



# Playing to Learn: Hosting Online Games with iClicker

Engage your students by turning classtime into gametime. iClicker makes it easy to do that while keeping the focus on the content and skills they need to learn.

## Lindsey Thomas

Training and Documentation Manager, iClicker

# Introduction

It's no secret that keeping online learners engaged is tricky. The difficulty increases exponentially when you teach a hybrid class as well. Finding strategies that make learning fun for every student, no matter where they're at, is key.

One solution is to teach through games. This has long been a handy teaching strategy, and iClicker allows you to take your gaming online. You can build a sense of community between virtual and in-person students while also ensuring they learn a little something.

With iClicker, it's possible to implement a variety of games you can play during the live sessions of your class. While only three games are highlighted here, this is by no means a finite list of options. If you want to engage students with a game now and again, regardless of format, iClicker has you covered.



# Why iClicker was Built for Gaming

Okay, iClicker wasn't built for gaming, but it was designed specifically for student engagement. Because of this, the program lends itself to many interactive game scenarios. These complement the main polling, quizzing, and attendance features that have become synonymous with iClicker itself.

Because iClicker works with all kinds of content and software, it's flexible enough to function as a tool for game-based learning. The polling feature in particular is great for game activities because it allows everyone to respond to the same question at the same time, and it produces immediate feedback.

Even with all virtual students, you can decide whether everyone will play individually or in teams. You also don't have to keep score in a traditional sense. Consider:

- Giving out bonus points if the majority of students answer a question right
- Awarding points for participation
- Fronting students a few points on the next quiz

You can still have a clear winner if you want, but it may take a little time to tally up the scores. It might be something you'll have to wait to announce until the following class. What you can do in real-time is share correct answers to questions, so students can unofficially score themselves or their team.

## Game-based learning can:

- Increase participation and attendance
- Give all students a voice
- Engage even those students who aren't competitive



# 1

## Game 1: Balancing the Bars

This is a great game to play to familiarize students with the functionality of iClicker. It can help them learn how to answer questions, but also that they can change their answer as many times as they want while a question is still running.

In order to play, create a multiple choice question. This should probably be an icebreaker-type question, or at least one where all the answer choices are correct. Leave the results window open while the question is live so students can see incoming responses.

**Instructions:** Students have one minute to balance all the answer choices responses. All the bars on the results window, for every answer choice, need to be the same length.

In order to get the “answer” correct, students will need to cooperate and communicate. Even in a virtual setting, you can direct students to a method of communication to help get to the right answer for this question. It may even surprise you how effective they are at lining everything up even without doing much communicating.

“Balance the bars” before time expires!



# 2

## Game 2: Jeopardy (a modified version)

Using a free website, jeopardylabs.com, you can create an academic-centric game that's perfect for iClicker. All you do is clone and edit an existing board. The familiarity of the game format itself will make it easier for your students to get into playing.

The website lets you set up a themed game board, and then you can modify the game to show the polling questions you've created in iClicker. Broken into categories, you can easily parse out an entire unit of learning.

**Instructions:** Select a category and value amount for the answer to appear. Submit your response, in the form of a question, before time runs out.

Using short answer responses for this game gives students 140 characters, which should be plenty of space. Multiple choice and numeric questions work too.

Once time runs out, you can put up the answer. Next, you can show the class the results to see how many people or teams got it right. When using free response questions, you can manually set an answer to correct for credit. This is great for those who've submitted a correct response, but possibly misspelled it.



	Glaciers and Rivers/Floods	More Rivers and Groundwater	Groundwater and Landslides	Miscellaneous and Mass Movements	Coastal Environments
100	100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500	500

	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
MENU	0	0	0
	+ -	+ -	+ -



With multiple choice, it's easier to indicate the correct answer. You do so within the results chart, by clicking on the right response. It will then turn green.

This type of game also accommodates target questions. These are visual, and a lot of fun for students. They answer by clicking on the right image. Results will display as a heat map of areas clicked on within the image. You indicate the right answer by drawing a box around the correct area of the image. Everything inside that box will get marked as correct.

Final Jeopardy is a little trickier since it involves wagers and answers. To collect all the data, although it will require some backend calculations on your part, release a numeric poll first in iClicker asking for wagers. Then, send out the final jeopardy answer as a short answer poll.

---

## The Winner's Prize

Make sure the winner gets something that benefits the whole class. Let them pick from a list of class-wide incentives, so although they get to make the choice, everyone's a winner for playing.



# 3

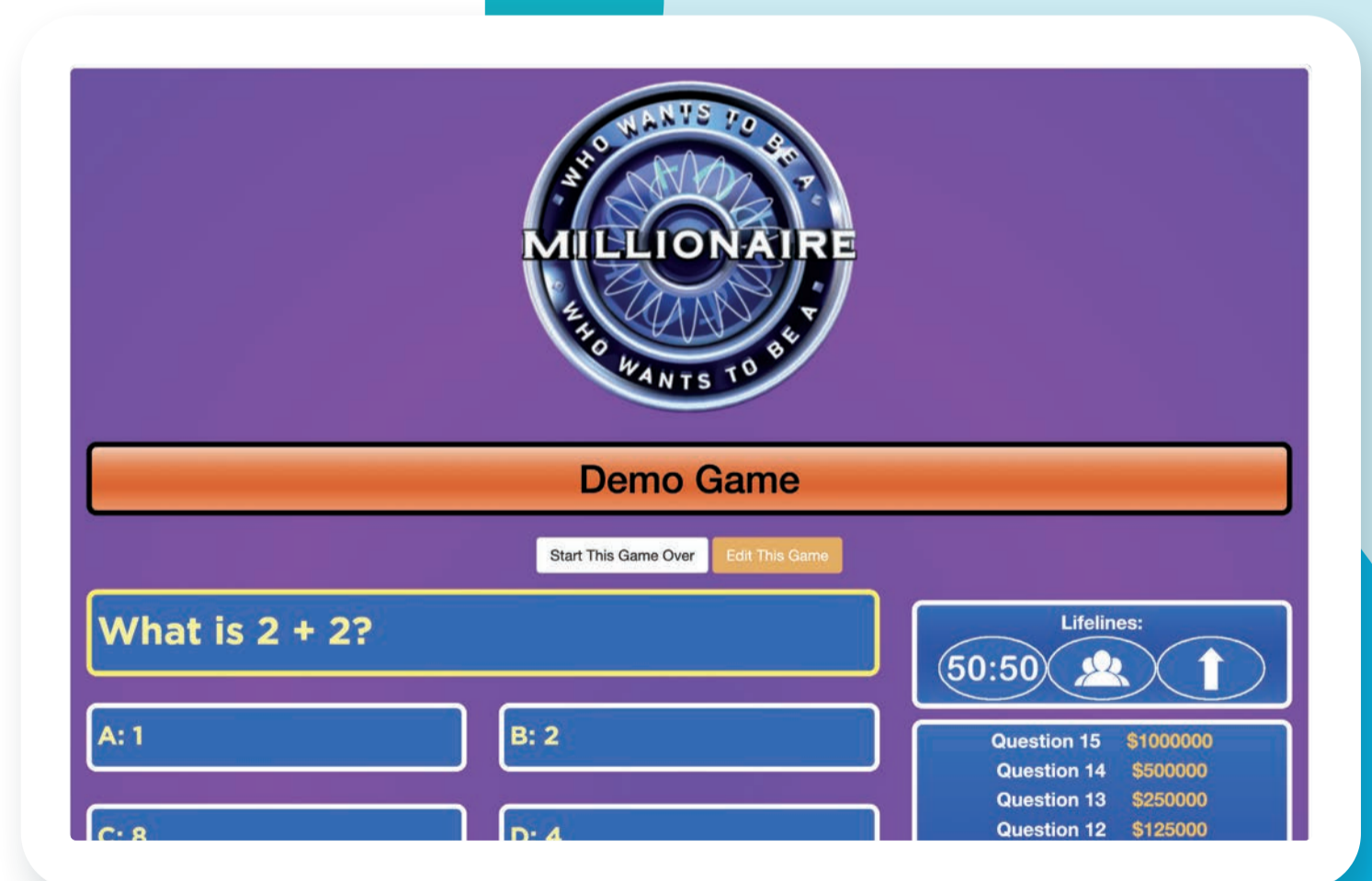
## Game 3: Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

Using another free tool, [superteachertools.us/millionaire](https://superteachertools.us/millionaire), you create a modified version of this popular game, inserting multiple choice questions from iClicker. They should all be multiple choice to play into the format of the original game.

One fun way to play, and keep everyone involved is to have one contestant that submits their final answer, while the rest of the class gets to weigh in via iClicker.

**Instructions:** A multiple choice question will appear at each level of the game. As long as you answer correctly, you'll keep moving up. Failure to answer correctly can knock you out of the game.

For each question, the contestant looks at the results of a classroom poll. They can either go with the guess of the majority, or decide to venture a guess on their own. Once a final answer is put in, the game tells you if the question is correct.



If you'd rather not play with a contestant, you can have the entire class answer in the same way and then only let those who got the question right continue on in the game. To score, you could award prizes if the entire class makes it through a certain number of questions.

You can choose how you want to handle this — follow the game structure exactly or use this as an opportunity to see where your students lack understanding. Either tell your students to ignore option E in iClicker, or allow them to make Option E: "I'm not sure!"





# Tips for Gaming in iClicker

## Keep Game Time Reasonable

No matter what game you implement, it's important to remember these activities are meant to keep students engaged. Here are a few tips to ensure games don't become a distraction, but that they support learning.

## Countdown Timers

The longer the game, the higher the chance that attention will drift, especially with virtual students. Limiting game time to no more than 20 minutes per class is ideal.

If you want to make sure you get to every question in a game, you can use a countdown timer in iClicker to set limits on answer time.

## Tie Questions Back to Course Objectives

To keep games relevant, make sure the questions tie into the course content and course objectives whenever possible. It is fine to have icebreaker games when starting a new term, and review games toward the end, but for all the gaming in between, keep it relevant.

## Don't Overuse Games

Even if games are going extremely well in your class, you may want to consider limiting game time to once every week or two. You want to keep it feeling like it's something special for your students, not an expected feature of every class.



# Gaming Possibilities are Endless

Although we are only looking at three game examples here, there really are so many other options that connect with iClicker. These three games all use outside websites to get things going, but there are also plenty of PowerPoint-based games as well. These will also integrate with iClicker.

The goal, regardless of what game you play, is to make learning fun and engaging for students. Don't bog them down in the competition itself, but rather allow them to have fun playing and learning in a different way.

Gamification is highly relevant in today's world, so why not bring it into your course in a way that brightens in-person and virtual classrooms alike?





**Lindsey Thomas** joined Macmillan Learning in 2017 and has worked in a variety of customer-centric roles involving concierge support, training, and marketing. She focuses on empowering instructors of all disciplines to transform their teaching using digital tools, such as Achieve and iClicker.

[Watch full webinar recording.](#)

[Contact your local Macmillan Learning representative.](#)