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To the Teacher

What's in the Cards? is intended as a resource for teachers of English to speakers of other languages. It is the hope of the authors to introduce you to (or perhaps remind you of) numerous fun and engaging activities that can be done using ABC cards, more specifically, to introduce you to the many activities that can be done using *ABAX Miniature Letter Cards*. That said, however, most of the activities described here can be done with other ABC cards — with ABC cards you might make yourself for instance.

We have divided the book into three activity sections — Letter Recognition and Alphabetical Order, Phonics and Sound Discrimination, and Vocabulary and Spelling. A fourth section at the end of the book offers some photocopiable images that you might find useful in doing some of the activities described.

While almost all the activities described in the first two sections are best used with children, we found (sometimes to our surprise) that many of the activities in the final section -Vocabulary and Spelling - work well with adult learners of English as well. This is especially true of those activities towards the end of the section.

In general, within each section, we have tried to arrange activities in order of difficulty, with easier exercises earlier on, and more difficult ones later. We hasten to add that this is but a rough judgement made rougher by the fact that individuals vary in the order in which they learn.

A final caveat to add is that the activities in *What's in the Cards?* are intended as supplements to your own curriculum and not to serve by themselves as the foundation for a course. While we have tried to include activities that touch upon as wide a variety of language use as possible, we cannot claim to have produced a book inclusive of all that should be covered.

We hope your classes enjoy and learn from the activities described in this book and that this book may perhaps help serve as an impetus and set you off developing activities of your own.



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On ABC Cards

While *What's in the Cards?* is designed to be used with *ABAX Miniature Letter Cards*, most exercises can be easily performed using sets of ABC cards you might make yourself.

If you choose to make sets of cards yourself we would recommend that the following be kept in mind:

- The cards should be one-sided. Many of the activities cannot be performed with cards whose identities are detectable from the reverse side.
- The cards should be small yet capable of being handled by children. Big cards do not lend themselves to many of the activities described in this book — too large of a playing surface would be needed.
- A small point perhaps, but ideally the letters have equally sized ascenders, descenders and x-values (that is, that the up parts, down parts and the bodies of letters be the same size). This is the paradigm by which children are taught to write and so is the paradigm which ABAX sought to follow in designing its cards.
- Finally, any letter cards should ideally be sturdy enough to survive the sometimes rough handling of younger users.

In the ABAX cards, a miniature letter can be seen in the upper left corner of each card. An upward-pointing arrow is in each card's lower right corner.

Red cards represent vowels and blue cards consonants.

12. Ex the X

“An ABC version of the card game Old Maid”

Number of Players: Four or five

Additional Materials: None



To Get Ready

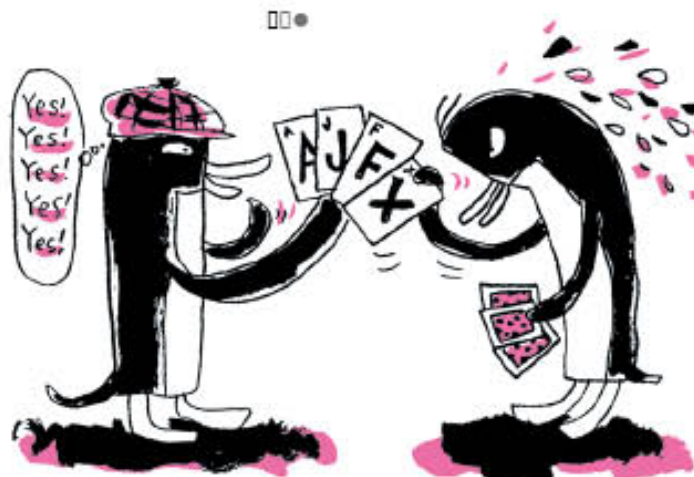
- ☐☐● Arrange students into groups of four or five.
- ☐☐● Each group should have one deck.
- ☐☐● From this students select out both upper and lower-case letters from A - M and one upper-case X.
- ☐☐● The cards should then be shuffled thoroughly and dealt out to all the students in the group.

To Play

- ☐☐● Students pick up and fan out their cards, being careful not to show them to any of the other players.
- ☐☐● Any matching upper-case - lower-case pairs are discarded.
- ☐☐● Students then in turn take one card from the player on their left. Again any matching upper-case - lower-case pairs are discarded, and so on.
- ☐☐● The first student to discard all of his or her cards is the winner.
- ☐☐● Play continues until only one student is left with the X.

Variations

- ☐☐● Two sets of upper-case letter cards can be used in place of the upper-case - lower-case pairs. This makes Ex the X an activity that can be played with students just learning their letters.
- ☐☐● Can be played with any combination of cards, not just A - M.



27. ABC Bingo!

“Sure to get the class involved”

Number of Players: Two or more

Additional Materials: None



To Get Ready

- ☐☐ The teacher or a student caller should have a thoroughly shuffled deck of lower-case letters (a half deck less the red y, and the x). This should be placed face-down on the playing surface.
- ☐☐ Each student lays out twenty-five upper-case cards (a half-deck less the red Y and the X), face up in a 5 x 5 square.

To Play

- ☐☐ The teacher or student caller turns over the top card of the deck and calls out a word beginning with the turned over letter. This is repeated until one or more students obtain a BINGO.
- ☐☐ Students turn over the starting letter they think they heard. Students obtaining five turned over cards in a row should call out "Bingo". These five cards can then be checked against the teacher or caller's pile of turned-over cards.

Variations

- ☐☐ Have all the students turn over their middle card at the start of the game. In other words, make this a free space.
- ☐☐ Use this game to practice end letter discrimination.
- ☐☐ With lower level students or when not so much time is available have students place cards in either 3 x 3 or 4 x 4 arrays.
- ☐☐ With lower level students, the teacher or student caller might just say the sound of the letter drawn.
- ☐☐ **Letter Recognition Bingo**
- ☐☐ **Two Line Bingo, Three Line Bingo, L-Shaped Bingo** and so on.

