

Onion rings

About this activity

‘Onion rings’ is a good activity to help primary and secondary learners communicate confidently. Learners get the opportunity to speak with lots of their classmates, but they only ever speak to one person at a time. This builds their confidence. It’s great to use at the start of the year for learners to introduce themselves. It can also help learners to practise new vocabulary, or to share what they know about a topic.”

Stage 1: Prepare	Divide the class in half. One half stand in a circle, facing outwards. The other half stand in a wider circle around them, facing inwards. Each learner should be opposite another learner. If there is no room for these circles, ask learners to stand opposite each other in two lines.
Stage 2: Explain	Explain the rules of the game. Say: ‘I will give you a topic to discuss with your partner. You will have one minute to talk. Don’t start until I say go.’ Say: ‘When I say move, the big (outer) circle moves one place to the right so they have a new partner.’ Or, if you are using the lines, say: ‘When I say move, the person at the top of the line should go to the other end of the line.’
Stage 3: Model	Model the game with a few learners. You should stand in the outside circle so you can demonstrate moving one place to the right. Make sure your “partner” is a confident speaker.
Stage 4: Play	Give the learners the topic you want them to discuss. Say: ‘Go!’ After one minute (or when learners have finished talking), say: ‘Stop!’ Ask learners in the outside circle to hold up their right hand and move one place to the right so that they have a new partner. Continue as many times as you like.
Stage 5: Closing	Learners share with the whole class what they learnt from each other about the topic.

This game needs space and can be noisy, so it might be better to play it outside. It's important that learners know what to do before they start. Check that each learner has a partner before you begin and make sure all learners know which is their right hand. Monitor to make sure learners are doing the task correctly.

Author: British Council