Resource Kit # 2

Grammar Games & Activities

Games and Activities for Promoting Grammar Practice and Speaking in EFL/ESL Young Learner Classrooms

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(ERES) English Raven Educational Resources

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Grammar Games and Activities

Table of Contents

Introduction/How to Use this Kit 3

Grammar Games and Activities Sorted by Function 4

- Adjectives [1] 4
- Adjectives [2] 4
- Articles [1] a/an 6
- Articles [2] a(n)/the/’zero’ 6
- "Be" Verb [1] 1st and 2nd Person 7
- "Be" Verb [2]: 1st/2nd Person 8
- Can [1] Ability 8
- Can/Could/May: Permission 8
- Can/Could: Requests 9
- Demonstratives [1] 10
- Future [1]: Going to (go) 10
- Future [2]: Going to ____ 11
- Future [3]: Going to ____ 11
- Future [4]: Going to ____ 12
- Future [5]: Going to ____ 12
- Have (got) [1] Possession 13
- Have (got) [2] Possession 13
- Have (got) [3]: Body Parts 14
- Imperatives [1] Commands 14
- Imperatives [2] Instructions 15
- Must/Have to [1]: Obligation 15
- Mustn’t [1]: Prohibition 16
- Nouns [1]: Singular and Plural 16
- Past Simple [1] Verb ‘to be’ 17
- Past Simple [2] Verb ‘to be’ + Adjective 17
- Past Simple [3] Regular 18
- Past Simple [4] Irregular 19
- Past Simple [5] Regular and Irregular 19
- Possessives [1] ‘s 20
- Possessives [2] Adjectives 21
- Possessives [3] Pronouns 21
- Prepositions [1] Location 22

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present Continuous [1]</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Continuous [2]</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Simple [1]</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Simple [2]</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Simple [3]</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Simple Vs. Present Continuous</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns [1] Subject and Object</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantifiers [1] “some”</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantifiers [2]: (a/an)(some)(#)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantifiers [3]: few/little/lot</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantifiers [4]: some/any/much/many</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantifiers [5]: some/any</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantifiers [6]: some/any</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions [1]: What</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is/are [1] (seen)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is/are [2] (exist)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Introduction / How to Use this Kit**

This Activity and Resource Kit focuses on classroom games and activities oriented around meaningful practice of grammar items in English. The vast majority of the activities have been designed to be simple and easy to apply, without requiring much in the way of additional resources or materials. Wherever possible, games have been presented in a way that makes full use of any natural or genuine communicative aspects embodied in the grammar constructions, though while there is emphasis on understanding the grammar and its functional and communicative aspects, most of the games also highlight the importance of using the grammar accurately.

The activities have been presented in the contents according to grammatical item and function. This is not to say that some kinds of grammar are to be attempted before others or in any kind of sequence – the listing here is designed for practical reference purposes when teachers are going from language/grammar presented in textbooks or other learning materials to some kind of fun and practical application in the classroom.

To help in selecting games and activities for different proficiency levels, a color bar scheme has been included under the main heading for each activity. These are fairly vague recommendations, certainly not set in stone and generally open to interpretation by individual teachers selecting activities for particular contexts. The color scheme is set up to refer to low/beginner, intermediate and high levels of proficiency as follows:

- **Low/Beginner Levels**
- **Intermediate Levels**
- **High Levels**

Note that many of the activities indicate that they could be applied to any of the three levels suggested above, and this highlights the fact that many of them include suggestions for variations to make them easier or harder. In grammar learning, it ought also to be pointed out that students will need to recycle grammar constructions regularly and many of the games/activities presented here can be reused time and time again.

Several of the activities have some suggestions for scoring procedures, either in an individual student sense or for team-oriented procedures. This is not to suggest that the games will not be effective without scoring procedures, and in fact, a classroom that can operate positively and effectively without over-competitive scoring in activities is thought of as model. However, in environments where student motivation may be low, scoring can be a good way to encourage students to invest more energy into the activity.

More than anything else, these activity suggestions and guidelines are intended as a starting point for teachers to adapt and build their own stock of in-class games and activities that can be applied relatively quickly and easily. Just remember that games in language classes can only really be judged as effective if they motivate students to try harder, raise their consciousness about English form and function, and result in some sort of “pay off” in terms of language development.

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Adjectives [1]  
Function: Describing Nouns in context

For this rotation game, one student thinks of or identifies a noun either in the immediate environment or in some other place (perhaps a specific place cued by the teacher). The following student then attempts to describe the noun by inserting an appropriate adjective. For example:

Teacher:  
Student 1:  
Student 2:  
Student 3:  
Student 4:  
Student 5:  
Student 6:  
Student 7:  

As the illustration shows, this game is good for describing nouns appropriate for a given context and adjectives that accurately describe them, but it also allows for other grammar elements to be incorporated, for example demonstratives, articles and plural markers.

Adjectives [2]  
Function: Appropriate nouns for adjectives

This game is similar to Adjectives [1], except the adjective is named first rather than the noun, creating a challenge of locating appropriate nouns that could feasibly combine with the specified adjective. This is a little decontextualized and may require students to draw on general/world knowledge. For example:

Teacher:  
Student 1:  
Student 2:  
Student 3:  
Student 4:  
Student 5:  
Student 6:  
Student 7:  

It may be a good idea not to be too fussy about these adjective-noun combinations, as appropriateness can be somewhat subjective and it is important to let the students be creative with the language when they have the urge to do so.

Students think of an animal, object or person. Each student then gives clues to a partner using adjectives and counting how many clues the partner needs to guess the answer (in this game, the less tries the better, as it indicates that adjectives selected for clues were helpful and accurate). Try to ensure that students provide at least two but no more than three adjectives in the clues to make them more helpful. For example:

Student A: It’s small and cute.
Student B: Is it a puppy?
Student A: No. It’s furry and soft.
Student B: Is it a kitten?
Student A: Yes, it is.

This game can be scaffolded by making a vocabulary list on the whiteboard first or having students work from flashcards depicting the objects, people or animals.

Adverbs [1]: Manner Function: Describing verbs in terms of “manner”

The teacher writes a list of verbs for everyday actions on one side of the whiteboard and a list of adverbs of manner (generally how an action is done) on the other. The teacher then starts a memory-rotation sequence in the following way:

Teacher: I write messily.
Student 1: I write messily and I speak loudly.
Student 2: I write messily, speak loudly and dance badly.
Student 3: I write messily, speak loudly, dance badly and sing beautifully.
Student 4: I write messily, speak loudly, dance badly, sing beautifully and run fast.

The game can be made more difficult by requiring students to use pronouns for actions of other students in the class, or by removing either all the verbs or all the adverbs from the lists on the whiteboard.

Adverbs [2]: Frequency Function: Describing verbs in terms of “how often”?

The teacher brainstorms a series of basic actions with the students and writes them on the board (for example, “go to school”, “brush my teeth”, “read a book”, “do homework”, etc), ensuring that there is a good range in terms of how often some of them would occur in the students’ lives. Some comical additions such as “dance with a gorilla” or “kiss an elephant’s foot” could also help to make the activity more fun once it gets started. When a fair list of actions has been completed, the teacher asks one student how often they do this action and the other students then indicate if they do that action as frequently as the
first student. For example:

Teacher: *How often do you go to the library, Charlie?*
Student 1: *I sometimes go to the library.*
Student 2: *I sometimes go to the library, too.*
Student 3: *I often go to the library.*
Student 4: *I never go to the library.*

The game can do several rotations, using a different action each time and starting with a different student each time. If students are still not all that familiar with the various frequency adverbs, the teacher could draw a chart or graph on the whiteboard to illustrate comparisons between *always, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, never.*

**Articles [1]: a / an**  
*Function: Basic application - identifying nouns*

- Ask students to imagine they are in someone’s house (it could be anyone’s house: the teacher’s, one of the student’s, the house of a famous person well known to the students, etc). Ask the students what they can see, allowing them to identify anything they like. Here is an example of how the game can be run:

Student 1: *In Mike’s house I can see a table.*
Student 2: *In Mike’s house I can see a table and an apple.*
Student 3: *In Mike’s house I can see a table, an apple and a spoon.*
Student 4: *In Mike’s house I can see a table, an apple, a spoon and an umbrella.*

To stay in the game, students need to remember what has been identified by previous students and use the correct indefinite article for each noun mentioned.

**Articles [2]: a(n)/the/zero**  
*Function: Specific application for different articles*

- This game is called “talented animals” and is designed to help students apply a range of articles correctly to specific common lexical categories. Students are going to create their own “talented” animals that can play a musical instrument and play a kind of sport. These categories open the way for application of the indefinite (a/an) article, the definite (the) article, and the zero article. The activity begins with the teacher ruling off three columns on the whiteboard. In the first column, the class brainstorms a list of animals. In the second column they choose a list of musical instruments. In the third column the class selects a variety of different sports. Once these three lists have been filled out, the teacher indicates that the first column with require “a” or “an” (it is assumed students will already have been exposed to the basic consonant/vowel rule that dictates which of these two forms are to be applied), the second column requires “the” and the third column requires nothing (i.e., neither “a/an” or “the”. Students then set out to create their “talented animals”, which they describe for the class:
- English Raven Activity and Resource Kit for Teachers of English to Young Learners [Part 2] -

Student 1:  *My talented animal is a tiger. It can play the guitar and it can play soccer.*

Student 2:  *My talented animal is a lizard. It can play the trumpet and it can play basketball.*

Student 3:  *My talented animal is an elephant. It can play the violin and it can play baseball.*

Student 4:  *My talented animal is an ant. It can play the drums and it can play badminton.*

Once students become accustomed to this pattern, other descriptive categories can be added which also apply articles in regular and specific ways. For example, the students can be required to indicate how often the animals practice their instruments and sports (requiring an indefinite article, as in “twice a week” or “five times a day”), what countries the animals come from (requiring a zero article except in cases such as “The United States”), what time they eat breakfast, lunch and dinner (zero article), and what school subjects they are good at (also zero article).

**“Be” Verb [1]: 1st/2nd Person**  
*Function: Linking Pronouns with adjectives*

The teacher elicits a range of adjectives from students that could be used to describe people. Care needs to be taken to ensure that none of them are too negative or potentially embarrassing as ‘labels’ for the students. List these on the whiteboard and ensure there are more of them than the total number of students in the classroom. Then commence a rotation-memory game as per this example:

**Teacher:**  
*I am tall.*

**Student 1:**  
*You are tall [points at teacher] and I am short.*

**Student 2:**  
*You are tall [points at teacher] and you are short [points at student 1]. I am clever.*

**Student 3:**  
*You are tall [points at teacher] you are short [points at student 1] and you are clever [points at student 2]. I am shy.*

**Student 4:**  
*You are tall [points at teacher] you are short [points at student 1], you are clever [student 2] and you are shy [student 3]. I am brave.*

At some point, the game can be adapted so that it uses contracted forms of the verb to “be” with the relevant pronouns (for example, “I’m” and “You’re”), or the 2nd person form could be used to address the student immediately next to oneself and the 3rd person forms are then used for the remainder of the previous students, so that in the previous game illustrated, student 4’s statement would look like:

**Student 4:**  
*He is tall [points at teacher] she is short [points at student 1], he is clever [student 2] and you are shy [student 3]. I am brave.*

Another variation of the game is to select adjectives that have silly or negative connotations, in which case the students can get practice using negation with the verb to “be” – for example:

**Student 4:**  
*He is not silly [points at teacher] she is not stupid [points at student 1],*
he is not smelly [student 2] and you are not ugly [student 3]. I am not crazy.

“Be” Verb [2]: 1st/2nd Person

Function: Yes/No Questions + Occupations

This game is called “Find the Astronaut”, but it could well be called “Find the Hero” or “Find the Thief” for that matter. It would be useful to have flashcards for this game, but strips of paper with occupations written on them would be just as practical. One student steps out of the room while the teacher distributes the occupation cards to individual students. They then hide these cards but must remember what their occupations are. The other student then returns and has three chances to “Find the Astronaut”. Here’s an example:

Student 1: Are you the astronaut? [Points at student 2]
Student 2: No, I'm not [holds up her card]. I’m the doctor.
Student 1: Are you the astronaut? [Points at student 4]
Student 4: No, I’m not [holds up his card]. I’m the police officer.
Student 1: Are you the astronaut? [Points at student 7]
Student 7: Yes, I am! [holds up his card]. I'm the astronaut!

Students get three points for guessing who the astronaut is within three turns, but any student can lose a point by not using the verb to “be” plus pronoun and/or negative particle when they attempt to answer a student’s question.

Can [1]: Ability

Function: Showing ability to do something

This game is called “Marvelous Machines”. Students in pairs or groups set out to invent a new machine that can somehow help them in their lives. They give the invention a name (for example “Homework Machine” or “Cleaning Machine”) and then tell the rest of the class what the machine can do.

Homework Machine: It can get a perfect score. It can do homework quickly. It can read many books.

Cleaning Machine: It can wash clothes. It can tidy my room. It can wash Dad’s car.

Can/Could/May: Permission

Function: Asking (politely) for permission

This game is called “Fussy Genie”. The basic idea is that students will each gain access to a genie from a magic lamp that has the ability to give the students anything they desire –
but there are two catches! The first is that the genie will only appear for 30 seconds, so
the students will need to speak quickly to ask as many permission requests as possible.
The second catch is that the genie is incredibly fussy about good manners and will not
grant wishes if it is not asked politely. Students will need to use “Can I...?”, “Could I...?” or
“May I...?” before the requests or the genie will ignore them.

Student 1: Can I have 1 million dollars?
Teacher/Genie: Yes, you can. What’s next?
Student 1: I want lots of gold!
Teacher/Genie: You can’t have that, because you’re rude! What’s next?
Student 1: Can I have lots of gold?
Teacher/Genie: Yes, you can. What’s next?

Etc.

Students gain a point for each polite permission request they make within the 30-second
time limit. This can be counted with the teacher holding up a finger with each request that
is successful, or the students chanting the tally aloud as it builds.

Basically speaking, ‘can’, ‘could’ or ‘may’ can all be used for this sort of activity, and there
are a few ways to ensure that all three forms are practiced. One way is to make the genie
either ‘super’ or ‘singularly’ fussy. In the first adaptation, the genie requires requests to
happen in a sequence (essentially, the first request being with “can I”, the second with
“could I” and the third with “may I”). The genie rejects the request if the form is omitted
or used outside the set sequence. For the second extension, the teacher can explain that
there are actually three ‘brother’ genies inside the lamp named “Can”, “Could” and “May”.
Students will not immediately know which genie emerges, but they will need to
experiment until they find the right form for the respective genie. For example:

Student 1: Can I have 1 million dollars?
Teacher/Genie: No, you may not. What’s next?
Student 1: Could I have 1 million dollars?
Teacher/Genie: No, you may not. What’s next?
Student 1: May I have 1 million dollars?
Teacher/Genie: Yes, you may. What’s next?

Etc.

Essentially the teacher/genie’s first response should indicate to students what form to go
with, so it encourages students to pay closer attention to what they hear.

Can/Could: Requests

Function: Making (polite) requests

This is basically a small variation on “Fussy Genie” (explained above for Can/Could/May
for Permission). The idea is the same except that the focus is on the genie being asked to
do something itself rather than just grant permission to the speaker. Thus, the exchange
would look something like:

Student 1: Can you give me 1 million dollars?
Teacher/Genie: Yes, I can. What's next?
Student 1: I want lots of gold!
Teacher/Genie: I can't give you that, because you're rude! What's next?
Student 1: Can you give me lots of gold?
Teacher/Genie: Yes, I can. What's next?
Etc.

**Demonstratives [1]**

Function: *This/these* and *that/those* for ‘close’ or ‘far’

One student is asked to pretend he/she is an alien from another planet who knows nothing about even simple things on Earth. The student’s task is to walk around the class asking other students questions about items or people, for example:

Student 1: What's *this*? [pointing]
Student 2: It's a chair.
Student 1: What are *these*? [pointing]
Student 3: They're pencils.
Student 1: What's *that*? [pointing away across room]
Student 4: It's a door.
Student 1: What are *those*? [pointing at pictures on the wall]
Student 5: They are pictures.

To ensure targeted practice, the teacher may like to explain that in this alien language, questions need to be asked in a ‘this ⇒ these, that ⇒ those’ sequence. After a student has asked four questions in this manner, you can say that the ‘alien’ is returned to the mother spacecraft to rest, and another alien is chosen to ask new questions. As the activity is happening, the teacher could listen and write down information that was conveyed by ‘alien’ and ‘earthling’ using correct structure, ignoring the information that was not. In this way, the teacher can allocate class points for the activity and present a list of all the information that was accurately conveyed.

**Future [1]: Going to (go)**

Function: Future (decided) actions with “go”

This game is primarily designed to help students apply “going to” for future decisions, but also aims to help students differentiate between the “going to” future structure and the basic “go” verb (this can often be confusing for students when learning this construction for the first time). The game is called “Magic Carpet”: the teacher announces that each student has been given a magic carpet that allows him/her to travel to any place he/she likes the following day. Students then state where they are going to go.

Teacher: [To student 1] Where are you going to go tomorrow?
Student 1: I'm going to go to Africa. [To student 2] Where are you going to go?
Student 2: I'm going to go to Disneyland. [To student 3] Where are you going to go?
Student 3: I'm going to go to Europe. [To student 4] Where are you going to go?
Student 4: *I’m going to go to the North Pole.* [To student 5] *Where are you going to go?*

Student 5: *I’m going to go to the moon.* [To student 6] *Where are you going to go?*

Student 6: *I’m going to go to Japan.* [To student 7] *Where are you going to go?*

Etc.

To apply 3rd person forms (important in practicing how to convert the “be” verb within this structure), students could then practice summarizing where each student in the class is going to go.

### Future [2]: Going to _____
**Function:** Future (decided) actions

This is a simple game called “After school today”. The teacher writes down 3-5 times (for example 5 o’clock, 7 o’clock and 9 o’clock) that follow the current class time on the same day. Students make some decisions about what they are going to do at each time and then report these to the class:

Class: *What are you going to do at 5 o’clock?*
Student 1: *I’m going to watch TV.*

Class: *What are you going to do at 7 o’clock?*
Student 1: *I’m going to eat dinner.*

Class: *What are you going to do at 9 o’clock?*
Student 1: *I’m going to play computer games.*

### Future [3]: Going to _____
**Function:** Future (decided) actions as “polite excuses”

This is similar to Future [2] Going to except that it is more contextualized and possibly more fun/humorous. The teacher informs the class that it is his/her intention to go to each student’s home over the weekend to give them some extra English instruction. Of course, students are not likely to be keen at all on this proposition, so they will need to provide polite excuses to the teacher – in this case using “going to ___” to show the action planned for the future has already been decided.

Teacher: *May I come to your house for some extra English lessons this weekend?*
Student 1: *I’m sorry. I’m going to watch a movie this weekend.*
Student 2: *I’m sorry. I’m going to play with friends this weekend.*
Student 3: *I’m sorry. I’m going to play soccer this weekend.*

Etc.

This game can be extended further, given that an entire weekend represents quite a lot of free time. The teacher could mention specific days and/or times to facilitate a greater range of “excuses” from each student.

The game can also be shifted into third person usage by adapting it so that the teacher...
pretends to want to come to the student’s house to talk to his/her parents about English grades. In this case, the students will need to create excuses for their parents and apply the 3rd person. Either application tends to be a lot of fun and semi-realistic, as students in general would definitely not appreciate a visit to their home by a teacher, or at least will enjoy pretending that this is the case.

**Future [4]: Going to _____**  
**Function:** Future (decided) actions

This game is called “the 3-day President”, but the title could easily be adapted if the role or time span decided on are different. Basically, students are informed that they are going to be their country’s President for just three days, and they are allowed to make one important change or action for each day of their presidency.

Student 1:  
*I’m going to be the president for three days. On day 1 I’m going to end all homework for students. On day 2 I’m going to fly to India and ride an elephant. On day 3 I’m going to give lots of money to poor people.*

Greater variation can be built into responses by giving every student a day of Presidency in sequence. Thus, a student who becomes President on day 5 cannot do or make what a student did as President on day 2 (because the President “is already going to do that”). Note that while this game can be fun, generally speaking it is hard for students to come up with language for potentially “presidential” decisions, so they may need help in refining their planned actions.

**Future [5]: Going to _____**  
**Function:** Future predictions based on current events

For this game, students need to make realistic predictions based on evidence they can see or know in the here-and-now. For this, they will need a range of prompts from the teacher, for example:

Teacher:  
*There are many big dark clouds in the sky.*

Student 1:  
*It’s going to rain.*

Teacher:  
*The class test scores were very low.*

Student 2:  
*The teacher is going to be angry.*

Teacher:  
*She left her jacket at home.*

Student 3:  
*She’s going to be cold.*

Teacher:  
*He forgot his lunch money.*

Student 4:  
*He’s not going to eat lunch today.*

Etc.

This game could also be played with visual rather than oral prompts, as it can lead to more creative predictions and give students the opportunity to explain rationales.
Have got [1]: (possession)  
**Function:** To indicate possession/ownership

This is a pair work game where two students guess about the contents of each other’s school bags. While there is/are could be used in this context, it is not as appropriate as “have got” in that the latter usually signifies ownership and it can be safely assumed that most items in schoolbags probably belong to the bag’s owner. Students continue guessing until they have found out four or five things about the contents of their partners’ bags, at which point they go to the teacher together to report their findings:

Student A:  
Have you got a pencil in your bag?

Student B:  
No, I haven’t. Have you got a teddy bear in your bag?

Student A:  
Yes I have! Have you got a lunch box in your bag?

Student B:  
Yes, I have! Have you got a cookie in your bag?

A quick and realistic way to check this game’s results would be for the teacher to actually look into one of the student’s bags while that student’s partner reports (using the 3rd person) about the contents. Note that ‘have got’ is generally more common in British English than American English, which usually just uses ‘have’ and ‘do you have?’

Have got [2]: (possession)  
**Function:** To indicate possession/ownership

This differs from *Have got [1]* above in that it involves what I like to call ‘substitute realia’ – or flashcards. Taking one set of flashcards oriented around a given theme (for example, animals, food, countries, toys, or for that matter even letters of the alphabet) and distributing them out to students, effectively the students are being handed ‘ownership’ of something. This is a class inclusive game that allows students to guess and take each other’s things! Basically, each student hides their own card and then takes a turn to guess what another student in the classroom has got. If they are correct, they take that card, place it face-up on the desk in the front of them, and this indicates one point. The student that was asked automatically gets a chance to ‘ask back’ to the original student before the turn passes to the next student in the round. When all hidden cards have been guessed and taken from the original owners, the game is over and points may be tallied. Here’s how the Q&A could be applied:

Student 1:  
[To student 4] Have you got a lion?.

Student 4:  
No, I haven’t. [To student 1] Have you got a penguin?

Student 1:  
No, I haven’t.

Student 2:  
[To student 7] Have you got a rabbit?

Student 7:  
Yes, I have! [Hands the card to student 2, then asks] Have you got a fish?

Student 2:  
No, I haven’t.

Student 3:  
[To student 5] Have you got a frog?

Student 5:  
No, I haven’t. [To student 3] Have you got a lion?

Student 3:  
Yes, I have! [Hands the card to student 5].

This game is surprisingly easy to apply, but it can also become surprisingly easy for some
students to pick on others by ‘ganging up on them’. It may be a good idea to make sure that each student is only asked once directly in each round, excluding the ‘ask back’ question chance.

**Have got [3]: (body parts)**

Function: To indicate physical attributes / parts

This game utilizes the alternate function of ‘have got’ in terms of the way it is used to describe things physically. Generally it works best with animals and associated hints to guess which animals are which, and in this particular application I call the game “Blind Man’s Zoo”. Students pair up and one student either blindfolds him/herself or feigns blindness. Together with their “seeing” partners, they take a tour of an imaginary zoo. The sight-enabled students receive either a flashcard depicting an animal or a piece of paper with an animal name written on it. Note that this version uses the contracted ‘s form for “has”. The game then proceeds thus (with student 2 being the ‘blinded’ half of the team):

Student 1:  *Wow! Look at this animal!*
Student 2:  *I can’t see it. What’s it got?*
Student 1:  *It’s got a big head and a long tail.*
Student 2:  *Is it a horse?*
Student 1:  *No. It’s got sharp teeth and a strong body.*
Student 2:  *Is it a wolf?*
Student 1:  *No. It’s got yellow fur and big paws.*
Student 2:  *Is it a lion?*
Student 1:  *Yes, it is.*

The object of the game is to try and guess the animal in less than three rounds and 6 body descriptions (so a maximum of two hints per utterance). If the game is to be scored, points could be allocated on a 3-2-1 basis, with 3 for guessing the animal after two hints, 2 for four hints, 1 for six hints, and 0 for not guessing the animal in less than three rounds. After a turn, students swap roles and new animals are distributed around the class.

**Imperatives [1]: (commands)**

Function: Asking others to perform actions

This is straight up “Simon Says”, a game almost anybody knows how to play. With the teacher going first, commands are given to students to perform various actions, only to be obeyed if the speaker inserts “Simon says…“ before each command. Students too slow to obey, or those that obey when “Simon says” has been omitted, have to sit out the rest of the game, until only one student is left as the winner of that round. In subsequent rounds, students themselves take on the role of “Simon” and command their classmates to perform actions. A fun game, students can quickly become tired of it if it is used for too long and/or too often.
Imperatives [2]: (instructions)  

Function: Giving instructions to be followed

This imperatives game is based on the idea of a cooking lesson, but is also useful for having students convert simple tense verbs back to their base forms to use them in an imperative application. First, the teacher writes a story/account on the whiteboard about somebody cooking something, using present simple or present progressive tense for the actions that take place in the cooking sequence. The students identify each action in the account, and as they do so, the teacher underlines these verbs. The teacher then announces that it is the next day and this imaginary person has forgotten how to cook! The teacher takes the role of this forgetful person and the students try to help him/her by using the actions from the account in imperative form for here-and-now application.

Teacher: So what am I cooking?
Students: Spaghetti.
Teacher: Spaghetti? OK, what’s first?
Students: Go to the supermarket and buy noodles, meat, tomatoes, garlic, mushrooms and onions.
Teacher: OK, what’s next?
Students: Fill a pot with water. Put it on the stove. Turn on the gas and wait for the water to boil.
Teacher: What should I do while I’m waiting for the water to boil?
Students: Cut up the mushrooms. Mash the tomatoes. Crush the garlic. Slice up the onions.
Teacher: Cut up the mushrooms – like this? [Pretends to ‘mash’ the mushrooms]
Students: No! Cut! Cut! Like this! [Students show the teacher a ‘cutting’ motion]
Teacher: Oh, OK. So I’ve done all that. Hey, this water is boiling! What’s next?
Students: Put the noodles in the pot.
Etc.

This game can be a lot of fun, and can be made more fun by simply reading aloud the original account without showing it to students on a whiteboard (a good way to check if they are actually able to use imperative forms because their attention span is divided somewhat between remembering the sequence of the actions and giving the next instruction). If you are teaching in a unique EFL context, have students attempt to instruct you on how to make a recipe from their own culture, an activity that brings very genuine communication to the overall activity.

Must/Have to [1]: Obligation  

Function: To indicate obligation to do something

This game is called “King/Queen of the Classroom”, and gives students a chance to make playful hypothetical rules for the classroom. To do this, they need to decide on rules and use “must” in order to express them. They can also use “have to”, though it is suggested the forms be introduced in game fashion separately before attempting to mix them.
Teacher: OK, Steve. You’re King of the Classroom. What are your five rules?

Student 1: Rule 1: Everybody must give me some money every day. Rule 2: The teacher must be kind all the time. Rule 3: Everybody must wear yellow socks. Rule 4: Everybody must lend me a pencil. Rule 5: Girls must give some lunch to the boys every day.

The teacher can follow this up with some practice of “can” for permission, by asking students questions, for example:

Teacher: In King Steve’s classroom, can you wear blue socks?
Student 2: No, I can’t. I must wear yellow socks.
Teacher: In King Steve’s classroom, can the teacher be angry?
Student 3: No, he can’t. He must be kind.
Teacher: In King Steve’s classroom, can students lend a pencil to the king?
Student 4: Yes, they can.

Note that the game can only really seem fair and fun if a majority if not all of the students get a chance to make some rules.

**Mustn’t [1]: Prohibition**

*Function: To indicate prohibited behavior*

This is a simple game that builds the concept of ‘prohibition’ from the “Don’t…” imperative and applies it in a variety of settings. The teacher begins by listing different locations likely to be relevant to the students (for example “at home”, “at school”, “in the library”, “on the school bus”, “in the science lab”, etc). As a class, “Don’t…” sentences are found to indicate what sorts of actions/behavior should not be engaged in for each setting. The teacher then gives each student a turn at converting one of these into a statement with “mustn’t” by giving a location cue:

Teacher: At home...
Student 1: We mustn’t make a mess at home.
Teacher: On the bus...
Student 1: We mustn’t fight on the bus.
Teacher: In the science lab...
Student 1: We mustn’t spill things in the science lab.

**Nouns [1]: Singular & Plural**

*Function: Using nouns in singular and plural*

Take students on an imaginary shopping trip (perhaps by using flashcards to indicate different shopping locations). The class builds a collective "wish list" in each store, identifying desired nouns for each place, applying singular and plural quantifiers and suffix markers as per the following example:

Teacher: OK, we’re going into the toy store. What do we want here?
Student 1: I want a toy car.
Student 2: He wants a toy car and I want three dolls.
Student 3: He wants a toy car, she wants three dolls, and I want a yo-yo.
Student 4: He wants a toy car, she wants three dolls, she wants a yo-yo, and I want two robots.
Student 5: He wants a toy car, she wants three dolls, she wants a yo-yo, he wants two robots, and I want a game CD.

Other stores (such as supermarket, bakery, department store, etc) can be added to the shopping trip to repeat the practice with different nouns connected to appropriate contexts.

Past Simple [1]: Verb ‘to be’  
Function: Expressing ‘state’ before ‘now’

This game requires students to try and apply basic occupations vocabulary with the verb ‘to be’ in the past. Students basically pretend that they were alive at some time in the past. First the teacher writes a list of occupations on the whiteboard, making sure they are general and universal enough to have been around both now and in the past. Each student is then given a piece of paper with the heading “200 years ago, I was...” Each student completes this sentence by choosing an occupation from the list. They then write a list of the other students’ names and make a guess at what occupation they might have been. They write this as a full sentence using “I think (name) was...”. Each student then gets a chance to ask another student in the class, as per the following example:

Student 1: I think Milly was a scientist. Were you a scientist?  
Student 6: No, I wasn’t.  
Student 2: I think Geoff was a doctor. Were you a doctor?  
Student 5: Yes, I was!  
Student 3: I think Peter was a pirate. Were you a pirate?  
Student 8: No, I wasn’t.

Note that students take turns to make a guess, and respond if asked, but they may also listen to exchanges between other pairs and adjust their guess list based on the details they are hearing. The general objective is to eventually have every student’s guess list correct, taking however many rounds of guessing necessary to complete this process.

Past Simple [2]: Verb ‘to be’ + Adj  
Function: Describing things from the past

This is a simple game called “dream animals”. Tell the students that they are going to pretend that the night before they had a strange dream about a weird and wonderful animal. Their job as a class will be to ‘build’ this strange animal together. Two simple activities to help set up the process could be to draw on the whiteboard a picture of a person in bed with a dream ‘bubble’ above the bed. Next to that, a quick review of adjectives could take place where students brainstorm an assortment of adjectives and the teacher lists them on the board. Students are then asked to add a feature to the
dream each as per this pattern:

Student A: Last night I had a dream about a strange animal. It was big.
Student B: Last night I had a dream about a strange animal. It was scary.
Student C: Last night I had a dream about a strange animal. It was hairy.
Student D: Last night I had a dream about a strange animal. Its legs were green.
Student E: Last night I had a dream about a strange animal. Its eyes were pink.
Etc.

When every student has had a chance to add a characteristic to the animal, the students attempt to draw the animal the class created. It could be a good idea to place students in pairs or groups to do this, so that they can help each other and reapply the language to try and remember the features given. Students or student teams could be allocated points according to the number of stated features they manage to incorporate into their final pictures. Note that the teacher him/herself needs to be able to recall the different features mentioned as well in order to be able to assess how well students have recalled them!

The game can be easily adapted according to the needs of classes of different proficiency levels. For example, a teacher might like to remove the “Last night I had a dream about a strange animal” lead in, though it needs to be pointed out that this lead-in phrase reinforces the context to which the language is being applied and also encourages pronoun usage for the antecedent “strange animal”. It should also be OK for students to use sentences with “have” for body parts (for example “it had 27 eyes”).

**Past Simple [3]: Regular**

Function: Applying regular past –ed endings

This is a simple quiz designed to raise students’ consciousness about regular past tense endings and their specific pronunciation according to the phonemic sounds at the end of the main verb (basically “–ed” can be pronounced /t/, /id/ or /d/). The teacher begins by asking students about various activities they did earlier or the day before, and as these are provided by students they are listed on the whiteboard in their base (uninflected) forms. The teacher should continue eliciting verbs until there is a bank large enough to include several regular past tense forms covering the three variations in possible pronunciation for “ed”, including miming or hinting at more verbs when the students get stuck (note: it is probably a good idea for the teacher to make a quick list of basic verbs the students may know or need to know prior to the class). When there is a large enough bank of verbs on the whiteboard, the teacher should circle the verbs that take a regular past tense ending, including students in the identification process if they have already learned something about the difference between regular and irregular past tense verbs. The teacher then quizzes each student in turn by stating a verb, which the student must then convert to a past tense form. After they have stated that, students then need to pronounce the ending sound in isolation:

Teacher: Listen.
Student A: Listened – “d”.
Teacher: Paint.
Student B: Painted – “id”.

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The game can be altered in a couple of ways to make it easier and/or incorporate the verbs into more meaningful sentences. For example, the teacher could color-code the circling of the verbs on the whiteboard so that the colors correspond to one of the three “ed” pronunciations. The teacher could mime or act out the actions, requiring students to make a statement about what the teacher did yesterday (for example, the teacher mimics listen, and the student says, ‘Yesterday you listened – “d”). To encourage a little more risk-taking, the teacher could also give second chances to students if they do not get the ending correct on the first try.

### Past Simple [4]: Irregular

**Function:** Applying irregular past tense forms

This is basically the same as Past Simple [3] except that the emphasis this time is specifically on irregular past tense verb endings. It may not be a good idea to attempt any coding, however, as the rules for which past tense form used are highly intricate and it is perhaps better for students to try and remember irregular past tense forms directly from the root words.

### Past Simple [5]: Regular & Irregular

**Function:** Applying past tense forms

This works in essentially the same way as Past Simple [3] and Past Simple [4], except that in this case all/any verbs are listed on the whiteboard and students may be called on to convert any of them into past tense forms. One way to organize and/or simplify this is to ask each student to convert two verbs, one of which is regular and one of which is irregular (though students may not know which is which, knowing that there will be one of each gives them a helpful start).

### Past Simple [6]

**Function:** Past Tense for real life and Yes/No Question Forms

This activity forms an effective follow-up to both past tense and Yes/No Question formation instruction. It is valuable in facilitating use of past tense in application to real life contexts and also active Q&A amongst students. The teacher writes the following question on the whiteboard “What did you do yesterday?” Three slips of blank paper are then distributed to each student, on which they are required to write about three
actions/activities they did the previous day. They should do this silently and not show their papers to other students. The teacher then gathers up the papers and shuffles them so that they are in random order, and then proceeds to write each statement on the whiteboard. If a student has written a sentence incorrectly on a slip of paper, the teacher can correct it before writing it on the board (possibly an effective error correction technique which doesn’t draw attention to specific students). While the teacher is writing, students copy each sentence down on a separate piece of paper so that the sentences form a long list.

Once all of the sentences have been copied down, it is the students’ job to find out which students did which activities. To find out, they will have to convert the sentences in the list to Yes/No Question forms and then begin asking random students. Every sentence in the list should end up with a student’s name beside it. Note that it is likely that some or even many students may have indicated the same kinds of activities, which is fine because it provides meaningful repetition of statements that are meaningful for a majority of the students in the class.

The activity can be adapted slightly by having students write sentences twice (on separate slips of paper), one of which they retain and the other they hand to the teacher. This can be effective in showing students how the teacher corrects any mistakes they made, but they may also need the second slip of paper to remember what activities they selected once other students in the classroom commence asking them questions. The activity can also be extended as a writing activity in which students summarize the findings by writing about what each student did the day before. Through this format, the students can also be shown how to condense three sentences into one explaining three actions performed by a single person (for example, instead of “Jane wrote a letter. Jane drank some soda. Jane went to school”, students could be encouraged to summarize it as “Jane wrote a letter, drank some soda, and went to school”).

**Possessives [1]: ‘s**

**Function:** Showing ownership in the 3rd person

Have students give the teacher something small and simple that they own, without other students seeing what has been given (one way to do this could be to have each student go out into the corridor with their school bag and select something from its contents, which goes into a small sack or box held by the teacher). Once each student has contributed something, run a guessing game whereby students take turns trying to guess who owns each item. For example:

Teacher:  
*Whose is this? [holds up a pencil]*

Student 1:  
*Is it Rachel’s pencil?*

Teacher:  
*No it isn’t Rachel’s pencil. [To another student] Whose is this?*

Student 2:  
*Is it Darren’s pencil?*

Teacher:  
*Why yes! Yes, it is.*

Allow up to three guesses per item, and allocate a point for each correct guess. Obviously, it is important not to ask a student who happens to own the item being held up for inspection.
Possessives [2]: Adjectives

Function: Showing ownership in 1st, 2nd, 3rd person

The teacher thinks of a person everyone in the class is likely to know. This could be a famous person (such as a celebrity), a book character, or even a student in the class. The teacher then provides hints about the person utilizing possessive adjectives, and each student takes a turn to try and guess who the person is based on the clues provided so far. For example:

Teacher: His sweater is blue.
Student 1: Is it Tom?
Teacher: No, it isn’t. His hair is brown.
Student 2: Is it Steven?
Teacher: No, it isn’t. His shoes are blue and red.
Student 3: Is it Patrick?
Teacher: Yes, it’s Patrick!

The game can be adapted in two ways. One is to allow students themselves to choose the mystery person and provide hints that other students use to guess who the person is. The other application involves using a different possessive pronoun function each round. In the example above, 3rd person was utilized, though the teacher easily could have said “My sweater is blue” to which the student would guess “Are you Tom?” in order to apply 1st and 2nd person possessive adjectives.

Possessives [3]: Pronouns

Function: Showing ownership in 1st, 2nd, 3rd person

This is similar to Possessives [1], in that students are asked to put personal items into a sack or box. In this application, however, students then approach the teacher individually and identify first their own object and then try to guess the ownership for the remaining items. For example:

Student 1: This eraser is mine.
Teacher: OK. And how about this green pencil? Whose is this?
Student 1: It’s hers. [Points at Student 3] Is it yours?
Student 2: No, it’s not mine.
Student 1: It’s his. [Points at Student 4] Is it yours?
Student 4: Yes, it’s mine.

A good way to ‘score’ this game and to encourage accuracy is the give penalties for each grammar mistake made and points for each person asked. Thus, if a student tries questioning four students in the class and uses grammar incorrectly on two of those occasions, they would still finish their turn with 2 points. On the other hand, if no mistakes were made they would finish with 4 points. Students could also be given points and penalties for their responses to questions.
Prepositions [1]: Location

Function: Using prepositions to indicate location

This game utilizes prepositions within an appropriate communicative theme – helping somebody to find something. The teacher takes 10-12 simple items into the classroom (for example, a ball, a ruler, a jacket, a book, etc) and then hands each item to a student in the classroom. The teacher then closes his/her eyes for 10 seconds, during which the students place the items in different places in the classroom. The teacher then looks for each item, by asking individual students for help:

Teacher: Susan, can you help me? I can't find my ruler.
Student 1: It's under the desk.
Teacher: Under the desk? Under whose desk?
Student 1: It's under Tony's desk.
Teacher: Ah yes – thanks! Brian, can you help me? I can't find my ball.
Student 2: It's in Steven's bag.
Etc.

The advantage of this activity is that the communication is relatively genuine, and the students take an active part in setting up the locations. Following the teacher’s model, students themselves could then become the people who try to locate things.

Prepositions [2]: Time

Function: Using appropriate prepositions of time

This game works from the idea of giving details about an invitation to a birthday party, using appropriate prepositions for time (“in” for months, “on” for days/dates, and “at” for clock times). The teacher begins by explaining that each student is going to set a time for their birthday parties. The teacher draws a large grid on the whiteboard. Along the top are students’ names, and down the side are listings for month, day, date and time. The teacher then asks a series of questions to each student to complete the information in the grid, basically:

1) What month is your birthday?
2) What day is your birthday party on?
3) What is the date for your birthday party?
4) What time does the party start?

As these questions are asked to each student (note: you may need to use a calendar and/or encourage students to just use their imaginations, but the more realistic the information the better), the teacher can help students to utilize the correct preposition for each of the categories (namely, 1 = in, 2 = on, 3 = on, 4 = at). Once the grid is completed, the teacher pretends to have “lost” his/her invitation to each student’s birthday party, and gets the students to help him/her retrieve the information.

Teacher: Fred, when is Sarah’s birthday?
Student 1: It’s in May.
Teacher:  Right. And Julie, what day is Sarah’s birthday party?
Student 2:  It’s on Thursday.
Teacher:  Thanks. Tim, what date is the party?
Student 3:  It’s on the 12th of May.
Teacher:  Ah, yes. Rebecca, what time does Sarah’s party start?
Student 4:  It starts at 6 o’clock.

If this is the students’ first time with applying prepositions of time or they do not yet have the confidence to use ordinal numbers, etc., the information can be scaled back to whichever section seems most appropriate and attainable for the students (for example, just months and days).

**Prepositions [3]: Time**

Function: Using appropriate prepositions of time

This activity draws on the same prepositions as in Prepositions [2]: Time, except in this case students are going to report to the class the exact time they were born and the information is expanded to include years and a specific sequence (as indicated by the teacher). This may very likely require some preparation and a little homework on the part of the students to get set up (i.e., they may need to go home and get the information from their parents). Each student then takes a turn to state when they were born:

Teacher:  What year were you born Michael?
Student 1:  I was born in 1992.
Teacher:  What month were you born?
Student 1:  I was born in July.
Teacher:  What date were you born?
Student 1:  I was born on the twenty-second.
Teacher:  What day were you born?
Student 1:  I was born on a Tuesday.
Teacher:  What time exactly were you born?
Student 1:  I was born at exactly 1.09am.

Following a report like this, students could then be asked to ask each other the details about the time of their birth, recording the information on a piece of paper and/or a pre-prepared grid. As a fun follow up, students could try to work out exactly how old they are (in years, months, days, hours and minutes) at that particular time in the classroom.

**Prepositions [4]: Movement**

Function: Applying prepositions to movement

This is essentially a listening activity called “Find the hidden treasure“ – designed to help students identify and understand prepositions such as “out of”, “through”, “over”, “into”, “across”, “under”, “around”, etc., as they are applied to movement. The teacher begins by drawing a ‘treasure map’ on the whiteboard, which the students copy down onto blank paper. At one side of the map should be a starting point (such as a house) and on the
other side should be the hidden treasure in some sort of specific location. The teacher then gives oral directions to the students on how to get to the treasure, and they trace the route on their maps. The teacher then repeats the directions and traces the route on the map on the whiteboard. Students compare to see if they have followed the original directions correctly. Students who have done so have found the treasure.

The map should include a variety of obstacles and/or simple landforms to make full use of the variety of possible prepositions of movement. Depending on the map produced, a set of treasure hunt instructions might sound like this:

Teacher: Go out of your house and down the street – watch out for cars! At the end of the street, go to the edge of the lake and get into the boat. Go across the lake (don’t fall out of the boat, because there are some monster fish in the water!) and get out of the boat next to the big tree. Go around the dark forest (there are goblins in there!), then over the small bridge (the big bridge is broken and dangerous) and through the tunnel under the mountains. Go over the railway tracks and through the castle gate into the castle garden. Go through the castle garden to the big tower. Go up the stairs to the third floor. You’ll find the treasure there in a big old wooden chest.

The game can become more interactive by pre-preparing maps for students and having them select their own places for treasure, which they then direct other students to find.

**Present Continuous [1]**

Function: Expressing actions happening ‘now’

This is a simple miming game where students take turns performing an action in front of the other students, who try to make guesses about what the student is doing using the Present Continuous. The game could be made a little more competitive by counting each incorrect guess as a penalty, with the object of the game being to try and keep the number of penalties to an absolute minimum (this version is great for encouraging accuracy, but be aware that is can also stifle risk-taking).

**Present Continuous [2]**

Function: Expressing actions happening ‘now’

This game is called “Why can’t you play with me right now?” (though it could of course be given any number of other names) and focuses on the idea of using present continuous to explain that a present ongoing action prevents us from doing another (suggested/offered) activity. In this game, one student pretends to call the other students on the telephone. The student says “Let’s go out to play“, and the other students reply in the negative, offering an explanation as to why. For example:

Student 1: Let’s go out to play!
Student 2: I can’t. I’m washing the dishes right now.
Student 1:  *Let’s go out to play!*
Student 3:  *I can’t. I’m *doing* my homework right now.*
Student 1:  *Let’s go out to play!*
Student 4:  *I can’t. I’m *eating* dinner right now.*

The game can be a little more difficult and/or goal-oriented by asking the “let’s play” student to summarize the results at the end of a complete round of the class, switching to a 3rd person application. This involves the teacher as well, and could be run like this (utilizing the beginning example above):

Teacher:  *Why can’t Rose go out to play with you?*
Student 1:  *She’s washing the dishes right now.*
Teacher:  *Why can’t Ben go out to play with you?*
Student 1:  *He’s doing homework right now.*
Teacher:  *Why can’t Steve go out to play with you?*
Student 1:  *He’s eating dinner right now.*

The follow up version could be scored by giving a point to students for each correct action they recalled and another point for using present continuous correctly in the explanation.

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**Present Simple [1]**

*Function: Showing regular/habitual behavior*

This game helps to contrast present simple with present continuous, involving some TPR and choral speaking. It focuses on identifying activity that happens regularly or habitually at certain times of the day, for example morning, afternoon or night. The teacher begins by introducing a time of the day and eliciting from students all the actions that normally happen in their lives during that period of the day. If the selected time is ‘morning’, the teacher then writes two lists on the whiteboard beneath two headings – one titled “this morning” and the other titled “every morning”. Verbs are written in both lists in present continuous form and present simple form (1st person) respectively. One student is then selected to stand in front of the class and be the “this morning’s doer”. The activity is then run as per the following example:

Teacher:  *What are you doing this morning, Sam?*
Student 1:  *I’m getting up.* [Motions as if getting up]
Teacher:  *Do you do this every morning, Sam?*
Student 1:  *Yes, I do.*
Teacher:  *What does Sam do every morning, everybody?*
Students:  *Sam *gets up* every morning.*

Each student ‘doer’ can be given a chance to do three actions each, with the teacher eliciting from the students how to say this when it is an everyday/habitual occurrence. The game can be made more difficult by not including lists on the whiteboard and asking the ‘actors’ to think of actions on the spot.
I generally call this game “How many times a day?” and apply it to help students indicate the regular things they do as part of their day and how often. After explaining the terms once/twice/three times/four times/etc and the accompanying “… a day” to indicate across the span of a general day, the teacher then asks Yes/No questions to individual students to facilitate the following sequence:

Teacher:  
Student 1:  
Teacher:  
Student 1:  
Teacher:  
Student 1:  
Teacher:  
Students:  
Teacher:  
Student 1:  

To encourage accuracy, the game can be scored by giving every student in the class a point each if the choral answer is correctly given. The student asked individually gains two points for correctly stating the answer using the first person form. Alternatively, the teacher can suddenly throw in unexpected ‘bonus runs’ where he/she follows up this sequence as illustrated by asking the same question to every student in the class – a great way to help weaker students in the class by providing choral and peer models before they are asked to say something under pressure.

This game involves motor skills in addition to vocabulary and grammar application. The teacher needs to do a little prior preparation, but it is worth it as students tend to love this activity! First prepare a series of cards or pieces of paper that have words or small phrases describing actions or things that can generally be expressed by ‘like’, ‘don’t like’, ‘love’ or ‘hate’ (for example “going to school”, “bananas”, “broccoli”, “reading books” etc). Then draw six large circles in a horizontal row on the whiteboard. In one of the end circles draw a happy or ‘satisfied-looking’ face, and in the circle at the opposite end of the row draw an angry or unhappy face. Explain that the four circles in between these two extremes represent ‘love’, ‘like’, ‘don’t like’ and ‘hate’ respectively. The teacher holds onto the pre-prepared word/phrase cards, and the students line up along the wall at the back of the classroom opposite the whiteboard. The teacher then starts a stopwatch and says “go!” The first student in the line dashes to the teacher, who states what is on the card – for example “eating rice”. The student then rushes to the whiteboard and slaps the circle that best describes how he/she feels about the action or thing. The student then runs to
the next student in the line and makes a statement that combines what the teacher said with the circle they slapped on the whiteboard (for example: “I like eating rice!”). If this matches up to statement and action, and uses correct grammar, the next student may take their try. If not, the erring student must go through the process again (going to the teacher to listen, going to the whiteboard and slapping, returning to the next student to make a combined statement). When all students have been through the process, the stopwatch is stopped and a time given. The teacher shuffles the cards, and the students go another round, this time trying to get a better class time.

Despite the potential pressure associated with this game, it gets students very active and concentrates on a team effort rather than inter-student rivalry. You may find that students want to play it again and again!

**Present Simple Vs. Present Continuous**

This activity is called “My dream day” and is designed to help students differentiate between present simple used for everyday routines and present continuous for things happening now. The teacher begins by brainstorming a list of ‘routine’ actions that happen on whatever day of the week it is, and writes these verbs/verb phrases in a list beneath the heading “USUALLY”. Next, the teacher elicits from the students a series of ‘cool’ or ‘fun’ activities that they would perhaps rather be doing, and this forms another list on the whiteboard. Depending on level of experience, all the verbs in both lists could be written in their base forms, or they could be given suffixes showing the two different forms. Students then take turns making a sentence that describes a ‘dream’ day that is contrasted to a real-life ordinary day. For example:

Student 1:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually go to school, but today I’m flying an airplane.*

Student 2:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually wash the dishes, but today I’m watching TV.*

Student 3:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually study, but today I’m playing computer games.*

Student 4:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually eat rice, but today I’m eating ice cream.*

Student 5:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually clean my room, but today I’m riding my bike.*

Student 6:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually go to the library, but today I’m playing soccer.*

The game can also be shifted into 3rd person summaries by dividing the students into groups of four. Three students follow the pattern above, but the fourth student then summarizes the ‘dream days’ so far. For example:

Student 1:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually go to school, but today I’m flying an airplane.*

Student 2:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually wash the dishes, but today I’m watching TV.*

Student 3:  
*Today is Tuesday. I usually study, but today I’m playing computer games.*

Student 4:  
*Today is Tuesday. He usually goes to school, but today he’s flying an airplane. She usually washes the dishes, but today she’s watching TV. He usually studies, but today he’s playing computer games.*

In the second version presented here, the whole team could be given a point for each correct sentence produced by the first three students, with another point for each correct sentence produced by the fourth student (making a possible total of 6 points per team per
round). Note that this can place a lot of pressure on the fourth student, making that role ideal for stronger students in mixed ability classes, but for weaker students the fourth 'summarizing' role will probably need to be rotated, or just counted as a single point so that it doesn’t appear to matter more than anything else anyone said.

**Pronouns [1]: Subject & Object**

*Function: Replacing subject/object nouns*

This Q&A circular game facilitates the replacement of nouns (subject and object) with their pronoun forms through the idea of talking about likes and dislikes. The fourth student in the sequence summarizes the four results up to that point before asking a new question to get the next round started. Example:

Teacher: *Do you like soccer, Tony?*
Student 1: *Yes, I like it. Do you like ice cream, Lisa?*
Student 2: *Yes, I like it. Do you like strawberries, Rachel?*
Student 3: *Yes, I like them. Do you like television, Sam?*
Student 4: *No, I don’t like it. I don’t like television, she likes strawberries, she likes ice cream, and he likes soccer [pointing to each student]. Do you like bananas, Harry?*

After a complete round of the entire class, perhaps reshuffle students’ seating arrangements so that in the new round some different students get a chance to try the summarizing stage (and subject rather than object conversions) following four questions.

**Quantifiers [1]: “some”**

*Function: Using “some” + count/non-count nouns*

For this game, students make creative food/drink recipes utilizing words from a list the teacher writes on the whiteboard. These words should be food and/or drink-oriented (with some other additions to make fun and crazy-sounding combinations) and written in collective plural forms (for example, "bread", "carrots", "milk", "eggs", etc). These words are combined with "some" to create recipes, as per the following example:

Teacher: *So what are you going to make, Tom?*
Student 1: *Crazy Spaghetti.*
Teacher: *OK, what do you need?*
Student 1: *You need some spaghetti, some chocolate, some eggs and some toothpaste.*

Once students get used to the basic format, they can be encouraged to continue the exercise in pairs or small groups. This game probably does not need a points system, as creative recipes are likely to get a lot of attention and laughs, creating a reward in itself.
**Quantifiers [2]: (a/an)(some)(#)**  
Function: (a/an)(some)(#) with nouns

This is similar to the "a/an" articles game except that it requires students to imagine somebody's kitchen as opposed to a house. Students then take turns selecting and adding to an ongoing list of items that can be seen in that kitchen, following a three-tier system per this example:

Student 1:  
_In Lisa’s kitchen, I can see an apple._

Student 2:  
_In Lisa’s kitchen, I can see an apple and some bread._

Student 3:  
_In Lisa’s kitchen, I can see an apple, some bread and three bananas._

Student 4:  
_In Lisa’s kitchen, I can see an apple, some bread, three bananas and a fork._

Student 5:  
_In Lisa’s kitchen, I can see an apple, some bread, three bananas, a fork and some rice._

Student 6:  
_In Lisa’s kitchen, I can see an apple, some bread, three bananas, a fork, some rice and seven eggs._

Guidelines/hints can be provided in the form of a list on the whiteboard showing the 1-2-3 sequence of a/an, some and (number)+s. This game helps to encourage students to think a little bit more carefully about accompanying quantifiers for basic nouns, and the three-tier sequence may actually help them to remember which items were named previously.

**Quantifiers [3]: few/little/lot**  
Function: General quantities for count/non-count

This game is called “A little shopping for a lot of different food” and is designed to help apply the general quantifiers for small or large quantities when the number is inexact, not important or referring to non-count nouns. Students are going to go shopping, but to get everything they need they will have to go to two different supermarkets and select food to go into five small bags and five large bags. This setup (while obviously contrived) is generally intended to help students identify countable nouns at the one supermarket and non-count nouns at the other. The different sized bags are to facilitate use of the different quantifiers (bags are utilized also to give the idea that the foods purchased cannot be seen in their entirety and therefore require general ‘estimates’ as to quantity).

Students commence by drawing five small and five large shopping bags. If they draw these in 3-D style with a visible opening at the top, later they can just draw the foods as they would be visible from the top of the bag. On the small bags, they should write “a few” and “a little”. On the big bags they should just write “a lot of”. Next, the teacher brainstorms different kinds of food and drink with the students and compiles two lists (one for the countable food items and another for the non-count food items). Once these two lists are relatively full, the teacher labels one of the lists “Supermarket 1” and the other list “Supermarket 2”. Tell students they may take 2 small shopping bags and 3 large shopping bags into supermarket 1, and three small shopping bags and two large shopping bags into supermarket 2. They may only put one kind of food or drink in each bag. Let the students make their selections (drawing the food and drink types into their bags), and
then encourage them to report on their shopping trip.

With some trial and error, the students should come to realize that they will need to say “a few ___s” when referring to foods selected from the “countable” supermarket and placed in small bags, whereas they will need to use “a little _____” for foods selected at the “non-count” supermarket. For foods selected from either supermarket and placed into large shopping bags, they will be able to use “a lot of”, so long as countable food items are accompanied with a plural “-s”. Here’s how one student’s (correct) shopping report might sound:

Student 1: I went to the first supermarket and bought a few apples, a few bananas, a lot of biscuits, a lot of grapes and a lot of oranges. At the second supermarket I bought a little milk, a little honey, a little sugar, a lot of bread, and a lot of rice.

Quantifiers [4]: some/any/much/many

This is a follow up to Quantifiers [3]: few/little/lot, and attempts to add some question forms in applying quantifiers to find out information. Through the activity, students should be exposed to and get some practice with much/many and the question form “any” as well as the negative application of some (also “any”). Students will need to ask each other questions based on the work they did for Quantifiers [3], enter information into a form, and then summarize the findings.

The teacher will need to prepare a reporting form that could look something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Some/Any?</th>
<th>Much?</th>
<th>Many?</th>
<th>A few ___s</th>
<th>A little ____</th>
<th>A lot of ___(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students then ask each other about the shopping that was completed, using a sequence like this:
Student 1: Did you buy any bananas?
Student 2: No, I didn’t.
Student 1: Did you buy any oranges?
Student 2: Yes, I did. [Student 1 then writes this item into the chart and checks the “some/any” column]
Student 1: Did you buy many oranges [selecting the correct “many” – not “much”]? 
Student 2: No I didn’t. [Student 1 then places an X in the “many” column and then a check in the “a few ___s” column]
Student 1: Did you buy any milk?
Student 2: No, I didn’t.
Student 1: Did you buy any juice?
Student 2: Yes, I did. [Student 1 then writes this item into the chart and checks the “some/any” column]
Student 1: Did you buy much juice [selecting the correct “much” – not “many”]? 
Student 2: Yes, I did. [Student 1 then places a check in the “many” column and then a check in the “a lot of ___” column]

Following this kind of Q&A, Student 1’s report form for student 2 might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Some/Any?</th>
<th>Much?</th>
<th>Many?</th>
<th>A few ___s</th>
<th>A little ____</th>
<th>A lot of ___(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oranges</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juice</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apples</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grapes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cookies</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carrots</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>honey</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following successful completion of student 1’s report form, student 2 could then interview student 1 following the same procedure. When all students have recorded and given information, they could make an oral or written summary. For student 1 above, it might look/sound like this:

Student 1: Amy [Student 2] went to the first supermarket and bought a few oranges, a lot of apples, a lot of grapes, a few cookies, and a lot of carrots. She didn’t buy any bananas, apricots or tomatoes. At the second supermarket she bought a lot of juice, a little sugar, a little rice, a little bread and a lot of honey. She didn’t buy any milk, water or meat.
This activity can be quite difficult for students, but there is a benefit in that students are working in pairs and the teacher is free to move around the classroom to help students in selecting the right quantifier elements to use in their questioning and reporting. If students already noticed the count/non-count pattern to the two supermarkets in *Quantifiers [3]*, then this activity is a useful follow up and expansion into additional quantifier forms. Notice also that the report summary facilitates “any” in the negative sense to indicate the absence of something.

**Quantifiers [5]: some/any**

Function: “Some” or “any” for questions/requests

This is a simple game designed to show students the difference between ‘some’ and ‘any’ for basic versus specific request questions. The teacher distributes some flashcards (or items written onto slips of paper) to students and makes a list of the items distributed on the whiteboard. These could be items of any general nature. Students are instructed to keep their items hidden, and then individual students take turns moving around the group to ask questions and make requests:

- Student 1: *Do you have any cake?*
- Student 2: *No, I don’t.*
- Student 1: *Do you have any cake?*
- Student 3: *No, I don’t.*
- Student 1: *Do you have any cake?*
- Student 4: *Yes, I do.*
- Student 1: *Can I have some cake?*
- Student 2: *No, I don’t.*
- Student 4: *Yes, you can.* [Hands the item to student 1]
- Student 1: *Do you have any pencils?*
- Student 5: *No, I don’t.*

Etc.

The basic idea here is for the circulating student to pick up as many items as possible in one round of the classroom, and then it is the next student’s turn. Students should be directed to ask questions using “any” when they are asking if someone possesses something, but they should swap back to “some” when making a request for something. This is to show students the difference between asking a general question and a question that is in fact a request (in which case “some” and not “any” is used).

**Quantifiers [6]: some/any**

Function: “Some” or “any” for questions/offers

This is identical to *Quantifiers [5]: some/any* except that in this application the use of “some” is used in questions that are actually offers:

- Student 1: *Do you have any cake?*
- Student 2: *No, I don’t.*
- Student 1: *Do you have any cake?*
Student 3:  No, I don’t.
Student 1:  Do you have any cake?
Student 4:  Yes, I do. Would you like some cake?
Student 1:  Yes please. [Student 4 hands the item to student 1]
Student 1:  Do you have any pencils?
Student 5:  No, I don’t.
Etc.

As with the reversion to “some” when making request questions, “some” (and not “any”) is to be used in questions that are in fact offers.

**Questions [1]: “What?”**

Function: Finding out more about people or things

This is a simple rotation game designed to practice application of “What” questions for information. Basically, students take turns answering and then asking a “what” question directed at different kinds of information. The students as a group get a point for each successful different “what” question and another point for a correct answer form. If a student repeats a question asked by someone else, the round is over and points are tallied. The teacher can repeat the activity to challenge the students to come up with more questions and therefore more points. The game could look like this:

Teacher:   Frank, what time is it?
Student 1:  It’s 2 o’clock. Jenny, what color is your sweater?
Student 2:  It’s blue. Billy, what day is it today?
Student 3:  It’s Thursday. Steven, what food do you like?
Student 4:  I like ice cream. Sarah, what is on your desk?
Student 5:  There’s a pencil on my desk. Judy, what subject do you like?
Student 6:  I like Math. Tom, what pet do you have?
Etc.

This game is useful for generating a range of “what” questions that can lead into explanation and practice of other (more specific) ‘wh’ questions (such as “where?”, “who?”, “whose?”, “why?”, “when?” and “how?”). It can also form a framework for introducing the question element “which” (used to indicate differences between two or more people or things when the range of possible answers is relatively small, compared to a wide range of possible answers for the more general “what?”).

**There is / are [1]: (seen)**

Function: To talk about things that can be seen

For this game, the teacher needs to collect a handful of different objects and to ensure that there are 1-4 of each and enough things to cater to the number of students in the class. These could be basic classroom items such as pencils, erasers, chalk, markers, rulers, etc., or more elaborate items or even things like animal flashcards. However, the more real the items are, the better. The teacher then goes around to each student and
places one or more of each item on the students’ desks. The teacher also places an object/objects on his/her own desk and starts the rotation game thus:

Teacher:  

There are erasers on my desk.

Student 1: There are erasers on your desk [points at teacher] and there is a ruler on my desk.

Student 2: There are erasers on your desk [points at teacher], there is a ruler on your desk [points at student 1] and there is a crayon on my desk.

Student 3: There are erasers on your desk [points at teacher], there is a ruler on your desk [points at student 1], there is a crayon on your desk [points at student 2] and there are pencils on my desk.

Student 4: There are erasers on your desk [points at teacher], there is a ruler on your desk [points at student 1], there is a crayon on your desk [points at student 2], there are pencils on your desk [points at student 3] and there is a spider on my desk!

This game is harder than it looks on paper – even though young learners often grasp the difference between ‘there is’ and ‘there are’ relatively quickly, it can take a considerable amount of time before the different forms roll out of their mouths easily.

There is / are [2]: (exist)  

Function: To talk about things that we know exist

This game is called the “class island” game, and involves each student in the class contributing some sort of feature or item to exist on an imaginary island. As each student contributes something, the teacher writes this down on the whiteboard. After everyone has finished adding a feature or object, each student attempts to draw the island that has been created using the vocabulary. For example:

Teacher: OK class – what things are there on our island?

Student 1: There are flowers on the island.

Student 2: There is a mountain on the island.

Student 3: There are dinosaurs on the island.

Student 4: There is a purple and green butterfly on the island.

A way to make this game more challenging is for the teacher to write these features on a piece of paper rather than on the whiteboard for everyone to see. When students then go to draw the island, they may need to ask fellow students again about the feature/features they added, which creates a good communicative opportunity to utilize the key language naturally. Students could be allocated points based on how many of the named features (in correct quantities according to “there is/are”) are drawn into their pictures. The game can also be applied to other more ambitious projects as well, such as an imaginary city or school.