

## Theme Days

One year, our school decided to have teachers set goals for the year. I decided I wanted Theme Days in my classroom. It took me about 3 years to go from good idea to collecting the right resources to implementation.

Why Theme Days? Do students look forward to your warmups each day? Do they vary? There were so many things I wanted to incorporate into my instruction but I realized I could not do them all every day. I decided to dedicate one day a week to a certain instructional strategy.

### Mental Mondays

I enjoy circuit cards. If you do not know what they are, read my article on Circuit Cards. Reinforcing mental math, even one day a week, is important. We start the class with circuit cards. I have around 8 decks I use frequently so it is not the same deck every week. The activity is timed. Every student in the class with the lowest time (competing against my other classes) gets a participation point (see my article on Participation Points). As an alternative to circuit cards, I have also used flash cards and I call on individual students. I have a great deck of mental math statistics cards that I used in my statistics class.

### Terminology Tuesday

How often do we emphasize vocabulary? I do it once a week. I have Quizlets built with all the vocabulary words for the math chapter we are covering. I have a requirement that all students must go through the deck once and take a sample quiz (easy enough to monitor in Quizlet). At the beginning of class on Tuesday, I have Quizlet generate a matching game and project it on my CleverTouch board. Students can raise their hand and offer a pairing. Again, I use participation points as a reward. Even if the chapter has 6 sections and we are only on section 1, students need to learn the vocabulary for the entire chapter. When they know the vocabulary in advance, it makes it easier when they see the words in context. As a side note, I also give a matching (written) vocabulary quiz when we finish a chapter.

### Whimsical Wednesday

How many of your students are excited about Wednesday? Many of mine are. We play "Name That Tune" the last five minutes of class. I put together school appropriate song lists on my Spotify app and broadcast the songs through the Bluetooth speaker in my classroom. Students will walk into class and ask if we are getting whimsical today. They are quick to remind me when we are nearing the last five minutes. I use participation points to reward correct answers but you can utilize whatever incentive you like. On the rare occasion when we cannot get whimsical on Wednesday, we get Freaky on Friday. You do not have to use music on Wednesday. Just do something that will engage students in a unique way, different from the normal math routine.

### Thinking Thursday

Often	not
Often	not
Often	

More often than not – that's the answer

I put word puzzles on the board – usually 3 of them. I will not disclose (here) where I get them. However, write me from a school email and I will tell you my source. I will have students hurry to be the first one to class so they can get first crack at the puzzles. Some are easy and students get them right away. I only give a participation point to the first person to get it right. However, I always congratulate those who solve one. Watch out. If you put up a difficult one, you will have at least one student who will focus on solving it the rest of the period!

### Formative Friday

Nothing really fun here. I try to give a quiz every Friday. However, if we missed one of the previous theme days for any reason, we can make it up on this day.