

Appendix 2: Games for language learning

Teachers can develop a basic repertoire of simple games to ensure that lessons are kept lively, interactive and fun. Such generic games can be used to practise a range of themes and may, of course, be adapted as appropriate.

Games might include the following.

- **Touch the Picture:** Place picture flashcards on the board. Divide the class into two teams. One child from each team comes to the board. Hold up a text card for one of the pictures and read it out. The first child to touch the correct picture wins a point for their team. Choose two new children for the next round. (This game is also known as **Knock, Knock**, in which children knock on the pictures.)
- **Kim's Game:** Children put small picture cards on their table. They study them for a few seconds and then, at a signal, turn them over (but keeping them in the same order). Call out a card and invite them to try to select this from memory. They hold it to their chest until you say *Show me*. If they have guessed correctly, they put the card to one side. If not, they return the card, face down, to the same place. The first child to have guessed them all correctly is the winner. The winner can be the caller in the next round.
- **Repeat if it is True:** Show a flashcard or digit card and say a word, phrase or number. If this corresponds to the card shown, the children repeat it. If not, they remain silent.
- **Start Again:** Display two questions and a few possible answers for each on the board. Read them all aloud. Two children leave the room. The class select an answer for each of the questions displayed. The two children come back into the room. The class chorus the first question and the two children choose one answer as a response. If their answer matches the class's choice, they proceed to the next question. If their choice does not match, they have to start again.
- **Stations:** Read aloud some word or sentence cards, and stick them on the walls. Play some music. When the music stops, children choose one of the cards to stand next to. Using a set of smaller cards, invite a child to choose one and read it out. All children standing next to that card are out.
- **Pass the Parcel:** Put small sentence cards in a bag. Children sit in a circle and pass the bag around to music. When the music stops, the child with the bag pulls out a card, reads it aloud and chooses another child to mime a corresponding action.
- **Chinese Whispers:** Organise children into lines, in teams of about six. Give the last child in each line a written sentence. On a given signal, they turn over their card and whisper the text to the next child in line. The sentence is passed along the line to the child at the front, who selects the corresponding picture and sticks it on the board. The first team to place the correct picture on the board scores a point.

- **Secret Signal:** Two children leave the room while the rest of the class choose a signal, eg a wink or scratch of a nose, and a signaller. Choose two sentences (eg from a story). The two children come back in and the class chorus the first sentence continuously until the signal is given. The class then switch to chorusing the second sentence. The two children try to spot who is making the signal.
- **Pictionary:** Draw a picture on the board, asking children to guess what it is after each stroke. They then play in pairs on mini-whiteboards.
- **Heads Down, Thumbs Up:** Choose four children to represent, for example, animals or characters in a story and give them each a flashcard to show the animal or character. The rest of the children each put their head down on one arm, close their eyes and put a thumb in the air. The chosen four walk around the room and gently squeeze one thumb each. The class sit up, and those with squeezed thumbs stand up. They have one guess as to which animal or story character touched them. If they guess correctly, they swap places for the next round.
- **Read my Lips:** Mouth a number or word, and children say it aloud or write it on a mini-whiteboard.
- **Number Ping Pong:** Say a number, and the class give the next one in sequence. Children can play this in pairs, 'batting' numbers to each other.
- **The Price is Right:** Divide children into teams. The price of each item displayed on the board is hidden behind a Post-it note or by using the interactive whiteboard. Ask each team how much they think an item costs. The team closest to the price wins a point.
- **Show Me:** Say a number. Children have 10 seconds to discuss with their partner and then show the correct number on a digit fan or mini-whiteboard.
- **Strip Lotto:** Each child has a strip of paper divided into six sections. They write a number in each section. Call out a number and children rip it off if they have it at either end of their strip. The child who is the first to hold only one number is the winner.
- **Find the Number:** Place numbered tiles, balls or number flashcards on the floor. Invite two children to stand next to them. Call out a number and the two children race to find it. The winner stays to have another turn.
- **Hopscotch with digit cards:** In small groups, children arrange digit cards (1–9) in a 3×3 grid on the floor. The first child jumps to a number, calls it out and then moves away. The second child jumps onto the first number, calls it out, then jumps to a second number, calls it out and moves away. The game continues with other children in the group following the sequence and adding their own number.