**List of Fun ELL Activities**

**LANGUAGE GAMES/ACTIVITIES:**

* **Taboo Pairs-**  Each pair gets a stack of words and must describe the word without saying it.  Then, the next player takes a turn, until all the words have been explained.
* **Apples to Apples-**  In small groups, each player gets a number of red noun cards; the judge gets a smaller stack of green adjective cards.  Each player chooses 3 noun cards, and chooses just 1 of the three to make an argument as to why it is the best match for the adjective.  Players are encouraged to be as creative as they want.  The judge decides which noun/adjective description is best.  The person who wins the round becomes the judge (with the adjective cards) for the next round.
* **True/False/I Don't Know-** Students form groups of 3-5.  Each group receives 3 cards:  1 says T for True; one says F for False; and one has a question mark, indicating the group does not know the answer.  A statement is given, and then the group discusses whether it is T/F or they don't know and when the leader says, "hold up your card," each group shows one card.  A similar variety (can be used as an icebreaker) is “**Two Truths and a Lie-“** In pairs or groups, a student says two truths and two lies about themselves, and the others have to guess whether the statement is a lie or the truth.
* **"I Love My Neighbor Who..."** Put chairs in a circle with one fewer than the number of people.  One person stands in the middle and says, "I love my neighbor who is wearing blue jeans."  Everyone wearing blue jeans has to get up from their chair (they cannot move to the right or left of their chair) and race to find a new chair, or they become the next person in the middle of the circle. The more common the object, the more movement there is (for example, I like my neighbor who is wearing underwear!)
* **Role Playing/Skit Activities**- The teacher presents specific scenarios that could be related to real-life issues that teens face, or they could be more fictional. Students write a script based on solving the problem within this scenario and act it out for their peers. It could be a competition for who has the best skit (each group could present their own skit for a given scenario or variety of scenarios). This could also be an opportunity to practice vocabulary or grammar previously learned if students are asked to use these in their skits. See handouts posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **Guess Who?** - Students are given a card containing a photo or name of a famous person (or it is put on their back), and the other person has to guess the identity by describing the person using English but not mentioning the name or obvious characteristics (who describes it depends on who is aware of the identity!).
* **Rumor Game/”Broken Telephone”-** Students sit or stand in a circle. One student, the “initiator,” is given a card with a short “rumor” on it, or someone whispers a sentence into his/her ear, and this student then “spreads the rumor” from one student to the next in a circle. Finally, the last person blurts the word or phrase out loud to see if it's the same as the original. Another option is groups can stand in separate lines and have a competition for who can spread the “rumor” the fastest and the most accurately.
* **Draw a Picture Game (Can also be team building)-** Place students in pairs with their backs to each other and an image in front of each. It can also be used in a group setting for team building. Each student explains what the image looks like while his/her partner has to attempt to draw it without seeing it. What type of image it is (e.g. landscape, caricatures, famous actor, etc.) depends on the English proficiency level and, to a lesser extent, the artistic ability of the students.
* **Running Dictation Game (Can also be team building)-** Divide students into groups of roughly 5 students. Post a list of sentences on the wall, which can be a poem or a riddle forming a complete text (for example, a short story). The same riddle/story can be used for all groups, or different texts can be used per group. Each group member takes a turn walking up to the wall, reading it, and then dictating the sentence to one “secretary” in the group who has to write it with correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. The person must physically leave their seat and remove themselves from the group to read it. The person can return as many times as she wants, but the second person cannot go to the wall until the previous person says he has finished dictating. Then the second person goes up, and so on, until the riddle, poem, or short paragraph is completed correctly by the secretary. The teacher goes around and checks errors.
* **Make a Commercial-** Students choose their favorite item, food, service, band, artist, etc. and write a script and later act out a “commercial” in which they promote it as the best. If video equipment is available, the commercials can be recorded. They can also create an imaginary item to promote.
* **English Board Game-** Can be used to teach and practice a variety of topics of the teacher’s choosing related to conversational English. On each point on the game board, students are required to ask and/or answer a question on a certain topic in English. If they get it right, they can role the dice and move forward to the next point. Example: “Would You Rather…? Game.” See handouts posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **Grammar Sentence Auction-** Students write down a list of sentences about a topic, or read sentences already written (some of which should be correct and some incorrect) and they place a bet on whether each sentence is correct or not.  Winners are who bet the most money and got the most sentences correct (in terms of grammar, spelling, etc.)! See handouts posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **English/American Jeopardy**- Like the TV game of jeopardy but with language-related questions of your choosing. You can create a “Jeopardy Board” and different categories with different values (e.g. “American Culture for $200) with a question connected to each jeopardy square. See handouts posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **English Relay Race**- Similar to a relay race with “checkpoints.” At each checkpoint, students must answer a question correctly in English, and can't leave until they do. This process could also require making a basket or doing something physical, or simply running from one place to another, answering questions at each checkpoint.
* **Word/Sentence Scramble**- Students are given cards containing single words or phrases, and must attempt to form a sentence in a way that is grammatically correct. Correct completion of the sentence can lead to the unknown identity of a person or the answer to a question presented, or can be a “clue” to finding something further.
* **Nouns Pictionary-** Students first learn a group of nouns. Then, in designated groups, a teammate is chosen to draw a select noun for his/her group mates. The group who guesses the word the fastest is the winner (you can have all groups compete to draw the same words, or give each group different words).
* **Verbs Charades**- Students first learn a group of verbs. Then, in designated groups, a teammate is chosen to act out a select verb/action for his/her group mates. The group who guesses the word the fastest is the winner (you can have all groups compete to act out same words or select random words).
* **Adjectives (Personality/Feelings) Charades-** Students first learn a group of personality/feelings adjectives. Then, in designated groups, a teammate is chosen to act out the personality/feeling for his/her group mates. The group who guesses the word the fastest is the winner (you can have all groups compete to act out the same words or select random words). This can be tricky, as it will require acting out facial expressions and personality characteristics. You can also choose the option of allowing both drawing and acting out (Pictionary combined with Charades).
* **Create and Describe Dream World/House-** Students paint, draw, or create their dream house or world, give a presentation in English about it, or write about it. This can be used to teach and practice a certain language point, such as conditional tense (if…could/would/should).
* **English Total Physical Response (TPR)-** Students hear a song or paragraph in English and jump or clap their hands every time they hear a certain word, phrase, or grammar point (make sure to include a lot of movement for younger children).
* **Song Activities-** Essential for camp activities as long as they’re in English! Karaoke is a plus if available. Can be used to teach endless language points. See handouts posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **Favorite Song Translation-** Students take their favorite song in Spanish and translate it into English, with the option of also performing it in English.
* **English Show and Tell “How-To” (General)-** Students model and describe how to do their favorite activity in English and act it out (e.g. dance salsa). They could use the verb cards from Charades for this and decide as a group who will explain which verb. They could also write down the instructions in English for their classmates (on the board or via handouts).
* **English “How-To” (Cook)-** Students write the recipe to their favorite food/dish in English, give a presentation describing how to cook their favorite food in English, and/or bring in the food to share. They could create a “cookbook” of one or more of their favorite recipes.
* **English Scavenger Hunt-** Students use English to find clues to the next clue, or a person hiding who provides the next clue.  (This depends on the number of students).
* **English Hide-and-Go-Seek-** Divide students into group of hiders and group of seekers. Searchers must find a person who gives them a clue or question in English that they must answer correctly, then they move on to the next person. Nobody is allowed to skip people and the “clues” require that they go in order.
* **Where’s the Beef? Logic Puzzle-** There are eleven related facts listed for this logic puzzle. After reading them, help the “waitress” who is serving the table to figure out the answer to this question: Who ordered the cola, cheeseburger with pickles, and French fries? See handout posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **Facebook Activity-** Students use their favorite social networking site to learn and practice English (particularly colloquial English). See handouts posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **My Words T-Shirt Activity-** Brainstorm with students some nouns that have significance in their lives (such as movies, friends, and music). Ask them to write as many words as they can on their T-shirt (3-5 minutes). Randomly pair students and ask them to explain their choices. Write reasons on board, if necessary. For example, “I chose ‘computer’ because I love to post photos to Facebook. I wrote ‘cell phone’ because I like to text my friends.” (Extension: if materials are available, students could paint their words on an actual T-shirt, with their camp team name on the back. On the last day of camp, they could then vote for the team with the best T-shirts.). See handout posted to [www.peopleleap.com](http://www.peopleleap.com).

**TEAM-BUILDING (LANGUAGE) ACTIVITIES:**

* **Human Knot-** Have the group make a large circle. (This game also works well as a race between several circles in larger groups). Have everyone put their left hand in the middle, and hold hands with someone in the circle, not directly next to them. Repeat with the right hand, and be sure to hold hands with a different person, who is not directly next to them. You can use 1-foot “buddy ropes” to reduce arm-twisting if you like. Then the group must use teamwork to unravel themselves into a circle again without coming disconnected. (Helpful hint:) To ensure that everyone is in the same circle, send a “pulse.” One person begins by gently squeezing their right hand. The person who is squeezed gently squeezes their opposite hand, which passes the pulse to the next person. Continue until the first person has their second hand squeezed.
* **Helium Stick** **(Team Building)-** The Helium Stick is used to teach a powerful lesson about organizational mission statements and group work in general. Facilitator storyline: Organizations create mission statements to be a guiding force. A good mission statement focuses everyone's attention on the core essence of a business or organization, and enables them to make decisions and take action that is directly aligned with their core values. For our next challenge, your group will have a simple mission: To lower this stick to the ground better than ANYONE in the world. Have the group repeat the mission a couple of times. The challenge: have the group of 8-12 divide into two lines and face each other. Explain the technical rules to the group (very important): everyone's index fingers MUST remain in contact with the stick at all times, and the stick must rest on top of their fingers at all times (no grabbing, finger curling, etc.). Have the group extend their index fingers at waist level. Lay the stick across the group's fingers. At that time, the group must work together to lower the stick to the ground. Inevitably, the stick rises almost instantly - causing laughter, frustration, or confusion. The rise is caused by the small ripples of upward pressure as individuals each try to remain in contact with the stick. After refocusing, the group will be able to lower the stick. The debriefing: ask the group if everyone understood the mission and technical lowering rules. Ask if anyone was intentionally trying to sabotage the group's mission by lifting the stick. Ask if everyone sincerely wanted to accomplish the mission or thought that it could be done. If everyone understood the mission, and was committed to succeeding, why did the group get so far off track right away? Try to elicit answers that are related to the group process, not the technical explanation of the challenge. For example, "we didn't plan well" more so than "we weren't holding our fingers correctly. Ask the group to share example of groups that they have participated in "the real world" that seemed to be comprised of committed folks, but were not productive. Discuss what types of actions are important to keep a group focused on the mission. Many times during this activity, people become frustrated with others who aren't lowering the stick, and often choose one person as the culprit. Also, some people give up and let the stick come off their fingers. If either happens, be prepared to discuss how blame or giving up affects groups. Tip for success: when you place the stick on the group's fingers, apply slight downward pressure before letting them begin. This helps create the initial upward pressure that creates the "helium stick."

**ICE BREAKER/”GETTING TO KNOW YOU” (LANGUAGE) ACTIVITIES:**

* **Sun Diagram Activity-** A fun and graphic way to get to know one’s classmates. See handouts posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **Mingling Chart-** Students get to know each other by “mingling” and filling in the blanks of a chart containing several questions to ask each of their classmates. See handout posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **Inner/Outer Circle-** Students stand in an inner and outer circle. Two circles move along to music in opposite directions and stop with the music. Students must discuss with the person who is facing opposite them a designated topics of the teacher’s choosing.
* **Guess Who?-** Participants write a brief paragraph about themselves not mentioning their names or giving any obvious clues. Then another student picks the paragraph out of a hat, reads it out loud, and the rest have to guess who in the group it is. This works best when the group doesn’t know each other very well, but may know a few basic things.
* **“My Bio” Poem/Paragraph-** Handout paragraph biography template in which students can fill in the blanksto write a brief biography of themselves. This can also be incorporated into the “Guess Who?” guessing game in which it is read by someone else and the rest of the class must guess who it is. See handout posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **“Are You Who I’m Looking For?”** Students write a list of personality adjectives to describe themselves and then the ideal qualities (adjectives) in a friend, colleague, and/or significant other. Later, in a “musical chairs speed-dating activity,” they interview each other to see if their partner has these qualities, and record yes or no in a chart. The person who is the most compatible is their best “match.” See handout posted to www.peopleleap.com.
* **Class Trends/Statistics Activity-** In groups, students make a chart/graph of statistics of the class based on certain aspects and possibly those from the Ice Breakers, or any other data such as age, gender, etc. Then each group gathers data for certain components and presents it to the rest of the class. They can use charts, graphs, Microsoft Excel, etc. to visualize their point. See handout posted to www.peopleleap.com.