

Literacy Games for Adults

NWT Literacy Council

http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/adultlit_res.htm

People of all ages can play literacy games. They can be a lot of fun. They can: help reduce tension

make the learning environment more comfortable
help build positive relationships, and . . .
they're also educational.

Lie Detector

1. The facilitator writes three statements on the board. Two are true and one is false.

I have been teaching for ten years.

I have a pet rat called "Monty".

I lived in Mexico for one year.

2. Participants ask "lie detector" questions to get more information to try to find out which statement is false.

Teaching: *Where have you taught?
How long did you teach in each place?
What subject did you teach?
What year did you start teaching?*

Pet: *How old is Monty?
What does he eat?
Where did you get him?
Where do you keep him?*

Mexico: *Where in Mexico did you live?
What state was that in?
Who were your neighbors?
What was your favorite restaurant?*

3. Participants vote on which statement is a lie.
4. Then another person gets to be the facilitator.

You can also play this game in small groups of 3 or 4.

Alpha Scavenger Hunt

1. Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5.
2. They must use all 26 letters of the alphabet for the scavenger hunt.
3. In their groups, participants try to find something in the room or on a walk that begins with each letter of the alphabet. They need only one thing for each letter.

The first group to find things for all 26 letters reads out their words. If the words are all OK, this group is the winner. If any are not OK, the game continues until another group finishes.

Survivor

1. You need the names of twelve famous people or twelve professions on slips of paper that are put into a bag.
2. Each participant chooses one of the slips of paper randomly.
3. They have to pretend they are all survivors of a shipwreck, whose lifeboat is about to sink, unless one of them jumps overboard.
4. Each participant, in turn, must try to convince the other participants of their value to the group and to society, in order to save themselves.
5. When everyone has spoken, each participant votes for the person they feel should jump out, and explains their reasons to the rest of the group.

Twenty Questions

1. Choose any item that people might be familiar with. For example, you might choose Stephen Colbert, road grater, banana, Mockingbird, or a number.
2. Participants then have to try to guess the item, but can ask only questions with “Yes” or “No” or “I don’t know” answers.

For example, “Is it a person?” “Is the person male or female?” “Does he live in the US?” “Is it a plant?” “Is it an animal?” “Does it live on land?” “Is it bigger than a shoe box?” “Is it an even number?” “Is it greater than 100?” “Is it a multiple of 7?”

3. The game is over if twenty questions have been asked and no one has guessed the right answer.
4. If someone guesses the right answer, that person can choose the next item and answer the questions.

Penny Story Telling

1. Collect a number of pennies with different dates on them.
2. Pass them out so that every participant gets one.
3. The idea is to look at the date and try to think of a story that happened to them in the year that is on the penny. For example, if the date on the penny is 1984, the person has to try to think of something that they did or that happened to them that year.
4. It will be important to make sure that the dates are relevant to the participants. For example, if everyone is under 20, then a coin with 1967 will have little meaning for them.

Food for Thought

1. Have participants sit in a circle.
2. Each participant has to say their name and also a food they like that begins with the same first letter as their first name. For example, "My name is Jeanie and I like jerky."
3. The next participant does the same, but also repeats the previous one. For example, "My name is Frank and I like french fries. She's Jeanie and she likes jerky."
4. And so on round the circle. It gets harder the more participants you have.

BUZZ - A Counting Game

This is a game of counting.

Sounds easy, but there's more!

Each time someone comes to the number seven, or any number with a seven in it (7, 17, 27, 37, 47, 57, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, etc) or any number that can be divided by seven (7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49, 56, 63, 70, 77, etc) you must say the word "**Buzz**" instead of the number.

1. Form a circle.
2. The first person begins the game by saying, "One".
3. The next person continues, "Two".
4. Continue counting. When a player comes to the number seven, they will say, "Buzz".
5. The game will sound like this: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, buzz, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, buzz, 15, 16, buzz, 18, 19, 20, buzz, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, buzz, buzz, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, buzz, 36, buzz, 38, 39, 40, 41, buzz, 43, 44, 45, 46, buzz, etc.
6. When anyone makes a mistake by saying seven, or seventeen, or twenty-one etc., they step out of the game.

Expression Skits

There are a variety of ways to make reading aloud with children fun. One way is to read with lots of expression. Here is a fun and entertaining exercise to practice using expression in your voice.

Model a sentence like the one below to show how the meaning of a sentence can be changed by emphasizing a particular word. Model the sentence again while, for example, pretending to cry. Again, although you're saying the very same words, the implied message has changed.

"Mary had a little lamb." "Mary had a little lamb." "Mary had a little lamb." "Mary had a little lamb."

As a group, repeat the dialogue below. Keep a neutral, expressionless tone. Repeat the dialogue a few times until everyone seems to know it.

A: Hi, how are you?

B: Fine, thank you. And you?

A: Just great. What have you been doing lately?

B: Oh, not much. But I've been keeping busy.

A: Well...it's been good to see you.

B: Yes, it has...well, bye!

A: Goodbye.

Match everyone into pairs and give each pair a situation. For example, two people who have met before but can't remember where, or two people who are angry with each other. Use your imagination!

Each pair will repeat the dialogue from above, but will use gestures, body language and the expression of their voice to convey the situation.

The others in the group guess at what the situation might be.

Some sample situations:

1. Two athletes who will compete in a match tomorrow
2. A sick person in hospital and a friend who visits
3. Two old people who are almost deaf
4. A divorced couple meeting on the street
5. A couple whose love is doomed by marriage promised to others
6. A teacher and a student
7. Two people who are angry at each other
8. A landlady and her overdue tenant
9. Two people who have met before, but can't remember where
10. Two spies who are meeting late at night
11. Two old friends who run into each other
12. A detective and a criminal

I Packed My Grandmother's Suitcase...

1. In a circle, the game begins with the first person saying, "I packed my grandmother's suitcase and in it I packed a _____". In the blank they say a word that starts with the letter **A**.
2. The next person continues and says, "I packed my grandmother's suitcase and in it I packed a _____ *and they repeat the word used for the letter A*, and a _____." This player says a word that starts with the letter **B**.
3. Continue playing until you reach the letter **Z**.

The game becomes more difficult as you go along because you have to remember all of the words used for each letter of the alphabet!

The Neighbor's Cat

1. All players sit in a circle.
2. The first player describes the neighbor's cat with any adjective that starts with the letter "A".
Example: "*The neighbor's cat is an adorable cat.*"
3. The next player must also use the letter "A" - such as "*The neighbor's cat is an angry cat.*"
Continue all the way around the circle.
4. When it comes back to the first player the letter "B" is used - example: "*The neighbor's cat is a bashful cat.*"
5. Anyone unable to come up with an adjective can pass on their turn.

The Human Alphabet

1. Prepare for the game by making two decks of alphabet cards. Use index cards or squares of paper and write out the letters of the alphabet, one letter on each card. Make a few extra vowels.
2. Each team receives a deck of alphabet cards which they spread out, letters facing up, on a table or on the floor.
3. Call out a word.
4. Each team must spell out the word using the cards. Each team lines up so that the word is spelled correctly and can be read from left to right.
5. The first team to correctly spell the word and display it in the correct order wins a point.

See the Light

1. Two players leave the room and secretly decide upon a word.
2. They come back to the room and carry on a conversation between themselves to help throw some light on what the word is. While talking, they give hints about the word but they do not actually say the word.
3. All the other players must try to guess the word by listening to the conversation.
4. If a player thinks he knows what the word is, he calls out "I see the light", and then whispers his guess to one of the two lead players.
5. If he is correct, he joins the first two players in the conversation while the rest of the players continue to guess.
6. If he is incorrect, he continues to listen and to guess the word.
7. The game continues until everyone has figured out the word.

The Dictionary Game <http://www.education-world.com/>

The Dictionary Game (also called Balderdash) is an activity used to introduce new vocabulary words from content areas. For the game to work, all students must be completely ignorant of the definition of the word being used. The game can be used to help students learn new vocabulary words that will be used in an upcoming unit

RESOURCES/MATERIALS: The words and their definitions plus enough identical pieces of paper (such as index cards) to go around.

1. The teacher chooses a word that no student can define.
2. Each student (or group of students if teacher chooses to play in teams) writes on their paper a made-up definition for the word in question and the teacher writes the real definition.
3. All of the definitions must be written on identical pieces of paper so that the paper doesn't become the clue.
4. All definitions are turned into the teacher and read by him/her. Then students vote for a definition when the teacher reads them through the second time.
5. Points are scored in two ways:
 - a. someone votes for your definition as the real one (one point per vote).
 - b. you vote for the correct definition.
6. The winner is the student with the most points.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER: The game is the most fun when the players get creative and humorous with their made-up definitions. The teacher needs to model definitions so that students can see how to do it.

Telling Tales http://bogglesworld.com/teaching_article3a.htm

1. Arrange three separate bags at the front of the class, and put slips of paper in each of them. The first bag should hold the name of a person, the second the name of a place, and the third should contain an action. For example, 'The Queen', 'Beach', 'Skipping'.
2. Ask the students to select one slip of paper from each bag, and then to write a short story that includes all three elements. This can be as fictitious as they wish, so long as it makes grammatical sense.
3. One by one, ask the students to read out their short paragraph to the class. The more random the words on the cards are the better, as humor and comedy are perhaps the most prolific teaching tools in existence.

Bits and Pieces <http://www.eduplace.com/activity/suspense.html>

Students use a collection of objects as the basis for writing a tale about the people who used the objects.

What You Need

- A collection of small objects, such as a small toy, a key, or a paintbrush (at least three for each student)
- Blank story map for each student (print and copy)

What to Do

1. Have each student bring in three to five small objects from home. The objects can be unique or common everyday things from around the house.
2. Then place all the objects on a table and let students choose three objects that they think they can work into a tale.
3. Distribute copies of the story map and have students complete it. Remind them that the objects must play a key role in the tale, such as being something that a father handed down to his daughter, and not just be mentioned in passing. Encourage them to write about the objects in imaginative ways.
4. When they have finished writing, have students read the tales aloud to the class.