

## USING “PICTURE THIS” CARD GAMES WITH COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

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This activity describes how [Activate: Games for Learning American English](#) “Picture This – Same and Different” game cards can encourage students to use comparative and superlative adjectives as they discuss groups of related items. These game variations enable students to practice using comparative adjective forms and a variety of vocabulary items in fun, creative, and personally meaningful ways.

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### LEVEL

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- Intermediate and above

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### LANGUAGE FOCUS

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- Grammar: comparative adjectives and/or superlative adjectives
- Speaking: comparing and contrasting, explaining an opinion

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### GOALS

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During these game variations, students will:

#### Game 1

- Use comparative adjectives while describing differences among a group of related things

#### Game 2

- Use superlative adjectives while comparing and discussing related items
- Give explanations to support their opinions

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### MATERIALS

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- Teacher:
  - Whiteboard, chalkboard, or large pieces of paper posted on the wall
  - Markers or chalk
- Students:
  - Pencils or pens
  - Blank writing paper
  - [“Picture This – Same & Different” cards \(.pdf\)](#) - only certain cards are needed, see the “Preparation” section for more details
  - Access to a clock, watch, or other timing device

## PREPARATION

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- Print out and copy the following *Picture This – Same & Different* cards (18 cards total):
 

3 – Eat Your Vegetables	25 – Tools
5 – A Trip to the Zoo	29 – Outdoor Places
9 – Beverages	31 – Furniture
11 – Let’s Play	33 – Transportation
13 – Time for School	35 – The Great Outdoors
15 – Personal Items	39 – Everyday Foods
17 – Snack Time!	41 – Musical Instruments
19 – Hobbies	43 – At the Market
23 – Bugs	45 – Outdoor Gear

You only need to print the cards that have the picture sets, not the cards with text questions.

Ideally, each group would have its own deck of cards. To save paper, adjust your printer’s settings to print 4-6 cards per page and have student volunteers cut up and sort out decks of cards before the activity. Also, two groups can share a deck of cards and swap cards when fresh content is needed.

## PROCEDURES – GAME 1: COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

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1. If desired, conduct a brief review of comparative adjective form and use prior to beginning the game. You can also play the game after initial instruction on this grammar topic.
2. Put students (the players) into groups of 4–5; have them sit in circles. Have student volunteers pass out a deck (or a partial deck) of “Same and Different” picture cards to each group. Players should place the cards facedown.
3. Ask each group to choose one player to be the “Timer,” making sure he or she can see a clock or other timing device.
4. The Timer draws a picture card from the deck and shows it to the group.
5. The other players get 1 minute to examine and compare the pictures, silently thinking about how the items are different. The Timer tells the players when to start and stop the silent brainstorming process. During the brainstorming time, students should think about adjectives that can describe these differences; you can give students the option to write down the adjectives.
6. Next, for 3 minutes, players (except for the Timer) take turns going around the circle naming one difference they observed among the pictures. The Timer keeps track of when to start and end play, giving the group verbal cues (“Ready, go!” and “Time’s up!”).
  - Players should state their observations about the pictures in complete sentences using comparative adjectives. Players should not repeat a response given by another person.
  - After each player gives his or her response, the others give it a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” (or other locally appropriate hand gesture signifying “Okay/Not okay”) depending on whether they think the response used the comparative adjective correctly. To reach consensus on the correct form, players should briefly discuss any responses that some people deem unacceptable.
  - Players get 1 point for each acceptable answer. Responses that exactly repeat a previous answer get a “thumbs down”/0 points. If a player can’t think of a response, they

can say “skip” and receive 0 points for that turn. Players keep track of their own points on a piece of paper during game play.

7. Model the process of playing with this example or by eliciting sample answers from student volunteers. The first round of play may move a bit slowly, but students will soon get used to the flow and play speed will increase.



**Example Play for a 5-person Group:**

**Timer:** Ready, begin!

**Player 1:** Fish is smellier than bread. (Thumbs up – 1 point)

**Player 2:** Fruit is tastier than fish. (Thumbs up – 1 point)

**Player 3:** Chicken is expensive than bread (Thumbs down – 0 points; incorrect form, should be “more expensive”)

**Player 4:** Eggs are healthier than bread. (Thumbs up – 1 point)

**Player 1:** Fruit is tastier than fish. (Thumbs down – 0 points; repeated answer)

**Player 2:** Eating chicken is messier than eating bread. (Thumbs up - 1 point)

**Player 3:** Um... I can't think of anything. Skip. (0 points)

...and so on.

8. After time is up, group members should tally their points. The person on the left of previous Timer becomes the new Timer. The new Timer starts the game process over again.
9. Game play continues until all members of the group have served as the Timer (e.g., served one turn in which he/she does not earn any points). When the game is over, the student with the most points in each group is the winner.
10. During game play, circulate and monitor students' progress. Answer questions and provide support as needed.

**Optional:** To make the game more competitive, have two groups compete against each other while working from the same picture card. Groups complete the brainstorming separately, and then they come together, taking turns giving responses. The Timer from one group remains the Timer, and the Timer from the other group keeps score for both teams. All other members of both teams give responses and participate in the brief thumbs up/thumbs down review for each answer. The two groups can play through several cards, switching the Timer and Scorekeeper roles after each round. The group with the most points when the time allotted for play is up wins.

**PROCEDURES – GAME 2: SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES**

1. Before the activity, write the Superlatives Question Bank (see Step 5) on the board. If desired, cover the question bank until you are ready to use it.
2. If desired, conduct a brief review of superlative adjective form and use prior to beginning the game. You can also play the game after initial instruction on this grammar topic.
3. Put students (the players) into groups of 4–5; have them sit in circles. Ensure each group has a deck (or a partial deck) of “Same and Different” picture cards. Players should place the cards facedown.

4. Ask each group to choose one player to be the first “Question Master,” making sure he or she can see a clock or other timing device.
5. The Question Master draws a picture card, examines the pictures, and then develops a question about items on the card with help from the “Superlatives Question Bank” on the board. The Question Master then shows the card to the other players and tells them the question.

### Superlatives Question Bank

Which (item type) is the most or least \_\_\_\_\_? Why?

- useful / useful where we live
- expensive
- familiar to you
- important to you in everyday life
- Important in the world today
- helpful in an emergency
- enjoyable
- exciting / boring
- interesting
- (choose your own superlative adjective)

Which (item type) is the \_\_\_\_\_? Why?

- best
- scariest
- healthiest
- funniest
- cheapest
- (choose your own superlative adjective)

6. All players (including the Question Master) get 1 minute to examine and compare the pictures, silently thinking about their answers to the Question Master’s question. The Question Master tells the players when to start and stop the silent brainstorming process. During the brainstorming time, players should decide, in their opinion, which item shown on the card best answers the question. They should also be ready to explain their answers.
7. After the brainstorming, the Question Master calls on a player to share his/her answer. Answers should be given in complete sentences that include the superlative adjective in the question. Students also must explain their answers (e.g., they should answer the “Why?” part of the question). Players go around the circle, each sharing his or her answer; the Question Master shares his or her answer last. In this game, it is okay if players have similar answers.
8. Model the process with this example or by eliciting sample answers from student volunteers. The first round may move a bit slowly, but students will soon get used to the flow and speed will increase.

**Communication Tools**

Radio, Mail,  
Newspaper, Telephone,  
Television, Email

#### Example for a 4-person Group:

**Question Master:** Remember, the question is “Which communication tool is the most useful? Why?” Maria, you’re first.

**Player 1:** To me, the radio is the most useful tool because you can use it in an emergency without electricity.

**Player 2:** I think T.V. is the most useful tool. T.V. gives us news and entertainment.

**Player 3:** E-mail is the most useful tool because it lets you communicate with people all over the world.

**Question Master:** I agree with (Player 2). T.V. is the most useful tool. T.V. gives us text, image, and sound information.

9. Once everyone has shared his or her answer, the person to left of the previous Question Master becomes the new Question Master, and the process begins again with a new card.
10. Play can continue for a set amount of time or until all groups have played a pre-designated number of rounds.
11. During game play, circulate and monitor students' progress. Answer questions and provide support as needed.

**Note:** Game 2 does not give players points; it simply provides a context for students to communicate using the target grammar point and creative thinking. If you'd like to add a competitive element, include the thumbs up/thumbs down evaluation and point system to rate grammatical accuracy described in the Game 1 instructions.