

Warm Up Games for ESL students:

Game 1: (a variation on karuta)

- Lay a selection of request cards (or other cards) face up on the table.
- The teacher forms a sentence containing the keyword from one of the request cards. The first student to locate this card, wins it.
- This activity works best when the teacher acts as the storyteller, adding a background story to the request, rather than just reading out a request.

Game 2:

- Lay a large selection of request cards face up on the table.
- Call out an adjective (e.g. scary, expensive, healthy, beautiful, difficult, dangerous, entertaining, romantic, thoughtful, unusual, unreasonable etc.
- Players now search through all of the request cards, trying to find the request card that can best express the adjective.
- Players take turns to recite their request. The best, or most interesting request (as judged by the class), wins all the request cards recited in that round.
- The student with the most cards at the end, is the winner.

- Alternatively, call out personality types (eg. bossy, charming, adventurous etc.) instead of adjectives.

Example of Game 2:

- *If the teacher calls out the word 'lazy', students would look through the request cards looking for a card that best demonstrates a lazy request. Possible answers could be 'can you cook me dinner?', 'do my homework?', 'wake me up after class.'* etc.
- You can try similar exercises with a selection of excuse, decline, why and pass it on cards. This time, the teacher makes a request, and students search through the cards on the table looking for the best response, with the winner collecting all the cards used in the round.
- As a further variation, the winner of a round starts the next round by quoting a request card.

Other *Scratch My Back* Games to Try:

The following games work best with three or more players.

1) SNAPPY ANSWERS TO STUPID QUESTIONS

Here, players attempt to win the pile of cards on the table by playing a 'matching Request card' at the right time.

Setting Up:

- Shuffle, then deal seven cards to each player. Place the remaining cards face down on the table, forming the draw pile.
- Nominate a player to start. (or if you like take turns cutting the pack. The first person to reveal an 'Agree' card starts).

Playing the Game:

- The starting player places a Request card face up on the table. Using the language on the card, they make a request of all other players.
e.g. if playing the 'Change' Request card, they could say: 'Would anyone like to change their hair color? I have some red dye'. (Any request that uses the keyword is okay).
- All players now respond to the request by placing a card, or cards from their hand onto the table. Players can take their turn in any order, and may play any card(s) from their hand, so long as the language fits in naturally*. The request maker can interact and ask questions of individual players by playing additional cards from their hand. From here mini dialogues take place, with players responding with cards from their hand as seems appropriate.
- If a player plays an Agree card, they become 'Request Maker', and next start a new round by playing a Request card.

- If all players refuse the request, play returns to the Request maker, who can either 'Agree' (after which they must play a new request card), or a new player (the one who hasn't made a request for the longest) now plays a new Request card.
- After taking a turn, a player may draw from the deck so that they once again have seven cards in their hand.

Scoring points:

- Playing an Agree card and a 'matching Request card' together wins all the cards accumulated on the table. (a 'matching Request card' is a card with the same icon as the Request card currently active in the game).
- If two players both have matching Request and Agree cards, the fastest to place their cards on the table wins.
- If no Agree card has been played after all players have responded to a request, the original Request maker has an opportunity to win the cards by playing an Agree and matching Request card themselves.

End of the Game:

- The game ends once the draw pile is exhausted and all Request cards played. The player with the most points, wins.

Optional Scratch My Back Card Rule:

If a player plays a Scratch My Back and Request card together the two players temporarily swap roles, with the request maker first responding to this new request. (Note: the two players involved in the dialogue have an opportunity to score points if they have a Matching Request card).

2) FREESTYLE CONVERSATION (a variation on Crazy 8s)

- Shuffle well and deal each player eight cards. Place remaining cards face down on the table and choose a starting player.

Playing the Game:

- The starting player places a Request card from their hand onto the table and makes a request of all other players using the language on the card.
- Players now respond to the request in turn by selecting any card (or cards) from their hand which provides a coherent reply*. If a player can't give a good reply, they pick up from the pile, forfeiting their turn.
- From here a dialogue unfolds. Players continue to expand the dialogue and interact by playing additional cards as seems appropriate.
- *Note the request making player can also use the 'why', 'reason' and 'command' cards to interrogate a player, who must respond again.*

- If an 'Agree' card is played, the player to their left starts a new dialogue by playing a Request card. Otherwise, after a dialogue reaches a natural conclusion, the player to the left of the previous starting player starts the next dialogue.

Other Rules:

- Crazy 8's Rule: If a player runs out of cards, they next pick up seven cards, after successfully discarding these, they pick up six cards, then five etc. until they reach zero cards, at which time they win the game.
Reload card: On a player's turn they can play this card, allowing them to nominate an opponent who must reload their hand to their full quota.

*Players can reply with any card (including Request cards) but should note that cards with an attacking icon Ⓜ contain language intended for a request maker, while the defending icon Ⓝ indicates language suited for responding to a request, thus some cards work more naturally than others.