

International Dialogue Game

Purpose

Strengthen conversational skills in a foreign language

Academic education

Improve fluency in a foreign language.

Character education

Build social skills with people from different cultures and backgrounds by playing together collaboratively. Build skills in making friends with people from diverse cultures.

Requirements

- Time: 20-40 minutes per match. 2 minutes per game. Debrief between games.
- Number of players: at least 2 students who are learning each other's language.
 - For example, a native speaker of Spanish playing with a native speaker of English.
 - Whole classrooms can play together (see variations below).
- Equipment: Internet devices connected with a video platform such as Zoom or Google Meet.
- Prerequisites: At least an introductory level of skill in the target language.

How to Play

Two students take turns interviewing each other on a topic of the teachers' choosing. Students take turns playing the role of interviewer. Both students speak in the interviewer's native language. Interviewer asks a question and the interviewee answers using the interviewer's native language. Interviewer responds with at least one supportive comment. Then the students switch roles and repeat the exercise in the other language."

Example

Topic: What do you like to do for fun?

Terry and Dana are learning Spanish in the USA. Pablo and Erica are learning English in Ecuador.

Step 1: Terry interviews Pablo for two minutes. Erica and Dana observe and keep score (or play concurrently on different computers – then players keep score themselves).

- In English Terry asks Pablo: *What do you like to do for fun?*
 - Pablo answers in English: *I like to play soccer.*
 - If Pablo has trouble with the answer, Terry can help, but Pablo must say the answer in a complete sentence.
 - Terry acknowledges Pablo's answer with two comments:
 - The first comment is to acknowledge something the interviewee said well or was of interest to the interviewer.

- The second comment could be either something that could be improved such as pronunciation (or acknowledge a second thing that was said well).
- The objective is to encourage and support learning.
- Terry continues asking in English: *Where do you like to play soccer?*
 - Pablo answers in English: *I like to play soccer at the park.*
 - Terry acknowledges Pablo's answer with two supportive comments.
- Terry asks: *When do you get to play soccer?*
 - Pablo answers: *I play soccer after school.*
 - Terry acknowledges Pablo's answer with two supportive comments.
- Terry asks: *Who do you like to play soccer with?*
 - Pablo answers: *I play soccer with friends from school.*
 - Terry acknowledges Pablo's answer with two supportive comments.

Step 2: Pablo interviews Terry for two minutes.

- In Spanish Pablo asks Terry: *What do you like to do for fun?*
 - Terry answers in Spanish: *I like to play video games.*
 - If Terry has trouble, Pablo can prompt Terry, but Terry must say the answer in a sentence before Pablo can go to the second question.
 - Pablo acknowledges Terry's answer with two comments as explained above.
 - The objective is to encourage and support learning.
- Pablo asks in Spanish: *Where do you play video games?*
 - Terry answers in Spanish: *I play video games at the library.*
 - Pablo acknowledges Terry's answer with two supportive comments.
- Pablo asks: *When do you play video games?*
 - Terry answers in Spanish: *I play video games after school.*
 - Pablo acknowledges Terry's answer with two supportive comments.
- Pablo asks: *Who do you like to play video games with?*
 - Terry answers in Spanish: *I play video games by myself.*
 - Pablo acknowledges Terry's answer with two supportive comments.

Step 3: Record scores and plan strategy to improve scores in the next game.

Step 4: Dana and Erica take steps 1-3 described above (unless they played concurrently).

Step 5: Rotate partners as shown on the score sheet and continue play until the match is complete.

Rules

1. The interviewer can help the interviewee, but the interviewee must state a complete sentence in the target language.
 - a. The answer that the interviewee gives does not have to be correct to contribute toward scoring a point.
 - b. The interviewee's answer must be a meaningful response to the question.
 - c. If necessary, the interviewer may suggest a sentence for the interviewee to say.
2. The interviewer must acknowledge the answer and make two supportive comments.

- a. The interviewer's reply may be simple statements such as "*Good pronunciation*" and "*I would like that, too.*" if the answer is appropriate and pronounced correctly.
 - b. If the answer is not correct, the interviewer first identifies one thing that was good and then suggests just one improvement that the interviewee could make.
 - c. The interviewer does not need to correct more than one mistake.
3. Time keeping is optional for novice players. Time keeping is required for advanced play.
 4. After each game, record the scores and rotate partners as shown on score sheet.

Scoring

The score is equal to the number of answers spoken by the interviewee in the target language in complete sentences and acknowledged with supportive comments by the interviewer. If the supportive comments are omitted, no point is scored.

The goal is to make as many points as possible in the time allotted. Because they are working together, the interviewer and interviewee have the same score.

Write the scores on the score sheet before rotating partners. Students win if they can improve their scores each time they play. They lose if they cannot improve their scores.

Match

In a match, each player has one game with each of the others in their foursome (or threesome).

The EnTeam score sheets simplify the process of scorekeeping. The EnTeam debrief forms give the students a structure for planning how to improve their collaboration.

Between games, players take time to plan how they will improve their combined scores. If the scores improve each time they play, they win together. If the score does not improve, they lose together.

Variations

- Three or four students from different cultures form a team online. Observers can be scorekeepers and teachers' assistants.
- In teams of 3 players, a different player is the observer each game.
- Teachers may decide that the answers must be written as well as spoken. If so, more time must be allotted.
- Teachers may pose more complex questions for longer interviews.
- If there are multiple computers, multiple interviews take place at the same time

Debrief Questions

The purpose of debriefing is to develop strategies that will improve your performance and to recognize how these lessons apply to everyday life. To facilitate a successful debrief, facilitators must observe participants and ask engaging questions that spark important conversations. If we don't debrief, we don't learn!

What happened?		
What did you see/hear? What was the score?	What worked? What didn't work?	How did people feel? What issue(s) came up?
So what?		
What did we learn?	How does this experience relate to other experiences?	Why are we doing this? How is it relevant to us?
Now what?		
How could we improve our score in this activity?	How can we work together better?	How could we apply lessons learned elsewhere?

Digging Deeper

- Did anyone feel reluctant to share strategies?
 - o Why? Are you still in a win-lose mindset?
 - o If we are trying to improve collective achievement, who are you benefitting when you withhold strategies from other teams?