

Slam!

Prep Time: 0-10 min

Aim: To practice counting quickly while mentally attending to multiple tasks

Level: Elementary

Time: 5-10 minutes

Materials: A regular deck of playing cards

Arrangement: Groups of two to five students

Description

A game of counting where students try *not* to gain cards.

In Class

- 1 Students sit in groups so that everyone can see the cards.
- 2 The cards are placed face down in a stack in the middle of the group.
- 3 The first player begins counting by saying '一' and turning over the top card from the stack and placing it face-up next to the original stack. This is now the face-up stack.
- 4 The next player continues counting with '二' and turns over the next card from the face-up stack.
- 5 The third player continues with '三' and turns over the next card.
- 6 Play continues around the group in this way, each player saying the next number and turning over the next card.
- 7 When the counting reaches '十三' the next player continues counting from '一' again.
- 8 If it ever happens that the number a player says is the same as the card that they turn over, everyone must race to put their hands on the face-up stack.
- 9 For the non-number cards, the Ace is '一', the Jack is '十一', the Queen is '十二', and the King is '十三'. If there are Jokers in the deck, they are automatic slam cards.
- 10 Whoever is last to put their hand on the stack must take all the cards in the face-up stack. They then put those cards face-down in front of themselves. On their next turn they take a card from their own pile to put on the face-up stack.
- 11 Whenever there is a race to slam the stack, the losing player begins the counting again from '一'.
- 12 When the original face-down stack is gone, the game is finished. Whoever has the least cards wins.

Variations

- ✓ This game can be played with days of the week or months of the year, perhaps even compass directions or anything that has standardized order. In such cases you will need to figure out what cards to removed from the deck, or you could make your own special deck of cards.
- ✓ If you want more slamming to occur, you could have the students count only to '十' and decree that every non-number card is an automatic slam card.
- ✓ If you want to have the students count to '一百' you could remove the face cards and decree that any number that contains the number on the card requires students to slam the deck. For example, if the student said '二十三' then they would have to slam the deck if the cards 2, 8, or 10 came up.

Note

I first learned this game from a group of Taiwanese junior school students when I was teaching English in Fengyuan, Taiwan. This game is one way to making repeated practice of counting somewhat interesting. If you have a few decks of cards handy in your classroom, it can easily be used in an emergency if you find yourself with a few minutes left at the end of the class.