

About Using Games in Language Teaching

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Language learning is hard work. Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work. Games also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners *want* to take part and in order to do so must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information. What is a game? Let's take a look at a definition from Huizinda: "a game is a voluntary activity performed within a pre-determined time frame and a specific space, following a set of consented rules (yet mandatory), with a clear objective and a feeling of tension and joy" [1].

Games have some specific features and they can be adapted to different moments in the class. In other words, you don't need to limit yourself to looking for specific popular games; you can also create your own games. You can do it by adding time frames, your own rules, clear objectives, tension and joy to the stages of your class. Games can be used at all stages of the lesson. But the teacher must be sure that games provided are suitable for this or that case. Before playing a game a teacher should pay attention to the topic learned, proficiency level, number of students and timing. Time limits are very important because they are what make the game interesting or boring.

Games are a great opportunity for learners to practice language and they can be associated with real life. There are some advantages of using games:

1. games create contexts in which the language is meaningful and useful;
2. playing games learners see language learning as fun but not a problem;
3. games naturally add motivation and challenge to classes;
4. games are a welcome break from routine;
5. games can more easily provide language practice;
6. games provide language practice in the various skills- speaking, writing, listening and reading.

Games are such powerful teaching tools that they might have more than language aims; they can be used to help students develop not only as learners but also human beings. If games are used to promote opportunities for collective learning and development as citizens, then you should try cooperative games. They can be used not only to develop language; they also can be used to achieve other educational goals such as communication, collaboration and empathy because they

- *are fun for everyone;
- * give all the players a sense of achievement;
- * teach how to accept differences;
- * help to share and trust
- * develop self-esteem.

It should always be taken into consideration that games are only useful if they practise using English in a constructive way and the students are actively listening to, recalling, or speaking the target language. With this in mind, we've picked a selection of games which require little preparation on the part of the teacher, but are intensive grammar, speaking and listening games.

Catch! (8-12 students) – one of the most popular and widely spread games: a ball encourages spontaneity and is a useful tool for turning almost any grammatical structure into a game. This game is best played with a group of about 8-12 students, and aims to speed up the response of the student, encouraging fluency in spoken English. The teacher can stand in the centre or join the students within the circle.

T: What are you doing tomorrow? (Teacher throws the ball to random student)

St: I'm going to work (throws ball back to teacher)

If the student hesitates for more than 5 seconds, he must then take the place of the teacher. Throwing a ball creates energy in the classroom, helps build confidence and increase fluency in a fun environment.

I went shopping and bought ...(memory games)

These games encourage students to recall specific vocabulary and can be adapted to practise any grammar structure. It also makes repetition seem much less boring. Have some realia or visual prompts on hand to remind students of vocabulary, so they don't get stuck and lose confidence. This is a classic memory game where each person adds a new item to the list in alphabetical order.

For example, : "I went to the shops and I bought an apple". 2nd person: "I went to the shops and I bought an apple and a bike". First person: "I went to the shops and I bought an apple, a bike and a coat", etc. ... And it doesn't have to be shopping.

Who am I? (10-15 min.)

This game is a fantastic ice-breaker. For this game we need post-its (small pieces of coloured paper which are used for writing notes), sticky tape (just in case), pens.

1. Hand out a post-it to each of the students.
2. Tell your students to write the name of someone famous that everyone in the class knows on their post-it; this person can be dead or alive. It is important to keep the name on the post-it in secret.
3. Stick the post-it onto the back of the person sitting next to you (*this is where sticky tape can be handy!*)

Split the class into pairs; each person must find out who they are by asking questions. Here are some examples:

1. Am I dead or alive?
2. Am I male or female?
3. Where do I live?
4. What do I do?
5. What am I famous for? Etc. ...

The only question your students are not allowed to ask is, of course, 'what is my name?'! Once each person from the pair has found out their name, they can swap post-its with another person.

Truth or Lie

This game works well at the beginning of a course, when students may not know each other well. Students make up three sentences about themselves. Two of the sentences are the truth and one is a lie. The other students ask questions to decide which sentence is the lie.

Noughts and crosses (15 min.)

Grammar: Determiners: some, any, much, many, etc.

Level: Post-beginner to lower-intermediate

Materials: None

1. Divide the class into team A and team B. Put a noughts and crosses grid (9 squares) up on the board and make sure that everybody knows the rules of the game.

Some from team A comes and puts a cross in one of the squares. Then someone from team B comes and puts a nought in another square. The aim of the game is to get a row of three noughts or crosses in any direction.

2. Now draw this grid on the board:

SOME	A FEW	ANY
MUCH	A LOT OF	TOO MUCH
MANY	SEVERAL	A PAIR OF

3. Tell team A they have 20 seconds to choose a particular square and produce a correct sentence using the word on that square. If they take longer than 20 seconds they lose their turn. If they produce a sentence, ask team B to say whether it is correct or not. If team B's judgement is correct accept it and if it is wrong correct it. If team A's sentence is correct, give them a cross in the corresponding square.
4. Team B then plays in the same way, with team A judging their sentence and you the correctness of team A's judgement. As the game develops the teams are forced to try and make sentences with the more difficult words in the grid.

Note

This game frame can also be used successfully with the following language areas: 'false friends' e.g. sensible\sensitive; become\receive; large\long; phrasal verbs; irregular past participles; irregular past simple.

Auction (50 min.)

Grammar: Mixed structures

Level: Lower-intermediate

Materials: One mallet or harmer

One **auction sheet** per two students

1. Ask students if any of them have been to an auction. Ask questions of those who have. Introduce necessary words like *to bid*, *auctioneer*, *a bid*, *What am I bid?* *Hammer*, *Going*, *going*, *gone!*

2. Pair the students off and give each pair an auction sheet. Tell them that some of the sentences on the sheet are correct and some incorrect. They are to read though and decide which sentences are correct and which incorrect. In the auction that is to follow they are going to have to bid for sentences, the aim being to buy only correct sentences. Tell them each pair has \$5,000 for buying sentences and ask them to note down in the *budget* column of their auction sheets how much they are willing to bid for a given sentences. They may not spend more than \$5,000 in the auction. The winners of the auction are the pair with the most correct sentences and the most money left.

As the students work on the sentences and discuss their budgeting in pairs deny them all language help – it is up to them to take responsibility for what they think they know.

3. Before starting the auction tell them you will not accept bids of less than \$200.

Start the Auction:

- a) Read out the first sentences in a lively, persuasive way, even if it happens to be wrong, and then ask for bids.
- b) Keep the bidding moving fast, keep up a fast patter to convey the excitement of an auction room.
- c) When you come to the ‘going, going, gone’ stage, be ready to accept last minute bids. When a sentence has been auctioned off make sure students keep a note of a buyer and the amount in their *bought* columns.
- d) After each sale tell the group if the sentence is correct or not and in the latter case give the correct version. Do this fast, so as not to break the ‘auction’ mood! Postpone explanation if the grammar involved until after the game.
- e) Start the auction with the first sentence but then auction the rest of the sentences in random order – this heightens the feeling of expectancy.

4. Follow-up the grammar points the students did not understand during the auction.

Variation 1

Once you have conducted an auction session yourself, have a student or students as auctioneers the next time. With a class of 30 you might have three groups of nine students bidding in three separate auctions, with three separate auctioneers. You will need different auction sheets for each auction and each auctioneer must be given a key. If you don’t have different auction sheets people in group A will be listening to what is going on in groups B and C! With nine or ten people per group, budgeting and bidding should be done individually, not in pairs.

Variation 2

You can auction grammar problems that come up in written homework. Don’t mark the homework. Take out 12-15 mistaken sentences, re-write half of them correctly

and mix them up with the uncorrected sentences so you have a fully student centered auction sheet. Do the auction in the normal way. Then give back the uncorrected homework and ask them to find each other's mistakes.

Auction sheet (You need 1 per two students.)

	Budget	Bought
1 I wanted that you should know what happened.	_____	_____
2 What did you want to tell me?	_____	_____
3 What happened to your sister last night?	_____	_____
4 I always've wanted to visit Spain.	_____	_____
5 What killed whom and when?	_____	_____
6 Was you pleased to see your mother again?	_____	_____
7 Usually I live in a large town in Switzerland.	_____	_____
8 Oh dear, I must have cached a cold!	_____	_____
9 Nice to see you both – did you meet yourselves yesterday in town?	_____	_____
10 What'd your father say if he heard about it?	_____	_____
11 I'm have a nice warm bath every day.	_____	_____
12 Yes, it's true, I am agree with you.	_____	_____
13 Excuse me, is there a possibility to have a meal?	_____	_____
14 If I want to learn the language, I must go to French.	_____	_____
15 She was shot while trying to escape.	_____	_____

Auction sheet-key

Sentences 2,3,5,7,10 and 15 are correct.

The other sentences should be:

1. I wanted that you should know what *was happening/had happened*.
4. I've *always* wanted to visit Spain.
6. *Were* you pleased to see your mother again?
8. Oh dear, I must have *caught* a cold!
9. Nice to see you both – did you *meet/meet each other* yourselves yesterday in town?
11. I *have* a nice warm bath every day.
12. Yes, it's true, I *agreed* with you.
13. Excuse me, *can I/could I* have a meal?
14. If I want to learn the language, I must go to *France*.

It is obvious what a huge challenge teaching English lessons is. However, with a good deal of preparation for class and by using some interesting devices, you can make your class livelier and also impart a better quality of English education to your students. Teaching English lessons is always challenging and English lessons always take a lot of preparations and forethought - you might have to plan lessons according

to the levels of the students, and make sure that your lessons will become interactive so that all students will feel free to participate. Always bear in mind that when students participate in your English lessons, then you are well on the way of becoming a successful English teacher.

Now let's see on how the teachers can make their English lessons more meaningful for their class.

Teaching English Lessons requires playing games along with the levels of the students.

If you are teaching English lessons to students who already know the language, then your primary intention is to make them evaluate the beauty of the language and get them to appreciate it. You have to remove the errors they make in speaking the language.

And if you are teaching English lessons to students who are alien to the language, then it's a whole new ballgame. Your primary intention then is to create in them basic conversation skills for the language. You might have to begin with the most basic approaches at conversation and then work your way upwards. The plus point is that these students might be more receptive at learning, and will probably hang on to every word that you say. Hence, you will also need to speak slowly.

Teaching English Lessons requires you to be unpredictable in class.

Quite often, we find that language training can be quite a bit boring, especially if the students already know the methods of their teacher. That is the reason why teachers have to keep changing their strategies time and again. This will enliven the lessons and will also prevent them from being boring.

As a teacher, you can do several things to keep your classroom active. Playing games is the most effective thing you can do, and you can browse on the Internet for various games on building vocabulary, grammar and conversation skills that you can adapt to the classroom format. But make sure the games will be interesting to the students, and will teach them something. Do not repeat games too, that becomes again predictable and boring.

In conclusion, games shouldn't be seen as time-fillers or as simple fun activities. They should be prepared and presented in a very responsible manner. In order to do so we have to bear in mind some important points:

- Games need to be carefully chosen and need to have clear aims.
- Aims should have a language and an educational focus.
- Every activity can be turned into a game using game-like elements.

Games are highly motivating because they are amusing and interesting. They can be used to give practice in all language skills and be used to practice many types of communication.

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Резюме

Игровые методы на уроках английского языка признаны одними из эффективных и современных методов преподавания на сегодняшний день. Особенно отмечаются их коммуникативная направленность и огромная стимулирующая роль. При применении на уроках данного метода преподавателем учитываются также такие факторы, как уровень языка, тема урока.

В данной статье приведены виды игр, используемых на уроках английского языка.

Түйін

Бүгінгі таңда шет тілі сабақтарында ойын тәсілдерін қолдану маңызды, себебі ол студенттердің шет ел тіліне деген қызығушылығын арттырып, олардың сол тілде сөйлеу қабілетін жақсартады. Бұл тәсілді қолдану барысында оқытушы түрлі факторларды ескереді.

Берілген мақалада ағылшын тілінде қолданылатын ойындардың түрлері, ережелері туралы мағлұматтар берілген.

Resume

Nowadays games are considered the most important and effective methods of teaching a language. Particularly, their communicative approach and tremendous stimulating role are emphasized. While using games in classes the teacher should also take into account factors such as language level of the students and topic of the lesson.

The article also gives the examples of games which can be used at a language lesson.