Can cards
by Maria Toth

Age: Primary (6–11)
Language aim: To ask for and give permission
Time: 20 minutes
Student grouping: Groups of four
Materials: One copy of Worksheets 1 and 2 for every group of four students (cut up into cards); extra copies of the worksheets if you choose Warmer option 2 (see Preparation for details)
Language focus: *Please can I … go to the toilet, watch television, borrow your pencil/bicycle/book/ruler/skateboard, play football/tennis, go to lunch, sit next to …, make a cake, close the door, open the window, write on the board, go to the library?; Yes, you can. No, you can't.*
Aim of the game: To be the first to lay down all the cards in your hand

Preparation

If you choose Warmer option 2 below, make enlargements of each of the sixteen 'asking for permission' cards (Worksheet 1) with the text in the bubbles removed. (This will require access to a photocopier that enlarges.) Also make enough copies of Worksheet 2 to give one 'giving permission' card to each child.

Warmer

Option 1

Explain to the children (in their mother tongue, if necessary) that for five minutes you will allow them to do anything they want, provided that they ask you for permission first. Help them by writing the prompt *Please can I ... ?* on the board. Remind them that it is only for five minutes so that they ask the questions quickly. It will also allow you to avoid situations in which children ask you for permission to go home, as it is unlikely that they will be able to go home and come back in five minutes!

Option 2

Taking the enlargements of the sixteen 'asking for permission' cards (Worksheet 1) you prepared earlier, ask the children to tell you what is happening in each picture. Stick a selection of the cards on the board and ask the children what the person is saying in each picture. You can write the request in the empty speech bubble. Give one 'giving permission' card (from Worksheet 2) to each child. Ask the children to stick their cards next to the corresponding 'asking for permission' card on the board. Review the language if you wish.

Playing the game

Step 1

Give each group of four a pack of cards from Worksheets 1 and 2. The dealer shuffles the cards together and gives out eight cards to each child in the group including to themselves.

Step 2

The children look at their cards. Players who already have an 'asking for permission' card and the corresponding 'giving permission' card can lay these down face up in front of the them.

Step 3

The players take it in turns to ask different children in their group at random for permission to do something. For example, player A has the card with *Please can I open the window?* and asks player D this question. Player D does not have the corresponding 'giving permission' card so they answer 'No, you can't.'

It is now player B's turn to ask a question. Player B asks player C 'Please can I borrow your bicycle?' Player C has the corresponding card and answers 'Yes, you can.' Player C gives the card to Player B who then lays down the two corresponding cards face up in front of them. It is their turn to ask another question as they have won a pair. Any player left with only 'giving permission' cards must wait to be asked in order to get rid of their cards.

Step 4

The first player to have no more cards left in their hand is the winner.

Extra ideas

An alternative way of playing this game is to give out 'asking for permission' cards to half of the class (one for each child) and the 'giving permission' cards to the other half. The children who have 'asking for permission' cards move around and ask other children their question. The children who have 'giving permission' cards answer 'No, you can't' if they do not have the corresponding 'giving permission' card. If they do have the corresponding card, they answer 'Yes, you can' and form a pair with the child who asked the question.

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