

## Games to Encourage Listening and Attention Skills:

### Purpose of the games:

To develop speech, language and communication skills in a whole-class setting. (You can also play these games in groups or one to one)

### Tips on when and how to play the games:

Teaching staff, try these for ten minutes every week for a term, whenever you have time. Try to play the games at the same time each week, so that it becomes part of your school routine. You know your class. You know which area, e.g. Looking, Listening and Attention, Understanding Words and Sentences, etc. would be the best place to start. Focus on one area, e.g. Looking, Listening and attention or half a term, then move onto another area.

Parents and carers, you can play these at home and include siblings too.

1.



**What you need:** a drum (optional)

### Instructions:

The class sit in a horseshoe or in a circle. The teacher claps or drums a short sequence, e.g. claps / drums three times, or claps / drums twice quickly then slightly pauses and claps / drums twice again. The child to the teacher's left copies the sequence, the child to their left claps the sequence, and so on until everyone in the class has clapped / drummed it.

When everyone has clapped / drummed the sequence, start again but clap / drum a more complicated sequence, e.g. increase the number of claps / drums, vary the rhythm, etc.

Follow the same procedure as above but choose a child to start by clapping / drumming and the class copy his sequence.

### Variations:

- Perform an action or make a noise, e.g. hop, or blow a raspberry. The child on your left has to copy your action / noise and add an action or noise of their own. The child on their left has to copy the two actions / noises, and add one more. Each child copies the actions / noises and adds another one – see if you can get round the whole class before someone forgets!

- Perform a sequence of actions or noises, e.g. touch your head, turn about, touch the floor; clap, stamp your feet, blow a raspberry. When you say “Go!” the children copy you.

2.



**What you need:** a list of instructions (see example instructions – you know the children so you can make them harder or easier).

**Instructions:**

The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Explain: “Listen carefully. I am going to tell you to do something. For example, jump! Turn around! Don’t do it, until I say **GO!**”

Get the class to stand up. Read the instruction and leave a short pause before you say GO!

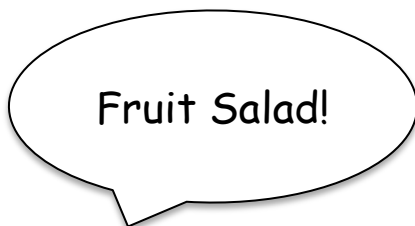
**To make this harder:** leave a longer gap before you say **GO!**

**Suggestion:** Chose children to think an instruction and say **GO**

**Example Instructions**

1. Stand up. Go!
2. Pat your head. Go!
3. Close your eyes. Go!
4. Stick your tongue out. Go!
5. Rub your tummy. Go!
6. Hop. Go!
7. Clap twice. Go!
8. Turn around. Go!
9. Shake hands with the person next to you. Go!
10. Pull a silly face. Go!
11. Close your eyes and hop. Go!
12. Pat your head and touch the floor. Go!

3.



**What you need:** (Optional) pictures of fruit.

**Instructions:**

The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Put the fruit on the board (four or five types of fruit, e.g. bananas, apples, pears, grapes, peaches) Go round the class touching each child's head and telling them what fruit they are, e.g. "You are banana. You are apple. You are pear. You are grape. You are peach. You are banana.....". Check they can remember what fruit they are (e.g. Put your hand up if you are a pear, etc.)

When you say a fruit, e.g. banana, all the children that are bananas have to swap places. After a few turns, sit down when the children are changing places so that a child is left without a seat. That child then calls out a fruit and tries to make sure that he gets a seat so that another child has to call out the fruit!

**Suggestion:**

- Call out something that most definitely will not be in a fruit salad from time to time, e.g. a sock, a worm!
- Play this game with speech sounds (phonemes not graphemes), e.g. "You are s, you are k, you are sh, you are b...." When you say a speech sound, e.g. "sh", all the children that are sh, swap places.

4.

Thumbs up!  
Thumbs down!

**What you need:** List of true and false statements, e.g. "I've got blue hair. Thumbs up or thumbs down?!" "Spiders have eight legs. Thumbs up or thumbs down?!" (See example statements)

**Instructions:**

The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Get everyone to give you a thumbs up or a thumbs down. Tell the class you are going to tell them something. They have to listen carefully. If they think it is true, they give you a thumbs up. If they think it isn't true, they give you a thumbs down. (Practise first as they can find thumbs up/down hard).

**Example Statements**

1. Milk is purple.
2. It is very hot at the North Pole.
3. Spiders have eight legs.
4. Apples grow on trees.
5. Spaghetti grows on trees.
6. Cats bark.
7. A bicycle is faster than a car.

8. A train is faster than a bicycle.
9. An ant is smaller than a butterfly.
10. Christmas is in August.
11. You need helmets to play tennis.
12. I've got orange eyes.

**Suggestion:** Make statements about curriculum topics, e.g.

**Romans:**

1. The Romans invented showers.
2. Romans wore togas, etc.

**Numeracy:**

1. All the sides of a rectangle are equal.
2. A cube is a 2D shape.
3. An octagon has six sides. etc.

When the class are familiar with this activity, get them to make five true or false sentences in pairs or small groups.

5.

Hurrah-Boo!

**What you need:** List of hurrah-boo statements (nice and not so nice sentences!), e.g. "We're going to the cinema!" "There's no playtime today!" (See example statements)

**Instructions:**


The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Practise saying "Hurrah!" and "Boo!" Tell the class that you are going to tell them something – if they like it, they have to say "Hurrah!" and if they don't like it they have to say "Boo!"

**Example Statements**

Christmas has been cancelled!  
We're going to do maths all afternoon!  
School is cancelled next week!  
We are going to watch tv all day tomorrow!  
We will have sweets for lunch!  
It is going to snow tomorrow!  
The Queen is coming to our school tomorrow!  
We are getting a dog for the class!

We are going to the zoo tomorrow!  
We are having monkey's brains for lunch!  
We are going to clean the classroom all day tomorrow!  
We are going swimming after lunch!  
One Direction are coming to school this afternoon!

6.



Listen and  
Jump!

**What you need:** List of statements, e.g. "If you have got trousers on, jump!"  
(See example statements)

**Instructions:**

The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Give a command involving an action that the children have to do. For example, "If you have blue eyes, jump!" "If you have a sister, jump!"

**Suggestion:** Children can think of two or three commands in small groups or pairs. They can give the commands to the class.

**Example Commands:**

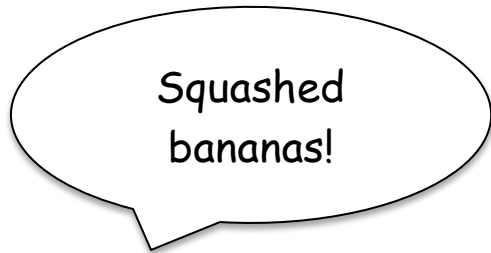
If you have curly hair, jump!  
If you have short hair, jump!  
If you have long hair, jump!  
If you have black hair, jump!  
If you have red hair, jump!  
If you have blonde hair, jump!  
If you have brown hair, jump!  
If you are wearing black shoes, jump!  
If you have brown eyes, jump!  
If you have blue eyes, jump!  
If you have green eyes, jump!  
If you are wearing a skirt, jump!  
If you are wearing trousers, jump!  
If you have a sister, jump!  
If you have a brother, jump!  
If you have a pet, jump!  
If you have a dog, jump!  
If you have a cat, jump!

**Suggestion:** Make statements about **curriculum work**, e.g.

**Science:** If you think that the nearest planet to Earth is Mars, jump! If you think that humans could live on the moon, jump! Etc.

**Literacy:** If you can spell because, jump! If you can spell people, jump!  
If you know what letter comes after f in the alphabet, jump! Etc.

7.



Squashed  
bananas!

**What you need:** List of questions, e.g. “What do you brush your teeth with?!”  
(See example questions)

### Instructions:

The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Choose a child to sit in front of the class. Ask the child a question. They have to answer, but they can only say “Squashed bananas” and they must NOT laugh! If the child laughs, they are out.

### Tips:

- Get the class to think of, and ask questions.
- Have a class champion!

### Questions

What's your name?	What would you say to the Queen if she came to tea?
Where do you live?	What is in your bag?
What do you clean your teeth with?	What is in your pockets?
What do you wash with?	What is your favourite ice cream?
What do you brush your hair with?	What do you write with?
What does your best friend look like?	What are you going to give to your mum for Christmas?
What do you want for your birthday?	Who do you like to dance with?
What do you like wearing?	What do you play football with?

What do you clean the house with?	What are you sitting on?
If you won a million pounds, what would you buy?	What are you wearing?

8.

Who's missing?

**What you need:** N/A

**Instructions:**

The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Tell the class to look around the horseshoe like detectives! Tell them to look at who is where..... Then tell them all to close their eyes. Choose a child and tap them on the shoulder. The child quietly gets up and leaves the room. Tell the children to open their eyes, look around and put their hand up if they know who is missing.

**Suggestion:** Increase the number of children that you tap on the shoulder to increase the memory load.

9.

Build it!

**What you need:** Wooden building bricks or duplo blocks.

**Instructions:**

The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Put the bricks on the floor in front of the class. Place a brick on the floor to start the tower. When you say a child's name, they come and put a brick on the tower until it falls down!

**Variations:** Children put a brick on the tower when you look at them.

10.



Tell it!

**What you need:** an envelope or a bag with the titles of well known stories or nursery rhymes in it, e.g. Sleeping Beauty, The Hungry Caterpillar, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Tiger who came to Tea, Humpty Dumpty, The Duke of York, etc.

**Instructions:**

The class sit in a horseshoe or a circle so that you can see everyone. Take a title from the envelope and read it to class, e.g. Cinderella. Start telling the story. Choose a child to continue the story. After a short time, choose another child to continue telling the story, and so on until the class have told the whole story.

**Variations:**

- The child chooses the next child to continue telling the story.
- Make up a story with the class and take it in turns to tell parts of it. Have an object bag. Each child takes an object and they have to include this in the story.
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11.



Magic sound!

**What you need:** (optional) pen and paper

**Instructions:**

Either sit the children at tables with pen and paper or the class sit in a horseshoe. Introduce a magic sound, e.g. s. Every time the children hear you say the magic sound, e.g. s, they have to stand up (clap/stamp their feet, etc.) or tick the piece of paper.

**This is easy:** Count to at least five silently then say s. Do this at least four times (leaving shorter or longer pauses depending on the group). Or hum a tune for at least five seconds and then say s (humming increases the anticipation!)



**This is harder:** say at least five other speech sounds before you say s. For example: b, t, k, w, d, **s**. Repeat this at least four times. It is harder for children to hear s if you say similar speech sounds, e.g. f, sh, v, z.

For example: Say the following sounds: b k d m p **s** w t g l ch **s** sh n h  
f b dg **s** p k t ch d **s**

**This is even harder:** Ask the children to listen for animals that start with s (or food / clothes / names / transport, etc that start with s – use key words from class topics if you can) As above, say at least five words that start with different speech sounds before you say one that starts with s, e.g. cat, donkey, duck, pig, dog, seagull. (This activity is harder if the words contain s in any word position, e.g. walrus (at the end of the word), ostrich (in the middle).

For example: Say: whale eel dolphin penguin **seal** chicken duck goose  
cuckoo turkey **seagull** worm ladybird bee **snail** donkey sheep horse  
cow dog **squirrel**

12.

Guess the  
instrument!

**What you need:** a selection of different musical instruments, e.g. bells, shaker, drum, whistle, etc.

### Instructions:

Children sit in a horseshoe or at tables. Show the class at least three instruments (depending on their level). Play each one for the class. Ask the class to close their eyes and play at least two.


Choose a child to come and show you which instruments you played.

**To make this harder:** increase the number of instruments you play.

**To make this easier:** give each child an instrument. They place the instrument on the floor or on the table if they are sitting at tables. They put their hands on their legs. When you say “Go!” They have to pick up their instrument and play it until you say “Stop!”

Choose children to say Go and Stop!

13.



Oranges and  
Lemons!

**What you need:** Paper and pencils or crayons.

**Instructions:**

Children sit at tables. Divide the class into oranges and lemons. Give different instructions to the oranges and lemons, so they are not doing the same thing. See listed examples of instructions to use.

**Example Instructions**

- Oranges, draw a house! Go! Lemons, draw a dog! Go!
- Oranges, draw a tree next to the house! Go! Lemons, draw a cat next to the dog! Go!
- Oranges, draw the sun! Go! Lemons, draw a bicycle! Go!
- Oranges, draw two flowers! Go! Lemons, draw a cake! Go!
- Oranges, draw a bird! Go! Lemons, draw a cup of tea! Go!

14.



That's wrong!

**What you need:** an envelope or a bag with the titles of well known nursery rhymes in it, e.g. Jack and Jill, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Baa Baa Black Sheep.

**Instructions:**


Children sit in a horseshoe. Take the title of a nursery rhyme out of the bag. Tell the class that you are really good at saying nursery rhymes. Tell them that if they hear any problems, they can stop you, but they won't because you are amazing at nursery rhymes!

Make errors in the nursery rhymes as you tell them. For example: "Baa, baa blue sheep" The children correct you, e.g. "No! Baa, baa black sheep!" Ask if you can try again, e.g. "Oh sorry! I thought it was blue sheep. Can I try again? Thanks. I will be fine now. Baa, baa black sheep have you any wool? Yes, Sir. Yes, Sir. Five bags full" and so on!

For example: Baa baa pink sheep, have you any bananas, yes sir yes sir 500 bags full, one for the elephant, one for the crocodile, and one for the granny who lives down the lane.

**Variations:** Tell well-known stories and make errors in your telling.

15.



**Make a card!**

**What you need:** Paper or card, coloured crayons, pens or pencils, decorative materials, e.g. sequins, glitter, feathers, etc.

**Instructions:**

Children sit at tables. Tell them they are going to make a card. They have to listen carefully and do what you tell them to do. Pause between instructions so they have time to follow your direction.

- Fold your paper/card in half.
- Draw a big flower on the front.
- Colour the petals red or orange.
- Choose four sequins from the box. Stick one sequin on each petal.
- Open up the card. Choose a piece of tissue paper from the box.
- Cut the tissue paper into a big heart.
- Stick the heart on the right hand page.
- Write To Mum at the top of the page.
- Write love from and your name at the bottom.

**Suggestion:** Give each child two pieces of card, e.g. a green piece and a red piece, or two faces, e.g. a happy face and a confused face. Tell them that if they are not sure what they have to do, they can hold up the red piece of card (or the confused face) and you will come and help them.

16.



**Action!**

**What you need:** pencils and paper, enclosed texts or sections from class reading books, curriculum texts, well known stories, etc.

**Instructions:**

Children sit at tables. They listen to the text and put a tick on their piece of paper every time they hear a doing word (verb). For example, He **jumped** down onto the grass, and **ran** across the field. Read the text twice.

**Suggestion:** Check that the class know what a doing word (verb) is, e.g. put at least four words on the board, make sure at least two are doing words: car, eat, wash, dog, on. Ask the children which words are doing words – action words – give an example. In pairs, the children decide which ones are doing words.

*I hope these games help, and that you enjoy them!*

