

Giochiamo Tutti Insieme

20 Games to Play with Children
to Encourage and Reinforce
Italian Language and Vocabulary

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All the games involve speaking, and most can be adapted to practise alternative language. See individual game descriptions for ideas.

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Introduction

The games in this book are designed to complement language teaching and learning, either in the classroom or at home. They are fun to play, and there is no age limit – children and adults alike can enjoy the different types of games.

Each game concentrates on one or two specific language areas. Many of the games can be adapted to practise other language vocabulary as appropriate.

All the games encourage speaking and listening. The skills of reading and writing are emphasized to different degrees in the different games.

The instructions for each game set out:

- the objectives for the game
- how to set it up
- how to play it
- extensions/variations

Some of the games require cards and boards and these are provided as photocopiable resource pages. It is a good idea to allow some time to prepare the items needed for each game before introducing them into play. If the playing cards and boards are photocopied onto thin card and laminated, you will be able to use them again and again for many years.

Buongiorno ball game

Action game

Objectives

- To practise key introduction words
- Game can be extended to include other introduction phrases as required

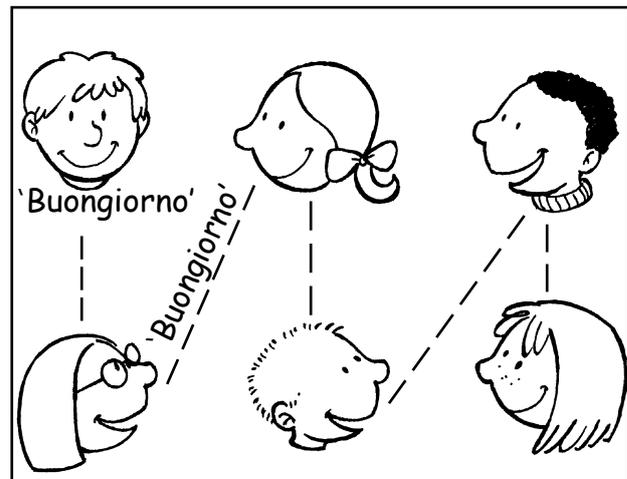
Setting up the game

- You need two or more different coloured balls.

How to play the game

1. Pupils stand in two lines facing each other. The end pupil starts with one of the balls, and throws it to the pupil opposite. That person then throws the ball to the pupil diagonally opposite, who throws it this time to the person directly opposite and so on. The ball thus makes its way in a zig-zag along the two lines.
2. While throwing and catching the ball, each pupil must say 'Buongiorno' or 'Ciao'. Using a different coloured ball, repeat the game, but this time say 'Arrivederci'.
3. Now, tell the children to take note of the colour of the ball. Using the red ball, for instance, they say 'Buongiorno', and with the blue ball they say 'Arrivederci'.
4. Start the game off with one ball again, then introduce the other ball after a couple of throws. This makes them think about which word they are saying! You could introduce further coloured balls with 'Come stai?', 'Sto bene, grazie', 'Mi chiamo ...'. Try as many as the group can manage!
5. As a rounding-up test, stand in a large circle, and pick a pupil to hold the coloured balls in the centre. They then throw the balls (gently!) to pupils at random who must say the appropriate phrase for that colour of ball as it is thrown. Younger pupils may find that concentrating on more than two colours/phrases at once is too difficult, but older groups will enjoy the challenge of several colours/phrases in this game.

| Parole importanti – Key words | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| buongiorno | hello |
| ciao | hi |
| arrivederci | goodbye |
| come stai? | how are you? |
| sto bene, grazie | I'm fine, thank you |
| mi chiamo ... | my name is ... |



Extensions/variations

- Adapt the game to practise vocabulary groups; each time a player catches the ball the pupil must say a different animal word/colour/food item.
- Use the ball throwing idea to practise lists of words, passing the ball up and down the line or in a circle; practise the alphabet in Italian/days/months/numbers.

Colour relay

Action game

Objective

- To practise saying colour words and respond by picking up the correct colour from a choice

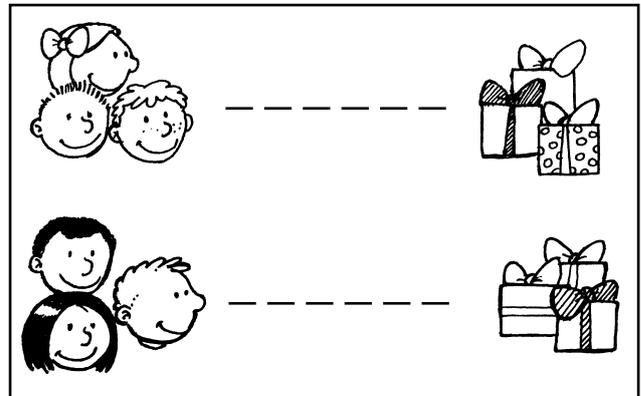
Setting up the game

- Pupils play in teams.
- You will need several items of different colours, the same number of items for each team.
- The game is best played in a large space so that the participants can run back and forth.

How to play the game

1. Place sets of coloured items in piles at one end of the room (or space you are playing in).
2. The teams line up opposite the coloured items so that they can race against each other in a back-and-forth relay.
3. The teacher calls out the first colour to start the race.
4. The first team member from each team runs to collect that coloured item from their team pile, and returns to the team.
5. On their return they say another colour (in Italian) to be picked up. The next player runs to collect that coloured item, returns to the rest of the team and says the next colour to be picked up.
6. The game continues in this way, with players joining the back of the line on their return to the team, storing all the items at the back of the line, until all the coloured items have been collected.
7. The winning team is the one that successfully collects all the items first. It is a good idea to have three or four small teams, with extra helpers to monitor the teams, so that everyone gets more than one turn, and you can listen carefully to the players saying the colours in ITALIAN. You could have a rule that anyone heard saying the wrong colour, or not using Italian, has to run back and forth again (without picking up another item) before the next player has a turn.

| Parole importanti – Key words | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| rosso | red |
| bianco | white |
| azzurro | blue |
| nero | black |
| verde | green |
| rosa | pink |
| giallo | yellow |
| marrone | brown |
| arancio | orange |
| grigio | grey |



Extension/variation

- To make the game more challenging pupils could say two or three colours at once, with plenty of items in the pile to choose from.

Slap down numbers

Action game

Objectives

- To practise saying the numbers one to ten
- To listen carefully
- To respond quickly to recognition of numbers in Italian

Setting up the game

- Players are in pairs, sitting at a table, or where they can put their hands down quickly onto a flat surface.

Parole importanti – Key words

| | |
|---------|-------|
| uno | one |
| due | two |
| tre | three |
| quattro | four |
| cinque | five |
| sei | six |
| sette | seven |
| otto | eight |
| nove | nine |
| dieci | ten |

How to play the game

1. Toss a coin to decide who starts. Both players have their hands on their heads to begin the game.
2. Choose one player to start first. Both players count together in Italian, slowly.
3. When the counting reaches the number that player one has decided to stop at, he slaps his hands down, and spreads out the appropriate number of fingers on the table. For example the counting goes: 'uno ... due ... tre ...' but on 'quattro' he slaps his hand down showing four fingers. Encourage the children to use both hands.
4. Player two must respond as quickly as possible by putting her hands down too, BUT she too must only put down the correct number of fingers, i.e. in this case only four.
5. If she puts the correct number of fingers down, then she becomes the caller. If she is not correct then player one continues to make the number choices.

Extension/variation

- The game can be made more challenging by counting up in twos, by counting backwards or by counting very quickly.



Calling all animals

Action game

Objective

- To practise saying animal words

Setting up the game

- Any number of pupils can play. Each player can have a different animal name given to them if there are 10 or less players; if there are more players the animal words can be used more than once.
- You need enough space for the group to form a circle.

| Parole importanti – Key words | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| gatto (m) | cat |
| topo (m) | mouse |
| cane (m) | dog |
| ragno (m) | spider |
| cavallo (m) | horse |
| coniglio (m) | rabbit |
| pesce (m) | fish |
| uccello (m) | bird |
| porcellino d'India (m) | guinea-pig |
| rana (f) | frog |

How to play the game

1. The group forms a circle and one pupil is chosen at random to be 'it', in the middle of the circle.
2. All the animal words should be introduced and practised first so that everyone is familiar with the words.
3. Each player is then given an animal name. The whole group hears the names being given out and they can all practise each word as it is introduced. Make sure that everyone knows exactly how to say what they are, and that the person in the middle can say all the animal words (some reminding might be needed).
4. The player who is 'it' decides on an animal name to say and says it aloud three times in succession.
5. The aim of the game is for the person who has been given that animal name to join in and say their name once but before the 'it' person has finished saying it three times! If the 'animal' succeeds, he/she is then 'it' instead. If the 'it' person manages to say the word three times before the person with that animal name has said his name once, the player in the middle stays as 'it'. Everyone who manages to be 'it' must aim to stay there as long as possible, and all the others must try to get him/her out.
6. If the circle players cannot join in before their names are said three times, adjust to saying the name five times (sometimes needed for younger children).

Extensions/variations

- This game is very adaptable as it can be played with any vocabulary that you wish to practise, e.g. buildings, food, parts of the body. It works well with Italian girls'/boys' names.
- Another way to play is for you to spell the animal word out, either in Italian or English. The player who thinks that the animal name is theirs has to run around the outside of the circle back to their place before you finish spelling the word (do it slowly to give them a chance!), and say the word to make sure they were right to run.

Domino months

Spelling game

Objective

- To practise the months in Italian with particular emphasis on word recognition in writing

Setting up the game

- Pupils can either play in pairs or groups with one set of dominoes (page 10) per pair.
- The dominoes could be coloured, decorated, and laminated and/or mounted on card before use.

| Parole importanti – Key words | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| gennaio | January |
| febbraio | February |
| marzo | March |
| aprile | April |
| maggio | May |
| giugno | June |
| luglio | July |
| agosto | August |
| settembre | September |
| ottobre | October |
| novembre | November |
| dicembre | December |

How to play the game

1. Place the dominoes face down in front of the players with one domino upturned to start the game. The aim of the game is to match the dominoes to make complete month words.
2. Players each take five dominoes at random and look at them without revealing them to their opponent(s). The rest of the dominoes are put in a pile on the table.
3. One player takes a turn first, trying to complete a month word by placing one of his dominoes before or after the starting domino. Dominoes can be placed at right angles so the words do not have to go in one continuous straight line. If the first player cannot go, the other player(s) take their turn. If none of the players can place a domino, then the first player picks one up from the pile and plays the card if it completes a domino month. Play continues with players either putting down a domino or picking one up from the pile.
4. The winner is the player who uses up all of their dominoes first, or who has the least number of cards left. It isn't always possible to carry on until all the dominoes have been put down. In the case of a tie-break, maybe add the number of letters on each card together, the person with the least being the winner!
5. You will need to monitor correct positioning of the dominoes to ensure correct word completion. Saying the names of the months out loud as they are completed helps to link the written and spoken words.



Domino months

Enlarge photocopy at 115% onto thin card and cut out.

br novem bre lu bre giu

bre dicem glio otto io settem

bre a prile mar gno febbraio

io maggio lusto genna

io febbraio gno otto io giu

zo genna zo genna lusto mar

io agoglio agoglio lu

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