

# 2023 TEACHER TRAINING COURSE USING GAMES IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

## INTRODUCTION

Games are an essential motivational tool for students of any age, in any school subject. While we all know that we have a lot to cover in our courses, some English-focussed games and activities can keep our students involved in their lessons. How can we use familiar games (e.g., noughts and crosses/tic-tac-toe) or new ones to practice their English?

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF WARMERS

What's the purpose of a warmer and how long should it last?

- to grab students' attention.
- to elicit / revise vocabulary.
- to revise a grammar point.

## GRAB ATTENTION

### Spelling

How many words in a word?

Give students 5 minutes to make as many words from one long word as they can.

### Clap and Stomp

This game has little language value but does always get them listening.

1. Students stand in a circle and quickly count to 30.
2. Then tell students 'next round on multiples of 3 you must clap INSTEAD OF saying the number'.
3. The following round introduce a stomp for multiples of 5 and so on .

## REVISE/ELICIT VOCABULARY

### The Shopping List

1. Write on the board 'I went to the supermarket, and I bought an apple'
2. The first student has to repeat the sentence and add an item that begins with 'b'.
3. The third student repeats the whole phrase and adds an item that begins with 'c'.

How could you adapt this game for a different language focus?

- Can change the place to a shopping mall/ pet shop.
- Weaker classes may want the alphabet written up to aid them while recalling items.
- You could add the requirement of a quantifier (a few, a couple of, several, many).
- You could come back to this at the end of the class and see if anyone can still remember the list.

Not ideal with large classes unless you group them up.

### 'Scategories'

Good way of making them think and share less common lexis.

1. Write one- four categories on the board and group students.
2. On a piece of paper, they jot down four words for each category.
3. They get a point for each word no one else thought of.

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## USING GAMES

### IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

How could you adapt this game for a different language focus?

- Animals: that can swim but live on land.
- Sports: you play with a ball.
- Foods: you can eat with your hands.

#### REVISE A GRAMMAR POINT

##### Whisper Dictation

1. Students stand in 2 rows facing the whiteboard.
2. Teacher whispers a short phrase to the first 2 students.
3. They pass the phrase along the row whispering.
4. The last students runs to the board and shouts out / writes the phrase on the board.

*I love eating pineapple pizza.*

*On Fridays, penguins never eat fish and chips.*

*Sorry Mrs M, I haven't done my homework.*

##### 20 Questions

- Great for encouraging students to listen to each other.
  - Great way to drill question forms.
1. Tell the students you're thinking of an animal / classroom object / food and they have to guess what it is.
  2. They only get 20 questions, and you can only answer yes or no.
- Option to ask students to summarise what they already know at q.10.

#### JUST A MINUTE

"Just a Minute" is a BBC institution. A weekly radio show which has been broadcasting since 1967, with almost 1000 episodes, it uses a tried and tested format. As it says on the website: "Contestants are challenged to speak for one minute without hesitation, deviation or repetition on any subject that comes up on the cards".

This can easily be played in your classroom, to practice your students' speaking skills. Some rules are essential. These can be put on the board, and the other students can be encouraged to police these rules but interrupting when a rule is violated.

#### RULES

1. No long pauses
2. No digression
3. No repetition
4. No lists
5. No "I", "I", "I"
6. No rubbish

Instead of stopping the student's speech, you can add on extra time to make up for the rules that they break.

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## USING GAMES

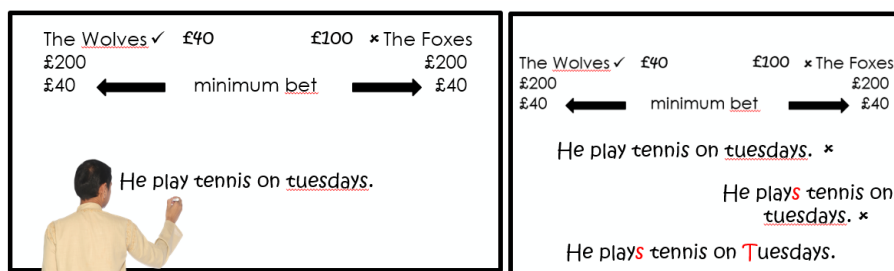
### IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

#### GRAMMAR CASINO

A fantastic game to play in your lessons is “Grammar Casino”. It is ideally used at the end of a class, or the end of the week, as a fun way of doing Error Correction and checking that grammar points have been understood by the class. In my experience, students will love playing this and will beg you to play it more often: BE WARNED!

The concept of the game is: Two teams of students compete to bet on whether English sentences written by the teacher are correct or incorrect. If the sentence is incorrect, they can only win their bet if they can correct the error. It will take a little explanation, and some ground rules will need to be established.

- Divide the group into two groups. They can choose their own names. Try to make the groups as equally matched in skills as possible. Each group has to nominate one student as a “scribe”. This student is given a piece of paper and a pen.
- Write on the board (The Wolves and The Foxes are the team names)
- Explain that each team has £200 in the bank. They can bet in multiples of £10, with a minimum bet of £40, and a maximum of £200 (at least for the moment.)
- The teacher will write a sentence on the board. Each group must decide if the sentence is correct or incorrect. They must discuss this as a group and then tell the teacher. If they say it is correct, the teacher puts a tick next to the team name. If they say it is incorrect, a cross goes next to their name.
- The team must decide how much to bet. Write this next to the tick or cross.



- If both groups said the sentence was correct, now the teacher reveals if the sentence was correct or incorrect. If it was correct, the teacher adds the amount bet to the groups’ banks. Then you can play another round.
- If one group, or both, thinks that the sentence is wrong, the group has to discuss and decide what the correct sentence is. The scribe must write this and hand it to the teacher.
- The teacher then writes it on the board, exactly as it is written on the paper. The teacher must write it on that group’s side of the board. If the two groups have different “correct” sentences, the teacher will need to write it twice. If both groups have corrected it in the same way, writing it once is enough. The teacher must check and ask the group to confirm that this is what they wrote. After they have given the paper to the teacher, no further corrections are possible.
- The teacher now puts a tick or cross next to the original sentence. Then a tick or cross next to each sentence of the groups.
- If necessary, the teacher writes the correct sentence on the board, explaining the errors.
- The bank amounts are adjusted, and the next round may begin!

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## TIPS

- Prepare some sentences that you plan to use. These should be based around grammar points that you have studied recently.
- Don't always give them incorrect sentences. Sometimes put in an unexpected correct sentence. "If I were you, I would watch that film" is a favourite, as students will try to correct the "were".
- As in the example on the previous page, don't be afraid to put two errors into the sentence.
- Before you reveal if the sentences are correct or incorrect, ask for a drum roll to build tension.
- If one team is dominating, change the minimum bet. Don't be afraid to be cruel – I sometimes give them a minimum bet of £180 even if they have £200 in the bank. Each team can have a different minimum bet. It can be a good way to keep the weaker team in the game!
- If one or both teams lose all their money, you can play a BONUS round. Write BONUS £100 on the board. You can point to students and get them to recite ODD or EVEN numbers. When one team makes a mistake, the money goes to the other team. A great activity to keep students attentive!
- The last round could be played as "ALL IN". The minimum bet is all their money in the bank!

## CONCLUSION

- Warmups can easily be adapted to introduce a particular topic of the lesson. Why not play "hangman" with the target word as the topic of the lesson?
- Games need to be two things at the same time: fun for the students and easy for you to set up so:
  - choose things that need minimal set up time for yourself.
  - keep them quick and don't overuse them.
  - read the classroom: are they tired and need waking up? Are they restless and need to be grounded?
  - reward students: let them choose the game at the end of a long day.
- This will be the first in a series of webinars on games. We have lots more games that we will be sharing with you soon!

## USEFUL LINKS

### From MLA:

- <https://www.mlaworld.com/blog/imparare-le-lingue-con-i-videogiochi/>
- [https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL09SjgoA1bItO30m99N3k9AGP8Ox6c\\_gr](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL09SjgoA1bItO30m99N3k9AGP8Ox6c_gr) – The Teachers' Refresher Course YouTube Playlist: You'll find many games in all the webinars archived here.

### Other:

- <https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/10-best-games-esl-teachers>
- <http://iteslj.org/games/>
- <https://teachinggamesefl.com/>
- <https://teflbootcamp.com/tefl-skills-2/games-for-efl-classes/>
- <https://enchantedesl.com/9-efl-esl-games-and-activities-for-advanced-learners/>
- <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.762447/full> - Using Games to Promote English as a Foreign Language Learners' Willingness to Communicate: Potential Effects and Teachers' Attitude in Focus
- <https://youtu.be/DSihiTCZB4Q> - TEFL (Almost) All Fun and ESL Games
- <https://youtu.be/EtwDhKso2No> - TEFL Online Tutorial: Teaching English With Games