

Educational Group Games to play with your students

Literacy

Sparkle

This is a spelling practice game. It also forces them to be good listeners. Again, divide into smaller teams of 6-8. Call up the first group. Pronounce the word that is to be spelled. The first child says the first letter. The second child says the second letter. The third child says the third letter, etc. If they miss, they sit down on the floor and the game continues. Do NOT repeat the word and do not repeat the letters that have already been called out.

After the last letter of the word has been given, the next person must say "Sparkle." The person after the sparkle person has to sit down. Pronounce the next word. The last person left standing is the winner. Then go on to the next group.

Adjectival Action: T writes on the board an activity like "bush your teeth." She/He picks one student, they come to the front of the class. The T then shows the S a card with an adjective written on it like "slowly" or whatever. The chosen student then does the activity in the way of the adjective. The other S have to guess the adjective. The one who guesses right gets a point and mimes the next action which the teacher writes on the board. To help them you can give them a list of options, if you think they need some help. (Submitted by Libby McArthur)

Action Race: This is a fun game using actions. Use actions like jump, hop, clap, run etc. Have the Ss split into two teams and sit in lines with a chair by each team and one chair at the other end of the room. One S from each team stands next to their chair and T calls an action, e.g. "Jump". Ss must jump to the chair on the other side of the room and back, sitting down in their chair Ss say "I can jump". First one to do it gets their team a point. (Submitted by Gareth Thomas).

Apple Pass: Have all Ss sit in a circle. Use a fake apple and toss it to one S. But you must say one English word as you pass. The S then throws to another S and says a different English word. If the student you threw it to drops it, he/she is out. And the game keeps going until you have one winner. It can be played with different categories, such as Food, Animals, Etc. My students love it! (Submitted by Kim.S.).

Art Gallery: This is a great activity for reviewing vocab. Draw enough squares on the board for each S to be able to draw in. Have the Ss write their names above their squares. T calls out a word and the Ss draw it (could be simple nouns e.g. "dog, bookcase, train", verb structures e.g. "draw a man running, eating cake, sleeping") or adjectives ("draw a big elephant, an angry lion, an expensive diamond ring"). For each S give a score for his/her picture, and then move on to the next picture. The S with the highest score at the end is the winner.

Attention: Call out commands such as: Attention, salute, march in place...stop, sit down, stand up, walk in a circle, clap your hands...stop, run in place...stop, jumping jacks...stop, swim in place....stop, etc. At first students will copy you but later they should be able to do the commands without you. (Submitted by Tania Bibbo).

Backs to the Board Game: This one is good for higher level kids. Make two teams and stand one S from each team in front of the board, facing away from it. Write a word or draw a picture on the board (e.g. "hamburger") and the Ss have to explain that word to their team member (e.g. you can buy it in McDonalds, it's got cheese and ketchup in it). The first S out of the two standing in front of the board to guess the word wins a point for his/her team.

Badminton: Good for reviewing target vocabulary (words or communicative expressions). Set a "court" into the classroom by placing a skip-rope tied up to two chairs. Make two small teams (the other Ss can be the crowd and or challengers). Give each S a flyswatter ("Racket"). Inflate a balloon (this will be the ball). Remember: the younger the Ss, the bigger the balloon must be (slower). Decides who serves and for every point one team scores, have the opposite team call out the flashcard or picture card by the T shown. Lots of fun! (NOTE: For very active Ss be careful since they might hit the others' faces when playing). (submitted by Salvador Domingo)

Bang!: Materials: Small peiced of paper, shoe box or coffee can. Write words on pieces of paper and fold them in half (sight words, vocab, blends etc.). Also add a few cards that say "BANG!". Ss take turns picking cards and if they read the word correctly they get to keep the word. If they draw a BANG! card they yell BANG! and then return all their cards (except the BANG! card) to the can/box. Very simple but the kids love it and there are many variations for the game! (Submitted by Heather Gilbert).

Blind Toss: Have Ss sit down in a circle. Place a mat on the floor with numbers and a flashcard (target vocabulary) on each number. Taking turns, each S gets blindfolded and tosses a beanbag so as to hit a number. S/he must call out that word the same number of times as the number indicates. For example: 4-dog, then "Dog, Dog, Dog, Dog! and the S gets the equal points (4). At the end, the S with the most points wins! Good for memorizing vocabulary since they are repeating words. (Submitted by Salvador Domingo).

Hangman: The old favorite. Very good for reviewing vocab from past lessons.

Label It: This works well with newcomers of all ages who need an introduction to basic vocabulary. As long as the learners are able to identify beginning letter sounds, they should be able to do this activity. To familiarize my students with names of objects found in the classroom, I label everything with an index card that has the item's name on it. Then I have them repeat what I read as they point to the item. The next day, I remove the cards and go through them one at a time and we place them on the correct item together. The third day, I let them label whatever they can on their own. I continue this for a few days. When they are able to independently label most of the items, I surprise them by having them labeled incorrectly. Then

they have to straighten out the mess. You can adapt this to any noun-based vocabulary list (e.g. types of foods, body parts, parts of a room in a house, animals, etc.) that you can post pictures of. Your website has amazing flashcards and pictures that can be printed out and used for this. (submitted by KMMP).

Make Words Game: Write a few random letters on the board. Have the Ss work in pairs/small groups to make up as many words from the letters as possible (e.g. letters: g, h, a, t, p, e, c. Possible words: cat, peg, tea, hat, get, etc.). The team with the most words is the winner.

Rhythmic Reading: This activity is fast-paced and lively, and improves their word recognition, speed, and confidence in reading. Choose a reading passage (one page if using a basic text, maybe one paragraph if using a more advanced one). Start a rhythm (clapping or tapping on your desk). Choose one student to start. Each student must read one sentence (or word, if you want), exactly on the beat and pronounced correctly. Immediately after the first student finishes, the next one starts with the next sentence, and so on. If someone misses a beat or stumbles over words, they lose a 'life' or they are 'out'. If you use the 'out' method, it isn't so bad, because the 'out' students help to keep the beat and follow along. In my experience, all students, whether 'out' or not, have focused intently on the reading - waiting like hawks to hear someone's mistake. Of course you can vary the tempo, making it much easier or much harder. This can also be played as a team game (which team can make it to the end of the passage, on beat, with no stumbles or mispronunciations?). Good luck! (Submitted by Melanie Mitchell).

Stop the Bus: All Ss need pencil and paper to play this game. The T writes a letter on the board, and shouts, "Start the bus." The students then write down as many words beginning with this letter as they can think of. When one S shouts out, "Stop the bus!" everyone has to stop writing. The students all get one point for each word. The S who has the most words wins an extra 2 point. This may or may not be the one who shouted, "Stop the bus." (Submitted by Katie McArthur)

Math

Math Wars

This is a great game for reviewing difficult Math calculation and story problems. Call about 5 or 6 students up to the chalkboard. Give a difficult math problem. Ex. For third graders, I might give: 423-179.

The first one to solve it correctly and sit down on the floor gets a piece of candy or a sticker. Then she goes to her seat, and you call up another child to take her place. Continue till everyone has a chance to come to the board and win. This game also works great for story problems. As a shorter variation, call up one row at a time. After someone wins, have the whole row go back to their seats and call up the next row.

Math relay

Ahead of time, prepare two large grids on the board, for counting from 1-100 or 400-500, a multiplication chart, etc. Divide into two groups and line them up, facing the board. Each child gets to write in 1 number and then goes to the end of the line. If a child sees a mistake, he may correct it instead of writing a number. The first team to complete the chart correctly is the winner. (Hint: I enforce a no talking rule during this game. Anyone who talks must go to their seat.)

Another math relay

This is a variation of the other relay. You can have the kids count by 2's, 3's, 5's, or 10's beginning with a certain number and working until they reach a certain number. Write the beginning and ending numbers on the chalkboard. For example, Count by 2's from 324 to 398.

Greater than/ Less than

Students always have trouble with this concept, so I came up with this idea. I like to play it with a few students at a time, waiting in line for lunch, the bus, etc. You say, "I am thinking of a number between 1 and 25." Give each child a guess and after each guess, you tell them if the answer is higher or lower than their guess. Let them keep guessing until someone gets it right. Reward them with a piece of candy. Keep using more difficult numbers as their skill level increases. Ex. "I'm thinking of a number between 7

Buzz: A counting game. Have the Ss sit in a circle. The Ss pass the ball around while counting (1, 2, 3, etc.). When the number reaches 7 the S must say buzz. Any number with a 7 in it must be buzz (7, 17, 27, 37, etc.) and any multiple of 7 must be buzz (14, 21, 28, 35, etc.).

Flexible

Airplane competition: First, have your Ss make some paper airplanes. Stand the Ss in a line and let them test fly their planes. For the competition, assign different classroom objects points (e.g. table 5 points, door 10 points, trashcan 20 points). Ask a S a question and if s/he answers correctly then s/he can throw and try to hit one of the target objects to win points. This works well as a team game.

Banana Race: Children just love this! It is basically a QUIZ game in which you ask children questions (Target Vocabulary) like: "What's this? What fruit is red and round? How many chairs are there in the classroom?" or the T simply draws items on the board, makes animal noises so

that they guess. You can work with Ss or split the class into small groups/teams if you have a large class. The T draws on the board a race track and each team or S will be a BANANA waiting at the Starting Line. They will approach the Goal line as they answer each question. Each right answer equals a step towards the Goal Line. The BANANA who arrives there first, WINS! (Submitted by Salvador Domingo).

Basketball: Ss take a shot at the trashcan/box/etc. First ask a question to S1. If s/he answers correctly then s/he can have a shot at the basket. If the S gets the ball in the basket then s/he wins 2 points. If the S hits the basket without going inside then s/he wins 1 point. The person who gets the most points is the winner. This can also be played in teams.

Bet you can't: This game can be played in millions and millions of different ways, and essentially it's just this: go to the toy store and buy toy money. Give each student the same amount of money at the start. Have the students bet each other that they can't do something - like this: make each S stand up and walk around. Have them say, "I bet you can't (e.g. count to 20, run around the room 5 times, sing the ABC song. etc.)". Get the Ss to bet using the toy money. You'd be surprised how much even adult students enjoy this game.

Bingo: Can be played with numbers, letters, pictures or even words. The winner is the first to either get a line or or full house.

Board Scramble: T puts the whole alphabet on the blackboard in a scramble of letters here and there, but low enough that the Ss can reach it. Have two teams and call out a letter. The person that is able to find and circle it first wins a point for their team. To make things harder have capital and small letters. Even more challenging- have four teams all looking for the same letter. The kids just love it. You can do it with numbers and also words. (Submitted by Susie).