

Activity Type

Vocabulary and Writing
Game: writing definitions,
true or false, guessing
(group work)

Focus

Defining

Aim

To invent false definitions
for words and guess true
definitions.

Preparation

Make one copy of the
word cards for each
group of five and cut as
indicated. Also, prepare
small slips of paper for
each student.

Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

Time

25 minutes

Introduction

This ESL word game is based on a popular board game of the same name. In the game, students invent false definitions for words and score points by correctly guessing true definitions.

Procedure

Divide the students into groups of five.

Give each group a set of balderdash word cards.

Ask the students to shuffle the cards and deal them out equally face-down.

Also, give each student some small slips of paper to write definitions on.

Students take it in turns to be the leader.

The leader of the round chooses one of their word cards, reads the word aloud and spells it.

The other students then each invent a short false definition for the word that could fool the other group members and write it on a slip of paper.

The leader copies the true definition onto a slip of paper so that they cannot be seen reading from the card.

Each student then hands their definition to the leader who mixes them up and then reads each one aloud.

The other students then vote on which definition they think is correct and the leader reveals the answer.

Students score one point for each vote their false definition receives and two points for choosing the correct definition.

The leader scores three points if nobody chooses the correct definition.

The scores are added up and another student becomes the new leader and so on.

Play until all the words have been used or time is up.

The student with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Balderdash word cards


aulete : a person who plays the flute	mantelet : a bullet-proof screen
belocolus : a magic stone that makes a soldier invisible	mawworm : a hypocrite
bettong : a small kangaroo	noddlethatcher : someone who makes hats and wigs
boletus : a wild mushroom	oxter : to walk along arm in arm
collutory : antiseptic mouthwash	ozostomia : bad breath
crwth : a 6-stringed violin	pistareen : a Spanish coin worth 20 cents
dorking : a chicken with 5 toes	ramfeezled : exhausted, tired
exoduster : someone who leaves town in a hurry	sclaff : to scrape the ground with a golf club before hitting the ball
fard : to put on makeup	screeve : to draw pictures on a sidewalk for money
forney : a ring worn on the fourth finger	shiggers : tight trousers worn by football players
galligaskins : loose baggy trousers	splate : a substance used in shoe making
gravid : pregnant	toison : the wool of a young sheep
hippiater : a horse doctor	tranka : a long cylindrical box which jugglers balance with their feet
histrixite : a Tasmanian mineral containing copper and iron	wakiup : an American Indian hut
jargonelle : a pear which ripens early	wallygowdy: a precious jewel or gem