

Games for Vocabulary Practice

**Interactive vocabulary
activities for all levels**



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Frontmatter

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Introduction

What roles can games play in vocabulary learning?

Researchers say that vocabulary must be encountered at least seven times before it is truly learnt. They also advise that words are most easily learnt when students manipulate them and make them their own in some memorable way. For both these reasons, games have a particularly important role to play in vocabulary learning: they provide an enjoyable way of revisiting words and they give students the opportunity to use them in a memorable context.

The activities suggested in this book are, thus, not intended to teach sets of completely new vocabulary: that would make the games far too difficult. Rather the activities are intended to help students consolidate their knowledge of English vocabulary.

How is the book organised?

There are 18 topic-based units in this book. Each unit has three games, one at each of three levels – elementary, intermediate and upper-intermediate to advanced. There is a map of the book, which gives a clear overview of the topics of the units, the vocabulary focus, activity types and student interaction patterns used in each of the 54 games in the book.

How is each game arranged?

Each activity consists of two pages: a page of notes for the teacher and a photocopiable page that may be freely duplicated for students. The teacher's notes on the left-hand pages provide you with information about:

Time

Aim

Materials

Key vocabulary

Warm-up

Main activity

Variation

Follow-up

Homework

The **Time** allocated for each activity is usually 40–45 minutes, though some activities are shorter. The suggested times include a warm-up activity and some follow-up work in the classroom. The teacher can, of course, make the games fit into a shorter lesson by omitting the warm-up or follow-up activities, or by doing them in different lessons.

The **Aim** for each activity clearly summarises the kind of language to be focused on.

The **Materials** section lists everything that will be required for the activity. It is assumed that students have pens and paper.

Key vocabulary lists the vocabulary that is required for the game. It is important that teachers should read through this section when deciding whether a game is appropriate for a particular group of learners.

The **Warm-up** section suggests ways of familiarising the students with the language which will be required in the activity. Depending on the level of the class, you may need to spend longer on this part of the lesson – though with stronger groups you may need to spend little or no time on this section.

The **Main activity** section explains the steps of the activity as clearly and concisely as possible. We would recommend in most cases that you demonstrate these steps to the students instead of just reading them out to them. In some cases you may feel it would be helpful to note down the key steps on the classroom board.

The **Variation** section suggests ways of adapting the basic game for different classroom situations or contexts. Occasionally there are suggestions for a completely different game, but still using the same photocopiable materials.

The **Follow-up** section suggests optional classroom activities to develop and practise further the language worked with in the games. These follow-up activities may be used in a later lesson, if that is more appropriate, or they may be omitted.

The **Homework** section provides a couple of different suggestions for homework tasks based on the work of the activity. These tasks are, of course, optional but we strongly recommend that you choose one of them for your students, in order to help them learn the key vocabulary more effectively.

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What about the photocopiable materials?

The materials on the right-hand pages can be freely photocopied.

Quite often you will also have to cut up the materials into separate cards, as indicated by the cutting lines. If you are lucky enough to have access to a laminator, we would recommend preparing laminated sets of materials so that they can be easily reused.

Learning from others

In some activities you will also see an acknowledgement. This is because many of the games we have used in this book have been learnt from or inspired by other people or by popular or traditional games that we know.

We hope that, just as we have adapted games we learnt from others, you will do the same with the activities we present here. We feel sure that many of the photocopiable materials we offer here can be used in different ways from those we have suggested. Similarly, many of the activities described can be used with a different vocabulary focus to meet the needs of different groups. We hope that you will find lots of interesting ways in which you can adapt and be creative with the activities in this book.

Above all, we very much hope that your students will enjoy playing these games and that they will also help them to consolidate their knowledge of English vocabulary.

Felicity O'Dell and Katie Head

Games for Vocabulary Practice

Map of the book

Activity	Level	Vocabulary focus	Activity type	Student interaction	Time (minutes)	Page
UNIT 1 Personal information						
1.1 All in a day	Elementary	Everyday expressions formed with the verbs <i>do, get, go, have, make, take</i>	Board game	Groups of 3–4	40–45	10
1.2 How special am I?	Intermediate	Ways of talking about yourself and finding things in common with others	Questionnaire and discussion game	Individually, then in groups of 4–6	40–45	12
1.3 The dating game	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Expressing personal likes, dislikes and preferences	Question and answer game to find an ideal partner	Individually, then whole class	40–45	14
UNIT 2 The family						
2.1 Family tree	Elementary	Family relationships	Information gap	Pairs	40–45	16
2.2 The happy couple	Intermediate	Stages in a relationship	Storytelling and role play	Pairs, then groups of 4	40–45	18
2.3 Family idioms	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Idioms relating to family life and relationships	Card game	Groups of 4	35–45	20
UNIT 3 Daily activities						
3.1 What people do	Elementary	Verbs describing everyday actions	Describing and arranging pictures	Pairs	35–45	22
3.2 Change places if ...	Intermediate	Everyday activities	Changing places in response to prompts	Whole class or large groups	25–35	24
3.3 Check in cheerfully	Upper-Intermediate to advanced	Phrasal verbs and adverbs of manner	Mime and guess	Groups of 4–6	35–45	26

Map of the book

Activity	Level	Vocabulary focus	Activity type	Student interaction	Time (minutes)	Page
UNIT 4 Homes						
4.1 At home	Elementary	Furniture and household items	Mime and guess	Groups of 5–6	30–35	28
4.2 Fully furnished	Intermediate	Furniture and household items	Board and dice game	Groups of 5	40–45	30
4.3 Dream rooms	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Language to describe rooms, décor and furniture	Questionnaire and find a partner	Individually, then in pairs	40–45	32
UNIT 5 In the town, in the city						
5.1 Finding places	Elementary	Places in the town and prepositional phrases	Information gap	Pairs	30–35	34
5.2 Mystery word pairs	Intermediate	Compound nouns for places in the town	Card game and storytelling	Pairs	35–45	36
5.3 City life	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Common problems in towns and cities	Discussion and debate	Groups of 4	35–40	38
UNIT 6 Travel and tourism						
6.1 Name the country	Elementary	Country names and describing countries	Crosswords	Groups of 4	35–40	40
6.2 Happy holidays	Intermediate	Items for holiday luggage	Card game	Groups of 4	30–40	42
6.3 Colourful holiday collocations	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Collocations used in holiday brochures	Card game – matching pairs	Groups of 3–4	40–45	44
UNIT 7 Food and drink						
7.1 What I had for dinner last night	Elementary	Items of food and drink	Card and memory game	Groups of 4–8	30–35	46
7.2 Twenty questions	Intermediate	Verbs, adjectives and nouns relating to food	Yes/no questions	Groups of 5–6	40–45	48
7.3 Odd one out	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Food and drink and language explaining differences	Finding the odd one out game	Pairs	40–45	50
UNIT 8 Describing people						
8.1 Who am I?	Elementary	Words describing hair, build and clothes	Yes/no picture game	Pairs	30–40	52
8.2 Compound adjective dominoes	Intermediate	Compound adjectives used about people	Dominoes	Groups of 4	40–45	54
8.3 The people's alphabet game	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Verbs, nouns and adjectives used about people	Board game	Groups of 4–5	30–40	56

Map of the book

Activity	Level	Vocabulary focus	Activity type	Student interaction	Time (minutes)	Page
UNIT 9 Describing things						
9.1 Everyday objects	Elementary	Names and uses of everyday objects	Bingo	Individually	35–40	58
9.2 Kim's game	Intermediate	Names and descriptions of objects	Memory game	Individually, then in pairs	40–45	60
9.3 Name this thing	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Names and descriptions of objects	Board game	Groups of 3–4	35–45	62
UNIT 10 Friends and relationships						
10.1 Poems	Elementary	Adjectives and phrases to describe people	Writing poems	Individually, then in pairs	40–45	64
10.2 Interesting people	Intermediate	People's lives and backgrounds	Card and dice game	Groups of 4–6	40–45	66
10.3 Feelings	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Adjectives describing feelings	Board game	Groups of 4–5	40–45	68
UNIT 11 The human body						
11.1 Describing the body	Elementary	Parts of the body	Word squares and information gap	Two groups, then pairs	35–40	70
11.2 Doctor, doctor	Intermediate	Illness, symptoms and treatment	Role play	Whole class	45 +	73
11.3 Idioms of the body	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Idioms based on parts of the body	Card game	Groups of 6–8	40–45	76
UNIT 12 Leisure time						
12.1 Mystery evening out	Elementary	Talking about an evening out	Story completion	Individually, then in pairs	30–35	78
12.2 Picture your free time	Intermediate	Leisure activities	Draw and guess	Groups of 3–4	30–35	80
12.3 Can you do any conjuring tricks?	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Leisure activities, interests and experiences	Survey and discussion	Individually, then in groups of 3–4	40–45	82
UNIT 13 Education						
13.1 My first school	Elementary	People, places and objects in a school	Spot the difference	Pairs	40–45	84
13.2 Secondary school: the best days of your life?	Intermediate	Experiences during school days	Board game and speaking	Groups of 3–4	40–45	86
13.3 Successful learning	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Learning styles and environment	Questionnaire and discussion	Groups of 3–4	40–45	88

Map of the book

Activity	Level	Vocabulary focus	Activity type	Student interaction	Time (minutes)	Page
UNIT 14 The world of work						
14.1 Who, where and what?	Elementary	Jobs and workplace	Card game	Pairs	30–35	90
14.2 Guess my job	Intermediate	Jobs and describing them	Yes/no questions	Whole class	35–40	92
14.3 Dangerous and stressful jobs	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Jobs and why they are dangerous or stressful	Categorising and ranking	Groups of 3–4	40–45	94
UNIT 15 Money and shopping						
15.1 Bring and buy sale	Elementary	Prices, buying and selling	Role play	Whole class	40–45	96
15.2 Crossword conversations	Intermediate	Money and shopping, and defining language	Crosswords and defining	Pairs	40–45	98
15.3 Get rich quick quiz	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Idioms and language connected with money	Quiz	Groups of 2–3	35–45	100
UNIT 16 Past experiences						
16.1 Past time dominoes	Elementary	Past time expressions	Four-sided dominoes	Groups of 3	35–40	102
16.2 Phrasal verbs auction	Intermediate	Phrasal verbs in sentences about the past	Auction of correct and incorrect sentences	Pairs	40–45	104
16.3 What a great story!	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Language for describing and reviewing a film or book	Categorising words and writing a film summary	Groups of 3–4	40–45	106
UNIT 17 Science and technology						
17.1 A day in the modern office	Elementary	The modern office and computers	Spot the difference	Pairs	40–45	108
17.2 Sci-tech board game	Intermediate	Names of inventions, sciences, scientists, planets and man-made objects	Board game	Groups of 4–5	35–45	110
17.3 Definitions	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Modern concepts in computers, entertainment, work, transport and science	Define and guess	Whole class or groups of 6–10	30–40	112
UNIT 18 Social and environmental issues						
18.1 Find five	Elementary	The natural world	Grid completion	Individually, then in pairs	35–45	114
18.2 Social survey	Intermediate	Social issues	Survey and discussion	Individually, then in groups of 3–4	30–35	116
18.3 Compounds	Upper-intermediate to advanced	Compound nouns of social and environmental issues	Card game	Groups of 3–4	35–45	118