

## Activity One: Vocabulary Games

by Derek Mackrell, Thomson Learning

**Level:** Low-intermediate and above

**Aim:** Using a vocabulary box for warm-ups and fillers.

**Time:** Approx. 30 minutes.

### Procedure

To make sure vocabulary that comes up throughout the lesson gets recycled, try using a vocabulary box. Get a shoebox and a pile of small pieces of paper or card. At the end of each lesson nominate a student to write the new vocabulary (either words or phrases) on the cards—one item per card—and put them in the box. Leave the box at the back of the room or in your desk and you have instant material whenever you need a quick activity. After a few weeks as the number of cards in the box grows you can start

taking out some of the ones which have been learned. Two favourite activities using the vocab box are:

### Charades

A student pulls a card from the box and mimes the item for the other students, who have to guess it. To make it easier for them, teach them how to break a word into syllables ('carpet' can be done as 'car' and 'pet')

### Hot Seat

Divide class into two teams. Put two seats at the front of the class with their backs to the board. One member of each team comes to the front of the board and sits on a chair. Draw a card from the box and write the item on the board behind

the two on the chairs (where they can't see it). Team members call out clues for the items on the board—without using any of the words on the board—and the competitors in the chair guess what it is. First to guess gets a point, the round is over, and two new competitors come to the front. Repeat. If any team member uses any of the words on the board when providing clues, that team gets no points for the round. To make it more challenging write next to the word on the board a list of other words they can't say (e.g. for 'bedroom', besides 'bed' and 'room', you might write 'sleep' and 'pillow').

## Activity Two: Southampton

by Brian Nevin, Obirin University

**Level:** Any

**Aim:** Vocabulary review

**Time:** Approx. 30 minutes.

### Procedure

1. Write the word "Southampton" on the board in

large letters

2. Explain to the class that they're going to play a game using only the letters in this word.

3. Divide class into pairs/teams. Each group has a set amount of time (about ten minutes) to make

words from the master word. They can only use each letter once, so "pot" is okay, "spots" is not (only one "s"). NB: Give them an example first.

4. While Ss are making words, monitor and check spelling. NB: You could give a prize (eg: no homework!) for a team that can get a seven-letter word, ("shampoo").

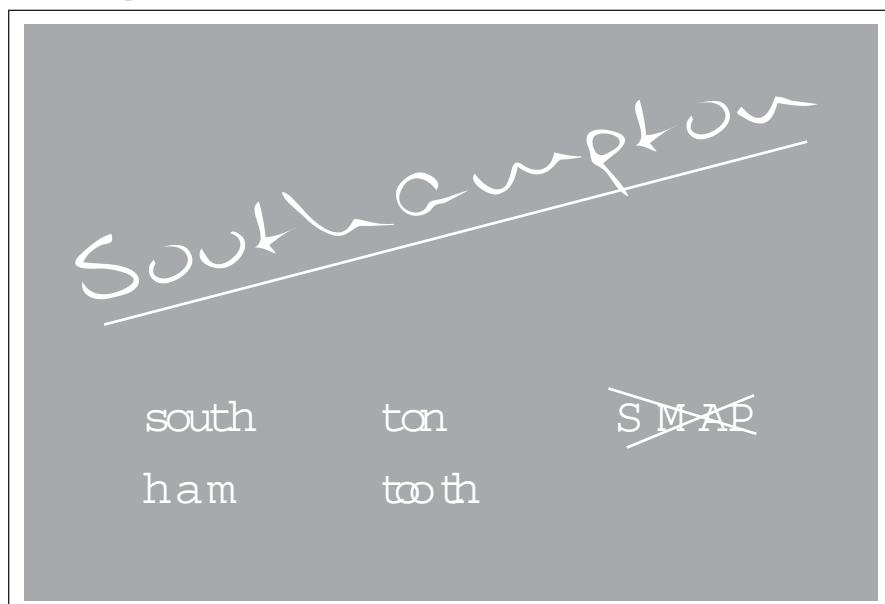
### Variations

Here are a couple of ways to make the game more challenging:

1. Stipulate the first, last or an included letter.
2. Stipulate word class (nouns only, verbs only).

### Follow-Up

For homework, or at another time, have the Ss do the same thing but with the word "Carpet", which I have been reliably informed contains about 50 words.



## Activity Three: Distractions

by Maurice Jamall

**Level:** Any

**Aim:** Question-form practice, short answers and fluency work

**Time:** Approx. 20 minutes

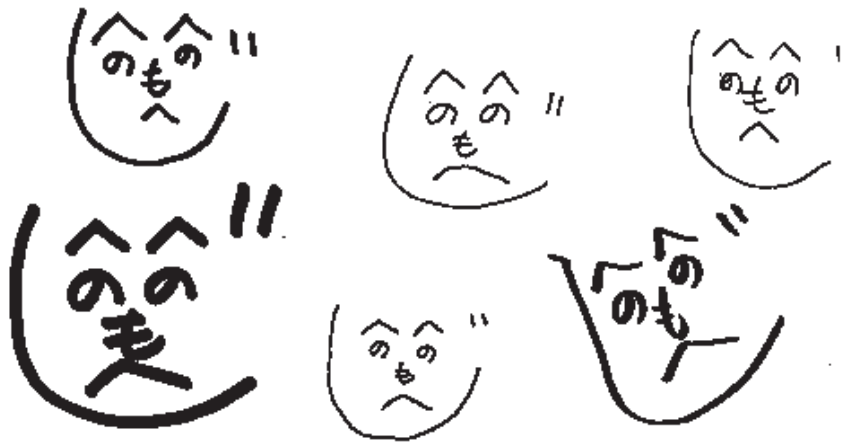
This activity is called “Distractions”, and is a team game. Play this with the whole class or, for very large classes, subdivide so that Ss are playing in at least a group of four, (two teams of two people each). Adapt procedure as necessary.

### Procedure

1. Divide the board into two. Team A member comes up to the board and starts drawing *henohenomoheji*. for one minute. This is a well-known kids’ doodle; every Japanese knows how to do this so don’t worry!

2. Team B wants him/her to get as few as possible done and so must distract the person from drawing. This is done by asking questions. When asked a question, the student must stop drawing and answer. When s/he’s answered, s/he can go back to drawing.

3. After a minute, roles switch:



Team B member comes to the board and draws. Team A members do the distracting.

4. When everyone has had a turn at the chalkface the game is over. The team with the most faces is the winner.

### Variations

- For very low-level groups, any question is allowed.
- Use the game to review lexical sets (eg: questions only about food, sports, house and home and so on).
- Limit the tenses that can be

used: questions only in the past form, continuous form and so on. (With a very advanced group, I once allowed them to only ask questions in the third conditional). Slightly easier, have students ask about the past, present or future only.

NB: In order for the game to work well, you need to be very strict about timing. One minute only. If the student hasn’t finished a face, as is usually the case, s/he stops there!!

## Activity Four: Find The Lie

by Scott Fernance, Obirin University

**Level:** Low-intermediate and above

**Aim:** Review narrative and past tense question form(s)

**Time:** Approx. 30 minutes

The aim of this activity is to have Ss talk about a recent day and include a lie. Partner/Other Ss have to guess/find out what the lie is.

### Procedure

1. Tell class what you did on a certain day (about 20 things but include one piece of false information. eg: On Sunday I got up, had cereal for breakfast, had a coffee, went to Harajuku for the day and so on. NB: for weaker Ss, board the verbs up as they come along.

3. Ss listen/take notes. Weaker

Ss can write in Japanese as the information retrieval is important. Ss check their notes with a partner and if there’s anything missing, they can ask you questions.

4. Write: “Did you really.....?” on the board. Tell Ss that now they have to find a lie. NB: For weaker Ss, go through the verbs on the board checking their present tense forms.

5. Ss ask you questions (randomly, not in chronological order). The student who finds the lie first, is the winner.

6. Put Ss in pairs. Ss now do the same thing, (tell their partner about a recent day, find the lie). The stu-

dent who finds the lie with the fewer number of questions is the winner.

### Variation

As a low-intermediate-and-above icebreaker, you could do this:

1. Write four things on the board about yourself, (eg: I taught English in Nepal, My wife is Chinese, I love tennis, I was born on a ship).

2. Ss ask you questions about the statements (eg: How long did you live there? Who are the current Wimbledon champions? etc.).

3. After a few minutes have them decide (in pairs) which are true, which are false. Then give them the answers.

4. Ss then do the same in pairs.