

Classroom Activities

Game 1: Word Rummy

Objectives:

- To practice sentence formation in English
- To develop the skill of constructing a story using a few sentences

Level: Grades V to VII

Materials: Two small stories. Each story has 30 words. One deck of playing card size cardboards for each group. Each group will get 60 cards. (360 for a class of 30 groups of students), pens, scissors

Time needed: One-and-half-hours

Procedure

Before the game, the facilitator has to:

Step 1: Select two very short stories or edit them (to about 25 words per story).

Step 2: Prepare playing card size rectangles with one side blank from reusable card sheets. The facilitator will need at least 60 of these per group. So you have to prepare six decks for a class of 30 students (5 students per group \times 6 groups = 30 students. 6 decks of 60 cards = 360 cards per class).

Step 3: Cut out the words of the stories and paste them on the cards. Each card must have only one word. Five such identical decks have to be created for a class of 30 learners.

Step 4: After writing one word from the story on every card use the leftover blank cards in each deck to write the punctuation marks. Keep two joker cards in each deck.

The Game Begins

Step 1: Divide the children into groups of five. Seat each group around a table.

Step 2: Shuffle the cards well and place one deck of cards face down on the table.

Step 3: Ask one member of the group to deal seven cards to each member of the group. The deck as specified above has at least 60 cards

Step 4: Explain the following rules to the participants.

- a. The participants must not show the cards to each other.
- b. They should play in turns, taking one card at a time from the deck of cards in the centre.
- c. The participants have to try and create at least one sentence using the words on the cards in their hand. They replace the card they have taken face down near the pack. The participants must use the word on the card and replace the card they do not need (i.e. the word they do not need). They have to include the word they have taken in the sentences in their hand.
- d. The sentence may be changed if another member of the group comes up with a better sentence.
- e. The members must discuss their sentences in the group to ensure that they are correct.
- f. Participants are not allowed to pick up a discarded card. This is the one that was put face down near the deck.

g. Lastly, it is important to remember that this is a game of cooperation, not of competition.

Step 5: Whenever a member of the group makes part of a sentence he/ she has to put it down or keep it separately. She has to try to complete the sentence in the next round. The cards need to be put down so that the group evaluates whether the sentence is correctly made.

(Remember this is a game of cooperation, if you put down the sentences you have made, the group members can help you to correct them or use the leftover cards in your hand)

Step 6: The game ends when a member makes a sentence or two sentences using all the cards in his/her hand. He/she shouts “rummy”.

Step 7: All the sentences, whether complete or incomplete have to be used to compose a story.

Step 8: The members have to try and use all the leftover cards. If they are unable to do so, they forfeit one mark for each leftover card.

Step 9: If the group is unable to finish the story using the words on the cards, they may use other words. However, the facilitator or the groups themselves can limit the number of words the members can use apart from the ones they have to make the game interesting.

Step 10: The facilitator must ensure that the sentences used to create the story are correct. He/she may help them to complete their tasks.

Step 11: Once the stories are ready, the groups present them in front of the class. There may be discussions around the stories.

Debrief: This game can be used in various ways. It could simply be used to discuss problems with sentence formation or it could be used for revision of the understanding of stories the students have already read (as this activity involves a reconstruction of the story). The stories may be taken from the text book. To reconstruct the stories using a limited set of words is a very high level cognitive skill. It could also be used for creating new stories with limited materials.

The students will enjoy recreating a story they already know. Many versions of the story may emerge causing much enjoyment.



Game 2: Word Gradients or Shades of Meaning

Objective:

To build an understanding of shades of meaning in synonymous adjectives

Level: Grades V to VII

Materials: 60 square sheets of sticky notes/paper slips for writing words for 6 groups for a class of 30 students, (if you use paper slips then you will need glue), a 24 inch x 5-inch-long cardboard sheet for each group.

Time needed: 1 hour

Procedure

Step 1: Brainstorm with the class to come up with adjectives related to feelings—angry, happy, sad, tired, afraid, etc.

Step 2: Write them on the board.

Step 3: Divide the students into groups of five.

Step 4: Ask the group to choose one adjective from the board. Each participant will write more synonyms of the adjectives they have chosen, e.g. angry, irritated, upset. They may use a dictionary or a thesaurus. Give them ten minutes. Then the group collates the adjectives written discussing whether they are synonyms or not. They may consult a dictionary. They must write at least 10 synonyms of an adjective as a group. Remember only ten synonyms of an adjective per group! E.g. angry, irritated, upset, anxious, uneasy, furious, irate...

Step 5: Give 10 slips to each group and ask them to write down the adjectives on the slips. Ask them to put the slips in an envelope.

Step 6: Ask the groups to exchange the envelopes.

Step 7: The groups now have to arrange the adjectives they have received from the other group according to degree of intensity of the emotion, e.g. livid, mad, annoyed, irritated, upset.

Step 8: Ask each group to stick the slips on a long rectangular cardboard in order of increasing intensity.

Step 9: Get each group to present its arrangement of semantic gradients or shades of meaning to the whole class, with two members holding up the cardboard

with the arranged slips while the other three explain the rationale behind the arrangement.

Step 10: Initiate a discussion around the arrangement of the words, for example, Is livid stronger than mad or is upset weaker than annoyed?

Step 11: For homework, ask the groups to write a story where they use at least five of the words discussed in the class in an appropriate manner.

Step 12: Read the best stories chosen by the groups in class, follow it up with a discussion on how the words have been used.

Debrief: When children write descriptions, they often use the same word many times. It is important for children to understand the use of the appropriate word and the shade of meaning that it conveys.

Game 3: Four Pictures One Word

Objective:

To develop vocabulary by understanding polysemy

Material: 50 slips of paper, gum, pictures and a rectangular card board

Time: 1 hour

Procedure:

Step 1: Create a list of 50 words from the lessons in the text book which students are studying in the class, or from any other book. Each word should have at least four meanings, two literal and two figurative.

Step 2: Search for pictures which represent the different meanings of each word.

Step 3: Cut the four pictures related to the four meanings of words and paste them on one sheet.

Step 4: Underneath the pictures write the number of letters and draw the number of blanks for the letters.

Step 5: Display it on the notice boards around the class room.

Step 6: Give a demonstration of predicting the word from the pictures by holding up one of the sheets and asking the children what one of the pictures represents (use a simpler word for demonstration. Begin the demonstration with the picture which shows literal meaning of the word for example drum – that make a noise, ear drum and then do on to drum roll)

Step 7: Ask students to go around with a notebook in hand noting down the words which they think represent all four pictures.

Step 8: Go around and help the students. Do not give the answers, help them by asking relevant questions.

Step 9: When the students finish ask them to write their names and pin their papers with the answers on a bulletin board

Step 10: Then write the answers on the board. Let the students correct their own papers and verify.

Step 11: Discuss why almost all the students did not guess certain words. The reasons may be because of unfamiliarity of context, picture unclear etc. Discuss how familiarity of context is very important. We cannot learn words in isolation. We remember them in association with their context.

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