

# Introduction

## What sort of games?

The *Games Book* is designed for teachers working with adult learners of English. The twenty games in the collection are divided into two sections: ten for use with **general English** learners and ten more specifically for **business English** classes.

Teachers of business people will also want to use a number of the general English games: most classes will enjoy giving their views in *The Sports Game* (whether they are pro-sport or contra), and have fun polishing their shopping language in *The Department Store Game*. And they'll probably have plenty to say about celebrities and others in *The People Game*, too.

## Games with adults?

However motivated and hard-working they are, adult learners also enjoy the chance to practise language in a more relaxed format, and the competitive element can be surprisingly productive. This is especially true for classes who have their lessons at the end of a hard day at work. "I'm glad my secretary can't see me," said a manager as he excitedly shouted out the answers during one of these games!

## Levels and language

Each of the games in *The Games Book* has a **minimum starting level**, but beyond that they are open-ended, allowing more advanced learners to come up with whatever they can. The **Language** overview section lets you see at a glance whether your class is ready for a particular game, and it suggests what minimum-level learners can be expected to come up with.

## How to use the game

The games in *The Games Book* can be used in several ways:

1. as a **diagnostic test** at the start of a course, to see exactly what your learners' weaknesses are and how you can help, especially if you are teaching false beginners or a refresher course;
2. to **practise** a specific structure or topic that you have to teach. Blank cards at the back of the book allow you to personalize the material to fit your particular class;
3. to **review** language you have taught at the beginning of the next lesson, or at any later stage of a course.

4. to **round off** a course before a break: *The Money Game*, for instance, makes an excellent way to wind up for the summer, and *The Christmas Game* settles one nicely into the festive spirit.

And there is no reason why many of the games should not also be **re-used** with the same class at a later date, showing them just how much progress they've made since the last time!

## How long do they take to play?

If you have taught someone and want to use a game to practise it in the classroom, allow at least **thirty minutes** for the game (itself and a bit more time for feedback afterwards – see page 5).

Cutting a game short because learners are really getting into it can be frustrating. If it is clear that no one will reach the end of the board within a reasonable amount of time, set a **time limit**; the winner will then be the player who has made the most moves.

## What about preparation?

Before using a game, check the language section and key to make sure it is appropriate for your class, then **try out a few moves** on the board to help you explain the rules. If you want to personalize the game to your class, use the blank cards at the back of the book.

Look at the "You will need" section and ensure that you have made all the necessary **copies** and cut up the **card sets**. Don't forget the **dice** (emergency substitute: six small squares of card, numbered from 1 to 6). Borrow the **markers** from family board games, or supply a selection of coins, keys, rings, etc. for learners to choose from.

## Starting the game

1. **Explain why** learners are going to play the game: to help you establish their needs; to practise or revise a specific area of language; to allow them to test their general communicative competence.
2. Point out that **you will not correct** what learners say *during* the game; the aim here is extended fluency practice. If learners disagree as to the correctness of a response, or really need help with a particular point, they can of course ask you.

3. **Demonstrate the game** yourself by making a few moves on the board and asking learners to come up with suitable responses. You might want to check that they really understand how to play by asking one of them to explain the rules after you have done so.

## During and after the game

Encourage learners to **judge their own performance** during the game rather than constantly turning to you for approval. If procedure is in doubt (for example, if a task seems ambiguous), let them decide what to do themselves.

Observe the play and **note anything interesting** that comes up, such as especially effective responses, or communication problems that the whole class need to be aware of so that they can avoid them in future.

**Give feedback** after the game: praise and then draw attention to a few useful points. Avoid a detailed examination of everything that went wrong – which could make learners wish they had never played the game in the first place!

And now, have fun!

*The author*

## Acknowledgement

The author would like to mention that it was "Tell us about" in Friederike Kilp's *Keep Talking* (CUP 1984) that started her interest in using board games in language classes and led to this collection.

# The Adjectives Game

## a General English game

In this game learners practice using adjectives, comparative and superlative forms.

### Language

#### Level

from elementary

#### Vocabulary

Any vocabulary you want to test (see the cards on pages 10–11 for a selection of topics).

### Preparation

#### Before the lesson

Decide whether you want to use the cards on pages 10–11 or make your own using the blank cards on page 112.

#### You will need

- one A3-size photocopy of the board on page 9 per group of 4–6 learners;
- one cut-up set of the cards on pages 10–11 (or your own cards) per group;
- one dice per group;
- one marker per player.

### The Game

#### Introduction

Divide learners into groups of 4–6 players. Give each group a board, dice, markers and a set of cards.

Ask learners to gather round one board. Place the cards face down on the board. Designate the game by making one or two moves and eliciting appropriate responses (see **Key** for suggestions).

#### The aim of the game

The winner is the first player to a) gain 20 points and then b) throw a 6 to get off the board in any direction.

#### How to play

Players place their markers in the middle of the board. The first player to throw a 6 begins. Players take it in turns to roll the dice and move in any direction.

Players landing on a patterned circle take the top card, turn it face back, read it out and make a sentence using the topic on the card.

Each sentence must include an adjective, or its comparative or superlative form, depending on the pattern of the circle they are on (see the legend on the edge of the board).

If the rest of the group approves of the sentence, the player gains the points for that pattern (again, see the board).

Players landing on a blank circle may pick up a card.

### Key

(some possible responses)

Card: animals  
Adjective: I've got a fat pig. My friend's got a black pig.

Comparative: Elephants have larger ears than ...  
Superlative: The elephant is the largest animal in the world is ...

Card: animals  
Adjective: Elephants aren't very large.  
Comparative: Elephants are more beautiful than ...  
Superlative: The elephant is the most beautiful animal I know is ...

Card: weather  
Adjective: February was very cold this year.  
Comparative: The weather last summer was worse than the year before.

Superlative: ... is usually the hottest region here in summer.

### Alternative games

(from lower intermediate)

This game could be played in the same way using adverbs, nouns or verbs instead of adjectives.

#### 1. Adverbs

Card: work  
Adverb: She works very hard/fast.  
Comparison: She types faster than/more slowly than ...

Superlative: She types the fastest ...

#### 2. Nouns

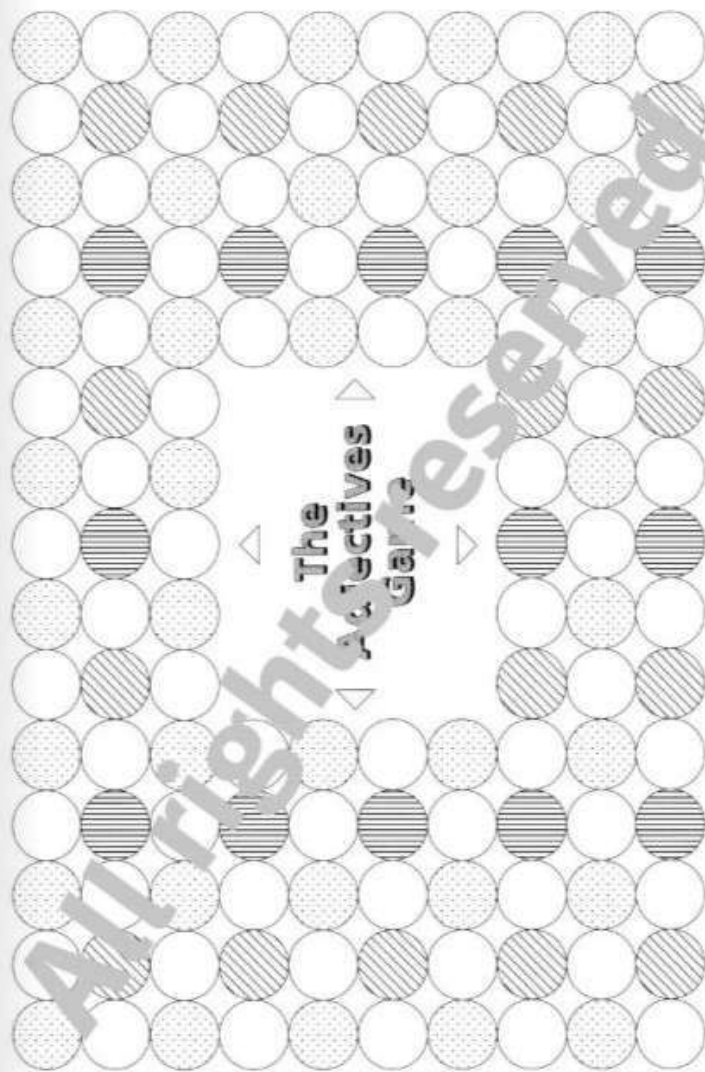
Card: appearance  
(points could be given for the number of related words in the sentence)  
He's tall, quite thin and has brown curly hair. (5 points)

Superlative: He is the tallest, thinnest and has the most curly hair. (5 points)

#### 3. Verbs

Card: housework  
(points could be given for the number of related words in the sentence)  
I did the ironing, dusted, washed the dishes and hoovered yesterday. (4 points)

Superlative: I did the most ironing, dusted the most, washed the dishes the most and hoovered the most yesterday. (4 points)





# The Christmas Game

## a General English game

In this game learners practise the language of social interaction at Christmas-time.

## Language

**Level**  
from intermediate

### Some Christmas vocabulary

**Decorations:** baits, candles, fairy lights, holly, mistletoe, streamers, tinsel, tree  
**Food:** roast turkey, Christmas pudding, mince pies, Christmas cake  
**Presents, etc:** Christmas card, Father Christmas/Santa Claus, stocking, Christmas present, wrapping paper, Christmas cracker  
**Season:** Advent, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day  
**Other:** Christmas carol

### Functions

- describing customs and habits
- describing dishes
- giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing
- making, accepting and refusing invitations
- regretting
- speculating
- suggesting
- thanking

## Preparation

### Before the lesson

Decide whether you want to use cards on page 15 or make your own using the blank cards on page 112.

### You will need

- one A3-size photocopy of the board on page 14 per group of 4–6 learners;
- one cut-up set of the cards on page 15 (or your own cards) per group;
- one dice per group;
- one marker per player.

## The Game

In the lesson, divide learners into groups of 4–6 players. Give each group a board, a dice, markers and a set of cards.

Ask learners to gather round one board. Place cards face down on the board. Demonstrate the game by making one or two moves and giving appropriate responses (see **Key** for suggestions).

### The aim of the game

The winner is the first player to reach the end. You may wish to set a time limit rather than wait for a player to reach the final square. The winner is then the player who has made the most moves.

### How to play

Players place their markers on START. The first player to throw a 6 begins. Players take it in turns to throw the dice and move around the board.

Players landing on a square with a "Present" symbol read out the text and respond accordingly. If the rest of the group approve of the response, the game proceeds; if not, the player returns to their or her previous position.

Players landing on a square with a "Present" symbol take the card from the pack, read it out and suggest an appropriate present, e.g.

**Present card:** An aunt who has three cats.  
**Suggestion:** I'd buy her a lot of cat food.

**Present card:** A teenage boy.

**Suggestion:** What about a computer game or a book?

## Key

(some possible responses)

1. Invite someone to have Christmas Dinner with you.  
*Would you like to have Christmas Dinner with us?*
2. You are the only person at a Christmas party wearing jeans.  
• *I'd go home and change – if I lived nearby!*  
• *I'd tell my hosts that I didn't realize that it was a formal party.*
3. Refuse an invitation to a Christmas drinks party.  
*It's very kind of you, but I'm afraid I can't come. I have to ...*
4. What ingredients do you need to make a Christmas pudding?  
• *I've no idea – does anybody know?*  
• *I think you need sultanas, nuts, flour and spices.*
6. Talk about spending Christmas in a hot country.  
*It wouldn't be Christmas! For me, Christmas has to be winter, with the cold and snow.*

7. English-speaking neighbours visit you unexpectedly on Christmas Eve.  
*Hello! What a surprise! Please come in. Would you like a cup of coffee?*
8. Describe a local Christmas dish.  
*We always have ... on Christmas Eve. It's made from ...*
10. Your family wants to stop giving Christmas presents. You don't.  
*We do spend a lot of money on presents, but we must give presents to the children.*
11. A relative you don't like very much has invited herself for Christmas.  
• *I wouldn't be very happy about it.*  
• *Oh, what a pity! I'm going away this Christmas.*
12. You think all Christmas trees should be made of plastic.  
*So many trees are cut down every year just so that people can use them for a few days. There won't be any trees left soon!*
14. You don't agree with using Christmas wrapping paper.  
*What a waste of paper! You unwrap the present and throw away the paper. Think of all the trees ...*
15. A friend has given you a very expensive present.  
*It's really lovely, but you shouldn't buy a present so much money.*
16. Accept an invitation to a Christmas dinner.  
*That's very kind of you. I'd love to come.*
17. Give an example of local Christmas biscuits or cakes.  
*We have mince pies. They're made of pastry and filled with a sweet mixture of raisins, apples, nuts and spices.*
19. Describe a local Christmas custom.  
*We decorate all the pictures with holly – green leaves with red berries ...*
20. Thank your English friends at the end of a Boxing Day visit at their house.  
*Thank you very much. We really enjoyed the visit.*
21. Your family wants to watch TV on Christmas Day.  
*We watch TV every day. You don't have to watch anything different.*

23. Someone you have invited to Christmas dinner says she is vegetarian.  
*Oh, dear! Shall I make you an omelette ...?*
24. Describe a foreign Christmas custom.  
*Well, in America they decorate the outside of the house and the garden with ... Father Christmas.*
26. You have received a present you don't like. Say thank you.  
*Er, thank you so much. What a lovely ...*
27. Your family wants to spend Christmas at a hotel. You don't.  
*Christmas is always spent at home – it's for families and children.*
28. Your visitors want to go to church on Christmas Day. You don't.  
*I'd love to go with you, but I have to cook the dinner. I'll arrive at the church and you could walk ...*
29. A friend asks you to help others this Christmas.  
*I think you should donate some money to a charity this year, instead of buying everybody presents they don't want.*
30. Describe your most unusual Christmas.  
*I once spent Christmas in Kenya ...*



"Well, we won't have needles all over the carpet."