

How do you use Breakout in your Classrooms?  
Tips from four Ontario teachers!

## Breakout! on TV

“In general, I found the content mature enough for Grade 9 and the design/structure of the episodes “cool” enough. The editing and use of sound in particular is catchy, and establish a quick enough pace. You’ve used lots of little hooks visually to engage the young adolescent.”

### 1. What are the curriculum links?

#### ENGLISH

“In English, I’d want to deconstruct the episodes (and games) as media texts. For example, we’d examine the relationship between purpose, audience, text (form, codes and conventions used), and production, with a critical lens.

Each video has the potential to be linked with any language or math strand. For example, from the grade 6 Reading curriculums there are multiple connections such as these specific expectations;

**Analysing Texts** 1.7 analyse increasingly complex texts and explain how the different elements in them contribute to meaning

**Responding to and Evaluating Texts** 1.8 make judgements and draw conclusions about ideas in texts and cite stated or implied evidence from the text to support their views

**Point of View** 1.9 identify the point of view presented in texts; determine whether they can agree with the view, in whole or in part; and suggest some other possible perspectives “

#### MATH

Grade 6 Math – Number Sense and Numeration

- solve problems that arise from real-life situations and that relate to the magnitude of whole numbers up to 1 000 000
- estimate quantities using benchmarks of 10%, 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100%

#### Curriculum links by theme:

##### Water

The overall grade 4 science curriculum for “Understanding Life Systems” overall expectations are covered within this video.

- analyse the effects of human activities on habitats and communities;

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- investigate the interdependence of plants and animals within specific habitats and communities;
- demonstrate an understanding of habitats and communities and the relationships among the plants and animals that live in them.

Other Curriculum links:

- grade 7 science (interactions within ecosystems)
- grade 7 geography (patterns in physical geography)
- grade 8 science (water systems)
- grade 8 geography (patterns in human geography)

### **Education**

Two of the Grade 6 Social Studies “Canada and the World” overall expectations are met here;

- use a variety of resources and tools to gather, process, and communicate information about the domestic and international effects of Canada’s links with the United States and other areas of the world;
- explain the relevance to Canada of current global issues and influences

Other Curriculum links:

- grade 7 geography (patterns in physical geography)
- grade 8 geography (patterns in human geography)

### **HIV/AIDS**

Grade 7 Health; Healthy Living

- identify the methods of transmission and the symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and ways to prevent them;

Other Curriculum links:

- grade 7 geography (patterns in physical geography)
- grade 8 geography (patterns in human geography)
- grade 8 science (cells, tissues, organs, systems)
- grade 8 Health (growth and development)

### **Child Rights**

Two Grade 5 Social Studies Canada and the World overall expectations are met;

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- use a variety of resources and tools to gather and analyse information about government processes, the rights of groups and individuals, and the responsibilities of citizenship in Canada, including participation in the electoral process;
- identify concrete examples of how government plays a role in contemporary society and of how the rights of groups and individuals and the responsibilities of citizenship apply to their own lives.

Other Curriculum links:

- grade 7 geography (patterns in physical geography)
- grade 8 geography (patterns in human geography)

### **Sustainable Living**

This could be used for Grade 5 Science Understanding Matter and Energy, specifically this overall expectation;

- evaluate the social and environmental impacts of processes used to make everyday products;

Other Curriculum links:

- grade 7 science (heat)
- grade 7 geography (patterns in physical geography)
- grade 8 geography (patterns in human geography)

### **Endangered Species**

All of the Grade 6 Biodiversity expectations are covered;

- assess human impacts on biodiversity, and identify ways of preserving biodiversity;
- investigate the characteristics of living things, and classify diverse organisms according to specific characteristics;
- demonstrate an understanding of biodiversity, its contributions to the stability of natural systems, and its benefits to humans

Other curriculum links:

- grade 7 geography (patterns in physical geography)
- grade 8 geography (patterns in human geography)

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These are just a few of the ways that the videos could support a variety of curricular areas. With further expansion, it would be easy to use a video for a foundation piece for a launch of a fully integrated unit addressing many expectations. The material allows the students to see authentic use of the curriculum on the fundamental knowledge level, and the social implications brought forth by these examples. This allows strong connections to be established with the Character Education and Equity programming utilized in our schools.

**2. How would you use these videos in your classroom?**

“I’d use each episode to explore and identify key ideas and issues, and to have students respond orally and in writing. I want them to look at content but also form – how are the episodes constructed, what modes of expression are used, etc.”

“Use of these videos in the classroom would depend on the curriculum expectations you are teaching. I would use them to introduce a topic, start a discussion, and supplement a text with science and geography. For the language expectations I would use them to address reading comprehension strategies such as inferring or main idea. You could also use them for any form of writing like persuasive or report writing. There are also endless ways I could use these texts in the classroom to address the media curriculum. “

“The videos would be used as launch vehicles to present information to the students in a way that would be engaging. It would encourage enquiry based learning; to expand on what was presented and to develop ideas further. In conjunction with their own research and through multiple viewings, students would develop greater understanding of the topics and be able to develop or suggest broader directions of action, which may include initiating their own courses of action.”

“The videos will be used as a modeled text for presenting research and media production. Students will understand presenting a big idea and supporting it with subset ideas and correlating data.”

**3. Would you use each episode in its entirety or as segments?**

“In some cases, and certainly with younger or struggling students, I’d break the episodes into segments. We’d view the segment, identify key elements, view the next and so on; at the end, we’d watch the episode in its entirety and discuss it as a collection of a range of related ideas. This would then allow for different understandings and point of view to be identified and addressed.”

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“I would use each episode in its entirety and in segments depending on the task or outcome I would be looking for.”

“In the initial introduction of the topic, it would be beneficial to slowly expose the students to the information contained with the different segments in chunks. This would allow students to develop their own ideas about the topic and courses of action available to address the issues presented. Students could then view the segments that weren’t shown and could contrast and compare their own ideas and solutions with those of others and the “Breakouters”. They could evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes.”

**4. What kind of lesson plans could be created from each episode?**

“In English, I’d use the episodes as part of a range of theme-based lessons, activities and tasks. For example, we might consider Global Citizenship, Challenges Facing Youth, Social Activism, or Cultural Connections as over-riding themes. I would either start with the Breakout episode or a clip from it, and then fold in other kinds of texts such as short stories, essays, poems, news articles, web sites, etc. that were related – or vice versa (i.e. I’d create a Text Set). From the initial set of texts, the students would launch into their own research – as small assignments initially but also probably as projects that build on the smaller investigations. For the project, their task (in pairs, groups or solo) would be to create a multimodal report (narrative, expository, poetic, and descriptive elements) to present to class. The use of multi-media would be encouraged, both in the resources consulted and the students’ own responses. Students would keep a Journal or Work Diary of some kind.”

“We feel that the episodes would be best used as foundations for cross-curricular units as opposed to individual lessons because the topics offer rich dialogue. A single lesson would not allow for deeper exploration and understanding of the ideas presented which could perhaps be seen as weak or underdeveloped pedagogy.”

**5. Would you consider asking your students to research these topics and take action?**

“Not “asking” but requiring them to do research, with some choice of: topic within the theme, partners, and the form of their project. For example, some students might want to make a video; some might prefer a scrapbook or PowerPoint; some might like to produce a text for children. The action part would be having them present their projects beyond the classroom, for example to other Grade 9 classes or better yet, to students in Elementary classrooms, such as in FOS feeder schools. We’d probably consider posting any digital works, like blogs, websites or videos, on line.”

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“I would definitely consider asking students to research these topics and take action.”

“Significant research would ideally be required to fully develop student understanding and comprehension of the topics presented. One of the significant issues facing this research phase is the availability of material that is both age-appropriate and levelled for comprehension. The website would be an excellent vehicle for additional links to facts, organizations, texts, and strategies for student-focused involvement.”

**6. Do you use video in your classroom?**

“I often use video in my classroom.”

“Video is often used as ways to support teachings and as alternate to written texts in order to engage students through multiple teaching/learning styles.”

“I’d suggest a Teacher’s Guide at the outset to get at the specific details of the curriculum expectations within a subject area (why use Breakout to teach); instructional strategies (how to teach using Breakout); comprehension strategies for literacy development (how to learn through/while reading, oral communication, writing, and media study related to the use of Breakout); related resources (i.e. create a Text Set); a list of possible assignments and performance tasks; and extensions.”

**7. Would you encourage your students to create their own videos and upload to CBC?**

“Students are quite likely to share any significant digital media they’ve produced on sites like YouTube or on their Facebook pages anyway, so they no doubt would welcome the opportunity to post their work in a place where other students (and friends, relatives) could see it. Teachers could find ways to encourage this, such as by building in marks for publishing, which is an expectation in English.”

“I would encourage students to create their own videos but there are some concerns about them posting things online.”

“Publishing and celebrating student work is key upon completion. Incorporating media production is an excellent way to present student work. There is however, concern regarding uploading video that visibly show students due to privacy concerns and laws. Alternative ways of sharing work could include voice only (podcasts), videos that do not show students, web links, blogs and other multi-media presentations.”

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## **Breakout! Online**

### 1. Do you see games as a way to engage your students?

“Games are very engaging. They’re under-used in schools in part because they tend to be less about content and more about functionality. Many teachers are eager (more so in Elementary or in Secondary CommTech) to use games, including computer/online games. But again, teachers need solid lessons or ideas for their use to validate their decision to include them in their instructional practice. Few will take risks, and few know how to use them in an educational context, in the service of pedagogy. I only know a couple who have tried – they usually make the link to curriculum through the mode of expression (e.g. narration for English), content (e.g. Spores for Science), or critical media literacy (calling into question issues of power, representation and ideology, which has its place in Social Studies and English).”

“Yes I see games as a way of engaging children.”

“Games are excellent for increasing student engagement. Students are encouraged to play with manipulatives to activate self-directed learning.”

### 2. What do you see the learning outcomes of the online games to be?

“There can be diverse outcomes, from meeting curriculum expectations to fostering learning skills such as collaboration. Like any resource or tool, the outcomes for using a game in the classroom are context-specific and driven by skills and knowledge development, and by parent, student, teacher, school, and system needs. In some cases (in early grades or with a student who has Special Needs), improved eye-hand coordination would be a valid outcome. Mostly, the outcomes would be tied to the idea of differentiation learning – integrating diverse and appropriate modes of instruction, providing multiple and relevant ways for student to access information, giving opportunities to articulate their understandings, and establishing an inclusive and “authentic” learning environment that acknowledges, includes and validates students’ out-of-school learning experiences.”

“Ideally, students will have a deeper understanding of the teaching concepts. The video clips will encourage students to have greater focus when watching videos.”

### 3. How can they be linked to the curriculum?

“The cell defense game can be linked to the science curriculum at various grade levels.”

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“The games can be used before during and after lessons to support the connected curriculum expectations. They can introduce students to new ideas, reinforce concepts, and used as culminating activities. They can be linked to grade 5 and grade 6 science strands.”

**4. How would you use them in the classroom?**

“As instructional tools; as sites for critical media literacy development; as ways for students to express their understandings and demonstrate their meeting of curriculum expectations; as platforms for collaborative learning; to launch inquiry; to explore career development.”

“To engage, stimulate, provoke thinking and discussion.”

“Students are expected to be exposed to a range of texts and learning experiences, and to critically assess and evaluate them – both for their content bias but also their form (how do they embed values and beliefs?). As a strategy, games largely fit into the “before” aspect of a lesson or topic exploration, as a way to generate ideas, access prior knowledge, stimulate interest, etc. If the game is content-driven, such as Spores or Sims, its use can be very closely linked to curriculum expectations for content, obviously.”

“I would use the cell defense game to explain the concepts of viruses, how they multiply and how hard they are to get rid of. (science, health).”

**5. Does the interactive aspect of the games enhance the learning experience?**

“Of course. It’s also the Zeitgeist. The games you are developing look like they’ll provide interactive learning but it’s too early to see what kinds and to what extent. The online games that students tend to like are collaborative, somewhat familiar but also fresh, fun, and challenging. They meet their cognitive as well as social needs. So if a game seems too preachy or educational, they will turn off fast because it doesn’t fit into their developmental stage.”

“The fact that the games are interactive definitely enhances the learning experience.”

“Our experience is that the students enjoy playing online games and that it does enhance the students’ experience with new concepts.”

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**Breakout! Live**

**6. Would you encourage your school to participate in Breakout! Days?**

“Social/Global Activism is all the rage in schools right now, migrating up and down across the divisions. The timing of Breakout is very good. I also think schools want to personalize and localize their global awareness and activism and maybe there’s a way to build that consideration into your promotion and planning, as you suggest – developing their own Breakout event. Perhaps rather than “come to a screening” it could go to them or they could create it.”

“My school or class would participate in a Breakout Day.”

“We feel that it would be beneficial to develop multi-grade units that connect to character development so that whole schools could participate in Breakout days to celebrate school-wide initiatives. We think holding assemblies to hear activists or attend screenings would truly build strong school communities and inspire students to start “Breaking out” on their own. We feel that our schools would participate in Breakout events.”