



## Simple Language Teaching Games for Groups

### TO MARKET

Good for numbers, food or object vocabulary, past tense and repetition

Students stand or sit in a circle. The first student says, "Today I went to the market and bought [one fish]". The second student repeats the first student's item and adds a second: "Today I went to the market and bought [one fish and three potatoes]" Each student adds one item, so the game gets harder as it goes around the circle. Depending on the context, students will sometimes choose to add difficulty; in an ESL class in Hawaii, I heard students use "three packages of green beans" and "two heads of lettuce". This game is easily adapted and is non-competitive. Other students will usually help out when one has trouble repeating a long string of items.

**Two Games Below From** <http://www.lingolex.com/userpages/Ernie.html>

### BALL GAME

Students stand up in a circle around the teacher. A ball is tossed to a student and the teacher asks a question, e.g.: "Say a color". The student then responds and throws the ball back to the teacher. The teacher then throws the ball to another student and asks another question. For higher levels, you can ask such questions like "Give me the past participle of an irregular verb". This is a fast game, and it is great for reviewing vocabulary.

### WHAT AM I?

Get a few blank adhesive tags, and write random nouns on them. Then have the students stand up. Paste a tag on the forehead of each student. They have to walk around the class asking yes/no questions until they find out which noun they have on their foreheads. A variation of this game would be using names of famous people.

### Change places if...

From Nick Kendall

Found online at <http://reocities.com/Athens/Delphi/1979/games/change.html>

Materials: None

Aim: To practice/ revise structures

Procedure:

- Write "**Change places if**" on board
- Get students to stand up and place chairs in circle
- Take away one chair

Demonstrate game:

#### "**Change places if you like eating bananas**"

Students who like eating bananas have to move to different seat. The student who remains standing (there should be 1 less chair than students) must think of a new sentence using structure e.g "**if you like playing football**" and students who like playing football have to change seat, standing student thinks of new sentence (" if you like watching TV) etc.

Teacher may need to intervene if 1 student is continually left standing!  
Both adults and kids seem to like it and it calms down the hyperactive ones! The game can be used with a variety of structures.

### **WHISPER CIRCLES**

From "Six Games for the EFL/ESL Classroom" by Aydan Ersöz Gazi University (Ankara, Turkey) found online at <http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Ersoz-Games.html>

Aim: Speaking (using a whisper), pronunciation, listening, grammar (it takes ...to do ...)

Divide the students into groups of 7 to 10.

Choose one leader from each group. Give the leaders the card which has the sentence "It takes about six seconds for something you drink to reach your stomach." Ask him to memorize the sentence, go back to his group and whisper what he has read on the card to the person on his right. Each person will whisper the sentence to the next person and the sentence can be said only once. The last person will say the sentence out loud. If the sentence is the same with the one written on the card, that group wins.

### **PAST-TENSE DETECTIVE**

Found online at <http://letsteachenglish.com>

Students love this game and will often demand to play it. Begin by announcing that a bank was robbed at 7:30 last night and two students in the class are suspected of being the robbers. Send two students out. They will be the robbers. The remaining students will be the police detectives who will question the robbers. The robbers go out and create a story which will alibi them. The goal is to break the alibis of the robbers.

One robber is brought in and is thoroughly questioned in the past tense while the second robber waits in a place where he can't hear or see the first robber. Then the second robber is brought in. His story must match the first robber's, or they have lost and the detectives have found them out. This game can be used to practice an almost infinite variety of question patterns and vocabulary. For example, if the first robber says they took the bus or taxi, students may ask "Who paid?" "Was the driver a man or a woman?" "Where did he pick you up?" "What bus was it?" "Where did you get off?"

Typical questions involve asking what they were wearing, what they ate, etc. The more detailed the better. If the robbers say they ate, students should ask what, how much, how long did you wait, what time did you go home, was it overdone or underdone, etc. It is important to stress that all questions must have answers. "I forgot" and "I don't know" should not be permitted.

### **STRING TOSS GAME**

*Posted on the Christian Youthworkers egroup*

Get a spool of string or yarn. Have each person answer a question of some sort when they have the string in their possession. They then hold on to string and throw the ball/spool to another so they can answer the question. You eventually create a web of some sort. In the end, describe how the web analogous to the group in that we all play a part in creating the web, and that if one person was gone it would look different. Likewise, it is important that we all take part to make the group what it is, unique and special.