**Interactive Word Walls **

This approach uses a technique known as word walls - nothing like the ones you may have encountered in Primary schools. These are word documents where each word is hidden by a red 'brick'. You click on a brick to reveal the word.

I've used the 'hidden words' technique quite a bit and found that it really does engage students' attention, whether in a known or unknown text.  With a text they've already met you can have a team competition to see who can pick out a word they know.  If it's a new text, you're testing their powers of prediction and logic. You might give points for guessing the right kind of word, adjective, noun, for instance.  There's usually a lot of opportunity for praise and reward.  'Wow - how did you work that out?!' 'That's a pretty smart guess!' and so on.

You can also play a version of the matching memory game, the one where you turn over two cards at a time and if they match you get to keep them. In the 'word wall' version you reveal two words and if there's a connection between them (rhyme, alliteration for instance - or they have a similar meaning) they stay revealed and the student gets a point. Otherwise, they are hidden again.  This is good for students who have a good visual memory and, of course, involves no writing but a good deal of attention to the text. This variation was suggested by a teacher who I remember as Susan from Stoke.

The IWB is ideal for this of course, but you can do it with just a computer and a projector. It may be possible for groups of students to play this on their own but I haven't tried it.  I think you'd need three to a computer as a minimum and one would have to be the referee - unless you have students who are very agreeable and well-disposed to each other. Teacher is the umpire of last resort, naturally.

Remember, all you need to do is open the Word document, select the highlighter pen and double click on a brick.

There are some word walls in this collection of resources using poems by Bronte’s, Dickinson and Basho.

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