



Language Support for Migrants A Council of Europe Toolkit

Tool 49 - Language games and activities for migrants

Aim: To suggest language activities and games that can support the development of migrants' vocabulary and skills in the new language.

1. Story cards

This activity is a useful way of helping both adults and children to develop their oral skills. You can focus on one specific theme or use a mixed selection of pictures.

This activity usually generates a great deal of laughter, but you may also need to do some prompting and supporting.



Preparation

- Cut at least 25 cards the same size as ordinary playing cards. The bigger the group of learners, the more cards you will need. Ensure that there is a good range of pictures to choose from.
- Learners, especially children, may like to illustrate each card by hand.
- Stick a picture taken from a magazine, a photo or digital 'clip art' onto each card.

Instructions

- Pick any card from the pack to start the story.
- Show the card to the group and ask them what they can see on the card, e.g. *What's this? A hippopotamus.*
- Then ask the group how a story usually begins. You can prompt them with expressions such as *Once upon a time...*, *One day, a long time ago ...* etc.
- Encourage and help learners to make a sentence about the picture on the card to begin a story, e.g. *Once upon a time, I was in the park with my hippopotamus. We turned a corner and ...* Depending on the learners' level there is no need to teach the past tense. They can use the present tense to describe past actions (e.g. *I'm in the park with my hippopotamus one day. We turn a corner and see a lake...*)
- Ask a learner to pick another card, to show the picture to the group, and to try to continue the story. For example, if the card shows a girl dancing '*... My hippopotamus was very excited. It did a dance, too. Then ...*' While playing the game you may need to remind the group of the story that has been told so far.
- Continue until everyone has had a turn at helping to build a shared story and/or the story is finished.
- If there is time, learners can try to remember and retell the story, supporting and prompting each other where necessary.

2. Memory

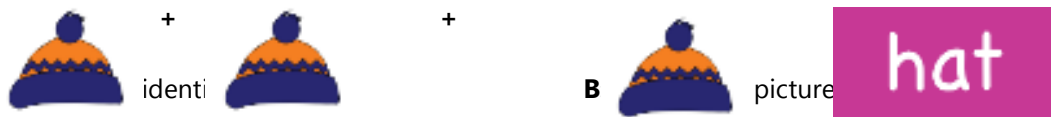
This activity is useful for encouraging migrant learners of all ages to develop their vocabulary and language skills. It is great fun and often children are better at it than adults. It is also useful when checking learners' understanding.

This game is suitable for 2 to 6 players depending on the size of the tables.

hat	
pen	
bin	
cot	
sun	

Preparation

- Cut at least 10 - 20 cards the same size as ordinary playing cards or a little bigger.
- Make sets of matching cards by:
 - A.** drawing, printing or gluing identical pictures on two separate cards **or**
 - B.** adding a picture to one card and the corresponding word to another:



Then cut each card out. The cards can be adapted for different ages or language levels. For example, you can increase the number of cards to make the game more challenging. For younger migrants, you can just include pictures so that there is no writing.

- Sets of cards can also be adapted to different topics such as food, games, animals, clothes etc.
- If you would like to make your cards using a computer, insert a table with playing card-sized boxes and then insert a ClipArt image from your desktop, memory stick or the internet.

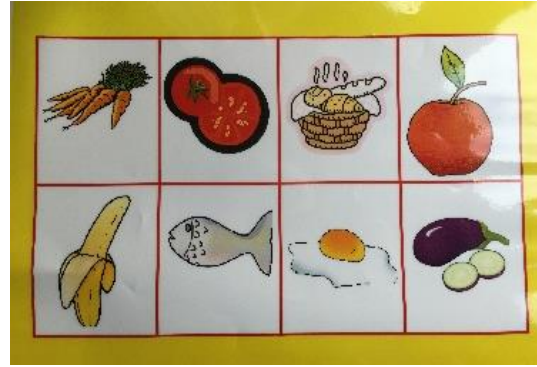
Instructions

- The cards are mixed up and laid face down on a table.
- Show learners how the game is played and explains the instructions.
- Players then take turns to play. One player begins by choosing any two cards to turn over. If the two cards match, the player puts them to one side and plays again. If a player turns over two cards that do not match, they put them back face down in exactly the same position. It is then the next person's turn.
- Players need to try to remember which cards are where on the table so that, when they turn over a card, they can find the matching one.
- When all the cards have been matched, the players then count how many pairs they have.
- The person with the most pairs is the winner.

3. Bingo

This activity is useful for:

- vocabulary development
- reinforcing learning
- reinforcing social skills
- having fun.



Preparation

- Each learner has a sheet of A4 or A3 card and uses it in landscape, with the long sides at the top and bottom. They divide the cards into eight equal sections (see above).
- Choose a topic for your Bingo game and get learners to suggest as many relevant words as possible. Learners need to draw or find and stick a different picture in each section on their card, i.e. 8 altogether. Some older learners may prefer to write words in the sections on their cards.
- Use a photocopier to make copies of each learner's Bingo card. Then cut them up so you have one small picture card (or word card) for each of the items on the learners' Bingo cards (learners may have drawn the same items so no need to repeat them – just choose the best drawing or picture).
- Find some round counters (8 for each learner) or ask learners to bring some small coins to use during the game.

Topics

Find out what the learners are interested in or would like to learn vocabulary for. Here are some topics that can work well for Bingo:

Fruit	Vegetables
Things in the home	Animals
Clothes	Transport
Sports	Emotions
etc.	(e.g. faces to match the emotions or the word for each emotion)

Instructions

- Each player/learner has their large Bingo card in front of them. Make sure you have all the duplicate Bingo cards.
- First, hold up each small picture or word card in turn to check that everyone can identify the item in the target language. Help them where necessary.
- When you have gone through all the cards the game can begin. Hold up one card and say e.g. 'What's this?'
- Everyone who has a picture of that item (or the corresponding word) on their Bingo card calls out the correct word in the target language and then covers the corresponding section on their Bingo card with a counter or coin.
- The winner is the first person to cover all the pictures/words on their board. When this happens, they shout 'Bingo!'

Useful resources

- SparkleBox has some very useful free resources: www.sparklebox.co.uk for making cards
- There is a wide range of free apps and websites such as Wordwall ([Wordwall | Create better lessons quicker](#)), Flippity (<https://flippity.net/>) and Educandy (<https://www.educandy.com/#>) which provide templates for online activities including Memory..

Lots of ideas for creating Bingo games are mentioned on <https://www.wikihow.com/Play-Bingo>