

# NERD CAMP COLOR WAR

Help bring literature to life in your classroom by hosting your own Color War!

In Color War, the class splits into teams to compete in a variety of physical and academic challenges. Feel free to use all of the activities included, adapt them as you see fit, use only some of them, or add your own.

Color War can last an hour, a day, a week, or even longer. Get creative to give your students a fun, educational competition that they'll remember!

## Included:

- Breaking Color War
- Color War score sheet
  - Scavenger hunt
  - Jeopardy!
  - Field Day
  - Water sports
  - Obstacle course
- Geography sing-off
  - Team spirit

## Some ideas to make your Color War a success:

- Break Color War in a clever, unexpected way
- Host Color War at the beginning of the school year to keep the summer fun going
- Host Color War before a school vacation or at the end of the year, when kids want to move and play
  - Have prizes for the winning team
- Award points for team spirit and sportsmanship to ensure the competition remains friendly
  - End Color War with an awards ceremony that honors everyone who participated—and maybe an end-of-war peace party
- Get a celebrity to visit! In *Nerd Camp*, the real Alex Trebek hosts camp *Jeopardy*, but your celebrity could be another teacher or the school principal. It could even be Elissa Brent Weissman herself, live or via Skype—visit [www.ebweissman.com/appearances](http://www.ebweissman.com/appearances) for details.

\* Special thanks to teacher Kelcie Haas for her help and inspiration. \*  
Her fourth grade Color War could not be beat!

# Breaking Color War

*But there was a challenge even before Color War started: trying to figure out when Color War would break. It could happen at any moment and in any way. Last year it even broke the very first week of camp, and it had a circus theme, so it broke by the director of the camp riding in on an elephant!*

- Nerd Camp, p. 50

Breaking Color War means kicking it off in a surprising and exciting way. In order to build suspense and anticipation, you may want to tell your students that there is going to be a Color War and that it could break at any moment—then make the actual break a surprise later that day or week. Or you could have it break without any warning for the ultimate surprise.

Breaking Color War also involves announcing the makeup of the four teams: blue, green, red, and yellow. Make sure you have the teams figured out in advance so that you can break Color War smoothly. You may want to give each student something to represent their team's color, such as a sticker, a badge, or a t-shirt.

Some suggestions for breaking your Color War:

- Have a celebrity (or quasi-celebrity) break Color War
- Pretend to give a pop quiz, but when students turn over their papers, all the test says is “COLOR WAR STARTS NOW”
  - Hold an opening ceremony, Olympics-style
- Decorate the room with posters and banners announcing Color War for when the kids return from lunch or recess
  - Show a video that announces the start of Color War

Check out the way Elissa Brent Weissman helped one teacher break Color War via YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Kx3mgrbi1k>

# Color War Score Sheet

<b>BATTLE</b>	<b>POINTS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>BLUE</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>RED</b>	<b>YELLOW</b>
Field Day	200				
Scavenger Hunt	400				
Water Sports	200				
Jeopardy	400				
Sing-off	400				
Team spirit	200				
Sportsmanship	200				
Other					
Other					
Other					
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>					

# NERD CAMP SCAVENGER HUNT

Work in teams to find as many of the following items as you can. Be creative to fill in items you can't get!

1. A simile
2. A metaphor
3. A dime from 1996
4. The name of the main character in Elissa Brent Weissman's first book
5. Red sand
6. A picture of someone on your team with a celebrity
7. Pi to the 20<sup>th</sup> digit
8. The Pythagorean theorem
9. Two classmates with the same birthday OR inverse birthdays  
(for example, 1/5 and 5/1)
10. The number of trash cans in the classroom
11. The school librarian's autograph
12. A book in your classroom with four words in the title
13. The temperature on the cover of *Nerd Camp*
14. Something pink
15. Two different sized rubber bands
16. A granola bar
17. The name of the town where Elissa Brent Weissman grew up
18. A brain teaser that will stump your teacher
19. A protractor
20. The number of miles from New York to Los Angeles
21. The hidden picture on the cover of *The Trouble with Mark Hopper*
22. The genus and species of head lice
23. The width of the hallway, in feet
24. A story on the front page of today's newspaper
25. The tenth word in the second column on page 237 of *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*

# COLOR WAR JEOPARDY!

*The theme song ended and the camp director's voice took its place. "Welcome to S. C. G. E. Color War Jeopardy. Here's your host, Alex Trebek!" And then the most incredible thing happened. Alex Trebek came walking out onto the stage. The whole theater erupted in cheers.*

*"That's Alex Trebek!" Gabe screamed. "The real guy from TV!"* - Nerd Camp, p. 187

Color War Jeopardy questions can draw from your regular class curriculum, common trivia, or the book *Nerd Camp*. Here are some *Nerd Camp* facts to get you started:

1. Gabe's new stepbrother, Zack, is moving to New York from this city.  
Answer: Los Angeles
2. These are the two classes Gabe takes at camp.  
Answer: Poetry Writing and Logical Reasoning
3. This is what Amanda Wisznewski always says to Gabe.  
Answer: We're meant to be
4. Gabe and his bunkmates are on this Color War team.  
Answer: Green nation
5. Every morning, Gabe and Nikhil record how long it takes Wesley to do this.  
Answer: Get out of his sleeping bag.
6. These are the "arch rivals" Gabe and his bunkmates put on their walls when they redecorate.  
Answer: Treble clef and bass clef
7. You would celebrate Pi Day on this date.  
Answer: March 14<sup>th</sup>
8. This character always says "just to be safe."  
Answer: Nikhil
9. This is the real name of the coolest kid at camp, C<sup>2</sup>.  
Answer: Calvin Chin
10. These are Gabe's two best friends at home.  
Answer: Eric and Ashley

# FIELD DAY and WATER SPORTS

*Green Nation had a strong showing for Field Day. A boy from Gabe's bunk blasted to victory in the 50-yard dash, earning Green 30 points. Then Gabe and Wesley were the stars of the three-legged race: they blazed past a team of boys from Yellow at the very end to come in second place just behind a pair of girls from Red, which gave them another 10. Then the counselors brought out large soil-sample bags from an earth science class to use for a potato sack race. Wesley, who apparently had a hidden talent for jumping far and fast, came in first, bringing the team's total to 70. – Nerd Camp, p. 165*

Field Day and Water Sports are the main physical components of Color War. The teams compete in individual or team athletic challenges. They can take place outside, in the school gym, or even in the classroom.

## **Some ideas for Field Day activities:**

- three-legged race
- potato sack race
- 50-yard dash
- egg-and-spoon race
- jumprope contest
- hula hoop contest

## **Some ideas for Water Sports activities:**

### **Water Balloon Toss**

Kids pair off and toss a water balloon back and forth to their partners, stepping farther away with each toss. The last pair with an unbroken balloon wins.

### **Melt the Ice**

Each team lines up in a straight line. The first member of each team gets an ice cube that he must rub between his hands to try and melt. When he gets too cold, he passes it to the next team member. The first team to melt the ice wins.

### **Water Relay**

Each team lines up by a bucket filled with water. The first member of each team uses a cup to scoop water from the bucket. He must walk across the room to an empty bucket and dump the water in the bucket—with a helium balloon between his legs! He then runs back and hands the cup to the next teammate. The first team to transfer all of their water wins.

For more ideas for Field Day or Water Sports, check out [www.kidactivities.net](http://www.kidactivities.net).

# OBSTACLE COURSE

*The first battle was the obstacle course, which rumored to always be one of the best parts of Color War. It totally lived up to its expectations. First you had to jump through a line of tires. Then you had to solve three arithmetic problems—inside a smelly port-a-potty. After that you had to run with an egg on a spoon across the field, and dropping the egg cost your team points. After depositing the egg in your team's color-coded bin, you came to a huge map of the world on the ground, and you had to locate the country or body of water that the counselor called out. From there you slid down a giant inflatable slide into a mud pit. Once you used the mud as paint to correctly spell a word on a wall, you were done.*

– Nerd Camp, p. 208-209

The obstacle course combines physical and mental activities. It can be completed relay-style, with different team members doing different challenges, or each student can complete the entire course. You can design a course that goes outside on the playground, around the school, or even in the classroom. Be creative and use whatever you have available!

## **Some ideas for a successful obstacle course:**

- Combine physical with mental activities,  
e.g. have a student spell a word while jumping on one foot
- Students roll a set of dice, then add (or multiply) the numbers he rolled
- Students run to pick up words at various stations around the room, then combine those words to make a sentence
- Students draw something on the board—while blindfolded

# GEOGRAPHY SING-OFF

*With each increase in volume the accuracy of the notes went down, but this was no longer about musical quality. It was a full-on alphabetical geography battle, and the audience was eating it up.*  
– Nerd Camp, p. 78

Recreate the karaoke battle between Gabe and Amanda, and have your class sing either the countries of the world or “Fifty Nifty United States.” You can learn the song as a class and then see which team can sing it with the most accuracy and style.

A link for the tune of Animaniacs “Nations of the World”:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDtdQ8bTvRc>

A link for the tune of “Fifty Nifty United States”:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zb0eOmX7ZGw>

## “Fifty Nifty United States” lyrics:

Fifty Nifty United States from thirteen original colonies;  
Fifty Nifty stars in the flag that billows so beautifully in the breeze.  
Each individual state contributes a quality that is great.  
Each individual state deserves a bow, We salute them now.

Fifty Nifty United States from thirteen original colonies,  
Shout 'em, scout 'em, Tell all about 'em,  
One by one, til we've given a day to every state in the USA  
Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut-  
Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana-  
Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine,  
Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan,-  
Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana,  
Nebraska..., Nevada,-  
New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York,-  
North Carolina, North Dakota, O H I O,-  
Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina,  
South Dakota, Tennessee, Tex-as,-  
Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

North, South, East, West in our calm, objective opinion (Name of favorite State)  
Is the Best of the Fifty Nifty United States from thirteen original colonies  
Shout 'em, scout'em, tell all about 'em  
One by One, till we've given a day to every state in the good old U...S...A!

# TEAM SPIRIT

*After dinner it was time to rehearse and then perform for the sing-off. Green wrote and performed "Green Will Rock You," a song to the tune of "We Will Rock You" that had the one line repeated in all eleven languages spoken on the team. They thought they were better than Blue, who prefaced their song with a long explanation of why the sky is blue. Red was pretty impressive: They ended their song with not just a human pyramid, but also with a human trapezoid and even a human rhombus, and only one person fell. But it was Yellow who came from behind with what was undoubtedly the crowd favorite. They dressed up as robots and computers and sang their entire song in binary. –Nerd Camp, p. 213-214*

Team Spirit points can be awarded based on the overall team spirit throughout Color War, or you can have a specific team spirit competition.

## **Ideas for a team spirit competition:**

- Each team makes a banner to show their spirit
- Each team prepares an original song, dance, or cheer
- Each team prepares and presents an original skit