

ELT RESOURCES REVIEW

Flippity.net: The Google Sheets Activity Maker that Dreams are Made of

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Summary: This article outlines some favorite activities from Flippity.net, a free online tool for creating Google Sheets activities, for both in-class and independent study.

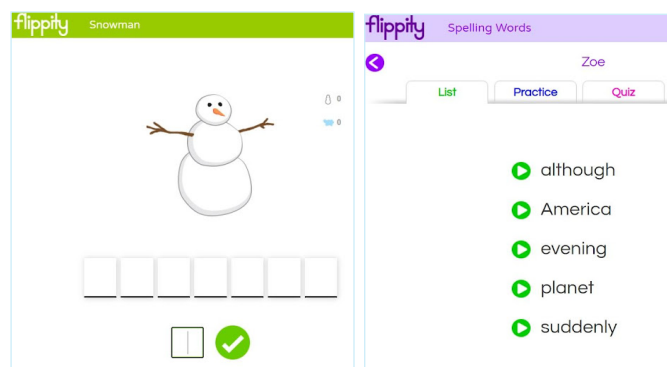
Keywords: free online tool, Google Sheets activities, in-class, independent study

Early in the shift to remote instruction, I latched onto the YouTube channel Pocketful of Primary (Emerson, n.d.), led by Michelle Emerson. She has so many great videos that helped me to add engaging and accessible activities to my mixed-level adult ESOL classes. One tool she introduced me to that has changed my teaching forever is [Flippity.net](https://www.flippity.net). Flippity is completely free and uses Google Sheets templates to create a large number of activities that teachers can run in class or have students use independently. Each activity includes a “demo” link, where you can see an example of the activity in action and an “instructions” link, which explains how to personalize it. Some templates require the user to make a copy of the Sheet in their own Google Drive, while others allow the user to input the information directly into the instructions page. Due to a Google security update in August 2021, some of the activities have limited functionality (particularly when inserting images), but the Flippity team is working on re-writing code to get them back to full function (Flippity, n.d.). In all cases, the activities are still incredibly helpful and the instructions are clear and easy to follow. Some other notable templates are Matching Game, Snowman (a version of Hangman), and Spelling Words. However, my favorites are Random Name Picker and Manipulatives.

The Random Name Picker allows users to insert text and it generates a randomized spinner, lineup, groups of various sizes, seating chart, gift exchange, and more. I have employed this tool for some of the obvious tasks: calling on students, creating groups/teams before class, and determining what order students would do presentations in. An activity I have done that works for any level is to review vocabulary from the quarter by having students spell or make a sentence using a random vocabulary word. For my higher-level students, I have plugged in all our vocabulary from the quarter, created random groups of 4-5 words, and had a small group of students write a short story using all their words. I have also used it to

practice different grammar points and even to study letters and numbers with my lower-level students. If using it to practice a skill (rather than just for names), teachers can give students the Flippity-generated link and they can use it as a study tool in their own time as well, either continuing with the activities practiced in class, or trying a new activity. And, as long as they don't have access to the spreadsheet, there is no danger of them accidentally deleting or changing any part of the activity.

The Manipulatives are equally (if not more) valuable to my current teaching practice. I used to have quite a lot of sentence strips in my in-person classes. With the Manipulatives sheet, users can input various forms of media



Flippity Snowman & Spelling Words



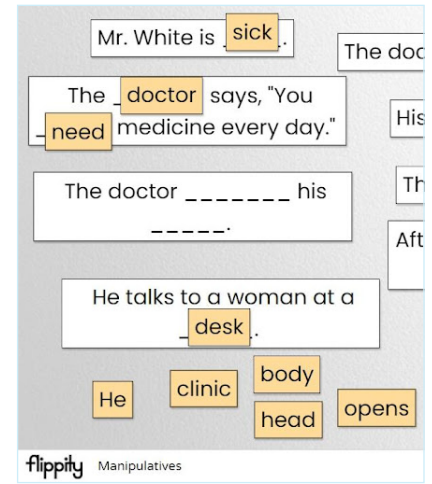
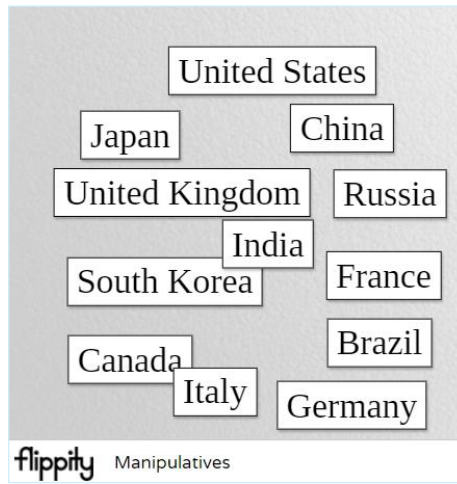
Flippity Matching Game

(text, images, YouTube videos, and/or Vocaroo recordings), and they appear like magnets on a fridge. Users can change the background to match the activity (grids, Venn diagrams, world map, etc.), and can drag and drop the magnets anywhere on the screen. Users can choose what color they would like each magnet to be, too. So, for example, I rely on this tool for mixing up our reading and having the students put it back in order. I may also take out some key words, write them on separate magnets of different colors, and ask learners to drag them into the appropriate blank space. I have also used this to organize words with long vowel sounds on one side of the screen and words with short vowel sounds on the other. I have done similar activities on Google Slides, but there are multiple reasons I prefer Flippity:

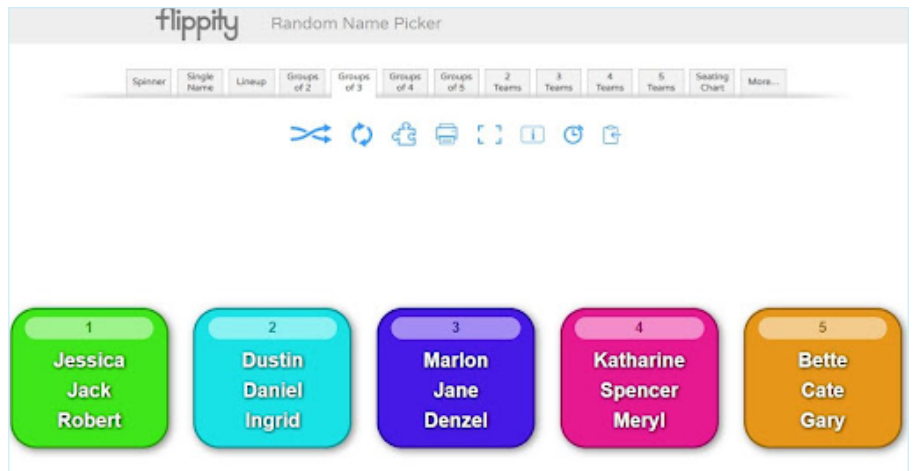
- Flippity activities reset each time the page is loaded or refreshed, so my students can keep going back to study this on their own.
- The elements can only be edited by those who have access to the spreadsheet. I do not have to worry about someone accidentally changing something and making it confusing for everyone else.
- Flippity has a simple, clear interface and thus less visual noise than a Google Slide.

One drawback of using Flippity Manipulatives over Google Slides is the inability to save one's work. If my students want to go back to see the answers they came up with in class, or if they are working independently and close the webpage, there is no way to retrieve their answers.

The Spelling Words template, however, allows teachers to pre-assign activities to specific students and have the results sent to the teacher's email upon completion. If they have the Flippity-generate link, they can just click on their name, and then complete their assignment. I relied



Flippity Manipulatives & Multi-colored and Layered Manipulatives



Flippity Random Name Picker Groups of 3

heavily on this when I was not yet using Google Classroom but wanted a way to monitor my students' homework without having them text me a picture of every assignment. There are so many other templates available as well, including Flashcards, Quiz Show, Timeline, MadLibs, and more. I always encourage colleagues to check it out, poke around, and try a few activities. I can't imagine teaching without Flippity, even as I transition back into some in-person classes. I am especially looking forward to trying the Word Search, Crossword, and Word Scramble in person so that I can project the puzzles onto the whiteboard and have students come up to the board to circle or fill in words.

REFERENCES

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LISA CHANTHAVISAY-GREENFIELD has her MA TESOL from the University of Washington. She's been an ESOL instructor at Literacy Source since 2017 and has taught at almost every level and in almost every program offered there. Her favorite part of teaching (besides having the immense privilege of getting to know so many amazing people) is the potluck at the end of the quarter. When she's not teaching, you can find her buried in a book, baking up something delicious, or hiking the trails of the beautiful PNW.