



# TECH BYTES

**April 2021**



This holiday was inspired by the success of Black History Month and Women's History Month. The Academy of American Poets brought together publishers, poets, and literary organizations to discuss the usefulness of celebrating poetry in 1995. The Academy of American Poets inaugurated poetry Month in 1996.

Launched by the Academy of American Poets in April 1996, National Poetry Month reminds the public that poets have an integral role to play in our culture and that poetry matters. Over the years, it has become the largest literary celebration in the world, with tens of millions of readers, students, K-12 teachers, librarians, booksellers, literary events curators, publishers, families, and, of course, poets, marking poetry's important place in our lives. In 2021, the Academy of American Poets looks forward to celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of this annual celebration!

## RESOURCES

[Poets.org](#)  
[Poetry for Kids](#)  
[Scholastic](#)  
[Scholastic Poetry Lesson Collection](#)  
[Reading Rockets](#)  
[Read Write and Think](#)  
[25 Poetry Resources](#)

**Virtual Student Engagement Isn't Impossible**

The challenges teachers are facing this school year are incalculable. Constant schedule changes. Social distancing regulations. Another virtual platform to learn. It can all feel so overwhelming.

But one frustration sticks out the most, makes us question our belief in our teaching abilities, and makes us feel as if we no longer have an impact: Not knowing how to engage our students anymore.

In the shift to virtual learning, many of the strategies that we had previously used to draw our students' attention have fallen by the wayside.

I've found it helpful to take a step back and remember what we already know about

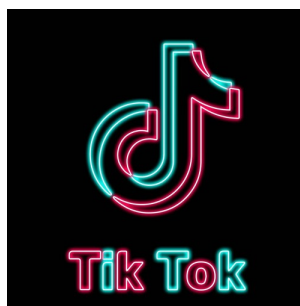


engaging learners. There are three types of student engagement: emotional, behavioral, and cognitive (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). When students are engaged in all three components, they can learn at their highest capability. By examining each of these components in action within my virtual classroom, I developed the Virtual Engagement Framework. [Full Article....](#)



<https://ditchthattextbook.com/10-sites-for-students-with-free-time-on-their-hands/>

When students are done with an assignment or project, how can they spend extra time wisely? These sites give them something academic to chew on. Here are 25 sites for students who finish early. File them away for a rainy day, if you need something stimulating for your students, pull them out! I have curated all of these sites in a Wakelet collection. Feel free to make a copy, edit as needed for your class, and assign through Google Classroom or just share the link or QR Code.



<https://tinyurl.com/2nhcz6k>

From Headache to Helpful—Teachers on Using TikTok in the Classroom

From 60-second micro lessons to brain breaks, teachers are finding creative ways to meet students where they are. Increasingly, that's on TikTok.

Despite the concerns, the platform has many positives for education.

So what does it look like to meet students where they are when that place is TikTok? According to members of the #TeachersOfTikTok and #learnonTikTok communities—common hashtags that educators use, with 7.6 billion views and 77.2 billion views, respectively—teachers are using the platform to craft bite-sized micro lessons [or assignments](#), learn from colleagues, start [TikTok clubs](#), and connect with students.

## 10 TikTok Tips for Teachers

<https://ditchthattextbook.com/tiktok-teacher/>

More and more teachers are finding their way to TikTok to watch, create and share tips, tricks, ideas and resources with their professional learning community. That includes ...

- How to organize your Google Classroom
- Ideas for learning activities that WORK
- New tech tools to try
- Templates you can copy and us

# 10 TikTok tips for teachers

- 1 # Follow the hashtags.
- 2 Use TikTok's algorithm to your advantage.
- 3 Find accounts that bring you joy.
- 4 Re-share great stuff!
- 5 Cross post on other social media.
- 6 Create your own content.
- 7 Limit your time TikTok time.
- 8 Be aware of privacy settings.
- 9 Interact with others.
- 10 Use both feeds.



## Making Project-Based Learning Inclusive in a Hybrid Setting

Moving to hybrid classrooms creates an even greater challenge for building community. In hybrid classrooms, some students never see each other in person, and some students never see their teachers in person. Project-based learning provides a powerful vehicle for creating a shared learning space, one that makes it clear that all students' voices are needed and welcome in the classroom. Being flexible and welcoming about how kids choose to participate builds trust as the kids feel valued, welcomed, and accepted.

Students get the opportunity to share parts of themselves through the questions they ask, investigations they design and carry out, and artifacts they develop and present. The more of themselves the students share; the more connections are built.

Read about four strategies to build trust using project-based learning.  
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/making-project-based-learning-inclusive-hybrid-setting>

## **Strategies for Teaching Students Online and Face to Face at the Same Time**

Many districts are making plans to begin teaching in the physical classroom after being fully online since last March. Teacher vaccinations and decreasing COVID-19 infection rates in the community are now making that move a possibility.

Many schools are considering an option that has several names—concurrent, hybrid, hyflex—and most include teaching students who are in our physical classroom at the same time we are teaching some who are online.

<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-strategies-for-teaching-students-online-face-to-face-at-the-same-time/2021/02>

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**Switching from remote to hybrid is 'one more thing' in this already stressful year, but you have the skills to tackle it all.**

Erin R. Scholes  
Education Week



<https://wonderopolis.org/>

Welcome to Wonderopolis®, a place where natural curiosity and imagination lead to exploration and discovery in learners of all ages. Each day, we pose an intriguing question—the Wonder of the Day®—and explore it in a variety of ways.

Wonderopolis was created by the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) in 2010, and it has become one of the most popular education sites today. Some highlights of the platform include:

- 2,000+ Wonders of the Day (and counting!), covering a vast range of topics—you're sure to find something that interests you!
- We've had more than 45 million visitors since the site launched and currently welcome more than one million visitors each month.
- 65,000+ comments submitted by our users, each with a personal response from Wonderopolis.
- More than 130,000 Wonder questions submitted by our users in the Wonder Bank. All of our new Wonders of the Day now come from questions from our users.
- Platform extensions including the gamified [Camp Wonderopolis](#) and the [Wonder Ground](#) educator network.

The excitement of learning that comes from curiosity and wonder is undeniable, and Wonderopolis helps create learning moments in everyday life—ones that fit in with dinner preparations, carpool responsibilities, a stolen moment between breakfast and the bus, or within school curriculum and education programs. From the very beginning, Wonderopolis has been lauded for our fresh approach to wonder and learning. Some of our awards and recognition include:

With multi-disciplinary content that purposefully aligns to Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the STEM Educational Quality Framework, and Bloom's Digital Taxonomy, we've earned a place in K-12 curriculum and in classrooms worldwide. Teachers can use the daily Wonder to jumpstart their students' critical thinking, or dip into our ever-growing collection of Wonders for content that relates to specific themes and student interests.

The possibilities for using Wonderopolis in the classroom are endless, and we invite you to find classroom resources, lesson plans, correlations to education standards, and real-

world applications in the [Wonder Ground](#), a network we created especially to support educators.

Free Wonderopolis Activity Sheets

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/Price-Range/Free/Search:wonderopolis>

<http://wg.wonderopolis.org/uploads/users/66/resources/WonderopolisActivityPage.pdf>



<https://www.tweentribune.com/>

**Join more than 200,000 registered teachers who are already putting these free Smithsonian Teacher tools to use in their classrooms.**

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- Self-scoring quizzes customized by Lexile® level
- Critical thinking questions
- Student commenting
- Espanol AP articles
- Weekly lesson plans





# 30 Free Google Drawing Graphic Organizers

ControlAltAchieve.com @ericcurts

Graphic organizers are a great tool to share information, explain a concept, or illustrate a relationship using elements including images, shapes, text, colors, and connecting lines. They can be used in education with any age group or subject area.

There are many excellent tools for creating graphic organizers. Some are installable programs, while others are online. Some are free, while other cost money. Educators and students should be encouraged to try out many different tools to determine what works best for them and for specific situations.

However, one great choice for graphic organizers is **Google Drawings**. Use the link below for **directions** on how to create graphic organizers with Google Drawings (including a **help guide** and a **recorded webinar**) as well as **30 free sample graphic organizers** that you can copy, use, and modify as needed.

<https://www.controlaltachieve.com/2017/05/graphic-org-drawings.html>

## 25 Free Google Graphic Organizers and How to Make Your Own

<https://ditchthattextbook.com/15-free-google-drawings-graphic-organizers-and-how-to-make-your-own/>

Using Google Drawings to create graphic organizers can help students gather their thoughts and customize to their needs. Sometimes, we just need some help organizing our thoughts – students AND educators.

Paper versions of graphic organizers can do a nice job of that. But by making them digital in Google Apps, they instantly become customizable. Multiple people can collaborate on them in real time. They can be shared with a link, embedded in a website or downloaded as an image file.

In short, digital graphic organizers are more versatile.

**In Google Apps, there's a highly powerful yet highly overlooked app called Drawings.** It gives users a blank canvas where they can add text, shapes, lines, etc. When done, they can save their work as image files or PDF files and can add those images to documents, slides and spreadsheets. Drawings can be the virtual page where students can gather and process their ideas.



## **FREE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE FROM GOOGLE**

<https://skillshop.exceedlms.com/student/path/56557-inspire-creativity-through-learner-engagement>

Go beyond the walls of your classroom and learn how digital tools can support creativity, promote student voice, and increase student engagement.

Unlock unlimited creative learning opportunities, whether students are in front of you or attending remotely. Go beyond the walls of your classroom and learn how digital tools can support creativity, promote student voice, and increase student engagement. Develop new ways to deliver instruction through learning models and digital tools while infusing creativity to support learning anywhere.

### **What Will You Learn?**

**By the end of this course, you will be able to...**

- Cultivate creative learning experiences
- Personalize learning through Project-Based Learning (PBL)
- Create a PBL unit or lesson

- Develop independent learning skills in learners
- Provide opportunities for learners to follow their interests
- Showcase student work
- Personalize learning with a Blended approach
- Use tech and face-to-face teaching to engage learners
- Create video content for learners
- Enhance learning experiences with Google Arts & Culture
- Incorporate CS First across all content areas
- Develop lesson plans with Chromebook App Hub
- Incorporate Google Earth Studio into lessons
- Incorporate Google Timelapse into lessons
- Use AR/VR tools in the classroom
- Increases student voice and agency with Blogger
- Encourage collaboration using Google Meet + Jamboard



<https://www.loom.com/education>

[Loom](#) provides both a desktop app and Google Chrome extension for video recording and sharing.

**Online Review:** [4.6/5](#), noting the ease of use as an essential feature.

**Price:** Loom's Education plan allows you to record videos up to 45 minutes long and is **100% free for verified teachers!**

When you create an account, you will gain access to your unique “workspace,” which acts as the home for all of your recordings.

In your workspace, you can organize your videos with folders in your library, which makes it easy to locate any recording you may need to send to students.

Loom for Education has many features for educators, including:

- Screen and camera recording
- Custom recording dimensions
- Drawing and mouse emphasis tools
- Capability to insert calls-to-actions and next steps for your students
- Viewer insights on who watches and engages with your videos
- Options for viewers to comment and submit emoji reactions
- Ability to password-protect videos

***If you're interested in using Loom, check out this article: [How to Use Loom for Education](#)***