

Activity: Categories

Materials needed: Game cards—one card per pair of students. (See sample cards following.) It isn't necessary to have a completely different card for each pair of students; it's OK to have one or two overlapping categories on each card.

Description: Give each pair or group of three students a grid/game card and make sure they understand their categories. Teams race against each other to complete their grid with a singular noun that fits in each category. For example, if the category is “machine,” the team might fill their category with the words “coffee maker,” “TV,” “car,” “washing machine,” “forklift,” “pencil sharpener.”



Set a time limit depending on the level of your class so that some people might complete their cards, but others won't. At the limit, shout “Time's up!” and ask everyone to put their pencils down. Teams with completed cards get to go first. They need to check their answers with the rest of the class by making statements like “A coffee maker is a machine,” “A car is a machine,” etc. The teacher can encourage variety by writing on the board the different ways students can check their answers:

“A car is a machine.”

“A car, a washing machine, and a coffee maker are machines.”

“Coffee makers are machines.” [With common nouns only, not with proper or unique nouns, like “jazz music”]

“London is a city.” [No article with proper nouns]

The students who have not completed their cards can ask for help from other pairs. They can announce which category they need help with, and other students can offer advice using the target language, like “Turtles are pets,” or “Antarctica is a continent.”

In addition, teams can challenge each other by saying things like “Tomatoes aren't vegetables! They're fruit!”

Here are some other categories for making game cards. Be sure to spread out the proper nouns among various cards:

house pet, musical instrument, wild animal, form of transportation, movie, month, season, language, city, country, vegetable, fruit, sport, drink, insect, fish, color, number, continent, electronic device, teacher, relative, movie stars, kinds of music, part of the body, class/course (English, math, chemistry, etc.), object in space (planet, star, satellite, sun, comet, etc.)



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Farm Animal	Flower	Vegetable	Student in My Class	Language

Car Company	Pet	Ocean/River	School/University	Fruit