
From Game Playing to Game Thinking: Unravelling the Impact of Gamification for Language Learning

Webinar handout

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Here are four of my favourite activities that can gamify your classrooms.

1. Scavenger Hunt with words and achievements

Create a scavenger hunt around the classroom using English words. Provide each student or team with a list of clues, all relating to different English words or phrases that they have learnt. Students have to decode the clue, find the corresponding word hidden in the room or school building, and write a sentence using that word. The first team to finish the hunt wins. This activity promotes critical thinking, sentence construction, and teamwork.

Gamification elements: *As students decode the clues and find the words, they can earn virtual badges or stickers for various achievements, such as "Fast Decoder" for the quickest solution, "Word Master" for finding the most words, etc. Leaderboards can also be displayed to motivate competition and engagement.*

2. Story Building with point system

This activity emphasizes sentence structure, creative writing, and storytelling. Students form teams and sit in lines. The first student in each line starts a story with one sentence. The next student must add another sentence, continuing the story, and so forth. The rule is that each new sentence must start with the next sequential letter of the alphabet. This activity ends either when a team reaches "Z" or when the time limit is reached.

Gamification elements: *Teams earn points based on creativity, coherence, and grammatical accuracy of the story. Bonus points can be given when students use a particularly challenging*

vocabulary word or correct use of complex sentence structure. Keeping score and having a "Story Champions" leaderboard can stimulate the competition.

3. Grammar Race with progress tracker

Set up different stations in the classroom, each representing a different grammar concept (e.g., verb tenses, prepositions, adjectives). At each station, have a mini-activity or challenge that tests the students' understanding of that concept (e.g., matching exercises, fill in the blanks, sentence corrections). Students race to complete all stations, with the fastest student or team being the winner.

Gamification elements: *Implement a visible progress tracker (like a game board or virtual map) that shows each student or team's progress through the stations. Rewards in the form of badges or points could be given for correct answers, and extra challenges (like 'expert levels') could be introduced at certain stages for extra points.*

4. Phrase Verb Frenzy Card Game

Design a card game to make the learning of phrasal verbs fun and interactive. Each card includes a phrasal verb, its meaning, and an example sentence. Divide students into small groups and deal a set number of cards to each group. Each round, a student draws a card and has to act out the phrasal verb without speaking. The rest of the group tries to guess the phrasal verb. The correct guesser gets to keep the card. The student with the most cards at the end of the game wins.

Gamification elements:

- *Levels: Divide the cards into difficulty levels based on the complexity of the phrasal verbs.*
- *Leaderboards: Keep a leaderboard for each group, rewarding points for each correct guess.*
- *Achievements: Assign badges for achievements like "Dramatic Genius" for the best acting, "Word Whizz" for the most correct guesses, etc.*
- *Power-ups: Allow players to use power-ups, such as hints, skipping a turn, or double points for one round.*

Here is a list of web tools suggested by teachers that are useful for incorporating gamification in the classroom:

- **Kahoot!:** A popular tool for creating interactive quizzes that can be played in real-time. It promotes competition and is great for revision sessions. <https://kahoot.com>
- **ClassDojo:** This platform gamifies classroom behavior management by awarding points for positive behavior. <https://www.classdojo.com>

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- **Quizizz:** Similar to Kahoot!, but with a different interface. Students can play at their own pace, which is excellent for homework assignments. <https://quizizz.com>
 - **Blooket:** A fun, question-and-answer gaming platform where teachers can engage their students with competitive and cooperative games. <https://www.blooket.com>
 - **Plickers:** A powerful tool for teachers that lets you collect real-time formative assessment data without the need for student devices. Students respond to questions by showing their paper card (a Plicker), which is then scanned by the teacher's device. <https://www.plickers.com>
 - **Wordwall:** This platform enables teachers to create interactive and engaging activities, including quizzes, matchups, word games, and more. <https://wordwall.net>
 - **Bamboozle:** A game-based learning platform where teachers can create or use existing multiple-choice quizzes, which students can then play in class or for homework. <https://www.baamboozle.com>
 - **Classcraft:** Classcraft is a role-playing game (RPG) designed to encourage positive behavior and active learning in the classroom. It allows teachers to transform their classroom management system into a game where students can earn points, unlock levels, and gain powers that can be used in the real world. <https://www.classcraft.com>
 - **Gimkit:** Gimkit is a game show-style tool where students answer questions on their device to earn in-game currency. Created by a high school student, it adds a fun and competitive element to learning and can be used for studying any subject. <https://www.gimkit.com>
 - **Canva:** While Canva is not a gamification tool in the traditional sense, it's a powerful graphic design platform that can be used to create visually appealing board games using diagrams. Additionally, you can prepare posters to invite your students to participate in a game. <https://www.canva.com>

A recording of Sirin's webinar can be found here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/ict-classroom-mini-event>