

GRID GAMES

Grids can be used to play many different games. The games can give students a chance to practice grammar concepts. A great way to review subject-verb agreement is shown below in our first activity. The variations that follow can easily be applied to the same size grid, or a larger one, to help students review other grammar skills.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT GRID

Skills: This activity can be used to practice subject-verb agreement. Students will also practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing during the game.

Materials:

- Chalk/markers and a chalk/whiteboard
- A timer

Example Grid:

Verb: _____ (infinitive)
Tense: _____

He	You (plural)	We
They	Familiar person's name	It
I	You (singular)	She

How to Play:

1. Create a large 3 x 3 grid on the board. Divide students into two equal teams, Team X and Team O. Each team should choose a speaker, a recorder, and a writer. The speaker will act as the

communicator for the team. The recorder writes down the team's response on paper during the discussion. The writer goes up to the board to write down the team's final answer.

2. Choose a verb and tense for students to practice and write them at the top of the grid.
3. Explain to students that the two teams will compete to get three of their symbols in a row on the grid by taking turns. In order to do so, they must use verbs correctly in sentences with the subjects shown on the grid. If they write a grammatically-correct sentence, they can place their team's symbol (X or O) in the space on the grid.
4. A coin toss can be used to determine who will go first. Tell students that the goal is not only to get three of their team's symbols in a row on the grid, but also to prevent the other team from doing so. Remind students to keep both goals in mind when choosing which subjects to attempt in the grid.
5. The team chosen to go first should pick a subject from the grid. As soon as the choice is made, the teacher must set the timer for 30 seconds to one minute (depending on the level of students). The team must collaborate to write a sentence before the timer goes off. The sentence must contain the subject from the grid and the correct conjugation of the verb (from the top of the grid). Note that teams should collaborate quietly in order to prevent the other team from overhearing their discussion.
6. Once the timer goes off, the writer must bring his/her team's paper up to the front of the room and write the team's sentence on the board. The opposing team will read the sentence and decide if it is correct or incorrect. If it is correct, the writer may replace the subject with an X or O for his/her team in the grid. If the team does not complete the sentence within the allotted time or the sentence is incorrect, they lose a turn and the other team gets to go again.
7. This process is repeated until one of the teams gets three symbols in a row and wins, or until all of the spaces on the grid have been filled in. The game can be repeated with new verbs and/or tenses.

VARIATIONS

1. This game can be played with multiple grids at the same time. Instead of one, create three grids on the board. The grids can all be for the same verb, but different tenses, or for three different verbs. The goal in this instance would be for a team to "win" two out of three grids by getting three symbols in a row.

2. The game can also be used to practice irregular verbs. Students can practice the irregular conjugations for each of the subjects noted in the grid.
3. Instead of playing this game as a whole class, students can play in small groups of four to ten students. Have students form teams within the groups. Monitor the activity and assist with any questions about correct responses or disagreements.
4. Rather than using pronouns, fill the grid with names or nouns such as *teachers*, *a student*, or anything else that could work with the chosen verb. You can use names and people that are familiar to your students to make the game more fun!
5. To make this game more challenging try using a larger grid, like a 5 x 5. Fill up the spaces with different pronouns, names, and nouns. In this case, students must get five of their symbols in a row to win.
6. The game can be “reversed” by filling the grid with different tenses, such as present, future, past continuous, past perfect, etc. Write a verb (infinitive) at the top of the grid, and also note a subject, such as “we.” In this instance, students must conjugate the verb for the noted subject in the tense specified for the space where they are trying to put their symbol. This version could be played on a 3 x 3 grid or a larger one. This variation would work well for advanced students.

Grid games are an easy, fun way to engage students in grammar practice without a lot of extra materials or planning. The flexibility of grid games makes them ideal for use with a wide variety of grammatical concepts. Take a look at [Try This: Listening and Logic](#) from *English Teaching Forum* for another great language practice activity using grids.