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50 Spanish Fireballs

Mind-Blowing Activities to ENGAGE, ENERGIZE & IGNITE Every Student!

BY Wade Petersen

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About the Author

Wade Petersen has taught French I, II, III, IV; freshman English; AP Composition; AP Literature; American Literature; World Literature and Creative Writing. He has taught at various high schools in Iowa, including Albia High School, Hampton-Dumont High School and West Des Moines Southwoods Freshman High School.

After growing up in Hartley, Iowa, Petersen earned his B.A. in French and English from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. During his undergraduate years, he studied at the Alliance Française in Paris through the Alma College Study Abroad Program. He earned his master’s degree in Effective Teaching, Learning and Leadership from Drake University.

Petersen has served as president of the Iowa chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French. He has also served in leadership roles within the Iowa World Language Association, including President during the 2010-2011 school year. Petersen’s presentations continue to earn rave reviews, helping him earn the “Best of Iowa” designation four times at the Iowa World Language Association Conference. He has presented various workshops in Iowa, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan and Nebraska, and he has served as a keynote speaker at state conferences. Wade Petersen was named Iowa’s 2004 High School Foreign Language Teacher of the Year.

Wade Petersen has published over 30 products with Teacher’s Discovery, which include books, poster sets, games and flashcard sets. His best-selling materials for world language teachers are creative, useful and practical for any classroom. Wade’s publishing philosophy clearly connects with his motto that

Creativity Speaks Volumes!
Spanish Fireballs are Wicked Cool!

What is a Spanish “fireball”? Let’s just call it a classroom “warm-up” with a few extra degrees of heat and excitement. One of the great perks of teaching a world language is the opportunity to teach students another language, and to have a blast in the process! Students probably get to do more interesting activities in your Spanish class than any other class. Spanish teachers know that throwing some occasional curve balls to have fun with the language not only helps our students process their learning, but also creates long-lasting memories. This book is full of new activities that will spice up your already fun classroom. So, turn up the heat on your students’ learning by pitching them a creative twist. How will your students react if they get hit with one of these fun-filled “wicked cool” fireballs? Get ready for a home run!

The goal of each of these activities is to get every Spanish student off the bench and into the game. We know the “major league” students who will eagerly volunteer to answer every question, participate in any dialogue and complete each assignment. What about the “minor league” players in the classroom who try to avoid answering questions, refuse to participate in dialogues or complete an assignment? The philosophy of each activity in this book is to engage, energize and ignite a fire in every student in your Spanish classes. Some activities are more competitive than others, while some simply require participation from every student.

Only a few of the fireball activities are content-specific. Many allow teachers to adapt the game to a wide range of vocabulary, grammar and cultural studies. The fireballs are also labeled by target levels (beginning, intermediate, advanced). Even though some are definitely geared for beginning levels, that does not mean your advanced Spanish class couldn’t use a good review of material they learned in Spanish I or II. You will also notice that my creative names or phrases used for the fireball activities do not always translate directly from English to Spanish.

Some activities require little preparation from the teacher while others may require a lot (writing review questions, obtaining necessary supplies, etc.). Remember that any investment of your time will pay off for years to come. Likewise, teachers cannot add all of these games and activities to their curriculum in just one year. Try a few of these each year with your Spanish classes. Once you try a fireball activity, be sure to keep notes on how well the activity worked in your class (along with ideas to change or adapt it for the future). Finally, have fun! Get wicked cool by throwing a red-hot fireball at your Spanish classes!
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El revoltijo
“Colored-clothing Jumble”

Once students have learned their colors and clothing items in Spanish, it is time to put them to the test! This is an effective activity to get students to work together for a common goal.

1. Divide the class into teams of three or four students.
2. Write 10 to 12 colors in a random jumble on the board.
3. On another area of the board, write the same number of clothing items you wrote for colors (12 colors = 12 clothing items).
4. Each team now makes a list that pairs each clothing item with a color. Students must write each combo in a grammatically correct phrase (una falda anaranjada). Do not tell students that these lists will be used in a scavenger hunt yet; otherwise they may put together very easy-to-find or very difficult clothing-color combinations.
5. Once all teams have created their lists, have them switch lists with another team; no team may have its own list. The lists become each team’s “scavenger hunt” list for the rest of the activity.
6. Reveal a stack of magazines that you have hidden in a box or under a tablecloth and inform students that they will be taking part in a scavenger hunt using the clothing-color lists. Students will “hunt” through the magazines for pictures of the clothing-color combinations on their lists.
7. Have 2 team members come forward to take several magazines, scissors, tape, and a large piece of construction paper and return to their teams.
8. When students find items from their lists, they will cut the picture from the magazine and tape it to their poster. Students must label each picture they cut out in Spanish, making sure the clothing and color phrase is grammatically correct and spelled correctly. Have students sign their names by the pictures they add to the poster to ensure that each team member contributes.
9. Give students approximately 15 minutes to search for items. Teams receive one point for each item they find; the team with the most points wins.

Options and Suggestions:

• Use classroom vocabulary instead of clothing for search items and use old school supply catalogs or advertisements instead of magazines
• Display the posters in your classroom for vocabulary reinforcement.
TEACHER NOTES

What Worked…

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What I’d Do Differently…

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¡Ruede rápidamente!
“Rock and Roll”

This quick-paced activity gets your students thinking about common Spanish words of varying lengths. Using the dice as an element of chance adds excitement and challenge.

1. Divide the class into three teams. Position teams at the back of the classroom so team members can race to the board relay-style. Tape a line on the floor behind which all students must stand.

2. Designate an area of the board for each team. In each team’s area, provide a chair with a die for rolling, tape a piece of 8 x 11 paper to the board, and give each team a marker. Students will write their responses on the paper rather than the board so teams cannot “steal” each other’s answers.

3. Signal for the relay race to begin. At this point, the first student from each team races to the board and rolls the die. According to the number rolled, the student must write a Spanish word with that same number of letters on the team’s paper.

4. When finished, the student races to tag the next team member, who races to the board to repeat the process. Encourage students who are waiting their turn to think of Spanish words they can use for the different possible die rolls. Words cannot be repeated so students should come up with several possibilities.

5. To win, a team needs 21 Spanish words as follows:
   • one one-letter word
   • two two-lettered words
   • three three-lettered words
   • four four-lettered words
   • five five-lettered words
   • six six-lettered words

Award a prize to members of the winning team.

Activity Level: Beginning
Activity Duration: 10 minutes
Grammar/Vocabulary Focus: general vocabulary
Required Supplies: 5 dice, paper, markers
TEACHER NOTES

What Worked…

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What I’d Do Differently…

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