

Noughts (O) and crosses (X)

Noughts and crosses is a fun game that you can use to review or practise vocabulary. It's a good activity to use at the end of a topic or unit to check your learners understand the meanings of words. You can use it with any subject, not only English.

Stage 1: Prepare	Make a list of 9 words on a recent topic, e.g. food.
Stage 2: Introduce	<p>Say: 'Let's play a game.' Draw a grid of nine squares on the board. Ask: 'How many spaces are there?'</p> <p>Draw a nought (O) and a cross (X) on the board. Say: 'There are 2 players. 1 is 'noughts', the other is 'crosses'. To win you need 3 in a line.' Show learners how they can win with 3 in a line.</p> <p>Demonstrate by playing against the class. Say: 'Let's play noughts and crosses. I'm noughts and you're crosses. I'll go first'. (Put a 'O' in the centre square.)</p> <p>Say: "Your turn. Where will you put your cross (X)?" Invite a learner to draw a cross. (Other learners will shout where to put it.) Play the game until there is a winner. Clap the winner.</p>
Stage 3: Practice	<p>Say: 'Now, let's play with words.' Write one word in each space in the grid on the board, e.g. banana, sugar, chicken, etc. Divide the class into two teams, noughts and crosses.</p> <p>Say: 'Choose a word and explain what it means. Noughts, choose a word'.</p> <p>If 'noughts' can explain, draw a 'O' in the square. E.g. 'banana' (= a yellow fruit you must peel it first)</p> <p>If they can't, say: 'Sorry. Crosses, it's your turn. Choose a word.'</p> <p>Continue until there is a winner or a draw. Clap the winners.</p>
Stage 4: Play	<p>Put learners in groups of four. Say: 'Draw a grid with nine spaces.'</p> <p>Say: 'Look at your books and recent topics. Choose nine words and write them in your grid'. Monitor and support.</p> <p>Say: 'Two of you are noughts, two are crosses. Choose who is noughts and who is crosses.'</p> <p>Say: 'Now play'. Check all groups are playing correctly. Circulate, monitor and support.</p> <p>Variations:</p> <p>1. Learners use the words to make a sentence, give an opposite word, or give a synonym. (These variations are more challenging and more difficult to manage in large classes. You will need to monitor and referee more.)</p>

	<p>2. Other subjects:</p> <p>Examples</p> <p>Maths: Use numbers, not words. Write sums in each square, e.g. 9 x 7, 40/5, etc. Learners give the answers.</p> <p>Science: Use categories, not words, e.g. mammals, fish, reptiles, etc. Learners give examples to win the square.</p>
Stage 5: Extend and share	<p>Stop learners after ten minutes.</p> <p>Ask who won. Clap the winners.</p> <p>Ask if they enjoyed playing Noughts and crosses.</p> <p>Ask different groups to tell the class their best or funniest definition.</p>

Learners can also work in pairs or groups to make word grids for their classmates to play with: at the end of a unit or before a test, give different pairs or groups a different topic and ask them to make a word grid to test their classmates.

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