

Picture This

Eat Your Vegetables



Broccoli, Pepper,
Tomato, Carrot,
Onion, Peas

Eat Your Vegetables

1. What are three vegetables on the card?
2. What are two more vegetables not on the card? What do they look like?
3. Which vegetables are common in this area? Which vegetables are uncommon in this area? Why?
4. Which vegetables do you like? What other foods do you eat with these vegetables?
5. What vegetables do you eat at breakfast? At lunch? At dinner?
6. What vegetables would you grow in your own garden? Why?

A Trip to the Zoo



Bear, Elephant,
Monkey, Lion,
Kangaroo, Giraffe

A Trip to the Zoo

1. Which animal on the card is your favorite? Why?
2. Tell me more about one animal. Where does it live? What does it eat?
3. Which animals have you seen in real life? When and where did you see them?
4. What are three other animals you might see in the zoo? What do they look like?
5. Which animal would you like to speak to? What would you say to the animal?
6. Imagine you are one of these animals. Which animal would you be? Why?

ABOUT PICTURE THIS

Picture This cards are a set of cards that can be used for a variety of conversation and word games in English classes. These cards form the foundation for conversational games that give students the opportunity to practice speaking with each other about a variety of topics. *Picture This* cards stimulate conversation through a series of thematically related questions and interesting images that engage students, activate background knowledge, and help match vocabulary words with concrete objects.


Activate: Games for Learning American English comes with a set of 24 *Picture This* cards that are ready for use in the classroom, and there are cards that are appropriate for a wide range of language abilities. On one side of the card, there are six small pictures and words or phrases (in random order) that match the pictures. The six pictures are all related to a similar theme, which is indicated by the brief title at the top of the card. On the other side of the card, there are six questions or prompts that are related to the pictures and theme of the card. Each card also contains questions at a range of difficulty levels, usually beginning with less challenging questions and moving to more difficult ones.

The cards included in this collection are intended to be a starter kit that will encourage teachers and students to make more *Picture This* cards and games. Some ideas for making your own *Picture This* cards are included in the *DIY!* section of this chapter. Students and teachers can expand their collection to match language levels, interests, and specific language features.

Example *Picture This* Card

Picture Side (pictures and topic)

Let's Play!



**Volleyball, Baseball,
Tennis Ball, Basketball,
Football, Soccer Ball**

Question Side

Let's Play!

1. Which games on the card do you play as a team? Which do you play as an individual?
2. Which game is the easiest to play? Which one is the most difficult to play? Why?
3. Choose one game. What do you need to play it? Why do you need it?
4. Which games do you like to watch? Why?
5. Which games do you like to play? Why?
6. Which games have you never played before? Which games would you like to play? Why?

STUDENTS' ROLE

Students use the *Picture This* cards to talk and play games in groups. Small groups of 3–4 students are ideal, as the students will have more opportunities to speak and to respond to each other's comments. Students can first match the pictures on the front of the card with the correct word written below. This can help them to activate background knowledge about the topic, review and recall vocabulary that they have learned before, and learn new vocabulary words. Then students take turns asking and answering the questions on the back of the *Picture This* cards. The questions direct students to think about a variety of items or topics related to the theme of the card. They use English vocabulary to identify additional related objects, give their opinions about some aspect of the theme, explain their answers, and so on. Because these questions are open-ended and because many of the questions ask students to rely on their personal experience and opinions, there are no right or wrong answers. In fact, there is always more than one possible answer.

TEACHER'S ROLE

Before Play

When *Picture This* cards are first introduced, the teacher should take a few minutes to show students a card and to establish some vocabulary for referring to the parts of the card. Teachers can refer to the side of the card containing the title/topic, pictures, and vocabulary words as the **'picture side'** of the card. The opposite side is the **'question side.'** On the picture side, teachers should explain that the title gives a brief clue about how the pictures on the card are related, and therefore about possible topics that might be focused on in the six discussion questions. On the picture side, teachers should also clearly point out that the vocabulary words at the bottom are printed in random order. That is, the order of the printed words does not match the order of the pictures on the card. This is because one way for students to use the cards is to match the vocabulary words with the pictures that represent their meanings.

To prepare to play with *Picture This* cards, the teacher should make sure that each group of students has a place to sit where they can easily hear each other, but not be interrupted by the conversations of other groups. In addition, the teacher should provide a basket, bag, or other container to hold the entire set of *Picture This* cards and place it in a central location in the room. The students will need to be able to easily move between their group and the collection of *Picture This* cards to get a new card when they have finished with a card.

The teacher should determine a set amount of time to use *Picture This* cards in the language classroom. Since students will be working in small groups and exchanging *Picture This* cards once they have completed the card, each group can work at its own pace. It is not necessary for all groups to finish a card at the same time. Instead, students can use as many cards as they need during that time, and teachers should end the game after the specified amount of time has passed.



During Play

During the game, the teacher should circulate among the groups and encourage students to speak in English as much as possible. The students may ask for help with English words, and the teacher may help if he or she wishes to. The teacher should be careful, however, that the focus remains on fluency, or producing a lot of language. That is, students should not spend a lot of time looking for or asking about words. Rather, the students can describe the item that they are thinking of to their group members and try to come up with the English word on their own. The teacher should walk around and remind students that the goal is to practice conversation in English and not just to learn new vocabulary. In addition, the teacher should ensure that all players are taking turns speaking to the rest of the group.

While walking around the classroom and visiting each group, the teacher should remind the groups to exchange their card for a new one when they finish a card so that another group can use that card.

After Play

When the game is finished, the teacher can review for a few minutes. Students can be asked to share any interesting ideas that they heard from their classmates. If groups have played with the same card, teachers can ask them to summarize their responses for one or two of the questions and make comparisons between the responses. Teachers can focus on the grammatical patterns and their meanings in the sentences that the students produced. At the end, the teacher should collect the *Picture This* cards and store them for their next use.

In the next section, directions for playing *Picture This* are given, followed by many other activities that students can do using the same cards.

