

Activate:

Games for Learning American English

TEACHER'S MANUAL



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INTRODUCTION

Activate: Games for Learning American English is a collection of games for the language classroom. The games in *Activate* offer practice with vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and interaction skills in a learner-centered, low-stress environment. The games provide opportunities to talk informally and to think creatively.

Although games are used mostly for entertainment, the use of games in education has a very long history, beginning with the creation of the first board games around 2200 B.C. Games can engage the learner and make practicing English enjoyable.

Games offer students many benefits, including opportunities to develop social skills, to learn coping strategies (It can be hard to lose!), and to keep their minds active. *Activate* is designed to provide these benefits while helping students to develop their English language abilities.

There are some basic guidelines to keep in mind when using the games from *Activate*—or any games—in your English class. It is important to ensure that the level of the game is appropriate for your students, that all players understand the procedure for playing the game, and that everyone can experience some level of success. To do the latter, it is important that students see that the purpose of the game is to practice using language in an engaging way.

Activate contains four chapters. Each chapter explains how to use a different type of game: Board Games, *Picture This*, *Guess What?*, and *Word Bricks*. Each chapter contains four sections. In the *About* section, you will find a general description of the game along with tips to help you and your students get the most out of the game. In the *Let's Get Started* section, you will find step-by-step instructions for how to use the games in your classroom, with a sample game to use as a model. In the *Ready for More?* section, you will find a number of additional games or variations for the game, including step-by-step instructions and examples of language that students might produce while playing these games.

Each chapter in this book is accompanied by a set of materials to allow you to immediately use the games presented in this book:

Board Games: 11 ready-to-use game boards.

Picture This Cards: 24 *Picture This* cards, each containing six thematically related pictures on one side and six corresponding questions for discussion on the opposite side.

Guess What? Cards: 24 *Guess What?* cards, each side containing a topic followed by six related words. Each card contains topics at two levels: basic (+) and advanced (++)

Word Bricks: 140 *Word Bricks*, a collection of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and articles.



In addition to the collection of games included in *Activate*, you can also create your own materials to build your collection. In the final section of each chapter, the *DIY!* (*Do-It-Yourself*) section, you will find a short introduction to making your own games, followed by a description of the materials that you will need to do so. In addition, you will find step-by-step instructions for how to involve your students in the creation of an expanded collection of games.



Board Games



ABOUT BOARD GAMES

Activate: Games for Learning American English includes 11 board games. The colorful boards show the paths that the players must follow and the English phrases that the players must produce orally if they land on a particular space on the board. The players' goal is to move ahead as fast as possible to the 'Finish' space. Each turn allows them to move forward by the number of spaces indicated by their roll of the dice, but some spaces result in penalties that keep them from moving forward.



Each board game has a theme that requires the students to produce certain types of expressions, so they practice a variety of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and functional meanings. The themes also provide players with an opportunity to be creative in making up sentences that express their own ideas on particular topics.

Something I
really enjoy
doing is...

While each of the 11 board games has its own visual appearance, the games share the same basic structure. They are designed to support a path in which players take turns moving their individual game pieces from one space to the next. Spaces contain prompts, or cues, that players respond to orally when they land on the space. Once learners play their first game, little instructional time is needed for learning the other games. Moreover, the teacher and students can create their own board games using the models provided in *Activate: Games for Learning American English*.

STUDENTS' ROLE

In groups, students take turns rolling the dice and moving their game pieces along the spaces on the path on the game board. Students land on a space and respond to the prompt by using their personal experience, imagination, and/or critical thinking skills to form answers. The students' responses in each game are open-ended, and there is never one correct answer. Thus, there is no need for an answer key. While one player is speaking, the other players should be listening carefully because they are responsible for remembering the responses that were given on each of the spaces. One rule in each of the games is that a player needs to say something new each time he or she lands on a space. If a player attempts to repeat, the other players need to recognize the repetition and not accept the response.



Because there are no fixed answers, each player responds according to his or her own level of proficiency in English. That means that these games are suited for a broad range of learner levels: from lower intermediate to advanced. The two or more sample responses that are provided with the directions of each game often reflect this by showing simple and complex responses that might be produced by students at different proficiency levels.

TEACHER'S ROLE

Before Play

When board games are introduced for the first time, students might be unfamiliar with the concept. The teacher should introduce students to the important terms they need to know:

dice. Players will roll or throw the dice to see how many spaces on the board they will move. Only one is needed for each group. Teachers can find instructions and a template for making dice in the *DIY!* section on pages 34 and 38. *Die is the singular form of dice. However, in common usage “dice” is often used for both the singular and plural forms.



game piece. This small piece, which represents each player on the board, is moved according to the number that appears on the dice after it is rolled. Possible objects for game pieces include coins, balls of colored paper or clay, paper clips, plastic figurines, or even uniquely shaped or colored rocks.

Activate: Games for Learning American English includes 11 board games, including *About Me*, the game that is introduced as an example to explain the basic procedures and rules for board games. The games can be photocopied so that each one can be used by a small group of students. For a class of 60 students, for example, 12 photocopies of one game will allow 12 groups, each with five students, to play. If 20 copies are made, 20 games can be played simultaneously, each with three students.

For students to get a lot of playing time and English practice, the ideal group size for a game is three or four students. When groups are larger, each student gets less time to practice speaking. Teachers should remind students that one of the purposes of playing board games is to have an opportunity to speak English.

The teacher should make sure that each group has a game board and dice and that each player has a game piece. Students should be seated around a small table or desk so that there is a common area where the board can be placed for all of the students to see it and work on it.

The teacher should demonstrate the game so that students know how board games work and what is expected of them. The teacher should explain the idea of taking turns. In the board games in *Activate*, each player gets just one roll of the dice per turn. This is to ensure that everyone participates more or less equally. This demonstration time is also a good opportunity for teachers to teach or review the language that the students will need as they play.

The teacher can set a time limit. Each game takes approximately 7–15 minutes to play. If students know their time is limited, they typically will get started faster. The teacher should also remind students not to write on the game boards so that they can be used in the future.



During Play

During the game, the teacher should circulate among the groups. Some students may ask for help understanding a word or phrase; some may have other questions. The teacher should respond to questions as quickly as possible without interfering in the game. The teacher should listen and show interest in the students' ideas and opinions.

Some students may want the teacher to referee, i.e., to say what the correct answer is. However, there is not one correct answer for each space. For this reason, students will be motivated to work cooperatively. They may even adjust the rules; for instance, they may help each other. This is fine, as long as students are playing and practicing speaking English.

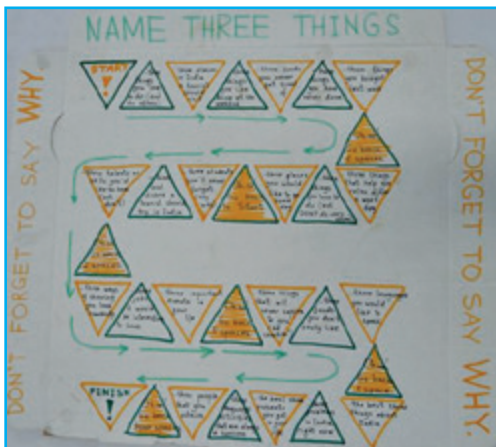
If one team finishes before the others, the teacher should be prepared with one or more of these follow-up options:

1. Ask students to discuss any spaces they've missed on the board.
2. Give them a new game.
3. Ask them to re-play the game using one of the recommended variations.
4. Give them a short crossword puzzle or another easy task.



After Play

When the game is finished, or after the specified amount of time, the teacher can review for a few minutes. Students can be asked to share any interesting ideas they heard from their classmates. Teachers can focus on the grammatical patterns and their meanings in the sentences that the students produced. Students can be asked who won the game in each of the groups and if they have any suggestions for improving how the game is played in the class. The teacher should collect the materials and store them for their next use.



More Play

To get the most out of the board games, the teacher can have student groups play different games at one time. For example, in a class with 33 students, the teacher can use all 11 board games included in *Activate: Games for Learning American English*, with three students at each game. A time limit for playing can be given, and upon completion of each time period, the game boards can be rotated from one group to the next.

LET'S GET STARTED...

In this section, directions are given for playing the first board game, *About Me*. This game demonstrates some of the features that are common to all of the board games in *Activate: Games for Learning American English*, and it provides a starting point for teachers to examine how board games work and how they can be used in a language classroom. In addition to step-by-step instructions, examples of language that students might produce while they are playing the game are provided.

Game 1: About Me

About Me lets students practice using English to express their opinions and preferences about a number of different topics.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and whether the turns will progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. Players then finish the sentence written on the space (called a “prompt” or a “cue”) where they land, using personal experience, imagination, and/or critical thinking skills.
6. Note that some spaces, like 6, 13, and 17 in *About Me*, penalize players by requiring them to go back to an earlier space. These are meant to increase the “chance” aspect of the game and usually foster mildly negative feelings for a moment, but it is all in fun! The victim will probably groan; the other players will probably laugh.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in About Me

Cue	“Player Talk”
Something I really enjoy doing is...	Something I really enjoy doing is going for a walk. (Simple response)
I think school is...	I think school is really difficult. (Simple response)
I think English class is...	I think English class is too short because I hardly get a chance to speak in class. (More complex response)
One way I’m different from everyone else is...	One way I’m different from everyone else is that my aunt immigrated to the U.S.A. and has invited me to visit her during school vacation. (Quite complex response)

Game Squares

START: LET’S GO!

1. Something I really enjoy doing is...
2. I think school is...
3. I think English class is...
4. One way I’m different from everyone else is...
5. Sometimes I try...
6. OH NO! GO BACK TO START!
7. I know how to...
8. One of my friends knows how to...
9. I wonder what it would be like to...
10. One animal I wouldn’t want to be is...
11. One animal I would like to be is...
12. I want to learn how to...
13. OH NO! GO BACK 2 SPACES!
14. Sometimes I help...
15. Someday, I would like to visit...
16. Someday, I would like to be...
17. OH NO! GO BACK 5 SPACES!
18. I’ve never been afraid of...
19. I’m afraid of...
20. Someday, I will...

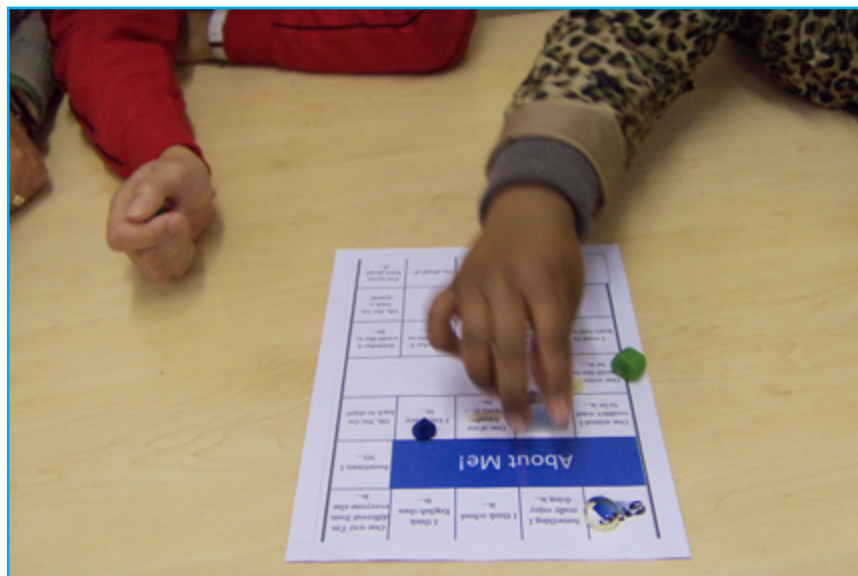
FINISH



Variations for *About Me*

Variations of a board game allow the teacher to create more than one game using the same board. The cues are the same, but the students' responses to them are different.

Variation	Directions	"Player Talk"
A Lie about Me	Have students finish the sentences following the cues, but this time, tell them not to tell the truth.	<i>Something I really enjoy doing is going to the dentist and having my teeth drilled.</i>
Make it Opposite	Have students finish the sentences following the cues, but make it state the opposite or the negative.	<i>Something I really don't enjoy doing is going to sleep without brushing my teeth. I don't think school is as bad as some kids say.</i>
What Your Friend Said	The teacher can have the students play the game again. This time the player can say what another player previously said when landing on that space. If no one had landed there, the player should create a new answer.	<i>Maya said that English class was the best part of her day. Dragana said she wondered what it would be like to dance on the moon.</i>



READY FOR MORE?

Ten additional games that can offer students hours of playing time are described below. As in the description of *About Me*, examples of player talk, the complete list of game cues, and variations to each game are included in the notes below each section. Games and their variations should be thought of as models that can be imitated and adapted. The teacher—or students—can create new games simply by supplying new content. In this way, these board games and new variations of the games can offer hundreds of hours of fun practice with English!

Game 2: Name Your Favorite

Name Your Favorite provides an opportunity for students to talk about their favorite things in a variety of categories. Like *About Me*, *Name Your Favorite* gives students practice using vocabulary and expressions that they may need to talk about themselves in English. Teachers may want to remind students of the use of the clause “because...” in addition to superlative adjectives such as “the best” and “the happiest.”

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. When players land on a space, they should read the category on the square.
6. The players should say their favorite item in that category and explain why it is their favorite.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in Name Your Favorite

Cue	“Player Talk”
Season	My favorite season is winter because I love skiing. (Simple response)
Fruit	Bananas are my favorite fruit. If I don’t have one for breakfast, I will be sad and hungry all day long. (Complex response)

Game Squares

START: LET’S ROCK!

1. season
2. fruit
3. cold drink
4. hot drink
5. time of day
6. dessert or sweet
7. place to spend a day
8. foreign language
9. book
10. film or TV show
11. room in your home
12. city you have visited
13. person in the world
14. music
15. animal
16. kind of weather
17. flavor of ice cream
18. word in English
19. subject at school
20. sport or hobby

FINISH



Variations for *Name Your Favorite*

Variation	Directions	“Player Talk”
My Least Favorite	Have students say what their least favorite is and why.	<p>My least favorite season is spring because spring is so wet and muddy.</p> <p>Apples are one of my least favorite fruits because they are too sour for me. I like sweet fruits.</p>
I Prefer	Have students play the game again. This time when a player lands on a space, he or she must (1) tell what one other player has already said and (2) add, “I prefer...”	<p>Lee said his favorite season was autumn. I prefer summer because the weather is warmer.</p> <p>If a player actually agrees with another player, he or she might say, Lara said her favorite dessert was apple pie. Me too! It is also my favorite dessert.</p>



Game 3: Use a Word

Use a Word is an excellent game for students to practice using English vocabulary productively and creatively in sentences. The teacher may wish to begin the game by reviewing difficult vocabulary. The teacher can also ask the students to provide some example sentences that one might use in the game before beginning.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. Players then use the word on the space that they land on to create a sentence.
6. No player is allowed to repeat a sentence that has already been said.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in *Use a Word*

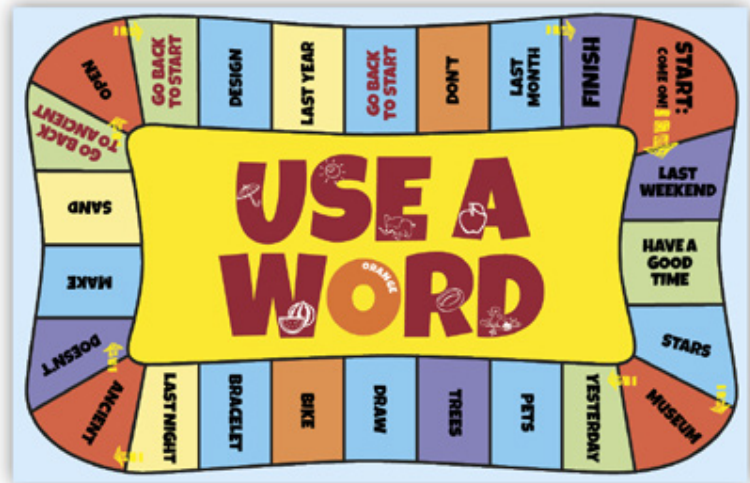
Cue	“Player Talk”
yesterday	I forgot my lunch yesterday. (Simple response)
doesn't	She doesn't know how to play the game, so I will explain the rules and show her what to do. (Complex response)

Game Squares

START: COME ON!

1. Last weekend
2. Have a good time
3. Stars
4. Museum
5. Yesterday
6. Pets
7. Trees
8. Draw
9. Bike
10. Bracelet
11. Last night
12. Ancient
13. Doesn't
14. Make
15. Sand
16. GO BACK TO ANCIENT.
17. Open
18. GO BACK TO START.
19. Design
20. Last year
21. GO BACK TO START.
22. Don't
23. Last month

FINISH



Variations for Use a Word

Variation	Directions	“Player Talk”
The Truth about Me	Have students make a true sentence about themselves using the cue word.	I climbed Mt. Fuji last year .
Outrageous	Have students make a funny or outrageous sentence using the word.	We biked through the forest and saw a shark.

Game 4: What Do I Know About?

What Do I Know About? lets students use English to express factual information. Teachers may want to introduce the game by teaching the expression “What I know is that...” and “What I know about X is...” These two expressions will help students as they use their English to express factual knowledge.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. When players land on a space, they should say one or more things they know about the subject indicated on the space.
6. No player is allowed to repeat something that has already been said.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in *What Do I Know About?*

Cue	“Player Talk”
Brazil	One thing I know about Brazil is that they speak Portuguese there. (Simple response)
Flowers	What I know about flowers is that they are pretty, and some of them smell really good. I like roses the most. (Complex response)

Game Squares

START: GET YOUR GAME FACE ON!

1. Brazil
2. flowers
3. baseball
4. coffee
5. Ancient Rome
6. Tokyo
7. GO BACK TO COFFEE (3 SPACES).
8. tigers
9. electricity
10. crocodiles
11. Australia
12. jazz music
13. GO BACK TO BASEBALL (10 SPACES).
14. noodles
15. learning languages
16. the Pacific Ocean
17. the moon
18. diamonds
19. GO BACK TO AUSTRALIA (8 SPACES).
20. love

FINISH



Variations for *What Do I Know About?*

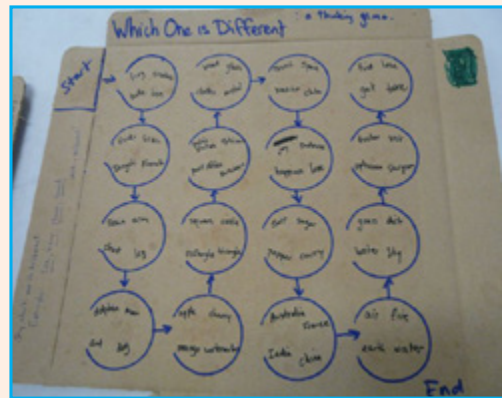
Variation	Directions	“Player Talk”
Associations	Have students say three words that first come to mind when they think of the subject indicated in the space. For higher levels, tell them that they should also explain why they thought of those particular words.	<p>Ancient Rome? <i>The Senate, statues, and the movie Gladiator.</i></p> <p>The moon? <i>Rockets, light, beautiful... because we can get there by rocket and it gives us beautiful light at night.</i></p>
Three Things I Know	Have students say three things they know about the subject.	<i>Three things I know about Australia—it’s a continent, they have kangaroos, and the Great Barrier Reef is there.</i>
Supposed to...	Have students make a sentence stating something that they think is true but they are not sure about. Have students form their responses using the subject followed by <i>supposed to...</i>	<p>Brazil is supposed to have beautiful beaches.</p> <p>Coffee is supposed to keep people awake.</p>
One Thing I Don’t Know	Have students say something they do NOT know about the subject.	<i>One thing I don’t know about Brazil is where the capital is.</i>

Game 5: Which One Is Different? Why?

Which One Is Different? Why? gives students an opportunity to take a look at a group of words and decide why one word doesn't fit with the others. They will be talking about similarities and differences, so the teacher might want to introduce the game with a review of expressions of similarity and difference, such as "different from," "similar to," or "the same as," and demonstrate how these expressions are used.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. On the space where they land, the players read the four words aloud.
6. The players say which word does not fit into the set logically and give a reason why the word is different. It is important to state the reason because there is no one correct answer.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the 'Finish' space.



“Player Talk” in *Which One Is Different? Why?*

Cue

Intelligent, handsome, funny, shy

The U.S.A., England, France, Australia

“Player Talk”

I think handsome is different. It is the only one that describes someone's appearance. The other three describe someone's personality.

France is different because they speak French. The U.S.A., England, and Australia are English-speaking countries.

Game Squares

START: LET'S BEGIN!

1. The U.S.A., England, France, Australia
2. wedding day, holiday, birthday, weekend
3. wood, metal, plastic, stone
4. tea, coffee, milk, fruit juice
5. hot, cold, wet, warm
6. plants, trees, flowers, grass
7. red, white, blue, orange
8. finger, leg, head, neck
9. post office, library, police station, hospital
10. Spanish, Arabic, English, Indonesian
11. ocean, lake, river, rain
12. sun, moon, planet, Earth
13. car, train, helicopter, airplane
14. dog, fish, mouse, elephant
15. OUCH! GO BACK TO START.
16. cake, candy, chocolate, ice cream
17. mother, grandfather, aunt, father
18. hat, jacket, shoe, scarf
19. kitchen, garage, yard, home
20. intelligent, handsome, funny, shy

FINISH



Variations for Which One Is Different? Why?

Variation	Directions	“Player Talk”
Make Logical Pairs	Have players put the items into two separate groups and explain why their groups make sense. There are many possible answers.	<i>The U.S.A., England, France, and Australia—England and France are in Europe and the U.S.A. and Australia are not.</i>
Find a Link	Have players say what the four things have in common.	<i>Tea, coffee, milk, fruit juice—they are all drinks that people often have in the morning.</i> <i>The U.S.A., England, France, and Australia are all democracies.</i>

Game 6: What Someone Does

What Someone Does provides an opportunity for students to use present tense verbs to indicate a habitual action. In introducing the game, the teachers can explain the use of the simple present (in contrast to the present progressive) to indicate habitual action, as well as the use of prepositional phrases of place as modifiers in expressions such as “a person in a movie theater.” The meaning of expressions such as “when sick” should also be introduced as meaning “when someone is sick.”

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. When players land on a space, they should read the phrase aloud.
6. The players say three things someone does in this place or in this condition.
7. No player is allowed to repeat something that has already been said.
8. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in *What Someone Does*

Cue	“Player Talk”
in a movie theater	Someone in a movie theater sits, watches a film, and eats popcorn. (Simple response)
at the beach	A person at the beach lies in the sun, and he tries to get a tan. Maybe he lies on a blanket and reads a book. And I would guess that he probably drinks something cold. (Complex response)

Game Squares

START: WE'RE PUMPED!

1. in a movie theater
2. at the beach
3. on vacation
4. in a car
5. in New York
6. at a birthday party
7. GO BACK TO START.
8. at a wedding
9. on a large ship
10. in a kitchen
11. GO BACK 3 SPACES.
12. in China
13. in a forest
14. on a tropical island
15. in English class
16. when watching a scary film
17. when hungry
18. when in love
19. when late for an appointment
20. when sick

FINISH



Variations for What Someone Does

Variation	Directions	“Player Talk”
Name 5 Things	Have students name five things instead of three. If this is the second time students have played the game, they should not repeat things that were said in the previous game. Other players should listen and not accept repeated responses.	<i>In a movie theater, you meet friends, buy tickets, give the ticket to the ticket collector, buy a drink, and wait for the movie to start.</i>
You Shouldn't	Have students say three things that would be bad to do in these places.	<i>In a movie theater, you shouldn't talk much, wear a big hat, or put your feet on the seat in front of you.</i>

Game 7: What You Might Find

What You Might Find provides a perfect opportunity to remind students of the meaning of the modal auxiliary “might” as they think about creative possibilities of what might be in the various locations introduced in the cues.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. When players land on a space, they read the phrase.
6. The players then say three things that they might find in that place.
7. No player is allowed to repeat something that has already been said.
8. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in *What You Might Find*

Cue	“Player Talk”
...in the desert	I might find a cactus, a camel, and sand in the desert. (Simple response)
...in a superhero’s closet	In a superhero’s closet, I might find a cape that will make the superhero invisible, the superhero’s costume, and mask. (Complex response)

Game Squares

START: WE'RE ON THE EDGE OF OUR SEATS.

1. ... in the desert
2. ... in the U.S.A.
3. ... in the ocean
4. ... in the jungle
5. ... at the beach
6. ... on a safari
7. ... OUCH! GO BACK TO START.
8. ... in a rich woman's purse
9. ... in a hospital
10. ... in a kitchen
11. ... on another planet
12. ... in a superhero's closet
13. ... OUCH! GO BACK 8 SPACES.
14. ... on a tropical island
15. ... in a safe
16. ... in a garbage can
17. ... on a pirate ship
18. ... in a shark's stomach
19. ... OUCH! GO BACK 7 SPACES.
20. ... in a bakery

FINISH



Variations for *What You Might Find*

Variation	Directions	“Player Talk”
In a Hundred Years	Have students say what they might find in these places 100 years in the future. The teacher may want to teach the modal verbs “may,” “might,” and “could” to indicate future possibilities.	<i>In the desert in a hundred years, you may find more cities, people, and roads.</i>
A Hundred Years Ago	Have students say what they might have found in these places 100 years ago. The teacher may want to teach the modal verbs “may,” “might,” and “could” along with the perfect aspect (“have found”).	<i>One hundred years ago in the U.S.A., you might have found carts and horses on the streets, dirt roads, and top hats.</i>
What You Probably Won’t Find	Have students say what they will probably not find in these places. Encourage students to be creative and funny.	<i>In the ocean, you probably won’t find McDonald’s hamburgers, Mount Everest, or clouds.</i>

Game 8: Name 3...

Name 3... provides students with an opportunity to be creative and stretch their vocabulary as they express their ideas about each topic. The teacher might want to remind students about the relative clause construction that can be used in the response: "Three places (that I'd like to go) are..."

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. When players land on a space, they say three things according to the topic.
6. No player is allowed to repeat something that has already been said.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the 'Finish' space.

"Player Talk" in Name 3...

Cue

...places you'd like to go someday. Why?

...talents or skills you'd like to have (but don't). Why?

"Player Talk"

Three places I'd like to visit are the ocean, New York, and Antarctica because I've never been to these places. **(Simple response)**

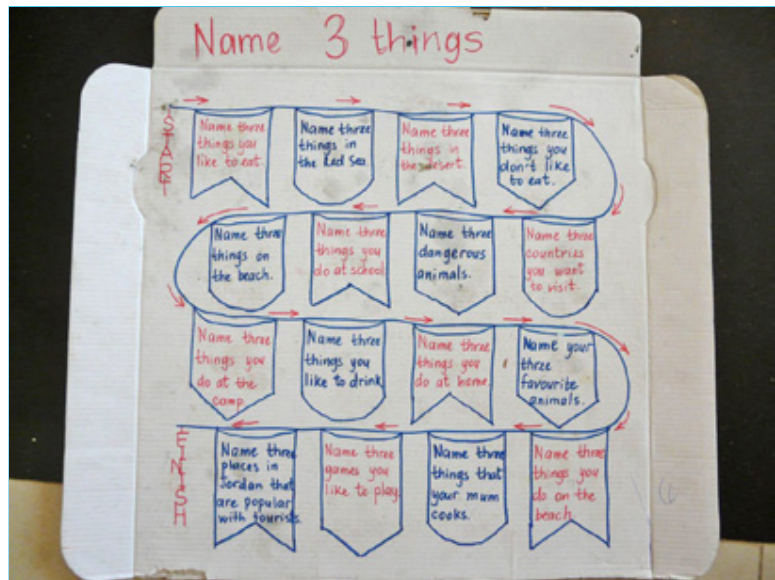
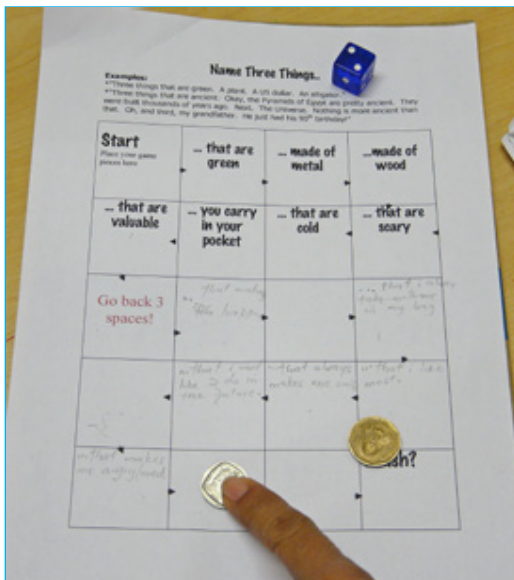
The first thing that I'd like to be able to do is play a musical instrument because I love music. The second skill that I'd like to have is to be able to fly. Then I could travel anywhere for free! The third thing I'd like to do is speak every language in the world so I could talk to anyone. **(Complex response)**

Game Squares

START: WE'RE OFF!

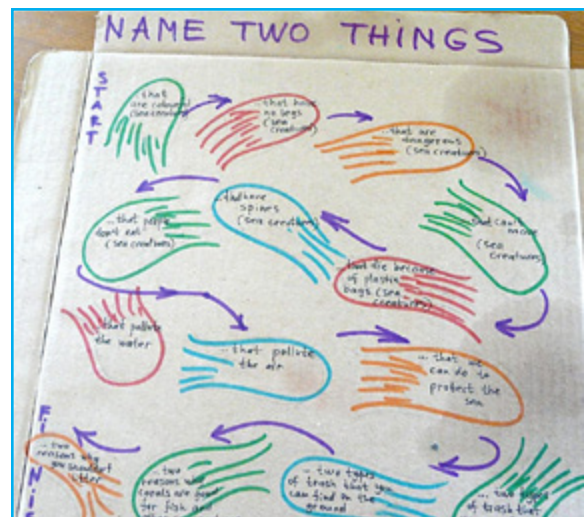
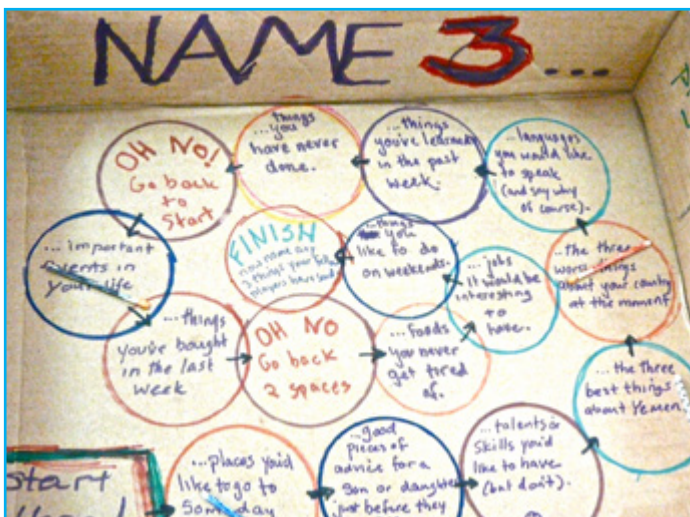
1. ... places you'd like to go someday. Why?
2. ... good pieces of advice for a son or daughter just before they get married.
3. ... talents or skills you'd like to have (but don't). Why?
4. ... of the best things about your country.
5. ... of the worst things about your country at the moment.
6. ... languages you would like to speak. Why?
7. ... things you've learned in the past week.
8. ... things you have never done.
9. ... OH NO! GO BACK TO START.
10. ... important events in your life. Why?
11. ... things you've bought in the last week.
12. ... OH NO! GO BACK TO START.
13. ... foods you never get tired of.
14. ... jobs it would be interesting to have. Why?
15. ... things you like to do on weekends.

FINISH: NOW NAME ANY 3 THINGS YOUR FELLOW PLAYERS HAVE SAID.



Variations for Name 3...

Variation	Directions	"Player Talk"
Name 5	Have students name five things instead of three. If this is the second time students have played the game, they should not repeat things that were said in the previous game. Other players should listen and not accept repeated responses.	<i>Five foods I never get tired of are bananas, pizza, salad, rice, and soup.</i>
Brainstorm!	One player is the timer using a watch or clock. As soon as a player lands on a space, s/he has 30 seconds to name as many things that fit the category as possible. Another player writes them down. The group keeps score for each player. At the end of the game, the player with the most responses is the winner.	Places you'd like to go someday... Italy Brazil The mountains The desert Hawaii An aquarium Outer space The Pyramids An island



Game 9: Have You Ever...? Oh, When?

Have You Ever...? Oh, When? gives students practice with common conversational moves by asking and telling about past experiences. The teacher may want to explain the use of the present perfect and the meaning of “ever” in “have you ever.”

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. On the space where they land, the players read the question aloud.
6. The players respond to their question. If the answer is “yes,” players should say the last time they did the activity. If the answer is “no,” players should tell something that they have done that is related.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in *Have You Ever...? Oh, When?*

Cue

Have you ever swum in a river?

Have you ever watched a baseball game?

“Player Talk”

No I haven’t, but I have swum in an ocean. **(Simple response)**

Yes, I have. The last time was when I visited my aunt. I saw a game on TV. **(Complex response)**

Game Squares

START: WE'RE SO READY!

1. Have you ever swum in a river?
2. Have you ever watched a baseball game?
3. Have you ever traveled by train?
4. Have you ever traveled to another country?
5. Have you ever worn a hat?
6. Have you ever kissed an animal?
7. Have you ever cooked dinner for someone?
8. Have you ever been to another continent?
9. Have you ever sung a song in a car?
10. Have you ever missed an English lesson?
11. Have you ever read a novel in English?
12. Have you ever slept outside, under the stars?
13. Have you ever borrowed something from someone?
14. Have you ever eaten sushi?
15. BAD LUCK! GO BACK 10 SPACES.
16. Have you ever eaten really spicy food?
17. Have you ever played a piano?
18. Have you ever seen a ghost?
19. Have you ever climbed a mountain?
20. Have you ever lost your cell phone?

FINISH



Variations for *Have You Ever...? Oh, When?*

Variation	Directions	"Player Talk"
What Your Friend Said	The teacher can have the students play the game again. This time the player can say what another player previously said when landing on that space. If no one landed there, the player should create a new answer.	<i>John said he has traveled outside his country many times. For example, last year his family went to Egypt.</i>
Time to Lie	Have students make up an answer that is not true. Students should also make up the last time they did the activity.	<i>Yes, I have seen a ghost many times. One was sleeping on our roof last week.</i>

Game 10: Which One Would the World Be Better Without...Why?

Which One Would the World Be Better Without...Why? is a great game to practice using unreal conditionals with “would.” The teacher should make sure that students understand the meaning of “would.” The teacher can also remind students how to express their opinions using “I think” or “in my opinion.” A reminder about the expressions “too,” “enough,” and “not enough” might also be useful.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. When players land on a space, they must choose one of the three items that they think the world would be better without. In other words, “Which one does the world need the least?”
6. The players say which one and explain why. Encourage the players to be creative.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in *Which One Would the World Be Better Without...Why?*

Cue

mice, cars, corn

zoos, video games, prisons

“Player Talk”

The world would be better without cars. Cars cost too much and use too much gas. **(Simple response)**

Of these three things, I think the world would be better without video games. I like zoos because we learn a lot about animals. And prisons are a necessary place to put criminals. But video games are not necessary, since we can entertain ourselves in nature and by spending time with each other. **(Complex response)**

Game Squares

START: LET'S DO IT!

1. mice, cars, corn
2. wine, money, books
3. the Internet, banks, romantic films
4. sugar, guns, hospitals
5. Hip Hop, volcanoes, police
6. traffic, computers, doctors
7. cell phones, football, pets
8. plastic bags, hunting, clocks
9. handshakes, milkshakes, candles
10. BAD LUCK! GO BACK 3 SPACES!
11. trains, candy, knives
12. laws, borders, shopping malls
13. cities, mountains, beaches
14. clowns, pianos, winter
15. milk, dancing, grass
16. plastic, fire, oil
17. English language, locks, make up
18. BAD LUCK! GO BACK 5 SPACES!
19. TV, mosquitoes, divorce
20. zoos, video games, prisons

FINISH



Variations for Which One Would the World Be Better Without... Why?

Variation	Directions	"Player Talk"
My Ranking	Have students rank the three items in terms of their importance in their own lives, with one being most important.	<i>Doctors are the most important because they save lives, computers are the next most important because many people use them for work and to share information. I do not think traffic is important because it causes many people to be late.</i>
Sentence Maker!	Have students make a sentence with all three terms in it. The sentence can be silly.	<i>Clowns, pianos, and winter. When I visited my uncle last winter, he and I went to the circus and saw clowns playing pianos.</i>

Game 11: Would You Rather...Why?

Would You Rather...Why? gives students a chance to express their preferences on a number of different topics. The teacher should remind students of the expression “Would you rather...or...?” as a polite way of posing a question of preference. Students might also benefit from discussing polite responses to the question such as “I’d rather” and “I’d prefer.”

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Determine who goes first and whether the turns will progress clockwise or counter-clockwise.
3. Each player rolls the dice in turn.
4. On their turns, the players move their game pieces along the path according to the number of spaces indicated by the dice.
5. On the space where they land, the players read the choices aloud.
6. The players select one of the possibilities and then say what they would rather be or do (even if the idea may be imaginary and really impossible). The players should explain their choices.
7. The game continues until one or all players reach the ‘Finish’ space.

“Player Talk” in *Would You Rather...Why?*

Cue	“Player Talk”
...be a baker, a dentist, or an accountant?	I would rather be a baker because I really like cake. (Simple response)
...visit Ireland, Japan, or Hawaii?	Oh, that’s hard. I guess I’d rather visit Hawaii. All three are beautiful islands, but Hawaii is the best one for a vacation because it is always warm there. (Complex response)

Game Squares

START: IT'S TIME!

1. ... be a baker, a dentist, or an accountant?
2. ... visit Ireland, Japan, or Hawai'i?
3. ... learn Arabic, Spanish, or Chinese?
4. ... live in a house or an apartment?
5. ... drink coffee, tea, or juice right now?
6. ... have the perfect job or the perfect husband/wife?
7. ... **BAD LUCK! GO BACK 4 SPACES.**
8. ... ride on an elephant, a camel, or a whale?
9. ... work as a cook, a lawyer, or a librarian?
10. ... be a turtle, a dolphin, or an eagle?
11. ... visit the past or the future (if you had a time machine)?
12. ... be 1.5 meters tall or 2.5 meters tall?
13. ... have a bird, a monkey, or a cat as a pet?
14. ... **BAD LUCK! GO BACK TO START.**
15. ... ride in a helicopter, a submarine, or a rocketship?
16. ... eat pizza, vegetables, or ice cream every night?
17. ... know how to play the accordion, violin, or drums?
18. ... be able to fly or have the power to be invisible?
19. ... be really wise or really lucky?
20. ... write a book, act in a film, or just make a lot of money?

FINISH



Variations for *Would You Rather...Why?*

Variation	Directions	“Player Talk”
What Your Friend Said	The teacher can have the students play the game again. This time the player can say what another player previously said when landing on that space. If no one landed there, the player should create a new answer.	<p><i>Marina would rather be a baker because she likes cake a lot. (Simple response)</i></p> <p><i>Carlos said that he would rather be a dentist because there are many people suffering from dental problems in his town, but there are very few dentists. (Complex response)</i></p>
Do You Agree?	The teacher can have the students play the game again. This time the student should say what another player previously said when landing on that space, and then add whether or not he or she agrees.	<p><i>Ahmet said that he would rather visit Hawaii, but I would rather visit Ireland because it is close. (Simple response)</i></p> <p><i>Rania said that she would rather visit Ireland, and I agree because I have read a book about Ireland, and I want to see the places described by the author. (Complex response)</i></p>

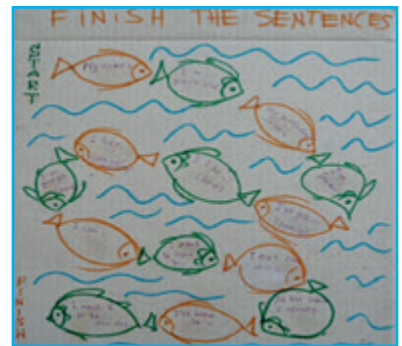
DIY! (DO-IT-YOURSELF)

Activate: Games for Learning American English comes with 11 pre-made board games and two templates to make games that are specific to a class's own language and content learning. The games and variations provide students with a fun way to practice a range of important vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and functions in English. Once teachers and students become familiar with how these games work, they can design their own board games with their own choice of content.

MATERIALS

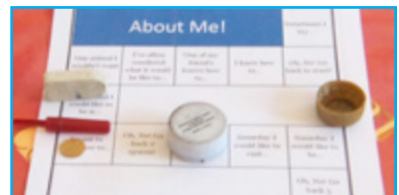
Teachers can use one of the **photocopiable templates** on pages 36–37 and write in their own content (game squares), or they can use a recycled piece of **cardboard** such as a pizza box or a flattened packing box. The picture on the right shows an example of a homemade game board, *Finish the Sentences*, which was created on the back of a pizza box.

A **permanent marker** can be used to draw the outline of the game board, and multiple colors can make the board attractive and helpful by using colors to classify the types of squares (e.g., “Go back” squares might be in red, to suggest stopping).



Dice are needed for each game or for each group of students playing a game. Create dice alternatives by writing numbers 1–6 on each side of a pencil (many pencils have six sides) and then have students roll the pencil. You can also write numbers 1–6 on small pieces of paper, put them in a bag, and have students select a number. To make your own six-sided dice, follow these steps:

1. For paper dice, photocopy the template on page 38. If you want to create more durable dice, use heavier stock paper, like cardstock.
2. Carefully cut out the diagram in one piece.
3. Fold along all lines, turning the diagram into a cube. When you fold the paper, all of the dots should be on the outside. This means that when you fold on the lines, the line will appear on the outside of the fold.
4. Put glue on the tabs that say GLUE. Carefully attach the tabs to the inside of the neighboring squares. (Alternatively, clear tape can be used instead of glue. After folding, form the cube and put tape on the outside along all of the seams.)
5. Make sure the sides are stuck together, but be gentle, or you may crush the cube.
6. When not in use, store the dice where they will not get crushed so they can be used more than once.



Students will also need small **game pieces** to show their movement around the game squares. Possible objects for game pieces include coins, balls of colored paper or clay, colored paper clips, plastic figurines, different colored or shaped buttons, or even uniquely shaped or colored rocks or shells.

HELP FROM STUDENTS

Use the following instructions to involve students in the creation of new board games.

1. As a class, create a list of current game board game titles and/or new game board titles. Write the titles on the blackboard. The following are some examples of potential topics:

Existing Board Game Titles:

- Name 3...
- Which One Is Different? Why?

Potential New Board Game Titles:

- What Does It Look Like?
- What Is It Used For?



These are only a few examples of the many topics that can be used to make a board game.

2. After compiling a list of gameboard topics, give students a chance to design the games themselves. Divide the class into pairs or small groups and let each group choose the title and subject matter for their game. Have students work together in their small groups to brainstorm the game content that will eventually be written into the squares on the game board. Assign one student in each small group to write the suggestions on the list. (You can rotate this position so that all group members have the opportunity to write.) Determine (or let students determine) how many game squares will be on each board game. Check for spelling and appropriateness of suggestions as students are working.

Existing Board Game Title:

- Name 3...

Sample Game Squares:

things you are afraid of, people you admire

Potential New Board Game Title:

- What Is It Used For?

Sample Game Squares:

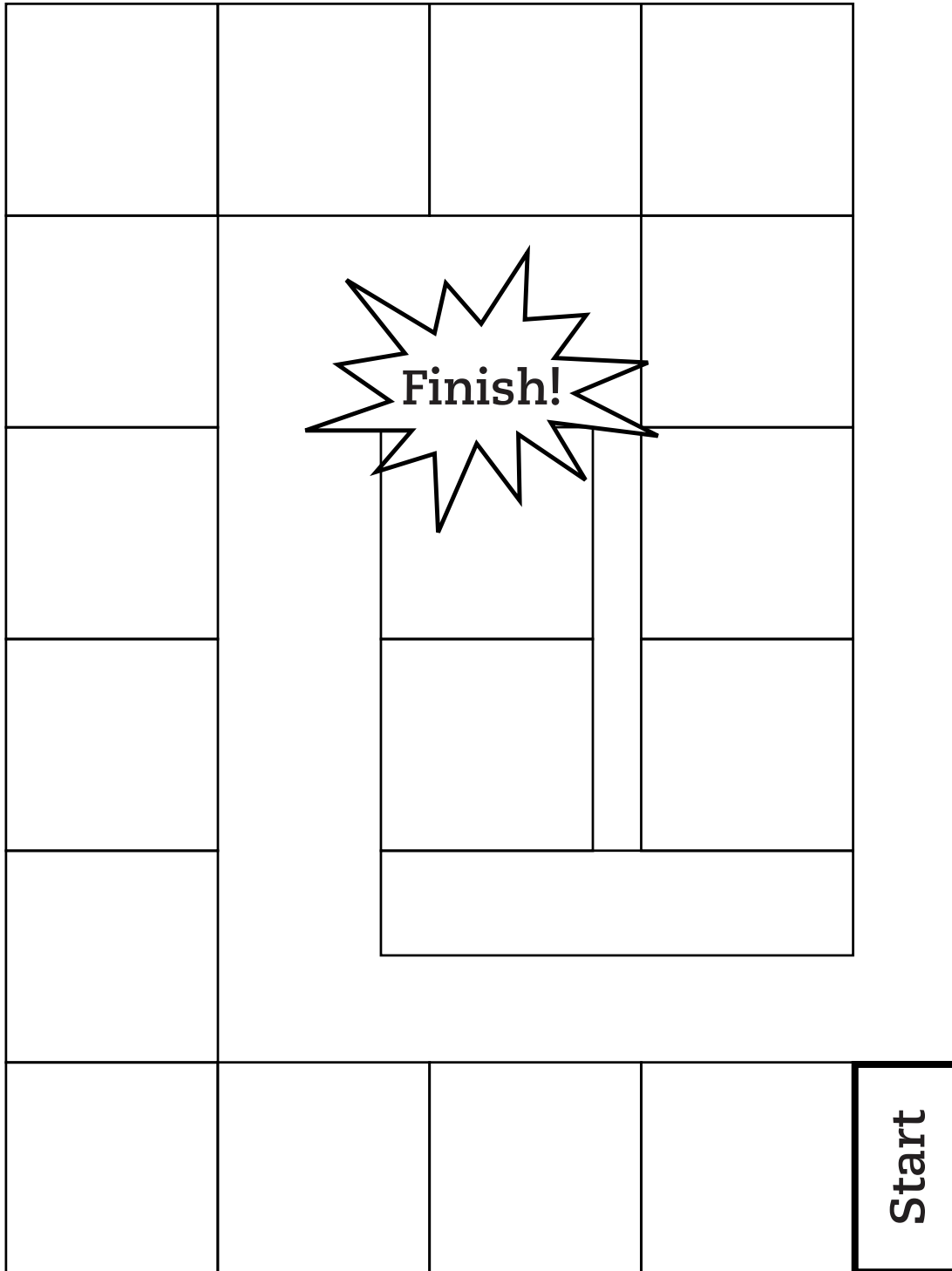
fork, hammer, satellite

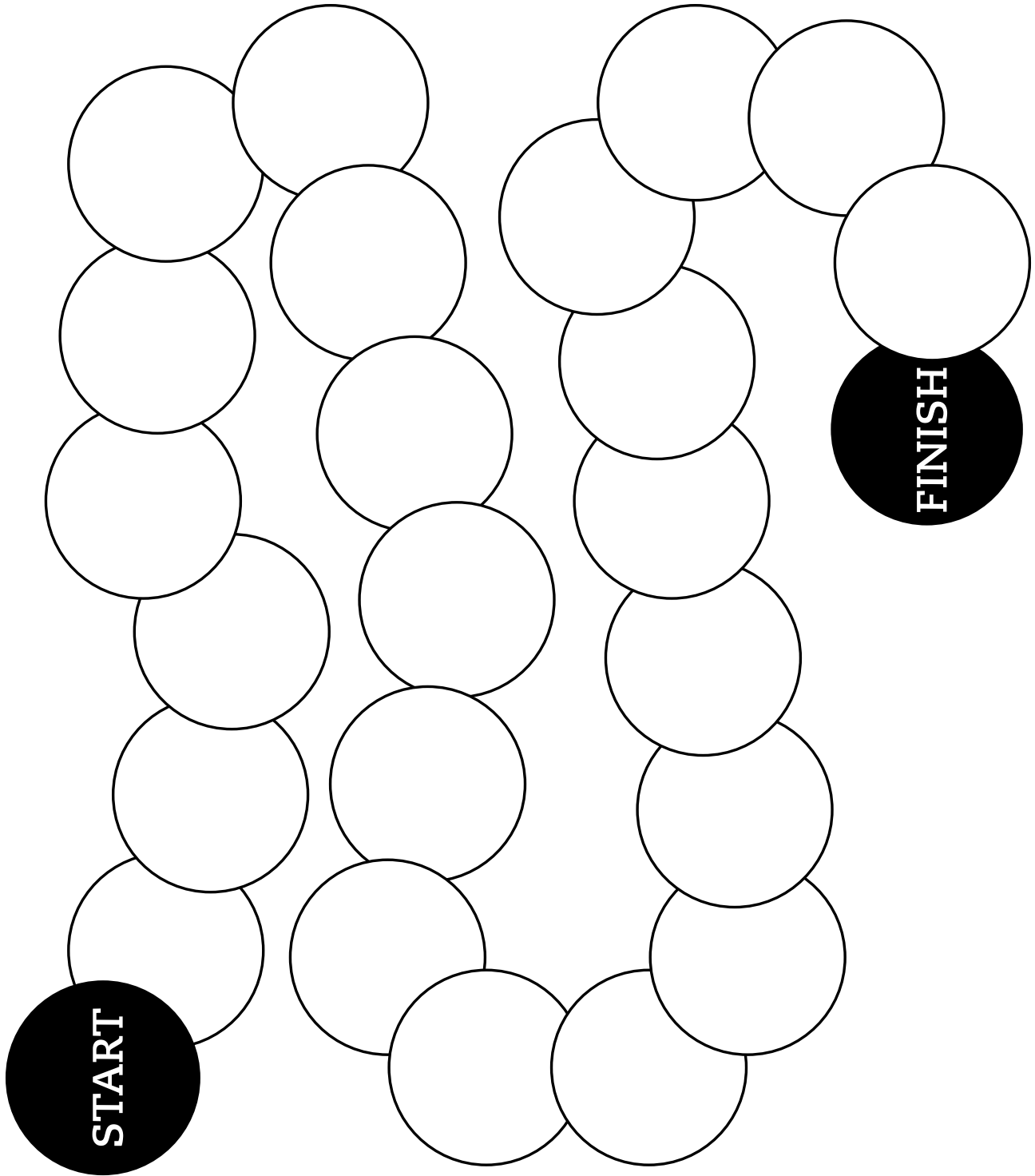
3. Once students have completed their lists and are ready to design their games, distribute markers or pens and templates or cardboard, and have each group make their board games using the lists that they created. Remind the students to include two or three “Go back” squares (e.g., “Go back to Start,” “Go back ___ spaces,” “Go back to ___”), which can be written on the board.
4. Have students exchange games with another group and play the game.

BUILDING A COLLECTION

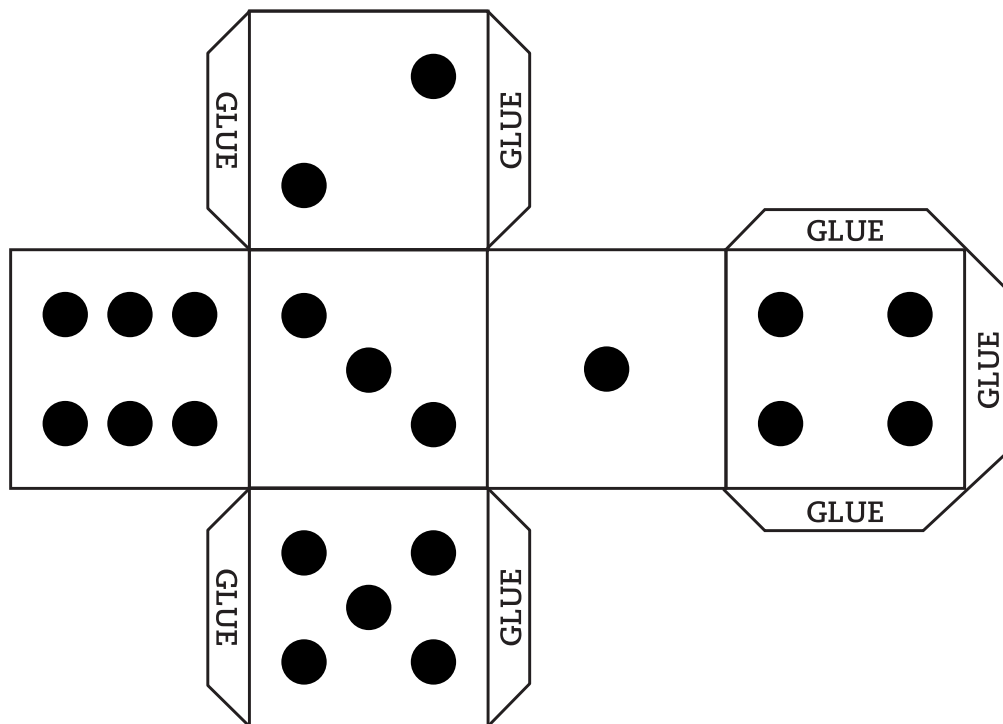
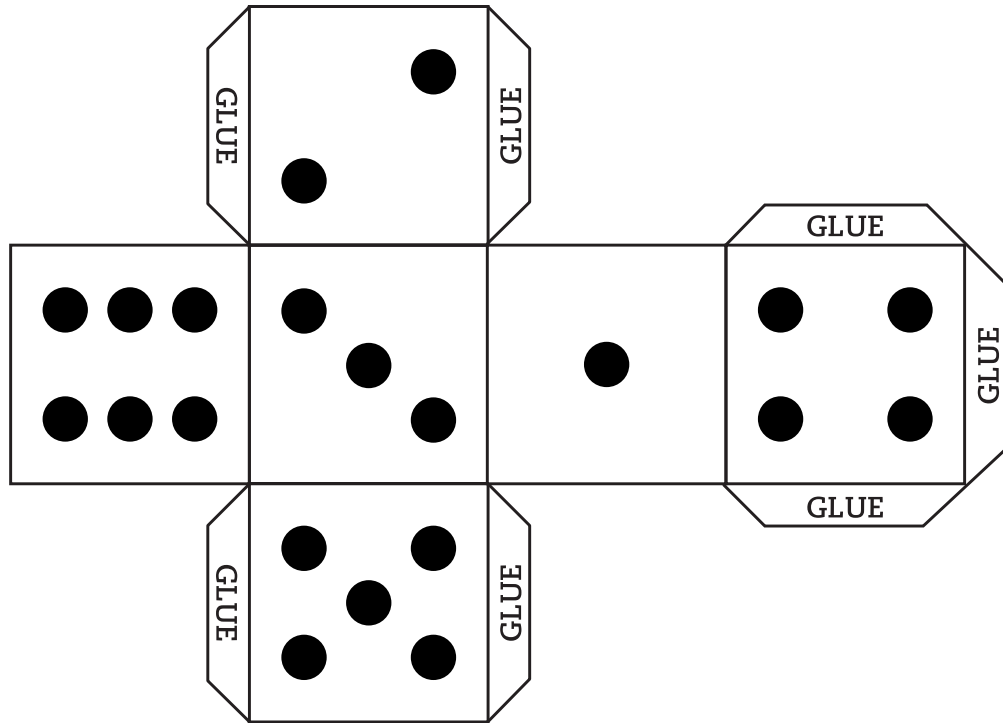
Language and content-based board games are useful additions to any class. Making (and then playing) games that are specific to the levels and interests of the students is an excellent way to motivate students. Students can create board games for the content areas that they are studying, or teachers can use existing games to reinforce and supplement their lessons. It is a good idea to have a list of the class’s existing board games with a short description of the content and post this list where you store the board games. This makes it easier to search for the most appropriate games and helps you to know what content is still waiting for new board games.

BOARD GAME TEMPLATES





DICE TEMPLATE



Picture This

Eat Your Vegetables



Broccoli, Pepper,
Tomato, Carrot,
Onion, Peas

Eat Your Vegetables

1. What are three vegetables on the card?
2. What are two more vegetables not on the card? What do they look like?
3. Which vegetables are common in this area? Which vegetables are uncommon in this area? Why?
4. Which vegetables do you like? What other foods do you eat with these vegetables?
5. What vegetables do you eat at breakfast? At lunch? At dinner?
6. What vegetables would you grow in your own garden? Why?

A Trip to the Zoo



Bear, Elephant,
Monkey, Lion,
Kangaroo, Giraffe

A Trip to the Zoo

1. Which animal on the card is your favorite? Why?
2. Tell me more about one animal. Where does it live? What does it eat?
3. Which animals have you seen in real life? When and where did you see them?
4. What are three other animals you might see in the zoo? What do they look like?
5. Which animal would you like to speak to? What would you say to the animal?
6. Imagine you are one of these animals. Which animal would you be? Why?

ABOUT PICTURE THIS

Picture This cards are a set of cards that can be used for a variety of conversation and word games in English classes. These cards form the foundation for conversational games that give students the opportunity to practice speaking with each other about a variety of topics. *Picture This* cards stimulate conversation through a series of thematically related questions and interesting images that engage students, activate background knowledge, and help match vocabulary words with concrete objects.


Activate: Games for Learning American English comes with a set of 24 *Picture This* cards that are ready for use in the classroom, and there are cards that are appropriate for a wide range of language abilities. On one side of the card, there are six small pictures and words or phrases (in random order) that match the pictures. The six pictures are all related to a similar theme, which is indicated by the brief title at the top of the card. On the other side of the card, there are six questions or prompts that are related to the pictures and theme of the card. Each card also contains questions at a range of difficulty levels, usually beginning with less challenging questions and moving to more difficult ones.

The cards included in this collection are intended to be a starter kit that will encourage teachers and students to make more *Picture This* cards and games. Some ideas for making your own *Picture This* cards are included in the *DIY!* section of this chapter. Students and teachers can expand their collection to match language levels, interests, and specific language features.

Example *Picture This* Card

Picture Side (pictures and topic)

Let's Play!



**Volleyball, Baseball,
Tennis Ball, Basketball,
Football, Soccer Ball**

Question Side

Let's Play!

1. Which games on the card do you play as a team? Which do you play as an individual?
2. Which game is the easiest to play? Which one is the most difficult to play? Why?
3. Choose one game. What do you need to play it? Why do you need it?
4. Which games do you like to watch? Why?
5. Which games do you like to play? Why?
6. Which games have you never played before? Which games would you like to play? Why?

STUDENTS' ROLE

Students use the *Picture This* cards to talk and play games in groups. Small groups of 3–4 students are ideal, as the students will have more opportunities to speak and to respond to each other's comments. Students can first match the pictures on the front of the card with the correct word written below. This can help them to activate background knowledge about the topic, review and recall vocabulary that they have learned before, and learn new vocabulary words. Then students take turns asking and answering the questions on the back of the *Picture This* cards. The questions direct students to think about a variety of items or topics related to the theme of the card. They use English vocabulary to identify additional related objects, give their opinions about some aspect of the theme, explain their answers, and so on. Because these questions are open-ended and because many of the questions ask students to rely on their personal experience and opinions, there are no right or wrong answers. In fact, there is always more than one possible answer.

TEACHER'S ROLE

Before Play

When *Picture This* cards are first introduced, the teacher should take a few minutes to show students a card and to establish some vocabulary for referring to the parts of the card. Teachers can refer to the side of the card containing the title/topic, pictures, and vocabulary words as the **'picture side'** of the card. The opposite side is the **'question side.'** On the picture side, teachers should explain that the title gives a brief clue about how the pictures on the card are related, and therefore about possible topics that might be focused on in the six discussion questions. On the picture side, teachers should also clearly point out that the vocabulary words at the bottom are printed in random order. That is, the order of the printed words does not match the order of the pictures on the card. This is because one way for students to use the cards is to match the vocabulary words with the pictures that represent their meanings.

To prepare to play with *Picture This* cards, the teacher should make sure that each group of students has a place to sit where they can easily hear each other, but not be interrupted by the conversations of other groups. In addition, the teacher should provide a basket, bag, or other container to hold the entire set of *Picture This* cards and place it in a central location in the room. The students will need to be able to easily move between their group and the collection of *Picture This* cards to get a new card when they have finished with a card.

The teacher should determine a set amount of time to use *Picture This* cards in the language classroom. Since students will be working in small groups and exchanging *Picture This* cards once they have completed the card, each group can work at its own pace. It is not necessary for all groups to finish a card at the same time. Instead, students can use as many cards as they need during that time, and teachers should end the game after the specified amount of time has passed.



During Play

During the game, the teacher should circulate among the groups and encourage students to speak in English as much as possible. The students may ask for help with English words, and the teacher may help if he or she wishes to. The teacher should be careful, however, that the focus remains on fluency, or producing a lot of language. That is, students should not spend a lot of time looking for or asking about words. Rather, the students can describe the item that they are thinking of to their group members and try to come up with the English word on their own. The teacher should walk around and remind students that the goal is to practice conversation in English and not just to learn new vocabulary. In addition, the teacher should ensure that all players are taking turns speaking to the rest of the group.

While walking around the classroom and visiting each group, the teacher should remind the groups to exchange their card for a new one when they finish a card so that another group can use that card.

After Play

When the game is finished, the teacher can review for a few minutes. Students can be asked to share any interesting ideas that they heard from their classmates. If groups have played with the same card, teachers can ask them to summarize their responses for one or two of the questions and make comparisons between the responses. Teachers can focus on the grammatical patterns and their meanings in the sentences that the students produced. At the end, the teacher should collect the *Picture This* cards and store them for their next use.

In the next section, directions for playing *Picture This* are given, followed by many other activities that students can do using the same cards.



LET'S GET STARTED...

In this section, instructions and examples are given for playing a basic game of *Picture This*. This game provides a starting point for teachers to familiarize themselves with the *Picture This* cards and to demonstrate how they can be used in the language classroom to help students develop fluency.

Game 1: Picture This

The basic *Picture This* game uses the *Picture This* cards as the starting point for conversations among students based on a question-and-answer format. As with all *Picture This* games, the teacher should set a specified amount of time for the game.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 2–4.
2. Put the *Picture This* cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see the cards) in the center of the classroom.
3. Invite someone from each group to take a card and carry it to his or her group.
4. Players examine the title and the pictures on the front of their card. Then players match the pictures with the appropriate words or phrases on the cards.
5. Players then take turns reading and answering questions in their groups. The player who reads the question can choose who should answer it, and he or she should hold the *Picture This* card up so that the player answering the question can see the picture side of the card. Then the player who answered the question should take the card and ask the next question.
6. When the group has responded to all of the questions on their card, one member of the group can return the card and get another.
7. Remind everyone that speaking practice is the main goal. If they get stuck, they can help each other or ask you for help.
8. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in *Picture This* Snack Time

Players look at the six pictures and match the word with the corresponding picture.

Player 1: This question is for Player 2. Which of the snacks on the card is the healthiest? Which is the least healthy?

Player 2: I think the fruits are the healthiest. So, the grapes, the banana, and the apple. The least healthy is the chocolate, or maybe the donuts. I’m not sure!

Player 2: This question is for Player 3. Which snacks are salty? Which are sweet? Which are crunchy? Which are soft?

Player 3: I think crackers are the only salty snack, and the rest are sweet. Crackers and apples are crunchy. Bananas and donuts are soft, and grapes are soft on the inside. I think chocolate is hard but not crunchy.

Player 2: Yes, I think so too.

Player 3 asks the next questions, and play continues until all questions have been asked and answered. All the players can contribute to the discussion.

Snack Time!



**Grapes, Crackers,
Donuts, Apple,
Banana, Chocolate**

Snack Time!

1. Which of the snacks on the card is the healthiest? Which is the least healthy?
2. Which snacks are salty? Which are sweet? Which are crunchy? Which are soft?
3. Which of the snacks do you like to eat? Why?
4. What other snacks do you like to eat? What do they look like?
5. Which snacks are easy to carry with you? Why?
6. Imagine you are having a party. What snacks would you serve?

READY FOR MORE?

This section contains 13 additional games that students can play with the *Picture This* cards that are included with this book (and with the cards that you create on your own). Some of these variations are designed primarily to help students relax, improve their speaking fluency, and have fun speaking English without worrying about accuracy. Others require students to pay close attention to English, but in a low-stress, game-like context. Each game below includes a brief description, step-by-step instructions for playing the game, examples of player talk, and in some cases, additional variations of the game.

Game 2: ABCs

ABCs provides students with vocabulary practice by asking them to think of vocabulary words that are related to many different topics. Students use *Picture This* cards as a starting point for each topic. Then they come up with related vocabulary items that begin with many letters of the alphabet. This game works well as a whole-class activity or as a competition among groups.

Instructions

1. Decide if you will complete this activity as a whole class or in small groups. If you are using groups, have students sit in groups of 2–4.
2. Write the letters of the alphabet (A to Z) in a vertical list on the blackboard, or have players do this individually on a piece of paper.
3. Show the class the picture side of one card. You may need to walk around the classroom so that all students can see the pictures clearly.
4. Have players name the pictures on the card. Write the names next to the appropriate letter in the ABC list based on the first letter of the word.
5. Together, think of examples beginning with other letters of the alphabet. How many can the class think of in 5 minutes?

Optional: To make this game more competitive, divide students into two or more teams. See which team can fill in the most ABC examples in 5 minutes.

“Player Talk” in ABCs Eat Your Vegetables

A asparagus	H ?	O onion	V ?
B broccoli	I ?	P peas	W ?
C carrot	J ?	Q ?	X ?
D ?	K kale	R radish	Y yam
E eggplant	L lentil	S spinach	Z zucchini
F ?	M mushroom	T tomato	
G green beans	N ?	U ?	

Eat Your Vegetables



**Broccoli, Pepper,
Tomato, Carrot,
Peas, Onion**

Eat Your Vegetables

1. What are three vegetables on the card?
2. What are two more vegetables not on the card? What do they look like?
3. Which vegetables are common in this area? Which vegetables are uncommon in this area? Why?
4. Which vegetables do you like? What other foods do you eat with these vegetables?
5. What vegetables do you eat at breakfast? At lunch? At dinner?
6. What vegetables would you grow in your own garden? Why?

Game 3: Questions, Questions

Questions, Questions gives students practice forming yes/no questions. Using a *Picture This* card, a player chooses one item, and the remaining players take turns asking yes/no questions to try and guess the item.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 2–4.
2. Give each group 5–10 *Picture This* cards. Put the cards in a pile on the table, picture side down. Choose one player to start.
3. Player 1 picks up a card, holds it so that others cannot see the pictures, and reads the title of the card out loud.
4. Player 1 then silently chooses one of the images on the card.
5. In turns, the remaining players ask yes/no questions about which object Player 1 chose. After each question, Player 1 should answer “yes” or “no.” The player who asked the question has one chance to guess what the object is.
6. If the player’s guess is incorrect, the next player gets a chance to ask a yes/no question and make a guess.
7. When a player guesses correctly, he or she chooses the next card and follows steps 3–4. The remaining players again ask questions and make guesses (steps 5–6). The player holding the card puts the used card at the bottom of the pile.
8. Cards may be used more than once, but different pictures should be chosen each time.
9. End the game after a specified amount of time or when all of the cards have been used several times.

“Player Talk” in Questions, Questions A Trip to the Zoo

Player 1: The topic is “A Trip to the Zoo.”

Player 2: Is it an animal?

Player 1: Yes.

Player 2: Is it a zebra?

Player 1: No.

Player 3: Does the animal fly?

Player 1: No.

Player 3: Is it a camel?

Player 1: No.

Player 4: Is the animal very large?

Player 1: Yes.

Player 4: Is it an elephant?

Player 1: Yes.

A Trip to the Zoo



**Bear, Elephant,
Monkey, Lion,
Kangaroo, Giraffe**

A Trip to the Zoo

1. Which animal on the card is your favorite? Why?
2. Tell me more about one animal. Where does it live? What does it eat?
3. Which animals have you seen in real life? When and where did you see them?
4. What are three other animals you might see in the zoo? What do they look like?
5. Which animal would you like to speak to? What would you say to the animal?
6. Imagine you are one of these animals. Which animal would you be? Why?

Game 4: Name It!

In *Name It!*, players take turns using English to describe the items or ideas pictured on the *Picture This* cards. In turns, one player describes the items with as much detail as possible, while the remaining players try to guess what the student is describing. This game works well as a whole-class activity or as a competition among groups.

Instructions

1. Put the *Picture This* cards in a box, bag, or basket (where the players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
2. Choose one player to be the Clue Giver. The other players are Guessers. The Clue Giver should face the Guessers.
3. The Clue Giver takes a card and holds it so that he or she can see the pictures, but the Guessers cannot.
4. The Clue Giver tells the Guessers the title of the card and gives clues about the pictures without using the words on the card. Instead, the Clue Giver should use other words and phrases, but not body language, to try and help the Guessers name all of the pictures on the card in the shortest period of time possible.
5. When the group has guessed all of the words on their card, one member of the group can turn in the card and get another.
6. End the game after the specified amount of time.

Optional: To make the game more competitive, divide students into two teams. Each team should have one Clue Giver and several Guessers. Both teams should use the same card. Start at the same time and see which team can guess all of the pictures first. Note that this option requires multiple copies of the *Picture This* cards.

“Player Talk” in Name It! The Weather

Clue Giver: The title is “The Weather.” You carry an umbrella when the weather is....

Guesser 1: Rainy.

Clue Giver: Yes! Good.

Clue Giver: This is like very cold rain.

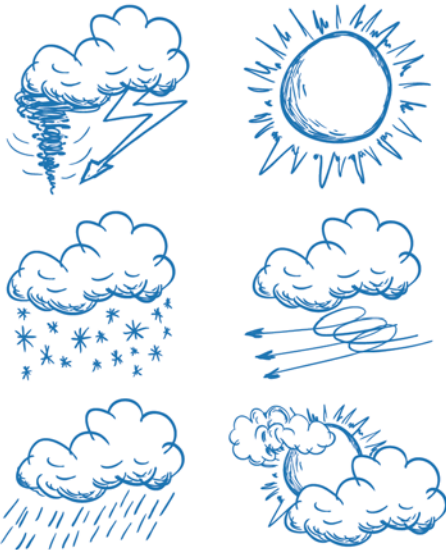
Guesser 2: Ice?

Clue Giver: No, it comes down from the sky.

Guesser 3: Snow?

Clue Giver: Yes, that’s right.

The Weather



**Stormy, Snowy,
Rainy, Sunny,
Cloudy, Windy**

The Weather

1. What is your favorite type of weather? Why?
2. How do you get ready for school on a rainy day?
3. What can you do outside on a snowy day?
4. Choose one type of weather. What are three fun things to do on that kind of day?
5. Choose another type of weather. What clothes do you wear outside in that weather?
6. What climate would you like to live in? Why?

Game 5: Guess Which Challenge

In *Guess Which Challenge*, students create sentences that use one of the words on a *Picture This* card, and they say the sentence out loud, omitting the word from the card. One student tries to complete all six sentences with the correct word, and then he or she guesses the topic of the card based on the six words.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 2–4.
2. Put the cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see the cards) in the center of the classroom.
3. Choose one player to be the Guesser. The other players are Clue Givers. The Guesser should face the Clue Givers.
4. Clue Givers take one card and hold it so that they can see the pictures, but the Guesser cannot. Clue Givers should not tell the Guesser the title of the card.
5. Each Clue Giver should choose one picture on the card and think of a sentence that uses the word for that picture (but no other words from the card).
6. The Clue Givers should take turns saying their sentence out loud, leaving out the word from the card.
7. The Guesser should try to complete each sentence with the word from the card.
8. If the Guesser guesses incorrectly, the Clue Giver can give another sentence.
9. When the Guesser has completed all of the sentences correctly, he or she should try to guess the topic or category of the card.
10. When the Guesser has correctly completed each sentence and guessed the topic of the card, one member of the group can return the card and get another.
11. Remind everyone that speaking practice is the main goal. If they get stuck, they can help each other or ask you for help.
12. End the game after the specified amount of time.

Note: The Guesser may not be able to guess the exact words in the title. For example, “Sports” is a good guess for the card titled “Let’s Play Ball.”

“Player Talk” in Guess Which Challenge The Weather

Clue Giver 1: You need an umbrella when it is ____.

Guesser: Rainy.

Clue Giver 1: Yes.

Clue Giver 2: Sometimes it's cold outside. Instead of raining, it ____.

Guesser: Snows.

Clue Giver 2: Yes.

Clue Giver 3: When it's ____, it's hot outside.

Guesser: Summer.

Clue Giver 3: No. When it's ____, you might need a hat or glasses to protect your eyes.

Guesser: Sunny.

Clue Giver 3: Yes.

(Play continues until all six pictures have been guessed.)

Guesser: The title of the card is “Types of Weather.”

Group: Yes!

Game 6: In a Minute

In a Minute provides students with practice forming questions that begin with *wh-* words: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. First, players read and respond to the six questions on a *Picture This* card. Then players race to write as many questions as they can in a set amount of time.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5. Select a timekeeper and make sure he or she can see a clock.
2. Invite someone from each group to take a card and carry it to his or her group.
3. Together, the group reads and answers the questions on the card (following the steps for the basic *Picture This* game presented on page 43).
4. Then, the group chooses one of the pictures on their card that they are familiar with.
5. The group chooses one player to be a Record Keeper.
6. Give the group 1 minute to work together to see how many information questions (starting with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*) they can ask about the picture. That is, the word represented by the picture should be in the questions. The Record Keeper writes down the questions.
7. End the game by having several groups share the questions that they came up with.

Note: If 1 minute is too short, you can extend the thinking time to 3 or 5 minutes.

Optional: To make the game more competitive, divide the class into teams and see which team can make the most questions in the given time.

“Player Talk” in *In a Minute* *Let’s Play!*

The players choose the picture of a soccer ball:

1. Who is a famous soccer player?
2. How long is a soccer game?
3. How many players are on a soccer team?

Game 7: Question Quiz

In *Question Quiz*, students practice creating questions that contain very specific information about one item from a *Picture This* card, so that there is only one correct answer to the question.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 2–4.
2. Invite someone from each group to take a card, carry it to his or her group, and put it on the table so that the picture side faces up.
3. Player 1 selects and names one of the pictures.
4. Player 2 tries to make a question for that picture. The item in the picture should be the only correct answer for the question.
5. Player 1 decides if the question is “good”—that the picture is the only correct answer to the question.
6. If Player 2 succeeds, he or she selects the next picture, and Player 3 makes a question. If the player’s question is “no good,” Player 3 tries to make another question for the same picture.
7. When the group has created questions for all of the pictures on their card, one member of the group can return the card and get another.
8. Remind everyone that speaking practice is the main goal. If they get stuck, they can help each other or ask you for help.
9. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in Question Quiz *A Trip to the Zoo*

Player 1: Elephant.

Player 2: What animal lives in Africa?

Player 1: No good. Several of these animals live in Africa.

Player 3: What animal has big ears?

Player 1: Good!

Game 8: Mix It, Fix It!

Mix It, Fix It! allows students to practice creating well-formed questions. First, one player scrambles a question from the *Picture This* card, and the remaining players work together to unscramble it.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Invite someone (Player 1) from each group to take a card and carry it to his or her group.
3. Player 1 holds the card so that the other players cannot see the questions.
4. Then Player 1 reads one of the questions, but he or she mixes up the word order.
5. The other players write down the words. Then they work together to try and rephrase the words in the correct order to form the original question.
6. Player 1 can give hints to the other players as they re-order the question and should tell them when they correctly form the question.
7. When the group has recreated all of the questions on their card, one member of the group can turn in the card and get another.
8. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in *Mix It, Fix It!* *A Trip to the Zoo*

Player 1: animal be which you would

Player 2: You would be which animal?

Player 1: No.

Player 3: I think *which animal* has to be the first part of the question.

Player 4: How about *Which animal you would be*?

Player 1: That’s close.

Player 2: Which animal would you be?

Player 1: Yes!

Game 9: Paraphrase It!

Paraphrase It! provides students with practice saying the same thing in a variety of different ways by paraphrasing. Paraphrasing allows students to be creative with language to express a particular meaning, while practicing different grammatical structures, word forms, and vocabulary.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Put the *Picture This* cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Invite someone (Player 1) from each group to take a card, carry it to his or her group, and place it on the table so that the question side faces up.
4. The players should work together to see how many ways they can ask each question using different words. Give players a set amount of time to make questions for the card.
5. End the game after the specified amount of time.

Optional: To make this game more competitive, form two or more teams, and have each team write down their paraphrases for the same *Picture This* card. After 10 minutes, have groups exchange papers and check each other's questions. See which team got the most correct paraphrases. Note that this option requires multiple copies of the *Picture This* cards.

“Player Talk” in *Paraphrase It!*

Beverages

Original Question:

Which drink on the card is the healthiest? Why?

Paraphrases:

Which is the best for you? Why?

Of these drinks, which is the healthiest? Why?

Which is the healthiest? Why?

Game 10: Pass It On

In *Pass It On*, students use the vocabulary words on a *Picture This* card to create a story. This game provides students with the opportunity to be creative with language and to use their imagination to tell a silly story.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4. Choose an amount of time for the activity.
2. Invite someone from each group to take a card and carry it to his or her group.
3. Group members examine the title and the pictures on their card. Then players match the pictures with the appropriate words or phrases on the cards.
4. The group should work together to tell a silly story. One player starts the story, using one of the picture words from the card.
5. Once Player 1 has used one of the words, the story passes to the next person, who continues the story until he or she can use another picture word.
6. Remind players that the words and ideas must connect to the previous part of the story.
7. When the group has used all of the picture words on their card, one member of the group can return the card and get another.
8. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in *Pass It On* *Eat Your Vegetables*

Player 1: Once upon a time, I planted some seeds. I thought they were broccoli seeds.

Player 2: But they were really tomato seeds.

Player 3 continues. The sentences can be silly!

Game 11: Same & Different

Same & Different provides students with an opportunity to use their background knowledge about the items on a *Picture This* card and create descriptions that compare and contrast two of the items on the card.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4. Choose an amount of time for the activity.
2. The group chooses one player to be the Timer making sure he or she can see a clock. The Timer takes a card and carries it to his or her group.
3. The Timer chooses two of the pictures on the card and shows them to the group.
4. The remaining players think about how the two pictures are similar and different. They name as many similarities and differences as they can in 1 minute while the Timer keeps track of the time.
5. After 1 minute, the group should choose a new Timer. The new Timer should choose two different pictures on the card or turn in the card and get another.
6. End the game after the specified amount of time.

Note: Depending on the students' level, groups can list words or phrases, or they can use complete sentences.

Optional: To make the game competitive, have each group compete with another group. Decide if the groups will list words or phrases or write complete sentences. Have groups write their comparisons on paper. After a specified amount of time (2 or 3 minutes), have the groups exchange papers and discuss the similarities and differences of the items that they have compared. Note that this option requires multiple copies of the *Picture This* cards.

“Player Talk” in Same & Different A Trip to the Zoo

Beginning level:

Lion and monkey—long tail

Elephants in Africa but kangaroos in Australia

More advanced level:

Lions and some monkeys have long tails.

Elephants live in Africa, but kangaroos live in Australia.



A Trip to the Zoo



**Bear, Elephant,
Monkey, Lion,
Kangaroo, Giraffe**

A Trip to the Zoo

1. Which animal on the card is your favorite? Why?
2. Tell me more about one animal. Where does it live? What does it eat?
3. Which animals have you seen in real life? When and where did you see them?
4. What are three other animals you might see in the zoo? What do they look like?
5. Which animal would you like to speak to? What would you say to the animal?
6. Imagine you are one of these animals. Which animal would you be? Why?

Game 12: Simple Switches

In *Simple Switches*, students ask each other questions that they have altered from the original question on a *Picture This* card. The questions on the card act as a starting point for the students' own questions. This is a great scaffolding activity for teaching how to form questions.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4. Choose an amount of time for the activity.
2. Put the *Picture This* cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Invite someone from each group to take a card, carry it to his or her group, and place it on the table so that the question side faces up.
4. One player starts by reading one of the questions silently. The first player will choose another player to answer the new question. Then the player makes a small change (or switch) in the question and asks the new question out loud.
5. The player who answers the question then chooses a new question and repeats step 4.
6. When the group has altered and responded to all of the questions on their card, one member of the group can return the card and get another.
7. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in *Simple Switches* Hobbies

Player 1 reads, “Which hobbies on this card are good for a rainy day?”

Player 1: Which hobbies on this card are good for a cold day?

Player 2: Reading books, surfing the Internet, and listening to music are good hobbies for a cold day.

Game 13: Word Strings

Word Strings provides students with practice forming phrases and sentences, using vocabulary words from a *Picture This* card as a starting point.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–4.
2. Put the *Picture This* cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Invite someone from each group to take a card and carry it to his or her group.
4. The group looks at the pictures together. Their goal is to make a sentence using one of the words on the card.
5. Players take turns. Player 1 names one of the pictures.
6. Player 2 makes a two-word phrase using the first word.
7. Player 3 makes a three-word phrase.
8. Players continue adding words until they have created a complete sentence.
9. The group can repeat steps 5–8 for all of the words on the card.
10. End the activity when sentences have been formed for all of the words on the card.

Note: Players can add words anywhere in the phrase—the beginning (*baseball* becomes *the baseball*), the end (*the baseball player*), or the middle (*the tall baseball player*).

Optional: To make it competitive, divide the class into two or more teams. Give a time limit (2–3 minutes) and see which team can make the longest sentence.

“Player Talk” in Word Strings

Let’s Play!

Player 1: baseball

Player 2: baseball player

Player 3: the baseball player

Player 4: the tall baseball player

Player 1: the tall baseball player hits

Players continue until the group has formed a complete sentence.

Let’s Play!



**Volleyball, Baseball,
Tennis Ball, Basketball,
Football, Soccer Ball**

Let’s Play!

1. Which games on the card do you play as a team? Which do you play as an individual?
2. Which game is the easiest to play? Which one is the most difficult to play? Why?
3. Choose one game. What do you need to play it? Why do you need it?
4. Which games do you like to watch? Why?
5. Which games do you like to play? Why?
6. Which games have you never played before? Which games would you like to play? Why?

Game 14: TV Talk Show

TV Talk Show is an extension activity that requires time for preparation and coordination. A *TV Talk Show* is a program on television. A talk show has a host who interviews people who are in the news—celebrities, leaders, people with special talents and interests, and so on. In this game, students put on their own *TV Talk Show* using questions on a *Picture This* card as a starting point for the questions that one student (the host) can use to interview other students (the guests).

Instructions

1. Divide the class into groups of 5–6. In each group, choose two students to be Talk Show Hosts. The remaining students will be Celebrity Guests.
2. To prepare for the activity, the Talk Show Hosts from all of the groups will work together, and the Celebrity Guests from all of the groups will work together.
3. Preparation: The Hosts choose one *Picture This* card, making sure that none of the Celebrity Guests see it. Working together, the Hosts brainstorm questions about the topic on the card. They should use the pictures and the questions on the back for ideas. Remind students to make their questions as funny, detailed, or impressive as they can.
4. Preparation: Working together, the Celebrity Guests brainstorm to choose who they want to be. They can choose real celebrities or made-up personalities. They should brainstorm things about themselves, such as name, style of speaking, body language, etc. Remind students to have fun and develop a character to play.
5. Put students back into their original groups, and have each group present a Talk Show to the rest of the class. First, have the Hosts ask each Celebrity Guest to introduce him/herself. Second, the Hosts should introduce the topic of conversation from the picture card. Third, the Talk Show Hosts ask questions about the topic of the card, and the Celebrity Guests take turns answering the questions. Remind students to be funny and creative and to act in character.

“Player Talk” in TV Talk Show Communication Tools

Host: Good evening viewers. It is my pleasure to introduce our special guest(s) today: two members of the rock band...

Guest: [Thank the host and greet the audience.]

Host: We know your public personality. Tonight, we would like to learn more about the real you. Okay?

Guest: Yes, of course.

Host: Thank you. In that case, I would like to ask about [the topic on the card]. How do you communicate with your family?

Guest: I call them on the phone.

Host: What about your fans?

Guest: I usually use Facebook.

The conversation continues.

Communication Tools



**Radio, Mail,
Newspaper, Telephone,
Television, Email**

Communication Tools

1. Which of the communication tools on the card do you use most often? Why?
2. Which communication tools are good for communicating with many people at once?
3. Which communication tools are the oldest? The newest?
4. Which communication tool is the most expensive? Why?
5. What communication tools do people have problems with? What kinds of problems do they have?
6. If you could use only one way to communicate with others, which tool would you use? Why?

DIY! (DO-IT-YOURSELF)

Activate: Games for Learning American English comes with 24 *Picture This* cards that can be used for a variety of conversation and word games. On one side of the card, there is a title, six small pictures, and words or phrases that match the pictures. On the other side, there are six questions or prompts that are related to the pictures. Teachers can create their own cards to make the collection specific to the content of a class and the level of ability of the class. The homemade cards can then provide a fun way to practice a range of important vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and functions in English.

MATERIALS

Use **small pieces of paper** or cut small rectangles from larger paper to make cards. (Recycled file folders or pieces of cardstock are great for this purpose.) The original *Picture This* cards are 2.75 inches (about 7cm) wide and 4.25 inches (about 11cm) long. However, it is not important that all of the cards be the same size as the original *Picture This* cards.

Each new *Picture This* card will need about six **pictures**. Pictures may be hand drawn, cut from old magazines, or downloaded from the Internet. You will need glue or tape to affix the pictures onto the cards. Finally, you will need **pens or thin markers** to write down the card title, words, and questions.

HELP FROM STUDENTS

1. Brainstorm two or three topics with the class. Together, think of words and questions related to the topic. Write them on the board to model how to produce words related to the topics and questions based on those words.
 - Example topics:
 - Pets
 - School Subjects
 - Tools
 - Example vocabulary (Tools):
 - Hammer
 - Saw
 - Wrench
 - Example questions:
 - What kind of pet is the most fun to have? (Pets)
 - What is your favorite subject? Why? (School Subjects)
 - How does it work? (Tools)
2. Brainstorm a large list of possible topics with the class. After compiling a list of 20 or 30 topics, divide the class into pairs or small groups.
3. Have each group volunteer for one of the topics. As they do so, check off the topics that are “taken.”

4. Give each group some scratch paper to use in planning their cards and questions.
5. Draw this graphic organizer on the board as a guide.

Title	Questions
Small pictures and labels	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

6. Encourage groups to divide up the tasks of writing questions and drawing (or finding) pictures.
7. Tell students that their goal is to create a card similar to the original *Picture This* card. However, it is not important that each card have exactly six pictures, labels, and questions.
8. Some groups will need more time to work than others, so plan accordingly. For example, if one group finishes quickly, the members can choose another topic from the list and make another card.
9. Encourage students to ask you or their classmates for ideas if they get stuck thinking of pictures or questions.
10. When a group is ready with a plan, distribute materials (paper cut to size, glue or tape, and markers or pens) for the final card and have them create their cards.

BUILDING A COLLECTION

Save the cards and add to the collection each year. The more cards you have, the less likely students are to say, “We did this one already.” Laminating or covering the cards with clear contact paper will help them last much longer. Perhaps students can even file the cards alphabetically and create a list of available topics.



Guess What?

At the zoo

.....

1. lions
2. elephants
3. monkeys
4. zebras
5. cages
6. bears

+

In the sky

.....

clouds
birds
the sun
the moon
airplanes
rainbow

+

At the beach

.....

sand
seashells
umbrellas
towels
bathing suits
waves

+

ABOUT GUESS WHAT?



Guess What? cards can be used for a variety of games in the classroom to provide an opportunity for students to practice making descriptions in English and to learn English vocabulary. *Guess What?* is a great form of fluency practice because success depends not on absolute accuracy, but rather on getting a message across to eager listeners. *Guess What?* also prompts quick exchanges as players rapidly make guesses and learn whether or not their guesses are correct.



An example of a *Guess What?* card appears on the right. Each card contains a topic, such as “At the zoo,” and below the topic is a list of six related words.

Activate: Games for Learning American English comes with a set of 24 *Guess What?* cards. These cards contain two levels of topics and vocabulary items: the side with + in the bottom right corner contains basic, common topics and vocabulary words, while the side with ++ contains more advanced topics and vocabulary words. A lower-level course will benefit from playing with the basic set of cards, whereas upper intermediate and advanced groups can enjoy playing with a mix of both sets.

As teachers and students become familiar with these sample cards, they will find that it is easy to create more cards to highlight vocabulary as it is studied in class.

STUDENTS' ROLE



Guess What? should usually be played by small groups of students so that each group member gets a sufficient amount of speaking and listening practice during the game. The exact number in each group is not important, but typically, groups of 3–5 students work well.

In a game of *Guess What?* each player in the group takes on the role of either the **Describer** or one of the **Guessers**. The Describer is responsible for describing a word on the card so that the other members in the group can guess what it is. The other members in the group are the Guessers. The role of Describer rotates with each new card.

TEACHER'S ROLE

Before Play

Teachers should demonstrate the games—usually more than once—because demonstrations are often more effective than instructions. The teacher should begin by demonstrating one round of the game with the entire class. It works best if the teacher starts as the Describer; the rest of the class will be Guessers. The teacher first tells the class the topic and then describes the first word on the card without using any of the other words on the card (including the title). When a student guesses that word, the teacher moves on to the second word. One entire card can be completed this way to ensure that students understand how to play.

A second demonstration using a student in the role of the Describer can really clarify how the game is played. Two to four students can be invited to the front of the class to play one round. One student is the Describer, and the others are Guessers. The students can complete an entire round (describe and guess all of the words on one card). Not only do students see again how the game is played, but they also see the group formation that they will use.

Guess What? should always be played in small groups (3–5 students per group). If the whole class plays the game together, with one student (or the teacher) as Describer and the rest of the class as Guessers, there is very little speaking practice. In small groups, more students have a chance to be the Describer, and therefore, they have more practice making descriptions in English. In a small group, students tend to be more engaged because it is possible for each player to speak and listen to each other. In addition, small groups allow students who are shy or nervous about talking in front of the whole class to participate more comfortably in small groups.

To prepare the classroom to play *Guess What?*, the teacher should make sure that each group of students has a place to sit where they can easily hear each other, but not be interrupted by conversations in other groups. Have students sit in a circle so they are all facing each other. Each group should be given a set of 5–10 *Guess What?* cards so that they can move on to a new card quickly. (*Guess What?* is a faster-paced game than *Picture This*.) If this is not possible, however, the teacher can provide a basket, bag, box, or other container to hold the entire set of *Guess What?* cards and place it in a central location in the room. Then the students can get up and get a new card when they have finished with a card.

The teacher should select a set amount of time to use *Guess What?* cards in the language classroom. Since students will be working in small groups and can exchange *Guess What?* cards once they have completed a card, each group can work at its own pace. It is not necessary for all groups to finish a card at the same time. Instead, the teacher should choose an amount of time to play *Guess What?*, and students can use as many cards as they need during that time. Teachers should end the game after the specified amount of time has passed.



During Play

Teachers may need to emphasize that students should not show the contents of their card to others. For many students, this will be the first time playing a game that requires them to keep information secret, and they may be unaccustomed to the process. Teachers may also need to remind players that they should not use the words on the card (including the title) in their descriptions.

While walking around the classroom and visiting each group, the teacher should remind the groups to exchange their card for a new one when they finish a card so that another group can use that card.

After Play

When the game is finished, or after the specified amount of time, the teacher can review for a few minutes. Teachers can focus on the grammatical patterns and their meanings in the sentences that the students produce. The teacher should collect the materials and store them for their next use.

Depending on the level of the students, some teachers may wish to offer translations on the card. In a classroom in which all students share a common language, the teacher can write translations of the words on the card next to them. Students can be enlisted to do this as an activity as well. Without the translations, Describers sometimes show the card to the Guessers when they do not recognize a word, and that puts an end to the card's usefulness.



LET'S GET STARTED...

Guess What? cards can be used for many different games, but most of the games suggested in this chapter have the same basic rules. In this section, instructions and examples are given for playing a basic game of *Guess What?* This game provides a starting point for teachers to familiarize themselves with the *Guess What?* cards and to demonstrate how they can be used in the language classroom. With all *Guess What?* games, the teacher should set a specified amount of time for the game.

Game 1: Guess What?

In a basic game of *Guess What?*, the Describer gives clues (descriptions) in English to try and get the Guessers to call out all of the words on the *Guess What?* card. Once all of the words have been guessed, a new player becomes the Describer and chooses a new *Guess What?* card. This gives all of the players a chance to make descriptions in English.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5. Seat the players in a circle so they are all facing each other.
2. Give each group 5–10 *Guess What?* cards, or put the cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Select one player to start in the role of Describer.
4. The Describer selects a *Guess What?* card but does not show the card to anyone. The Describer should then tell members of the group (the Guessers) the card's topic.
5. The Describer gives descriptive clues about the first word on the card without saying the word. Be sure that the Describer understands that the words on the card should not be told to the Guessers. The Describer continues to describe the word until one of the Guessers says the word. As the Guessers guess the word, the Describer should let them know right away whether or not they are correct.
6. The Describer repeats this process for all six words on the card.
7. When all the words have been guessed, the round is over.
8. Another player takes the role of Describer, selects a new card, and begins the next round.
9. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in Guess What? At the zoo

Describer: Okay, the topic is “At the zoo.” The first word is an animal. It’s a kind of big cat.

Guesser 1: Tiger?

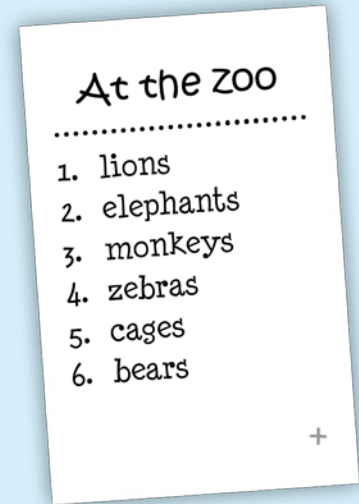
Describer: No, it doesn’t have stripes. It’s all brown, and it has long fur around the face, and it is scary.

Guesser 2: Lion.

Describer: Right. Lion. Okay number two. Well, this is a big animal. It’s very big, and it’s gray.

Guesser 3: Elephant.

Describer: Right. Elephant. Okay the next word...



Variations for Guess What?

Variation	Directions
No Topic	To make the game more difficult, the Describer should not announce the topic of each card before starting.
Describing Pairs	Have a pair of students act as Describers (instead of one student) and work together to describe the words on the card. Working in pairs can foster teamwork and help less confident students.

READY FOR MORE?

Guess What? cards can be used for a number of other games. In this section, the teacher will find the directions for seven additional games that are variations on the basic *Guess What?* game. Each game below includes a brief description of the game, step-by-step instructions for playing the game, examples of player talk, and in some cases, additional variations on the game.

Game 2: Mime the Words

In *Mime the Words*, the Describer is allowed to say the topic and nothing else. Instead, the Describer must describe the words on the *Guess What?* card using mime.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5. Seat the players in a circle so they are all facing each other.
2. Give each group 5–10 *Guess What?* cards or put the cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Select one player to start in the role of Describer. The remaining players will be Guessers.
4. The Describer selects a *Guess What?* card but does not show the card to anyone. The Describer should then tell members of the group (the Guessers) the card's topic.
5. The Describer should then describe each of the six words using only **mime** (describing with actions rather than words). The Describer cannot speak, but the Guessers may ask questions as the Describer acts out the words without speaking.
6. The Describer repeats this process for all six words on the card.
7. When all the words have been guessed, the round is over.
8. Another player takes the role of Describer and begins the next round.
9. End the game after the specified amount of time.

Note: In the pre-play demonstrations, the teacher may want to take the role of the Describer once and also of the Guesser once, to show how Guessers can be active by asking questions, making suggestions, and so on.

“Player Talk” in *Mime the Words* At the zoo

Describer: Okay, the topic is “At the zoo.” Here is a mime for the first word.

(The Describer acts like a cat.)

Guesser 1: Cat?

(The Describer shakes his or her head yes, but hold his or her hands far apart to indicate ‘big.’)

Guesser 2: Lion.

Describer: Right. Lion. Okay number two.

(The Describer holds his or her arm so that the shoulder is near his or her nose, and hangs down, swinging back and forth.)

Guesser 3: Elephant.

Describer: Right. Elephant. Okay the next word...

Variations for *Mime the Words*

Variation	Directions
No Topic	To make the game more difficult, the Describer should not announce the topic of each card before starting.
Describing Pairs	Have a pair of students act as Describers (instead of one student) and work together to mime the words on the card. Working in pairs can foster teamwork and help less confident students.

Game 3: Draw to Describe

In *Draw to Describe*, the Describer is allowed to say the topic on the card and nothing else. The describer attempts to draw pictures—one at a time—of the six objects on the card while the remaining students try to name the pictures.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5. Seat the players in a circle so they are all facing each other.
2. Give each group 5–10 *Guess What?* cards, or put the cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Select one player to start in the role of Describer. The remaining players will be Guessers.
4. The Describer selects a *Guess What?* card but does not show the card to anyone. The Describer should then tell the topic of the card to members of the group (the Guessers).
5. The Describer should then try to draw a picture of the first word on the card. The Describer cannot speak, but the Guessers may ask questions (and are encouraged to do so) as the Describer draws the object without speaking. As the Guessers guess the word, the Describer should let them know right away whether or not they are correct.
6. The Describer repeats this process for all six words on the card.
7. When all the words have been guessed, the round is over.
8. Another player takes the role of Describer and begins the next round.
9. End the game after the specified amount of time.

Note: In the pre-play demonstrations, the teacher may want to take the role of the Describer once and also of the Guesser once, to show how Guessers can be active by asking questions, making suggestions, and so on.

“Player Talk” in *Draw to Describe* At the zoo

Describer: Okay, the topic is “At the zoo.” Here is a drawing for the first word.

(The Describer draws a picture of a lion.)

Guesser 1: Is that a cat?

(The Describer shakes his or her head yes, but draws a large, fluffy mane on the animal.)

Guesser 2: Lion.

Describer: Right. Lion. Okay number two.

(The Describer draws a picture of an elephant.)

Guesser 3: Elephant.

Describer: Right. Elephant. Okay the next word...

Variations for *Draw to Describe*

Variation	Directions
No Topic	To make the game more difficult, the Describer should not announce the topic of each card before starting.
Describing Pairs	Have a pair of students act as Describers (instead of one student) and work together to draw the words on the card. Working in pairs can foster teamwork and help less confident students.

Game 4: Yes, No, Maybe!

In *Yes, No, Maybe!*, the Guessers must ask yes or no questions until they discover what the words on the *Guess What?* card are.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5. Seat the players in a circle so they are all facing each other.
2. Give each group 5–10 *Guess What?* cards, or put the cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Select one player to start in the role of Describer. The remaining players will be Guessers.
4. The Describer selects a *Guess What?* card but does not show the card to anyone. The Describer should then tell the topic of the card to the members of the group (the Guessers).
5. Then, the Guessers ask yes or no questions, which the Describer answers, until they guess the first word on the card. Any Guesser can ask a question at any time, and the Describer will answer only with “yes” or “no.” The Describer can also answer with sentences that give brief clues. (See the example below.)
6. This process is repeated for all six words on the card.
7. When all of the words have been guessed, the round is over.
8. Another player takes the role of Describer and begins the next round.
9. End the game after the specified amount of time.

Note: In pre-play demonstrations, teachers should model answers beyond “yes” and no.”

“Player Talk” in Yes, No, Maybe! On the wall

Describer: Okay, the topic is “On the wall.”

Guesser 1: Is it made of wood?

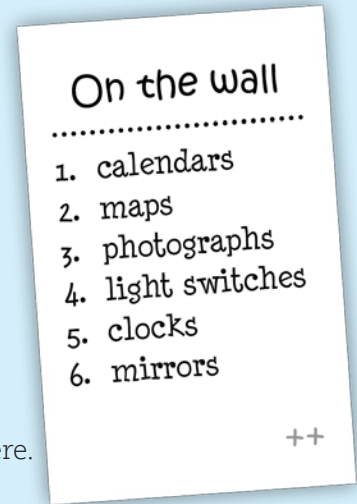
Describer: No.

Guesser 2: Is it smaller than a shoebox?

Describer: Sometimes. It can be many different sizes.

Guesser 3: Is it found in our homes?

Describer: Sometimes. Most homes probably have one somewhere.



Variations for Yes, No, Maybe!

Variation	Directions
No Topic	To make the game more difficult, the Describer should not announce the topic of each card before starting.
Describing Pairs	Have a pair of students act as Describers (instead of one student) and work together to answer the questions asked by the guessers. Working in pairs can foster teamwork and help less confident students.

Game 5: You Don't Say

In *You Don't Say*, one player describes the topic on a *Guess What?* card without using any of the words on the card. The goal is for the Guessers to guess the topic of the card (rather than the words). This form of practice—which forces the Describer to find alternative sentences and descriptions—is excellent for vocabulary and fluency practice.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5. Seat the players in a circle so they are all facing each other.
2. Give each group 5–10 *Guess What?* cards, or put the cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Select one player to start in the role of Describer. The remaining players will be Guessers.
4. The Describer selects a *Guess What?* card but does not show the card to anyone. The Describer should not tell the Guessers the title of the card.
5. The Describer then describes the topic using as much detail as possible, but he or she is not allowed to use any of the six related words on the card in his or her description.
6. The Guessers call out ideas to guess the topic (or title) of the card. If a guess is wrong, the Describer tells the Guessers that the guess is not correct and offers further description.
7. When the topic of the card has been guessed, the round is over.
8. Another player takes the role of Describer and begins the next round.
9. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in *You Don’t Say* At the beach

(Words that are included on the card and not allowed in the description: sand, seashells, umbrellas, towels, bathing suits, waves.)

Describer: Okay, this topic is about a place that you go for fun.

Guesser 1: The movie theater!

Describer: No. This place is usually very warm and sunny.

Guesser 2: The park.

Describer: No. You can play in very deep water at this place, and you can surf if you know how.

Guesser 3: The beach!

Describer: Yes!



Variation for *You Don’t Say*

Variation	Directions
Describing Pairs	Have a pair of students act as Describers (instead of one student) and work together to describe the words on the card. Working in pairs can foster teamwork and help less confident students.

Game 6: Guess the Topic

In *Guess the Topic*, the Describer says the six words below the topic, slowly, one at a time. The Guessers try to guess the topic after each word is read.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5. Seat the players in a circle so they are all facing each other.
2. Give each group 5–10 *Guess What?* cards, or put the cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Select one player to start in the role of Describer. The remaining players will be Guessers.
4. The Describer selects a *Guess What?* card but does not show the card to anyone. The Describer should not tell the topic of the card to members of the group (the Guessers).
5. The Describer says the first word below the topic on the card. The Guessers try to guess the topic.
6. If no one guesses the topic, then the Describer says the second word on the card and allows time for the Guessers to guess. The Describer repeats this process until the topic has been guessed.
7. If no one guesses the topic after the Describer lists all six words, the describer will add his or her own words, one at a time.
8. When the topic of the card has been guessed, the round is over.
9. Another player takes the role of Describer, selects a new card, and begins the next round.
10. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in *Guess the Topic* *At the movie theater*

Describer: Tickets.

Guessers: Going to a sports game.

Describer: No. Seats.

Guessers: Going to a concert.

Describer: No. Screens.

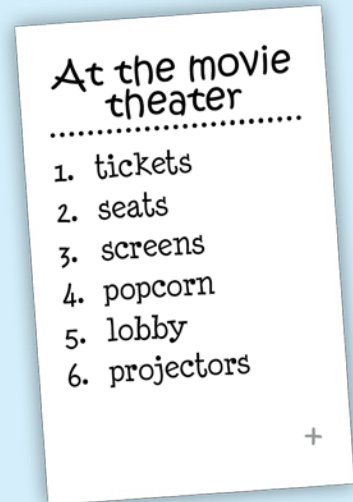
Guessers: Riding on the airplane.

Describer: No. Popcorn.

Guessers: Going to the movie theater.

Describer: Yes!

If no one had guessed the title after all six clues from the card, the Describer would add single words, one at a time, such as candy, projector, aisle, and Hollywood.



Game 7: One-Word Clues

One-Word Clues is a competition between two teams to see who can guess words on the *Guess What?* cards based on one-word clues and the topic of the card.

Instructions

1. Divide students into an even number of teams (two, four, or six teams) with 3–5 students per group.
2. Select one player from each team to start in the role of Describer. The remaining players will be Guessers.
3. Have pairs of teams sit near each other. Have the Describers from the two teams sit next to each other. Together, they choose a card and hold it so each can see the same card, but the Guessers cannot.
4. The Describers should then tell the topic of the card to the members of the teams (the Guessers).
5. The Describer from Team 1 gives a one-word clue to his or her teammates for the first word under the topic on the card. The goal is for Team 1 to guess the first word. Only Team 1 Guessers may answer. Team 2 must remain silent. Team 1 will have 20 seconds to make one guess.
6. If Team 1 does not guess, or guesses wrong, it is Team 2's turn. The Describer from Team 2 offers another one-word clue for the first word. Team 2 has 20 seconds to make one guess. If Team 2 does not guess the word, then Team 1 gets another chance, and so on.
7. When the first word is guessed, the guessing team receives one point, and the Describers move on to the next word on the card. If Team 1 gave the first clue for the previous word, then Team 2 gives the first clue for the next word.
8. When all of the words on the card have been guessed, the round is over.
9. Two new players take the role of Describers and begin the next round.
10. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in One-Word Clues *At the movie theater*

Describers 1 and 2: The topic is “At the movie theater.”

Describer for Team 1: Food.

Guessers for Team 1: Candy.

Describer for Team 2: No. Salty.

Guessers for Team 2: Popcorn.

Describers: Yes! Team 2 gets one point. Now it is Team 2’s turn to start.

Describer for Team 2: Soft.

Guessers for Team 2: Music.

Describer for Team 1: No. Sit.

Guessers for Team 1: Rows.

Describer for Team 2: No. Comfortable.

Guessers for Team 2: Seat!

The round continues until all words have been guessed.

Game 8: Guess the Words

In *Guess the Words*, the topic of the card is given. The Guessers race to call out as many words that appear on the card as possible in 1 minute.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5. Seat the players in a circle so they are all facing each other. Give each group a stopwatch, or make sure they can see a clock.
2. Give each group 5–10 *Guess What?* cards, or put the cards in a box, bag, or basket (where players cannot see them) in the center of the classroom.
3. Select one player to start in the role of Describer. The remaining players will be Guessers.
4. The Describer selects a *Guess What?* card but does not show the card to anyone. The Describer should then tell members of the group (the Guessers) the card's topic and start the timer.
5. The Guessers have 1 minute to call out as many words as possible related to that topic.
6. The Describer should keep track of which words on the card the Guessers call out. The goal is to say all of the words on the card.
7. At the end of 1 minute, the Describer should tell the Guessers how many of the words on the card they called out. Then, the Describer should give clues to help them guess any remaining words.
8. When all of the words on the card have been guessed, the round is over.
9. Another player takes the role of Describer and begins the next round.
10. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in *Guess the Words* *In the sea*

Describer: The topic is “In the sea.” Ready, go! (Start 1 minute on the timer.)

Guessers: Water! Boats! Waves! Octopus! Salt! Swimmers! Coral! Shipwrecks! Sand! Fish! (Players continue guessing until 1 minute is up.)

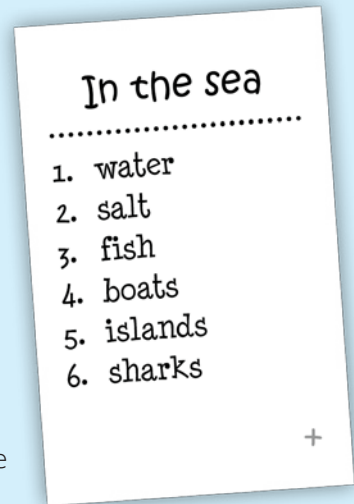
Describer: Time’s up! You guessed four of the six words. Here’s a clue for the first word you didn’t guess. This is a piece of land in the middle of the ocean.

Guessers: Island!

Describer: Yes. The second word you didn’t guess is a very large animal that lives in the sea.

Guessers: Dolphin! Shark!

Describer: Yes, shark.



DIY! (DO-IT-YOURSELF)

The 24 *Guess What?* cards included in *Activate: Games for Learning American English* are meant to be a part of a larger collection. Once teachers and students become familiar with the cards, they can use them as models to make their own cards in just a few minutes, ensuring that the topics and vocabulary on the cards are appropriate to the students' levels and interests, and the content being studied.

MATERIALS

Use **small pieces of paper** or cut small rectangles to make **cards**. (Recycled file folders or pieces of cardstock are great for this purpose.) The original *Guess What?* cards are 2.75 inches (about 7cm) wide and 4.25 inches (about 11cm) long. However, it is not important that all the cards be the same size as the original *Guess What?* cards. You will also need **pens or thin markers** to write on the cards.

HELP FROM STUDENTS

Use the following instructions to involve students in the creation of new *Guess What?* cards:

1. Brainstorm a list of topics with the class. Write the topics on the board. The following are just a few examples of potential topics that could be suggested in such a brainstorming session:

<i>countries</i>	<i>football</i>	<i>adjectives for describing people</i>
<i>sports</i>	<i>email</i>	<i>my country</i> <i>funny adjectives</i>

2. After compiling a list of 10 or 15 topics, divide students into small groups or pairs to work. Alternatively, have students work alone.
3. Tell students to choose a topic from the brainstorming session and check them off the list on the board as topics are selected. Students should write the topic at the top of their card. The cards should look something like this at this stage:

Countries	Adjectives for Describing People	Email	Football

- Have students write six words related to the topic below the topic. Tell them that there are no correct answers, and any six appropriate words will do. Remind students to print the words very neatly so others can read them. Offer to help them with the spelling of the words that they want to include. The following cards are examples:

Countries	Adjectives for Describing People	Email	Football
1. Brazil	1. smart	1. electronic	1. ball
2. Egypt	2. confident	2. Internet	2. goal
3. The USA	3. awkward	3. fast	3. pass
4. South Africa	4. lazy	4. computer	4. soccer
5. Spain	5. boring	5. subject line	5. World Cup
6. Australia	6. trustworthy	6. Internet café	6. goalkeeper

- Have students exchange cards with another group to edit and proofread the cards.
- Finally, collect the cards, use them, and have fun!

BUILDING A COLLECTION

In a matter of a few minutes, students can create dozens of *Guess What?* cards that can be collected and used again and again, year after year. Teachers and students should have fun making these cards. As more and more cards are created, the teacher can model and encourage creative topics like “Things You Can Find in a Monster’s Pocket,” “Words that End in R,” “Disgusting Creatures,” or “Places Where You Can Find Sand.”


Teachers can use clear contact paper to cover their cards to preserve them for many game-playing sessions. Alternatively, some schools may have access to a lamination machine that can provide a glossy protective cover for the cards and keep them in usable condition for many years.

COMBINING GAMES

Once students are comfortable playing *Guess What?*, *Picture This*, and board games, they can combine the cards, boards, and other materials to make new games of their own. Here is one example.

- Choose one of the game boards in this game kit, or have student teams make their own blank board similar to this example.
- Label a third of the spaces *Guess What?* Make sure to space them out across the path. Use an erasable pencil so that you can change the labels in the future.
- Label another third of the spaces *Picture This*. Again, space them out across the path. Use an erasable pencil.
- Label the rest of the spaces with typical game moves like *Lose a Turn*, *Go Ahead 2 Spaces*, etc.

5. Select 10–15 *Guess What?* cards and put them in a pile.
6. Select 10–15 *Picture This* cards and put them in a pile picture side down.
7. Decide how the *Guess What?* and *Picture This* cards will be used in the game. For example, players can answer the questions on the cards, or they can use one of the variations that the class is already familiar with.
8. Play as any other board game. When you land on *Guess What?* or *Picture This*, take the top card from the appropriate pile and complete the tasks decided upon in step 7.

Go Ahead 1 Space.	Picture This	Guess What?	OH NO! GO BACK 2 SPACES.
Guess What?	 Finish!		Picture This
Picture This	Guess What?	Guess What?	Guess What?
Lose a Turn	Go Ahead 1 Space.	Picture This	Picture This
Guess What?	Guess What?		
Picture This	OH NO! GO BACK 2 SPACES.	Picture This	Guess What?
Start			



Word Bricks



ABOUT WORD BRICKS

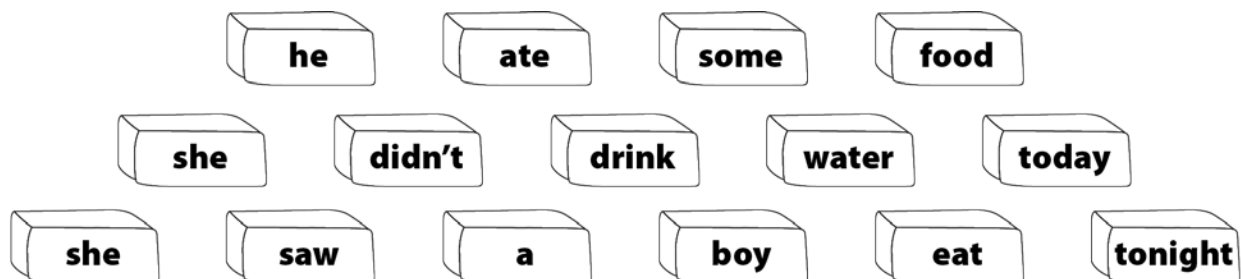
Bricks are blocks made from baked clay that are used for building houses, walls, and buildings. *Word Bricks* are also for building, but they are used for building sentences in English. The *Word Bricks* that come with *Activate: Games for Learning American English* are made from thick paper and have English words written on both sides of the 'brick.' The bricks are printed with a wide range of words in English: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, articles, pronouns, and so on—all of the building blocks that students need to form complete phrases and sentences in English.

Each *Word Brick* has two words, one on each side. These word pairs are related in some way. For example, some word pairs may be different forms of the same word (such as present and past tense verbs or forms of the verb *to be*). Other word pairs might focus on words with opposite or complementary meanings (such as *boy* and *girl*, *happy* and *sad*, *many* and *some*). They look like this:

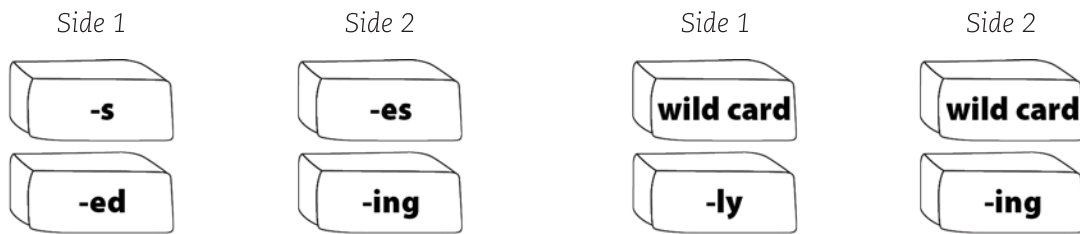


Side 1	Side 2	Side 1	Side 2
drink	drank	a	an
he	she	boy	girl
eat	ate	don't	didn't
water	food	see	saw
today	tonight	many	some

Activate: Games for Learning American English comes with 140 brick cards for a total of 280 words. (A complete list of the words can be found on page 109.) Students use the bricks to build complete sentences in English while they talk and play in small groups. At the start of a game, each group receives a handful of *Word Bricks* and engages in the activities that the teacher introduces to them. For example, with the *Word Bricks* pictured above, students could build any of the following sentences:



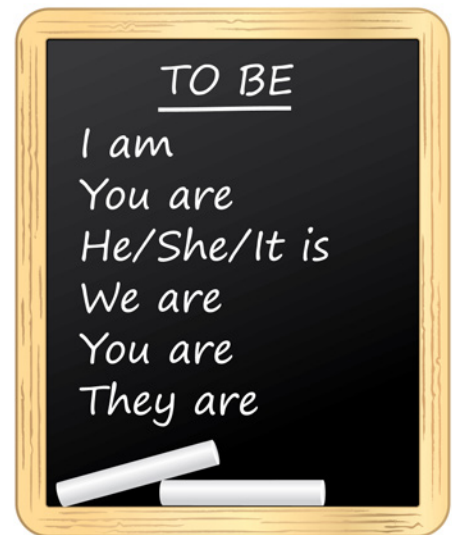
In addition to the regular *Word Bricks*, some special bricks are included to increase the flexibility of the sentence building process. One type of special brick is the “Wild Card,” which the students can use to stand in for any word that they would like to include in their sentence. The “Wild Card” designation appears on both sides of the brick, as shown below. Other bricks contain endings needed to create other forms of words, such as -ed for past tense, -s or -es for plural nouns and subject-verb agreement, -ing for the progressive, and -ly for adverbs.



For each of the games described in this chapter, the groups should have at least one “Wild Card” and one -s. These cards greatly increase the number and range of sentences that students can create. For example, using the special bricks and the bricks above, the students could make the following sentence, in which the “Wild Card” stands in for the adjective *hungry* and the sentence reads, “She saw some hungry boys eat.”



Word Bricks are an excellent way to promote active grammar study in English. With *Word Bricks*, students learn the patterns of English through repeated exploration of the language, through *doing*, rather than through the study of explicitly taught rules. For example, the *Word Bricks* include all of the forms of the verb *to be*, which students will need for correct subject-verb agreement in the simple present and simple past tenses. They can also use these bricks to create verb phrases in the passive (e.g., *was taken*) or the progressive aspect (e.g., *is going*).



Word Bricks games can be used to interactively practice and review grammar, and all of the games included in *Activate* can be used in any class. However, teachers can also use *Word Bricks* games to focus on particular grammatical structures, such as different verb tenses and aspects (e.g., *She goes*, *She went*, *She had gone*, *She is going*, *She may go*, etc.), active and passive voice, question forms (including yes/no and *wh-* questions), introductory *there* constructions (e.g., *There are five books on the table.*), relative clauses (e.g., *The boy who caught the fish shared them with everyone.*), and many more structures. The teacher can pair a *Word Bricks* activity with a grammar lesson focusing on these structures and can remind students of these structures before beginning a game.

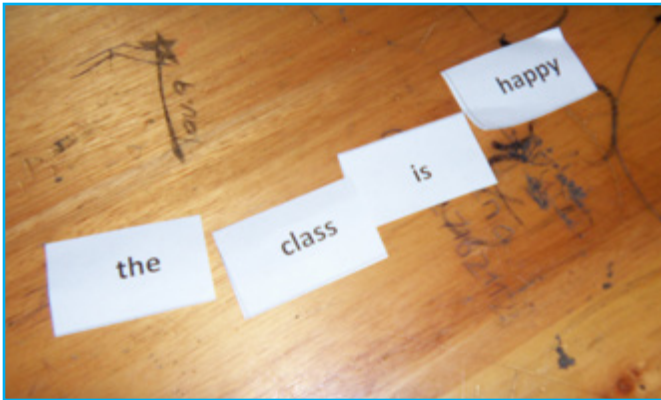
However, *Word Bricks* games do not only focus on building complete, well-formed sentences in English. Several of the games described in this chapter are well-suited to more general practice with words in English. (For examples, see *Brick Bingo*, *Word Category Bingo*, and *Sorting Race*.) These games allow students to reinforce their knowledge about the forms and uses of these words.

STUDENTS' ROLE

Students use the bricks to build complete sentences in English while they talk and play in small groups. Students at all levels can benefit from playing with the *Word Bricks*. Beginning level students construct short phrases or simple sentences. Intermediate or advanced students make longer sentences. Teachers can adjust the level by adding an extra “Wild Card” or two. This will allow students to add the exact word that they are looking for to their sentence.

TEACHER'S ROLE

Before Play



Teachers will want to demonstrate that *Word Bricks* contain words on either side of the brick. In addition, teachers will want to show how to add the special bricks to words in order to make alternate forms of words, such as -s, “Wild Card,” -ed, -ing, -ly, and so on. If a game focuses on a particular grammatical structure, the teacher may want to offer a brief review of the structure.

Most *Word Bricks* games are played in teams or small groups. Each team will need a flat surface to work on as they move their *Word Bricks* around to create sentences. Almost any flat surface will work. For example, in the picture above, the students are using the seat of a chair to build their sentences.

The teacher will need to give each team a handful of *Word Bricks*. Some of the games described below specify the number of bricks each team should have, while the exact number of bricks is not as important for other games. For this second type of game, it is usually not important for each group to have the exact same number of bricks. However, all games benefit from at least one “Wild Card” and one -s brick in each team’s set of *Word Bricks*. The teacher should ensure that each team receives one or more of each of these bricks.

During Play

Teachers play three fundamental roles during *Word Bricks* games. First, they answer questions or check sentences for correctness, if needed. Second, teachers help players notice errors in the sentences that they produce in a way that helps them correct the sentences themselves. For example, if students make this sentence, “My friend like elephants,” the teacher can put his or her finger on the word *like* to show students where the problem is. Students very often miss an -s or an article (*a, an, the*). However, to promote students’ active learning, the teacher should give them the responsibility of making corrections when a sentence is incorrect. By creating many sentences, students identify patterns. The third important role for the teacher is to keep the game fresh by rotating bricks from one group to another so that players can continue to make new sentences with new words.

After Play

The teacher should collect all of the *Word Bricks* to be used another time. The teacher should also make note of any additional bricks that would have made the game better, such as replacements for ones that are wearing out, more bricks of a particular word, or special bricks.

The teacher can review a grammar feature that he or she noticed during the game that was particularly difficult or prone to errors. The teacher may also want to review sentence types or grammar structures that were taught during a previous lesson.

More Play

The bricks can be used again and again in class. Each time students play with the bricks, the combination of bricks that they receive is different, and the make-up of the groups is different. As students progress in language learning throughout the semester, the teacher should observe their progress in the number and complexity of the sentences they build.



LET'S GET STARTED...

Teachers can introduce their students to *Word Bricks* with a game of *Sentence Race*. The instructions for the *Sentence Race* game introduce teachers and students to the basic concepts of using *Word Bricks* in the language classroom to practice forming complete sentences in English in a fun, low-stress competition.

Game 1: Sentence Race

This is a fast-paced, exciting game that gives students a chance to think quickly in English as they try to earn points by building well-formed sentences. This game can be played for a specified amount of time (which you should announce to students), and the team with the most points at the end wins the game. Alternatively, the game can be played until one team reaches a target number of points. The first team to reach the goal wins the game.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5, and ask each of the groups to choose a name for their team.
2. Make a column on the board and write the teams' names at the top. Tell players that they will receive points for each *Word Brick* that they use in a complete sentence. The points will be recorded on the board.
3. Give each team a handful of *Word Bricks*. It is not necessary that teams receive exactly the same number or any particular combination of *Word Bricks*, but make sure each team has at least one "Wild Card" and at least one -s brick. If each team has 50–100 bricks, they can play the game for an hour.
4. Players work with each other in their teams and use the bricks to build sentences.
5. When a team has made a correct sentence, count the number of *Word Bricks* in it. The team gets one point for each brick in the sentence if the sentence is correct. This will soon turn into a race to earn points.
6. Write the number of earned points on the board in a column under the team's name, or have a group member run up and write the number. Once points have been recorded, players may use the same bricks to build new sentences. They do not have to save their sentences.
7. Each team will call you to check new sentences. Each time a team makes a new sentence, add it to the team's total on the board. Depending on the number of teams in the class, you may wish to have someone be your score-keeping assistant.
8. End the game after the specified amount of time or when the first team reaches the target score. The team with the most points wins the game.



READY FOR MORE?

Sentence Race is one of the many games that can be played with *Word Bricks*. The following variations describe nine other games. Each game description contains step-by-step directions and notes for teachers to use in guiding students through the *Word Bricks* games.

Game 2: Brick Bingo

Brick Bingo helps students (particularly students at lower proficiency levels) make connections between the spoken and written forms of words in a fun, low-stress game. This game requires the teacher to have a list of the words included in the *Word Bricks* collection. (A complete list of the *Word Bricks* can be found on page 109.) A round of *Brick Bingo* is usually fairly short, and multiple rounds can be played in a lesson, giving multiple students the chance to win a round. This game can be played individually or with small groups of 2–3 players per group.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) work individually or in small groups (2–3 students) to make a 3 x 3 Bingo chart. They can draw a grid in about 1 minute with squares being large enough for a *Word Brick* to fit inside:

Example:

2. Have players put one *Word Brick* in each square until the Bingo card is full, as shown below. Each word must appear only one time on the Bingo card.

the	cat	in
out	up	down
on	have	do

3. At random and without looking at the players' Bingo cards, call out words, one at a time. You can use the list of words that includes all of the *Word Bricks* on page 109. Mark each word as you call it out so you will remember that it has been used.

- Instruct players to remove each word when they hear it called.
- The first team to get a pattern of blank spaces such as a blank **row** on the Bingo card is the winner. They should shout, "**Bingo!**" Other patterns that can be set as the goal are a blank **column**, blanks at the **diagonal**, or blanks at the four **corners** of the card. These patterns are illustrated below:

out	up	down
on	have	do

	cat	in
	up	down
	have	do

	cat	in
out		down
on	have	

	cat	
out	up	down
	have	

- Continue calling out words. Players or teams can continue to call out "**Bingo!**" as they remove *Word Bricks* in the patterns above. As the game continues, more and more teams will call out "Bingo!"
- The round ends when the first team removes all their *Word Bricks* from the Bingo card. This team should shout, "**White Out!**"

Note: Creating a bigger 4 x 4 Bingo card such as the one below will extend the game.

Game 3: Word Category Bingo

Word Category Bingo is similar to Game 2: *Brick Bingo*, but it focuses on only one type of word. Instead of players filling their cards with their choice of words from the complete *Word Bricks* collection, players must select all of one type of word. For example, in *Preposition Bingo*, players find prepositions in the *Word Bricks* collection and put only prepositions on their Bingo cards. The choice of word category can make the game more or less challenging. Possible word categories include:

Basic Word Categories

- nouns
- verbs
- adjectives and adverbs
- articles and pronouns
- prepositions
- words of three letters or fewer

More Challenging Word Categories

- countable nouns
- non-countable nouns
- irregular plural nouns
- irregular past tense verbs
- intransitive verbs
- abstract words
- words that can be both nouns and verbs

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) work individually or in small groups (2–3 students) to make a 3 x 3 Bingo chart. (See more detailed directions in *Brick Bingo* step 1.)
2. Place piles of *Word Bricks* in several locations around the room so that a small group of players can look through the *Word Bricks* easily.
3. Tell players what word category to find and place on their Bingo cards. You may want to show some example bricks, particularly for the more challenging word categories.
4. After players/teams have found the correct number of *Word Bricks*, play Bingo following steps 2–7 in *Brick Bingo*.

cat	girl	school
mountain	water	mother
city	house	garden

to	for	under
from	at	with
under	in	down

Game 4: Describe and Guess

In *Describe and Guess*, players take turns selecting a *Word Brick* and then describing one of the words on the brick without saying the actual word. The goal is to get the remaining players to guess the word.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5 and give each group a handful of *Word Bricks*.
2. In their groups, players take turns choosing one *Word Brick*. Each player should not let anyone else see his or her brick.
3. Each player examines both sides of his or her *Word Brick* and chooses one of the words.
4. In turns, each player describes his or her word without saying the actual word. The other players guess until one guesses the word.
5. After all of the players' words have been guessed, repeat the process (steps 2–4) with a new *Word Brick*.
6. End the game after the specified amount of time.

“Player Talk” in *Describe and Guess*

The player picks a brick with the word *one* on one side and *the* on the other side. He or she chooses to describe *the*.

Describer: Okay, this is a small word. It's very common in English.

Guesser 1: Is it *and*?

Describer: No. We often use it before the word *sun*, *ocean*, and *weather*.

Guesser 2: *The*.

Describer: Right.

Game 5: Longest Sentence

Longest Sentence asks students to create the longest sentence possible using a set of 15–20 *Word Bricks* in only 3 minutes. Keeping the time limit short makes for a fast-paced, fun atmosphere as teams compete to make the longest sentence.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in pairs or small groups and give each team 15–20 *Word Bricks*. Each team should have the same number of *Word Bricks*, but they can have different bricks.
2. Tell the teams that they have 3 minutes to create one complete sentence, and the team with the longest sentence will win the round. (If teams become frustrated, or if most teams have not completed a sentence in the time limit, they can be given more time to complete their sentence.)
3. After 3 minutes, have each group share their sentences.
4. When you and the teams verify that a team has made a correct sentence, one player from that team should write the sentence on the board. Each team that comes up with a correct sentence should complete this step.
5. Once all of the correct sentences are written on the board, have all teams count the words in each sentence and determine which team created the longest sentence. This team wins the game.



Note: Teachers can make the activity easier by making sure that each group has a “Wild Card.” Giving each group two “Wild Cards” will produce even longer sentences.

Optional: To play multiple rounds of *Longest Sentence*, ask each group to choose a name for their team and make a column for each team on the board with their team name written at the top. Proceed with steps 2–5, but award the team with the longest sentence one point and record it under their team name on the board. Give each group a new set of *Word Bricks* and repeat the game. The game can be repeated as many times as you wish. At the end, the team with the most points wins.

Game 6: Part of Speech

In *Part of Speech*, players follow the general rules for *Sentence Race*. However, the teacher gives the players a specific pattern to use, and their sentences must follow this pattern. This activity is great for lower proficiency level students, as it provides scaffolding to help students generate a correct sentence. Groups should be given quite a few *Word Bricks* to ensure that they have examples of each type of word required by the pattern. Alternatively, teachers can make sure each group receives appropriate *Word Bricks*.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in groups of 3–5, and ask each of the groups to choose a name for their team.
2. Make a column for each team on the board and write the teams' names at the top. Tell players that they will receive points for each *Word Brick* that they use in a complete sentence. Their points will be recorded on the board.
3. Give each team a handful of *Word Bricks*. It is not necessary that teams receive exactly the same number or any particular combination of *Word Bricks*, but make sure that each team has at least one “Wild Card” and at least one -s brick.
4. Tell players the pattern that you would like them to follow. For example, one pattern could be:

article — noun — verb — plural noun

Instruct students to use their *Word Bricks* to make sentences that fit the given pattern. Remind students that they will likely need their -s brick.

5. Follow steps 4–8 for *Sentence Race* (page 95), but encourage wild and silly sentences. Teams can build odd but grammatical sentences, such as “The cat eats fish.” and “The men love trees.”



Game 7: Reading Race

Reading Race is a fast-paced game that gives students practice reading the words on *Word Bricks* out loud. The goal is to see how many *Word Bricks* each team can read out loud in 1 minute. Thus, *Reading Race* is a great game for improving sight recognition and pronunciation of English words.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in pairs or small groups, and give each team as many *Word Bricks* as possible (divide the entire collection of *Word Bricks* evenly among all the pairs or groups).
2. Tell players that they will have 1 minute to read the words on as many *Word Bricks* as possible. In their teams, players should take turns picking up a *Word Brick* and reading both words on it as fast as possible.
3. When you start the timer, Player 1 picks up a brick, reads the words on it, and places the brick in a “read” pile.
4. Then Player 2 does the same as soon as Player 1 finishes, and so on.
5. At the end of 1 minute, players count how many words they have read aloud and record their totals.
6. If teams exhaust all their *Word Bricks* before 1 minute is up, they should begin again using the same pile of bricks.
7. You may have the teams play again with the same or different *Word Bricks* and try to break their previous record.

Optional: Have the same teams play a few days later. Players can try to improve their totals again and again.

Game 8: Sentence Boundaries

In *Sentence Boundaries*, the teacher gives the players five specific requirements for their sentences. Each round of the game requires the players to create sentences that follow different patterns. The first team to complete all five patterns (in order) and earn 5 points wins the game. Possible patterns include:

- 1 sentence with exactly 5 words
- 1 sentence with exactly 8 words
- 1 sentence with exactly 6 words AND 1 sentence with exactly 7 words
- 1 sentence with 2 verbs
- 1 sentence with 1 adjective and 1 adverb
- 2 sentences with 2 different verbs

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in pairs or small groups, and ask each of the groups to choose a name for their team. Give each group an approximately equal number of *Word Bricks*.
2. Make a column for each team on the board and write the teams' names at the top. Make a list on the board that tells the requirements for each round of the race. You should have five requirements. (See above for ideas.)
3. Tell players that the game is a race and that the teams will need to create grammatically correct sentences that exactly follow the requirements that are listed on the board. Go through each of the requirements, and explain that the teams must complete sentences in the order they are listed on the board.
4. Begin the game, and ask players to call you when they believe they have a correct sentence. Evaluate the grammatical correctness of the sentence. If the sentence is correct and matches the pattern for that round, give the team one point and record it underneath their name on the board. If the sentence is not correct, have the team continue working on the sentence.
5. The first team to create sentences to match each of the patterns and earn 5 points is the winner.

Game 9: Sentence Challenge

Like *Longest Sentence*, players in a game of *Sentence Challenge* work in teams to create the longest sentence possible out of their *Word Bricks* without any help from the teacher. Then, the opposing teams are responsible for ‘challenging’ a sentence if they believe there is an error in a team’s sentence. Points are awarded to teams that appropriately challenge incorrect sentences and to teams that create their own correct sentences.

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in pairs or small groups, and give each group about 20 *Word Bricks*. Make sure to include one “Wild Card” and one -s brick.
2. Tell the players that they have 3 minutes to create the longest correct sentence possible with their *Word Bricks*.
3. Begin the game. Do not help or correct the players.
4. After the time is up, have each team write their sentence on the board.
5. Give teams a chance to evaluate each sentence for correctness.
6. Any other team may ‘challenge’ a sentence by raising a hand. If they think the sentence is incorrect, they can go to the board and make a correction. The challenging team may not change the meaning of a sentence or rewrite it—only make a correction.
7. Award points to each team in the following ways:

No challenge: If no other team challenges a sentence, then the team that created it receives one point for each brick in the sentence, including the special bricks.

Challenged sentence that was correct: The challenging team loses 3 points, and the original team earns one point for each brick in the sentence.

Challenged sentence (with correction): If another team challenges a sentence and is able to correct the sentence, then the challenging team receives one point for each brick in that sentence.

Challenged sentence (not corrected): If a sentence is challenged, but the challenging team is unable to correct the sentence, then the challenging team loses 3 points. Another team may attempt to correct the sentence for the points. If no team is able to correct the sentence, then the original team receives the points for the sentence but must subtract 3 points for the errors.

8. To play more than one round, give each team a new set of 20 *Word Bricks* and repeat steps 3–7.
9. After the desired number of rounds, the team with the most points is the winner.

Game 10: Sorting Race

With just a few extra minutes in class, teachers can lead any number of *Sorting Races* using *Word Bricks*. In a *Sorting Race*, players race to find all words of a certain type in a set of *Word Bricks*. The choice of word category can make the game more or less challenging. Possible word categories include:

Basic Word Categories

- nouns
- verbs
- adjectives and adverbs
- articles and pronouns
- prepositions
- words of three letters or fewer

More Challenging Word Categories

- countable nouns
- non-countable nouns
- irregular plural nouns
- irregular past tense verbs
- intransitive verbs
- abstract words
- words that can be both nouns and verbs

Instructions

1. Have students (the players) sit in pairs or small groups, and give each team about 50 *Word Bricks*.
2. Tell the teams that they will have 2 minutes to find as many words in their set of *Word Bricks* that are in the selected category. (The time limit can be adjusted for larger sets of *Word Bricks* or for the more challenging word categories.)
3. Call out the word category and immediately start the timer. Alternatively, the teacher may need to give some examples of the word category to help players know what to look for.
4. At the end of 2 minutes, have each team call out how many *Word Bricks* they found in their set of *Word Bricks*.
5. To play more than one round, call out a new category and repeat steps 3–4.



DIY! (DO-IT-YOURSELF)

Activate: *Games for Learning American English* comes with 140 double-sided *Word Bricks* for a total of 280 words. (See page 109.) To maintain the collection of bricks, teachers should carefully collect the bricks after each use so that they can be used in future activities. However, it is easy to add to the collection. *Word Bricks* can be created to include:

- words about everyday events or activities that students may want to discuss
- new vocabulary items from textbooks or other course materials
- new words that come up in class discussions
- function words that are needed to create certain grammatical structures, like *than* for comparisons, *there* for constructions like “*There are two books.*,” and so on.

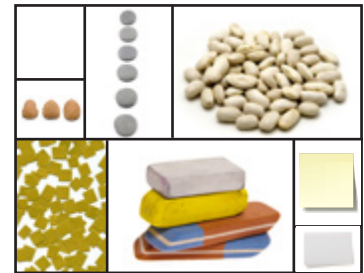
Teachers may want to keep a small section of the board available for vocabulary that comes up in discussions or lessons and use this list when adding to the *Word Bricks* collection. It is important to add many function words to the collection as well so that students will have enough of these ‘small’ words to connect the vocabulary words into complete sentences. For example, teachers will likely need to add additional copies of these functions words as the collection grows:

- articles and quantity words (*a/an, the, this, these, that, those, some, many, few, etc.*)
- auxiliary verbs that are used to form complex verb phrases (e.g., all forms of *be, have, and do*)
- negative particles (e.g., *not, no*)
- modal verbs (e.g., *can, could, may, might, will, would, should, etc.*)
- prepositions (e.g., *in, on, with, for, from, by, against, along, etc.*)
- clause markers (e.g., *to, that, because, since, when, etc.*)

As you add to your collection, it is a good idea to keep a list of all of the words that are added to the class’s collection of *Word Bricks*, especially for games like *Brick Bingo* and *Word Category Bingo*.

MATERIALS

All *Word Bricks* do not need to be made of the same materials. They do not even need to look like bricks. Whatever material *Word Bricks* are made from, their name reflects their use for building—which is what students do with *Word Bricks*. Teachers can use anything that can be written on. Pieces of paper will work, but thicker objects will be easier to handle and more fun to build sentences with. Some materials that can be used include the following: cardboard cut from boxes, flat stones, large uncooked beans, rectangular erasers, smooth pieces of wood, shells from the seashore, walnut shells, pumpkin seeds, or plastic building blocks. Plastic building blocks (pictured in the top left corner) have four smooth sides that can be written on. A **permanent marker** can be used to write the words.



Some nouns can be represented through the use of small images or objects. A toy dog can represent the word *dog*, for example. In the picture on the right, a toy hippo is used in the sentence, “The hippo talks to no fish.”



“Wild Cards” are very important. Teachers may want to designate some particular small object as the “Wild Card,” such as a piece of clay, a coin, or a paper clip.



List of Word Bricks Included with Activate: Games for Learning American English

To Be	Irregular Verbs	Nouns	Pronoun Forms	Time and Place Adverbials	Adjectives
is	run	cat	I	now	hot
am	ran	dog	you	then	cold
be	buy	food	he	tonight	new
are	bought	drink	she	today	old
was	eat	mountain	it	yesterday	fun
were	ate	valley	its	tomorrow	boring
been	know	country	we	there	long
	knew	city	they	here	short
Regular Verbs	drink	sea	us	back	good
play	drank	river	him	what	bad
work	have	student	her	where	small
live	has	teacher	them	when	big
die	had	English	me	who	slow
like	come	language	my		fast
dislike	came	room	your	Numbers	blue
look	go	house	our	one	green
show	went	water	their	two	happy
ask	make	thing			sad
answer	made	something	Prepositions		
	take	girl	of	Determiners	Special
Do, Modals, Auxiliaries	took	boy	to	the	wild card
do	get	school	in	a/an	-ed
did	got	class	for	this	-ing
can	think	building	on	that	-ly
could	thought	garden	at	many	-s
would	write	mother	from	some	-es
will	wrote	father	by	more	
may	say	son	up	any	
might	said	daughter	down	each	
don't	see	car	out	every	
didn't	saw	bus	over	no	
doesn't	wake		under	not	
does	woke	Conjunctions	with	these	
would	sleep	and	without	those	
should	slept	or			
		but			
		if			
		as			
		like			
		so			
		because			





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