

A Game for Everyone

With the holiday season approaching, you are probably thinking, “Is there something new I haven’t tried yet? Perhaps something I can use for an end-of-the-year event?” Check out these games for some fresh ideas, and some interesting variations of familiar ones.

Got a Minute? What can your students do in a minute? This game is good for helping students focus on a particular topic. All you need is a timer. As very little explanation is needed, this game can be started and stopped very quickly. It is good for both warm-ups and sum-ups. It can be adjusted to any size or level of class, and you can work out your own scoring system, if desired. To play, ask the students to do what the question asks. Keep a record of how many times the student(s) performed the action (said the required words) in one minute. Play as many rounds or versions as you have time for. It is very intense, but lots of fun. Here are some suggested questions:

1. How high can you count? (or How many times can you count to ten? Twenty?)
2. How many times can you say the alphabet?
3. How many three-letter words can you write?
4. How many word cards can you read?
5. How many (vocabulary group-animals, colors, etc.) can you name?
6. How many people can you introduce to the teacher?
7. How many times can you say a tongue twister?
8. How many words can you write or say beginning with “C” (or any other letter)?

Jumbo Tic Tac Toe with Prepositions Prepositions are sometimes difficult to teach to children. They can learn the prepositions, such as “in”, “on”, “under”, etc., quite easily, but when it comes to producing a sentence by looking at real objects in the classroom, they freeze up. *Yuco Kikuchi* has put this learning process into three steps:

- 1) Learn the prepositions; 2) Say the preposition and the place, e.g., “on the table”, “in the box”, “behind the house”; 3) Make a complete sentence, e.g., “The cat is in the box”. She uses this game to practice the second step.

Materials needed: Preposition grid (see below for example), colored pencils or markers

Time: 10-15 minutes

Age: Ten years or over


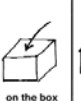
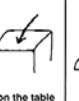

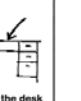

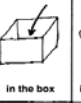
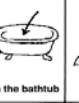



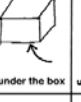
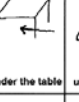
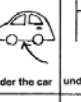


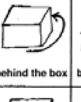
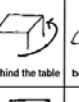
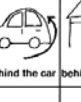

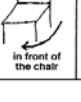
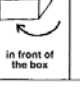
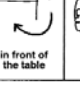
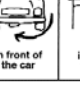

How to play: Divide students into groups of two or four. Have each student (or team) choose a different color to mark the grid with. The first player (team) chooses a square and says the phrase written there, e.g., “on the chair”, and then marks it with either an “X” or an “O” — like a typical tic-tac-toe game. The next player continues in the same way. Play continues until all the squares have been spoken for.

Scoring: Three squares in a row with the same color earn one point; four squares in a row earn two points. The student/team with the most points wins.

Variations:

- 1) Draw the grid on the board and play in teams.
- 2) Use colored chips instead of pencils. That way you can use the sheet over again. (*Ohajiki* or poker chips can be found at the 100-yen shop).
- 3) Use a 3 X 3 version to introduce the game initially.

Jumbo TicTacToe: Prepositions

 on the chair	 on the box	 on the table	 on the car	 on the desk
 in the basket	 in the box	 in the bathtub	 in the car	 in the sink
 under the chair	 under the box	 under the table	 under the car	 under the desk
 behind the chair	 behind the box	 behind the table	 behind the car	 behind the desk
 in front of the chair	 in front of the box	 in front of the table	 in front of the car	 in front of the desk

Monster Bingo Before you pass this off as just “another bingo game”, you **MUST** give it a try. Your students will come alive like you have never seen them.

Chris Hunt tells us how to play this exciting version:

This is a team bingo game, and it is played in two stages. It works best if you have a sucker ball (or rubber dart gun) — something that can stick to a whiteboard. Here’s how it works:

1. Each player receives a blank bingo grid 3 x 3 or 4 x 4.
2. As you dictate words, students fill out their grids. Have students help each other with the dictation. Write the word on the board after at least one person has written it successfully. If time is an issue the teacher can prepare bingo sheets full of words in advance.
3. Write the words all over the white board, leaving some space for a monster.
4. Circle the words. They are targets the students will try to hit with the sucker ball.
5. Draw half a monster on the whiteboard.
6. The aim is to erase the monster off the board, or at least stop it from being completed.
7. In turn each player uses a sucker ball and aims at a word from a predetermined spot or from their seat. (*If a sucker ball is unavailable, try using a large, thin, flexible magnet, or a sponge ball, which can leave a mark on the board — Games ed.*)
8. If the player hits a word (a target), all players cross off the word on their bingo sheets. Erase the word from the board.
9. If the player misses a word, draw an additional body part on the monster.
10. When a player gets a bingo they get a free shot at the monster. Erase any part of the monster that is hit.
11. Play until the monster is cleaned off the board or completed. Alternatively, play to a time limit.

Variation: Draw several small

monsters on the board. When a player misses a word draw one more monster. Play to a time limit. Can the players clean the board of monsters?

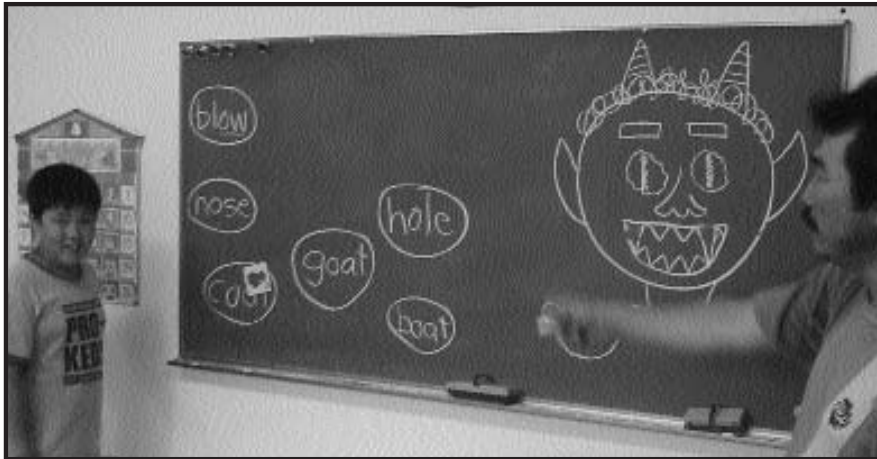
For younger classes, *Will Percy* suggests building up to the game as

follows:

- a. First, introduce the targets — numbers or letters may work better than words.
- b. In the next class introduce the monster.

c. Finally, introduce the bingo aspect.

Holiday Twist: For games using pictures or flashcards, substitute seasonal words and pictures, and reward the students with a small present representative of that season or holiday. Games that are easy to adjust to various holidays or events include “Bingo”, “Pin the Tail on the Donkey” (For example, this can be changed to “Pin the Star on the Christmas Tree”. It doesn’t require much language, but it is a lot of fun), “Fruit Basket”, memory games (for example, “Concentration”), “Go Fish”, “Pictionary” (children draw pictures on the board and their teammates try to guess what they are and say the names in English), and “Treasure Hunt”.



Good shot Yohei!

Co-operative Corner

By Chris Hunt

Co-operation occurs at many levels and in different ways. It even occurs with competitive team games and this is one argument sometimes given for using them. Competition can be retained without sacrificing the merits of co-operation.

But why use competition? The space is lacking to look at all the issues here, but probably the strongest argument is that of focus. If two teams desire to win they will focus on the task at hand. The more focus there is, the more language gains are likely to be made.

Focus is a key issue and can be difficult to acquire especially in a democratic classroom, but focus does not require competition. The more competition, the more aggression and the more negative pressure. This is not conducive to risk-taking and conscious language acquisition involves taking risks. A warm nurturing environment is the most beneficial one for taking risks and competition does not help to achieve this. Harmony and stimulation are a better way.

Harmony occurs through team

building and class building. In a small class the team is the class. In a larger class there are more language gains to be had by dividing children into teams. Four is the optimum number, as a team of four can also divide into pairs for pairwork.

A simple team building game is **The Clapping Game**. One member of the team becomes the “seeker” and leaves the room. The other members of the team then choose an object somewhere in the room for the seeker to touch. Upon the seeker’s return, the team guides the seeker by clapping. The closer the seeker, the louder the clapping. The team can high-five each other when successful. Give every team member a chance to be a seeker.

Notice that no language is involved in this game. Building a warm friendly atmosphere is a legitimate target in its own right. Direct language can come later. Of course, it is possible to use the words, “hot” and “cold (which is what I used as a child), or even phrases such as “You’re getting closer!” and “You’re getting further away!” But remember the focus is

team building, rather than language.

Notice also that the teams need not race each other but instead can concentrate on creating goals for individual teammates.

A simple class building game is **Line Up**. The class is given a command to line up according to some criteria, for instance alphabetical name order, or birthday. They do this against the clock. The concept should be easy for the group to understand. If necessary, use flashcards. For example, give each child an animal flashcard and ask the children to line up according to the size of the animal.

Again this activity may or may not involve language but the idea is to get the group working as a whole. A positive supportive atmosphere brings considerable rewards and is worth pursuing in its own right.

For more ideas from Chris visit www.wisecat.com. Chris also edits and contributes to “Teachers Learning with Children” the newsletter of the TCSIG (JALT Teaching Children Special Interest Group).