

Simplified Articulate Board Game Rules for English Language Teaching (ELT)

Niall Douglas. April 2011. <http://www.nedprod.com/studystuff/>

These are for the Adult game of Articulate ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articulate_\(board_game\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articulate_(board_game))), best used near the end of their ELT course to **cement** their English learning so they won't forget it in a hurry after they go home. There is a hard to find Kids version of Articulate with a much easier vocabulary, this can be played unmodified for advanced students. Game length: 45 to 60 minutes, though the first time you play it they will take much longer as they learn the rules (you can always halve the board to make it a shorter game if desired).

Articulate is superior to Taboo in ELT in my opinion because it's faster, more competitive and doesn't artificially restrict the vocab used. This makes skills developed here identical to survival skills in English where miming or drawing can become necessary in some circumstances, especially with thick regional accents.

Rules

Break class into between two and four teams (larger in each the better I find). Place the team counters on the start line. For each turn, one member of the team does:

1. Take a card from the top of the stack and choose ANY ONE of the words on the card.
2. Another person turns over the hourglass (it will be turned over TWICE during the go to make 60 seconds).
3. Describe in ENGLISH the word you chose to YOUR team only without:
 - a. You cannot SPELL the word, or say how many letters it has.
 - b. You cannot SAY any part of the word, or anything like it.
 - c. You cannot use "rhymes with" or "sounds like".
4. You MAY act or mime (but NOT mouth the word).
5. Once your team has guessed the word, quickly pick up the next card and describe another word.
6. If the word is too hard, you can choose to PASS the card and take another one. You can PASS no more than TWO cards per turn.
7. When two turns of the hourglass runs out, your turn is over. You move your team's piece forward by the number of words you got correct. If you land on:
 - a. A WHITE entry (with spade), the next person in the SAME team describes another card to ALL the teams. There is NO time limit. Whoever wins gets the next go.
 - b. A RED or ORANGE entry, that team spins the spinner:
 - i. If the spinner points to WIDE GREEN, you can move your piece forward TWO or another team's backward TWO.
 - ii. If the spinner points to NARROW GREEN, you can move your piece forward ONE or another team's backward ONE.
8. When you reach the FINISH point, it becomes like a permanent WHITE entry with spade – your team must describe to ALL teams and your team must win to win the game. During this time other teams can move you backwards if they win the spinner. This stage is very useful for getting competitiveness very high and lagging teams catch up quickly.

The only problem with this game I would say is that once they have played it they want to play it all the time, so keep it for the end of a course and end of each day of teaching. Also, they get very noisy towards the end of each game as they get all worked up, but they are getting worked up in English so I figure it is okay. Be careful of some of the boys in a mixed sex class, they can get a bit aggressive about some of their teammates not performing fast enough.

The required level of English for this game is actually lower than you'd think especially if they are European students – the game is more about self-confidence than proficiency. However, they do need a certain minimum level of English to understand at least a few of the vocab on the cards. Try it in your class and see!