

Educational Activities

Activity A – BINGO

Bingo is a simple game that can be played on pre-made handouts or drawn by students in their notebooks. It requires a 5x5 graph that looks something like this →

The blank spaces on the Bingo board should be filled with information, depending on your subject area and goals. Some ideas might be:

- Vocabulary words
- Word definitions
- Pictures (to represent vocabulary words)
- Numbers
- Dates or historical figures

Bingo Board

B	I	N	G	O

If you are having students create their own boards, draw a sample on the blackboard. Then provide them with a list of words that they should write in the blank spaces of their Bingo boards. Make sure they understand that they should use each word only one time, and that **their boards should all be different!** (Keep this in mind if you pre-make boards for the students.)

Students should also create from **12-25 small paper pieces** that they will use to cover up the squares. You may also hand out beans, candies, or other small objects for this purpose.

Then the teacher begins to call out different words that are found on the Bingo boards. Students listen carefully, then place a little piece of paper (or bean, etc.) on the word that they just heard. There are several variations of this:

- Students have English words on Bingo boards, teacher calls out same English words
- Students have English words on Bingo boards, teacher calls out their Bulgarian equivalents (or vice versa)
- Students have words on Bingo boards, teacher calls out definitions of the words
- Students have pictures on their Bingo boards, teacher calls out words that match the pictures
- Students have numbers on their Bingo boards, teacher calls out math problems that the students must solve
- Students have dates on their Bingo boards, teacher calls out historical events that happened on the given dates

The goal is for students to have **5 squares in a row covered up**—diagonally, horizontally, or vertically. You can also give students a “free” space in the center square. Once a student has 5 in a row, **they call out “Bingo!”** and the teacher comes to check their answers. If you like, you can also have students read the squares out loud, or recite the corresponding fact to check their comprehension. You can award prizes of all sorts for Bingo—candy, bonus points, or just a high five.

There are endless variations of Bingo for all ages, levels, and subjects—the alphabet, historical figures, mathematical formulas, chemical elements, and so on. And once you create Bingo boards (or lists of questions and answers), **the game can be reused again and again!**

Activity B – Visual Aids

“Visual aids” is just another term for photographs and pictures, which can be used to supplement most subjects, but especially for foreign language, literature, writing, and social studies classes. Here are some ways to use pictures from oral and written class work:

1. **Questions:** Show students a large, complicated picture (using a projector is best). Ask straightforward questions suitable to their age and level (you can ask the group as a whole or individuals). This can be done aloud or written, in Bulgarian or in a foreign language.

Busy Beach Scene

- What do you see?
- Find and show me something “red”.
- Find an example of something on this beach that you cannot legally do on a Bulgarian beach and explain why.



2. **Quick Peek:** Show students a picture for only 1 or 2 seconds before covering it up again. Then have a class discussion, asking them to share what they *think* they saw. Encourage debate among the class—students will remember seeing different things, and not all will remember correctly! It’s also fun to instill doubt (“Are you *sure* that you saw a blue fish? It wasn’t another color?”). Finally, after most students have spoken, reveal the picture and see who was right.

3. **Mystery Picture:** (This exercise is particularly good for practicing yes/no questions in English.) Choose an interesting image, and tell the students that you will show it to them shortly, but first they must guess what they will see. Have the class ask you questions that can be answered using only “yes” or “no”. For example:

- Student: Are there people in the picture?
Teacher: Yes, there are people in the picture.
Student: Are the people outside?
Teacher: No, the people are not outside...

Once you feel the students have asked enough questions, have them tell or write down what they predict they will see in the picture. (For example, “I think we will see a family eating dinner together.”) Then reveal the picture. You can then discuss the similarities/differences between their expectations and the real picture, or award prizes for the picture closest to the truth. This game can also be played with a student answering the questions and other students asking them.

4. **Critical or Creative Thinking:** Choose a picture of particular interest and show it to the students. Build up using questions similar to those in example 1, then have the class interpret the picture in a way suitable to their level, either in a discussion or for homework or a project.

Seated Man and Woman

- Draw a picture of what you think their faces might look like.
- In 3-5 sentences, describe what ceremony is taking place.
- In what part of the world might this be? Why do you think so?
- Tell a story: how did this couple meet?
- Do you think this couple will still be married in 20 years? Why or why not? Write 8-10 sentences.



You can find lots of great pictures at: <http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/>

Activity C – Ball Games



Using games that involve throwing and catching items, such as a light ball, help physically engage students while learning in addition to being fun. Here are some activities involving a ball that can be done in class:

1. **Word Ball:** (Great for foreign language study!) Take a large ball (like an inflatable beach ball, or a volleyball) and cover it with pieces of tape. On each piece of tape, write a vocabulary word that your class is currently studying, such as question words (who, what, when, etc.).

Have the class stand in a circle (or two lines), then throw the ball at Student A, who should catch it. Whichever word Student A's index finger lands closest to (i.e., "who"), he must then use in a sentence. (For example, "Who is Eminem?") Student A then throws the ball to Student B, who must answer the question given by Student A. ("Eminem is a singer," "Eminem is an American," etc.). Student B then sees where *his* index finger has landed and then uses *that* word to ask a question to Student C, to whom he will throw the ball. The game continues this way until everyone has asked/answered, all the words have been used, or you just decide to stop.

There are lots of variations of this game, depending on the vocabulary, subject, or student level. Here are a few other ways to play:

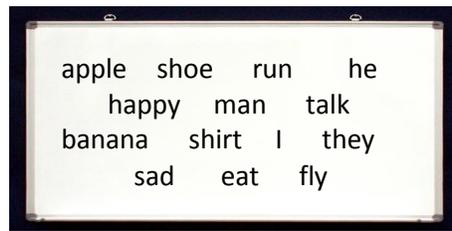
- **Total Physical Response:** The ball has commands (i.e., "Jump!" or "Eat!") written on it. When a student is thrown the ball, he must read aloud the command nearest his index finger and then do the commanded action (that is, jump or pretend to eat). He then throws the ball to a new student, who completes a new command.
- **History Facts:** The ball is covered with historical events, dates, and/or people. The student must try to provide information about the one of these on which his index finger lands. ("1776. Ummm...The American Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776," or "Death of Julius Caesar. Caesar died in...44 BC?") If the student provides incorrect information, then the class can correct him.
- **Periodic Table of the Elements:** The symbols of the elements are written on the ball, and students must provide the full name of the element before tossing the ball to someone else.
- **Animals:** Animal names are written on the ball, and students must make the corresponding animal sound to the animal that their finger lands on.

As you can see, this can be adapted to almost any subject or content, just like Bingo. Also, you can have the students throw the ball back to the teacher after answering each question, so that the teacher chooses who will answer next.

2. **Speed speaking:** Students stand in a circle or line. The teacher then hands the ball to someone at the beginning of the line, who must give a word related to a certain theme (i.e., fruit). The student then quickly passes the ball to the next person in line, who must name another fruit. If a student does not know a fruit word or repeats a word, he or she is out. Each word can only be said once. Play until there is only one student left, the winner. Can be used with all sorts of vocabulary, facts, etc.

3. **Class participation:** When conducting class, you can also use a ball to simply call on students. When the teacher chooses a student to answer a question, he tosses the ball to that student. This is good because it keeps students attentive—no one wants to get hit with a beach ball when they aren't paying looking! Once a student answers, the ball goes back to the teacher.

Activity D – Word Wall



The blackboard (or whiteboard) is one of the simplest resources to use when playing educational games. One way involves a making word wall—that is, writing a scattered group of words on the board. These words can be vocabulary, verb tenses, parts of speech, formulas, important events, etc.

Here are some ways to use such a word wall:

1. **Identification:** Divide the class into groups or teams. Then have one student from each group come up to the board. Depending on the sort of words on the board, have them race to circle a word that corresponds to your command. For example:

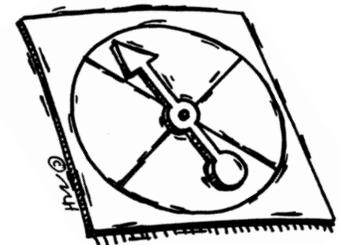
- “Circle a word that begins with the letter ‘S’.”
- “Circle the person who murdered Jean-Paul Marat.”
- “Circle an adjective.”
- “Circle the year that John F. Kennedy was elected.”
- “Circle the formula used to calculate the hypotenuse of a triangle.”
- “Circle a prime number.”

The first student to locate the answer and circle it wins a point for his or her team. If students are too aggressive in the race, you can tape up words on the wall or board to be taken down instead of circled.

2. **Sentence formation:** Using a word wall full of vocabulary words, have students create sentences using 1, 2, 3, 4... of the words on the board.

3. **Finding order:** Using a word wall of parts of speech (or some other unlike things, i.e. historic figures from opposing sides of a major war), have students find all of the nouns and write them in a list. Have them do the same for verbs, adverbs, pronouns, etc. Again, this can be done with all sorts of information, not just grammar.

4. **Word wall spinner:** Create a simple spinner that looks something like this:



Then, in each triangular space on the spinner, write in commands that can be used with a word wall. (If you laminate your spinner, you can use whiteboard markers to write new commands each time you play.)

Some examples:

- Find a noun and make a sentence with it.
- Find two verbs and put them in the past continuous tense.
- Find a country that is in the E.U. and tell which year it entered.

In teams (like in exercise 1) or individually, have the students spin the spinner and complete the task upon which the arrow lands. Award points to the team or student who first finds and answers the question correctly. You can award partial points if students can only do part of the task (i.e., find a noun but not make a sentence out of it).