

150+ ESL GAMES, ROLE
PLAYS & DRAMA ACTIVITIES

~ESL EMERGENCY~



150+ TOP ESL GAMES & ACTIVITIES THAT WILL SAVE YOUR LESSONS MORE THAN ONCE

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How to Teach Using Games

A WIDE VARIETY OF GAMES CAN BE USED WHEN TEACHING ENGLISH.

The key is to ensure that everyone fully participates and has enough practice with the lesson material to play. If students are not confident, they will struggle and not get the most out of the activity.

HOW TO USE GAMES

1 WHOLE CLASS GAMES

Some games such as interview activities, bingo, jeopardy, and board games can be played by the entire class.

- An interview activity to practice the "Where are you from?" and "I'm from ~." structures might start by handing out slips of paper with eight to ten different country names. Students can then be given a worksheet with all the country names written on the left and told that their goal is to get a student signature for each country by mingling with their classmates and asking the target question. When asked the target question, a student should respond based on the slip of paper he received.

- Bingo can be played with numbers, letters, vocabulary words, or many other topics you may want to practice.

- Jeopardy is more of a review activity because it focuses on listening and does not give students lots of speaking practice. The easiest thing to do is have students make groups of four to five, write categories and stars for each answer on the board, and explain that groups will get three points for a correct answer after the first clue, two points after the second clue, and only one point after the last clue. You will need five or six categories and perhaps five answers per category. If you would like to focus on a particular tense, simply use that tense for at least one clue per answer. You can choose the first category but after that, the group who provides the correct answer first should choose the category. This activity could take a whole forty-five minute lesson and the group with the most points at the end of class wins.

- Board games are often best played in small groups but if introducing a very challenging game, it may be a good idea to play as a class first. A group of students can be represented by a game piece and students can work together to answer questions. In the class following this, students can play the game in groups for further practice.

2 GAMES IN SMALL GROUPS

There are also lots of games that can be played in groups of about four students.

- Board games where students move pieces and answer questions or form sentences based on images make for good practice activities. For practicing the "If ~, then ~." structure a Chutes and Ladders layout may be fun for students.

- Card games such as Go Fish, Memory, and many more can be adapted for classroom use. When you are teaching comparatives, card games can be an invaluable tool. You can also use simple card games to test comprehension by making up decks of cards with letters for example. Have students spread all the cards face up on their desks, you then say a letter aloud, and the first student to slap the correct card gets to keep it. Repeat until all the cards are gone and the student with the most cards at the end of the game wins. To make this more challenging, you can tell students that if they slap the wrong card, they have to take one card out of their pile.

3 PAIWORK GAMES

There are many of pair activities students can do to practice English but very few of them take the form of a game.

- The best and most versatile one by far is Battleship. This will take a lesson to explain and practice but once your students are familiar with it, can be played as a twenty to thirty minute activity. Battleship is best used to practice tenses. The worksheet consists of two identical seven by seven grids, one above the other. The first box in the upper left is kept blank, the

first row is filled in with phrases such as "play soccer" and "study English", and the first column is filled in with words such as "I, You, He, We, They, The students." Students should secretly draw their "boats" on the grid. Typically one boat should have five squares, one boat should have four squares, two boats should have three squares, and one boat should have two squares. Boats can only be drawn vertically or horizontally. On the board practice the structure that students will use for the activity for example "I played soccer. You studied English." until every row and column has been practiced and then instruct students to say "Hit", "Miss", or "You sank my ship!" when appropriate just like in the original game. Students can usually play two or three times before moving on to another activity.

AGAIN, THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT GAMES OUT THERE THAT CAN BE USED IN THE CLASSROOM. BE CREATIVE AND HAVE FUN! ENSURING YOUR STUDENTS HAVE THE NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS AND PRACTICE BEFORE STARTING ANY ACTIVITY WILL MAKE IT MORE ENJOYABLE AND BENEFICIAL FOR YOUR STUDENTS.

Games that Work Without Fail in the ESL Classroom

EVERYONE LIKES TO HAVE FUN AS THEY LEARN. ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES TO BEING AN ESL TEACHER IS THAT THERE ARE ALWAYS GAMES CENTERED AROUND LANGUAGE AND WORDS.

You can use these games either to take a day off from the normal classroom routine or to enhance what you are already teaching your students. Either way, your students are sure to have fun while they improve their English skills.

GAMES THAT WILL WORK WITHOUT FAIL IN YOUR ESL CLASSROOM

1 PRE-PURCHASED GAMES

In stores today, there are many games made for native speakers that are effective in the ESL classroom. One of the most popular games to use with your ESL students is Scrabble. Most people know that Scrabble is a game where the players make up words using preprinted tiles. They score points based on the letters they use and where they place the word on the board. Ultimately, the player with the highest score at the end of the game is the winner. This game is useful for ESL students because it builds their vocabularies in a fun way. If you allow your students to use an English dictionary, they will learn words as they search for plays on the board. More often, you, the native speaker, will play a word that they are not familiar with without even trying. In this case, your students will usually ask the meaning of the word which you should then explain to them.

Catchphrase is another good game that you can buy to play with your students. The object of the game is to not get caught on your turn when the buzzer goes off. If you ever played hot potato when you were a child, this is similar. The way you pass on the display is by getting the rest of the players to say the word that the display gives you. You can pass to an-

other word if the word is too hard of you don't know the meaning of it, but there are no restrictions in the words you can use to get the other players to guess, so there should be some word each student can describe. For example, if your word was "farm" you might say, "a place where they grow vegetables for money." The rest of the players can shout out answers at any time. Once one of them gets the word correct, the player taking his turn passes the display on to the next person. The newer versions of Catchphrase are electronic, so there are no pieces to change or lose. This game will also increase the vocabulary of your students as they play though they may not want to stop to ask for a definition when they are trying to pass the display to the next student.

2 NO PREPARATION

Several games you can play with your class require little to no preparation. **Charades** and **Pictionary** are both good for reviewing vocabulary with your class. For both games, divide your class into two teams. One person from each team will play at the same time as the other. Give each player a word, usually one from a vocabulary list you have already taught with a previous unit. In charades, each player must act out the word for his team without using any words. While he acts out the target word, his team should watch him and guess at the answer. The first team who correctly guesses the word scores a point. Pictionary is similar except that instead of acting out a word, the player must draw a picture of it on the white board. She cannot use numbers, letters or symbols in her drawing. Again both teams guess at the answer, and the team that guesses correctly scores a point. Continue until you have reviewed all your vocabulary words or until one team has reached a set amount of points to win the game.

Twenty questions is another game that requires no preparation though it is not as lively as the previous games.

In twenty questions, one player thinks of an object. The rest of the class then asks yes/no questions to try to narrow down what the object is. They may ask, "Is it an animal? Is it smaller than a breadbox? Does it live under water?" After each question, the player answers either yes or no. Based on those answers, the class must strategically develop a course of questioning. If the class can guess the object within the twenty-question limit, the class wins. If the class cannot guess the object, the player wins. You can then choose another player to select an object for the class to guess. If you want to make sure all your students get practice asking and answering questions, divide your class into pairs and have each pair play against each other. Though it is an old-fashioned game, twenty questions is very useful for reviewing question grammar and getting in speaking practice.

3 MAKE YOUR OWN GAMES

When you have the time or inclination, these games take some prep work but usually only the first time you use them, and you can use them any time you teach the lesson in the future. Icebreaker tumbling blocks is good for more advanced students and takes more physical skills than the other games mentioned here. Purchase a set of stacking blocks (like Jenga though any brand will do) and gather several icebreaker questions. Then take a permanent marker and write one icebreaker question on each block. You can use questions like, "Do you prefer a hug or a kiss? What is your earliest memory? Do you write with pen or pencil? What is the last song you purchased from iTunes?" These or any other questions will work. Then as each person takes his turn, he must pull a block from the bottom of the tower (the top two rows are off limits), answer the question and then place the block on the top of the tower. Play continues around the table until someone knocks the tower down. Your students will enjoy learning more about each other and find

the game itself exciting. No one will want to make the tower fall!

A simple game that you can use with any vocabulary list is the memory game. In this game, a set of cards is arranged on a table face down and each player may turn over two cards on her turn. If the cards are a matching pair, she may keep them and then turn over two more cards. If they do not match, she must turn them back over and try to remember where each of the cards is located for her next turn. If you are using this game with beginning students, you can have one card from each pair have the vocabulary word and the other a picture of the object. For more advanced students, have the word on one card and the definition on another. You can also make matching pairs with either synonyms or antonyms depending on the skills of your students and your goals in teaching. If you provide your students with index cards, they can even make the pairs themselves. You can then compile all the cards your students have made and use them together as one set. With this game, you will need a relatively large playing area, but you can use the cards any time you teach the same material in the future. You can also change it up a little and use the same matching pairs to play Go Fish for some variety.

PLAYING GAMES IN THE ESL CLASSROOM IS ALWAYS FUN AND A NICE CHANGE OF PACE FROM THE NORMAL DAILY ROUTINE.

You can use any of these games to fit in with a unit you are teaching or just use them to break up the semester. Your students will enjoy themselves as they increase their vocabularies and laugh with their classmates.

Games in the Classroom: 5 Tips that Will Help You Be Prepared

Ask anyone what they think about games, and the answer will be, “well ... they ‘re fun”. Isn’t that why we play games in the first place? Because we like them, right? In the classroom, games are a great way to practice just about anything. With games, we can work on vocabulary, grammar, or even reinforce classroom behavior. They make our lessons more dynamic, interesting and of course, entertaining. Games are also an amazing way to include more tasks that involve critical thinking, and they are amazing for convincing kids to do activities they may not enjoy as much otherwise. It all sounds super so far but, as in everything we do, games require planning and above all preparation.

HOW TO PROCEED

1 CHOOSE THE RIGHT GAME:

What game to choose can be an issue if you don’t consider certain things ahead of time. Here are some questions you might want to ask yourself. Is this game age appropriate? Is it level appropriate? Is it too time consuming? Will they get too rowdy or will it calm them down? Is it too simple or too complicated? Remember, some games work well with certain age groups, levels and type of group and others just don’t. A typical mistake when choosing is to consider only the content of the game but remember, you know your young learners better than anyone, so think about them when making your choice.

2 MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND IT.

Since most of us learn by doing, the best way to see what a game is like is to try ourselves first. That’s right, play the game by yourself or with a friend/colleague. Very often when we play it first, we realize the rules are not clear or are incomplete. Maybe you thought the game was right for your kids but after playing it, your opinion changes. What happens most of the time is that teachers become aware that an

adjustment needs to be made. In any case, by playing the game by yourself or with fellow teachers ahead of time, you’ll feel better about using it with your kids.

3 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE GAME?

It might seem like a silly question to ask yourself but believe me, it is necessary. If you don’t, you might lose sight of what that game is for. Games are useful for lots of stuff and some teachers just choose to use games for fun. Fun is ok, but keep in mind you can use games to your advantage to practice. Ask yourself, what do I want my students to learn to do with this game, what’s the objective? Are you using it to practice vocabulary or grammar? Let’s say you found a game that can be used to practice vocabulary related food. In class you practiced certain foods but the game has words they haven’t learned yet. Make sure to adapt it to your specific needs. The game has to have a clear goal, after all, isn’t that why you are using it?

4 DO YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED?

Game can range from very simple to very complicated and detailed. In any case, there are things you are going to need, like a game board, rules, cards, play money, pawns etc. Some games can be acquired and include everything you’ll need. However, most of the games we use in class come from books or website that give us awesome ideas but don’t provide all the necessary elements. Here we have to gather everything ourselves. If you adapted the game to suit you specific needs, make sure to include the elements you decided to change.

5 WHEN SHOULD WE PLAY THE GAME?

When we teach young learners, managing their levels of energy is crucial. There are games that will calm them

down because they require more focus, while others energize them. Again planning is everything. Sometimes after a disaster strikes, either because they are falling asleep in the middle of the game or out of control, we put the blame on the game. We dismiss the incident thinking it was just wrong for our kids, but often the problem lies in timing. A game as well as any other activity needs to be considered ahead of time. See how you can incorporate it into your lesson plan and try to visualize it. If it is an energizing game, maybe it would be better at the beginning of the lesson where students feel sluggish. If the students are energetic when the lesson starts, playing it at the end is better. Basically it all depends on your group.

MAKE THEIR LESSONS ENJOYABLE, HAVE FUN WITH YOUR STUDENTS. DON'T BE AFRAID TO PLAY GAMES. JUST REMEMBER TO BE PREPARED AND AS DR. SEUSS SAYS "IT'S FUN TO HAVE FUN BUT YOU HAVE TO KNOW HOW".

7 More Great Games for Your ESL Classroom

TRY THESE 7 MORE GREAT GAMES FOR YOUR ESL CLASSROOM

1 JEOPARDY

Put the answers up on the board (tape a sheet of paper over each one until you are ready to reveal it) and get your students to give you the questions. This game is great for reviewing content material or for practicing question formation in the different tenses.

2 MODIFIED BANANAGRAMS

Starting with 11 tiles from a Banagrams game, have pairs of students work to use all their tiles in one crossword style grid. Have students add one tile at a time, arranging and rearranging the letters and words as necessary to incorporate the new tile. Continue until all the tiles are used. The team that uses the most letters in their grid wins.

3 SCRABBLE SLAM

Using a deck of lettered cards, students make words consisting of four letters. Use the game to expose your students to new vocabulary or help them learn predictable spelling patterns in English.

4 UNSCRAMBLD EGGS

To practice spelling relay race style, fill 12 plastic eggs with the letters your students will need to spell each of 12 vocabulary words (use game tiles or small slips of paper). Students race to the eggs, choose one, spell the correct word and race back to tag the next person. The first team to correctly unscramble all 12 eggs wins.

5 SPELLING PONG

Write letters on the bottoms of several plastic cups. Students take turns bouncing a ping-pong ball into

the cups and collecting the letter on the bottom of the cup. They can then use the letters they collect to spell a word. Play continues until every student is able to spell a word with at least three letters using the ones he or she collected from the cups.

6 SPELLING B

With no preparation, you can test your students spelling knowledge. Introduce new vocabulary and teach your students standard spelling patterns with this elimination game. Give two teams of students one word at a time to spell (use a mixture of familiar and unfamiliar words). A mistake causes the player to sit down. The last student standing is the winner.

7 SIMON SAYS

Students practice their listening and vocabulary skills when you give directions in this classic children's game. Start most commands with Simon says and then see if your students can follow your directions. If you do not start with 'Simon says' students should not follow the command. Anyone who does must sit down. The last student standing is the winner.

6 Super ESL Games for Grammar Review

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT STUDENTS START DISAPPEARING RIGHT ABOUT THE TIME YOU START REVIEWING FOR A TEST?

Review lessons can be boring enough, but grammar reviews are precisely the type of thing that makes students want to skip class and reappear only for the test. Now, what if you were to give your students a grammar review they wouldn't want to miss? Here are some classic games you can adapt to any level and use to review essential structures. You will have a full classroom during your reviews lessons – guaranteed!

TRY THESE 6 SUPER ESL GAMES FOR GRAMMAR REVIEW

1 SHOOT FOR POINTS

We often need to review things that are no fun, things like the past simple or past participle of irregular verbs. Instead of the classic Q & A, try this. Use a large container or trash can as your “basket”, give your students a ball and have them shoot for points. But here's the catch: you'll ask them a question in past simple, and they'll have to remember the past correctly in order to earn the chance to shoot. They can get 10 points for scoring or five if they miss (because at least they answered the question correctly). You can try any variety of this type of game, whether you use large balls or small ones, or even a wadded up piece of paper.

2 BOARD GAME

Everyone loves a board game, and your ESL students will particularly appreciate one if it's not only loads of fun, but also a helpful way to review essential grammar. You can design your own to include the tenses and structures your students have learned, or use any of the ones already available at BusyTeacher.org. This Grammar Revision Board Game (busyteacher.org/14264-grammar-revision-board-game.html) is a perfect example.

3 TIC TAC TOE

Tic Tac Toe is another versatile game, one that can be adapted to suit a wide variety of needs. What you need to decide first is which grammar your students need to review for the test. Then, write the topics on nine index cards or large enough pieces of paper. Arrange the cards face down on a table or stick them on the board, in the classic Tic Tac Toe 3 x 3 grid.

Next, teams take turns choosing a square (you can add letters across and numbers down to make it easier to call out the squares). You turn over the card and reveal to your students the tense/structure/grammar point written on it. Students must then either provide an example or ask a question that another team member must answer correctly to get their X or O on that square. Of course, the first team that gets three Xs or Os across, down or diagonally wins.

4 SNAKES AND LADDERS

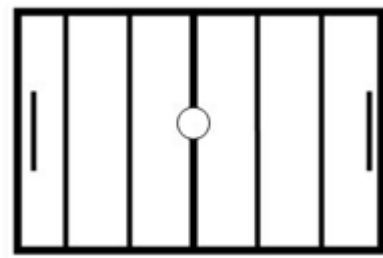
To play this classic game in your grammar review lesson, you'll first need to prepare some cards: they may have verb tenses written on them, questions your students must answer or prompts from which to say a complete sentence.

The rules are simple, but the game is so much fun! Students must first choose a token to move around the board (a different colored button for each will do nicely!) Then they take turns rolling the dice to move across the board. They must take a card and answer correctly to remain on that spot, or move back two places if they are incorrect. If they land at the bottom of a ladder, and they answer correctly, they get to move up the ladder, but if they land on a snake's head they automatically move down to where its tail is. Here's a blank template (busyteacher.org/9177-snakes-and-ladders-blank-template.html) you can use or create your own.

5 FOOTBALL!

This is a game I've played with students of different ages and levels with tremendous success. First, you'll

need to draw a playing field like this one on the board or a large piece of paper:



Next, divide your students into two teams. Place a “ball” token at the center. Then, students must answer questions correctly to approach the posts and score a goal. For example, Team A answers correctly and moves right one step closer to their goal. Team B answers correctly and moves the ball left back to the center. Team A answers incorrectly and can't move the ball at all. Team B answers correctly and moves left one step closer to their goal. If Team A were to keep answering incorrectly and Team B correctly, then Team B will continue moving left to eventually score a goal. When a team scores, the ball moves back to the center, and the team that did not score last starts. The team with the most goals wins.

6 JEOPARDY

I've mentioned this game in several articles, and it happens to be my personal favorite. There is so much you can do with it - you can review everything they've learned in a single fun game. You'll find it explained here (busyteacher.org/5878-what-you-can-do-with-a-whiteboard-10-creative-esl.html). All you have to do is replace the categories at the top with tenses or structures you want them to review.

NOT ALL GRAMMAR REVIEWS HAVE TO BE CUT AND DRIED. DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF GAMES - THEY HELP STUDENTS USE THE RESOURCES THEY'VE ACQUIRED IN CREATIVE WAYS.

They engage learners to put the things they've learned to good use. The competitive environment motivates them to give it their best effort.

5 Fun Filled Activities with Noncount Nouns

A, SOME, MUCH OR MANY? IF YOUR STUDENTS ARE ASKING THEMSELVES THESE QUESTIONS, YOU ARE LIKELY STUDYING NONCOUNT NOUNS.

The objects in English require a counting word to express plurality. For example, pieces of furniture, cups of coffee or cartons of milk. Once you explain the concept of noncount nouns to your class, here are some fun activities for reviewing how to properly express noncount nouns in English.

TRY THESE 5 FUN FILLED ACTIVITIES WITH NONCOUNT NOUNS

1 GOING ON A PICNIC

When you are teaching noncount nouns, you will find that many of them fall into the category of food. Rice, milk, coffee, jelly and peanut butter are just a few of the noncount nouns one might find at a picnic. Playing this game will challenge your students' memories while also reviewing count and noncount nouns. Arrange your class in a circle. Then start the game by saying, "I'm going on a picnic, and I'm bringing a _____" filling in the blank with a food item, either count or noncount. The student to your left continues, "I'm going on a picnic and I'm bringing a..." He then chooses his food item and repeats your food item. The third person in the circle chooses a food item and repeats the other two. Play continues around the circle until it has reached you once again, and you face the big challenge of remembering what everyone is bringing on the picnic! As play moves around the circle, be sure to correct your students if they make an error with count and noncount nouns. For example, if someone says I am bringing a juice, you should remind him or her to say a bottle of juice.

2 MUCH OR MANY AUCTION

Give each student two stiff cards. On one have her write much, and on the other have her write many. All students should hold their cards flat on their

desks. You present a noun to them, and they need to decide whether they should use much (noncount nouns) or many (count nouns). On the count of three, each person holds up his chosen card. Anyone who gets the answer wrong is eliminated. Play until only one student remains – the winner.

3 THREE STRIKES

Play a baseball style game with count and noncount nouns with your students. Draw a baseball diamond on the board or lay one out in your classroom (your students will not be running) and review the basic rules of the game. Then give each "batter" a fill in the blank challenge that includes a noncount noun. For example, you might write on the board "Five _____ celery". The batter must then choose which blank to fill in to correctly complete the phrase. In this case, "five stalks of celery." If the batter gets the answer right, his team gets a hit and he advances to first base. If the batter gets the answer wrong, he is out. Teams give each member a turn until they receive three strikes. Anyone who makes it around the bases scores a point for his team. Play for three innings, and the team with the most points at the end wins bragging rights.

4 A ROLL OF THE DICE

There is no risk in this game for practicing pluralization of noncount nouns. Write several noncount nouns on small slips of paper and put them in a hat or basket. Then give a student two standard, six sided dice. First she rolls the dice to get her number. Then she draws a noun. She must then make a sentence using the number to pluralize the noun she drew. For example, if your student rolls a seven and pulls the noun furniture, she could say, "I bought seven pieces of furniture this weekend."

5 THIS IS A WHAT

Play this classic youth group game with your ESL students to practice the difference between a and some

in English. Students arrange themselves in a circle. Give one student an object (a pencil, for example). That student should then present that item to the student next to him. Their conversation should follow the following pattern.

This is a pencil.

A what?

A pencil.

A what?

A pencil.

Oh, a pencil.

The first student then passes the object to the second student, and that person follows the same pattern as he introduces the item to the next person in the circle. Play continues around the circle until the object is back to the first person. While this object is moving around the circle, give two other students additional objects and have them present them to their neighbors in the circle. You will have three objects travelling around the circle at the same time, and students will need to pay attention to what they are giving and receiving. If you are careful to choose at least one count noun and one noncount noun, your students will have to determine whether to use a or some in their dialogue. For example,

This is some coffee.

Some what?

Some coffee.

Some what?

Some coffee.

Oh, some coffee.

Listen to students as they present their objects and correct any errors you hear.

THOUGH SOME STUDENTS WILL FIND NONCOUNT NOUNS EASY TO REMEMBER, FOR MOST ESL STUDENTS NONCOUNT NOUNS ARE TROUBLE.

These fun filled activities give your students a chance to practice this unusual structure while having a good time in your classroom.

7 Best Games for Vocabulary Class

TRY THESE 7 BEST GAMES FOR YOUR NEXT VOCABULARY CLASS

1 CHARADES

Write vocabulary words on individual index cards. Break your class into two teams, and have one individual from each team act out the same word. The team to correctly guess the word first scores a point.

2 Pictionary

Write vocabulary words on individual index cards or use your set from charades. Break your class into two teams, and one individual from each team draws a picture on the board. Drawers cannot use letters numbers or symbols in their drawings. The first team to guess the word correctly scores a point.

3 MEMORY

Create your own memory game using vocabulary words. Write each word on individual index cards. For each existing card, make a matching card with the definition, a synonym or an antonym. Students shuffle the cards and arrange them all face down on a table. Students take turns flipping over two cards. If the cards make a set, the student keeps the cards and takes an additional turn. The person with the most cards at the end of the game wins.

4 MODIFIED CATCH PHRASE

Write each vocabulary word on an individual index card. Students sit in a circle with a timer set for a random amount of time (3-8 minutes works well). Shuffle the cards and give the deck to the first person in the circle. That person draws a card and tries to get his classmates to guess the word by giving verbal clues. He cannot say the word or any part of the word. When someone guesses the word, he passes the stack to the next person

who takes a turn with another word. The person holding the stack of cards when the timer goes off loses.

5 SCATTERGORIES

Choose ten categories with your students or before class starts (e.g. types of pets, city names, sports, items in a kitchen, etc.). Use an alphabet die to determine the letter for each round of play. Set a timer for three minutes, and students must think of one word for each category that begins with that round's letter. Students score one point per word, and the person with the most points at the end of three rounds is the winner.

6 THE DICTIONARY GAME

Choose an unusual word from the dictionary and spell it for your students. Each person creates a fictional definition for the word and writes it on an index card. You write the actual definition on another index card. Collect and shuffle the cards, and then read all the definitions. Students must try to guess which definition is the real one.

7 A-Z PICTURES

Using a picture with many elements (I-Spy books work great), students attempt to find an object in the picture that begins with each of the letters A through Z. After about five minutes, students compare answers. The person with the most correct answers wins the round.

6 Absolutely Essential ESL Games for Vocabulary Review

Well, it is that time again. You have finished your unit on (insert topic here) complete with vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading and writing activities, but you are not entirely done. The test is coming in just a few days, and your students need some review. When vocabulary is on that agenda, try one of these fun games to review the words your students have recently learned!

TRY THESE FUN ESL VOCABULARY REVIEW GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

1 CHARADES

Charades is a fun and lively game for your ESL class to play when reviewing vocabulary. Your students will be energized and enthusiastic when their acting skills are put to the test for their classmates. It is easy to have a charade vocabulary review ready for your class at almost any time and on a moment's notice with minimal advance preparation. The easiest way to be ready at any time is to keep a collection of vocabulary cards for the words your class has studied. When you are ready to play, divide your class into two teams. Individuals will take turns acting out one of the words from the cards that you have prepared. They will choose this card randomly on their turns and will have 2 minutes to get their team to guess the word without using books or notes. The actor cannot use any sounds but must communicate only through actions. The rest of the team should shout out any answers that come to mind. If the team is able to guess the word within the designated time, they score a point. If after two minutes the team has not guessed the word correctly, the other team gets one chance to guess the word. If they are correct, they score a point and then continue with their turn. Continue playing until you run out of time or you run out of words. The team with the higher score at the end of the game wins.

2 Pictionary

Pictionary is a similar and just as entertaining game to play for vocabulary review. The rules are similar to those of charades except that instead of acting out the word, the clue giver is permitted only to draw on the white board in front

of the class. He cannot use any symbols, numbers or letters in his drawing. Again, give each person two minutes to try to get his team to guess the word. If he is unsuccessful, give the other team a chance to guess. Score the game the same way that you would score charades and announce the winning team at the end of the game.

3 CLAYMATION

How creative are your students? How daring are they? If you think they would have fun with this activity, modify the same general idea that you used in charades and Pictionary with clay or play dough. Again, the rules are generally the same but in this version your students will not be acting or drawing. They will be molding clay to communicate the target word to their teams. Follow the same general rules, but this time you may want to give each person three to five minutes before turning it over to the opposite team for their guess. Scoring is done the same.

4 ALL OF THE ABOVE

If you want to energize your students even further, add a little element of chance to the festivities. Using a six-sided die, have your students roll to see whether they will give a charade, draw a picture or form their clues out of clay. For rolls of one or four, the student will give a charade. For rolls of two or five the student will draw his clues. For rolls of three or six, your students will use clay to give their clues. In all cases, no letters, symbols or numbers are allowed when giving clues. The element of surprise will make the review even more exciting and entertaining for everyone!

5 BINGO

Bingo can be another good game for vocabulary review though perhaps not as lively. Give your students a blank bingo boards and ask them to put the review words into the squares randomly. You should have some strategy for choosing the words to call and then which your students will mark on the cards. You may want to choose words randomly from a list. You may, instead, write the words on cards and choose them randomly from the deck or simply put small slips of pa-

per into a hat to draw randomly. Whatever method you think will work best for you, once you have chosen the word do not read it. Instead, give the definition of the word to your class. Each person must then determine if he has the word that corresponds to the definition on his bingo board. When anyone gets five squares in a row, he should shout, "Bingo!" Warn your students not to clear their boards until you have checked the winner's words to make sure they did not have an incorrect answer. Give the winner of each round a prize or allow him to call the words for the next round though you may need to supply the definitions.

6 MEMORY

A memory style card game can be another effective way for reviewing vocabulary, but you or your class will need to do some advanced preparation before you play. You will need a set of cards for the vocabulary you want to review. For each word, one card should have the target vocabulary word and another card should have the definition of the word. The players should then shuffle the deck and lay all the cards in a grid pattern face down on a large playing surface. Each person turns over two cards each turn trying to find a match. If the cards do not match, he turns them over again and the next person takes a turn. If they do match, he keeps the cards and gets an additional turn. The player with the highest number of cards at the end of the game wins.

You can modify this game to practice matching words with their synonyms or their antonyms, too. For each, instead of using the definition card to match the vocabulary card, use a card with either a synonym or an antonym printed on it. Play continues the same as above. Just be sure you keep the sets of cards separated so you are ready to play at any time.

VOCABULARY IS A PART OF EVERY ESL CLASS, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN IT HAS TO BE BORING.

These games are both fun and educational and are never boring. The next time you have vocabulary to review, change things up with a game and help your students see that fun can be effective learning, too!

Speak Up: 6 Fabulous Games to Get your Students Speaking

Many ESL teachers find that their students are timid speakers or reluctant to participate in class discussions. It's only natural. After all, they are trying to talk in a language they are still working on learning. Still, silence can be deadly in the ESL classroom for your students and you. When you want to get your students to speak up, try one of these fun and simple games to get them talking in class.

TRY THESE 6 INVOLVING ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS TO SPEAK UP

1 THIS IS HOW WE ROLL

You can use this simple game as a get to know you at the start of school or later as a get to know you better activity. All you need is one standard die and six questions – either ice breakers or ones that elicit opinions, experience or other personal thoughts. Be creative and choose the ones you'd like to hear your students answer. Give students a list of the questions, and make sure they are numbered on the paper. Then, have students take turns rolling the die. Whatever number they roll, that is the question they must answer. You could do this activity as a class, in smaller groups or as a public speaking activity. For the latter, have students prepare answers to each question as homework and then have them share in front of the class after they roll.

2 HUMAN EXPERIENCE BINGO

Your students are probably already familiar with the rules of Bingo. Simply get five numbers in a line on a chart. You can use this as a basis for another get to know you game. Work with your class to compile a list experiences that a person might have had. For example, gone scuba diving, made a birthday cake and eaten sushi would all be good experiences. Work together on the list until you have about 30-40 different experiences. (You can also compile the list on your own if you prefer.) Then, give students a blank bingo board (a 5x5 chart) and have them write one experience in each of the boxes. On your word, students mingle and talk to each other to find someone with each experience they have chosen. If a student finds someone who, for example, has gone scuba diving, that student signs the square where

your student wrote it on his Bingo board. The first person to get five in a row yells, "Bingo!" Another variation is to arrange students speed dating style: two rows of chairs facing each other. Each pair then gets two minutes to talk with each other. When time is up, the students in one row shift one chair to the right. The game is over once someone has gotten five spaces in a row on their bingo board.

3 CHARACTER TRAIT ROULETTE

This game works best for students who already know each other fairly well. Work as a group to come up with a list of several character traits a person might have. (Try to stick to positive traits.) You might include adventurous, sympathetic and generous. Then write these traits on small slips of paper and put them in a bag. Each person takes a turn drawing one character trait from the bag in front of the class. The student must then announce who in class (and you are fair game, too) possesses that character trait. Of course, a name isn't enough. The person must tell a story or give an example of why he made his particular choice.

4 STORY STARTER HOT POTATO

Put the list of story starters in your writing drawer to double duty with this silly and fast paced game. Students play in small groups of around five members. Students should arrange their seats in a circle. Give your class a story starter at the beginning of the round. Starting with the person whose birthday is closest to today and them moving around the circle, each person gives his group one sentence of the story. After one person is done, the person sitting to his left adds a line where the first person left off. Students continue around the circle, adding one sentence at a time, until the music stops or until you give another signal. Whoever is in the middle of his sentence or is struggling to think of a sentence when the music stops is out. He must leave the circle. Then students play a second round either continuing the story or with a new story starter. When you stop the music, whoever's turn it is is eliminated. Play continues until the final round when the person not speaking

when the music stops is the winner.

5 FIND YOUR PARTNER

Prepare a small slip of paper for each student in your class. Each paper should have one word on it that goes with a word on another slip of paper. For example, matching pairs might be fork and spoon, day and night, bat and ball, or table and chairs. Fold the papers and put them into a hat. Each person then draws one slip of paper. On your word, students must circulate and talk to one another trying to find their partner. Once two people think they are a match, they come to you to see if they are right. If they are, they sit down. Play until everyone has found their partner. Then have those partners work together to create a new pair of words that go together. Repeat the game with these student given examples.

6 HIDE AND SPEAK

To prepare for this energetic and fast paced game, write several questions each on one index card or post-it note. These questions can be get to know you questions, comprehension questions or questions using current vocabulary words. Before your students arrive, hide these cards throughout your classroom. At the start of class, break your students into two teams. Explain that you have hidden cards throughout the room. On your word, students will search the room for the cards you have hidden. They can only pick up one card at a time. When a student finds a card, he must bring it to you and answer the question on the card. If he answers it correctly, he earns the card for his team. If he does not answer it correctly, he must get someone else from his team to help him find the answer. Once students have correctly answered the question on their card, they can search for another card. At the end of the game (after a certain amount of time or when all the cards have been found) the team with the most cards in their possession wins.

Speaking doesn't have to be forced or boring when it comes to ESL class. These games are just a few of the fun ways to get your students speaking up and having a good time while they practice their English.

7 Best Games for Your Next Conversation Class

TRY THESE 7 BEST GAMES FOR YOUR NEXT CONVERSATION CLASS

1 ICE BREAKER JENGA

Using a tumbling block game such as Jenga, create your own ice-breaker game. Write one simple icebreaker question on each block. When a student pulls the block from the stack on his turn, he must answer the question before placing the block at the top of the stack.

2 GET TO KNOW YOU BINGO

With your class brainstorm several characteristics a person might have (for example, fly in an airplane, have a younger sister, etc.). Students fill in their own empty bingo boards with these characteristics. Students then mingle asking their classmates if they have one of those characteristics. (Students may ask only one question before they must switch partners.) If the student's answer is 'yes', that student initials his classmate's board. The first student with five initials in a row shouts, 'BINGO!' and wins the game.

3 MYSTERY PARTY GUEST

Assign each of about five students a secret identity. One at a time, these students enter a party where another student is playing host. The host must determine the identity of each guest by having party type conversations with each person.

4 20 QUESTIONS

One student chooses an object. The rest of the class takes turns asking yes/no questions to determine what the object is. After 20 questions, if the class has not guessed the object the student who chose the object wins.

5 CREATE A GAME

Get students talking to each other by making up their own board game. Start a collection of assorted board game pieces, then challenge groups of 3-4 students to make up their own game using them. They must also explain the game to the rest of the class.

6 APPLES TO APPLES

In this game, students play cards that they think relate to one another. The judge in each round of play lays down a card, and the other players must choose the card they think are related to the first one. The judge chooses the card that is most appropriate and then must explain his reasoning behind the choice.

7 CHOOSE YOUR VICTIM

Choose a specific grammar point to practice and arrange your students in a circle. The first person asks a question using the grammatical structure and then tosses a ball to another student, who answers the question. If he answers correctly, he asks a question to another student and tosses the ball. If he answers incorrectly, he must return the ball and sit down. The last student standing wins.

5 Easy Listening Games for ESL Beginners

ESL BEGINNERS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SAY A WHOLE LOT, AFTER ALL THEIR VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR ARE RATHER LIMITED. BUT IN ORDER TO START SPEAKING, THEY HAVE TO START LISTENING.

And not just listening to the correct pronunciation, intonation and stress. I mean really listening. Listening for meaning. Listening for context. Listening for real comprehension.

You may think there isn't a whole lot beginners can comprehend, but you'll be surprised. Try playing these simple listening games. They may be easy, but for students who are just starting out in their English learning journey, they can be highly effective ways to train in the basic skills they will use on a daily basis in the near future!

HOW TO HELP ESL BEGINNERS IMPROVE THEIR LISTENING SKILLS: 5 EASY GAMES

1 LISTEN FOR IT!

One of the most essential listening skills your students should develop involves listening for key information, which often includes numbers, facts, hours, dates or other essential info. To help them train for this skill, first give them some context: You will listen to a man asking for information at the train station. Then, before they listen, give them something they will have to find out: What time does the train to Boston leave? Now here comes the "game" aspect of it. You can:

- Divide the class into teams and have a team member raise their hand/ring a bell as soon as they hear the answer. Then, you do the same with another short audio track. You ask a question and play the audio, the team that answers first gets a point. And the team with the most points at the end wins.
- Have each student participate individually, but make sure everyone participates, not the same students over and over again.

2 UNMUSICAL CHAIRS

This easy listening game works great with young learners. Arrange chairs as if to play musical chairs. Students will walk around them, but in this case they won't be listening to a song. They will listen to a conversation. As always, give them the context and ask them a question: What is Tom's favorite food? Students walk around the chairs as you play the audio and the student/s who hear the answer to the question sit/s down. Pause the audio. Those who are seated answer the question, and if it's correct they will remain seated. If several students sit down at the same time, that's fine, but ask them to whisper the answer in your ear to make sure they all heard the answer from the audio.

Ask another question (whose answer will come up next in the audio). The students who were left standing now walk around the chairs till they hear the answer. Go on asking questions and giving students the opportunity to secure a seat. The last student left standing, like the usual game of musical chairs is left out of the next round. A chair is removed from the circle and so it continues until you have one chair and two students competing to answer the final question.

It's convenient to have the script of the audio so it's easier for you to ask the questions. Also, bear in mind you will play longer with a longer audio, but you can also play with several short ones. The game will go much faster if several students sit down (have the answer) at the same time, but only those who got it right should remain seated.

3 WHICH ONE IS IT?

Something that is particularly difficult for ESL students is listening to the subtle differences between words that have a different, but similar spelling. These are words like leave/live, fill/feel, tree/three, fit/feet, etc. So here's a great game you can play. Have a set of cards printed out with these troublesome words. Divide the

class into two teams. Students take turns. You place the two cards on the desk in front of them: live and leave. Say one of the words out loud: live. If the student chooses the right card, the team gets 2 points. Now, if the student is unsure, he/she may choose to request "an example", i.e. the word used in a sentence: I live a few blocks from here. If the student chooses the right card in this case, the team gets 1 point.

4 WORD OF MOUTH

Here's another game you can play with the same easily confused words from above. Divide students into two teams. Whisper a word to a student, who must then whisper it to the student next to him/her, and so it goes until the last student in line has to say the word out loud. If he/she pronounces it correctly, the team gets a point. A variation of this would be not to whisper to the first student but show him/her the word written down on a piece of paper.

5 STEP BY STEP

Another important listening skill students must develop is learning to understand step by step instructions. Try this fun listening game, which also helps them practice asking for and giving directions. You'll need a "city map": you can use a real map, or better yet create one with your students' desks, so they have actual "streets" to walk on. Start at any give point, say the "bank", and have a students ask for directions to another location. Tell them how to get there. The student must trace his/her finger along the route you indicated, or walk all the way there. Students who manage to reach their destination/don't get lost win points!

FROM THESE EXAMPLES YOU CAN SEE THAT'S IT NOT DIFFICULT TO MAKE LISTENING PRACTICE INTO A GAME, ONE THAT IS NOT ONLY FUN, BUT ALSO GIVES YOUR ESL STUDENTS THE LISTENING SKILLS THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.

10 Fun English Spelling Games for Your Students

ARE YOUR STUDENTS READY FOR A FUN FILLED GAME STYLE SPELLING REVIEW?

Here are some ways to get their pulse quickening and the letters in the right order.

TRY THESE 10 FUN ENGLISH SPELLING GAMES WITH YOUR STUDENTS

1 UNMIX IT UP

Have students unscramble letters to make an English word. Using a current vocabulary list, have each student write the letters for one word on index cards – one letter per card. Then under the flap of an envelope, have each student write out the correct spelling of their word. Students then tuck the flap into the envelope, shuffle their letter cards and put them into the envelope in front of the flap. Now you have a learning center game ready for your students. Just put the envelopes out in a box or basket. Students using the center should pull out the index cards and arrange them to make a correctly spelled English word. They can check their answer by lifting the flap of the envelope when they are finished. As the year progresses, add words to the collection while leaving those that are already there and it becomes a way to review vocabulary as well.

2 UNMIX IT UP RELAY

Using the envelopes your students made for the 'unmix it up' learning center, have a spelling relay race. Divide your class into teams of five, and put a stack of ten envelopes on a desk across the room for each team. One at a time, students run to the desk, take the cards out of an envelope and unscramble the letters to make a word. When they think they have a correct word they call "check". You should see to be sure they have a correctly spelled English word. If so, he should put the letters back in the envelope and put it on the floor be-

fore running back to their team. The next person then runs to the table and choose his own envelope to unscramble. Whichever team finishes unmixing all their words first wins the game.

3 BLIND RELAY

If your whiteboard is also a magnetic one, this game will get your students excited about spelling. Divide your class into two teams. Each team should have a set of magnetic letters (the simple kind you find at the dollar store) on their half of the board. On your go, announce one word for each team to spell. One person from each team runs to the whiteboard and uses the magnetic letters to spell out the word. Just be sure you have enough duplicate letters to spell the words you call out. (For example, "taller" would require two letter ls.) The team that gets the word first scores a point. Then two other players take a turn. Play until everyone has had at least one turn. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins. If you want to make the relay even more challenging, blindfold each person and position them at the board before calling out the word. They will have to feel the letters on the board to spell their word correctly.

4 TELEPHONE SPELLING

This game is just as much a test of pronunciation and listening skills as it is of spelling skills. Divide your class into two teams, and have each team sit or stand in one long line. You whisper a word to the person at the back of the line, and she must carefully whisper it to the person in front of her. That person whispers to the person in front of him and so on until the first person in line hears the word. When he does, he should go to the whiteboard and write the word that he heard using the correct spelling. If he gets the word right, his team scores a point. If not, he does not score for the team. He then goes to the back of the line and the teams play again with a new word and a new player.

5 SECRET SPELLER

This game requires a small whiteboard or flipchart that you can face away from the students in your class. Set the flipchart up so it is opposite the front wall of the classroom. Put your students in pairs and have them choose one person to be the speller and one to be the writer. On the flipchart, write five to ten words that are difficult to spell or pronounce. When you say go, the speller from each team runs to the front of the classroom and looks at the list of words on the flipchart. He tries to remember as many of the words and their spelling as he can and runs back to his partner. He must then help his partner write the words on her paper, but the speller is not allowed to look at the paper. He can run back to the flipchart as many times as necessary to check spelling or remember words. When the pair thinks they have all of the words right, they call check. You should then look and tell them if the words are all correct or if there is a mistake. Throughout the game, the speller and the writer can say anything they want, but the speller can never look at the writer's paper. The first team to get all the words written correctly on the writer's paper wins.

6 SCRABBLE SLAM

Scrabble Slam is a fun spelling game that also builds vocabulary. Each card has one letter on the front and another on the back. (You can also create your own Spelling Slam cards by writing one letter each on index cards. Have more copies of common letters like vowels, t, s, r, n and l in your set, also omitting q and z.) Play starts with any four letter word laid out on the table and each player holding ten cards. The remaining cards go in a pile on the table. On go, players add one letter at time to the word to create a different four letter word. For example, pole may become poke which becomes pike which becomes bike. Every time a letter is laid down, it must correctly spell an Eng-

lish word. Up to four players play at one time trying to get rid of all their cards as quickly as possible. If someone plays a word that is not spelled correctly, players stop and that person must take a three card penalty from the draw pile. If no one can play a new word and everyone still has cards, each person draws one letter from the draw pile. The first person to use all her cards wins.

7 HANGMAN

This classic grade school game gives your students a fun way to practice spelling. For the traditional rules, look here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Play-Hangman>. Start by playing with your entire class, you putting a word or phrase on the board. Players guess letters trying to decipher the words. If a student calls a letter that is in the phrase, you fill in all the places where it belongs. If they call a letter that is not in the phrase they receive a penalty. After a practice round with you leading, have students break into groups of three and play on their own.

8 3-D SPELLING

Why have a spelling test with pencil and paper when you can use play dough, beans, toys or other fun items to write out the words. You call out a word to your class, and they race through the items in their desk to spell the word out on their table. They might spell the word by arranging crayons, paper clips or other items in their desk. If they do not have enough items in the desk to spell the word, they can use items from around the room though collecting items will take more time. The first person to spell out each word correctly gets a point. The person with the highest score at the end of the spelling test wins.

9 SPELLING BATTLESHIP

In traditional Battleship, you sink your opponent's boats. In this spelling version, you sink their spelling words. Each person needs two 10 by 10 grids. Have students start by labeling the rows letters A-J and the columns 1-10. Then each person writes the same set of 5-7 spelling words on one grid, in random order and location, either vertical or horizontal. On the other grid, he tracks his opponent's words. Players take turns calling out a coordinate, for ex-

ample D-5. His opponent checks his grid and announces whether D-5 was a hit or miss. The first player should mark that square on his blank grid – red for a hit and blue or black for a miss. Play continues until one person finds every letter of all the words on his opponent's grid. (For more detail on how to play as well as a printable grid, see Salvo - the complete rules: http://boardgames.about.com/od/salvo/a/salvo_rules.htm.)

10 SPARKLE

This game tests spelling as well as listening skills. Have your students arrange themselves in a circle. Announce a word from the current vocabulary unit. The person to your left says the first letter of the word. The second person says the second letter. The third person the third and so on until the word is completed. The next person says 'sparkle'. Then you call out a new word. If at any time a person says the wrong letter, he is out and returns to his seat. If a student does not say sparkle when the word is completely spelled or if he says it too soon, he is out. Play continues until only one person remains in the circle.

10 Fun Spelling Games for Your ESL Class

WHETHER YOU TEACH ELEMENTARY ESL OR WORK WITH ADULTS, SPELLING WILL BE A PART OF YOUR CURRICULUM.

When you are looking for a fun way to use or review these spelling words in class, try one of the following games with your students.

TRY THESE 10 FUN SPELLING GAMES WITH YOUR ESL CLASS

1 SCRABBLE SLAM

With no preparation and a small financial investment, Scrabble Slam is a fun way for your students to practice spelling words in English. The game consists of a simple set of playing cards with one letter printed on the front and back of each card. Starting with any four letter word, students add one letter at a time on top of one of the original four letters to create a new word. Modify the rules slightly and take turns going around the table to see if each person can create a new word with each of his turns.

2 FREE FORM SCRABBLE

If your students are working with a specific spelling or vocabulary list, challenge them to fit all of their spelling words on a Scrabble game board. Each word must connect with one of the other words, and students only have the letter tiles which came in the game. Students may find it easier as well as more fun if they create their spelling word grid with a partner.

3 UNSCRAMBLD EGGS

Another activity you can do with a given set of vocabulary words requires two sets of plastic eggs. For each egg, put the letters to spell a vocabulary word (use letter tiles, plastic letters or whatever you have on hand) and shake to mix. Make one egg for each spelling word for each team. Two teams then race relay style, each person opening one egg and putting

the letters in the right order to make a vocabulary word. The first team to unscramble all their eggs is the winner.

4 SPELLING PONG

For a fun, rainy day activity, set up a grid of cups on a table in your classroom. Each cup should have a letter written on the bottom of it. Students then take turns bouncing a ping-pong ball into the cups. Whatever cup the ball lands in, the player has that letter to use as he tries to spell a word. Students take turns until each person is able to spell a word from the letters he has collected. Either race to see who can spell a word first, or challenge students to make as many words as possible from the letters they earn. Make sure your students spell words with at least three or four letters as you play.

5 SPELLING BEE

A Spelling Bee is a classic spelling game which will help your students spell and review words from their vocabulary lists. Divide your class into two teams and have each team stand along an opposite wall of the classroom. Give one word at a time to each student, alternating teams. If the student spells the word correctly, she goes to the end of the line until her turn comes up again. If she spells the word incorrectly, she sits down. The last team standing wins. This game is a great way to review vocabulary or spelling words before a comprehensive test.

6 FIND THE VOWELS

Make a set of go fish cards using spelling words. For each spelling word, write the word on one card minus the vowels in the word (for example "H—D"). On another card, write the vowels which complete that word (for example, -EA-). Students play the card game go fish style by matching the spelling word with the vowels it needs to complete the word. You can add cards to the set as you add spelling words throughout the year.

7 INVISIBLE MAN

For a team spelling game, draw two stick figures on the board. Each figure should have the same number of parts. The goal is to make your team's stick man invisible before the other team does. Give each team a word to spell. If they spell it correctly, erase one piece of the stick figure. If they do not spell the word correctly, leave the stick figure unchanged. Then repeat with two new words. The first team to make his man invisible wins!

8 MAGNETIC LETTERS

Using a magnetic board and a few sets of magnetic letters (available in most stores), see which player can create the most words in a set amount of time, around five minutes, from his set of letters. After the five minutes is up, check the words and explain any unfamiliar vocabulary. The person with the highest number of words wins the game.

9 WORD SEARCH

A word search is a fun way for students to review spelling words. Give each person a sheet of graph paper and have him write the spelling words in the grid before filling in the remaining boxes. Have students exchange their word searches and see who can find all the vocabulary words first.

10 SPELL HOPSCOTCH

For an outside spelling game, have students draw a hopscotch board on the playground.

Give each person a word to spell as she jumps through the boxes. If she spells the word wrong, she must repeat that word on her next turn. The first person to get through the entire board wins.

7 Fun ESL Games to Practice Pronunciation

LET'S ALL BE HONEST. PRONUNCIATION IS ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT WE DON'T OFTEN TEACH EXPLICITLY.

Of course, we correct our students' pronunciation when they make mistakes, when they're not speaking clearly or when they need to be a little more accurate. But do we devote class time to pronunciation practice on a regular basis? Don't feel bad if your answer is no. Instead, try playing these games to practice pronunciation. Your students will thank you for it, and you'll be relieved you can make pronunciation practice fun!

7 FUN GAMES FOR PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

1 ODD ONE OUT

Prepare a list with sets of three to four words that have the same vowel sound, plus one somewhere in the middle that is different. For example, cut, but, nut and put. Divide your class into two teams and have them form two lines in front of the board. Write the first set of four words on the board. The students at the front of the line must read the set of words, race to the board once they have identified the word that sounds different and circle it. The first student to circle the odd word scores a point for the team.

2 HOMOPHONE GO FISH

This is a game that is best played in pairs or small groups – a really fun way to practice homophones! Make a list of the homophone pairs you'll use, and write each word on a separate index card or piece of paper. Make as many decks of cards as you'll need depending on the number of groups you'll have. Each group gets a set of cards, each student gets five cards. The remaining cards are put in a draw pile. The goal of the game is to find the matching homophone by asking another student if they have "a word that sounds like...". For example:

S1: Do you have a word that sounds like "plane"?

S2: Yes, I do. (hands over "plain")

Now, to keep the matching pair the S1 must use both words correctly in a sentence or two. If S2 does not possess the homophone he/she has to say, "Go fish!" And S1 takes a card from the draw pile.

3 PRONUNCIATION MAZE

In this game, students must connect words that have the same vowel sound. Take a look at this Pronunciation Maze as an example. Here, students must follow the path from boys to choice by following the words with the /ɔɪ/ sound. But you can create your own maze. Make a 10x6 table, add the words that have the sound you want to practice, then fill in the rest with others words that don't have this sound at all. You can have students take turns on one maze. Or print out several copies to see who reaches the end of the maze first!

4 FOUR IN A ROW

Here's a good one for young learners! Divide your class into groups of three to four students. Print out this Four in a Row worksheet (or make your own!) and cut it up into separate cards. In groups, students must work together to arrange the words into sets of four words that sound the same. The first team to complete all of the sets wins.

5 IPA BINGO

There are lots of pronunciation games you can play with IPA flashcards, but here's a great Bingo with a twist. You'll have to prepare several 5x5 Bingo sheets with sample words for each of the phonemes: students can play individually or in pairs. Take an IPA flashcard from a bag and say the sound: /ɔɪ/. Students must find the word that matches that sound on their Bingo sheet in order to cross it out: toy. If this is too hard, you can say

the sound and give them a sample word: /ɔɪ/ - toy. Students must find a word with the same sound: boy.

6 MINIMAL PAIR SLAP

There's no better way to practice those pesky little minimal pairs! Choose sets of minimal pairs and write down each word on a separate card/piece of paper. Divide the class into two teams and have each team line up in front of a desk: the first students in line must have their hands behind their backs. Present two cards: forty and fourteen. Say one of the words out loud: fourteen. Students must slap the right card. The one who slaps it first must use the word in a sentence to get a point for the team.

7 RHYMING PAIR MEMORY GAME

Make cards with words that rhyme, like name/game, box/fox, tick/stick, etc. Place them face down. Students take turns turning over the cards to find the pairs that rhyme.

IT TAKES A LOT MORE THAN SIMPLE CORRECTION TO IMPROVE YOUR STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION.

Take a few minutes of your class time every day to practice some phonemes, consonant or vowel sounds, or verb endings. And to add a little more fun to it, make a game out of it!

What Is It? Top 10 Guessing Games for Young Learners

THE CROWD IS ROARING. THEY'RE GOING MAD WITH ANTICIPATION. EYES ARE WIDE OPEN. HANDS ARE UP. SOCCER FANS AT THE WORLD CUP FINAL? NOPE. A GROUP OF YOUNG LEARNERS TRYING TO GUESS THE RIGHT ANSWER.

Guessing games are engaging and make them think – the ideal way to practice key vocabulary and grammar.

TOP 10 GUESSING GAMES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

1 GUESS THE ANIMAL

Give students an animal flash-card or have them take one from a bag. They must give their classmates clues as to what animal it is: This animal lives in the jungle. It eats bananas. It's brown.

2 GUESS WHO?

This guessing game is very similar to the classic game Guess Who? Use the real board game if you've got it or print copies of this sheet (<http://busyteacher.org/8638-describing-people-guess-who.html>) to hand out to teams of two students. Separately print out strips of paper with the names. Student A draws a name from the bag. Student B has to guess who they are by asking questions: Do you have brown hair? Do you have blue eyes?

3 CELEBRITY GUESS WHO?

This game is very similar to the above. Simply use celebrity photos instead.

4 GUESS MY JOB

Print out a sheet of clues like this one (<http://busyteacher.org/8638-describing-people-guess-who.html>). If students guess the profession after the first clue they get three points, if they guess after the second they get two points and after the last clue they get one point. You may be using language your young learners may not use themselves, but they are capable of under-

standing a lot more than you think. In any case, you may adapt the clues to suit their level, and even use this point-giving strategy for any type of guessing game.

5 LISTEN UP – AND GUESS!

A fun spin on the guessing game is playing short audio files and having students guess what it is. FreeSFX.co.uk has hundreds of sound files to choose from. Can your class tell the difference between a mouse squeaking and a bird chirping? How about a bear's growl and a lion's roar? Find out!

6 GUESS THE MYSTERY OBJECT

This is a classic in my young learner's classroom and one of my personal favorites. Take a big cloth bag and place one item in it. Students put their hands inside the bag and feel the object to guess what it is. You can do this with classroom objects, animals, toys or any piece of realia.

7 LANGUAGE HANGMAN

Who hasn't played this classic whiteboard game? But try this variation to help students review any expressions they've recently learned. Draw enough number of blanks to represent each letter of the words contained in the expression. For example, for "thank you" you'd draw blanks like this: _ _ _ _ _ . You may choose to add the first letter or the last one to get them started, or a random letter in the middle. Students have to not only guess the correct expression or phrase, but also use it with a partner.

8 GUESS WHAT I BOUGHT!

Another great way to review vocabulary. Tell your class you went shopping yesterday and that they must guess what you bought. Describe each object in terms they can understand: It's warm. It's brown. You put it on your head (it's a hat). If they guess correctly show them a flashcard or magazine cutout of the item.

9 GUESSING RHYMES

Rhymes are great for practicing pronunciation. I'm thinking of an insect. It rhymes with sea (bee). I'm thinking of a fruit. It rhymes with beach (peach).

10 RIDDLES

Children love riddles so feel free to try some out in your ESL class. ESLMOBI (http://eslmobi.com/3i/a_riddles.htm) has a great list you can use. If some are too hard for students to guess, try giving them additional clues. These animal riddles are also great (<http://busyteacher.org/7139-animal-riddles.html>)!

BONUS GAME: I SPY

This is a classic that children love and has variations throughout the world in different languages. Choose an object that is clearly visible in the classroom. Or an object from a large illustration. Say, "I spy with my little eye something green/that you wear on your feet/that you use to write". The student who guesses correctly first gets to choose an object and continues the game by saying "I spy..."

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR GUESSING GAMES:

- Divide the class into teams. Students take turns giving their teammates the clues so that they can guess for points.
- Allow them a limited number of clues, say three. If the team guesses with those three clues they get 10 points. If teammates still can't guess, they're allowed to ask additional questions, but each additional question subtracts two points.
- Switch roles! Have students give you the clues and guess what they are describing. You can have lots of fun with this. Pretend you have no idea so students are forced to come up with extra clues.

GUESSING GAMES LIKE THESE ARE GREAT WARMERS OR FILLERS, AS WELL AS A FANTASTIC WAY TO END THE CLASS ON A FUN NOTE!

Can't Play or Dance? Top 9 Sit-down Activities for Young Learners

AH, YOUNG LEARNERS JUST LOVE TO MOVE.

They're not as self-conscious as teens are – not afraid to look silly as adults are. They'll dance, race and jump with gusto, relishing in the sheer energy that is coursing through their veins. But what happens when we have no room to jump and dance? What happens when there are simply too many students and no space left to play? What if you are told to keep the noise level down and can't have as many high-energy activities as you'd like? There is no need to despair: there are several sit-down activities that young learners will enjoy just as much.

9 BEST SIT-DOWN ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

1 WHITEBOARD GAMES

There are plenty of whiteboard games students can play from the comfort of their own seats, including Pictionary, Tic Tac Toe and Hangman.

2 STORYTELLING

Children love to be told a good story. If you have enough room, get the children to sit in a circle on the floor. Use big, bright storybooks with lots of pictures. Ask them questions as you go along – pause, what do you think will happen next? Get them involved in the story, and they'll enjoy it a lot more. And don't forget to make faces and use different voices!

3 YOU'RE THE TEACHER!

Show students a series of flashcards and practice the same kind of question: what's this? what color is this? etc. Students take turns standing in the front of the class and being the teacher. They must ask their classmates the same question. The element of repetition helps boost retention.

4 CRAFTS

Crafts and art work are great, quiet sit-down activities that don't always have

to be as dull as having them sit working in silence. Give them each a set of materials they must arrange and glue on a sheet of paper by listening carefully to your instructions. For instance, give them each one red square, one green triangle, one brown rectangle, one green circle, and a smaller brown rectangle. Give them these instructions: Put the red square at the center. Put the green triangle above the red square. And so on till they complete a picture of a house and tree.

5 COLORING AND DRAWING

Similar to the activity above, you can give your class a picture to color but give them specific instructions: color the hair brown, draw a blue square and draw a green circle in the square. These are great exercises in paying attention, listening carefully and following instructions.

6 GUESSING GAMES

You can play this game by having students sit in a circle on the floor or at their own desks. Place an item in a bag that is not see through – it can be any real object or toy. Walk around and students take turns putting their hands in the bag to feel the object. They must guess what it is. You can also hold a flashcard towards you and describe what you're seeing to have students guess. Guessing games are great for keeping students engaged – and keeping them sitting quietly.

7 ACTIONS – SITTING DOWN

Who says they can't do some actions while sitting down? There are plenty of songs you can sing while students move their arms and hands. They can chant and clap. They can even stomp their feet. If you have limited space for movement around the classroom, see what they can move while sitting at their seats.

8 BOARD GAMES

Whether you have a small group or a large group of students you have to

divide into smaller groups, board games are the ideal sit-down activity. Have them sit together on the floor or push their desks together. Give each group a copy of the same game or different games – they can then switch! Use this template for Snakes and Ladders (<http://busyteacher.org/9177-snakes-and-ladders-blank-template.html>) and adapt it to suit your needs – review vocabulary or a particular grammar point.

9 PASS THE BALL!

And who says you can't play with a ball while sitting? If students are sitting at their desks, they can simply hand it over to another student. If they're sitting on the floor in a circle, they can toss it to each other. Play spelling games, Q & A games, count or say the letters of the alphabet.

SIT-DOWN ACTIVITIES CAN BE YOUR BEST ALLIES WHEN YOU NEED TO TAKE A BREATH OR GIVE YOUR YOUNG LEARNERS SOME TIME TO RELAX AND SETTLE DOWN. THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE BORING – YOU CAN MAKE THEM AS MUCH FUN AS ANY RACE OR TPR ACTIVITY.

If you have to teach a large group of young learners in a classroom that is not big enough for activities with movement, I strongly suggest taking them outside, if possible, as often as you can (maybe a couple of times a month) or perhaps to the school gym, cafeteria, or any large space where they can be more active. It'll be a change of pace and your students will definitely appreciate it.

7 Terrific Telephone English Activities for Adult ESL Learners

FOR THOSE WHO SPEAK ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, SPEAKING ENGLISH ON THE TELEPHONE CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING AND FRUSTRATING TASKS.

On one hand, listening comprehension proves to be more difficult on the phone. On the other hand, it is sometimes absolutely necessary for those who do not live in English speaking countries to communicate with others in English – and on the phone.

So, for most adult ESL learners, speaking on the telephone in English is an essential skill. Fortunately, it is one that may be improved, if you give your students fun, interactive activities to help them practice. Here are some great ways to practice speaking English on the telephone.

TRY THESE 7 TELEPHONE ENGLISH ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR ADULT ESL LEARNERS

1 LEAVE YOUR MESSAGE AFTER THE “BEEP!”

Have students practice leaving each other messages. First, try to gather as many recording devices as you can: MP3 players, digital recorders, laptops with microphones, or even your students' own cell phones (there's no need to actually make calls, just use notetaking software like Evernote or any other that may be used to record voice notes on cell phones).

If you have a large class, have groups of two or three students share one device. Have students record their outgoing messages, then students take turns leaving messages for their classmates. This works best if you give each student a specific reason for calling.

2 COULD YOU REPEAT THAT, PLEASE?

Students practice asking the other speaker to repeat or clarify something they did not understand. Divide stu-

dents into pairs and assign the roles of caller (Student A) and non-native speaker (Student B). Student B pretends they speak very little English so that Student A has to ask B to repeat everything they say. Variations include adding background noise, static, or having Student B speak very softly. You can also give them specific instructions/complications, like a difficult name to spell, or asking for directions.

3 I NEED TO CONFIRM YOUR DETAILS.

When conducting some transactions on the phone, we are quite often asked to supply personal details to confirm our identity. Give your students this situation or a very similar one: Student A wants to purchase an item on eBay, but is unable to make the payment. Student B works in Customer Support and will help Student A complete the transaction. But before they can do that, Student B asks Student A a series of personal questions, from address to phone number, ID number to mother's maiden name. A fun twist is to ask Student B to ask as many questions as he/she can, including ridiculous things, like a pet's name!

4 PLEASE HOLD. I'LL CONNECT YOU TO THE RIGHT DEPARTMENT.

This is a great way to have students practice their reason for calling over and over again. Give Student A a reason to call Customer Support. Student B takes the call, but then connects Student A with another department (Sales, Technical Assistance, Accounts Payable, etc.) Student C then connects A with D and so on. Student A must repeat the reason for calling each and every time.

5 MIMIC THE CALL

This works great with beginners who are not yet familiar with common telephoning expressions and their appropriate intonation. Play a telephone conversation while students read and

mimic the call as it plays – the goal is to follow the rhythm and copy the intonation to match the speakers in the audio. Play the audio track again, but this time lower the volume, and then a third time with the volume even lower. Play the track as many times as needed, till students are able to act out the situation comfortably without listening or reading.

6 THE VANISHING CALL

Write out a complete telephone conversation on the whiteboard. Have students take turns reading it out loud. Then, erase one or a few words, depending on how long the conversation is. Students once again read it out loud and include the missing word(s). Continue erasing words, a few at a time and having students read the conversation, until all of the text has been erased. Students must then say it completely from memory.

7 WHAT DO YOU SAY NEXT?

Print out role play cards that include a variety of reasons for calling (making/changing appointments, asking for someone on the phone, a problem with a bill/invoice) and proper responses to these situations (“The doctor is available Tuesday morning”, “He's at a meeting right now. Would you like to leave a message?”, “I'll put you through to Accounts Payable”). Student A picks up a Reason for Calling card and calls Student B. Student B has to choose the appropriate response from the set of Response cards.

REMEMBER TO TEACH YOUR STUDENTS PLENTY OF EXPRESSIONS/RESPONSES, AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO REPEAT, REPEAT AND REPEAT SOME MORE.

Most telephone conversations are based on a certain repetitive set of phrases for talking on the phone. The more you expose your students to and the more you practice them, the easier it will be for them to handle a variety of telephone situations.

5 Easter Games and Activities Your ESL Class Will Never Eggs-pect!

ANOTHER MAJOR HOLIDAY ROLLS AROUND AND YOUR STUDENTS KNOW YOU'LL BE UP TO SOMETHING.

You've had special lessons for Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, so they'll be expecting the Easter crafts, new vocabulary, and worksheets, as well as the reading, writing and speaking activities. They'll also be expecting the Easter games. They know full well that any games you play in class will be somehow related to an ESL component, that there will be some focus on grammar or new vocabulary. Because they know that in an ESL classroom, you rarely play games just for fun. Want to surprise your class? AND give them opportunities to learn? Try these Easter games, and you'll have your students eagerly lining up to play. And learn!

5 EASTER GAMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR ESL CLASS

1 EASTER BUNNY SAYS

Simon Says is a classic Total Physical Response activity, and one that young students enjoy, so why not play it for Easter but with a twist? Or with a hop, rather? First, get your students outfitted with some bunny ears (teach them how to make some and stick them onto plastic headbands) and bunny tails (make some of out cotton and stick with double sided tape). Some of the instructions may be:

- Easter Bunny says hop left/right!
- Easter Bunny says touch your bunny ears (make sure they touch the right ones!)
- Easter bunny says shake your cotton tail!
- Etc..

This is a great way to review the part of the body and introduce new Easter-related vocabulary.

2 EASTER FACES

This is a fabulous way to review face vocabulary and put their listening

comprehension to the test. This activity requires some previous preparation at home. First, you'll have to prepare some eggs. Make a hole on either end of an egg, blow out the inside, and rinse. In class, give each of your students an egg and tell them to get their markers ready. Give them step by step instructions on what they have to draw:

- Draw two big eyes.
- Draw a big nose.
- Draw a smiling/frowning mouth.
- Draw eyebrows/glasses over the eyes.
- Etc.

Walk around the classroom and check to see if they followed your instructions correctly.

3 ROLL THE EASTER DICE

Roll some custom made dice for a fun speaking task! Print out two copies of this dice template, available at SparkleBox.com. On each side of each dice write the usual one to six numbers plus a different word - include as many Easter-related words as you can, but add some interesting ones: bunny, eggs, basket, hunt, break, spring, hop, etc. Each student rolls the dice and has to say a sentence using the two words they rolled - if they succeed they get the number of points they rolled (the two numbers added). You may choose to make it a bit more challenging for older students. Give them more difficult words to use, or tell them they have to make short story based on those two words. The best story wins!

4 EASTER EGG AND SPOON RACE

A classic among relay races, you may choose to adapt this one to suit your students' ages. You may use uncooked eggs, hard-boiled ones, plastic eggs, or even chocolate eggs. Divide students into two teams. Each team member races to the finish line. The winning team has to come up with ten Easter-related questions that the losing team has to answer.

5 WORDY EASTER EGG HUNT

Do you feel that sometimes your students lack the words to say what they want to say? Here's your chance to provide some through an Easter egg hunt. First, write Easter related words in small slips of paper. Place each slip inside a plastic egg. Hide the eggs throughout the classroom or outside, if you can, and invite your students to participate in this exhilarating egg hunt. Once they've collected them all, they open their eggs and take out the slips of paper. Their task is to write a story using the words they found in their eggs.

DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A FUN EASTER LESSON, FILLED WITH GAMES THAT ARE RICH IN LEARNING POSSIBILITIES? NO MORE EGGS-CUSES!

We've given you some great ideas for games that will not only keep your students engaged and thrilled to participate- they ensure they'll put on their thinking caps (or bunny ears!)

7 Thanksgiving Crafts and Games Your Students Will Be Thankful for

WE ALL HAVE HOPES, DREAMS AND DESIRES. BUT DURING THANKSGIVING, WE DON'T FOCUS SO MUCH ON WHAT WE HOPE TO HAVE, BUT RATHER WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE, WHICH WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL FOR.

So, this Thanksgiving instead of having your ESL students hope and dream about more fun activities in class, give them some they can truly be thankful for!

THANKSGIVING CRAFTS:

1 TUBE TURKEY

This project makes beautiful centerpieces for your students to take home for Thanksgiving dinner. You'll need to supply each of your students with a toilet paper tube and a copy of this template (<http://busyteacher.org/3423-turkey-paper-tube-zoo-project-for-your-young.html>). Those who finish their turkeys may complete the writing task and describe their animal: Where does it live? What does it eat? They may even create a story for it.

2 WAX PAINTING SECRET MESSAGE CARDS

Students will have the pleasure of finding out what a classmate is thankful for with this project they can later make into great Thanksgiving cards. Give each of your students some white poster board or card paper, and a white wax crayon. Students carefully write something they are thankful for with the white crayon – naturally it will be very difficult to read. Each student passes their paper to another classmate. Give them some diluted poster paint and a paintbrush. As they brush the paint over the paper, their classmate's message is magically revealed!

The messages are shared with the class (Maria is thankful for having so many great friends.), and each paper is then returned to its owner. They may fold the paper into a card, write Happy Thanksgiving on the front, and decorate it as they please.

3 THANKSGIVING SCRAPBOOK

There is no better time than Thanksgiving to not only count our blessings, but also share them with others. For this project, your class will create colorful scrapbooks to remember everything they are thankful for. Give your students plenty of colored paper, scissors, crayons and markers, plus lots of magazines they can cut pictures from.

For their scrapbook cover they will write the title, "This year I'm thankful for..." On the following pages they will add all of the things they are thankful for using magazine cut outs or by drawing their own pictures on each page. They may wish to add pictures of places they visited, sports or things they learned to play, or general good times they had with their families.

4 A BIRD IN THE HAND...

There's a popular expression in English that goes, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush", which means we should be thankful for what we do have, rather than focus on the possibility of more. Ask your students how this expression can be applied to Thanksgiving. Then, show them how they, too, can have "a bird in the hand". Show them how to trace a hand on a piece of paper. The thumb will be the head and the fingers will be the feathers of their bird, which in this case will be a turkey. After they trace their hands, they draw other details and color their turkeys.

THANKSGIVING GAMES:

5 THANKSGIVING YUMMY BINGO

Looking for a fun Thanksgiving Bingo to play with your class? Then, look no further! Download this Thanksgiving Yummy Bingo worksheet (<http://busyteacher.org/3222-thanksgiving-yummy-bingo.html>), kindly provided by Hallmark and have tons of fun with your class.

6 THANKSGIVING TIC TAC TOE

How about giving the ol' Tic Tac Toe game a Thanksgiving theme? It's as easy as pumpkin pie! Simply download this Thanksgiving full-color clipart file (<http://busyteacher.org/3736-kids-thanksgiving-clipart.html>) and print some into small Tic Tac Toe-sized squares – try to have at least five of each image you choose, for example five pilgrim hats and five turkeys. Draw the typical 3x3 grid on some poster board. Students use the images instead of the Xs and Os. For a bigger challenge, you may require them to answer a question correctly before they can place their card on the board.

7 PIN THE SNOOD ON THE TURKEY

What's that funny-looking thing that hangs below the turkey's chin? Why, that would be the snood, and won't your students have a grand, ol' time trying to pin it onto a turkey. Put up a poster of a turkey without the snood and have your blindfolded students take turns trying to pin it in the right place for some hilarious fun!

AND AREN'T YOU THANKFUL YOU'VE GOT A SITE LIKE BUSYTEACHER ON YOUR SIDE, ALWAYS SUPPLYING FRESH IDEAS WHEN YOU'VE GOT NONE AND NEW WORKSHEETS WHEN YOU'RE TIRED OF USING THE SAME OLD, SAME OLD?

5 Fun Games that Teach the Weather

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A FRESH WAY TO TEACH YOUR ESL STUDENTS COMMON WEATHER WORDS? ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW WAY TO REVIEW WEATHER EXPRESSIONS AND VOCABULARY?

Why not try one of the following games to add some energy to your class and fun to the everyday topic of weather?

HOW TO TEACH WEATHER: 5 FUN GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

1 PIN THE TAIL ON THE GLOBE

After introducing or reviewing a list of weather terms, post a world map on your classroom wall. Take a few moments to introduce your students to the terms equator and pole and discuss what types of weather the residents at each place (human or otherwise) experience year round. Then, depending on the time of year, discuss with your students what the weather may be like in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. Finally, review weather in specific areas like rain forests and deserts. Now it is time for fun. Give each student in turn a marker with either a pushpin or piece of tape or other adhesive. This is especially entertaining if you can take a picture of the student or have her draw a small self-portrait. Blindfold one student, give her three turns while she wears the blindfold, and then point her in the direction of the world map. The student should then place the marker somewhere on the world map. You can encourage her to aim for the type of weather she thinks she would enjoy. Then remove the blindfold and have your student describe the weather where she is on the map. Give each student a turn to place himself on the map while blindfolded and then tell the class about the weather at his location.

2 I'M GOING ON VACATION

Do you have a dream vacation?

Most people can imagine where they would like to go whether it is skiing on a dramatic slope or sunning on a peaceful beach. Give your students some practice with weather words by getting them thinking about their dream vacation. Have your class sit in a circle and ask a volunteer to start. The person who takes the first turn will also take the last turn in the game. With each turn taker, the person should first describe in about two sentences the type of weather he would like on his vacation, and then tell the rest of the class where he will go on that vacation. For example, "I like sunny skies and warm ocean water. I'm going on vacation to Hawaii." The second person, whoever is sitting to the left of the person that just went, will describe her dream vacation weather, and then tell the class where she is going on vacation. Then she must also repeat where the first student is going on vacation. The third student then tells the class about his dream vacation weather and then where he will go. He also says where student number two will go and then where student number one will go. Continue in this manner until you make it all the way around the circle to the first student who must say, in the correct order, where each of his classmates will take his dream vacation. Feel free to prompt students throughout the game if they are stumped, but do not be surprised if the students do it on their own. If you have the map on the wall from the previous game, you could also let your students put their markers on the globe where they said they would like to vacation after the game is finished.

3 TWENTY QUESTIONS

Here is a game that reviews not only weather words but also question asking. Have one student choose a location he would like to visit. You can supply a list of possibilities or just let him choose at random. The rest of the class takes turns asking questions about the destination trying to determine where the person chose.

Encourage your students to use questions about the weather at the beginning to narrow down the possibilities. If the class cannot guess after twenty questions, the student answering the questions wins. If they are able to guess before using all twenty questions, the class wins. Give each student a chance to be the question answerer. If you have a particularly large class, you may want to break your students into small groups to play the game.

4 CLOTHING RELAY

This game requires more preparation than the others and a small financial investment, but you can use the props anytime you teach about weather. Start by getting a collection of clothes that are appropriate for all weather conditions, bathing suits, hats, scarves, shorts, raincoats, sunglasses, etc. You can ask for donations from parents, friends or purchase some second hand items at a thrift store. Put them all into a large bin and place them at the front of the class. Then divide your class into two teams and have each team choose a volunteer to stand up front with the collection of clothing. The rest of the class should line up at the back of the room in teams. For each round, you will announce a weather condition and one person from each team should run up to the front of the room. They must then run up to the person on their team who is standing by the clothing and choose an item that is appropriate for that type of weather. The runner must then place the item on the other student without the other student's assistance. The first person to choose an appropriate item of clothing for his teammate and put in on the teammate appropriately scores a point for the team. Continue until everyone has had a turn or until you have used all your weather words. The team with the most points wins.

5 CLOTHING STACKER

This is another game you can play with the collection of all weather

clothing. Again, divide your class into two teams. You should also divide the clothing into two equal piles. Again, have one person volunteer to wear the clothing, but this time the opposite team will dress him or her in all the clothing from their pile. That person then returns to his own team and stands at the front of the room. The others are in line at the back of the room. Begin a relay race in which one person at a time runs up to the dressed member of their team, removes a piece of clothing, and announces to you or another judge what type of weather in which that item can be worn. After getting an okay from the judge, he runs back to the rest of the team with the item. Then the next person takes a turn. Continue until the person up front has been stripped of all his weather clothing. The first team to finish wins the game.

WHEN IT COMES TO TEACHING WEATHER, DO NOT BE A DRIP. PUT SOME FUN AND EXCITEMENT INTO YOUR CLASS AND DO A WEATHER LESSON BASED ON GAMES.

It will energize your students and challenge them to think on their feet, and weather will become an instinctive part of their vocabulary.

How To Teach Time: Telling Time Activities And Games

Telling time can be tricky for some students so it is important that they have a very strong grasp on numbers before trying to proceed with this lesson. Depending on the age of your students, they may struggle because they have not learned to tell time in their native language so teaching general references to time such as 'in the morning' and 'at night' would be more beneficial.

HOW TO PROCEED

1 WARM UP

Get your students in a numbers frame of mind by doing some pronunciation practice. Only the numbers one through fifty-nine are going to be used but review zero through one hundred anyway. A game or two of bingo would be good practice. Give students a five by five grid with the center square filled in. Ask them to write any numbers zero through one hundred in the remaining squares, say random numbers (starting with the one already filled in) and play until a few students have gotten bingo.

2 INTRODUCE – TIME: HOURS

Draw a clock face on the board to demonstrate. Start by showing times such as 7:00 and 11:00 and writing them on the board next to clock faces. Check to ensure that your students understand that the short hand indicates the hour and should be both said and written first. Have students repeat "One o'clock, two o'clock..." after you. Ask students to come to the board to both write and draw times you give them. For example, say "Rachel, it is 9 o'clock." The student should write 9:00 and draw a clock face indicating that time.

3 INTRODUCE – TIME: MINUTES

Move on to minutes. Show that there are sixty minutes in an hour and that the long hand indicates minutes which should be said and written after the hour. Now demonstrate times such

as 8:10 and 3:42 just as you did for hours in the previous step. Ask students "What time is it?" after drawing new clock faces on the board. Ask a student "What time is it?" while pointing to the clock in your classroom. See if there are any volunteers to draw clock faces on the board and ask the class what time it is. Make sure your students understand that "It's 8:10 o'clock." is incorrect.

4 PRACTICE – TIME

Have a worksheet prepared with a section containing clocks showing various times. Ask the students to complete this section independently and check the answers as a class. If students are struggling, more practice may be necessary. In the second section ask students to draw in the hands of the clock and then ask their partners "What time is it?"

5 INTRODUCE – TIME: VOCABULARY

Once your students have a basic grasp on numbers and telling time, introduce time related vocabulary such as those listed below:

- a quarter past
- It's a quarter past 4.
- half past
- It's half past 9.
- a quarter to
- It's a quarter to 12.
- AM
- It's 7:50 AM.
- PM
- It's 11:20 PM.
- noon
- midnight

Your textbook will determine what exact vocabulary you need to cover. Practice pronunciation of all the new words and ask students to tell you the time shown on the board in two different ways. For example "It's 7:15. It's a quarter past 7." Extensive drilling and practice activities are necessary at this stage.

6 PRACTICE – TIME

Continuing the worksheet used

above, students can match sentences with clock faces or even with images. For example "It's 9:30 AM" might match up with an image of a student at school while "It's midnight" would go with an image of a person sleeping.

7 PRODUCTION – TIME

Teach your students the model dialogue below:

- A: Excuse me. What time is it?
- B: It's 9:30.
- A: Thank you.
- B: You're welcome.

Have students practice this dialogue in pairs using clock faces drawn on the board or printed on their worksheets. Students should take turns being A and B. After five to ten minutes of practice ask for students to demonstrate the conversation to the class in order to ensure that students are correctly saying the time that corresponds with each image.

8 REVIEW

To end the class use another short activity to review what has been covered in class. Ask students to tell you the time shown on the board, translate phrases, and ask for the time to ensure that students are comfortable using all the new material and review anything that gives them difficulty both before the class ends and at the beginning of the next lesson. To build upon this lesson, the following lessons may be based around the structures "What time do you ~?" and "I ~ at 7:30" which practices both time and the simple present quite extensively.

GENERAL REFERENCES TO TIME SUCH AS AT NIGHT, IN THE MORNING, AND ON SUNDAY COME UP QUITE OFTEN IN ESL CLASSES WHILE SPECIFIC TIMES SUCH AS 9:35 DO NOT. BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT STUDENTS WILL NEED PRACTICE TELLING TIME THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THEIR STUDIES SO DURING WARM UP ACTIVITIES OR ON WORKSHEETS TRY TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC TIMES REGULARLY.

Top 10 Role Plays For Your Speaking Class

Role plays can often be a fun and entertaining way of getting the class to practice their English. There are literally hundreds of possible ideas available, and what is listed below is only a few of them.

Language of course is meant to be spoken. It originally evolved as the spoken word, and in historical terms writing is more or less a new invention. As a result, speaking classes are probably one of the most essential parts of teaching a language. Understanding and learning the grammar is all well and good, but if the students don't get practice, then how will they be able to use the language effectively? By putting them in different scenarios, students' minds will pick up faster and be able to work properly. Taking a look on the Internet, one can find a whole range of pre-written role plays that can be adapted for the class, or used in their original format (you have checked our own 'Role Plays' section already, right?). This is usually up to the teacher. Often, when beginning a new language, it is possible for one to practice simple phrases with a role play. Another interesting challenge would be to have the students design their own one. Often this can help bring out their creative side, and allow with the production part of speaking.

TRY THESE TOP 10 ROLE PLAYS WITH YOUR NEXT SPEAKING CLASS!

1 TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Telephone conversations are good because, unlike ordinary face to face conversations, they require people to listen solely to the words. Normally, you would have the students sit back-to-back and pretend they actually are on the phone. Appropriate telephone manner is then taught during this, such as always saying "hello" when answering the phone (this is particularly important when it comes to business, always answer with "hello").

2 GOING TO THE SHOP

For this role play, you can teach the basic vocabulary. If students are planning on going abroad soon, then this will allow them to practice dealing with the general public. This role play will also make great use of certain grammatical structures, for example, the difference between: "I would like those" and "I would like that". Even if your class is sufficiently advanced, this can be helpful for fine tuning specific grammatical errors.

3 DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

A doctor's appointment will get the students used to particular medical terminology. As you can see, each role play serves a specific purpose when practicing speaking. It allows the student to become more familiar with certain terms.

4 IMMIGRATION OFFICE

Another important one, especially if the students are planning on emigrating any time soon. They will need to know certain vocabulary, and doing a role play of this nature is definitely going to boost their confidence.

5 LOOKING FOR ACCOMMODATION

Finding accommodation in another country is tricky. Using this type of role play, one student can act as the estate agent and the other can be the prospective buyer or tenant. It might also be a good time to let them jot down some very common terms used when it comes to dealing with getting accommodation such as land lord, lease, etc.

6 BOOKING A HOTEL ROOM

For student going on holiday, this will also be helpful. Again, it can be tied in with telephone manner. Try practicing this both as face to face and on the telephone!

7 JOB INTERVIEW

This is going to be of particular interest to business students. Job interviews will generally require a lot of business phraseology in order for the interviewee to appear professional to the employer. Even when not learning a language, practicing a job interview can relieve a lot of the stress that comes along with looking for work.

8 CASUAL TALK

Integration is another important point when it comes to moving to a new country. Helping the students learn common phrases and even slang in English is going to be just as vital as teaching them "proper" words. Whilst they will have all the knowledge, getting used to various slang words is something which needs to be worked on. A fun class would be to show the differences in accents in English speaking nations from around the world!

9 TALKING ABOUT A HOLIDAY

Using a specific topic or theme, depending on what vocabulary one wants to teach on a specific day, can be very fruitful. The students can pretend to be a travel agent and a customer, or simply two friends.

10 DEBATE

Whilst not necessarily a role play, a debate is always a good way to begin a class. Students will get used to the different modes of argument and sometimes the debates themselves can become quite heated. It will, overall, make for a very interesting class.

ROLE PLAYS, ULTIMATELY, ARE MORE FRUITFUL WHEN THE STUDENTS MAKE THEM UP THEMSELVES.

Of course this is usually done with guidance from the teacher, in order to weed out any grammar mistakes. It is important to use a variety with your students if teaching general English. There are many more resources out there on the web, so you will never be short of great ideas!

10 Fresh Roleplay Ideas for General English

Role plays are an excellent way of getting your students to practise their English. They simulate real life situations and allow them to act out what they would do in a real situation.

There are two ways a role play can go: scripted and non-scripted. With a scripted role play, the teacher might use an example in a text book. This is a good idea for a warm up exercise, by getting everyone to split up into pairs and allow them to speak to their partner, taking on different roles. Non-scripted ones are when students are given a role each and must use whatever knowledge they have in order to speak with that partner. Below is a list of ideas for a general English class. This can be adapted to suit a situation.

TRY THESE FRESH ROLE PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR CLASS

1 TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Speaking on the phone is different to a face-to-face conversation because one relies solely on language to communicate. Get the students who are practicing to sit back to back in order for this to work properly. There is a whole range of ideas which one can use to act this out. Examples include: phoning to make a complaint, speaking to a friend or inquiring about a job position.

2 GOING TO THE SHOP

A great one for younger learners as it will teach them the basics of interacting with people. Children generally rely on their parents to buy things for them, therefore this will boost their overall general confidence in buying. It can be as simple or as complex as one wishes, depending on the situation. Key phrases are often important here, such as "I would like..." "How much are..." "Good morning..." and so forth.

3 BOOKING A HOTEL

This will allow students to practise a specific type of language. Usually this will be formal language as it is

a business conversation. This can also be done in the format of a telephone conversation, or it could be someone approaching a text. There is a wide range of opportunity here for the students to learn new forms of vocabulary.

4 SHARING OPINIONS

Choose a topic that everyone appears to be interested in. Get the students to pair up and give them a list of questions to follow. This will allow them to come up with their own phrases and use language in a much more practical way.

5 JOB INTERVIEW

Work is usually a good topic to begin with when teaching adults. Many are learning English in order to improve their career prospects. As a result, a job interview role play is an excellent way to get the class learning that all important material. Again, this can be scripted or non-scripted. A good idea would be to have the interviewer have a list of set questions, and the students can take it from there.

6 GETTING EVERYONE TO SPEAK

A traditional method is to ask the class to pair off. Of course, one cannot monitor every student particularly if the class is quite large. Therefore, it is important to make sure everyone is speaking and getting the most out of the language they know. If one has time, have each individual group come up to the top of the class and speak in front of everyone else. This will allow people to use their language more creatively.

7 ARGUMENT BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS

Again, this is a new opportunity for learning different types of vocabulary. This could be between two neighbours who are having an argument. Perhaps one plays music too loudly in the middle of the night and is disturbing the rest of the apartment block. This can be as absurd or ridiculous as the students' want, as long as they are speaking and

using the language correctly. Some of the situations thought up can be quite amusing. See some suggested situations here: "Neighbour Problems Role Play" (<http://busyteacher.org/7353-neighbor-problems-role-play.html>).

8 BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is just as important as spoken language, so in their role plays try and let the students get into the role. Of course, one does not have to be an expert at acting but it is important for them to get a feel of the flow of the conversation. Using body language effectively will allow them to become a lot more in tune with the language they are using.

9 DEBATE

Debates are a brilliant way of encouraging language use. This is because they can become somewhat heated, and many new words can come up. It is important to choose a topic which might not be too controversial to some students. Remember to be sensitive to their age group and the general attitude of the particular country. Divide the class into two sides and give them each a side of an argument to defend.

10 HAVE FUN

When it comes to role plays, it is all about the creative use of language. The student must put what they know to the test. This doesn't mean they have to list off a boring dialogue. Allow them to be as creative as they can. Put them into challenging situations, and this will allow them to think of new ways of saying things.

ROLE PLAYS CAN WORK AS A GREAT ICE BREAKER FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS.

Always remember to be sensitive to any particular issues at the time, however, and be wary of the students' age. Usually, the likes of filing a complaint will not really be of interest to children. Once the students are having fun and speaking English, there are no limits to their own learning!

From Check In to Check Out: 3 Hotel Role Plays You Need

English for tourism classes are taught to prepare students for the difficult task of speaking English in the real world, either through work in the travel industry or travel abroad.

Speaking English out the classroom is messy and non formulaic, so there is nothing worse than a tourism class where students simply listen to dialogues from a book and repeat them word for word. This practically ensures that your students will immediately forget what they have learned. To ensure that students will remember critical structures, you must create a classroom where dialogues are so full of fun and creativity that it will be impossible for your students to forget them!

One of the main focuses of any English for tourism class should be communication in a hotel situation. Typically, hotels are the hub of the travel abroad experience and, after the airport, hotels are students' first contact with English speakers who probably don't speak their primary language. Below I offer three role plays that can (and should) be used in every English for tourism classroom. What's best is that these three role plays are not just vague ideas: with a small amount of preparation, these guides give you a clear and entertaining lesson plan. These role plays are totally adaptable and can be tailored to any level. Keep it simple for low level students and add more details to the situation to keep higher level students on their toes!

ROLE PLAY 1: RESERVING A HOTEL ROOM

1 GATHER YOUR MATERIALS

For concierge students, role cards should include a table of hotel information (types of rooms, prices, dates available, etc). For students acting as customers, role cards should include their personal information and specific travel plans. Remember that the more information you use, the

more difficult the role play becomes.

2 INTRODUCE THE ROLE PLAY

You could begin by writing on the board: What should you do before going on holiday? After students have made lists in pairs, feedback as a whole class, making sure that someone adds 'reserving a hotel room' to the list. Draw students' attention to this point.

3 PRE-TEACH RELEVANT VOCABULARY / STRUCTURES

Begin by eliciting what information students need when reserving a hotel room. This list should include things like name, price of the room, how long they'll be staying, etc. Other specific vocabulary should be revised as necessary. For example, types of rooms and things you might find in a typical hotel room. This vocabulary can be revised as a warmer for higher levels or taught more thoroughly for beginning or pre-intermediate classes. Here it might also be appropriate to elicit phrases used in a hotel setting. ("I'd like _____", "Do you have _____?", etc.)

4 GIVE A SAMPLE ROLE PLAY

The teacher should provide a sample role play worksheet. For elementary or pre-intermediate students, it might be best to provide a full role play. The teacher should go through key structures with the students and also repeat the role play several times in front of the class, practicing pronunciation and intonation. For higher levels such as upper-intermediate or advanced, teachers may be able to simply elicit certain target language and allow students more freedom in their dialogues.

5 ALLOW STUDENT TO ACT OUT THE ROLE PLAY

Put students into pairs with the appropriate role cards. Explain that because reserving hotel rooms is typi-

cally done over the phone and not in person, they should not face each other so as to simulate the experience of talking over the phone. After your students are back-to-back, have them act out the role play. Monitor carefully, particularly the first time. Make sure that they are inserting the information on their role cards into the dialogue. As you listen, make notes but do not interfere unless a pair has had a total breakdown in communication.

6 REPEAT

While some teachers might think that students are not interested in repeating role plays multiple times, the opposite is in fact true. Making slight modifications to a situation allows students to repeat critical structures while allowing enough creativity to make the role play different and engaging each time.

7 FEEDBACK

In feedback you might want to invite a confident pair to the front of the room to perform their role play. After that, go over any common errors you heard during the production stage.

ROLE PLAY 2: CHECK IN

1 GATHER YOUR MATERIALS

For students acting as the concierge, role cards should include the customer's personal information, credit card information, and reservation details. For students acting as hotel customers, you should have role cards with slightly different information than that of the concierge: for example, last name "Black" instead of "Block", incorrect credit card number, etc. Remember: the more information, the more difficult the role play becomes. For lower level classes, include a worksheet with a sample role play as well.

2 INTRODUCE THE ROLE PLAY

Ask students to think back to their last experience in a hotel. Ask them what they did first. You should be able to elicit 'check in'. Explain that you will start your hotel unit with a role play involving one student as a customer and the other as concierge.

3 PRE-TEACH RELEVANT STRUCTURES

Explain that students should listen very closely as they check in, as there may be some mistakes. Give one example, such as: "I have a reservation for Jen Black." "No, I'm Jen Block. That's B-L-O-C-K." With the whole class, give several mistakes and elicit a correct response.

4 GIVE A SAMPLE ROLE PLAY

As with hotel reservations, the teacher should provide a sample role play worksheet or simply elicit / teach useful structures depending on the class's level. In this role play, particularly with lower level students, be sure to emphasize that they should not simply repeat the role play: the structures should be used to create sentences specific to the errors in their particular role cards.

5 ALLOW STUDENT TO ACT OUT THE ROLE PLAY THEMSELVES

Put the students into concierge / customer pairs. Monitor carefully, particularly the first time they do the role play. Make sure that they are inserting the information on their role cards into the dialogue. As you listen, make notes but do not interfere unless a pair has had a total breakdown in communication.

6 REPEAT

Be sure to allow each student a chance to act both roles. If time allows, switch pairs and give each new information. This ensures that students understand the structures that they are using (and keeps them from getting bored).

7 FEEDBACK

ROLE PLAY 3: COMPLAINING

1 GATHER YOUR MATERIALS

Complaining role plays are quite simple and do not require much preparation. All you will need are role cards. For customers, you should include information like room number, problem, and desired solution. For concierge, you may give some example solutions. With higher level or more creative classrooms you may choose not to use role cards at all and allow students to fully use their creativity.

2 INTRODUCE THE ROLE PLAY

A good communicative way to introduce this role play is to write several questions on the board, such as What was the worst hotel you ever stayed in? Why? or What problems could you have in a hotel room? After allowing time for students to discuss the questions in pairs, elicit answers to the questions and write them on the board. Remember to teach or elicit any problems they didn't mention. Next you should write another question: What should you do if you have a problem in a hotel? You should be able to elicit complaining from your class. Go over useful complaining structures ("Excuse me, I have a problem", "I'm afraid that I have a problem with _____", etc.)

3 GIVE A SAMPLE ROLE PLAY

Like the check in role play, the teacher should provide a sample role play worksheet. Go through it with the students several times: drill pronunciation and intonation, discuss any unknown words, and point out the structures that were elicited on the board in the second point. Again: with higher level students it may be appropriate to simply elicit all the key structures you would like them to use and allow them to speak freely, without a written dialogue.

4 ALLOW STUDENT TO ACT OUT THE ROLE PLAY

If you chose to use role cards for the complaining role play, hand them out to students and divide them into customer / concierge pairs. Remember to

save your corrections until the end of the role play, only interfering if a mistake impedes understanding.

5 REPEAT

Allow each student to act out each part at least twice, preferably switching partners at least once. This ensures that students will drill the structures thoroughly, but will also have some variation in their dialogues.

6 FEEDBACK

EACH OF THESE ROLE PLAYS IS APPROPRIATE FOR ONE 60 MINUTE LESSON, BUT THEY CAN BE STRETCHED TO 90 MINUTES DEPENDING ON YOUR NEEDS AND ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS.

The warmer and vocabulary introduction should take about 20 minutes. One round of the role play will probably last for 5-10 minutes and should be repeated several times with changing groups. This leaves time for 3-4 additional dialogues and 10 minutes for feedback.

With 15 minutes of time spent typing up role cards, you can create a lesson that is low preparation for you, and engaging and memorable for your students.

Look into the Future: 5 Role Plays for Practicing Future Tenses

ROLE PLAYS ARE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON ACTIVITIES IN ESL CLASSES, AND RIGHTLY SO.

They get students thinking quickly, applying grammar and vocabulary, and putting their language knowledge to practical use. Role plays are flexible, too. You can cover just about any subject area in a role play. The following role plays cover a variety of subjects, but they have one thing in common. Each focuses on using the future tenses, and they are sure to get your students talking. So whether you are teaching the simple future or doing a review of all the future tenses, try one of these role-plays with your students and watch their imaginations go wild!

TRY THESE 5 ROLE PLAYS FOR PRACTICING FUTURE TENSES

1 ENGLISH RESTAURANT

Setting up a restaurant role-play is easy. All you need are one or more students sitting, playing the role of the restaurant patrons, and another student playing the role of server. Servers asks guests, "What will you have?" and patrons answer using the simple future and their meal choice. But with a little more work, a restaurant role play can be far more in depth. Have students write their own menus and use them to place an order. You can also host a "restaurant" for your fellow teachers and students. Have three or four dishes that your guests can order, and have your students play the role of server. (Half the class works as servers while the other half run the kitchen. The groups switch places half way through your time block.) Patrons order food and your students fulfill the duties of a server. If you are in an English speaking country, it's as simple as that. If you are teaching ESL in a non-English speaking country, have servers work in pairs. One person speaks to the guests in English and the second acts as interpreter between server and guests.

2 I CAN SEE THE FUTURE...

Your students will have fun with

this role play, which allows them to imagine and invent their classmates' futures. Gypsies are famous for fortune-telling. Some use crystal balls, others use cards or read palms. Choose one or all of these as part of a role-play set up to practice future tenses. One person acts as the fortuneteller while one or more students act as his/her customers. The customers ask questions about their futures, and the gypsy answers them after referring to his or her magical objects. If you like, give your students advance warning of the role play and encourage them to dress creatively for the fortune telling role!

3 PRESS CONFERENCE

Though politics may not be your students' fields, this mock election campaign will challenge them to pretend it is. All candidates make promises when they are running for office. These promises point toward a better future. Depending on what office a person runs for, these promises might be anything from putting vending machines in the cafeteria to changing national laws. Playing the role of an aspiring politician will give your students the opportunity to talk about what they will do once they are in office. First challenge your class to think of an office which they could pursue someday, and then give them a chance to talk about the better futures they imagine. One at a time, have students come to the front of the room and act as a candidate running for office. The rest of the class plays the role of the press, asking the candidate questions. "What will you do about x, y and z?" Encourage an open and honest dialogue between press and candidate and watch as both use future tenses to talk about what they future will hold.

4 THE BUCKET LIST

English is a complicated language, and little is more complicated than idioms. Perhaps that is why ESL students can run into new idioms every day. The expression "kick the bucket" is an idiomatic reference to dying. From that expression we get the relatively new phrase bucket list. A bucket list is the list of all the things you want to do

before you die (or kick the bucket). Give your students some time to think about what they want to do before they die, and have them write their own bucket lists. Challenge each person to dream big and list at least ten things they want to do before they die. These bucket lists will be the foundation for this future tense role play. Pairs of students will play the parts of a retiree and a teenager. In the scenario, the teenager is sharing the things he or she will do (the items on the bucket list). The retiree, though, has more life experience and a more realistic expectation to what a person can accomplish. Your students should role-play a conversation between these two people. The teenager is bragging about all the things he will do in his life, and the retiree is correcting him with more realistic expectations. For example, the teenager might say he will climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, but the retiree knows he won't climb the mountain. He will only climb the stairs to his fourth floor apartment. After the discussion, have students switch roles.

5 A BABY ON THE WAY

Life certainly changes when a person has a baby. Many of these changes are wonderful – love and cuddles and snuggly smiles from your little one. Other changes are more of a challenge – lack of sleep, dirty diapers and regular crying fits. Your students will argue both sides of life with a baby in this role-play. Put your students in pairs. One person plays the soon to be mother or father. The other person is the longtime parent. The soon to be parent shares about how his or her life will change for the better once the baby comes. The voice of experience will balance the discussion with challenges the parent will encounter: he or she will remind his partner of all the struggles of being a new parent. Have students discuss what is to come after baby comes until both parties can agree on a realistic but hopeful middle ground.

THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE ROLE PLAYS YOU CAN USE WITH YOUR STUDENTS AS YOU REVIEW FUTURE TENSES.

How to Teach English Using Role-Plays, & When (Not) to Use Them

Role-plays give students the opportunity to demonstrate how to use English in real life situations and make them focus more on communication than on grammar. Role-play activities can be a lot of fun however a class full of shy students may be reluctant to participate so it is important to know your students.

HOW TO PROCEED

1

Regardless of what type of role-play you intend to do, it is imperative that students feel comfortable with the necessary structures and vocabulary.

This makes role-plays ideal for the final lesson on a particular topic. If students perform well, move on to the next chapter and if students struggle, address any mistakes in the following lesson. The feedback given in any role-play lesson should be primarily positive and focus on pronunciation, acting, and creativity. Role-plays are about encouraging your students and building their self confidence.

2

Mini-role plays can be done in any lesson as a practice activity.

Rather than just practice the model dialogue in pairs or groups, encourage students to be creative and use props to better reflect a real life situation. Students should have some space to move about the classroom and be given extra time to practice. If the model dialogue is four to six sentences total, a practice activity in pairs may take five minutes with only two or three demonstrations while a mini-role play of the same length may take ten to fifteen minutes to prepare with about ten minutes for performances. This activity can even be done in the same lesson as the introduction and drilling of a new topic if your students have a good understanding of the new material.

3

Role-plays can also take an entire lesson especially if students are put in groups instead of in pairs.

A lesson such as this would be ideal after several lessons on the same topic. A directions themed role play might be best in groups of three or four where each student must say a minimum of three or four lines. Structuring the activity in this way will give your students some easy guidelines to follow. You can prepare your students by explaining the activity at the end of a class, placing them in their groups, and asking them to think about what they would like to do. Suggest that they bring in any props they would like to use and try to provide some if possible. In the next class, quickly review the target material before splitting the class into groups and dedicate half of the time to practice with the remaining half being for performances. If your students are really eager to perform, ensure that every group gets an opportunity to present their role-play to the class even if it means performing during the next lesson as well. If students are reluctant, then have only the groups that volunteer present.

4

Role-plays can be used as end of term projects for intermediate and advanced students.

At this stage in their studies, they have sufficient knowledge to draw upon to enact real life situations and can get really creative. It is important to decide how you plan to grade your students so that you can explain it to them before they get started. If the project is worth one hundred points, you can break it into sections such as creativity, pronunciation, acting, attitude / enthusiasm, script, etc and assign a point value to each section. Four sections are probably enough. Perhaps each group of students can be assigned a different chapter of your textbook or a different theme. This project would take many lessons. There would be one class

where you introduce the project, split the class into groups, and let students brainstorm followed by classes for script development, practice sessions, and final performances. A good method of checking the progress of each group is to have script submissions once or twice before the final performance. The first submission can be to correct grammar and the second submission should be the final script. This will ensure that students can take chances and push their abilities, prevent them from practicing incorrect material, and verify that they are making progress on the project.

ROLE-PLAYS CAN BE IMMENSELY TIME CONSUMING AND REQUIRE SOME REAL PLANNING AND STRUCTURE BUT ARE GENERALLY EASY TO CONDUCT ONCE STARTED. STUDENTS WHO STRUGGLE WITH ENGLISH EXAMS MAY FINALLY GET THEIR OPPORTUNITY TO SHINE WHILE STUDENTS WHO GENERALLY PERFORM WELL ON EXAMS WILL BE CHALLENGED TO PROVE THEIR ABILITIES IN ANOTHER WAY. ROLE-PLAYS ARE LESS STRESSFUL THAN PREPARING FOR EXAMS AND ENJOYABLE FOR BOTH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS.

Role Plays to Improve Speaking Skills

IT'S IMPORTANT TO PRACTICE SPEAKING IN THE APPROPRIATE CONTEXT; HOWEVER, THE CLASSROOM IS A CONTRIVED SITUATION THAT DOESN'T ALWAYS AFFORD THE OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO PRACTICE NATURAL SPEAKING.

A way to bring a wide variety of social contexts to your class is through a role play, which is one of the most adaptable activities for the speaking classroom. This activity is practical, entertaining, and gets students to produce authentic English. Here are some tips for using role plays in the classroom.

HOW TO USE ROLE PLAYS TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS

1 BE PRACTICAL

Students will be more motivated and eager to participate if you present them with a realistic situation that they might encounter in their daily lives. For example, asking students to role play about a tenant that has a problem with an apartment manager will be more practical than a student speaking with an alien. Using realistic situations gets students to practice essential vocabulary and phrases in such a way that they will be better able to retain what they learn.

2 IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

Role plays are an opportunity for students to produce natural, semi-spontaneous speech. When setting up a role play, you should give enough information about the situation to evoke the vocabulary you are targeting, but it should leave enough to the imagination to allow the students to construct their speech on the spot. Students will get more from the exercise if they can correctly use the appropriate vocabulary on their own. Encourage students to make notes while they are planning, but not to write a script. If you want students to read from scripts, try an activity like reader's theatre. In a role play, students should work on building their fluency by using unplanned speech.

3 PRE-TEACH VOCABULARY AND CONVERSATIONAL PHRASES

Using role play scenarios based on themes you've taught in class is a good way to enforce the vocabulary you've been teaching. Discuss the scenarios before you do the role plays, and teach the necessary phrases and vocabulary. However, it's essential to teach realistic vocabulary. For example, many times we teach our students this dialogue when in a coffee shop:

A: Hello, welcome to Coffee Place. What can I get for you today?

B: I would like a tall coffee.

A: Would you like any cream or sugar with that?

B: Yes, please. I would like two sugars and a little cream.

A: Your total is \$5.50.

B: Here you go.

A: Thank you so much. Have a nice day.

B: Thanks, you too.

In reality, most coffee ordering experiences go something like this:

A: Hi.

B: A tall coffee please.

A: Cream or sugar?

B: Two sugars please.

A: \$5.50

B: Thanks.

If we teach our students that every customer service experience they have will use formal speech, they may end up confused and frustrated. It's important to teach our students polite speech, but we must also teach them realistic encounters as well. Decide what your objectives are before doing the role playing activity: is it to teach polite, fully grammatical structures or to give them a realistic world encounter? You may need to approach the activity differently depending on which of the two objectives you have.

5 MIX UP ACTIVITIES

One of the best parts about role plays is that they are adaptable. If you do normal role plays frequently in the classroom, students may become

bored and less motivated to try their best. By changing the activity slightly, you can break the tired routine in the classroom.

For example, a modification you could make would be to give each pair or group a 'mystery phrase' or sentence written on a note card, and instruct them to build a role play where this word or phrase might occur naturally. While the students are performing their role play, have the remaining students try to guess what their 'mystery phrase' was. Another variation is doing each role play twice, but having the students switch roles for the second time.

For advanced students you can have students in the audience call out words or situations for the role players to use or switch to immediately, similar to an improv routine, and award points for the team that can produce the most successful dialogue.

6 RECORD AND REFLECT

Role plays are great in class, however, students often don't get feedback on their speech production to determine if their accuracy or pronunciation was correct. Try to make notes while each student is speaking to give them some constructive feedback on their role play after it is completed. Try to avoid correction and feedback while students are speaking so as not to disrupt their fluency.

An alternative to this would be to record the students while they are speaking, and then send the file to the student to have them reflect on their production. Did they use the key vocabulary correctly? Did they speak clearly? Producing the speech in a role play is one part of the learning experience, but reflection and feedback are equally essential for students to improve.

ROLE PLAYS ARE GREAT FOR GETTING STUDENTS OUT OF THEIR SEAT, COLLABORATING WITH OTHER STUDENTS TO USE APPROPRIATE VOCABULARY, AND SPEAKING IMPROMPTU ENGLISH.

It is a wonderful low-prep activity to boost your students' confidence and speaking skills.

5 Tips for Using Role Play in the English for Tourism Classroom

SHORT OF HOPPING ON A PLANE AND GOING ABROAD, THERE IS NO BETTER WAY TO PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS FOR COMMUNICATING IN ENGLISH WHILE ABROAD THAN USING ROLE PLAYS.

As a teacher, you should understand that your classroom is an artificial world – your job as a teacher is to bring as much reality into your lessons as possible. Because of this, role plays are a critical component of the English for tourism classroom: students will still experience the safety of speaking English in a controlled environment, but they will also find themselves operating in unpredictable, real-world situations.

Not only are role plays useful linguistically, but there is nothing better than a well executed drama exercise to bring excitement and creativity into your classroom. Here are six tips to ensure each role play you use in the classroom will be a hit:

HOW TO DEAL WITH ROLE PLAYS SUCCESSFULLY

1 GET READY: PREPARATION

The most basic rule of creating an effective role play lesson is simple: if the teacher is well prepared to lead, the students will be well prepared to learn. There is nothing worse than watching a lesson where the teacher fumbles through materials, explains instructions poorly, and basically expects the students to read his mind. To ensure a useful experience, confidence and preparation is a must.

There are several important aspects to consider while preparing for a role play lesson. First, you should plan a basic layout of the lesson. Do the students need to revise any target language? What needs to be pre-taught? What is the overall target of the role play – fluency or accuracy with specific language? Once you've decided the outline of the lesson, it is time to gather materials. Dialogue sheets,

role cards, paper, markers – whatever it is you need for the lesson, make sure you have it before the lesson starts. Nothing derails a speaking lesson like the teacher running out of the room to grab something.

Finally, it should be noted that it is always recommended to incorporate a piece of realia whenever possible. Realia, or objects from the real world, serve to once again bring your lesson closer to the real world. If your role play focuses on booking a hotel room, print off rates from the websites of real hotels. If your students are choosing a holiday, provide brochures for them to look at. By moving away from ESL-specific materials, students will become even more engaged with the activity as they see its value in the real world.

2 KEEP IT SIMPLE, STUPID: FOCUS ON SIMPLICITY

While it's tempting to create an elaborate role play, it is best to keep the exercise as simple as possible both for the student's understanding and the teacher's sanity. By keeping it simple, I mean that there should be one overarching focus to each role play lesson. During the preparation period it should become quite clear what topics are important when performing a specific role play.

To ensure a successful role play, first choose a theme. This is the easy part. Themes might include checking in at the hotel, getting directions, or small talk with new people. Beyond the main topic, it is best to choose only one new language aspect to focus on. Typically, you would choose some new target phrases or an aspect of grammar. Target language might include phrases for talking about money, complaining, or expressing opinions. An aspect of grammar would be focusing on question forms or a new tense.

By choosing a very narrow range of language to practice, it is much easier for students to express themselves

more freely. If you add too many new aspects of vocabulary or grammar, students get bogged down in trying to remember everything, rather than communicating with fellow students in a natural way.

3 DON'T SWEAT THE SILENCE

No matter what the class's level, confidence in spoken English, or your preparation attempts, it is almost inevitable that there will be a period of awkward silence at the beginning of any role play. Don't worry! It takes some time for students to feel comfortable enough to slip into a new character and manipulate the target language into a new dialogue. Let your students stare at each other, giggle uncomfortably, and stumble over their words at first – it's all part of the process.

It can be difficult as a teacher to listen to a fumbling class. However, don't compensate for the silence by guiding your students word for word. The whole point of role plays is for students to manipulate the target language themselves. Remind students before each role play that there is no script in real life and they must be prepared to adapt their language as situations change. Students familiar with role plays should become more confident even when they don't know what to say, but it does take time to reach that level. Just be patient, encourage them to use stalling tactics, and be amazed when they really begin to interact!

If, however, students continue to be quiet and hesitant during a dialogue, it may be time to consider other reasons. Be sure that there is not too much new information in the role play, the level is appropriate for the students, and, most importantly, you have taken the time to thoroughly explain what the targets of the activity are.

4 PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: ROLE PLAYS ARE MADE FOR REPETITION

I once sat in on a lesson where the teacher introduced a role play, had the students run through it once, gave corrections, and then simply moved on. I was surprised – why bother planning and setting up a role play if the speaking portion lasts only a few minutes? This teacher clearly thought that students were not interested in repeating role plays multiple times. I argue that the opposite is in fact true: the first time students create a dialogue it is awkward and stilted. By running through a dialogue multiple times, the teacher allows students to become more and more comfortable with the material.

To keep students engaged, try several things. First, it is important to switch roles. If you're doing a taxi ride role play, make sure students act as both the passenger and the driver. Second, make slight adjustments to a situation (for example, changing personal information or destination details). This allows students to repeat the target language while ensuring that they're always engaged and listening to their partner to get that new information.

5 BE FLEXIBLE: ADJUST BY LEVEL

There is nothing worse than conducting a role play with confused students. Not only does it put a dent in the class' confidence, but it can derail a well-planned lesson. To avoid this disaster, make sure that your role plays are appropriately introduced and conducted according to skill level.

For beginning levels, it is obviously necessary to introduce each step of the process and provide a clear outline for students to follow. One of the best ways to ensure lower level students feel comfortable is to give students a completed dialogue. Make sure that the class reads through the text several times to practice pronunciation and intonation. For total beginners, it may be enough to simply read the dialogue in pairs with no changes. For pre-intermediate or intermediate students, you may underline or leave blank the parts you want them to insert their own information. This method is very successful: weaker students have a safety net and higher

level students have a chance to be more creative if they want.

For upper-intermediate or advanced students (or confident intermediate students), the role play process will be much freer. You should provide students with a clear goal for the conversation (for example, purchase a ticket to Mexico City or buy as many souvenirs as they can for \$20) and any key phrases you want them to use. Beyond that, it should be up to the students to create their own dialogues. You should expect some dead air at the beginning but, as mentioned before, resist the urge to intervene.

6 AN EXCITED TEACHER = AN EXCITING LESSON

What do you remember most vividly from school: a lesson where you listened to your sleepy teacher lecture unenthusiastically about something? Or that one lesson where your teacher laughed, joked, and played games with you? I feel confident that everyone chose the second option. Unsurprisingly, your students feel the same way you do!

In my experience, the number one mood killer in an ESL classroom is a teacher's poor mood. Maybe you're tired, sick, or simply in a bad mood, but once you're teaching you need to "fake it 'til you make it". If you're not interested in a lesson, your students quickly pick up on that and mirror your apathy. When leading a role play lesson, this is especially important. Happy students are more willing to be enthusiastic and creative while speaking: harness that positive energy and make the lesson totally memorable.

THE GOAL OF AN ENGLISH FOR TOURISM COURSE IS TO GIVE STUDENTS THE CONFIDENCE TO USE ENGLISH FREELY WHILE TRAVELING ABROAD OR WORKING WITH ENGLISH SPEAKERS. BECAUSE IT'S USUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET STUDENTS FACE TO FACE WITH NATIVE SPEAKERS IN THE REAL WORLD, ROLE PLAYS ARE THE NEXT BEST WAY TO EXPOSE STUDENTS TO LANGUAGE AND BOOST CONFIDENCE IN THEIR SPOKEN LANGUAGE. NEXT TIME YOU LEAD A ROLE PLAY LESSON, TRY THESE TIPS AND WATCH YOUR STUDENTS SPEAK WITH EASE!

10 Methods to Incorporate Drama in the ESL Classroom

WHAT DOES DRAMA HAVE TO DO WITH ESL? A LOT.

Drama is about dialogue, about language, and interacting with others in specific “scenes” with appropriate language—all activities we as teachers try to get our students to engage in.

REASONS FOR INCORPORATING DRAMA IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

Drama can be a valuable teaching tool. It gets students up and moving around and interacting with each other. It's particularly appealing to kinesthetic learners but can be used successfully for all learners. It also contextualizes language, making real and three-dimensional that which is on the printed page.

Students will improve the speaking and listening skills in performing scenes and also their writing skills through such activities as dialogue writing. Drama also teaches the “pragmatics” of language, how we appropriately use language to get something done, like make a request. Finally, drama promotes class bonding: in drama classes, there is usually a great deal of comradery.

METHODS FOR INCORPORATING DRAMA IN THE ESL CLASS

1 ACT OUT THE DIALOGUE

One of the easiest ways to incorporate drama in the classroom is to have students act out the dialogue from their textbooks. Simply pair them up, have them choose roles, then work together to act out the dialogue, figuring out for themselves the “blocking,” or stage movements. This is effective for a beginning activity of incorporating drama in the classroom.

2 PERFORM READER'S THEATER

Another good beginning exercise is to do Reader's Theater. Hand out copies of a short or one-act play, have stu-

dents choose roles, and then read the play from their seats without acting it out. However, do encourage them to read dramatically, modeling as necessary.

3 ACT OUT THE STORY

If students are reading a short story such as “The Chaser,” about the man who buys a “love potion” for his unrequited love, have students act out the story or part of the story, working in groups and assigning roles and determining the blocking. This is particularly effective with “short-shorts”: brief, one-scene stories with limited characters.

4 WRITE THE DIALOGUE FOR A SCENE

Watch a brief clip of a movie without the sound on. Have students write the dialogue for it and act it out.

MORE ADVANCED ACTIVITIES

Once students have had some experience with the basics of character, dialogue, and stage movement, they can move on to some more advanced dramatics, involving more of students' own creativity and critical thinking skills.

1 ACT OUT AND PUT WORDS TO AN EMOTION

Give students an emotion, such as “anger” or “fear”. Have students, either singly or in groups, first act out that emotion then put words to the emotion.

2 GIVE “VOICE” TO AN INANIMATE OBJECT

What would a stapler say if it could talk? Or an apple? Have students write monologues with inanimate objects as the character. A monologue is a short scene with just one character talking, either addressing the audi-

ence, God, or himself or herself. Hamlet's “To Be or Not to Be” soliloquy might also be termed a monologue, for example.

After writing them, students can read the monologues aloud.

3 CREATE A CHARACTER

Have students develop a character, writing a one-page profile on the character's background, appearance, personality, etc. Have them introduce the character to the class, explaining what interests them about their character.

4 WRITE A MONOLOGUE

Using the character they've already developed, have students write a monologue for that character then perform it.

5 MIME AND DUBBING

Have students act out short scenes without dialogue. The rest of the class then supplies the dialogue, developing the “script.”

6 IMPROVISE

Put students in groups of two or three, and assign the characters and the situation to the groups, perhaps using 3x5 index cards. Give a time limit of two to three minutes per scene. Students go from there, extemporaneously creating the dialogue and movement themselves.

DRAMA IS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL THAT CAN BE USED TO PROMOTE INTERACTION AND LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE ESL CLASSROOM AS WELL AS CREATE A CLASS BONDING EXPERIENCE.

With careful planning, use of drama can enhance your English classroom curriculum.

Do Be So Dramatic: Ideas for Integrating Plays into the Classroom

Most ESL classes do not spend a lot of time reading and discussing contemporary drama. Just because drama is not common in the ESL classroom, though, does not mean there is not value in that genre of literature. Plays can be integrated into the ESL curriculum and classroom, and they can serve your students well as both reading and speaking resources for all areas of language learning. Read on to see how you can integrate plays into your ESL curriculum.

HOW TO INTEGRATE PLAYS INTO YOUR ESL CLASSROOM

1 DIALOGUE IN MANY FORMS

Plays are written in a unique format – the speaker is listed before each line which is written just as the person is supposed to say it. Because of this unique writing style, plays are a great resource when you are teaching your class about quoted and reported speech. The lines listed on the page represent the actual words of the characters. Choose a scene to read aloud with your class, and assign roles to your students before reading through the dialogue. It does not have to be too long of a selection. After your class has read the scene, review the difference between quoted speech and reported speech. When writing quotations, the words that a person said are written in the same tense and agreement, but the punctuation must follow a special pattern. Reported speech, on the other hand, does not use a special punctuation pattern but does change the verb tense and its agreement at times. Have your students practice using both forms by taking the lines from the play and writing them first as quoted speech and then as reported speech before reviewing it together. To follow up this activity, have your students write their own dialogue in one of three forms: quoted speech, reported speech or play format. Give the students who would like a chance to share their dialogue an opportunity to do so in front of the class.

2 SPEAK ON

Since plays are written to be read, they are a ready resource the next time you are looking for a class dialogue for pronunciation activities. By assigning parts and having your class read aloud, you can work on general pronunciation and intonation patterns with your students. Not only that, you can also challenge your students to act out the dialogue from the play as they read. This will add to their listening and reading comprehension and give you a chance to evaluate the pronunciation of individual students in isolation of their spoken grammar.

After your class has read a play, ask a volunteer to lead this question and answer activity. Have a volunteer pretend to be one of the characters in the play (you can either assign the character or let the volunteer choose it himself). Then give your class an opportunity to ask questions of the volunteer to try to identify who he is. They should be allowed to ask yes or no questions but not open ended questions. If the class is able to guess the character with ten or fewer questions, they win. If they are not, the volunteer wins. Repeat with as many characters as you like, and use a different volunteer each round.

3 WRITE ON

A scene that your class reads aloud can also serve as a unique story starter for writing class. After reading a scene, challenge your students to write a continuation of what happens with the characters. They should include details about the setting and characters in their piece as they write in pros form.

Another writing activity that you can use with a play your class has read is letter writing. Challenge each of your students to put himself or herself into the position of one of the characters in the play. What does that character think and feel? Have your students imagine themselves as that character at the pivotal point of the play, and in character ask your students to write a personal

letter to another character in the play. Your students should keep in mind what is happening in the play at that point and the perspective of the character.

You can also challenge your students to write their own short skits and present them for the rest of the class. If your class has watched a movie at any point in the year, use the deleted scenes from that movie as a starting point for this speaking activity. Using the deleted scenes as a model, have your students work in groups to write their own additional scene that was “cut” from the play and then have them perform it for the class.

4 LISTEN ON

If you are able to get a copy of a performance of a play your class has read, watching it as a class will be a unique experience for your students. Since a play is written to be watched rather than read, your class will likely increase their comprehension by viewing actors speaking the lines they have only seen on paper up until that point. After watching the play, ask your students to comment on the stage directions, costumes and props used in the performance and how they compare to what the playwright wrote. Was it what they imagined as they were reading? If your students were the directors, what would they have done differently? What would they have done the same?

DRAMA IS A UNIQUE GENRE AMONG LITERATURE, BUT IT IS PROFITABLE FOR YOUR ESL STUDENTS TO BE EXPOSED TO THIS TYPE OF WRITING.

By including plays in your ESL curriculum, your students will have a more rounded literature experience and still gain valuable language skills though its study.

Get Students Talking Passionately & Logically With a Mock Trial

True, not many of your students will have to stand up in court and defend themselves or prosecute another in the English language, though a few may, but that is no reason to dismiss having a mock trial in your classroom.

A mock trial has more to offer your students than familiarity with court procedures. Playing roles in a mock trial requires your students to speak clearly, logically and with conviction. They will need and develop confidence in their speaking abilities as they play formal roles in a mock court setting. So even if you and your students are not pre-law, give a mock trial a chance in your ESL classroom and you may find that your students' language abilities flourish, case closed!

HOW TO HOLD A MOCK TRIAL IN YOUR CLASSROOM

1 GIVE A BRIEFING

Because your students may not be familiar with U.S. legal proceedings, start by showing them this short video on the Supreme Court from pbs.org. It gives a general idea of the purpose of the Supreme Court, and PBS has also supplied a transcript and comprehension questions that you may choose to use with your students. Point out that the courts in the U.S. are not designed to create the law but to apply the laws that already exist. You should also give your students a chance to ask any questions they may have about the U.S. legal system.

2 ASSIGN ROLES

Tell your students that they are going to hold a mock trial in the classroom. You may need to explain what this term means. Once you do, you can assign roles to your students. Start by asking your students what roles they think people might play in court proceedings. If your students would benefit from seeing a trial in progress, you may want to show clips from *A Few Good Men*, *12 Angry Men*, or even old

episodes of *Night Court*. Your students may not know the correct terminology for each position, but they should be able to get a feel for what each person is doing. You also have the option of having your class read a scripted trial in class, though this may be a greater time investment than you want to take. Review the specific roles that various people play in the trial and give their official titles. Give accurate vocabulary (defendant, prosecutor, judge, attorney, witness) for the different roles as well as an explanation of what each person does during the trial. Have students choose roles or assign them as you see fit, but make sure each person will have a speaking part in the trial.

3 REVIEW THE STEPS

Now that your students understand the roles and know which they will be playing, review with them the steps in the trial.

- The Prosecutor's Statement
- The Defendant's Statement
- The Prosecutor Calls Witnesses (and defendants have an opportunity to cross-examine)
- The Defense Calls Witnesses (and prosecution has an opportunity to cross examine)
- The Prosecutor's Closing Statement
- The Defendant's Closing Statement
- Deliberation of the Jury
- The Verdict

As you review each of these steps, point out who does the majority of the speaking for each.

4 PREPARE AND PLAY OUT

Before the actual mock trial, give your students time to prepare. The prosecution and defense will be doing the most work at this point. They will want to interview witnesses and prepare their opening and closing statements. They may even do some legal research, but that is completely optional. Keeping the topic of the trial lighthearted will keep the element of fun in an otherwise serious situation. You may want to try *Goldilocks vs. the*

Three Bears or *The Three Little Pigs vs. The Big Bad Wolf*. If your students are more suited to a serious topic, choose something more realistic, or tie the topic into material you are already working with in class. You may decide to use a situation your students have read about in a piece of literature, the newspaper or a controversial issue you discussed in class.

When the day of the trial arrives, act as director or even as judge as the students play their parts. After everyone has spoken, have the jury deliberate privately. They will get the most speaking practice during this deliberation, so make sure they have enough time and that they discuss all of the important elements of the trial and review all the evidence. The judge closes the trial by announcing the verdict.

5 EXTEND

After the great accomplishment your students have made, celebrate with a court themed movie and a classroom party, but your court ties do not have to end there. You can extend the activity further in ways that will continue to challenge and develop your students' language skills. Many courthouses are open to the public, and your ESL class may enjoy a field trip to see an actual trial in process. Another option is to invite a law professional to come to your class and give a presentation. Allow your students enough time to ask about actual court proceedings and share their own experiences in the mock trial as well.

IF YOU DECIDE TO GIVE YOUR ESL STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A MOCK TRIAL, YOU WILL SEE THE CONFIDENCE THAT DEVELOPS FROM PUBLIC SPEAKING AND LOGICAL ARGUMENT.

They will have experience in presenting as well as interviewing and deliberating, all valuable language skills. A mock trial may not be the best fit for every ESL class, but those that take the chance will find that it was a meaningful and memorable experience for your students!

Top 10 Board Games for the ESL Classroom

Board games can be a useful and ready asset for the ESL classroom. Most require little to no preparation, and with a little patience, your English learners add a new resource to their language studies. On top of all that, board games are a fun way to learn new vocabulary and make a change from the normal routine.

Here are some tried but true board games that many ESL classes have enjoyed.

TRY THESE TOP 10 BOARD GAMES WITH YOUR ESL CLASS!

1 SCRABBLE

Hundreds of ESL students have played this classic word game. In the game, students receive a selection of letters which they must use to make word in a crossword style grid. When you, the teacher, also play, you have the opportunity to introduce unusual vocabulary to your students. Straying slightly from the rules makes for a more enjoyable game for nonnative speakers. Try allowing use of the dictionary at any point for any player and refrain from keeping score.

2 UPWORDS

Upwords is a game very similar to Scrabble. In this game, students use their collection of letters to build words on the crossword style grid. Unlike Scrabble, in Upwords players can place letters on top of existing letters to change a word that is already on the board. For example, on a player's turn he may add a T to the word bath turning it into bath. In this game, your students will see the relationships between words and recognize patterns in English spelling.

3 BANANAGRAMS

A relative newcomer on the game scene, Banagrams uses letter tiles to create a grid of words, but in this game no structure is permanent.

Players start with a set number of letters and use them to create their own word grid. When one player has used all of his letters, everyone must draw another tile and incorporate it into their own structures. Each person can rearrange his word grid as desired. This game can be fast paced when higher-level students play, but even with less advanced students it is a ready source for learning new vocabulary. In addition, it teaches students flexibility with words and spelling structures.

4 SCRABBLE SLAM

Similar to Upwords, Scrabble Slam uses cards printed with letters to modify an existing word. In this game, there is only one four-letter word on the board and all players must use their own cards on this word. By the traditional rules, everyone plays at once, and the player to use all of his cards first wins. However, ESL classes may want to take turns playing on the word so your class has time to think and absorb each of the words that are created.

5 SCATTERGORIES

Scattergories is a way for your students to practice using the vocabulary they already know. In this game, students receive a list of ten categories. With a roll of the 26-sided die, a letter is designated for the round. Players must then think of a word which begins with that designated letter to fit each of the categories. Answers may be something like the following: boy's name/Tom, food/tomato, city/Toronto, game/tic-tac-toe. A timer is set, and when time is up the group reviews the items they listed. Any words that more than one player listed are eliminated. Each remaining word is worth one point. This game can be a challenge for students still learning the language, but it can easily be adapted for lower level students. Feel free to define your own categories, linked, perhaps, to a unit you are studying in class and then continue as usual.

6 CATCH PHRASE

Catch Phrase is a word guessing game in hot potato style. The starting player has a disk which gives him a word. He can say anything to get the rest of the players to guess the word on the screen. Once that word is guessed, he passes the disk on to the next player. That person then does the same. After a random amount of time, the disk will signal that time is up, and the person holding the disk at that time receives a point. The goal of this game is to have as few points as possible. To make the game easier for your ESL students, you can challenge each person to have his word guessed before the timer buzzes. Then reset the disk and send it on to the next player.

7 TABOO

Taboo takes the concept of Catch Phrase and brings an even greater challenge. In this game, players must get their team to guess a given word, but each word comes with related vocabulary that cannot be used in the description. The key in this game is to think of another way to give the clues on the card. Players do this by using similar but not the same vocabulary. You can modify this concept and have your students write out clues for a given word, avoiding the vocabulary on the card. Limit the description to four or five sentences. If the class can guess the word from the clues that are provided, the writer scores a point. You can feel free to use vocabulary that the class has studied or select specific words from those that the game supplies. This game challenges your students to be creative with their language use – a skill that is useful for all language learners.

8 BALDERDASH

The game of balderdash is best reserved for advanced students. In this game, on his turn, a player is given an obscure vocabulary word. Each

player must create a false definition of the word in hopes that the other players will believe it is the true definition. When playing this game, the teacher should be moderator every turn and correct any grammatical problems in the fictional definitions as well as write the correct definition on an identical slip of paper. Then s/he should read all of the definitions to the players who must vote for the one they think is correct. Any player that guesses correctly scores a point as does any player who receives a vote from another player.

9 JENGA

Though not a traditional board game, Jenga can be a handy resource for students to get to know each other. Using any list of icebreaker questions, write one question on each block. Then when your class plays the game, each person must answer the icebreaker before placing the block on top of the pile. By doing this, your students get speaking practice while getting to know one another better. Besides, it is always fun to see who makes the tower fall!

10 I-SPY BOOKS

Create your own board game with pictures from an I-Spy book or any other pictures that contain a plethora of objects. On a piece of paper, have your students write the letters of the alphabet from a to z. Then let them look at the picture for a set amount of time (three to five minutes is good) and try to identify an object that begins with each letter. Of course, it will be nearly impossible to find an item for every letter, but by using creative vocabulary and having keen eyesight, your students will be able to fill in more letters than they might think. This is another game that is good for vocabulary development and is less threatening for beginning level students.

SOMETIMES THE BEST ESL CLASSES DO NOT COME FROM WITHIN THE PAGES OF A BOOK BUT FROM A PIECE OF CARDBOARD PAINTED WITH BRIGHT COLORS.

Try one of these games in your classroom or find others that work for you and your students, and bring a little laughter to today's learning!

7 Back to School Games And Activities To Help Students Bond

Whether you have a class full of antsy five-year-olds, shy teens, or busy adults learners, they all have one thing in common: they will be together for the duration of the ESL course, and they will work together to achieve their English-learning goals.

What better way to start classes than to help them get to know each other? Here are some games and activities. These are more than simple icebreakers: they will help your students really bond as a group:

BACK TO SCHOOL: HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS BOND

1 A BLANK CANVAS TO FILL

Once you've greeted all of your students and gotten all of the introductions out of the way, present them with a completely blank bulletin board. Tell them that their first task as a group will be to decide what they want to do with it:

- Fill it with drawings of what they did over the summer?
- Put up family photos?
- Choose a theme and decorate accordingly (fall, summer movies, pop stars?)
- What they hope to learn?

When they have chosen their theme, they must decide how they will decorate the bulletin board and which materials they will use (you may have a box of odds and ends they can recycle).

2 RIGHT ON OR DEAD WRONG?

Hand out slips of paper and ask each student to write two things about themselves that are true and one thing that is untrue. Shuffle the papers and give one to each student. Students must guess which statement is untrue about their classmate.

3 SHOW YOUR STUFF

Tell your class that they will have the chance to show off their best talent. Have students divide themselves into groups according to different abilities. Form groups of students who have musical talent, artistic skills, or are really creative writers. Each group has to work as a team to prepare something to show to the class. Dancers may choreograph one of their favorite songs. Artists may create a poster. Writers may write a short story. Give them enough time to prepare and choose a day for your talent competition. Each team has to vote for another team they consider the best. The winning team wins a special prize.

4 THINGS IN COMMON

Create a questionnaire with 5 to 10 questions like:

- What's your favorite American/English food?
- What's your favorite American/English TV show?
- What's your favorite international pop star?
- What's your favorite color?
- What month were you born in?
- Etc.

Students must first complete this questionnaire and then walk around the classroom to find other students they share some of these things with. They must write the names down. When everyone's done, each student counts how many people they share things with. The student with the biggest number wins!

5 WHAT A CUTE BABY!

Ask students to bring in baby pictures of themselves and put them up on the bulletin board. Students take turns matching a student to a baby pic. The student who guesses the most correctly wins. For obvious reasons, this game works best with

teens or adult learners.

6 BAG IT!

Give each of your students a paper bag and instruct them on what to do with it:

- First, they must decorate it in a way that represents them. Students may draw a guitar on it because playing the guitar is their favorite thing to do. Or perhaps they can draw something connected to a sport they play. Or their country of origin.
- Secondly, they must place three things that represent them inside the bag. Obviously, they must be small enough to fit inside.
- Finally, they must bring the bag and its contents to school, and share it with the class.

7 CHOOSE A CLASS NAME AND CREATE A FLAG

You may have a class with students from different backgrounds and nationalities. While you may encourage them to share information about their countries of origin, it would be nice for them to also form their own little "nation". Ask students to come up with a name for their class: English Ninjas, Grammar Warriors, or the like. Then, they may create their own class flag or banner, something that will represent them as a group. If you decide to create a class website, you can tell parents what your "English Ninjas" have been up to and proudly display their work.

TRY ANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES, AND YOU'LL SEE. WHAT WAS AT FIRST A GROUP OF COMPLETE STRANGERS WILL BECOME A GROUP OF STUDENTS WHO SHARE A GREAT MANY THINGS AND ARE READY TO EMBARK ON THIS ADVENTURE THAT IS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.

Fun and Games in the Classroom: Designing Your Own Games

Almost everyone likes games. They are fun, energize the players and require their players to use imagination and brain power. What is there not to like when it comes to games? Games can provide an additional benefit to the ESL teacher – they can give your students practice using their English skills. With this unit on making games, your students will walk through the process of creating and producing their original games as they use their English along the way.

DESIGNING YOUR OWN ESL GAMES

1 GAME RESEARCH

Before your students can create their original games, they will need to do some research on what kinds of board games people like and what is already available. If possible, take your students to a toy store and let them peruse the aisle that houses board games. Each person should write down the names of the games that are available for purchase. If there is not a toy store nearby, take your students to a large department store. Target, Wal-Mart and other department stores usually have a toy section and within that section a shelf or two of board games. As your students are writing down the names of the games available for purchase, encourage each person to read the information that the box offers. They may be able to determine the overall concept of the game as well as the rules and objectives. The goal of the activity is to get a general sense of what each game is and how to play it.

2 AN ORIGINAL IDEA

Now that your students have some exposure to what games already exist, it is time for them to start using their own imagination. First, each person should determine whether he wants to design a game of chance or a game of skill. Looking back on the list that each person made in step one, the games there can be classified into either games of chance or skill. A game of chance depends on your ability to roll well or choose good cards during play. These types of games include Chutes and Lad-

ders and Candyland. Other games require skill or strategy from the players. This type of game includes Monopoly and Jenga. With skill games, the decisions that players make determine the outcome of the game.

Once your students have decided on a game of chance or a game of skill, they should start thinking of the overall concept of the game. Will players imagine themselves in a post apocalyptic world of zombies or will they role-play bunny rabbits making their den. This is where your student's personality will really come out in his game. Once the overall concept of the game is determined, your students should decide what the goal of the game will be. Will it be to kill all the zombies or create the most harmonic rabbit den? The final goal should fit with the overall story.

3 HOW TO PLAY

Now that each person has his overall concept and final goal, it is time to decide how to get from point A to point B. Will players travel along a game board, rolling dice as they go? Will they have to answer questions and get clues to the mystery that they must solve? Have your class use the games that they listed in the first step as inspiration for their original game. After deciding how progress will be made, your students should determine what rules the players must follow as they move throughout the game. Here is another place to gain inspiration from games that are already in production. In general, the fewer rules a game has the easier it will be to play and, perhaps, the more appealing to its players. Have your students try to compose three to four rules that players should follow while playing their games.

4 MAKING IT HAPPEN

The final step is where creativity meets practicality. Your students must now produce the games they designed. First, each person should physically create his or her game. You will want to have as many resources available to your students as possible at this point. Some may need computers to produce cards for their game play. Others may need dice or props. Many will need large pieces of cardboard that can be made

into game boards. Have each person determine what he needs to make his game and then do whatever it takes to make it happen.

The second element for making the game happen is to write a set of instructions for players to follow when playing the game. If you have any games in your classroom or at home, let your students read the instructions that came with the game. These are often in a booklet or printed on the inside lid of the game box. You can also find directions for playing games online, and you can allow your students to read these instructions and use them as models as they write their own instructions. Each person should type up his instructions once they are written and package them with the other elements that he created for his game. Now all that is left to do is play the game!

5 PLAY TIME

You may want to spread this activity out over several days to avoid burn-out on the part of your students. Group your class into teams of four. Each team will then play a game created and produced by another member of the class. The creator should not be a participant in the game but should be an observer of the group as they play. The group will need to follow the instructions that the creator wrote. The game creator should watch to see how well his classmates are able to play his game, how clear his instructions were and how much fun the group seems to be having. If the group gets stuck, he should step in and help. Once all the games have been played, each person should write an evaluation of his game. He should note how well his classmates were able to play and how much they seemed to enjoy the game as well as any modifications he thinks should be made.

CREATING AND MANUFACTURING A GAME IS NO SIMPLE TASK, BUT IF TAKEN SYSTEMATICALLY IT IS SOMETHING THAT ANY OF YOUR STUDENTS CAN ACCOMPLISH.

With reading, writing and speaking in the mix, your students will use many of their language skills over the course of this unit and will finish with an originally and (hopefully) entertaining game!