



Speak, Play, Win – engaging students through board games

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Why use games in the classroom?

Games bring communication, creativity, and collaboration into language learning. They lower anxiety, motivate students, and make speaking activities more meaningful and memorable.

Benefits of board games in EFL teaching:

- Encourage **authentic communication** and spontaneous speaking.
- Build **confidence and fluency** through play.
- Support **critical thinking and imagination**.
- Promote **teamwork, negotiation, and listening skills**.
- Easy to **adapt** for any level or topic.

The teacher's role:

In game-based lessons, teachers act as **facilitators** — explaining rules, modeling language, and guiding communication rather than leading it. The focus shifts from correctness to creativity and fluency.

Workshop goal:

In this session, you'll explore three adaptable, low-prep games that promote speaking fluency, vocabulary growth, and classroom interaction — and you'll get to try them yourself!

The Giri Game

Focus: Storytelling, creativity, narrative skills, linking ideas.

Game Components

- **Cards:** The game includes cards from various categories, such as Characters, Objects, Atmosphere, Places, and Themes.
- **Card Distribution:** Each player draws a set number of cards from each category. The exact number can vary based on the number of players and the desired game length.

Basic Rules

- **Setup:** Shuffle the cards and deal a set number to each Storyteller (1 Themes, 1 Atmosphere, 1 Place, 2 Characters, 2 Objects)
- **Gameplay:**
 - The Storyteller has 3 minutes to prepare their story
 - The Storyteller starts narrating their story, incorporating the elements from their cards into a meaningful story
 - Teasers (1 card each teaser) can interrupt the Storyteller once to introduce elements from their own cards, seamlessly integrating them into the ongoing narrative
- **Objective:** Collaboratively create a coherent and imaginative story, using the cards as prompts.

Educational Benefits

- **Language Skills:** Enhances vocabulary and grammar through storytelling.
- **Creativity:** Stimulates imagination and creative thinking.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Encourages empathy and understanding of different perspectives.
- **Social Skills:** Promotes teamwork and communication among players.

Impossible Decisions

Game Components:

- **Deck:** A collection of cards, each presenting a unique "Would You Rather" question.
- **Categories:** The questions cover a wide range of topics, from the absurd to the hilarious, ensuring diverse and engaging conversations.

Basic Rules

- **Setup:** Shuffle the deck of cards and place it face down in the centre of the playing area.
- **Gameplay:**
 - Players take turns drawing a card from the top of the deck.
 - The player reads the question aloud to the group.
 - All players, including the one who drew the card, must then choose one of the two options presented.
 - After everyone has made their choice, players share their decisions and the reasons behind them.
- **Winning:** There is no competitive aspect to the game. The goal is to enjoy the discussions and learn more about each other's preferences and personalities.

Classroom Integration Tips

- **Icebreaker Activity:** Use the game at the beginning of a lesson to help students get to know each other in a fun and relaxed setting.
- **Vocabulary Building:** Encourage students to explain their choices using new vocabulary or grammatical structures they've recently learned.
- **Debate Practice:** Select questions that prompt students to justify their opinions, fostering critical thinking and speaking skills.

The Three- Round word game

Focus: Vocabulary recall, paraphrasing, teamwork, fluency.

How it works:

- Each player writes 5-10 words, writing each one on a separate piece of paper
- Teams compete to guess as many words as possible in three rounds:
 - **Describe the word** (no gestures, no spelling).
 - **One-word clue only.**
 - **Act it out** (charades).
- Same word set is used in all rounds — students rely on memory and associations.

Learning outcomes:

- Vocabulary reinforcement.
- Paraphrasing and quick thinking.
- Collaboration and communication strategies.

Variations:

- Use vocabulary from a recent lesson or textbook unit.
- Add a “taboo” challenge (for advanced groups).

Pro tip: “Set expectations, then step back”

- **Explain rules clearly but concisely** – do a very quick demo if possible.
- **Model the language** – show one example of a story, answer, or description before starting.
- **Step back and circulate** – once the game starts, don’t over-direct. Move around, listen in, gently prompt, and note language use.
- **Keep time visible** – a timer helps students stay focused and keeps the pace lively.
- **Celebrate creativity and participation, not just “winning”** – a quick comment like *“I love how you connected all the images!”* or *“Great reasoning!”* keeps motivation high.
- The key is: **clear instructions + space to play + light guidance = maximum learning and fun.**

And let's finish with a joke...

How can you tell difference between a chemist and a plumber?

*Ask them to read **unionised** 😊*

Thank you for your
attention and may the
dice always roll in your
favour!

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