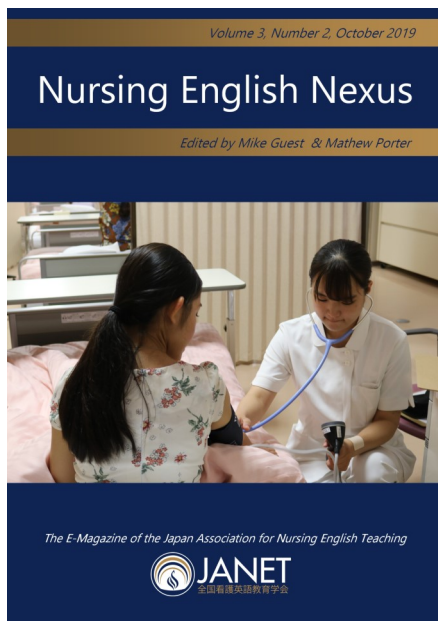


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Medical English Bingo

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Learner level: Elementary to Advanced

Activity time (length): 20 - 40 minutes

Teacher Preparation time: 20 -30 minutes

Materials: Vocabulary lists

Number of Participants: 2 - unlimited

Introduction

Medical English Bingo is a highly enjoyable, stimulating information gap activity that can be used to revise and recycle medical vocabulary through pair-work explanations. It's highly adaptable, easy to prepare, and has proven to be the most popular communicative classroom activity that I've used in over three decades of English teaching.

For this introduction I've limited my scope to commonly used medical English terminology. The game can, however, easily be adapted beyond the realm of medical English to focus on cultural items (such as explaining Japanese food items, or features of British culture), adjectives of emotion, adverbs of manner – the variations are endless.

Procedure

Step 1: Pre-class preparation

The teacher needs to prepare two different lists of 25 target vocabulary items, preferably on a similar theme (see Appendix 1). Next, convert these lists into two 5 x 5 square Bingo grids, clearly marked 'A' and 'B' (see Fig. 1). You may prefer to use different colours for the page heading, to be able to make sure at a glance that students don't have the same grid as their partner.

Step 2: Pre-teach key expressions

Before playing Bingo, it's always helpful to review expressions that may facilitate explanations:

- "It's (kind of) + adjective (long / short / thin / round / square / pointed / sharp / wide / narrow / hard / soft) and it's made of (wood / plastic / glass / rubber / metal / leather /

cardboard).

- It's something we use (when we / with / to / in) ...
- It's a kind of ...
- It's a place where ...
- It's shaped like a ...

Paraphrasing should be encouraged:

- "They're like paper pants."
- "It's a kind of support that we use when it's difficult to walk."
- "It's like a hard cover, it's white, and we use it to protect a broken bone."

Step 3: Make partners, distribute the papers

Learners choose a partner, and determine which is 'A' and which is 'B'. Give each player a 'Partner A' or 'Partner B' Bingo sheet, according to their assignment. Each player then randomly fills in their Bingo grid with the numbers 1-25. Players should not show their sheet to their partner.

Step 4: Play the game

When the grids have been filled with numbers, Partner A begins the game by saying a number (1-25, chosen at random) to Partner B. Partner B should then attempt to explain the item with that number on their own sheet.

While explaining the item, under no circumstances should Partner B say the word in the grid square. Instead they should explain it in such a way as to elicit the word from Partner A. When the target word has been successfully elicited, Partner B can circle it on their grid. Partner A can, of course, ask questions in order to gain more information. This is a useful strategy if Partner B's explanation is too short or otherwise insufficient. The process is then repeated in reverse, with Partner B giving Partner A a random number, and Partner A attempting to elicit the target word from Partner B.

Variations and Extensions

Players don't need to stop when they've both completed a bingo line. Bingo may continue until both players have completed two or even three bingo lines. Alternatively, on completing their lines players can be required to explain the remaining vocabulary on their bingo sheet until other members of the class have had a chance to complete their games.

For a shorter game, the centre square of a 5 x 5 grid given may be designated as a 'free' square, or a 4 x 4 grid may be used.

inhaler	vitamins	ointment	prescription	antibiotic
aspirin	anti-pyretic	eye drops	gargle	antiseptic
capsule	IV drip	solution	nasal spray	anesthetic
anti-histamine	suppository	sedative	nebulizer	patch
painkiller	analgesic	vaccine	narcotic	laxative

Fig. 1: Partner A – Medication Bingo

Further Options: Spelling Bingo

An alternative to 'Explanation Bingo' is 'Spelling Bingo'. In this variation, players challenge each other to spell the words and are effectively marking their partner's bingo card. As with 'Explanation Bingo' each partner is given a grid of 25 words, and numbers in the grid boxes from 1-25. Play begins with Partner A nominating a number. Partner B then finds this number on their grid and asks Partner A "How do you spell _____?"

If partner A correctly spells the word, it is circled and play continues with Partner B choosing a number from Partner A's grid, and Partner B attempting to spell the word. In 'Spelling Bingo' players cannot see their own progress on the grids, so they are reliant on their partners to tell them when they've reached Bingo.

Appendix 2 provides Partner A & B lists of illnesses that are suitable for Spelling Bingo, although of course, this same list could be used as a basis for Explanation Bingo too (with players describing causes, symptoms, or treatments).

Note: Medical English Bingo is best used for fluency and revision. These are not suitable classroom activities if the vocabulary items are not already reasonably familiar to learners.

Appendix 1: Suggested vocabulary for Medical Equipment Bingo

PARTNER A	PARTNER B
adhesive tape	antiseptic cream
bandage	blood pressure gauge
cast	crutches
diaper	disinfectant
dressing	elastic bandage
emesis basin	forceps
gastroscope	gauze
gurney	hearing aid
heating pad	incubator
latex gloves	measuring spoon
medical chart	microscope
neck brace	needle
oxygen	pulse oximeter
reflex hammer	respirator
rubber tube	safety pin
scales	scalpel
splint	sterilizer
stethoscope	stretcher
suction port	surgical mask
syringe	thermometer
tongue depressor	tourniquet
trolley	tweezers
urinal	vital signs monitor
walking frame	ward
waste bin	wheelchair

Appendix 2. Suggested vocabulary for Illness Spelling Bingo

PARTNER A	PARTNER B
anorexia nervosa	anemia
arthritis	appendicitis
asthma	bipolar disorder
bronchitis	bulimia
chicken pox	chlamydia
cholera	constipation
cystitis	dementia
dermatitis	diabetes
eczema	gastroenteritis
gonorrhoea	halitosis
hay fever	hemorrhage
hemorrhoids	hepatitis
hypertension	hypotension
influenza	jaundice
laryngitis	leukemia
malnutrition	measles
menopause	mouth ulcer
mumps	neurosis
osteoporosis	pneumonia
psychosis	rheumatism
rubella	schizophrenia
gastric ulcer	strep throat
stroke	syphilis
tonsillitis	tuberculosis
typhoid fever	whooping cough