

To The Teacher

Teachers of ESL/EFL spend countless hours thinking up new ways to teach the traditional components of the English language. They ask, “How can I present this point so that the students will understand? How can we practice this vocabulary in a way that’s enjoyable for these students? How can I motivate this group so that they want to work?” The games in this book provide practice with structures and topics that can be found on any syllabus, using a game that is known around the world, but they do it in ways that are varied, creative and fun.

Traditional BINGO

Traditional BINGO involves a caller, who calls out numbers and letters in different combinations (B9, G77, etc.), and players, who have BINGO cards (a 5x5-square grid labeled B-I-N-G-O across the top and filled in with a random selection of numbers.) Players listen to the combinations called and mark the numbers that appear on their boards. The first player to mark five squares in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), calls out “BINGO!” and wins.

B I N G O				
2	21	44	61	88
17	33	48	79	81
14	36	50	77	91
9	28	52	63	95
3	39	57	68	82

← Bingo!

Some of the games in this book are quite similar to traditional BINGO – the main difference being, instead of number/letter combinations, the teacher calls out vocabulary items which the students find and mark on their boards. However, most of the games are very different – the students must do much more than listen to a word, find it on the board, and mark the square. Each game comes with its own set of instructions, but some of the game types are described on the next page.

The Games in This Book

The games are categorized into skill/topic areas. The five sections are vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, writing, and cultural topics. Within each section the games are labeled according to their levels of difficulty. These numbers are indicated in the procedure descriptions at the beginning of each game.

- ❶ Beginning
- ❷ Lower Intermediate
- ❸ Upper Intermediate
- ❹ Advanced

All of the games can be used in the context of an intensive English program, and most can be used in other ESL contexts within the United States and in EFL contexts around the world.

“Traditional” BINGO Games – Some of the games involve more difficult variations on the standard instructions for BINGO. For example, in “Weather BINGO” and “Clothing BINGO”, instead of saying a word, the teacher can give a definition or description, and the students mark their boards. In “‘So...’/’Neither...’ BINGO”, the teacher makes a statement, and the students must find the appropriate response and mark their boards. In “Go, Went, Gone BINGO”, the teacher says a verb; the students conjugate the verb and then strategize about where to write it on the board.

“Task” BINGO Games – In these games the students are required to do something before they can mark a square. For example, in “Valentine’s Day BINGO”, the students write a poem to mark the square. In “Scavenger Hunt BINGO”, they explore different areas of the school and mark squares that they’ve completed. In “Punctuation BINGO”, the students must punctuate sentences before they can mark their squares.

“Talking” BINGO Games – In this type of game, the students have to talk to people before they can mark a square. For example, in “Ice Breaker BINGO,” the students interview their classmates until they find people with certain characteristics. In “Thanksgiving BINGO,” the students survey native speakers about their favorite Thanksgiving foods until they hear the foods on their boards.

“Testing” BINGO Games – In these games, all of the students have the same board. If they all get BINGO at the same time, the teacher knows they have acquired the necessary skills/knowledge. For example, in “Pronunciation BINGO”, if the students hear the minimal pairs correctly, they will all get BINGO at the same time. In “Classroom BINGO”, if the students have investigated the idioms well, they will all get BINGO at the same time.

Preparation

Because the games are so varied, teachers should read the Teacher's Notes and the Student's Page(s) carefully ahead of time, think through the process and decide whether a game will be appropriate for a particular class at a particular time. Then they will need to prepare the necessary materials. (Teachers should not cut up the book itself, but rather always photocopy the pages first and then cut up the boards, cards and chips.)

The Boards: Instructions for each game specify whether every student gets a copy of the same board or whether there are different boards to be photocopied. In some cases, the teacher must prepare the board before making copies by adding information to some squares. In other cases, the students will need time to prepare their boards before playing. Some games require that the students have a copy of the board to write on, but with other games, the teacher can choose to mount or laminate the boards to make a permanent set. The games that require multiple boards can be organized in various ways. If there are eight (or fewer) students in the class, each student gets one of the boards provided in the book. If there are more than eight students, some alternatives are:

- The teacher is the caller. Some or all of the students play in pairs, each pair with one of the eight boards provided.
- The teacher makes more than one copy of each board, so that there is one board for each student. The students play individually, but several students may get BINGO at the same time.
- The students play in groups of five. One student is the caller. The rest play, with each one using one of the eight boards provided.
- Before class, the teacher cuts apart one or more of the boards and reassembles the pieces in different arrangements to make as many new boards as necessary so that each student can play, and everybody will have a different board.

The Cards: Instructions for each game describe how to prepare the cards (when cards are necessary). The teacher can choose to mount or laminate the cards to make a permanent set. In some cases, there are more cards than there are squares on a board, but every card corresponds to an answer that is on at least some of the boards.

The Chips: Instructions for each game will specify whether chips are necessary. There is a page of chips at the back of the book that the teacher can photocopy and cut apart (mounted and/ or laminated if so desired). Alternatively, students can use candy, seeds, pennies, etc., to mark their boards. Or, in some cases, they can mark squares using a pencil, making a different shaped mark each time the game is played, or erasing the marks each time and starting over.

This book is the product of many years of challenging our students with all sorts of tasks in enjoyable new ways. We hope you enjoy the games as much as we do!