

# Let's Play a Game!

Julie Waterman, Shokei Jr/Sr. High

- \* Games that are fun and challenging are highly motivating.
- \* Games allow meaningful use of the language in context.
- \* During the game, students are focused on the activity and often absorb the grammar subconsciously.
- \* Games can be used to add excitement through competition or to create bonding between students, and between students and teacher.

These quotes are adapted from:

[teachingenglishgames.com/Articles/Teaching Grammar with Games in the ESL Classroom](http://teachingenglishgames.com/Articles/Teaching_Grammar_with_Games_in_the_ESL_Classroom)

## 1. Snakes and Ladders

(Ss = students; T = teacher; RPS = Rock, Paper, Scissors 1,2,3!)

- \*\* Use to practice any language you've been working on - a "universal game board."
- \*\* 3 colors (or symbols) of squares = 3 types of questions/activities. For example: *If you land on:*
  - Red** - the next person asks you a question from these cards.
  - Blue** - pick up this card and make a sentence or do what it says.
  - Black** - ask a group member a question from this list.
- \*\* Make the snakes and ladders moveable, so Ss can change them each game or not use them.
- \*\* If you'd like the Snakes and Ladders game board and/or the patterns for the snakes/ladders, email me at [julie\\_water@yahoo.com](mailto:julie_water@yahoo.com)

## 2. Go Fish

- \* 3-4 person groups with 2-3 sets of 10-12 cards in each set. Make cards that practice any language.
- \*\* Each S gets 5 cards. RSP with the winner (A) starting. A can ask B or C about any card A has in her hand. A: *Mari, do you like to swim?* Mari (B) answers truthfully and then looks at her cards. If she has that card, she gives it to A: *Here you are.* (If B has 2 of that card, she only gives one first.) If B doesn't have that card, B says, *Sorry!* A picks a card from the pile and it's B's turn. (If A got a card from B, A gets one more turn. A can ask B again for the same card if she thinks B may have had 2 or ask B for a different card or ask C.) Play continues in turn.  
When a player gets a set of the same card, she lays them down for one point. If a player runs out of cards, she takes one from the pile and the game continues. The game ends when all of the cards are laid out in front of the players in sets. The highest number of sets wins.
- \*\* Ss could also practice statements. For example, with time cards, Ss could practice: *It's \_\_\_:\_\_\_, I usually get up at \_\_\_:\_\_\_, Yesterday I was studying at \_\_\_:\_\_\_, Next week I'm going to \_\_\_ at \_\_\_:\_\_\_.* Her classmate could say *Uh-huh. / Oh, really? / Me, too.* before *Here you are.* or *Sorry.*

## 3. People Bingo (sample game board on next page)

- \*\* Google "making bingo cards online free" and you'll find many sites. (I use [teachnology.com/web\\_tools/materials/bingo/5/](http://teachnology.com/web_tools/materials/bingo/5/)) Just input the questions and print them. It'll randomize them for you so that each card is in different order.
- \*\* Ss go around the room asking and answering the questions. They write down the first name (in English!) in the square of whoever gives them a *Yes* answer. If they get a *No* answer, keep asking until they get a *Yes* answer or else go on to someone else. (I go over full sentence answers before we start – Yes, I do / don't / have/ haven't....) Then switch and the answerer asks. They can only write a S's name one time. (This insures they'll talk to many people!) After they get single, double or triple bingo, they show you their card. I give a sticker to the first several winners. You can play it again with *No* answers the same day or another day.
- \*\* This gives the Ss fun practice in asking and answering questions at any difficulty level. They also need to listen to the answer to know if they can write that name in the square.

4. **AGO** - A card game similar to UNO that has Ss practicing very useful questions and answers. There are 3 levels of difficulty. I use the lowest (blue) deck with JH 2<sup>nd</sup> year. I start the first-year HS Ss out with the blue and after one game, level up to the green deck. I use blue and green with JH 3<sup>rd</sup> year at different points in the year. They are about 900 yen per deck. [www.agocardgame.com/index.html](http://www.agocardgame.com/index.html)  
 \*\*Here's a site I highly recommend for ES, JH, & HS. You can look up game/activity ideas by the name of your school's text and the unit you're studying! [www.englipedia.net/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.englipedia.net/Pages/default.aspx)

### People Bingo

Have you ever been to a wedding?	Have you ever forgotten your umbrella?	Have you ever ridden a horse?	Have you ever met a famous person?	Have you ever been to a bazaar?
Have you ever been to a farm?	Have you ever stayed in the hospital?	Have you ever been to Tokyo Disneyland?	Have you ever made your lunch?	Have you ever watched a movie in Japanese?
Have you ever held a baby?	Have you ever eaten mango ice cream?	Have you ever taken the wrong bus?	Have you ever cooked dinner?	Have you ever changed trains?
Have you ever slept in class?	Have you ever been on a ?	Have you ever watched ice hockey?	Have you ever lost your cell phone?	Have you ever been to a rock concert?
Have you ever done kendo?	Have you ever given your father a gift?	Have you ever slept in a tent?	Have you ever sung a karaoke song in Japanese?	Have you ever borrowed a friend's CD?

Some other games:

### 5. **Gesture Game:**

I play this when the Ss are learning action verbs such as *dance, cook, ski, skate, swim*, etc. I make one set of cards with these words on them for every 4 Ss. The Ss sit in groups of 4 with two of them as a team. RPS to see who starts first. If Team A starts, Team B sets the timer for 45 seconds (or whatever time you want) and says, *Ready, go!* One person on Team A (Ai) picks the top card from the deck and acts it out. Her partner on Team A (Emi) guesses the word.

You could have them just say the word, or say a sentence like *You are dancing!* or *You can dance!* If Emi guessed the correct word, Ai goes on to the next card. If Ai can't read it or doesn't want to act it out, she can say *Pass* and go to the next card. Emi can only guess once, so if she's wrong, Ai should go to the next card. If Emi can't guess, she can say *Pass*.

Meanwhile, the other team is watching – Reika is holding the timer (says *Time's up* when the timer goes off) and Kana is helping keep track of the cards Team A got right, missed and/or passed on. Ss count the cards Emi guessed correctly and it's the other team's turn. After about 5 minutes, I rotate Ss into different groups so they get a chance to work with and watch other Ss, too! Most Ss really love this game!

## 6. *Guess the Picture:*

I play this as a whole class and in small groups with 8-10 pictures up on the blackboard or on a sheet of paper in the groups. First the Ss practice making sentences orally and/or in writing about each picture. Then the T chooses one of the pictures in her mind. The Ss take turns trying to guess which picture it is by saying the sentence for a particular picture. If the picture the S described isn't the one the T chose, she says, "Sorry!" Then the next S tries. When a S guesses the correct picture, she wins a point. (Could also be played in teams.) In small groups, the Ss take turns choosing the secret picture and have fun trying to guess which one their classmate chose.

## 7. *Animal Comparisons:*

I use an original A3 game board and a set of animal cards from [genkienglish.net](http://genkienglish.net) that I added stats to for such as how fast /heavy / tall / old / big ...the animal is. Ss roll a die to make a comparative sentence such as "I think animal A is bigger than animal B." Then they turn over the cards in the A / B decks to see if they were correct or not. If they were correct, they get a point. Other sentences: *the fastest, more dangerous than,...*)