



Here are a few games ideas to get you started with Talking Dice, which show their almost limitless versatility, and give you ideas for making up your own games.

First Language and Special Needs – page 2

- ▶ A simple, single dice game for vocabulary drilling
- ▶ A straightforward single or multiple dice game
- ▶ Hot-seating
- ▶ Storytelling
- ▶ Stimulating Memory
- ▶ Poetry Writing
- ▶ Music - Writing your own song
- ▶ Drama - Making your own play
- ▶ Developing Tally and Frequency Charts
- ▶ Multiple dice usage - cross-curricular
- ▶ Emotive Language
- ▶ Wet Play

Primary modern languages KS1 & KS2 – page 5

- ▶ What is it?
- ▶ My pets
- ▶ What's the weather?
- ▶ What colour is it?
- ▶ How many?
- ▶ My body
- ▶ Things I like or dislike

Any Second/Foreign Language and Special Needs – page 9

- ▶ A quick grammar exercise
- ▶ Multiple dice usage - grammar exercises
- ▶ Multiple dice usage - Imaginative sentence construction
- ▶ Memory game
- ▶ Noughts and crosses
- ▶ Question game
- ▶ Word board game
- ▶ Picture board game
- ▶ The Media
- ▶ Integrating other sources of information with the dice
- ▶ Reported speech game

First Language and Special Needs

▶ A simple, single dice game for vocabulary drilling

Each player rolls a die and calls out what they see. This is the most basic use of the dice, although useful for drilling vocabulary, it can quickly become tedious. Why not add number dice, which makes the exercise competitive?

As each player throws he or she calls out what he or she sees. If correct - monitored by the group - he or she gets the number of points on the dice. This game is now not only more interesting, but by adding chance, even those less able could win the game making it a more balanced activity for mixed ability pupils.

▶ A straightforward single or multiple dice game

Let's now imagine the topic is **pets** and the initial introduction of vocabulary has been completed.

To stimulate a speaking a writing activity, split the pupils into small groups and ask them to write the names of their group members on the left hand side of a blank piece of paper. Next to each name they are to write the type of pet that they think each group member will throw.

In turn each member throws a pet die and a number die saying what he or she has just thrown. If anyone has guessed the pet correctly, they win the number of points on the die - if not they are to cross out the pet they wrote down initially and write down the correct pet.

The winner is the one who gets the most points. Following the game, pupils are to write a complete sentence based on the results. For example, if John threw a 'rabbit', the pupils could write, 'John has a rabbit'.

▶ Hot-seating

The teacher chooses a selection of dice. For example, **people, sports, hobbies & clothes**.

One pupil throws the dice, which gives him or her an identity. Through a question and answer session the other pupils in the class have to find out as much as they can about this pupils new identity.

This game can be modified for use in any hot-seating activity by altering the dice chosen.

▶ Story-telling

Split the class into small groups. Each pupil in each group has one die from any topic, and the pupils are to collectively create a story. Each throws their die in turn making a story as they go around the group.

These could later be presented to the class and could also be the basis for a written exercise.

► Stimulating Memory

Split the class into small groups each pupil in each group has one die and they play the game:

'I went shopping and I bought ...'

The variations of this game are endless.

In small groups the pupils are given a large number of dice from different topics. Each pupil throws the dice and looks at them for 30-40 seconds. They are then covered up and they have to see how many they can remember.

► Poetry Writing

Using the dice to guide pupils in this difficult area can stimulate ideas. Pupils throw one die for each part of the poem to guide and awaken ideas. Alliteration, too, can be stimulated.

Each line of a poem is to be based around the image thrown.

Examples:

Bus -big bad bouncy bus

Trousers - tight torn turquoise trousers

► Music - Writing your own song

Inspiration for composition can be difficult for many pupils. To guide their compositions each group can throw a selection of dice. These images need to be included and can be supported with or without instruments.

► Drama - Making your own play

Ask pupils to throw dice from a mixture of topics. They are to develop a drama and must include vocabulary based on the images from the dice they have thrown.

Make this more interesting by adding a few sound effects from a sound effects tape/CD or they could make them themselves. Try to ensure the sound effects have nothing to do with the dice images.

This causes much hilarity as pupils try to develop silly stories based on totally disconnected sources.

This need not be as difficult as it seems by limiting the vocabulary needed this exercise can be made suitable for all abilities.

► **Developing Tally and Frequency Charts**

Pupils around the class repeatedly throw a selection of dice. The frequency of each picture and the number of times thrown is recorded. This could establish an understanding as to what is the modal class for more advanced pupils. The results could be entered onto a database to develop IT skills.

► **Multiple dice usage - cross-curricular**

This is an activity that could be spread over a whole term and could incorporate all areas of the curriculum.

Split the class into groups. At each stage the group is allowed one throw of the specified die to build up their personal profile.

Pupils are to imagine they are stranded on a desert island. The entire activity is divided into many stages. All ideas gathered should be recorded and discussed at some point with the rest of the class.

The following stages are only examples:

Who am I? People

How did I get there? Transport

What is my occupation? Why? Occupations

What did I take with me? Why? Hobbies

What is the weather today? How does that affect me? (This can be done at every session)

At any point pupils could be asked to do their pose and present to the rest of the class.

► **Emotive Language**

I worked with hearing impaired pupils on this exercise, although it could be used for any first language pupil. Each pupil threw a single die and had to make up a sentence using the picture in front of them together with emotive language. For example, the football exploded into the net, the exhausted dog walked home.

The group really enjoyed a fun activity to drill, what is to them, difficult grammar.

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► **Wet Play**

Give the pupils the dice and let them get on with it! This is a great way to capture their attention.

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Primary modern languages KS1 & KS2

► What is it?

A very simple game for KS1 French learners

Split the class into groups and give them one or more of the simple dice topics, such as:

People Furniture

Each student rolls a die and the group asks:

"Qu'est-ce que c'est?"

The student replies with the words they've learned.

E.g:

*C'est une fille
C'est un garçon
C'est une table
C'est une chaise*

This lesson can be adapted to any target language.

► My Pets

This is a simple primary French game, which deals with pets and animals.

Split the class into groups and give each group a dice form the Pets topic.

Each student rolls the die in turn and the group asks:

"Tu as un animal?"

The student answers based on the picture showing, for example:

*J'ai un chien
J'ai un chat
J'ai une souris
J'ai un poisson
J'ai un lapin
J'ai une araignée*

This can be adapted to any target language. It could also be extended to include colours, for example:

*J'ai un poisson rouge
J'ai un lapin gris*

This allows students to be imaginative and have fun thinking of colours. Some of the answers can be quite amusing:

J'ai un chat orange, J'ai un chien vert ...

► What's the weather?

All we ever do in the UK is talk about the weather! Primary students should pick this up easily, even if the weather is commonly taught at KS4.

1. Split the class into groups
2. Give each group a die from the weather topic
3. Each student rolls in turn and the group asks

"Quel temps fait-il?"

The answers based on the weather pictures can be:

Il fait du soleil, il fait beau, il fait chaud

Il fait du vent, il fait mauvais

Il pleut

Il neige, il fait froid

Il est nuageux

Il est orageux

► What colour is it?

This game can be adapted to any language. This example uses simple French.

Talking Dice are several different colours. Split the class into groups and give them a selection of dice of different colours.

To start with, the students can just say the colour of the dice picked from a bag and rolled at random. For example, the group asks:

"C'est de quel couleur?"

The student answers, e.g.:

C'est bleu

C'est rouge, etc

This game can be extended as the group progresses to include the colour of the picture rolled, for example:

C'est un stylo bleu

C'est une voiture vert

Some of the pictures are unusual colours, so the answers can be amusing.

C'est un lapin violet, for example.

► How many?

This game can be adapted to any language. This example uses simple French.

Split the class into groups and give them a few dice topics, which they have already learnt, such as People or Pets or Furniture. Also, give them a number dice.

Each student takes it in turns to roll a picture a die and the number die together and calls out the number and the picture to make plurals. For example:

“Combien?”

Cinq filles

Un lapin

Une table

The answers could also be written down to give the students a head start in genders. As the group progresses, add more number dice. This makes them add up and learn bigger numbers, for example:

Vingt-trois tables

You can also use this game and get the students to multiply the numbers by 10, e.g.:

1 = 10 = dix

2 = 20 = vingt etc

Add another number dice and get the students to multiply the sum by 10. This allows for multiples up to 120.

► My body

This game can be adapted to any language. This example uses simple French.

Split the class into groups and give each group a die from the **Body Parts** topic.

Each student rolls the die in turn and calls out the body part, for example:

l'oreille

la bouche

la main

le pied

les yeux

le nez

To make the game more interesting, get the students to draw a picture with the body parts included. If they roll one of the body parts, they can tick it off or write the name of the body part on their picture. The first student to get all body parts wins.

To slow the game down, tell the students that they have to roll **both** of the feet, hands, eyes, and ears before they win.

► **Things I like or dislike**

This game can be adapted to any language. This example uses simple French.

This game can use a number of different topics that the students have learned through vocabulary drilling or through other games with Talking Dice.

Split the class into groups, and give them a few topics each, such as Hobbies, Pets, Snacks, Sports etc. Each student picks a die from a bag at random and rolls it, then says that they either like or dislike what they see, for example:

J'aime le football

J'aime lire

Or

Je n'aime pas des souris

Je n'aime pas la musique

Any second or foreign language and special needs

▶ A quick grammar exercise

This is a quick grammar exercise making sentences linked with the word 'because'.

Take two dice - such as **Occupations** and **Clothes** - and link them. For example:

*I cannot wear trainers to work because I am a doctor.
I need new trousers because I am going to be a waiter.*

▶ Multiple dice usage - Grammar exercises

In a straightforward grammar drilling exercise, pupils throw the dice and need to construct sentences in the simple past, perfect, future etc.

More complicated grammar can also be practised. For example, throw one **weather** die in combination with another topic die, such as **clothes**.

The results allow for full sentence construction, such as:

'If the sun shines, I will wear a T-shirt'.

▶ Multiple dice usage - Imaginative sentence construction

1. Pupils are given a selection of dice each from various topics - any multiple of dice can be used; the more dice in the game increases the complexity. They have to build a story by throwing either all the dice at once or by throwing one die at a time.

The first exercise allows the pupil to re-order the dice making them fit into a logical sequence. The second calls for more spontaneity and is therefore more of a challenge.

2. Split the class into small groups. Each group has one die and the pupils are to collectively create a story. Each throws the die in turn using the pictures to create an ongoing story around the group. This game can be turned into a writing exercise that can be presented to the rest of the class.

3. Again the class goes into small groups. Each pupil in the group has one die and they play any variation on 'I went shopping and I bought...' The variations of this game are endless.

▶ Memory game

In small groups the pupils are given a number of dice from different topics. Each pupil throws the dice and looks at them for 10-20 seconds. They are then covered up and they have to see how many they can remember in the target language.

► Noughts and crosses

Play a simple noughts-and-crosses game. If the pupils can name a picture or say a sentence relating to that picture they can enter a nought or a cross

► Question game

The next exercise was invented by a group of students at the *University of Wales Institute of Cardiff*.

1. Split the class into groups of four.
2. Sit the groups around a table in a square shape.
3. Stack a number of dice with one side facing each pupil.

Each pupil has to ask the others a question in the target language. For example:

'What are you wearing?'

The others have to answer based on the picture-dice they have in front of them - with interesting results. A simple and entertaining question and answer exercise.

► Word board game

Split the class into small groups. Make simple game boards on pieces of A4 paper consisting of twelve squares, and give a game board to each member of the group.

Write down a single word relating to the dice in each of the squares or get the group members to do this.

Each group member throws the die or a mixture of dice. Players can cover a word-square when they can say a sentence or construct a question using that word or words from the dice.

► Picture board game

Using similar boards as above but this time with pictures instead of words, this can be turned in a whole class activity.

The class is split into small groups, and each group receives one game board and some markers to cover the pictures. The squares on the board also need to be numbered. Use as many squares as you like but only number the squares using the numbers one to six - as on a die. This means that two of each number appears on the board.

This is a teacher lead activity. The teacher throws a picture die and a number die together. Turning to the first group, the teacher calls out the number on the dice. The group has to find the number and call out the corresponding picture. If the picture matches the teachers picture dice, the group can then cover that picture on the board.

The game continues around the class until a group has covered all the pictures on their board. This game of chance can be exiting as well as a useful drilling exercise and can be won by any group - even in a mixed ability class.

► Integrating other sources of information with the dice

Ask pupils to throw any multiple of dice from different topics. They are to develop a story or role-play and must include the vocabulary based on the dice they have thrown.

Make this more interesting by adding a few sound effects from a tape or CD. Try to make sure the sound effects are unrelated to the dice. This can be hilarious as pupils try to develop silly stories based on disconnected sources.

This need not be complex. By limiting the vocabulary needed, this exercise can be made suitable for all ages and abilities.

► Reported speech game

Find a picture suitable for suitable for the age group, making sure it is quite 'busy' with one central character. Pictures used for this have ranged from cartoon characters to photographs of riots.

Split the class into smaller groups. Allow the groups to study their picture for a few minutes and ask them to feedback to the rest of the class on what they see. This is already quite a challenging exercise. Ask them to imagine themselves as a reporter and they need to imagine that they have interviewed the central character only minutes after the picture was taken.

This can be quite a serious exercise, until of course you ask them to throw a selection of dice and use the pictures to tell you what the character said in the interview. Using the dice the pupils need to create the characters story but in the context of the picture they were studying.

This is a very challenging exercise even for advanced pupils. Note that here we are using relatively straightforward vocabulary in a reported speech context. Therefore, the pupils are able to concentrate on the grammar without overtaking themselves on the actual vocabulary.

► The Media

I gave pupils a whole range of topics. From the pictures they threw they had to produce a news programme. For example, the weather was the weather report. Sport was their sport report. With their clothes they produced an article about new Levis jeans, and so on.

They really enjoyed themselves, a simple yet effective way to inspire ideas.

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