

Activity Type

Writing and speaking activity, group work

Focus

Defining

Aim

To invent false definitions for words and guess true definitions.

Preparation

Make one copy of the word cards for each group of five and cut as indicated. Also, prepare small slips of paper for each student.

Level

Intermediate (B1-B2)

Time

25 minutes

Introduction

This ESL word game is based on a popular board game of the same name. In the game, students invent false definitions for words and score points by correctly guessing true definitions.

Procedure

Divide the students into groups of five.

Give each group a set of balderdash word cards. Ask the students to shuffle the cards and deal them out equally face down.

Also, give each student some small slips of paper to write definitions on.

Students take it in turns to be the leader.

The leader of the round chooses one of their word cards, reads the word aloud and spells it.

The other students then each invent a short false definition for the word that could fool the other group members and write it on a slip of paper.

The leader copies the true definition onto a slip of paper so that they cannot be seen reading from the card.

Each student then hands their definition to the leader who mixes them up and then reads each one aloud.

The other students then vote on which definition they think is correct and the leader reveals the answer.

Students score one point for each vote their false definition receives and two points for choosing the correct definition.

The leader scores three points if nobody chooses the correct definition.

The scores are added up and another student becomes the new leader and so on.

Play until all the words have been used or time is up.

The student with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Balderdash word cards

aulete : a person who plays the flute

belocolus : a magic stone that makes a soldier invisible

bettong : a small kangaroo

boletus : a wild mushroom

collutory : antiseptic mouthwash

crwth : a 6-stringed violin

dorking : a chicken with 5 toes

exoduster : someone who leaves town in a hurry

fard : to put on makeup

forney : a ring worn on the fourth finger

galligaskins : loose baggy trousers

gravid : pregnant

hippiater : a horse doctor

histrixite : a Tasmanian mineral containing copper and iron

jargonelle : a pear which ripens early

mantelet : a bullet-proof screen

mawworm : a hypocrite

noddlethatcher : someone who makes hats and wigs

oxter : to walk along arm in arm

ozostomia : bad breath

pistareen : a Spanish coin worth 20 cents

ramfeezled : exhausted, tired

sclaff : to scrape the ground with a golf club before hitting the ball

screeve : to draw pictures on a sidewalk for money

shiggers : tight trousers worn by football players

splate : a substance used in shoe making

toison : the wool of a young sheep

tranka : a long cylindrical box which jugglers balance with their feet

wakiup : an American Indian hut

wallygowdy: a precious jewel or gem