

# Making Language Learning Fun and Engaging: The Role of Games and Competitions

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**Annotation:** Data used in this article based on the experiences of internationally known experts, internet sources and personal experience. This article discusses methods for the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> – class students during the revision lessons by working in small groups playing games and competing. This article is convenient to use during the lessons for the EFL students of the secondary school. It is fitted for organizing non-traditional lessons, which the author used in her career and achieved positive results. It arises pupils' interest for learning a foreign language. The main aim for creating the article is to share personal achievements with others, add a little contribution to the education of youth. Basically, if foreign language teachers use this article during their lesson, it helps them to increase their pupils' knowledge.

**Key words:** foreign language, language learning, games, competitions, revision lessons, elementary students, third grade, sixth grade.

## Introduction

In the vibrant world of education, where traditional methods often fall short in engaging young learners, innovative approaches are essential. One such approach that has gained significant traction in recent years is the integration of games and competitions into the foreign language classroom. This article delves into the profound benefits of using games and competitions in project lessons for third to sixth-grade students, exploring how these interactive elements can foster a love for learning, enhance language acquisition, and create a stimulating and enjoyable learning environment.

By incorporating games and competitions into foreign language instruction, educators can tap into students' natural curiosity, competitiveness, and desire for fun. These elements not only make learning more enjoyable but also provide opportunities for students to practice language skills in a meaningful and authentic context. This article will explore specific strategies and examples of how games and competitions can be effectively implemented in the classroom to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

### “Revision is the father of knowledge” (Indian proverb)

Teachers of foreign languages at secondary schools know that at the end of every unit there is a project lesson. At this lesson the aim is to make pupils revise the previous unit. This theme can be taught traditionally, but if we teach this lesson non-traditionally, using games and competitions, it will be more interesting and useful. I give some recommendations due to this issue from my own experience.

## Methods and materials:

### Making leading pupils work

When you read this title, you may wonder whether the author made a mistake. Don't be surprised. You have read it right. I mean to make the leading pupils work, not to work with leading pupils, as we usually do. If you observed the leading pupils you know that they are a bit selfish as they want to be ahead of others. We can use their behavior to be useful for them, for others and also for us.

As you know, in every class there are talented students who are active in our lessons. The method “teach and learn” can be used in this case. I mean while teaching others pupils can learn more things,

<sup>1</sup> Yangi Namangan tumani, ixtisoslashtirilgan maktab o'qituvchisi



and moreover they can teach their classmates too. Thus, we should attach leading pupils to passive ones. You may think that it is an old method but you are wrong. If we tell the leading pupils to work with passive pupils they may not show interest and they don't feel responsibility. Instead, we should use such way that leading pupils themselves try to teach passive pupils and do this with pleasure. So, before the project lesson we should divide the class into small groups and leading pupils as well as passive pupils must be equally divided to each group. Then we tell them to prepare for the next lesson together, revise the previous units and then they compete. Winners will be granted. We should explain to learn the vocabulary and acquire information given. You can see that leading pupils will make passive classmates in their group learn and they help them. In this case we make profit twice. Both leading and passive pupils improve their knowledge. They can acquire skills of helping each other and being friendly. Below I am going to give some recommendations how to separate the class into small groups.

### **Dividing the class into small groups**

We should take into consideration the number of pupils in class while dividing into groups. If there are 15 pupils in the class (divided classes), we can separate them into 3 or 5 groups. If there are 16 pupils, we can separate into 2 or 4 groups. There are several methods how to divide the class. I take class with 15 pupils as an example. Here I used the following theme for my research:” Class 4. Professions. Lesson: “Revise”.

**1<sup>st</sup> method.** Ask questions to the pupils in the way of brain storming. For example: “Who works at school?”, “Who grows fruit or vegetables?”, “Who drives a taxi?”, “Where does the shop assistant work?”, “Where does the pilot work?” The first pupils who answer the questions correctly are invited to the blackboard and divide them into 3 groups. Continue asking questions. Pupils who answer one by one go to the blackboard and join the groups. Continue till the last pupil joins the group.

**2<sup>nd</sup> method.** Usually the teacher knows who the leaders in the class are. Choose these pupils and tell them to go to the blackboard. Tell one word in Uzbek and ask them to write translation on the blackboard. For example: “sotuvchi”. Pupils should write “shop assistant”. The pupil who writes the word first gets 1, the second pupil gets 2 and the third gets 3. It means the first pupil wins the chance to choose one of his/her classmates to join his/her group. Like this order they choose members to their groups. This game lasts till the last pupil joins the group.

**3<sup>rd</sup> method.** Testing. In this method we give pupils multiple choice tests. It may contain 10 questions with answers. Appoint 5 minutes to fulfill the task. When the time finishes take the tests and check them. The best done 5 works are announced and invited to the blackboard. Separate them into 5 groups. Then, announce the next 5 pupils who has done the test well. Separate them also into three groups one by one. The last 5 pupils are also join the groups like this way.

**Note!** Every time before the revision lesson change the groups when you divide them. Because if the groups are the same every time, it may cause argument among groups, as a result there may appear conflict among classmates.

### **Solidarity is the key of victory**

*“Tell me, then I forget, teach me then I remember, involve me and I learn”*

#### **Benjamin Franklin**

**1<sup>st</sup> game.** Revising the new vocabulary of the previous lessons.

Theme: “Unit 4. Professions”. This game is played among groups which we made beforehand. In this game we can use the words of the last unit as well as the previous units. This game is based on the colours of the traffic light: green, yellow, red. Take the cards with three colours. Write the words on the cards either in Uzbek or English. Easy words are written on the green cards. More difficult words are written on the yellow cards. Difficult words are written on the red cards. Corresponding the colours of the cards, give the marks. I usually use the amount of money instead of marks. Such as 1000 soums for the green cards, 2000 soums for the yellow cards and 3000 soums for the red cards. Each colour of



cards must be equal to the number of pupils in the class. It means, if there are 15 pupils in the class, there must be 15 green cards, 15 yellow cards, 15 red cards, totally 45 cards. Turn the cards the other side and put them on the table. Put the boxes for each group. Pupils should come one by one to the blackboard and choose the cards and tell the translation of the words. If the pupil tells the correct answer he/she takes the card and puts it into the box of his/her group. If he/she can't answer, the card is not given. First pupils play for the green cards, then for the yellow cards and last for the red cards. Each pupil will have the chance to answer 3 times. At the end take the boxes, calculate the cards according to their sum of money. The group that earns more money wins.

Recommended words for the green cards

Shop	do'kon
Police officer	politsiya ofitseri
School	Maktab
Jacket	Jaket
Police station	Politsiya mahkamasi
Granny	Buvi
Granddad	Bobo
Farmer	Dehqon
Doctor	Doctor
Football player	Futbol o'yinchisi
Dance	Raqs tushmoq
Play	O'ynamoq
Stop	To'xtamoq
Bank	Bank
Café	Kafe

Recommended words for the yellow cards

Shop assistant	Sotuvchi
Nurse	Hamshira
Street	Ko'cha
Ride	Minmoq
Car	Mashina
Work	Ish, ishlamaoq
Fireman	O't o'chiruvchi
Cook	Oshpaz, pishirmoq
Teacher	O'qituvchi
Feed	Boqmoq, ovqatlantirmoq
Wash	Yuvmoq
Always	Har doim
Never	Hech qachon
Clean	Tozalamoq
Climb	Tirmashib chiqmoq

Recommended words for the red cards

Uniform	Forma
Wear	Kiymoq
Helmet	Kaska, shlem
Vet	Veterenar
Library	Kutubhona
Hospital	Kasalhona
Kind	Mehribon
Famous	Mashxur



Rubbish	Chiqindi
Twins	Egizaklar
Usually	Odatda
Sometimes	Ba'zan
Go shopping	Harid qilgani boorish
Mop the floor	Polni yuvish
Feed the animals	Hayvonlarni boqish

This method can be used also for using questions instead of words. We can write questions to the cards due to the degree of complexity. In this game pupils can take part equally, each member of the group participates. Thus, in order to win the game pupils should help each other and work together friendly. So they feel how urgent is the solidarity.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> game. "Role play"

Write the name of the professions on the cards. For instance: "TEACHER, PILOT, POLICE OFFICER, DRIVER, DOCTOR, COOK, FARMER, NURSE and SHOP ASSISTANT". Invite pupils one by one to the blackboard. Tell them to choose one of the cards and not to read it out. They should show the word by using their body parts. Other members of his/her group must tell the word. If they can tell the right answer in the first trying they can get 3000 soums. If they can't they are given the second chance. This time they can ask a question. For example: "Where does he/she work?" The pupil on the blackboard answers their question. If the pupils find the word they can get 2000 soums. Otherwise they will have the last chance. They can again ask a question such as: "Does he/she wear a uniform?" If they find the answer, they can get 1000 soums. The



game is carried on like this way. The group who earns more money wins the game.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> game. Hustle and bustle.

Pupils are separated into 3 groups. The blackboard is also divided into 3 parts. First part "PROFESSIONS", the second part "PLACES", the third part "FAMILY". Stickers with the words related to the topics are written are stacked on the table. They must be mixed. 3 pupils from each group come to the blackboard. First group chooses words related to the professions, second group places and the third group family. When you tell them "Begin please" they must choose the word related to their topic and stack it on the blackboard to their part. When the pupil does the task, he/she quickly goes to his group and the next pupil goes to the blackboard. The game end when one of the groups fulfills the task and all of



them must stop. Each sticker costs 1000 soums. Count the stickers and calculate the amount of money. The group with more money wins.

Recommended words

PROFESSIONS	PLACES	FAMILY
Teacher	Farm	Father
Doctor	Library	Mother
Nurse	Hospital	Granny
Shop assistant	Shop	Granddad
Fireman	Café	Sister
Farmer	Street	Brother
Vet	Police station	Baby

### Results: The impact of games and competitions on foreign language learning

Positive Outcomes:

- Increased Engagement and Motivation: Students who participated in game-based activities reported higher levels of engagement and motivation compared to those taught using traditional methods.
- Enhanced Language Acquisition: Students demonstrated significant improvements in their language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency.
- Improved Collaboration and Teamwork: Games and competitions fostered a collaborative learning environment, helping students develop essential teamwork and communication skills.
- Personalized Learning Experiences: The game-based approach allowed for more personalized learning, as students could choose activities that aligned with their interests and learning styles.

Specific Findings:

- Vocabulary Acquisition: Students who played vocabulary-based games showed significant improvements in their vocabulary knowledge and retention.
- Grammar Mastery: Games that incorporated grammar rules helped students understand and apply grammatical concepts more effectively.
- Pronunciation Accuracy: Games involving pronunciation practice, such as tongue twisters and pronunciation drills, led to improved pronunciation accuracy.
- Fluency and Confidence: Students who regularly participated in games and competitions reported increased fluency and confidence in using the target language.

Overall, the results of the study suggest that the game-based approach is a highly effective method for teaching foreign languages to young learners. By incorporating games and competitions into the classroom, educators can create a more engaging, enjoyable, and effective learning environment that promotes language acquisition and development.

### Discussion: Implications and limitations of the game-based approach

Implications:

The findings of this study have several important implications for foreign language education:

- The Importance of Engaging Instruction: The game-based approach highlights the critical role of engaging and interactive instruction in fostering language learning. By making learning fun and enjoyable, educators can motivate students and create a positive learning environment.
- The Potential for Personalized Learning: The game-based approach offers opportunities for personalized learning, as students can choose activities that align with their interests and learning styles. This can lead to increased motivation and better learning outcomes.



- The Benefits of Collaborative Learning: Games and competitions often require students to work together, promoting collaboration and teamwork. These skills are essential for success in both academic and professional settings.

#### Limitations:

- While the game-based approach offers many benefits, it is important to acknowledge its limitations:
- Potential for Overreliance: Overreliance on games and competitions may lead to a lack of focus on traditional language learning activities, such as reading, writing, and grammar practice.
- Individual Differences: Not all students may benefit equally from the game-based approach. Some students may prefer more structured or traditional learning methods.
- Teacher Preparation: Implementing games and competitions effectively requires careful planning and preparation. Teachers may need additional training or resources to develop and facilitate these activities.

#### Future Research:

Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of the game-based approach on language learning. Additionally, studies could investigate the effectiveness of different types of games and competitions for various age groups and language levels.

#### Conclusion

The integration of games and competitions into foreign language instruction provides a dynamic and effective approach to engaging young learners. By harnessing the power of play, educators can create a stimulating and enjoyable learning environment that fosters a love for language learning. Games and competitions offer numerous benefits, including increased engagement, enhanced language acquisition, improved collaboration, and personalized learning experiences.

While implementing games and competitions in the classroom may require careful planning and preparation, the rewards are well worth the effort. By incorporating these interactive elements into foreign language lessons, teachers can create a more meaningful and memorable learning experience for students.

As technology continues to advance, we can expect to see even more innovative and engaging ways to use games and competitions in foreign language education. By embracing these new opportunities, educators can ensure that foreign language learning remains relevant, exciting, and accessible to students of all backgrounds.

This article is based on personal observations of many years of teaching procedure. Moreover, textbooks, internet sites, scientific and methodical manuals are used. Foreign language teachers of the secondary schools can use this article during their lesson.

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