

Monikers / Fishbowl

Rules:

This game has 3 rounds. In round 1, students can use any words (including the category), sounds, or gestures to describe the card; they just can't say the word or name itself. In round 2, they can only use one word, and round 3 is just gestures.

Students sit in circles. There are two teams within each circle. Every other person is part of a team, so it's best to have even numbered groups if possible. Deal the cards face down. The number of cards used is flexible depending on class size and desired game length. Each kid chooses 3 of their favorite cards from their hand and discards the rest. The discard pile is not used. I collected every group's discard pile so they didn't accidentally get mixed in later. Everyone's chosen cards are then shuffled together to make one deck. Teams can janken to decide who starts first.

In each round, a person from the starting team is given 60 seconds to get their team to guess as many cards as possible by giving clues, keeping in mind each round's limitation. If they don't know a card, or their teammates can't guess after a few clues, they can put the card on the bottom of the deck and continue with the next card. If a teammate guesses correctly, the card is removed from the deck and placed in their win pile. After 60 seconds is over, they pass the deck to the next person in the circle from the other team. This continues until the deck is depleted. The team with the most cards in their pile wins that round. Then, they reshuffle the deck and start the next round, using the same cards. Rounds 2 and 3 are more difficult, but the kids also become more familiar with the cards in the deck as the rounds progress.

Logistics:

Group Size: For a 40 person class, I made 5 groups of 8 kids. 8 kids per group seemed to be a good number, but I think 6-10 kids could also work well depending on your class size. If you have a small enough class, you could play together in one larger group.

Estimated Game Time: Each group in my class ended up playing with a 24-card deck. In a 50 minute class, most groups did not make it through all 3 rounds. In the future, I think I'd either have them play with more cards and only focus on round 1 or have them play with fewer cards to get through more rounds. In general, you can adjust the number of cards to make the game shorter or longer.

Keeping Time: I only had one timer available, so I kept track of the 60 second intervals for all groups simultaneously. A few groups did progress to all 3 rounds. Groups that ended a round more quickly just used one or two of the intervals to count and reshuffle their decks before continuing. One timer worked out pretty well, but if you have more, groups could keep time by themselves.

Choosing Cards: If you want to save some time, you could just give the kids a predetermined stack of cards, instead of dealing them out and having them choose their favorites. Also, you wouldn't need to print as many cards since they wouldn't be discarding anything.

On the other hand, choosing by themselves helps personalize the deck and gets rid of cards kids don't know. Also, even if some cards that were chosen are difficult, at least one kid will know each card.

Initial Card Numbers: It was overkill, but I printed 3 sets of cards and gave each group a half set. I made sure each half set contained a good mix of each category. Part of my plan was to make more cards than necessary, so if we play it again later in the year, they are less likely to see the same exact set of cards. You definitely could print less card sets depending on your class size, desired game length, and how much choice you give kids in building their decks.

Last Few Notes: In the future, I think it could also be fun to ask kids for card recommendations and create a booster set. My kids seemed to have a lot of fun with this game, so I hope yours enjoy it too!