

ROCKET UP YOUR CLASS!

**101 high impact
activities to start, end
and break up lessons**



Dave Keeling Edited by Ian Gilbert



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Introduction

Welcome one and all to a *Rocket Up Your Class*, a book designed purely as the intellectual equivalent of a ‘firework up the arse’ for any lesson.

Whether you’re looking for a creative opening, energising middle or big finish to a lesson, then just pick out a relevant game, exercise or idea from this little book of mini-rockets and watch the sparks fly.

Failing that, just leave the room as you found it and head for your local hostelry where Dawn will be waiting with a patient ear, a packet of crisps and your usual.

All the ideas contained within this book have come together over ten years of experience, working the length and breadth of the country with thousands of students in hundreds of schools.

Some of the rockets are of my own devising, some have been donated and the rest have been simply nicked under the user-friendly title of ‘knowledge sharing’. But all have been deployed with two things in mind, which are to shamelessly entertain whilst at the same time engage young people in the creative arena in order to prove, as the Greek philosopher Socrates once stated, ‘Life and learning should be a festival of the mind’.

Unfortunately, for the majority of people this statement simply isn’t true in relation to their days at school.

Put your hand up now if your school experience was a FESTIVAL OF THE MIND!!!!!!?

Perhaps a small garden fete of the mind!!!!?

Or maybe a wet camping holiday for two of the mind?



If you did raise your hand to the first question, you were either lucky enough to get into Hogwarts or you don't get out enough; either way it's a hugely uncommon response.

I, like the majority of people I meet, did not have a festival of the mind during my school experience. I had fleeting moments but, like many others, I was waiting for someone to create the festival for me.

Every day I would enter the gates waiting for the school to inspire me, for the teachers to entertain me, and when they didn't, I was very quick to point the finger and say:

- School's boring!
- Teachers are rubbish!
- Lessons are c**p!

I took no responsibility for my education whatsoever.

So now my role as a Stand Up Educationalist is to empower and enable young people to take action, and therefore take control of their learning, so that they may leave education having already begun to explore and develop the skills required not just to cope with the 21st century but also to be happy and successful within it.

With that in mind, let the festival commence!!

For each activity, game or idea, I will suggest where I think it will best complement a lesson and explain in what way it will advance the students' experience.

Picture the scene. It's Monday morning, first lesson. It's raining outside and you've got bottom set maths for an hour and all you have for company and support is a lukewarm Pot Noodle and a lesson plan hastily written on the back of a Post-it.

You have three choices:

- 1 Run

Introduction

2 Eat the Pot Noodle and run

3 Plough on regardless

Or you could dip into your copy of this book and start your lesson with a quick game of *Thumb Wars*, *Anagrammer* or chuck in a *Thought Grenade*.

You may wish to break it up with an all-out round of *Bagsnatcher* or make it unforgettable with *Quizzical* and *Pass the Exam*.

Or end it with *School Disco*, *Homework Lottery* or *Strictly Write Quickly*.

Whatever the session, whatever the mood, there's a mini-rocket to suit any lesson, anytime, anywhere, that will get the creative juices flowing and engage even the most reluctant pupil/teacher.

So here we go with 101 ways to start, end or break up a lesson, and where best to begin but at the beginning.

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Homework Lottery



: **KHQ** Play at beginning, draw at end.



: **K** Every student would love the idea of getting out of homework.

So why not make a virtue out of it? Having a lottery such as this will guarantee that you have full attendance every lesson, because no kid would want to miss out on the opportunity of a night off. It will help to create a buzz and excitement around the lesson, not to mention that the money accrued over time can be used to pay for an end-of-term party.



R You will need a pot and a book of raffle tickets.

Each student, or those that want to, puts their name (or even 20p if you're in that sort of school) in the pot and takes a raffle ticket.

At the end of the lesson the teacher draws out a ticket. The winner, just for that night, is let off from doing their homework. At least this way you know that there's going to be one student who loves your work. (And if you are in that sort of school, you've just raised

some money for the PTA cheese and wine evening.)

21

Student Exchange



: **KHQ** Beginning, middle or end.



: **K** To help in the development of the students' approach to teamwork, communication skills and confidence with others and to re-enforce the idea that the person they are now working with may not be their best friend, but they will still have many things in common. Lets face it, even in the working world we sometimes have to work with people whose company we may not enjoy, but this shouldn't mean that we can't still have a productive working relationship.



R Explain that the students have two minutes to sit with someone they don't normally sit with and then find out at least three things that they have in common.

The Rockets

When the task is complete, the pairs then quickly feed back their findings. It is then up to your good self whether the students remain where they are for the rest of the session or return from whence they came.

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Desk Jockey



: **KHQ** Beginning.



: **K** To motivate the students and help them to consider what kind of music may fire them up, relax them or aid their concentration. This exercise also introduces students to many differing styles of music.

After all, music is one of the fastest ways to change the mood of a room, closely followed by balloon animals and swearing.



R Before the lesson, prime a student on the style of music required – i.e. is it to fire them up or to calm them down? Then allow the student to pick a relevant piece of music to play next lesson.



The Rockets

Do not be alarmed if the music chosen is one you have never heard of and be quick to cover any gratuitous swearing by repeatedly shouting phrases such as Shabba, Com'on, Break it down, Shammo and Stop ... Hammer time!!

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Teach Us Something We Don t Know



: **KHQ** End.



: **K** Sometimes it's refreshing to let the students know that you are more than just a teacher and that you do indeed have a life outside the science block, or that being a PE teacher consists of more than just blowing whistles and picking on the lazy kids.

It's important to bring a bit of outside inside, to let them see you being human and openly embracing the life of a learner. (Go on, you know you want to.)

“There are so many ideas here that are guaranteed to improve the classroom atmosphere. I think absolutely every teacher will find something new and improving in this book.”

Johnny Ball, Science Writer

If you are looking for a creative opening, energising middle or big finish to a lesson then this book provides over a hundred activities which have been developed over ten years and have worked with thousands of students in hundreds of schools.

Start your lesson with a quick game of *Thumb Wars*, *Anagrammer* or throw in a *Thought Grenade*. Break a lesson up with a round of *Bagsnatcher* or make it unforgettable with *Quizzical* and *Pass the Exam*. Bring the lesson to an end with *School Disco*, *Homework Lottery* or *Lesson Trailer*.

This book is for the curious and enthusiastic and for anyone who is stuck in a learning environment wishing they were somewhere else. The activities are designed to develop communication, teamwork, creative thinking, confidence, and provide the dopamine release required for effective learning. This book shamelessly entertains whilst at the same time engaging young people in the creative arena by putting a *Rocket Up Your Class!*

“A brilliant book loved by teachers and students - and not many educational books can claim that!”

Jim Smith, Assistant Headteacher, Clevedon School and co-creator of Learning Bug

“Dave’s approach motivates all students to think and learn and doesn’t simply teach to the 20% who are already motivated.”

Esther Sayers, Curator for Young People’s Programmes, Tate Modern



Dave Keeling, a 6’ 2”, self-confessed Ginger Ninja, has been a professional actor and a ‘stand-up’ educationalist (or kinaesthetic and passionate) for 10 years working the length and breadth of the country with teachers, pupils and parents.



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