

FOUR IN A ROW!

Players

two teams of two–six players in each group

Materials

one game sheet and one *Topics ticklist* per group; a pen/pencil; coloured pens

Before starting

Photocopy one game sheet per group, and cut along the dotted line to produce one word grid and one *Topics ticklist* for each group.

How to play

The aim of game is to make a line – vertical, horizontal, or diagonal – of four connected circles before the other team does. Toss a coin to decide which team goes first. At the start of each turn, teams must choose a word or phrase on the word grid and a topic from the ticklist. They then make a sentence related to this topic which includes the word or phrase from the word grid, e.g. *food* → *athletics* = *Before athletics I eat a banana*. If the opposing team agrees that the sentence is acceptable and exemplifies the meaning of the word or phrase, the team that made the sentence wins the circle and colours it in with the team's colour. The topic on the ticklist is ticked off and cannot be used again by either team until all the topics have been used once (or twice, etc.). If the sentence is incorrect, then both the topic and circle remain available. It is then the turn of the opposing team.

The game continues until one team gets four circles in a row on the word grid or all the words have been coloured in. If this happens, the team with the most circles wins.

When is a sentence 'acceptable'?

The teacher and the students themselves can decide how strict to be with the language produced – whether 100% grammatical accuracy is required, or whether clearly communicated meaning is enough. For example, the sentence *Before athletics I eating a banana to feel good* contains a grammatical mistake (*eating*) but still expresses the meaning of *banana* clearly, so it could be acceptable for students at a lower level. For stronger students, the teacher could demand 100% accuracy from the class in their sentences.

An example of a sentence which is not acceptable as a valid answer, would be *I like athletics* because it does not exemplify the meaning of *athletics* (in this case the sentence *In athletics I run a lot* would better exemplify the meaning of *athletics*).

Before students start the game, the teacher could put the following examples on the board to demonstrate how to use the language and topics to make sentences.

My family → yoga = *My sister does yoga in the living room.*

My day → feel better = *When I finish my homework I feel better.*

School → always = *I always have PE on Mondays.*

Entertainment/Technology → laptop = *I watch films on my laptop.*

Jobs → make your bed = *I make my bed before I go to work.*

TIP

Teams can 'block' their opponent by winning the circles that the other team needs to make a row of four.

Versions of the game

- **Spoken or written:** The teacher can specify if the sentences are to be spoken or written, depending on what students need most practice of. If players write sentences on the whiteboard or on a piece of paper, the game will take longer.
- **It must be true:** The teacher can specify that the sentences must, wherever possible, be true for at least one member of the team.
- **Bottom to top:** Students must begin on the bottom row, and can only win circles in higher rows that are on top of circles which have already been won.
- **You give me the topic:** Team B chooses the topic for Team A and vice versa, either before or after the circle is chosen.

Notes

This game revises a range of grammar and vocabulary from Student's Book 1, Units 9–12; the *Topics ticklist* covers topics in the Student's Book up to and including Unit 12.

Follow-up activity

If students played the speaking version of the game, ask them to remember as many of the sentences as they can and write them down.

