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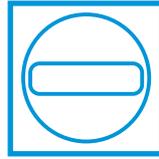
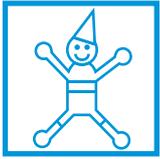
English for 2 - 7-year-olds

EASY-TO-PLAY CLASSROOM GAMES

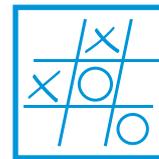
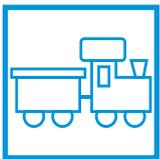
Handout for teachers

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EASY-TO-PLAY CLASSROOM GAMES – when, how and why?



We sincerely hope that every lesson you ever give will go exactly as planned. You won't have to make adjustments either for the mood your group is currently in, or for the timing you planned. But to be honest, this doesn't sound like a very realistic scenario.



Plan for the unplanned

Another time you may find the list useful is when you discover that the activities you had planned (and were quite proud of and excited about) are not exactly making a splash. Make no mistake: **last week's favourite** may well turn out to be a **no-go a few days later**. This is basically what working with kids looks like.

So, assuming your teaching experiences will be exactly the same as virtually everyone else's, it is crucial for you to be prepared to come up with ideas, variations and modifications which will allow for any unforeseen circumstances you may face. In such situations, no-prep games are a teacher's best friend, and it's good to keep a list handy to avoid chaos and confusion in class.

Why games?

"Why are games so important anyway?", you may ask. The answer is that games mean **fun**, and if you are having fun while surrounded by English, you trick your brain into thinking that it is in fact English that makes you so happy. Hence – good correlations, inner motivation, rapid language development.

Do remember about the fun part. People are different, and a game that works with one group may well bore another. **Don't push** – if it's obviously not working, change. It's not failure, it's **adaptability**.

Pay attention to details

When introducing a game in your classroom you need to remember the following things:

- Does the game comply with the 3F rule? Is it **fast**, **fat** (teaching a lot of language) and **fun**?
- Does it give the children the **opportunity to speak**?
- Does it handle the **issue of competition** in a way that's right for this specific group? Young children can be very sensitive about losing, so make sure they feel ok – sometimes it's best to have a class vs. Eddie competition, and yes, Eddie had better lose.
- Is **everyone involved**? Are those waiting for their turn not bored? If the wait is long, consider playing in groups.

But do not despair. All this can be taken care of, providing you are ready to be a bit flexible, and are equipped with some tried and tested ideas for games. Keep in mind that the longer you teach and the better you know your group, the easier it becomes to improvise and the less stress it costs you. Here's a list of no-prep games you can use anytime, anywhere.

GAMES WHICH DON'T REQUIRE ANY PROPS



JUMP ONCE IF (ages 2 and up)

A favourite with all the kids who love to move and always seem to be bursting with energy. Stand in a circle and **say a sentence**. It can be virtually anything, from well-known facts (*A cucumber is green*) to opinions (*I don't like chocolate*) and personal information (*I have got a brother*).

Explain to the children that they must listen carefully, and **jump once if they think the sentence is true**, or they agree with it, and **three times if the opposite is the case**. Encourage students to take over; you can first ask volunteers to say the sentences, but aim at reaching a point where **all** the children participate and one by one take turns speaking. When they are confident, divide them into groups and assign one "teacher" in each of them, so that more children speak at the same time.



GUESS THE QUESTION (ages 5 and up)

One group **gives an answer**, and another has to **come up with a question** to match it. Sometimes it's possible to make more questions than one, for example if the answer is *It's green*, you can ask *What's your favourite colour?*, *What colour is a frog?*, *What colour is Ben's T-shirt?* etc. With confident or older groups, **you can play in pairs**, so everybody is involved all the time.



SONGS WITH A TWIST (ages 5 and up)

Everybody reaches a point where singing a song yet again simply won't do. To breathe new life into an old tune, try one of these variations.

Choose a song where **one of the words is repeated a few times**. Perform the song, and any time you get to the word, **put your finger on your mouth instead of singing it**. The game boosts concentration in the group.

Instead of not singing, **you can introduce a gesture**, for example a clap, instead of the word. The fun begins when you have **two or three words in a song** that you substitute with different gestures. But take your time getting there, as it might be too confusing for the children to start from this point right away.



BLACK WORD (ages 4 and up)

To play this game you need a ball or a soft toy, or something you can safely **throw around**. Each player in turn throws it to another player, calling out a word or a sentence. But there is one **"forbidden"** word, on hearing which the player **must not catch the ball**. To raise the bar, you may agree on a **bigger number of black words**, for example: call out animal names, but don't catch when you hear *lion, zebra or elephant*.



BACKWORDING (ages 5 and up)

This game works for **vocabulary sets such as months, days of the week, numbers, seasons** etc. The task is to **recite the set from the end to the beginning**, engaging the brain and producing a lot of laughter. To add to the fun, set a timer or ask the groups to compete against each other, timing their attempts.



NO LETTER -E (ages 6 and up)

A more advanced game, in which the children **find words with similar sounds**. You can set the task to come up with words **where you don't hear – or hear - a specific sound**. For example, ask them for words where they hear /ʊ/ and elicit *push, pull, foot, book* etc.



SEQUENCING (ages 4-5 and up)

A game to boost concentration and improve memory, which is also a nice way to **drill virtually anything**. The trick is to **start with a short sentence** which the next person repeats, **adding a new element**, and then another person does the same, making the sentence even longer. Depending on the level of the group and the age of the children, you can either focus on **adding elements of the same kind**, e.g. nouns or verbs:

Player 1: I have got a doll.

Player 2: I have got a doll and some blocks.

Player 3: I have got a doll, some blocks and a train.

Etc.

or

Player 1: I kick a ball.

Player 2: I kick a ball and feed the doll.

Player 3: I kick a ball, feed the doll and swim.

Etc.

or, with advanced classes, you can opt for adding **any** element to make the sentence longer, but still logical.

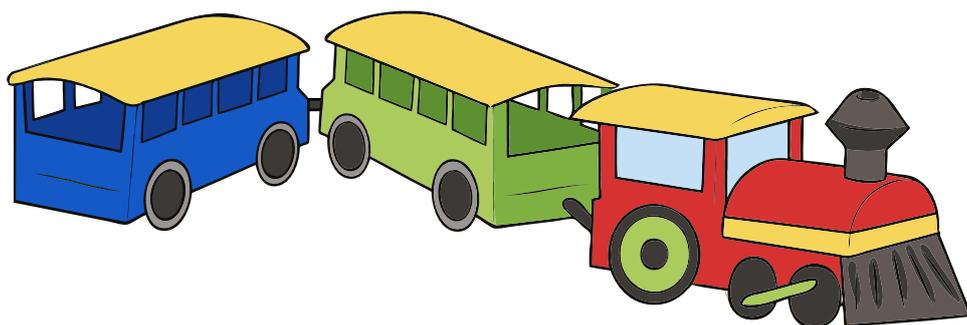
Player 1: I have breakfast.

Player 2: I have breakfast and go to school.

Player 3: I have breakfast in the kitchen and go to school.

Etc.

The game goes on as long as the players can remember the sequence. Optionally, a person who makes a mistake drops out and you play to the last man standing. But this option often excludes weaker students from the possibility of practising, and favours the stronger ones.



GAMES WITH FLASHCARDS AND WORD CARDS



SLAM (ages 3 and up)

Put **flashcards or word cards on the floor** and make the children sit down in a circle around them. Call out a word and explain that their task is to **slam the right card as quickly as possible**. The winner is the person whose hand touches the card first. Make sure you tell the kids not to slam too hard, so that they don't hurt each other.

This game **can be played in groups of three**, where one person is "the teacher" and calls out the words, and the other two compete. They should take turns at being the teacher.



ACTIVE BINGO (ages 3 and up)

Put your students into two groups, standing opposite one another, and **give each player a card with a picture or word**. Then, **call out the words in random order**. Alternatively, put the second copy of the cards in a box and draw them. The player who is holding the card which is being called out, sits down. **The first group sitting is the winner**.

If possible, let the students take over the role of the teacher (this will work especially well if you have an odd number of students, and you want to be fair with the team sizes).



WORDS ON THE BOARD (ages 5 and up)

Words, or pictures, for that matter, depending on what groups you are working with. The trick is simple: you need **a surface on which you can write, draw or stick words or flashcards** (like the ones you will find in Teddy Eddie's Box). Make sure there are plenty - to raise the difficulty level a bit. Then, you put the children into **two groups, standing in two lines**, one next to the other. When you call out a word, the two kids in front should run up to the board and try to be **the first one to touch the right word or card**. The fastest group gets a point, the two children **go to the end of the line**, and you repeat the exercise with the new two in front. In time, you can give up the role of teacher and ask one of the children to take over instead.



Warning! Make sure children are wearing shoes or non-slip socks when running on slippery floor.



THROW THE BALL

(ages 2 to 7)

Don't be put off by the name of the game – if you don't have an actual ball, a paper one (crumpled up paper) will do. Make sure whatever you are throwing around is soft enough not to damage anything or anybody. If possible, let the students take over the role of the teacher (this will work especially well if you have an odd number of students, and you want to be fair with the team sizes).

There are two ways of playing this game. The first one is easier: you **put up different picture or word cards**, and each player **takes turns throwing the ball** at them. The task is to name the picture or read the word the ball hits.

The second option is slightly harder, and requires one of the players to call out a card, and the other has to throw a ball and hit it.

Either way, the children will have tons of fun.

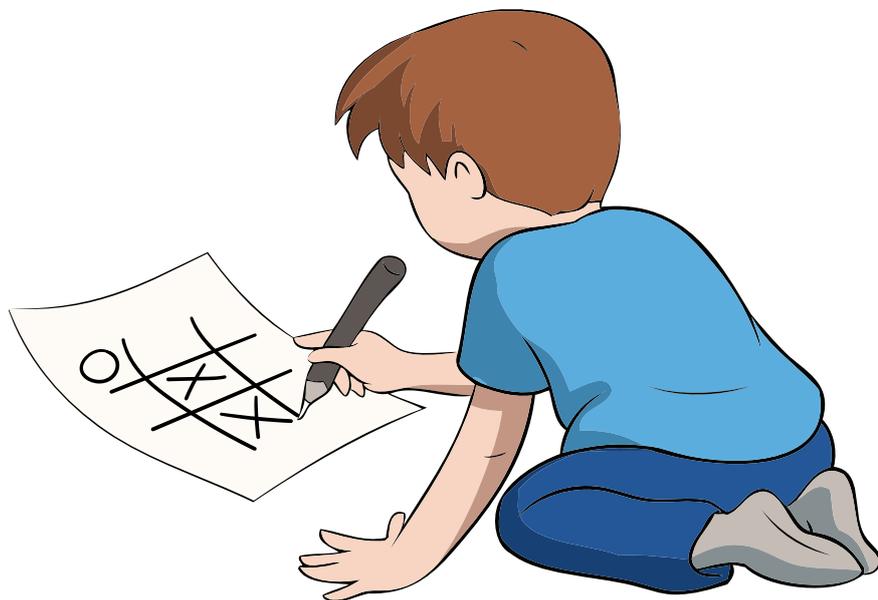


NOUGHTS AND CROSSES

(ages from 4-5 up)

The board for noughts and crosses is a **grid of nine squares**, arranged three by three. The task is to win **three neighbouring squares**, horizontally, vertically or diagonally, and **mark them with a nought (O) or a cross (X)** depending on which team you are in.

Now, the squares of the grid can be flashcards to call out, word cards or sentences to read, or even tasks to carry out (from Jump on one leg to the door to Sing Spider on the floor). Teams take turns to try and do what's required, and if they are successful, they mark the square with their symbol (if you don't have O and X cut-outs, use buttons for one team and paperclips for the other – any variations allowed). The first team to have three in a row wins.





Need some advice?

Contact us and we will do our best to help you!

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