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ABSTRACT

An annotated list of 29 games that can be used in the foreign language classroom is provided. An introductory listing of all the game titles gives their application (vocabulary and/or grammar), a rating (on a three-point scale) of the amount of preparation time required of the teacher, and the time required to play the game. Annotations follow for each of the games, giving the equipment required, the rules, and, in some cases, a variation and/or comments. A list of four other games that are available in many schools is also provided. (RM)

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## FOREIGN LANGUAGE GAMES

The games in this booklet were compiled by the following Baltimore County public school teachers: Suzanne Bradford, Jean Dorey, Joseph Glus, Barbara Roller, and Norman Smith, Jr. We wish to thank Mr. Art Miccozzi, Supervisor of Foreign Languages in Baltimore County, for permission to reprint the collection of games in this booklet.

Game	Page	Application	Preparation	Time Required
Headword	1	V	1	10-15 minutes
Missing Letters	1	V	1	10-15 minutes
Buried Words	1	V	1	10-15 minutes
Puzzle Word	2	V	1-2	10-15 minutes
Anagrams	2	V	2	15-20 minutes
Mosaic	2	G-V	1	20-25 minutes
Who Am I?	3	G-V	2-3	15 minutes
Because	3	G-V	1	20 minutes
ABC Game	3	V	1	15-20 minutes
Missing Nouns	4	V	2-3	15-20 minutes
Observation	4	V	2	15-20 minutes
Forbidden Words	4	V	2	15-20 minutes
Scrambled Letters	5	V	2-3	15-25 minutes
Memory Game	5	V	1	15-25 minutes
Cablegram	5	V	1	15-20 minutes
Hangman	6	V	2	10 minutes
Rumor	6	V	1	10 minutes
Cooperative Tale	6	G-V	1	15-20 minutes
Where Am I?	7	V	1	15-20 minutes
Verb Game	7	G	2	15 minutes
Password	7	V	2	15-20 minutes
20 Questions	8	G-V	3	15 minutes
I've Got A Secret	8	G-V	2-3	15 minutes
What's My Line?	9	G-V	2-3	15 minutes
Simon Says	9	V	1	10 minutes
Categories (Ani., Veg., Min.)	9	V	2	15 minutes
Let's Take A Trip	10	G-V	2-3	10-15 minutes
Ole (A Version of Bingo)	10	G	2-3	15-20 minutes
I Spy	10	G-V	2	10-15 minutes

V = Vocabulary, G = Grammar, 1-2-3 = Scale of Teacher Preparation (1 = very little)

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Baltimore City Public Schools, Model Early Childhood Learning Program, E.S.E.A. Title III. "This Is The Way I Help My Child."

Da Silva, Zenia Sacks. *Usted y Yo*, Teachers Annotated Edition. The MacMillan Company, MacMillan Limited, London, 1969.

Xerox Education Publications. *44 Bright Ideas*. Education Center, Columbus, Ohio 43216.

- Title:** *Headword*
- Equipment:** Blackboard, pencil and paper for each player
- Rules:** The teacher, or the first player, chosen by lot, writes any word on the blackboard. All players, including the one who writes the word on the blackboard, then try to make as many words as they can think of out of the letters that make up the Headword. Players do not need to use all or any given number of the letters of the Headword, but they are limited to those that appear. They cannot use any letter in a new word they make more often than it appears in the headword. That player wins who is able to find the largest number of words he can make.
- Comments:** This is an excellent game for building vocabulary.

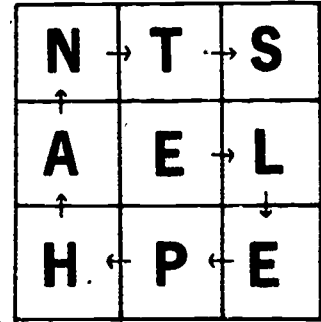
- Title:** *Missing Letters*
- Equipment:** Blackboard (c. a large piece of paper), chalk, pencil and paper for each player
- Rules:** The teacher or a player writes the first and last letters of a 4 or 5 (or more) letter word on a blackboard or a large piece of paper. He marks an "X" between the first and last letter of the word for each of the missing letters: e.g., BxxD for Bird. The rest of the players in turn must try to guess the missing letters. The player who guesses the word writes a new word in the same manner for all to guess. It is important to limit the game to words of a specified number of letters, depending on the ages and abilities of the players.

- Title:** *Buried Words*
- Equipment:** Blackboard and chalk, or paper and pencil for each player
- Rules:** Each player in turn writes down a sentence in which a noun (name of a city, country, animal, person, fruit, or any other) is buried, because portions of the noun are split up between several words that mean something else entirely.
- Example: I amaZE BRAzilians with tricks.
- Variation:** The teacher, or the first player chosen by the lot, composes one sentence, like the one described, and writes it on the blackboard. The first player to guess the hidden word may then come up and write his sentence with a hidden word, and so on.

**Title:** *Puzzle Word*

**Equipment:** Pencil and paper for each player

**Rules:** Each player draws a square, about 3" x 3", on his own sheet of paper and divides it into 9 smaller squares (see diagram). He then decides on a nine letter word and writes that word into the square, one letter per space. The letters must be arranged so that starting with the first, each following letter is placed into an adjacent square that has a common side with the previous one.



The example, using the word "elephants" shown below, demonstrates one way in which the letters must be written down so that starting with the letter "E" a pencil line can connect all the letters in their proper order going from one square to the next, without doubling back across any square or letter. Once every player has made his own puzzle out of sight of all others, each passes his paper to the next player to his right, who then tries to solve it. That player wins who solves his puzzle first.

**Title:** *Anagrams*

**Equipment:** Paper and pencil for each player

**Rules:** Each player is required to think of a five-letter noun (limited, if desired, to animals, place names, or any other category). He then writes down the letters of the word so that they are totally scrambled, and passes his jumbled word to the next player to his right. The player wins who first unscrambles the letters and forms either the original word or any other word, using all the letters given him by the player to his left. Of course, words of more than five letters may be used if the players so decide in advance.

**Variation:** Before he passes his paper to the next player, each player scrambles a list of three or more nouns, or a short sentence of five words in which each word, though scrambled, is written separately.

**Title:** *Mosaic*

**Equipment:** Blackboard and chalk, two pieces of paper and one pencil for each player.

**Rules:** Each player in turn writes any noun he chooses on the blackboard or on a large sheet of paper that all can see. All players are then required to write a story, using all the nouns listed. Each may use the nouns in any order he chooses. The winner may be the one all agree is the best.

- Title:** *Who Am I?*
- Equipment:** None
- Rules:** Have the students write a short biography of a famous person or possibly a classmate without saying the name of the person. After hearing the biography, his classmates must guess who it is. To aid the students in their biographies, it may be useful to pre-teach some expressions: I was born . . . . I spent most of my life . . . . I am famous for . . . .
- Comments:** Allow 20-30 seconds for guessing so there is time for everyone. Or collect the papers, correct them and reintroduce them some other day. Limit each biography to 30-40 seconds. Useful for Levels I-V.

- Title:** *Because*
- Equipment:** None
- Rules:** The first player describes any event in the simplest way; e.g., "The toast burned." The second player is required to give a reason; e.g., "Because the toaster was turned up too high." The third player (or the first, in a game of two) must then state a probable effect - "And everyone had charcoal for breakfast." The next player starts with a new statement and so on.

- Title:** *The ABC Game*
- Equipment:** None
- Rules:** The first player is chosen by lot. He names any letter of the alphabet. Each of the players in turn must name within 15 seconds or any other agreed-to time period, a word that begins with that letter. Any player who fails to do so is out of the game. Once each child has taken his turn, the next player (chosen by lot or by agreement among players) names any other letter of the alphabet, and so on. No player may use a previously mentioned word. The last remaining player is the winner.
- Variation:** This game may be limited to cities, countries, nouns, verbs, flowers, animals, or any subject with which the children are familiar.

**Title:** *Missing Nouns*

**Equipment:** Blackboard and chalk, and pencil and paper for each player.

**Rules:** The teacher, or player chosen by lot, writes a story on the blackboard, leaving out all the nouns, leaving empty spaces in their place, and marking each space with a number.

Example: 1 went to the 2 in order to find a 3 . When he came to 4 , he went into the 5 and spoke to a 6 . . . . . and so on.

Each child either draws a picture or writes down a noun. He numbers it according to the space into which it is supposed to fit. At the end of the agreed-to time period, each player reads the whole story or sentence, including the nouns he has drawn or written, each placed into its proper space.

**Title:** *Observation*

**Equipment:** Paper and pencil for each player; a number of small common objects.

**Rules:** All players remain outside the classroom. Meanwhile, one player chosen by lot, or the teacher, places a number of objects on a table inside the room. The number and variety of the objects to be arranged depend on the level and experience of the players.

Each player then returns to the room alone, and stays in it for an agreed length of time, looking at the heaped objects on the table. He then leaves the room, and once outside, writes down all the objects that he saw and can remember. The player or players win who can accurately remember, name, and describe one or more qualities of each object that was heaped on the table. For very young players, it is sufficient that each remember the objects only.

**Variation:** Instead of requiring players to leave the room, the designated first player or teacher may place the objects in a large paper bag. This bag is passed around the room. Each player is then required to reach into the bag, but may not look into it. He may feel the objects in the bag for 20 seconds, and then must pass it to the next player.

When all players have had their turns, each then either recites or writes down the objects that he can identify.

**Comments:** Levels I-V

**Title:** *Forbidden Words*

**Equipment:** None

**Rules:** One player is chosen to be "it" and leaves the room or stays out of earshot of the other players. The rest agree on a "forbidden word." When "it" is recalled, all others engage him in conversation and ask him questions designed to make him use the "forbidden word" as often as possible during an agreed-to period of time. One player keeps score as to the number of times "it" uses the "forbidden word." But none let "it" know what word was chosen until the end of his turn. The object of "it" is to try to discover the "forbidden word" and avoid saying it. If he is able to guess the word chosen, his turn ends and the game resumes with another player as "it." Each mention of the "forbidden word" scores 1 point against "it." But if he is able to guess the word before the end of his turn, his total score is erased. At the end of a complete round, those players who have no score are given additional turns until only one player remains who has no score. He is declared the winner of the game.

**Comments:** Levels I-V

**Title:** *Scrambled Letters*

**Equipment:** 26 (or more) small squares of paper, about 1" x 1" each. Write one letter of the alphabet on each. Prepare several sets for advanced groups.

**Rules:** All letters are shuffled and turned face down in the center of the table. The first player, chosen by lot, takes three slips of paper from the center and turns them face up. If possible, he makes a word out of two or more of the letters. Each following player then continues and plays in the same manner as the first until all have had one turn. Thereafter, each player continues to draw one letter in turn, using it for different words in combinations with other letters or words he already has placed in front of himself on the table.

At his turn, each player may demand from any other player either whole words or individual letters that another has in front of him on the table, which he can use to enlarge a word he has already placed or to make a new word, using one or more of his own letters. That player wins who, after all letters in the center have been drawn, has used the largest number of letters for completed words placed on the table in front of himself after he has deducted all unused letters that he drew and was not able to use to make words. A player at his turn may not demand individual letters that form part of a completed word from another player.

**Comments:** Useful for Levels I-V

**Title:** *The Memory Game*

**Equipment:** None

**Rules:** Players sit in a circle or decide on the order of play. The first player, chosen by lot, declares what he has for sale. EXAMPLE: "I sell apples." The next player, and each in turn, also declares what he has for sale. After all the players have declared themselves, the first player announces: "My neighbor has . . . . for sale," naming whatever the second player declared previously. Each player continues to announce his next neighbor's goods until all have spoken. Any player who fails to announce and remember what his neighbor has for sale is out of the game. At the end of that round, the first player announces what the next two players have for sale, and so on. The object is to see who can remember, in subsequent rounds, the goods first declared for sale by each, for an increasingly large number of players. The problem is made more difficult when players drop out of the game. But if each player pays attention, he is reminded by the players who follow him in the present round of what remains for sale in the next one.

**Comments:** The more players, the better.

**Title:** *Cablegram*

**Equipment:** None

**Rules:** Each player in turn calls out one letter (or more if less than three players are in the game) of the alphabet. Each writes down every letter as it is named. The object is for each player to compose a cable message, using the letters in the given order as the first letter for each succeeding word. The messages must make sense.

Example: WPFBWYCIIS

Will pay for broken window if you come home soon.

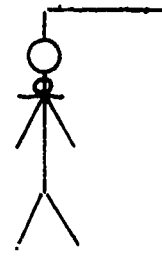


**Title:** *Hangman*

**Equipment:** Blackboard

**Rules:** The teacher, or a player chosen by lot, decides on a word or short sentence that is well known to all players. He then draws a series of dashes on the blackboard, each representing one letter of the sentence with each group of dashes representing one word separated from the next.

Example: "I am silly," would be shown as \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .



Each player in turn may then guess any letter of the alphabet. When he guesses a letter that is part of the sentence and that has not yet been entered, then the first player or teacher must write it over the proper dash. In case of a double-letter word, or whenever the same letter appears more than once in a sentence, the first player writes the letter in each dash in which that letter appears.

If a player fails to guess a letter used in the word or sentence, he draws a circle for the first error, a line each for the body, legs, arms, of a stick man for each of the succeeding errors, one line of a gallows for each of the following errors, a rope, and finally a noose around the man's head for the rest, one line for each error (see illustration). When a player completes his drawing, he is out of the game. The player who either names the last remaining open letter or who guesses the whole sentence even before all the letters are named, wins. Any player who tries to guess the whole sentence, but fails, must add two strokes to his hanged man at that turn.

**Title:** *Rumor*

**Equipment:** None

**Rules:** Players are seated in a circle. The first, chosen by lot, whispers a short sentence in the ear of the second. The second player repeats what he heard or what he thinks he heard by whispering this into the ear of the third, and so on, until the message reaches the last player. He then repeats the message as he received it and compares it to the sentence that the first player announces as the one that he whispered to the second player.

**Comments:** Useful for Levels I-V

**Title:** *Cooperative Tale*

**Equipment:** None

**Rules:** One player -or an adult- starts a story by telling a few sentences; e.g., "Once upon a time I went to the Zoo . . ." Each following player in turn adds whatever he wishes to the last player's sentence; e.g., "The keeper had left a cage door open . . ." "And so, just as I got there, a bear walked out . . ." and so on.

**Title:** *Where Am I?*

**Equipment:** None

**Rules:** One player is chosen to be "it." The class asks him a question like, "Are you south of Washington, D.C.?" which may only be answered by a "yes" or "no." The person who guesses the location is now "it."

**Variation:** The teacher is always "it." The class is divided into two groups. The players question the teacher until one succeeds. The team the successful player is on gets one point. Game can be any specified number of points.

**Title:** *Verb Game for Review of Tenses*

**Equipment:** None

**Rules:** Divide the class into two teams. Have the first person from each team go to the board. Give the students at the Board the infinitive, the tense, and the person of the verb, (i.e., *ir. imperfecto. yo*). The first person to correctly write the verb on the board wins a point for his team. You can then move on to the next two people on the team and so on around the room.

**Comments:** This game may also be done orally and may be used in Levels I-V.

**Title:** *Password*

**Equipment:** Dial to indicate number of points awarded for word.  
List of words.

**Rules:** Class is divided into two groups. A leader is chosen for each group. The teacher shows one selected word to both leaders who then in turn give clues in the language to the other team members who try to guess the word. Points are awarded according to the number of clues required to identify the word.

**Comments:** If an answer given is a form of the word, the student gets one try to identify the specific word. Suitable for Levels II-V.

**Title:** *20 Questions*

**Rules:** Think of a person, dead or alive, or of a place or a thing and tell the class whether it is a person, place or thing. The class will then have to guess in 20 questions who or what it is. They can ask questions such as:

For a person: Is he living now?  
Is he a famous person?

For a place: Is it a city?  
Is it in Europe?

For a thing: Is it metal?  
Is it found in the schoolroom?

**Comments:** Useful for Levels I-V.

**Title:** *I've Got A Secret*

**Rules:** Have the student think of something interesting and write it on a piece of paper. One secret can be something personal, something related to the class, or something related to another person in the class. Then have the student stand up and say to the class: "I've Got A Secret." Now it is up to his classmates to guess the secret by asking questions such as:

Does it have to do with you, yourself?  
Does it have to do with a classmate?

**Comments:** To give everyone a chance, limit the number of questions. Or time allowed for each secret should be limited to two minutes. Useful for Levels III-V.

**Title:** *What's My Line?*

**Equipment:** None

**Rules:** Have student choose the name of an occupation or profession. In the interest of fairness you may want to limit the choice to a certain list written on the board. The class is then to guess the occupation. Before they are allowed to ask directly: Are you a doctor? Are you a carpenter? etc. They must ask at least six other questions such as: Do you work with your hands? Do you work outside? Do you work in a factory?, etc.

**Comments:** The questions given should enable the students to get the clues. They may need help in framing questions. Make sure everyone gets to ask questions. Useful for Levels II-V.

- Title:** *Simon Says (Simon dit, etc.)*
- Equipment:** No equipment is necessary. However it may be helpful in lower levels where the number of commands and the amount of vocabulary known by students is limited, to have each student have on his desk a pencil, pen, book, notebook, etc.
- Rules:** The teacher or a selected student is to give commands, himself following each as he calls it. The rest of the students in the class are to follow the command or directions given if prefaced by, "Simon says..." When a student fails to follow the rules of the game, he is "out" until a new Simon (leader) is selected. The new Simon is that student who is the last to remain in a given round.
- Comments:** Commands should be given as rapidly as possible, allowing for a reasonable amount of time for them to be carried out in order to make the game fun and worthwhile for the students. May be used in Levels I-V, the commands given becoming more difficult as the students' knowledge of the language increases.

- Title:** *Categories*
- Equipment:** None
- Rules:** Each player chooses one category such as animals, clothes, food, etc. at every turn. The next player is required to name one member of that category. If the second player gives the correct answer, he then demands that the third player name any member of a category that he chooses, and so on. Any player who fails to name a member of a requested category or who gives an incorrect answer may not, at that turn, ask the next player to name a category.
- Comments:** Useful for Levels I-V.

- Title:** *Let's Take A Trip*
- Equipment:** None
- Rules:** The teacher (or a selected student) says, "We are going to take a trip. But before we go, we'll have to pack a suitcase. We'll just pack certain things. These things will begin with the letter     (ex 'a')." Going about the room in a predetermined order, one student says, "I must repeat, I'm going on a trip and I'm going to pack     (any noun starting with the letter 'a')." As soon as a student is unable to think of another thing that starts with the selected letter, choose another letter sound for things to be packed.
- Another variation of the game would be for the teacher to say, "I'm going on a trip and I'm going to pack     (a noun starting with any letter)." The next student must begin his list of items packed with the object mentioned by the preceding student and add his own selection. As soon as a student misses by not being able to think of a new item to pack or by not being able to recall what was packed by the previous person, select another letter sound for things to be packed.
- Comments:** Useful for Levels I-V. However, in lower levels lack of vocabulary will prohibit students from continuing with one letter for a relatively long period of time.

- Title:** *Olé (A Version of Bingo)*
- Equipment:** Each student should have two sheets of paper.
- Rules:** Have the students write down ten verb forms in the preterite (imperfect, present, etc.) tense and then arrange them in alphabetical order. After the list is made, then have the students copy each of the forms onto a separate little slip of paper, and hand the ten slips to the teacher. Be sure students keep the original alphabetical list for themselves. Place each student's ten slips in a basket and mix them together. The teacher will begin the game of Olé by pulling out one slip at a time and reading the word on it to the class. As the teacher reads, if the student has the word on his list, he is to check it off. The person who can check off all his ten words first wins. He must shout "Olé" and read off his ten words for checking.
- Comments:** This game can also be used with adjectives, idiomatic expressions, numbers, etc. Useful for Levels I-V.

- Title:** *I Spy*
- Equipment:** None
- Rules:** The game is started by having a selected student or the teacher selecting some object within eyesight and saying: "I spy something that starts with \_\_\_\_ (gives the initial letter)." Then, going about the room, in some predetermined order, the spy calls on students who in turn try to guess what the object spied is. The student who correctly guesses the item replaces the "spy" and the game begins another round.
- Comments:** This game is very good for reviewing vocabulary and the alphabet. However, it is played too slowly to be used often. Good for 5 or 10 minutes at the end of the period. Levels I-II

#### OTHER GAMES WHICH ARE AVAILABLE IN MANY SCHOOLS

Directions for the following are included in the games:

1. Loto-Vocabulary game similar to Bingo  
Jeux Educatifs "F.N."  
Fernand Nathan, Editeur  
Paris 21.382-2-1958
2. Monopoly-Parker Brothers
3. Scrabble-Selchow and Righter Co.  
2215 Union Boulevard  
Bay Shore, New York 11706
4. Card Games-Gessler Publishing Company, Inc., New York, New York 10010  
Las 7 Familias (Vocab.)  
Historia de Espana (Culture)  
Buena Apetito (Vocabulary)  
Victoria (Vocabulary)  
Los Deportes (Vocabulary)  
Repondes S'il Vous Plait (Culture)  
Grands Rois et Grandes Figures (Culture)  
Bon Apetit (Vocabulary)  
Victoire (Vocabulary)  
Les Sports (Vocabulary)  
Vingt Questions (Culture)