



Speaking Games

Jason Anderson
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Speaking Games is a terrific find! This book is packed full of photocopiable resources to liven up any EFL class. Although the book targets students at the intermediate to advanced levels

(B1, B2, C1), much of the material could be easily adapted for any level. The aim is for students to learn English in a fun and enjoyable way by using play and games to encourage real communication.

The book is divided into four sections which include 'board games', 'card games', 'secrets and lies' and 'puzzles and challenges'. For each game provided, there are teacher's notes which outline the grammar and lexical focus, as well as the targeted subskills and functions. These cover a wide range of grammatical structures such as passive forms, verb patterns and relative clauses as well as a variety of subskills, including justifying, negotiating, paraphrasing and recalling. The rules for each game are written at the level of the student and can be easily copied and given as a handout to encourage learner autonomy. A resource bank is provided at the back of the book to ease copying of extra materials that may be needed for each game.

I believe this book is an incredible resource and I thank the author for bringing it to our shelves! It is practical for the teacher, as the games are straightforward and easy to explain. The activities are also engaging for the student because they are not the same old thing; they are full of creative ideas with lots of pictures and offer up many opportunities for meaningful communication. Two of my favourite activities from the book are 'Description Bingo', where students are given a bingo card full of images of different people, which are more detailed and true to life than images usually provided in textbooks, and 'Question Maze', where students have to make as many questions as they can from a maze of words. My only wish is that the book was also available in colour. All in all, *Speaking Games* offers a wealth of fun for both teachers and students and I'm hoping the author might come up with a reading games sequel.

Hilary Livingston

CELTA, Med. Curriculum Studies/TESL,
College of the North Atlantic, Qatar
hilylivingston@hotmail.com



audioBoom

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audioBoom is a web-based recording tool and app that helps you create, broadcast and syndicate audio content across multiple media outlets. The website homepage may look a bit cluttered at first glance but if one clicks on 'browse', one finds the various categories: Sport, Music, News & Current Affairs, Business, Comedy, Culture, Entertainment, Knowledge and Mind Body and Soul, and start exploring the clips, also known as boos. One needs to register to start listening but it is quick, and free for the basic account.

However, what makes *audioBoom* really exciting for teachers is the section 'For Educators', under 'More'. The extensive library includes unique user-generated but also professional audio (UNICEF, BBC, Guardian, CBS, etc.). We can choose the boos we want or create our own using mobile devices or laptops, and share with students, who can listen to the boos, reflect on the content and create new boos. Boos can be shared via Twitter and Facebook but we can also add the *audioBoom* widget to a blog, school website, or learning management system (such as Edmodo). Students can then respond and keep the conversations going. In short, *audioBoom* helps give students and teachers a voice through a very easy to use recording tool.

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- A student, thrilled, reads aloud a book he has authored.
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- A librarian shares how her students have reinvented the book report.
- A university creates podcasts that help students engage in learning about complex topics in science.

With the free account we can record up to ten minutes per clip, upload unlimited clips, follow, comment and send direct voice messages, build our own playlists and share our boos.

If you haven't heard of *audioBoom*, you may want to have a look. If you decide to use it with students, for personal development, or just for fun, check out <https://audioboom.com/about/education-get-started> and 'How to make a podcast using *audioBoom*' by Nik Peachey at <http://www.onestopenglish.com/11975.file>.

Ana d'Almeida

Explorer of many things
anacik@email.com

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