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Ideas: Let's Play Bingo: A New Way to Learn Numbers, Vocabulary, and Verbs

Lina Lee

University of New Hampshire, Durham, lina.lee@unh.edu

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Author(s): Lina Lee

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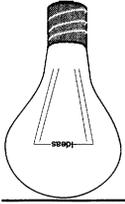
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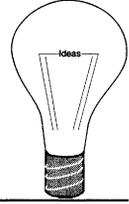


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PEDAGOGY: ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS, FLES* (K-8)



Ideas



Prepared by Gladys C. Lipton

Let's Play Bingo: A New Way to Learn Numbers, Vocabulary, and Verbs

Lina Lee

State University of New York, Plattsburgh

Abstract: The objective of this activity is to help beginning students learn numbers, and practice vocabulary and verbs in an interesting and meaningful way. In addition, this activity attempts to improve their listening comprehension and speaking ability.

Key Words: games, vocabulary, verbs, numbers, bingo, *lotería*

Many beginning students have the difficulty of understanding numbers as well as of composing simple sentences in a foreign language. The activity of "Vamos a jugar a la lotería" is a great way for practicing Spanish by listening, asking, and answering questions to each other as well as reinforcing what they have just learned in the classroom. In addition, it creates interaction among students.

The following is an example of playing *lotería* with numbers. The instructor decides the range of the numbers to play, for example from one to a hundred, writes the numbers on paper, and cuts them into small pieces to place in a plastic bag or a box. The instructor also brings pinto beans for the students to mark the items on their cards.

Each student prepares a cardboard bingo chart of 12 blocks (3 x 4) or 16 blocks (4 x 4). They then write the desired numbers within the selected range in the boxes on their cards, as illustrated below:

Lotería (0-100)

27	7	87	13
3	68	100	99
43	33	2	70
15	6	0	56

As the instructor reads numbers from the bag, students place a pinto bean on the number they hear that matches the number on the bingo card, taking care to mix the numbers well before drawing them. Before the game, the instructor explains the following rules to students in Spanish:

- (1) Primero se van a decidir las alternativas para ganar (una fila completa o tarjeta completa)
- (2) Se dirá cada número tres veces
- (3) Hay que colocar un frijol en el cuadro que corresponde al número leído
- (4) Se dice "lotería" en voz alta cuando uno gane la lotería
- (5) Se van a leer los números otra vez para comprobar los números de la cartilla ganadora
- (6) Se le premiará al ganador con dulces o con crédito extra [optional]

A variety of this activity is to ask students to write a short phrase on each box of the bingo chart, such as "Tener una familia loca" or "Tener un tío soltero" in Spanish. The instructor can choose the thematic topic, such as "familia," "viaje," and "fin de semana" activities for students to create a set of sentences to write on the bingo chart. Some examples for family situations that students can write on their cards follow:

Lotería (Familia)

una familia loca
 una madre que trabaja
 un pariente que bebe mucho
 más de cuatro hermanos
 un tío divorciado
 una tía que cocina bien
 una sobrina que canta bien
 un padre que fuma
 un pariente de México
 una cuñada rica
 más de siete tíos
 una hermana casada
 un hermano menor
 gemelos/as en la familia
 un primo que vive en Tejas
 cuatro abuelos vivos

Instead of the instructor's reading phrases, the students themselves present each situation to their classmates. Once they get a "sí" answer of confirmation, they ask the classmate to sign his or her name in the square. Students continue to play the activity until they have enough signatures to get *lotería*. In order to evaluate the learning outcome of this activity, the instructor can call on individuals and ask them questions or have them ask each other questions in Spanish at the end of the activity.

This activity can also be used to reinforce grammatical concepts, such as *servir* vs *estar*, *gustar*, or *saber* vs *conocer*. Students can create their own sentences, such as "conocer al presidente de la universidad" or "saber cocinar la comida china" for their bingo chart. Another way of using *lotería* is to acquire cultural knowledge by asking questions, such as "¿Cuál es la capital de Cuba?", "¿Quién es el presidente de Perú?", "¿Qué es una sobremesa?" etc. Overall, the activity of *lotería* is an effective and fun way for students to learn and to practice their numbers, vocabulary, grammatical concepts as well as cultural knowledge in the target language. Students feel less anxious while speaking Spanish and interact actively with their peers by playing *lotería*.