

# Dewey Decimal Game 2

## Summary

This multiple-class lesson plan will thoroughly familiarize elementary students with the Dewey Decimal system and the subjects found in each number range.

## Time Frame

6 class periods of 30 minutes each

## Group Size

Small Groups

## Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning

## Background for Teachers

After teaching the Dewey system to elementary students for a few years, I realized that I was bored to tears with it. If I was bored, then it stood to reason that the kids were bored as well. I also noticed that they didn't seem to retain the information after I had taught it. They asked the same questions over and over again. Since "my" kids are always ready for a good challenge and a good game, I decided to try teaching the Dewey system as a competition.

From the first time we played it, the game was a success with third, fourth and fifth grades. The third graders even caught up with the upper grades, often gaining enough confidence to challenge other grades. The kids enjoyed it so much they wanted to challenge other schools. Of course, no one else taught the skill this way so that was impossible.

The students became more confident with Dewey as they began to apply what they learned in the "game" to researching for projects and reports. Even middle school librarians began to notice that the kids who came from my school were more comfortable with Dewey.

Since that first time, I have refined and extended the game. I have used it in 3 different schools with vastly different clientele. Even the slowest learners get the hang of it and the quick ones are happy to help their classmates. This was after all my ultimate goal ... confidence in and knowledge of the Dewey Decimal System.

Please feel free to bend, mold and shape this game to your teaching style. All you need to do is get excited about the game and let the kids do the rest. If your classes are like mine, they will be asking for months later if they can play the Dewey Game again.

From the first day of classes, when kids ask where an informational book is - say "in number \_\_\_\_\_" and then guide them there.

Begin preparing for actual game weeks well in advance. Each section takes about 20 minutes, but can be extended to fit your schedule. 15 minutes is the least amount of time that works well. I find that long dry spell between Winter and Spring break is the best time to hold this competition.

Note: If you wish, contact community businesses for a gift for your top classes of each grade and prepare certificates. (Consider Burger King or McDonald coupons for top class, book marks for second place and lollipops for 3rd.) Make a certificate of some kind for each class - most enthusiastic, most improved, best teamwork, etc. - something for the class to have in their room. Plan bulletin board which will have a picture of the DDC Champions for school year ... you may want to leave this up somewhere and add to it each year.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

Elementary students will become thoroughly familiar with the structure of the Dewey Decimal System.

## Instructional Procedures

### Intro/Basics

Begin with "when you ask me, where are the drawing books?" And I say "-" in 743." What do I mean? What is 743?" Explain why they need to know this both as the basis of game and future usage.

Discuss what libraries were like before Dewey:

- closed stacks. Only trained personnel were allowed to go into the stacks to search for books.

- varying systems. Usually organized to each person's specifics and interests.

- inefficient. What if librarian wasn't available?

- make up a story about how people had to come to the librarian to get any books because they weren't allowed to browse the stacks and how the librarian would "call" back to his/her assistants to bring the books up from the stacks. (hence the word call number) How long would that take a class to get books?

Dewey said "That's ridiculous. People who come here can read and they know what they want." He devised the DDC using all the subject areas he could think of.

Go over a Dewey poster briefly. Choose any subject and tell them "Here's what I had to learn in library school" (I chose dogs but you can do topic):

- I know that 600 = Applied Science

- I know that 636 = domestic animals

- I know that 636.7\* = domestic animals that are dogs

- I know that 636.73 = domestic animals, that are dogs, that are working dogs

- I know that 636.737 = domestic animals, that are dogs, that are working dogs, that were born in the US

- I know that 636.7375 = domestic animals, that are dogs, that are working dogs, that were born in the US, that were born in GA

- I know that 616.73756 = domestic animals, that are dogs, that were born in the US, that were born in GA, that were born in Whitfield county

- I know that 616.737564 = domestic animals, that are dogs, that were born in the US, that were born in GA, that were born in Whitfield county, in Dalton

- I know that 616.7375649 = domestic animals that are dogs that were born in the US that were born in GA that were born in Whitfield county in Dalton on Dug Gap Road

Ask "Do you see what's happening? (Hold arms outspread wide and narrow with each statement) "I went from a very wide group and made it narrower and narrower. I can even go domestic animals that are dogs that are working dogs that were born in the US that were born in (your state) that were born in (your) county that were born in (your city) on (school's street or teacher's) on Thursday at 7:30 AM ... if I wanted to." (By this time, fingers are micro-distance apart.)

\* Point out "Here is the decimal part of the Dewey Decimal System."

Talk about how elementary schools rarely go past 2 digits; mid/high school usually about 4. In colleges, they use a different system, but the idea is the same. Tell them that they only have to work with the major categories for this game. (I usually tell them "Say Thank you (your name)" here with a big smile. They do with great relief.) Point out this only applies to non-fiction books. During the game, you MIGHT throw in a FIC book just as a trick question. If you do, preface the title with some sort of clue like "OK, Smarties" or "Be careful here" and make certain it is a title you KNOW they have read.

### Bibliography

<http://www.storylady.com/deweygame.html> I found this on this site-- want to make sure I give credit to the real author! I put it on UEN as a workshop training. I found it a fun idea and wanted to share it with others.

## Authors

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