How Students Can Play Your Activity-Games Online Using Google Slides

By Prof. Joe Bisz *(Version 1.2)*

There are two ways to play online. You can have students play *asynchronously* and upload their moves during the day, or you can schedule a common class time for some *synchronous* play!

Synchronous? Yes. The free browser programs Google Docs and Google Slides allow for editing a file by multiple people at once. Since "editing" a file means *changing or moving any element*, this means they can also allow for online synchronous play of your learning activities.

For ASYNCHRONOUS gameplay:
- *Option 1: Individual Play:* Each student downloads your PowerPoint file and uploads the answers (as a finished .ppt file, screenshot, or written post). No Google Slides link is needed.
- *Option 2: Team Play:* Provide each team a different Google Slides "edit" link to the game (upload one copy per group), so each teammate can see and manipulate the pieces on the same board. They should also write each other with suggestions and questions during the allowed time period for the activity.

For SYNCHRONOUS gameplay (in Teams):
- *Option 1:* Provide each team a different Google Slides link to the game (upload one copy per group), so each teammate can see and manipulate the pieces on the same board. They can also simultaneously text chat with each other (using Google Slides chat feature), arrange a group audio phone call, or use a 3rd party video chat (like Zoom—so all your groups can be playing in separate breakout rooms during your Zoom class). OR
- *Option 2:* If you don't want to use Google Slides, provide each team the same link for downloading your PowerPoint file. Divide teams into separate Zoom breakout rooms so they can hear (and see!) each other while playing the game. In this case, since there is no shared cloud-based file, one student leader in each team must be chosen to screen share his/her Zoom screen for the entire game. In addition, that person must make each of the game's moves (i.e. move the pieces), while the other team members manically call out their suggestions.

During synchronous play, the teacher can migrate between the Google slides or Zoom rooms to observe and advise.

Below are more tips for *designing in* or *using* Google Slides.

Google Slides – Directions for Designing
Choose Standard Fonts: If you open Google Slides, you'll notice it only supports about 25 fonts. This means when you're building in PowerPoint, you should choose standard fonts, so that Google Slides will actually display them correctly. Always check the final result!

Check for Cut-off Text and Images: Sometimes text on the bottom or sides will be cut off in Google Slides, so always check everything.

Google Slides – Directions for Using

Opening the File: Follow the link sent by your instructor. Find and open the file in your Google Docs area. Then pick the option to "Edit in Google Slides."

Viewing the File - Use Full Screen: The best view is Full Screen (View > Full Screen). This is the same as the Standard view but it hides the controls. Game pieces are still fully moveable and editable. Do not use Presenter view, otherwise you can't "play" anything on the crossword, and you won't see the left thumbnails.

Destroying the Board!, or Accidental Deletions: While playing the game, it is easy to accidentally delete a square/ game piece/ board (especially a crossword square). If this happens, don't panic! Select File > Undo, or use the shortcut CTRL-Z on a PC, COM-Z on a Mac. (If you don't see "File", you're in Full Screen mode; press "Escape" to exit that mode.) Since you might not be aware if you deleted something, all instructors should include a slide that is simply a screenshot reference of what the game is supposed to look.