

Five Games for the Language Classroom

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'FLY SWAT GAME'

All you need is 2-4 different coloured flyswats, and the same amount of teams. The team name is the flyswat colour in the target language (TL). Have vocabulary words written on the board. (I get my fast finishers to do this for me prior). Then one person from each team takes their flyswat and stands in front of the board. You, or a chosen student, can yell out the word to be swatted. Fastest hit wins a point for the team. Take turns until each student in the group has finished.

Notes

Is quite a noisy game but instead of students choosing own groups I normally just group them where they are sitting so they stay seated. I have used this game from year 5 to year 12 and they all love it. Very good game if you need to fill in 10 minutes at the end of a lesson. Be careful though....Some rules must be established first: only one swat is allowed, must swat the board safely (not hit others), if they swat the wrong one they are out of that round, etc.

"PLAYDOUGH HIRAGANA/KATAKANA/KANJI/VOCAB"

As the name suggests you need a small amount of play dough for each student. You or a student calls out a character and the first student to roll their play dough into that shape wins a point.

"KATAKANA SCATTAGORIES"

You might be familiar with the English version. There are lots of lists of different categories, a character is chosen (either randomly or from a pile of katakana cards) and students must write words that begin with that character in Katakana. I have a noisy timer that came with the game that I sometimes use with older grades or at the end of the game. An example of the categories is listed below. You can do anything really.

1. A Girls name
2. A city in Australia
3. Things that are cold
4. Things you would find at the beach
5. An Animal

"BUS TO NO WHERE"

A game for character development. Divide the students into groups of about 5-8 (I normally try for 4 teams as it works best in my classroom) each person in the team sits on a chair behind each

other facing the board (so they are looking at their back) a bit like a bus. The first person is the bus driver and you need to give them a white board marker. The last person in the line was the last person to get on the bus and they need to pass a message to the driver without talking (no talking is allowed on this bus). You show the last person on the bus a hiragana or katakana card and they have to draw it on the persons back in front of them without speaking, that person in turn must draw it on the back of the person in front of them and so on and so on until the bus driver has it drawn on their back and they must run up to the board and draw what character they thought it was. If incorrect the last person must repeat the character until one of the team's bus drivers get the character correct. Then the bus drivers become the last passengers and everyone moves up a seat.

"TWISTER ALPHABET VERSION"

I have purchased a large plastic tarp (as big as I could fit in the classroom with all the desks pushed back) and written in thick permanent marker Japanese Hiragana symbols (more than once). Student or teacher calls out hiragana symbols and either left or right leg or hand and the students playing must place the appropriate body part on the symbol. Because I have such a large tarp I can fit about 10 students on it at a time.