

ՀՀ ԿՐԹՈՒԹՅԱՆ, ԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ,
ՄՇԱԿՈՒՅԹԻ
ԵՎ ՍՊՈՐՏԻ ՆԱԽԱՐԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ



«Երևանի Լեոյի անվան հ.65ավագ դպրոց»ՊՈԱԿ

ԱՎԱՐՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԵՏԱԶՈՏԱԿԱՆ ԱՇԽԱՏԱՆՔ

Թեմա՝ Teaching Vocabulary with the Help of Games

Կատարող՝ Կարապետյան Հասմիկ

Ղեկավար՝ Օհաննա Ավետիսյան

Teaching Vocabulary with the Help of Games

Vocabulary represents one of the most important skills necessary for teaching and learning a foreign language. It is the basis for the development of all the other skills: reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking, writing, spelling, and pronunciation. Vocabulary is the main tool for the students in their attempt to use English effectively. When confronted with a native English speaker, when watching a movie without subtitle or when listening to a favorite English song, when reading a text or when writing a letter to a friend, students will always need to operate with words. For developing the vocabulary teachers use a lot of word games which help them to learn and remember the words. In what follows, the focus of this research will be on why vocabulary is important, on the main reasons why teachers use games during the lessons and what kind of games help students to learn and remember new words.

Why is Vocabulary Important?

Talking about the importance of vocabulary, the linguist David Wilkins argued that: "Without grammar little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." Indeed, people need to use words in order to express themselves in any language. Most learners, too, acknowledge the importance of vocabulary acquisition. The students usually find it difficult to speak English fluently. They usually consider speaking and writing activities exhausting because they keep on using the same expressions and words and very soon their conversation is abruptly interrupted due to missing words. And the main reason for such communication problems is the lack of vocabulary. Other students are confronted with the problem of forgetting the words immediately after the teacher has elicited their meaning or after they have looked them in the dictionary, and this also a cause of the lack of vocabulary. The more words students learn, the easier they memorize them.

The teacher has an essential role in helping students to improve their vocabulary. Unfortunately, vocabulary teaching has not been enough responsive to such problems, and teachers have not recognized the tremendous importance of helping their students to develop an extensive vocabulary. Vocabulary is no longer treated as an add-on and teachers become more aware of the importance of vocabulary and attention is paid to the grammar of words, to collocations and to word frequency. Nevertheless, students still have difficulties in expressing themselves fluently and still consider speaking tasks exhausting.

In order to be able to have a rich vocabulary, not only do students need to learn as many words as possible, but they also need to remember them because, in fact, learning is remembering. Vocabulary knowledge implies accumulating individual items. It is a learning process that relies primarily on memory.

Another important technique is using the newly learned words. In this case, the teachers' role is also valuable. In the classroom, teachers should insist on practicing the new vocabulary by encouraging students to speak as much as possible and by designing vocabulary-centered activities and games. There are many valid reasons for using games in the language classrooms. When one considers the importance of communicative competence in the target language, a major goal of all language acquisition, and the need for the spontaneous and creative use of that language, one recognizes the significant role of word games in achieving these objectives. Students, in the informal atmosphere of gameplay, are less self-conscious and therefore more apt to experiment and freely participate in using the foreign language. In addition, games automatically stimulate student interest; a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques.

Reasons for including games in the language class are:

- They focus student attention on specific structures, grammatical patterns, and vocabulary items.
- They can function as reinforcement, review, and enrichment.
- They involve equal participation from both slow and fast learners.
- They can be adjusted to suit the individual ages and language levels of the student in the class.
- They contribute to the atmosphere of healthy competition, providing an outlet for the creative use of natural language in a non-stressful situation.
- They can be used in any language teaching situation and with any skill area whether reading, writing, speaking or listening.
- They provide immediate feedback for the teacher.
- They ensure maximum student participation for the minimum of teacher preparation.

Having justified the use of word games in the language class, accepting the fact that they provide not only a learning experience but an enjoyable one as well. The logical time for using games is toward the end of the lesson – the “dessert” after the main course. However, there is no hidebound rule about this. All this is relative and it will be the good judgment of the teacher that determines the appropriate time. (101 Word Games, 1980).

Choosing the Right Game

Which game should be played, once we have decided it is time for such an activity?

Many factors enter into deciding the answer to this question.

- The size of the class.
- Whether it is a class of adults or one of the children.
- The class level – elementary, intermediate, advanced.
- The structure being studied at the moment.
- The physical space you have to work with.
- The noise factor- will you disturb the classes around you?
- The students’ interests, in and out of class.
- The equipment and materials available.
- Cultural consideration.
- The time available for a game (101 Word Games, 1980).

Teacher Preparation

A game should be planned for the day’s lesson right along with exercises, dialogs and reading practice. It should not be an after-thought.

Some games require the use of additional equipment or materials, such as flashcards, small, easily identifiable objects, a bean bag, stopwatch, or pencil and paper. These are noted at the top of each game. In most cases, the equipment will already be available in the classroom. Where advance preparation is required for successful game play, it is recommended that the teacher assemble these materials prior to introducing the game. Certainly, the teacher should understand the game and how it is to be played before explaining the rules to the class. Once the rules are made clear, the teacher should see to it that they are adhered to. Changing the rules in mid-game is bad strategy. No game

has to be played exactly as presented; the teacher should always feel free to take it to the class. This is especially true when working with children. All of the class should be involved in one way or another. Everyone should be made to feel he has some part in the game, even though for the moment it is a passive role (101 Word Games, 1980).

The Role of Games during the Lesson

A game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun. There are two kinds of games: **competitive games**, in which players or teams race to be the first to reach the goal, and **co-operative games**, in which players or teams work together towards a common goal. 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 revising words and they give students the opportunity to use them in a memorable context.

Games and fun activities are a vital part of teaching English as a foreign language. Whether the games are used for teaching adults or children, games will liven up the lesson and ensure that the students will leave the classroom wanting more.

Games can be used to warm up the class before the lesson begins, during the lesson to give students a break or at the end of class when the teacher has a few minutes left to kill. There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of games that the teacher can play with the students. EFL games are used to test vocabulary, practice conversing, learn tenses - the list is endless.

Game № 1 Mixed letters - CHRISTMAS

A really fun way to review vocabulary at the end of the lesson or the week is to mix up the letters of each word. Write a word or words on the board. The students then race to identify the vocabulary.

Utyekr	Turkey	wreyaen	New Year	setrepn	Present
Gincokst	Stocking	loarcs	Carols	mpcieien	Mince pie
ayrpt	Party	rete	Tree	duelwnlime	Mulled wine


eedrirn	Reindeer	drac	Card	nwtire	Winter
olhyl	Holly	tloestime	Mistletoe	mevstaserich	Christmas Eve
doyliha	Holiday	owns	Snow	xobignady	Boxing Day


Game №2 Fill in the blanks with words from the puzzle.


On February 14, my boyfriend gave me a big box of _____ and a beautiful red _____. I gave him a _____ and a _____ card. In the evening we went to a fancy restaurant. We ordered a delicious _____ and a bottle of _____.


Puzzle


Find the words in the puzzle. Some words go across and some go down.



 valentine


 gift


 dinner


 chocolates


 rose

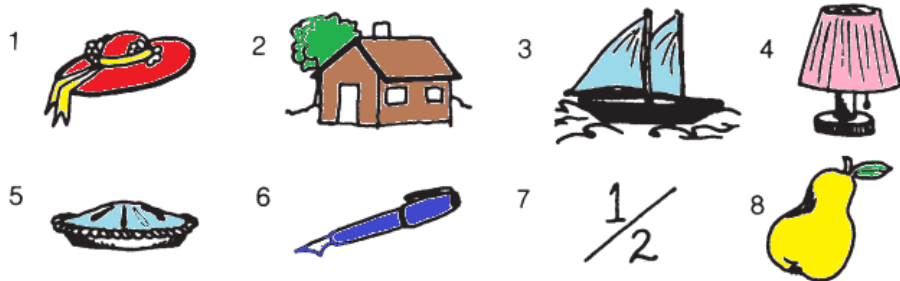

 wine

a	g	c	p	k	l	r	v	r	t
o	h	m	p	z	s	o	a	r	e
g	i	f	t	r	f	w	l	o	n
r	d	i	n	n	e	r	e	s	k
w	i	n	e	t	x	k	n	e	n
c	h	o	c	o	l	a	t	e	s
b	e	j	r	l	o	t	i	g	y
x	a	v	k	v	v	k	n	d	t
u	r	t	h	d	i	z	e	h	b
o	t	a	j	k	t	p	s	v	t

Game № 3 Change a letter.

Each picture illustrates a common word. Change one letter of each word to produce the name of an animal.

EXAMPLE:  ax — ox



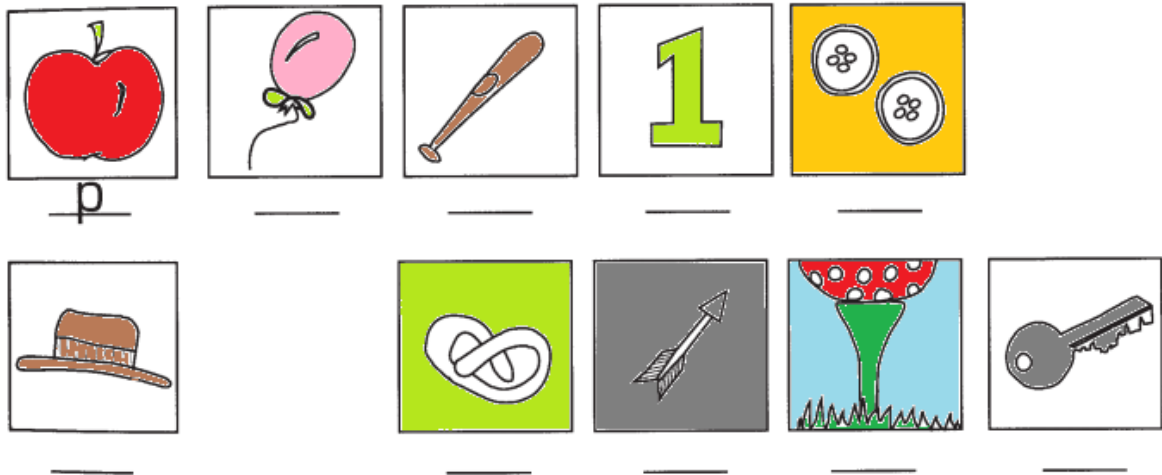
Game № 4 Five letters in common

The answer to each of the definitions below is a five-letter word. Each of these words ends in the same four letters but has a different first letter. What are they?

1. Power.
2. Vision.
3. Opposite of loose.
4. Not dark.
5. Opposite of wrong.
6. Not day.
7. Contend, struggle.
8. The number of this clue.

Game № 5 Middle riddle

Identify each of the pictures below. In the space beneath each picture write the middle letter of each word. For example, the first picture is an apple and the middle letter is P. When finished, the Middle Riddle will reveal an important thing that you can do to help the environment.



Game № 6 Board Race

Board Race is a fun game that is used for revising vocabulary, whether it be words from the lesson the teacher have just taught or words from a lesson the children taught last week. It can also be used at the start of the class to get students active. It is a great way of testing what the students already know about the subject they are about to teach.

- **Why use it?** Revising vocabulary; grammar
- **Who it's best for:** Appropriate for all levels and ages

How to play:

This is best played with 6 students or more - the more, the better. Here is a step by step explanation:

- Split the class into two teams and give each team a colored marker.

- If the class is large, it may be better to split the students into teams of 3 or 4.
- Draw a line down the middle of the board and write a topic at the top.
- The students must then write as many words as the teacher require related to the topic in the form of a relay race.
- Each team wins one point for each correct word. Any words that are unreadable or misspelled are not counted.

Game № 7 The Mime

Miming is an excellent way for students to practice their tenses and their verbs. It's also great for teachers with **minimal resources** or planning time or teachers who want to break up a longer lesson with something more interactive. It's adaptable to almost any language point that you might be focusing on.

This game works with any age group, although you will find that adults tire of this far quicker than children. To keep them engaged, relate what they will be miming to your groups' personal interests as best as possible.

- **Why use it:** Vocabulary, Speaking
- **Who it's best for:** All ages; best for young learners

How to play:

- Before the class, write out some actions - like washing the dishes - and put them in a bag.
- Split the class into two teams.
- Bring one student from each team to the front of the class and one of them choose an action from the bag.
- Have both students mime the action to their team.
- The first team to shout the correct answer wins a point.
- Repeat this until all students have mimed at least one action.

Game № 8 Hot Seat

Hot Seat allows students to build their vocabulary and encourages competition in the classroom. They are also able to practice their speaking and listening skills and it can be used for any level of learners.

- **Why use it?** Vocabulary; Speaking and Listening
- **Who it's best for:** All ages and levels

How to play:

- Split the class into 2 teams, or more if you have a large class.
- Elect one person from each team to sit in the Hot Seat, facing the classroom with the board behind them.
- Write a word on the board. One of the team members of the student in the hot seat must help the student guess the word by describing it. They have a limited amount of time and cannot say, spell or draw the word.
- Continue until each team member has described a word to the student in the Hot Seat.

In conclusion, using games is one of the most important ways to teach effectively in a language class. Games mean the world to children. Nothing is more fun than playing games for them because they feel happy and free while playing.

It does not matter indoor or outdoor we cannot deny the importance of games. If students learn with games, have fun, feel happy and free, it means that you have reached your goals. Games strengthen language skills, besides learners develop social skills and good relationships while they interact with each other.

The pupils have already got tired and bored of sitting and being in the same class and desks. Whatever your goal is (speaking, grammar or vocabulary) you must believe that every game you have students play, is much more useful than tons of exercises and worksheets and you get more positive results than anything else. Using games is an efficient way to teach English vocabulary in the classroom. This way you get the best results in the classroom. It arises students' motivation. Games prepare young learners for life and they acquire positive social attitudes. Games teach sharing, helping each other and working as a team. A child learns by doing, living, trying and imitating. So this kind of learning is lasting. During games, some feelings such as the pleasure of winning and the ambition of losing may arise. This gives to the teacher an idea about student's character. So games are must-have activities for hardworking teachers.

References

- George P. McCallum (101 Word Games), New York, Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Felicity O'Dell and Katie Head (Games for Vocabulary Practice), United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Internet Sources

- https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/001-094-s1-word-games.pdf
- <file:///D:/laura/Desktop/method%20paper/vocabulary-games-and-activities.pdf>
- <https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/10-best-games-esl-teachers>
- <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/teaching/teaching-and-learning-vocabulary.php>
- http://www.bestofthereader.ca/Ebooks/Word_Games_and_Puzzles.pdf