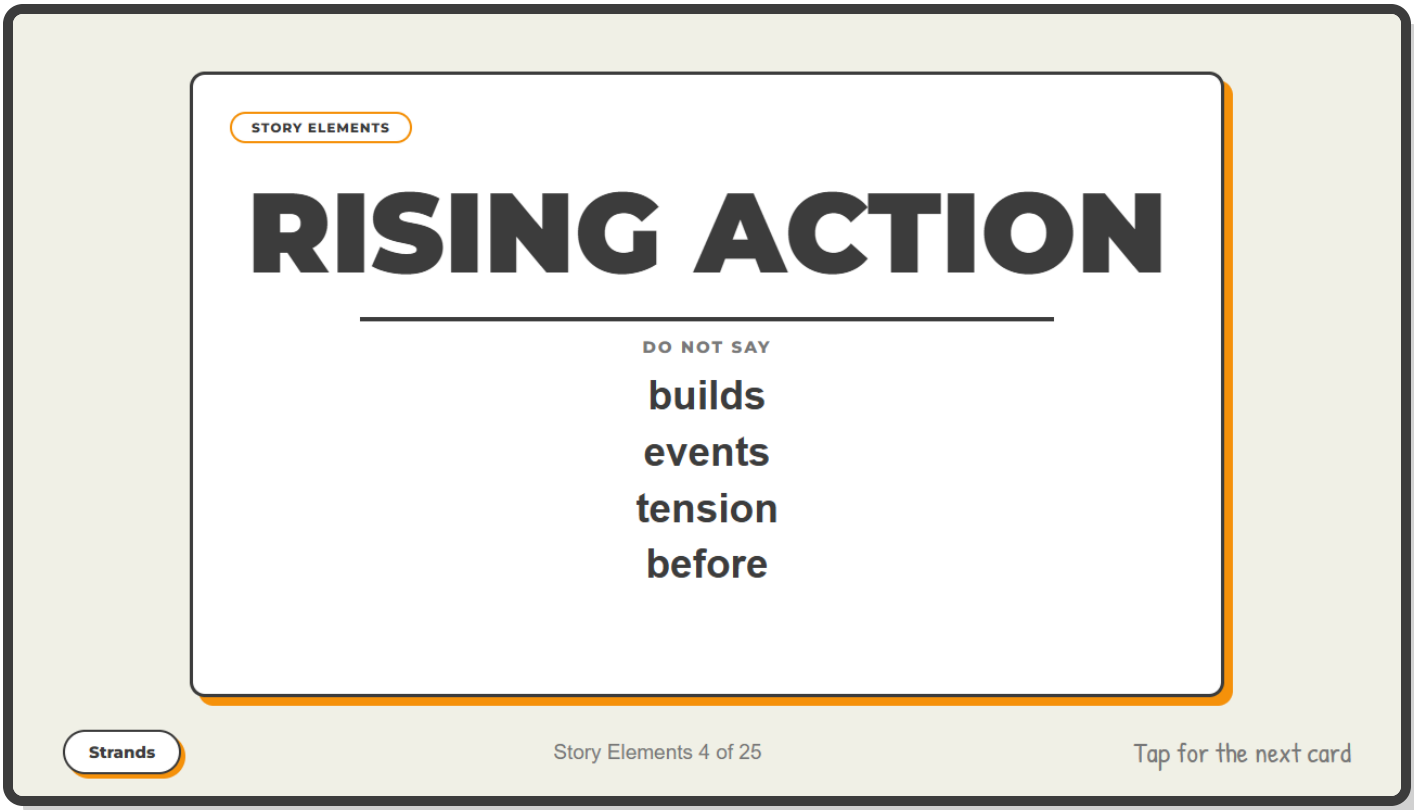
Six rounds is about 30 minutes, and every student describes at least twice.

Deal one strand to review that unit, or shuffle all 100 for a mixed game.

Scoring is peer checked, so the teacher never has to judge an answer.

The tablet deck: 100 card slides





Tap anywhere for the next card. The Strands button in the corner goes back to the menu, so the next student can switch strand without leaving the slideshow. Opens in Google Slides and PowerPoint.

Teacher rules page

ELA Vocabulary Taboo

Describe It Without Saying It · Grades 6 to 12 · 100 cards · 4 strands

Tables of 6

This is a table game, not a whole-class game

The card must stay hidden from the guessers, so it is never shown on the board. Each table of **6** splits into **3 pairs** and plays with one tablet, or one pile of printed cards, passed around the table. Every table plays at the same time.

Set up (3 minutes)

1. Tables of **6**. Partners sit next to each other, so 3 pairs per table.
2. Give each table **one score sheet** and a pencil, and either **one tablet** showing the deck or **one pile of cards** face down.
3. Pairs decide their order. Pair 1 goes first.
4. You keep the clock for the whole room: **60 seconds** a turn.

Read this out

"You are playing in pairs. When it is your turn, one of you looks at the card and describes the word so your partner can say it. You may not say the word itself, and you may not say any of the four words listed under it. Someone from another pair watches your screen and checks. You get 60 seconds. Every word your partner gets is one point. Then the tablet passes on."

A turn, step by step

1. **Describer** takes the tablet or the top card. Only that person looks at it.
2. **Checker** from another pair sits so they can see it too. Their only job is to catch banned words.
3. **Describe.** The describer talks; their partner guesses out loud. Right answer, tap next and keep going.
4. **Banned word?** The checker says "banned". That card scores nothing, move to the next one.
5. **Time.** When the 60 seconds are up, write the pair's score on the sheet.
6. **Pass.** The tablet goes to the next pair. Inside a pair, swap who describes each round.

The rules a class will test

- No part of the word: no "sounds like", no first letter, no spelling it.
- No gestures and no drawing. Words only.
- Skipping is allowed, but a skipped card scores nothing.
- The checker's call is final. Arguing costs the pair that card.

Timing for one period

Set up 3 min · 6 rounds of about 4 min (60 seconds of play plus passing and scoring) · add up and announce 4 min. **About 30 minutes**, and every student describes at least twice. Short period? Play 4 rounds.

What is in the deck

Literary Devices (25) · **Story Elements** (25) · **Grammar** (25) · **Reading and Writing** (25). Deal one strand at a time to review that unit, or shuffle all 100 for a mixed game.

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Table card: the rules students keep in front of them

At Your Table

Print one per table. Keep it in the middle where everyone can see it.

1. **One person describes.** You look at the card. Your partner guesses.
2. **One person checks.** Someone from another pair reads the same card and listens for banned words.
3. **Never say** the word, any of the four banned words, part of the word, or the first letter. No pointing, no acting, no drawing.
4. **One point** for every word your partner says correctly in 60 seconds.
5. **Pass it on** when time is up, and swap who describes next round.

Stuck?

Say what it is used for, where you would find it, what happens because of it, or what it is the opposite of. Those four openings will get you through almost any card.

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Table score sheet

Table Score Sheet

One per table. Write each pair's name, then their score for every round.

Table _____

PAIR	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	TOTAL
Pair 1							
Pair 2							
Pair 3							

Which strand each round

ROUND	SUBJECT
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Table winner

Pair _____

Points _____

Best describer at this table, voted by the table:

_____

Hand this sheet in at the end so the class winner can be worked out.

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Literary Devices: 1 of 3 card sheets

Literary Devices

cards 1 to 10 of 25

Cut on the dashed lines. Print on card stock, or back to back with the next sheet so the words do not show through.

Literary Devices

LITERARY DEVICES

METAPHOR

comparison
like
as
direct

LITERARY DEVICES

SIMILE

comparison
like
as
using

LITERARY DEVICES

PERSONIFICATION

human
object
qualities
given

LITERARY DEVICES

HYPERBOLE

exaggeration
extreme
over
million

LITERARY DEVICES

ALLITERATION

same
sound
beginning
letters

LITERARY DEVICES

ONOMATOPOEIA

sound
word
buzz
imitates

LITERARY DEVICES

IMAGERY

senses
describes
picture
vivid

LITERARY DEVICES

SYMBOLISM

object
stands
represents
meaning

LITERARY DEVICES

IRONY

opposite
expected
happens
twist

LITERARY DEVICES

FORESHADOWING

hint
later
clue
coming

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Story Elements: 1 of 3 card sheets

Story Elements

cards 1 to 10 of 25

Cut on the dashed lines. Print on card stock, or back to back with the next sheet so the words do not show through.

Story Elements

STORY ELEMENTS

PROTAGONIST

main
hero
story
central

STORY ELEMENTS

ANTAGONIST

opposes
villain
enemy
against

STORY ELEMENTS

EXPOSITION

beginning
introduces
background
setup

STORY ELEMENTS

RISING ACTION

builds
events
tension
before

STORY ELEMENTS

CLIMAX

peak
turning
most
exciting

STORY ELEMENTS

FALLING ACTION

after
events
wind
toward

STORY ELEMENTS

RESOLUTION

end
solved
wrapped
conclusion

STORY ELEMENTS

CONFLICT

problem
struggle
against
opposing

STORY ELEMENTS

POINT OF VIEW

who
telling
perspective
first

STORY ELEMENTS

FIRST PERSON

myself
telling
narrator
own

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Grammar: 1 of 3 card sheets

Grammar

cards 1 to 10 of 25

Cut on the dashed lines. Print on card stock, or back to back with the next sheet so the words do not show through.

Grammar

GRAMMAR

NOUN

person
place
thing
name

GRAMMAR

VERB

action
doing
word
tense

GRAMMAR

ADJECTIVE

describes
noun
word
modifies

GRAMMAR

ADVERB

describes
verb
ly
how

GRAMMAR

PRONOUN

replaces
noun
he
she

GRAMMAR

PREPOSITION

under
over
relationship
before

GRAMMAR

CONJUNCTION

joins
and
but
connects

GRAMMAR

INTERJECTION

exclamation
wow
emotion
short

GRAMMAR

SUBJECT

who
sentence
doing
main

GRAMMAR

PREDICATE

verb
part
tells
subject

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Reading and Writing: 1 of 3 card sheets

Reading and Writing

cards 1 to 10 of 25

Cut on the dashed lines. Print on card stock, or back to back with the next sheet so the words do not show through.

Reading and Writing

READING AND WRITING

THESIS

main
argument
statement
essay

READING AND WRITING

EVIDENCE

proof
support
facts
quotes

READING AND WRITING

CITATION

source
credit
reference
quote

READING AND WRITING

PLAGIARISM

copying
credit
stealing
someone

READING AND WRITING

PARAPHRASE

reword
own
restate
words

READING AND WRITING

SUMMARIZE

short
main
briefly
retell

READING AND WRITING

INFER

conclude
clues
between
guess

READING AND WRITING

CONTEXT CLUES

surrounding
meaning
unknown
hints

READING AND WRITING

MAIN IDEA

most
important
about
point

READING AND WRITING

SUPPORTING DETAIL

backs
examples
adds
proof

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WHAT YOU GET

- **100 cards in 4 strands: Literary Devices, Story Elements, Grammar, Reading and Writing**
- **A tablet deck (PowerPoint, opens in Google Slides) with one card per slide**
- **The same 100 cards as printable cut-apart cards, plus card backs**
- **A teacher rules page, a table card for students, and a table score sheet**
- **Color and ink-saver black and white, in US Letter and A4**

Questions or a special request? Email me any time.

carolin@classroomreview.games