

The games kids play

Oral Comprehension: OC

Oral Production: OP

Reading Comprehension: RC

Written Work: WW

To introduce a lexical field: you start by showing a real thing or a flashcard or by making pupils listen to a noise and then you say the word. All the big flashcards are spread out on the walls of the class and then you ask the pupils to point to the flashcard corresponding to the word you said. After, you distribute the cards to all the pupils (or to pairs). You say the word and you say “show me”, the pupils show the corresponding flashcard. You enunciate a series of words and the pupils have to place the flashcards in the same order on their desk (or they have to get in order physically if they only have one card). Or you can give orders like “give me back”, “can I have”... This acquisition phase can last 10 minutes.

The games given below can be used as reactivation exercises.

You can use these games for any lexical field. You just have to adapt them. These games enable the acquisition of vocabulary at any time of the lesson. A lesson is not a succession of games!

There are games which work more OC or OP, some games are played by teams or by pairs, and others are played with the whole class... It's up to you to choose depending on what you are looking for. Once the game is well known, a pupil can become the leader.

I) Sensorial games: OP

1. Gustative game

The pupils taste without seeing and must guess what it is (in order to review food for example).

2. Touch based game

The pupils touch a hidden object in a bag and they must guess what it is (it is also called “game of hand in the bag”), the pupils can be blindfolded (jeu de Colin Maillard = blind man game).

3. Audio game, also called “sounds interesting!”

The pupils listen to a noise and must find what it is (the teacher can also drop things like a fork, a rubber, a book...). “Everybody close your eyes and listen very carefully! I am going to make a noise (sound) now. If you can guess what it is, put your hand up.” Or you can make them listen to tapes with sounds (I spy: animals ...).

II) Group games: OP/OC/RC

1. Chinese whispers (telephone) OC-OP

Form 2 lines, each line is a team. A message (sentence, saying, or tongue twister) is whispered into the ear of the first person of each line. The first person in each line then whispers the message into the ear of the next person in his/her line, this continues until the message is whispered into the ear of the last person in each line. The last person then says out loud what she/he heard of the message. The winner is the team who repeats the original message correctly (or the closest).

2. Labels on the table OC

You need teams of 6 or 8 students. Make them line up facing the table.

In front of each team, you put the flashcards on the table.

You say one word and the first one who points to the right flashcard wins one point for his team. The winner can go to the back but the others have to stay until they are the quickest one (3 turns allowed for losers).

3. Happy families/7 families OP (jeu des 7 familles)

The teacher will use real Happy families cards or make the cards with the studied vocabulary. It's very useful for structures like “have you got?” or “do you have?” or for placing the adjective in the right place “have you got the red dog?”.

4. Memory cards OP

The pupils must say the word of the picture every time they turn over a card. You can also match flashcards with the written words (RC).

5. Boardgame RC/OP (Jeu de l'oie)

Game which gives instructions (count to five, spell the word “elephant”, say 5 colours...), when the pupil is able to do what is demanded, he can go further.

6. The calling game OP (Pierre appelle Paul)

You give a number card to each child or assign a number to each child. Make a circle. Start clapping a rhythm. You can start the game by saying “number 5 is calling number 3”. The child who has been assigned number 3 can then choose a number and call that person by saying “number 3 is calling number 10” for example. The game continues like this.

7. Number cards OC/OP

Make several teams of 3. One person chooses a number card, looks at it and whispers it to the second person. This person then shows the number with his fingers to the third person, who says it out loud to the group. They check it together.

8. Observation game OC/OP

Some pupils look at a flashcard and describe it to other pupils who try to draw or identify the flashcard among a lot of other flashcards.

9. Number game OC/OP

This game is played by groups of 3 with number cards. Pupil A draws one card and whispers it to pupil B who in turn shows the number with his fingers to pupil C, pupil C says out loud the number; the three pupils check together.

III) Games with the whole class OC/OP/RC

1. Touch red, touch blue OC

“Here is something red” (show something red). “Here is something blue” (show something blue) “When I say “red” find something red to touch. When I say “blue”, find something blue to touch. You can touch anything in the room.”

2. Sequencing OC

“I will give each of you a word or a picture. When I say your word you have to line up.”

3. Bingo (loto) OC/OP

Either as our French Lotto with a grid, or with flashcards which the pupils get rid of progressively, OC [for example each pupil chooses 5 flashcards among the cards which were used for the game “show me”. When they get rid of all their flashcards they shout “Bingo!” The teacher checks, the pupil has to say out loud the words (OP)]. Numbers, vocabulary can be used, and this game can also be transformed in a reading game [the teacher shows written words and the pupils have to get rid of the flashcards or on the contrary, the teacher shows the flashcards or says the words and the pupils have to find the written words (RC)].

4. Domino RC /OP with cards containing on the left side a word and on the right side a picture (RC).

5. Kim game OP (can you guess what has changed?)

“Look at the flashcards on the whiteboard (blackboard). Try to memorize the position of each flashcard. When I say “stop”, turn around. While you are not looking, I will change the position of 2 flashcards on the board. When I say “Go”, turn back around and look at the white board (blackboard) again. Can you guess which cards I moved? ”

6. Labels OC/OP

“I will put a sticker on each person’s back. To find out which picture or word you have on your back, you will have to go around and ask your classmates questions to guess your word. Of course, you cannot ask directly what is taped on your back but questions that will give you clues. The others can only answer “yes” or “no” to your questions.”

7. Simon says OC

“When I say “Simon says” you have to do the action that I say. Be careful, if I don’t say “Simon says”, don’t do anything! ”

8. Chain’s exercise OP

The first pupil says what he wants (for example: I want an apple”) and the second repeats the item and then adds one of his own (“I want an apple and a pear”), and so on throughout the class (“I want an apple, a pear and an orange”).

9. Action songs PO

Sing a song describing some actions. The pupils must do the actions while they sing: “Head and shoulders”, “Hockey Pokey”...”

10. True or false OP/OC

Give the pupils some statements, they must say whether they are true or false (=right or wrong) or they can raise a hand when it’s right and cross their arms when it’s false (“the sun is green”).

11. Mime and guess OC/OP

One child must mime an action or a job and the rest of the class must guess what it is. Or they can say something and the others mime.

12. The pillar box RC/WW

Make a British mail box, a pillar box. Everyone can leave a message inside or read one (foreign correspondents, Valentine’s card, Christmas’s card, birthday’s card, parties...)

13. I spy (OC/OP)

“I spy with my little eyes something beginning with b”; the pupils ask questions to find the object: “Is it in the classroom?”, “Is it a book?”...

14. Noughts and crosses (OP)

Draw a noughts and crosses grid on the board.

Divide the class into two teams. One team is X and the other O.

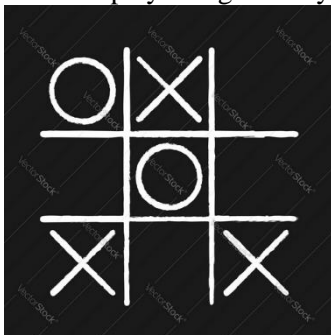
Decide on the topic of the questions you will ask (they could refer to the previous unit in the course book, be general questions about English, be on general knowledge or on subjects the children study in their own language at school, on anything at all).

In turn each team decides which square they want to nominate.

Teacher asks a question. If the team gets it right their symbol is written in that square.

The first team to get a line of three symbols in any direction across the grid is the winner.

You can play this game any number of times and keep score.



15. Abrakadanagram (OC/RC)

Groups of three, give each group a pile of pictures and/or words flashcards from which they can make a sentence or question. Each player takes one card each. Call out a sentence such as “Jacky loves chocolate” and the three players must stand in the right order, to present their pictures up in front of so you can see them. If you have a big class you can recruit a couple of “runners” (your best pupils) who will have the job of running around and checking that everyone has got their pictures in the right order. You can use word flashcards for older players and mix up pictures and words. The teams race each other to get into the correct order calling out “Abrakadanagram” when they are ready, at this point you or the “runners” can check the sentence.

IV) Pair games OC/OP

1. Kim game OP

You play this game in pairs. One is blindfolded and tastes something and has to guess what it is. The other confirms the answer.

2. Who’s who OC/OP (jeu du « Qui est-ce ? »)

This game can also be done with the whole class.

3. Snap OP/OP

Make teams of 2. Deal number cards between the 2 players who must not look at them.

They take turns to put a card down and say its number out loud. If the numbers are the same, they must say “snap!” as quickly as they can and put their hand on the cards. The faster player takes the pile of cards and the winner is the one who has won all the cards

4. Information game OC/OP

Both pupils don’t have the same information; they must exchange their information in order to get **the** complete information: drawing, grid, table to complete, fragmented information...

5. Knowing each other OC/OP

Both pupils have to present themselves, they have to record the given information in a table, for example: tastes, sports, family...

6. Role playing OC/OP

V) Outdoor games OC/OP/RC

1. Fishes and fishermen OC/OP

Form 2 groups of equal numbers. One group consists of fishermen, the other consists of fish. At the beginning of the game the fishermen will gather together and decide on a number between 1 and 20. Then the fishermen will form a circle with joined hands held high so that the fish can pass under their arms. As the fishermen begin to count out loud together, the fish begin to weave in and out of the circle formed by the fishermen. When the fishermen reach the number they have decided on, they will lower their arms quickly to trap any fish caught in the circle. Then there will be a big feast on the fish that were caught. You can do this game by saying the Alphabet or by singing a song or by saying a poem.

2. The “beret” or also called “number snatch” OC

You have 2 teams of 5 to 12 pupils facing each other at opposite sides of the playground. There is a beret in the middle. Each person on a team has a name of a different fruit (or whatever) but one person on each team has the same fruit name as a person on the other team. When they hear the name of the fruit, they have to go to the middle and pick up the object (beret) and bring it back to their team before the person from the opposite team can do so. Each time a player succeeds in doing it, he/she scores one point for his/her team. The team with the most points wins.

3. The ball game OP

Make a circle. The teacher says a rhyme and explains the rules: “when I throw the ball to you, you will have to catch it. Once you have caught it, you can start by saying the first word of the rhyme. You then throw the ball to another pupil. The pupil who catches the ball says the next word in the rhyme and so on.” The game continues like this until the rhyme is completed by throwing the ball to each child. Or you can use this game to review all the questions and answers you have learnt.

4. Hide and seek OP

One pupil of the class will be “it” and will count up to 30 with his eyes closed. During this time the others have to hide. When the pupil who is “it” has finished counting he has to search for the others. When someone is found, he becomes “it” and the game starts again.

5. Changing the circle OP

The children must sit down in a circle. Give them each a number and stand in the middle of the circle. Say 2 numbers, those 2 children must come into the middle, count to three, and then all three of you try to find a place to sit in the circle as quickly as possible. The one who hasn't got a place stays in the middle to call the next number. You can do this game with any kind of vocabulary you have taught.

6. Hop scotch (jeu de marelle) OP

(NB: you need a hopscotch grid on the floor)

The children must throw a pebble or counter in a square and then jump along the grid, using each square except the one with the pebble in. As they are jumping in a square, they have to say out loud what the picture in it is.

7. Physical relays OC/OP/RC

The teacher has prepared a physical circuit with a language test at each stage, the same concept as the “jeu de l’oie” but with physical responses in addition. Written instructions can also be given. RC

8. Magic spell

“Close your eyes and say Abrakadabra: Touch your nose, one, two, three!” The pupils must do what is demanded while their eyes are closed (so you are sure they don't copy their neighbour, they really understood).

9. To know how to find the proper direction

8 pupils come in front of the class and stand like this: X X X X
X X X X

The teacher (and later on a pupil) gives instructions: “move forward/back/left/right/turn left/right”. Every time the teacher says something the pupils have to move one step as demanded. Pupils who make a mistake are eliminated.

10. Please mister Crocodile, can I cross the river?

The teacher symbolises the river with 2 lines and names a pupil who will be mister Crocodile. The other pupils who are on the riverbank ask mister Crocodile “Please mister Crocodile, can we cross the river?” and mister Crocodile answers “only if you are wearing something blue/a red skirt/if you have got blue eyes...”, the concerned pupils go one step forward, the first one who is able to cross the river has won and becomes mister Crocodile.

11. What's the time mister Wolf? (the same as « 1, 2, 3, soleil ! »)

One player is the wolf and faces a wall, the other pupils are 5 meters away behind him. The group shouts “what the time mister Wolf?” The wolf turns around and shouts the time is “10 o'clock!” The group takes 10 steps forward towards the wolf. Announced time = number of steps. But the wolf can suddenly say “Dinner time!” and then he runs after the group who tries to reach the departure line without being caught. The who is caught becomes the wolf.