

28 Conga Line/Inside-Outside Circles

Conga Line is a vocabulary game named after a popular Cuban line dance. The game provides a highly interactive way to study and review important terms. It helps learners develop vocabulary as they practice asking and answering questions. Students form two lines (or two circles) facing each other and take turns asking and answering questions about vocabulary words or comprehension questions about readings.



Target Learning Strategies: practicing asking and answering questions; study strategies

Lesson Stages: Into, Beyond

Language Levels: All

Procedure: Vocabulary Study

1. Choose terms that have been recently taught, or review words.
2. A day ahead, each student prepares one or more cards, each with a term on the front and the definition, description, and example (or, for newcomers, picture) on the back.
3. Collect and check the cards, and then edit or ask for revisions to make sure that the information on each card is accurate.
4. Return the cards to learners and have them carefully study their cards to be prepared to teach their items to someone else.
5. Learners stand opposite partners in two parallel lines. At a signal, learners turn to the partner opposite them in the other line and take turns teaching one another the word they have on the card.
6. At the next signal, the two partners exchange cards. Then the last student in one line goes to the front of that line and everyone in that line moves back one.
7. At the next signal, the new partners teach one another their new terms. This pattern continues until everyone has partnered with everyone else.
8. Quiz learners on the words and set aside those that have been mastered.
9. Play again (perhaps) another day with the words that still need study or a different set of words

Variation: Asking and Answering Questions

Use the same procedure, but this time each student makes a card with a comprehension question about a selection they have read. The cards have the question on the front and the answer on the back.

Example:

After reading, "Tornado Survivor by Wes Johnson (*Edge*, pp. 261-266), assign one paragraph to each learner. Learners each write a question and an answer about the paragraph on a card. Then they use these cards in the Conga Line activity.