

## How to play HOTSEAT

**HOTSEAT is a game that I picked up from one of my high school history teachers. It's VERY easy and the kids LOVE it (they'll actually study just so they can win the game!). I actually used it as a sort of "study session" before tests this year and every single time they loved it. Anyway, here are the basics:**

For this game, students will be on teams (usually of about 4) and will sit in rows (I usually just randomly give each student a number or an animal and then ask them to sit in the rows accordingly). To begin the game (after, of course, reviewing the procedures/rules/etc.) I give them 18.6 seconds or so to come up with a team name. I then put each team name up on the board and leave space for tally marks underneath them (note: If the team is taking too long to come up with a team name then I pick it for them – whatever the first thing one of their group members says... Team "We Need One More Minute" or Team "We Don't Have a Name Yet" are common examples).

Once students have their team names and procedures have been reviewed, the game can become. The students in the front row (one member from each team) are the *only ones who can answer*. If a student anywhere else in the class either speaks out of turn or tries to whisper an answer to somebody I automatically take a point off of their score (even if it means they wind up in the negatives). Once the teacher asks a question (something that you would like them to know for the test the next day) you look for the first hand that is raised (out of people sitting in the front row). If it is a two-way or three-way tie, then I either flip a card or have them play it out with a bit of rock, paper, scissors. The winner of the card flip or match (or the first one to have raised his or her hand) gets a chance to answer the question. If answered correctly, then his or her team gets a point. If answered *incorrectly*, then the 2<sup>nd</sup> place team gets a chance for a steal. If that person answers correctly, then his or her team gets a point – and so on.

If *no one* in the front row answers the question correctly, then I will say the "magic word" (which is different every time... usually a type of fruit for some reason – "mango", "kumquat", etc.). When the students hear the magic word they may immediately gather together with their team and discuss possible answers together (this "magic word" rule keeps all students paying attention for every question – which is pretty sweet). After the teams discuss I accept the first hand raised and hear answers from each subsequent team (if the first guessers get it wrong) until one is correct (to which the team will be awarded a point). IMPORTANT: I don't allow for just one person on the team after the magic word has been said to just raise their hand right away and answer the question. I demand that all team members discuss the answer together and at least *agree* on the correct answer before they raise their hand. If I see that they are avoiding collaboration, then I let them know, don't call on them, and look for a group that *is* working together.

The game goes on for as long as you want. In times past a team would be winning by 15 points and getting a little full of themselves, so I instituted a "Super Hotseat!" round that is fairly similar to Double Jeopardy. I give the teams about a minute to decide how many points they would like to wager and then I ask one question to everyone. I give the teams about 2 minutes to discuss a very detailed answer together (usually the question or topic is one that is going to be an essay on the test), at which point I begin to take (starting with the first place team – so they get less time to discuss) each team into the hall and give them a very short time (I usually have my stopwatch and say they have 1:30 or so) to answer the question in as much detail as possible. When the time is up I make them stop, return to the class, and then take the next team into the hall and repeat the procedure. I do this until all teams have had a chance to answer the question in their 1:30, and then come back into the classroom for the long-

awaited “announcement” of the team that had the *BEST* answer. The team that has the best answer gets all the points they wagered and the other teams lose the points that they wagered (sometimes, if 2 teams had *very* good answers, I would take a 1<sup>st</sup> place and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place – the 2<sup>nd</sup> place team getting ½ of their wagered points).

Then, I either conclude by writing the winning team member’s names on the board (so I can keep track of who receives extra credit – of which they receive a very minimal amount, but it’s not the extra credit that pushes them anyway... it’s the competition!) or I give out random prizes (candy bars, liters of soda, rolls of toilet paper, etc.).

Last but not least, I remind the students to continue studying for the test tomorrow!!!

And that, my friends, is the amazing game of “Hotseat”.