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Preface

The purpose of this book is to provide a collection of communicative activities that encourage students to interact with one another while practicing key grammar points in English. Recognizing the roles that challenge and confidence-building play in successful language learning, we have designed two types of activities. The first provides students with the grammatical forms, while the second requires students to produce them. Both types include cooperative task-solving and opinion-sharing activities. All are student-driven and require minimal teacher input, permitting the instructor to assume the role of observer and facilitator after introducing the activity.

Although this is not a grammar textbook, the activities are grouped according to grammar focus for ease of reference. They are appropriate as supplementary exercises in an ESL grammar or listening/speaking class at the high school, college, or adult level.

Because this is a supplementary text, we encourage teachers to choose and adapt the material to fit individual course needs. We offer the following suggestions:

1. Choose activities based on factors such as grammar currently being taught, time constraints, and students' language level and interests. Many of the exercises in this book are in game format. Although experience has proved these games to be successful and motivating for many students, we realize that classes have their own "group personality," and what will work well in one class may be less successful in another.
2. Identify unfamiliar vocabulary and preteach it.
3. Modify instructions as necessary. For example, we have used grammatical labels such as "participles." Change them if your students don't know these terms.
4. Adjust activities to suit class size. For example, if your class is larger than the suggested size for a particular activity, divide the students into two groups and run simultaneous games.
5. Decide when a game is completed—for example, when a certain number of points is obtained, when a predetermined time period has elapsed, or when a given number of rounds has been played.

We hope these activities will add to the ESL teacher's repertoire and contribute to the students' enjoyment and success in learning English.

*James Kealey
Donna Inness*

A Note on Appropriate Age Ranges and Proficiency Levels

If your students enjoy learning by playing games, most of the game techniques in this book can be adapted for use with students of almost any age and a proficiency range from advanced elementary to advanced intermediate. Most students do eventually enjoy classroom games, but it is important not to make older students feel that you are talking down to them or treating them like children. If some of your students seem to be put off when you first introduce these games, take some time to let them relax and become more comfortable with you and their fellow students. Then, when you reintroduce games, be sure to start with one that practices skills and vocabulary that are immediately relevant and that does not require childish behavior.

The grammar-focused games in this book have been written for use with adults. They can be useful in all kinds of high school, adult education, and university preparation English language programs, both in the U.S. and overseas. Many of the games could even be used as is with middle school students, depending on the maturity of the class. However, if the game as it is presented here seems inappropriate, **we encourage you to adapt it**. Any of the techniques may work well with different vocabulary and graphics more appropriate to your class. Although we have developed photocopyable materials for the games, at heart “the technique’s the thing,” and we hope it will provide your classes with some entertainment as well as valuable practice with the grammar in question.

The proficiency level appropriate for any of these games varies. If your students’ conversational English is strong enough to be able to enjoy the game, it is appropriate to use it as long as they need to practice the grammar. Some elementary students (not absolute beginners) will find these games very helpful; others would be overwhelmed. At the other extreme, some advanced intermediate students need to focus on grammar, and these games provide a relatively painless way to practice; for other students with strong grammar backgrounds, these games would be inappropriate. You, the teacher, are the best judge.