



Yes / No Game: how it should be used

The traditional Yes / No game relies on guesswork. Pupils guess a number / event/ country / language...that another person is thinking of by asking questions to which the answer is 'Yes' or 'No'. In order to make the game more challenging and to create potential for making strategies and developing better questioning and thinking, some limitations and additions to the rules have to be made. These changes can be seen below and in the instructions for learners.

CHANGES NECESSARY FOR THE GAME TO DEVELOP THINKING AND LEARNING SKILLS

Alternative answers: Yes, No, Yes and No, This is not relevant and This is unknown are all possible answers.

Limiting the number of questions: As few questions as possible should be used to find out the answer. The questions can be asked individually, in groups or as a whole class. It might be decided in advance how many questions are allowed, or groups can compete against each other, or against their own previous scores. This forces the learners to think of the best questions for finding out the answer and to come up with a strategy.

Making the thinking visible: In order to make the thinking visible and to help reflection the questions should be written up during the game, by a pupil or by the teacher.

Reflection: Reflection after the game includes looking at the learner questions and asking for example, 'Which were the best questions and why? Which helped most? Which didn't help at all?' The learners gradually begin to see a strategy emerging, as they see and think about which questions are or are not useful and why. (Blank and filled in Challenge Sheet).

Using the Challenge Sheet: Observation Sheet (The Yes/No Challenge sheet) should be used during reflection, either by the whole class together reflecting, or by groups or by individual pupils. This helps the learners to remember what they did the previous time, how they felt they could improve, and it encourages them to try for a better (smaller) number of questions the next time. (An example of a possible tool to help learners to understand that they are narrowing the search space can be seen)

Discussing working and thinking skills: While playing the Yes / No game the Bloom verbs for thinking/ clouds can be discussed, as can the working skills (the wall sentences). The pupils can decide what kind of thinking they used in the game. These all help to promote the learning skills necessary to play the game effectively and at the same time learning skills in general. These also form part of the reflection on the game and how it went. (For possible Bloom verbs and working skills especially relevant to this game, see.

When the learners become adept at finding out for example a number in a sequence, the game can be made more challenging by asking them to find out, for example, an object in a room or picture, a country on a map, or anything relevant to the curriculum content. How can the pupils narrow the search space in these cases? Can they transfer the strategy to a new situation? Sorting and classification skills can be practised here and can lead to learning to use the ENV tool to help to break down and understand problems and tasks better. (See information sheet Moving on...)