

Ten Ways to Turn Lessons into Games

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Competition can make even the duller lesson exciting for both adults and children. However, motivating and fun activities can be time consuming for teachers to create. Every teacher needs to know about the ten generic games that can be adapted to suit almost any review lesson.

The Board Game

1. Materials needed: dice, markers, board game.
2. Before class, make a special board game practicing the target lesson.
 - o Start with a blank board.
 - o If it's a hard copy, print words, symbols, or questions in each square.
 - o If it's on your computer (a basic board can be EASILY made with the graph feature of Word), type words or cut and paste pictures or symbols into each square.
3. Divide students into 2–3 person groups and give each group a board game, dice, and markers.
4. Students will roll the die and move their marker to the appropriate square.
5. They should answer the question, make a sentence, or identify the picture.
6. If a student can not perform, he/she moves back to the original position.
7. The first student to reach “finish” wins.
8. Additional rules:
 - o If the activity permits, you can ask students to give as many answers as numbers rolled on the dice.
 - o Other players should act as the judge and call on the teacher if disagreement occurs.
9. This game can be used:
 - o To review anything.
 - o To practice any grammar structure.
 - o To go over individual sounds, word stress or intonation.
 - o To provide conversation topics.
 - o To review vocabulary words.

The Card Match Game

Possibility One

1. Materials needed: One set of the same or matching cards.
2. Give each student in the class one card.
3. Students must walk around giving hints about their card, either verbal or non-verbal until they find their match.

Possibility Two

1. Materials needed: multiple sets of the same or matching cards.
2. Divide students into groups of 2–3 and give each a set of matching cards.
3. Students race to match each card with it's pair.
4. This game can be used:
 - o To warm up.
 - o To get students into pairs or partners.
 - o To review vocabulary or idioms.

- To practice minimal pairs.
- To practice compound and complex sentence, adjectives, verb forms, and other grammar items.

The Dice Game

1. Materials needed: dice.
2. Divide the class into 2–4 groups.
3. Ask one person from the first group a question.
4. When the question is correctly answered, that student rolls the dice.
5. Award the team the number of points that is rolled on the dice.
6. Additional rules:
 - Students may be given a time limit to answer the question.
 - Other group members can not answer for the student.
7. This game can be used:
 - To review anything.
 - As a fast grammar practice.
 - To check answers from book work or hand outs.
 - As a summary of what was covered in class that day.

The Dot Game

1. Materials needed: a white board and markers.
2. Draw 25 dots in a square on the whiteboard.
3. Divide the class into 2–4 groups.
4. Ask the first groups to answer a question, finish a sentence or use a word in a sentence.
5. If they answer correctly, one team member goes up to the board and draws a horizontal or diagonal line from one dot to another dot.
6. If they answer incorrectly, the game moves to the next team.
7. The students continue drawing lines, one by one, between the dots until a square is made.
8. The team that makes a square writes their number in the square and then makes another line.
9. If the second line makes another square, they continue until they draw a line without a making a square.
10. The team with the most squares on the board when there is no possibilities for more lines is the winner.
11. Additional Rules:
 - You can impose a time limit of 10 seconds per question.
 - You can make it an individualized game.
12. This game can be used:
 - To review anything.
 - To practice grammar, pronunciation, reading, listening, or writing skills.
 - To check answers from book work or hand outs.
 - As a summary of what was covered in class that day.

The Flyswatter Game

1. Materials needed: flyswatters / flashcards.
2. Scotch tape some flashcards on a desk at the front of the class.
3. Divide the class into 2-3 groups.
4. Give one person from each group a different color flyswatter.
5. Give the groups “hints” about which card you want them to hit.
6. Watch carefully to see which group hits the correct card with their flyswatter first.
7. Give the first team one point.
8. Additional rules:
 - The player must leave his/her flyswatter on the card to earn the point.
 - The players only get one chance to hit the correct card.
9. This game can be used:

- To reinforce vocabulary.
- To practice pronunciation of minimal pairs.
- As a quick review or warm up.

The Jeopardy Game

1. Materials needed: special flashcards.
2. Before class, make a special set of jeopardy index cards.
 - Use four colors for four categories.
 - Write the question on one side of the card.
 - Write a number from 1–4 on the other side.
 - Make a special card for the topic category.
 - Tape the cards so the same colors are going down the wall and the same numbers are going across the wall.
3. Divide students into 2–3 groups
4. Team One chooses the category and value and tries to answer the question or make the sentence.
5. If they succeed, they get the number of points written on the card.
6. If they fail, the games moves to the next team.
7. Additional Rules:
 - You can impose a time limit of 10 seconds per card.
 - You can make it an individualized game.
8. This game can be used:
 - To prompt students to make sentences containing target language.
 - To practice grammar structures.
 - To go over reading strategies.
 - To review vocabulary words and idioms.

The M&M Game

1. Materials needed: M&Ms(candy).
2. Put students into pairs or small groups and give each student a handful of M&Ms.
3. Write six different categories or topics on the board (sentence parts, conversation topics, reading tasks).
4. Assign each category/topic a color.
5. Students should make one sentence or give one word for each M&M that they have according to the corresponding category.
6. Additional rules:
 - Students can not eat their M&M until they make a sentence.
 - Students can not refuse to take M&Ms (I tell them to throw them out if they don't want to eat them).
7. This game can be used:
 - As an ice breaker.
 - To review vocabulary.
 - To promote conversation.
 - To brainstorm about different topics.

The Playdoh Game

1. Materials needed: playdoh/flash cards.
2. Divide the class into 2–4 teams.
3. Give each team a piece of modeling clay or playdoh.
4. Ask one person from each team to come to the front of the class.
5. Show them a flashcard with a word or phrase written on it.
6. Students should go back to their teams and form the word or phrase out of the clay while his/her team tries to guess it.
7. Additional rules:
 - The “maker” should (obviously) not talk.
 - No actions are allowed.
 - To control the chaos, when a team guesses the correct word or phrase, they should sit down.

8. This game can be used:
 - o To review vocabulary.
 - o To practice idioms.
 - o To practice verb forms.
 - o For fun!

The Relay Game

1. Materials needed: copies of the worksheet with 10–15 sentences for each group.
2. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 and ask them to line their desks / seats up.
3. Give the first person in each row a handout.
4. Each first student must complete one sentence or find one error and then pass the paper back to the next person.
5. The second person must do the second sentence, but he / she can also check the first person's work for errors before passing the paper back to the third person.
6. The first team to finish is the winner.
7. This game can be used:
 - o To complete handouts or book work.
 - o To work on error location activities.
 - o To practice spelling.
 - o To identify parts of an essay or paragraph.
 - o To practice reading strategies.

The Word Game

1. Materials needed: none.
2. Divide the class into 2 or 3 equal groups.
3. Ask one player from the first group to come to the front of the class and sit facing his/her team with his/her back to the board.
4. Write a word on the board.
5. Tell the team that they can give the player hints about the word.
6. Give the player a point if he/she can guess the word within one minute (longer or shorter depending on the class level).
7. Additional rules:
 - o The team must not say any part of the word that is written on the board.
 - o The team can not use actions.
8. This game can be used:
 - o To reinforce vocabulary.
 - o To practice word stress.
 - o To practice grammar forms.
 - o To practice idioms.

Link

- [Games & Activities for the ESL/EFL Classroom](#)