eslactive

Battleships

Tags: be, beginner, future (going to), kids, present continuous, questions

The Battleships ESL game is a version of the popular game Battleship(s), adapted to practise subject-verb agreement and questions.

👤 2+   ⏱ 20-40 mins   📋 None

Setup

Pre-teach the word 'battleship', and show the students a picture of the original game if possible, as this will help many with the concept.

You can either play with single-square ships (easier for younger students), or a few ships of varying size (as in the original). If you are using ships that cover multiple squares, pre-teach the phrase 'You sunk my battleship!'

Draw a 6×6 grid on the board. Label each row with a variety of different subjects (e.g. Donna, Mr and Mrs Andrews, You, I, Steve, We). Label each column with either emotions/feelings (e.g. happy, sad, tired), or activities (verb in the base form – e.g. go shopping, play football, watch a movie). Fill in a few of the squares by drawing battleships on them.

Selecting a row and a column, model a few questions in your target language, e.g. *Is Donna tired?* or *Are you playing football?* Demonstrate the process of finding the corresponding grid square to check if there is a battleship there. If there is, model the correct affirmative answer, e.g. *Yes she is*, and draw a tick in the square. If not, model the negative one, e.g. *No you aren't*, and draw a cross.

Game

1. Students find a partner. With that partner, they draw two identical grids each in their notebooks. Younger students could all just copy your original grid.

2. Specify the number of battleships to use. With single-square ships, ten usually works well. With multi-square ships, use one two-square, one three-square, one four-square and one five-square ship.

3. One grid will be for attacking, and another for defending. Now keeping their partner secret from their partner, each player draws in their battleships in their 'defending' grid.

4. As described above, students take turns asking questions in the target language to try and find the positions of their partner's battleships. They record the responses in the appropriate grid depending on whether they are attacking or defending, with ticks and crosses. Importantly, if playing with multi-square ships, defenders must say *"You sunk my battleship!"* if all the squares in that ship have been hit.

5. The first student to find all their partner's ships is the winner.

Target Language

The Battleships ESL game is designed for practising subject-verb agreement with the verb to be. To focus solely on the verb to be, use emotions/feelings as columns. Students have to select the correct form of the verb for each subject, e.g. *Is Donna tired?* or *Are Mr and Mrs Andrews bored?*. It's also a great way to practise questions.

By using activities instead of feelings you can also practise the present continuous or future with going to. For example for the square in row 'Marcus' and 'play tennis', *Is Marcus playing tennis?* or *Is Marcus going to play tennis?*.

Although the Battleships ESL game suits the varied forms of 'be' best, you could also use the game to practise other basic irregular verbs with beginners, such as have/ have got, go, or do.