Preface

This guidebook is intended to provide practical planning tips for language games.

Planning Language Events

This guidebook was created by Chief Atahm School. The school has a vision of language revitalization. This language guide will help to increase language spoken in a classroom setting.

This guidebook shares ideas and strategies that Chief Atahm School has used to motivate language learning through a variety of language games. Most of these games require few resources. The goal is to provide fun and enjoyable activities for all people and all levels of language speakers.

Language games ensure a comfort level while introducing or practicing new words and phrases. They can be added to a language meeting or any gathering. The directions are easy to follow and the material is easily obtained.

We thank and acknowledge the support and funding from the Aboriginal Language Initiative Grant from the First Peoples Cultural Council and Adams Lake Indian Band.
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Language Games and Activities

Learning a second language is hard work; therefore, as teachers we need to keep our students interested and maximize opportunities for students to participate.

1. Why play games?
   • Games spark interest with learner
   • Students learn better when relaxed (laughter)
   • Keep the learners interested
   • Give opportunities for students to use the language

2. What types of games?
   • Choose games with simple instructions that students understand
   • Choose a game or activity that is easy to play and will move quickly, is interesting, and amusing
   • Choose games to fit the program
   • Choose games that motivate and engage students

3. Games for different learning styles:

   A. Auditory Learners: Students who learn best by listening to explanations, oral instruction

      • games that involve repetition, rhythm, and listening for clues are good

      • Repetition:
        Concentration-style games with hand-clapping to a rhythm
        Sentence patterns

      Memory game with sentence starter: "I like to eat apples, but I don't like to eat worms"; (next student starts with the vocabulary item that previous student stated they didn't like to eat): "I like to eat worms, but I don't like to eat people"
B. **Visual Learners:** Students who learn best with plenty of visual clues, scenarios or demonstrations.

- use of graphics to give clues and information
- act out an example
- mini-role plays
- picture games such as flyswatter, and the bop game

C. **Tactile and Kinesthetic Learners:** Students who like to use their whole bodies to learn. Look for games that involve touching things, moving them around, and making connections using their bodies.

- Touch games - paper islands, musical chairs, throw a bean bag on corresponding graphic or object
- Craft games: have students assemble or draw something with another person giving verbal directions in the language.

4. **When to Use Games?**
   - Short warm-up or at the end of the class
   - Throughout the lesson: choose an appropriate game

5. **How to Choose a Game?**
   - Is comprehensible
   - Look for the “fun” aspect
   - Something that will get the students involved in friendly competition
   - Keep all students involved
   - Give opportunities to learn, practice, or review language material
Guess Who

Objective
To give students practice understanding descriptive words
   He/she/it has brown hair; glasses; is tall; is wearing a blue shirt...

Material
A headband for everyone in the class. A picture of an object / animal that can be tucked into the students headband.

Procedure
Headbands - All students have picture of animal/ object tucked in headband on head facing out so other students can see the picture. As they move around the classroom they are able to ask questions to try to guess what their card is. Other students can only answer with “yes”, “no” or “maybe”
Musical Chairs

Objective
To reinforce pronunciation and identification of single-item vocabulary

Material
A word list, a flip chart, a black board or whiteboard. A room with space to put 10 to 15 chairs in a circle

Procedure
Select 4 target words. Write them on the board in a vertical list. Draw a line under the third word. The forth word is the “group word.”

Have the students sit on a chair. There should be one less chair than students, so that one student remains standing. Have that student stand in the middle of the circle. The first three words will be given out to each student. There will be more than 3 students with the same vocabulary word.

When one of the words is called out, those students with the same word have to exchange seats. The person standing in the middle also needs to find a seat. When everyone finds a seat, there will always be one person left standing.

If the forth, or “group word” is called out, then everybody needs to find a new chair.
Body Parts Musical Madness

Objective:
To reinforce pronunciation and identification of body parts

Materials/ room
Large room with a clear area

Set Up
Classmates choose a partner.
One set of partners stands in a circle.
The other set of partners stands in another circle surround the first circle.

Procedure
Music starts and this indicates to the students to start walking in circles.
Inside circle one way and outside circle the other way.
Let the music play for maybe 30 seconds and then stop it.
Teacher yells out "Hand to knee!" Students have to find their partner and put one hand to the partner’s knee.
The last set of partners to find each other and get in position is OUT.
Students get back into the two circles.
Music starts again with a new command, like "Hand to Elbow" and the process is repeated until only a few sets of partners are left.
The last set of partners is the winner!
Watch out! This game can get crazy but it’s a lot of fun. Works best with 20 or more students.
Poncho Carrancho  (by Ramiro Garcia)

Objective: review

Material: none

Procedure

Assign the name of a food to every student and write the names on the board. The teacher is also assigned a food, let's say 'turkey'. Have the students say in a loud voice what they are. The teacher starts the game by saying, "Pancho Carrancho doesn't eat turkey, he eats rice."

The student who is rice has a few seconds to react. Her response should be "No, Pancho Carrancho doesn't eat rice, he eats spaghetti."

Alternatives:
verbs: Pancho Carrancho doesn't ______, he ______.
past tense: Pancho Carrancho didn't ______, he ______.
family: Pancho Carrancho looks like his ______
jobs: Pancho Carrancho wants to be a ______.

The Musical Clock Concert

Objective
To learn and practice telling time; to practice vocabulary; to improve listening, comprehension and verbal skills.

Material
One large clock with moveable hands (Judy Clocks TM works well.), six to twelve musical instruments or noisemakers, a couple of balloons and something too pop them.

Set up
Teacher stands in front of the class with a clock and musical instruments.

Procedure
Hold up your clock so that the entire class can see it. Begin by moving the hands of the clock to each hour of the day, modeling the correct way to state the time in the target language. "Look, it is one o'clock, Now it is two o'clock. It is now three o'clock, etc. Then move on to 3:30. It's 4:30 What time is it now, class? Right, it's 5:30. Etc.

Once students have learned the basic concept of telling time, pick up your musical instruments and noisemakers one at a time and talk about each one. "Look, class. This is a tambourine. What colour is a tambourine? Is it big or small? How many bells does it have? Etc." One at a time distribute the instruments to some of your students and tell them at what time each instrument is supposed to ring/sound/play. "Who wants the tambourine? Jill gets the tambourine. The tambourine sounds at 2:30. What time does it sound? Right, 2:30. Does it sound at 4:00? No, the bell sounds at 4:00" Pass out the balloons last and tell the students with the balloons that the balloons pop at midnight.

Go back through the hours, having students sound their instruments each time the hands of the hour reach the designated time for that instrument. For example, if at 1:00 the drum plays, the student holding the drum plays the drum each time the clock hands are at 1:00. To keep students on their toes, make the clock hands go forward and backward in time, to 1:00 to 4:00, then quickly back to 1:00 again, etc. Continue round the clock for a "Clock Concert'. End the concert with "midnight" so the balloons go pop.
Frenzy or La Carte

Objective
To provide students with a fun environment in which to practice a list of new vocabulary words

Materials
Picture file containing one picture for each of the vocabulary words or verbs which you wish to practice with the game; One deck of playing cards per group of 4-5 students.

Set Up
Groups of 4-5 sit in a circle on the floor or at a table or their desks.

Procedure
We have seen students fully engaged in the game for entire class periods. In the following example we will describe a game of Frenzy designed to practice the seasons and months of the year. For this game you will need to make a set of four flashcards visuals for each group of four students in the room. Each set of flashcards would have one card for each season. Simply write or have the students draw the season on the card. It took us less than five minutes to do the preparation for this game.

Arrange students in groups of four. Give every table one deck of playing cards and one set of the season flashcards. Assign a group leader. The group leader will hand out the flashcards, giving one season to each student. Every student places the flashcard in a way that all the other players at the table can see it clearly. Then the game begins.

The group leader is the dealer. The dealer starts dealing the playing cards face up one at a time in a clockwise direction around the table. The dealer continues to deal around the table placing each new card on top of the old cards so that the piles are beginning to form in front of the students. When the dealer turns up a card that matches another card for another player at the table (eg., two players both have an eight showing on top of their pile), the dealer stops. The two players with matching cards must then compete to name the months of the year that correspond to season showing on their opponent's flash card. Whichever player says the three months first wins that battle and takes their opponent's pile of cards and adds it on to their own pile. The dealer then resumes dealing, starting with the player who lost the battle. Dealing continues until another match is seen; another battle ensues to see who can name the opponents months first. Play until the deck is finished.
Variation: Frenzy or La Carte

You can use Frenzy to practice many different types of vocabulary and verbs. For example, we can use it to practice shapes, sizes and colours. We give each student in the room a shape. Then as they play Frenzy, when a match comes up, students have to describe their opponent’s shape. (“a large red circle” or “a big green triangle”) To practice verbs, have students draw a picture depicting the verb. Students then must call out either the verb or a sentence containing the verb (“eat” or “the girl is eating a taco”).

Frenzy is also a good game for practicing any thematic vocabulary. Pictures of carpentry tools can be used in a game before students use the real tools. Likewise, pictures of the material needed to make a fire can be taught using frenzy.

A fluent speaker gives the correct pronunciation before the game. If a player mispronounces the word during the game, the game is stopped momentarily, so that the correct pronunciation can be modeled, then the game continues.
Flyswatter

Objective:
To practice single-item vocabulary or sentence-level comprehension

Materials
A chalkboard where you can draw pictures, words or numbers, Or a picture file of visuals that you can tape or Velcro to the board or wall and two flyswatters. (The game is easier to officiate if you have flyswatters of different colours. It is also a good idea to use flyswatters with plastic handles, as the metal ones can tend to scratch the board or wall.)

If magnets will stick to your chalkboard or whiteboard, you may purchase a roll of stick-on magnet tape to apply to the back of your picture file visuals. With a tiny piece of magnetic tape, visuals stick easily to the board. Magnetic tape can often be found in a sewing department of large drug stores and costs only a few dollars.

Set Up
Divide the class into two teams. Students can line up or be seated at their desks.

Procedure
To simplify the explanation of Flyswatter, we will describe how we play it in the very beginning of the year to practice shapes, sizes and colours.

Tape a variety of shapes on the board. (We use circles, squares, triangles, rectangles and diamonds. We have each shape in five different colours and two different sizes.

Divide your students into two teams and have two teams line up facing the board, with the first member of the team at least ten to fifteen feet from the board. Mark the spot on the floor. Give the first person in line a flyswatter.

To play the game, you read a cue such as“the small yellow triangle.” The two students with the flyswatter then run to the board and swat the small, yellow triangle. Whoever swats the correct shape first wins a point for their team. If both players go to the correct shape, you will need to see which flyswatter was there first, which was on the bottom. You will probably want to add an extra rule that students only get two or three attempts. This prevents students from standing in front and sweeping their flyswatter back and forth.
Loud/Soft/Hot/Cold

Objective
To reinforce pronunciation and identification of single-item vocabulary

Materials
The item being practiced or a piece of paper with a picture or the name of the item written on it.

Set Up
One student will search for the item as other students help him via chanting

Procedure
This activity is intended to be used only when you want to practice a single vocabulary item which students are having trouble either remembering or pronouncing. Loud/Soft/Hot/Cold need not take more than a minute or two of class time. Results are guaranteed!

If your students are having trouble, for example, pronouncing or remembering the words “the bubble”, draw a bubble onto a piece of paper. Send one student out of the room, and then quickly hide the piece of paper, with bubble written on it. Bring the student back into the room, and start a soft, slow chant, with everyone participating - “the bubble, the bubble the bubble...” The student must start looking for the bubble. As the student gets closer to the hiding place, the pace and volume of the chanting pick up. Conversely, if the student searches further and further away from the hiding place, the chanting gets slower, and softer. Students searching for objects can usually listen to the class's cues and find the object in one or two minutes.

If you have pictures from a new thematic unit, keep playing the game. The person who found the picture gets to hide the next one. That student also chooses the student who will leave the room as the second vocabulary word is hidden.