

Single-student classes can and should be very different from group, but I've found that they can often be the most fun. By only having one student, you can cater the class to their needs without having to worry about meeting the needs of other students. Plus, because it is by nature a more personal environment, you tend to have a closer relationship with the student.

## **Setup**

Chairs are wonderful things. They are great for keeping restless kids settled. However, I normally don't use chairs in single-student classes. If I do, I put the two chairs (mine and the student's) *next to* each other, rather than facing each other. I like to make my single-student classes very personal. Chairs (especially facing each other) seem to make the class too rigid. I like to sit on the floor, next to the student.

## **Hello Activities**

### *Hello Songs*

One of my favorite things to do with hello songs in single-student classes is to make them a patty-cake activity with the student. This is especially popular with the girls. Just incorporate high-fives (or high-tens) into the actions of the hello song. Hello songs that end in a game of rock-paper-scissors are also good. You can make these a best 2-out-of-3 to make it even more fun.

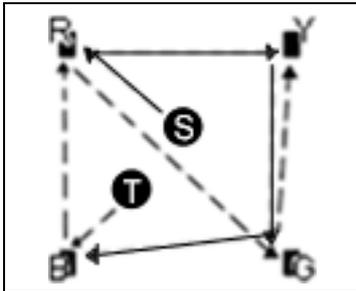
### *Hello Games*

Especially for the older kids, hello games can be a fun way to start the class. Sports simulations work really well. Simply ask the student a question and have them do the given action (kick a ball, hit a ball/balloon with a bat or tennis racket, etc.) as they give the answer.

## **Review / Warm ups**

### *UNO Four Corners*

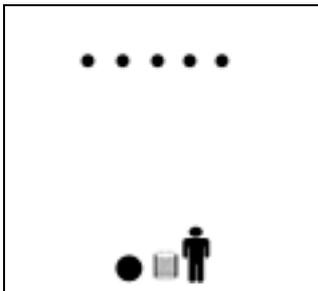
With only one student, you can work in a lot of review and extracurricular English into your classes. One of my favorite warm ups is a card-sorting warm up. I like to use UNO cards as the items to be sorted, and associate them with whatever vocabulary I want to review.



The student and teacher place their cards one by one in the appropriate corners.

The simplest way is to just use the four blank cards (if you don't have the blanks, just use the zeros), and place one in each corner of the room. Remove the wilds and special cards (draw 2, skip, reverse), and shuffle the rest of the deck. Pass out the deck and on your count, both of you sort your deck into the appropriate corners. For a color review, you can just use the UNO cards and have the student say the color every time they put a card down. However, if you place a flashcard in each corner, you can have them say its vocabulary instead. If you want to review more than four words, simply sort by number instead of color. If you find that the student is dropping piles of cards at once, you can fix this by placing both decks on a chair and only allowing one card to be carried at a time.

### *Theme-based Bean Bag Toss*



The student needs to think of five animals.

This is a great game for having older kids think of several items in a given category. For example, if you want the student to think of five different animals, take five objects and dump them on the floor. Stand opposite the objects, with a basket near you. On your count the student runs and fetches one ball and throws it into the basket. As they throw it, they say "I like (cats/dogs/monkeys/elephants/etc.)." Then they fetch another ball and repeat the process, saying another animal, and so on until all five objects are in the basket. You can time how long they take and keep a note of it in their attendance book. See if they can do the process faster next week.

### **Flashcard Presentation**

This part of the class is something that's often overlooked, but I've always felt it's just as important (if not more so) than games. The games usually need the flashcards to be played, so it makes sense to have ways to help them remember the cards rather than just showing it to them and saying the word. Since students remember 80% of what they discover for themselves, here are a couple of activities to help them remember the flashcards better:

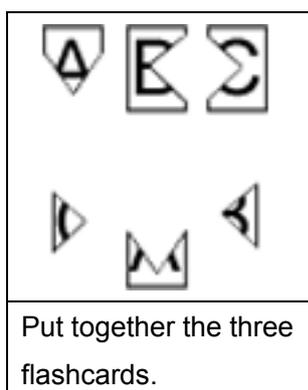
### *Deciphering*

As a kid, I always loved codes and ciphers. There was always a sense of accomplishment when I figured one out. You can give your student the same feeling by having them decipher the vocabulary on the card before presenting it. The simplest substitution cipher is numbering the alphabet 1-26:

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

e.g. "19-21-13-13-5-18" would be "SUMMER".

### *Puzzles*



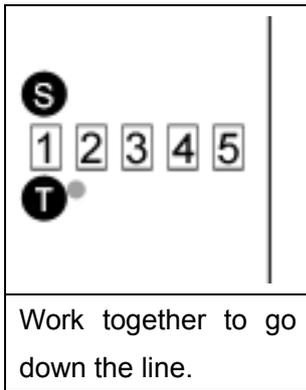
For younger students, you can give them the same sense of discovery by making mini-puzzles out of the flashcards. Simply photocopy and laminate (or paste onto cardboard or some other stiffer surface), then cut into interlocking shapes. Have more pieces to the puzzle for older students. Start the very young students out with 2-piece puzzles and have them put together a few. Work up to more complicated puzzles.

### **Theme Games**

#### Modified group games

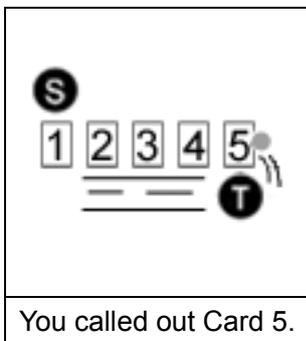
#### *Passing Games*

One of the most traditional group games is the passing game. One person holds an object, says the target language, then passes it on to the next student. In a single-student class, you obviously have to tweak the game to accommodate for their being only two people playing. The simplest way is to change your position after each pass.



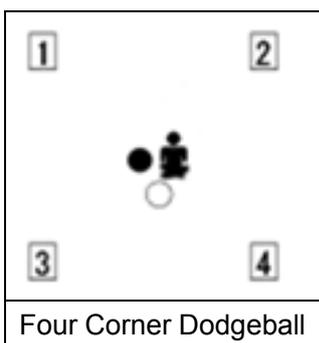
You can set up a line of cards and pass a ball or balloon back and forth as you go down the line. After you pass it to the student, take a step to the next card. The student catches or taps the object back to you and takes a step over as well. Your goal is to reach the line at the opposite end. You can make the cards be the vocabulary you stress, or you can have a stack of cards at the finish line – when you cross it, you turn over the top card and elicit the vocabulary.

### *Chase and Toss*



Using the same setup as the above (without the finish line), you can make it a more active game that reinforces card recognition. Hold the ball/balloon at Card 1 and have the student stand opposite you. Call out one of the cards and immediately rush over to it. Toss the ball/balloon directly across. The student has to make it to the card and catch it before it hits the ground. Then it's their turn to call out a card.

### *Dodgeball*



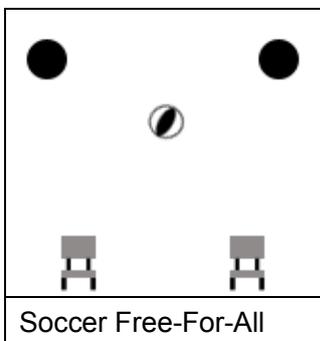
Dodgeball is one of the most popular games in the classroom, but the traditional style is difficult to do in a single-student class. One of the easiest ways to tweak the game is to give the student a task to fulfill, and you try to prevent them from doing it by trying to hit them with a ball. The traditional game of Four Corners is a good example. Place a card in each corner of the room. Sit in the center of the room with a beach ball a little in front of you. The student stands next to you. Call out one of the cards, and on your signal

the student runs to touch the card you called out. As they are doing this, you stand up, pick up the ball and try to hit them with it.

### **Sports-Themed Games**

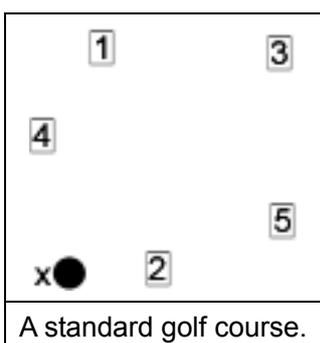
Dodgeball is just one sport you can simulate in the classroom. Try these others as well:

### *Soccer*



Set up a soccer goal against one wall. Have a student stand across the room from you, and also on the opposite end of the room from the goal. Show a card and elicit the vocabulary. On your signal, you both run toward the ball and try to kick it into the goal. The real fun begins if the ball doesn't go in. Then the both of you try your best to be the first one to make the ball in – defense is allowed and encouraged, but you can't use your hands!

### *Golf*

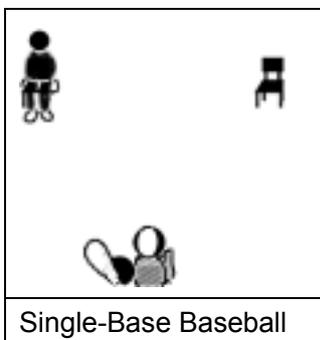


A standard golf course.

Golf is an easy game to play in class, and it lends itself to tons of variations. The basic setup is easy. Simply place cards around the room at different locations and move an object from one card to the other in a specific order. It's best to spread successive cards out as much as possible, as in the diagram. For older classes you can place obstacles around the room to make it slightly more difficult. Use your imagination for what to use for the ball and club.

Paper airplanes are possibly the most fun. You can also use colored magnets as the ball and slide them across the floor (you can use a flashcard as the golf club). Another fun variation is to make actual golf balls out of clay.

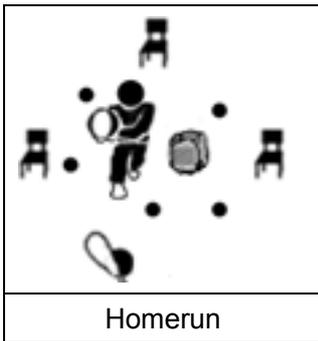
### *Baseball*



Single-Base Baseball

Baseball has been the big hit in my classes recently. Set up two chairs and a ball in a V-formation. Place the ball on an overturned, foldable basket. Give the student a bat and sit down in the chair at the top left. Show a flashcard or ask the student a question. The student answers, hits the ball, and runs toward the opposite chair. They touch the chair and run back to home (a chair, a wall, or some other distinct object) while you fetch the ball and try to tag them out. If you have no bat or basket, you can make it

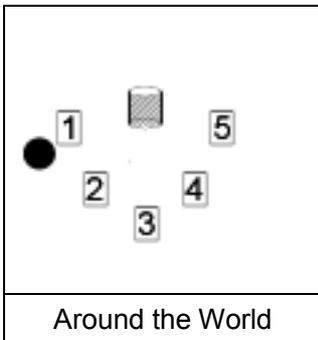
Single-Base Kickball and just place the ball on the floor for them to kick.



Homerun

This is another baseball variation you can try. Set up chairs for the three bases and home plate. Place a basket next to you and stand at the “pitcher’s mound.” Also scatter some small objects around the room (start with only a few and work your way up to a larger number). Pitch a beach ball to the student and they hit it and run the bases. While they are doing this, you have to pick up all the small objects *and* the beach ball and place them in the basket. If you can do this before they get home, they’re out. If they can make it home first, they score a point. It’s an all-or-nothing game.

### *Basketball*



Around the World

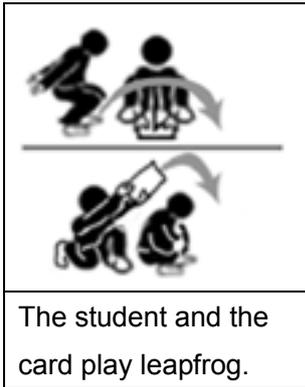
Place a number of cards at different locations from the basket. Traditionally, you would place them in a semicircle as in the picture. Take a shot from Card 1. If you make it, you go on to the next card. If you miss, it is the next person’s turn, and you continue from the same spot on your next turn. The first person to make a shot from each card wins. You can also use ABC letter pieces instead of cards, and spell out one of the vocabulary words.

### *H-O-R-S-E*

This is a traditional game that anyone who grew up around basketball probably knows, but it translates well to the classroom. If you don’t know the game, you basically take a shot from anywhere in the room. If you make it, the student has to make a shot from the same spot you did. If they miss, they get an H. The next time they miss, they get an O, and so on. The first person to spell out “HORSE” loses. If you should miss, the student can take a shot from anywhere they want. If you make it and then the student makes it, then you can take a shot from anywhere you want. Either have the student say a vocabulary word before every shot, or have the word spelled out be one of the theme cards rather than “HORSE”.

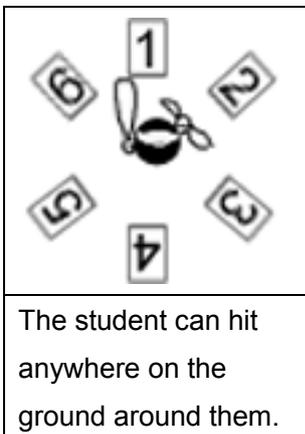
### Other Games

#### *Single-Student Leapfrog*



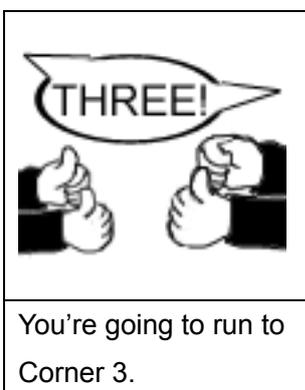
This is great for 2-3 year olds. They love to jump, so leapfrog is a great game to play. However, with just you and the student, it'd be a hard task indeed to play the game the traditional way. Have them play leapfrog with the card instead. Hold a card on the floor in front of them and have them jump over it. Then move the card over their head and place it in front of them again. They say the card again and jump over it. Repeat several times. After they get the hang of it, you can use two cards and switch back and forth. Take them around the room with this game.

### *Blind Spinner*



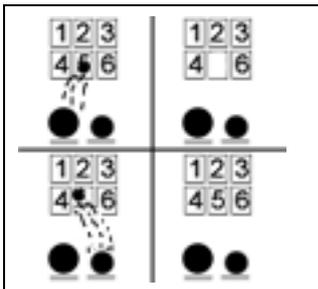
This is a simple game of chance that requires a blindfold and preferably a long object (although it's not necessary, in a pinch). Stand the student in the middle of a circle of cards. Blindfold them and give them a bat. Have them spin around for 10 seconds or so, and then they can hit the ground anywhere around them. If the bat hits a card, put a marker on that card. If it hits in the space between two cards, put a marker on the cards on either side. Take turns and play until one person has a marker on every card. For younger students you can just make it an elicitation activity and take the competitive aspect out of it.

### *Thumbs Up Four Corners*



Place a card in each of the four corners of the room. Also number the cards clearly, from 1-4. Sit in the middle of the room and do a simple rhythm clap-chant with the student – e.g. “Ready (slap the ground), set (clap your hands), GO!” and at the end of the chant, you both put up 0-2 thumbs each. Count the number of thumbs up and elicit the number. On your signal, you both rush to tag the card marked with that number. If you both chose not to put up any thumbs, you do the chant again.

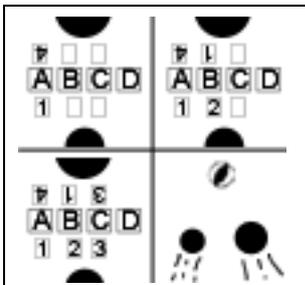
### *Cooperative Ball Toss*



If the student throws a ball onto an overturned card, it gets turned over again!

This is a good game for getting the student to work with you rather than compete against you. Lay out some flashcards on the floor a bit in front of you. Toss a ball (or any small object, really) onto one of the cards. Elicit the vocabulary and flip the card over. The student then tries to throw a ball onto another card. The point of the game is to get all the cards flipped over, but if a ball lands onto a card that has already been flipped, it gets turned right-side-up.

### *Small Card War*



You're going to run to Corner 3.

Place a random object to be grabbed on one side of the room. Sit on the other side of the room with the student and place down a few theme cards. Give the student playing cards 1-4 (or however many theme cards you were using). Take a matching set for yourself as well. Both of you shuffle your decks and at the same time place a card down by the first theme card. Elicit the vocabulary of the theme card and the numbers as well. Continue until you both place down the same number. When this happens, you both rush to grab the object on the other side of the room.

### **Goodbye**

### *Goodbye Dance*



Shall we dance?

A fun way to end the class is to do a goodbye dance with the student. Have the student stand on your feet (leave the designer shoes at home!) and move around while singing any goodbye song. Exaggerated leg movements and dips are especially fun for the kids.