

ESL Activity Packets

Margaret Mary Katherine Aly-Youssef
ESL Instructor

Minneapolis Public Schools Adult Literacy Program, Northside ABE

Individual activity packets are made for each ESL learner consisting of laminated paper cards that are used in a kind of matching game. Each laminated card has a word, phrase, picture or number on it, and the learner must match it with a corresponding card. Sets of matching cards may include:

- Money
- Capital and lower case letters
- Print and cursive letters
- Numbers and their written equivalents
- Vocabulary and pictures
- Dates and days, months or years.

After the instructor introduces the lesson, the learners use the cards to reinforce or develop skills and test their knowledge. The learners organize the cards according to categories and put them into proper matching order. The instructor checks each learner's work and moves around the cards that are in the wrong place. After the learner matches all of the cards, he or she mixes up the cards and proceeds to match them again. When all of the learners have matched all the cards correctly in front of them, the instructor can call out different words, numbers, phrases, etc., and the learners can identify the corresponding cards.

This practice can be used for low-level ESL learners. Each learner can work at his or her own pace and mistakes are quickly and easily corrected by moving cards around. The activity exercises comprehension as well as kinesthetic learning styles that are often overlooked by the "pencil and worksheet" approach. One of the benefits that instructors gain from this activity is a quick, accurate evaluation of a learner's progress. It is also the case that faster learners can help to tutor lower-level learners, incorporating peer tutoring into the activity.

The instructor can copy a page from a book or use typed original material. Enough copies should be made for each learner using a different color for each matching category. After each page is laminated, learners can cut the pages into individual cards, thereby developing motor skills and a sense of ownership. The cards can be reused for multiple classrooms.