

# eslactive

## Scattergories

Tags: [advanced](#), [beginner](#), [intermediate](#), [kids](#), [vocabulary](#), [warmer](#)

The Scattergories ESL game is a version of the category-based party game designed to test your students' vocabulary knowledge.

 2+  15-30 mins  None

### Setup

Divide your class into teams, with a maximum of four students in each team. Two to four teams is ideal, but more can work if necessary. Each team will need a piece of paper.

There is more than one way to play Scattergories with your ESL class. The original game requires players to write one word in each of twelve categories. However, we prefer a version with three categories, in which students have to write as many words as possible.

This provides more of a test of students' vocabulary because they have to think of more words. Plus it allows you to focus on vocabulary relevant to your class, and makes it more suitable for reuse (just change the categories next time you play). For a game where students only have to write one word in each category, see [Stop](#).

### Game

1. Give your students three vocabulary categories suitable for the level of the class.
2. Each team divides their paper into three columns and writes these categories as the titles.
3. Give the students a [random letter](#) of the alphabet.
4. The teams then have two minutes to write as many words as they can in each vocabulary category, beginning with that letter.

5. When the time is up, the teams swap papers and check each other's answers. The team with the most valid words in each category gets a point (giving a maximum of three points available each round).
6. Students swap the papers back.
7. For subsequent rounds, repeat with a different starting letter.
8. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

You could also specify that words also written by other teams are not valid or worth less. However, this should only be incorporated with smaller groups and more advanced players.

### Target Language

Like most vocabulary category-based games, you can adapt the difficulty of the Scattergories ESL game to any level by varying the categories. Some Scattergories vocabulary categories that work well with English classes are [food](#), [animals](#), [jobs](#), [sports and hobbies](#), [furniture](#), [adjectives](#), verbs and [adverbs](#). So for example try food for beginner classes, jobs for intermediate and adverbs for advanced students. Be aware that the difficulty of each category varies with the letter!

The Scattergories ESL game is always a great option for a warmer, and you can make it relevant by choosing categories you have recently studied or are about to study. Not only can you test your students' vocabulary knowledge, you can help expand it by reviewing the meaning of words. You could write the words in columns on the board if you have one available.