

# ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS

Adaptable to different levels  
and languages



# ACTIVITIES WITH A BALL

A NEW WAY TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES:

## IT'S A BOMB!

- Ask the students to form a circle. You will need a timer.
- Pass the ball to a student and say: It's a bomb! He or she has to say his or her name, say the name of whoever passed the ball to him or her, and then pass the ball to someone else:

MY NAME IS JUAN, YOUR NAME IS MARÍA.

- The student who has the ball (bomb) when the timer sounds is "out" and has to leave the circle.
- Those who stay change places and the game continues.

POSSIBLE PHRASES:

- My name is Gema and I love to eat chocolate.
- My name is Gema and...if I were an animal, I would be a dolphin because they are smart / they are sociable / I love to swim... etc.
- My name is Pedro and I would like to be a... / travel to... / be able to...
- **Make up your own**

• A FUN WAY OF TAKING TURNS

• INTRODUCES NEW LANGUAGE CONTENT



# MORE ACTIVITIES WITH A BALL

## 1. SPELLING WORDS:

The students stand in a large circle. The teacher says a word (eg. potato) and throws the ball to a student who says the first letter. Then, he or she throws the ball to a second student, etc. If a student makes a mistake, he or she is “out” and has to sit down; the teacher starts again. The last student standing is the winner.

## 2. BASKETBALL:

- Using a waste basket as a hoop, ask the students to line up.
- Choose a topic or grammatical principal that is relevant to the class: eg. the simple past tense.
- Address a question to the first student: Where did you go last weekend?
- If the student uses the verb tense correctly, he or she can throw the ball towards the basket. He or she receives 10 points if he or she scores and 5 if he or she does not score, but responded correctly.

(VARIATION POSSIBLE USING PAPER PLANES AND A TARGET DRAWN ON THE BOARD)



### 3. CHOOSE A VICTIM:

- Questions and Answers:
- The teacher asks the students to ask questions using the phrase "**Have you ever**"

Eg. Have you ever been to Paris?

- Students throw the ball to ask others questions using the given structure. They can only throw the ball and ask another question if they respond correctly.
- Students who make mistakes are "out" and have to leave the circle.

### 4. FREEZE/STOP!

(A good activity for smaller children)

- Vocabulary practice with flashcards.
- Explain the word Freeze!\* which means "stop."
- Have the students sit in a large circle with a set of flashcards in the middle.
- While the students pass the ball, tell them that they can not hold it for more than a second.
- The teacher, who has his or her eyes covered while the students pass the ball, says: FREEZE!\*
- The student who has the ball has to stop and take a card from the pile.
- Depending on the grade level, ask the student to say the word or to use it in a sentence.

\*depends on your language

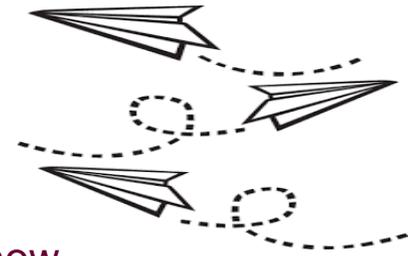
# ACTIVITIES WITH PAPER AND PENCIL

## DRAW MY HAND:

- In pairs, each student has to draw his or her partner's hand on a piece of colored paper, using the partner's hand to make an outline with a pencil or marker.
- On each finger they will write the answer to a question (5 questions).
- Choose the questions that you would most like to know about the students (eg get to know you questions for the first day of class). You may decide the questions together with the students.
- The students get to know each other and write a short answer on each finger.
- Students use their partners' paper hands to introduce them to the group (eg. this is Clara's hand, she likes to go to the movies with her friends, she is afraid of the dark, etc.).
- This activity may be extended by letting each student write something extra in the palm of the hand (eg. my best quality / my dream / my etc.).
- You may hang these on the classroom walls.

THIS ACTIVITY ALLOWS FOR VARIATION





## PAPER PLANES:

- Ask the students to make a paper plane. If someone doesn't know how, give basic instructions and a demonstration in the target language, or ask a student to demonstrate.

### VARIATION 1:

Students write something inside the plane. All at once, each student throws his or her plane into the air at random. Another student picks it up and reads what is written:

- A question for the student to answer out loud (read the questions and their answers in front of the whole class or in groups).
- A sentence with a blank to fill in as a grammar or vocabulary review, etc.
- Students may write their names on the planes.

### VARIATION 2:

The students take turns throwing their planes at a target that is drawn on the board:

- As a prize for having answered the question correctly, if they hit the target they can receive extra points (if you choose to make this game competitive).

### VARIATION 3:

- Use one plane for the entire group of students in different kinds of activities for taking turns (eg. to switch readers while reading texts out loud as a group).



## USING STRIPS OF PAPER:

- Give each student two strips of paper
- On the first the student writes a question that begins with the words **WHY.....?**
- On the second strip the student writes the answer to this question beginning with the word **BECAUSE...**

Eg. **Why did** the chicken cross the road?

**Because** there was food on the other side.

- When they have finished writing their sentences, collect them and make two piles: one with the questions and the other with the answers.
- Shuffle the papers from each pile separately.
- Read a random question from the **WHY?** pile. Then, read a random response from the **BECAUSE** pile.

**YOU CAN ALSO ASK DIFFERENT STUDENTS TO READ THE QUESTIONS OUT LOUD TO THE ENTIRE CLASS, OR IN SMALL GROUPS.**

**THE COMBINATIONS OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CAN BE FUNNY AND GIVE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE THE INTERROGATIVE STRUCTURE.**

- It's important to supervise the students as they write.
- **THERE ARE MANY VARIATIONS:** eg. conditional sentences



#### 4. MATCHING ACTIVITIES:

- Use blocks of colored sticky notes if possible. Write words on the yellow sticky notes and their definitions on the pink sticky notes, stick them on the board and ask the students to take turns connecting words with their definitions by drawing arrows.

#### 5. PROVIDING CORRECTIONS:

- While students talk, write down corrections of their errors on a sticky note and stick it to their desk or notebook.
- At the end of the oral activity, ask the students to read the incorrect phrase and then the provided correction.
- Variation: don't make the correction and instead ask the whole group to try to correct the error.

#### 8. FILL IN THE BLANK ON THE BOARD:

- Write sentences with blank spaces (vocabulary / grammar) on the board and write the missing words on sticky notes. Ask students to go up to the board to place the words in the appropriate spaces.
- This can be more fun if it is competitive: eg. the group that completes the task first and with the fewest errors earns points.
- You can also ask them to write the answers themselves on the sticky notes.

#### 6. USING THE BOARD FASTER AND MORE EFFECTIVELY:

- When you want students to provide sentences or examples quickly, you can ask them to write them on sticky notes and then get up and stick it to the board (this saves writing time).

#### 7. ORGANIZING VOCABULARY:

- Students can use sticky notes to make a list of vocabulary organized by intensity levels. For example, they could put adjectives in order from hottest to coldest (cold, cool, lukewarm, warm, hot, burning, etc.). Using the sticky notes, the students can work together to organize them until they agree on an order.
- You can also use sticky notes to make vocabulary trees and group the words by meaning.

# DICTATION ACTIVITIES...

## YES, DICTATION:

### ADVANTGES:

- For all levels.
- You can adjust the activity for different levels within the same group of students.
- Requires little preparation and avoids the expense of photocopies.
- Works on listening and writing skills.

### DISADVANTAGES:

- If used poorly, dictation can be boring.
- Some students find it very difficult.
- It may be difficult to ensure that the students are correctly writing what is dictated when this activity is performed in large groups.



## SOME IDEAS FOR USING DICTATION IN CLASS:

- **DICTATING A STORY:**

Preferably a short and entertaining one. You may dictate the sentences out of order so that the students (in pairs or groups) can put them back in order. You may leave the end of the sentences open for them to complete using their imagination (selecting the number and difficulty of words/grammar depending on the students' level).

- **DICTATING QUESTIONS:** Instead of using the ones in the book or providing written questions, you may dictate comprehension questions about a text or about an oral exercise that was performed in pairs.

- **DICTATE SENTENCES TO START DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES:**

- At more advanced levels you can dictate two or three questions to start a new topic and have the students answer them in pairs or groups. Eg: travel. Where did you go on vacation most recently? Where in the world would you like to visit? Where would you never want to go on vacation? Why?
- At lower levels you can simplify the questions by using a recurring structure. Eg. Do you like to go to the movies? Do you like pasta? Etc.

- **SONGS AND TALKS/SPEECHES ON YOUTUBE:**

Before beginning an activity that has a song, you can dictate a few lines of it and ask students to read them out loud before listening to it. Or vice versa: have the students listen to the song and then read the lines out loud, imitating what they've heard.

- **DICTATION RACE (RUN AND DICTATE):**

Perform this activity competitively with texts that aren't too long. The first group to finish with the fewest errors is the winner.

- **STUDENTS DICTATE SENTENCES:**

Cut a text into strips of paper and pass them out to students to read to the rest of the class. Students should read slowly and pay attention to their pronunciation.

- **COMPLETING THE SENTENCE:**

Dictate phrases for students to complete with their own ideas. This works very well for grammatical structures that they have recently learned. Eg. "I have never liked..." "No one in my family has ever..."

- **FILL IN THE BLANK.**

Explain to your students that while you dictate you will replace a word with a "beep" sound. They have to complete the dictation by choosing a word that makes sense in the context of the sentence that you're dictating. Eg. "Yesterday I (beep) a wallet on the street."  
(found)

- **ONLINE DICTATIONS.**

Eg. phone numbers:

<http://www.autoenglish.org/telephoneenglish/phonenumbers.htm>

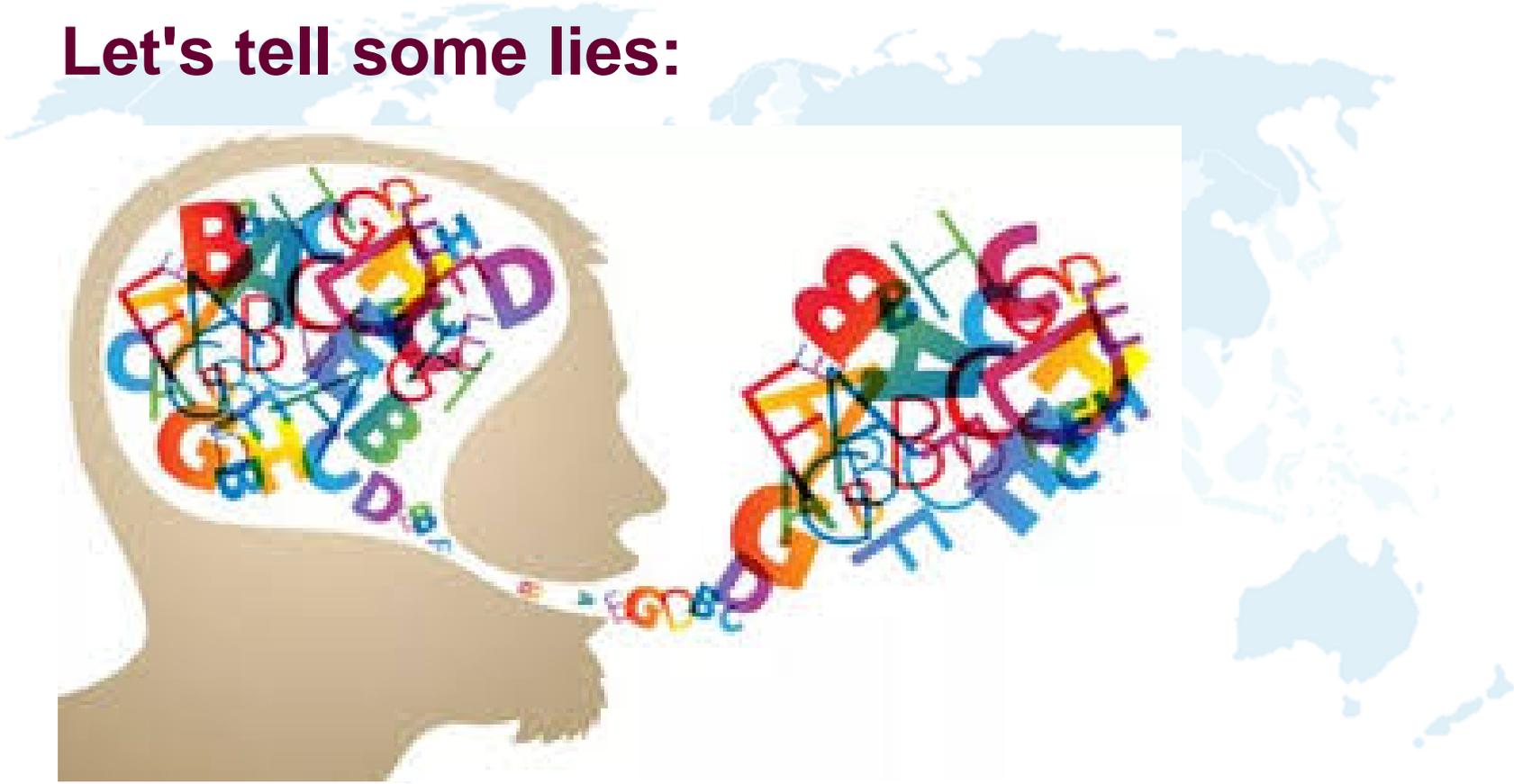
Google Search....

**BRACE YOURSELF**



# ACTIVITIES WITH A BIT OF INTRIGUE...

## Let's tell some lies:



# ACTIVITIES WITH A BIT OF INTRIGUE...

## Let's tell some lies:

### 1 TEACHING YOUR COUNTRY'S CULTURE:

- Tell the students something about the customs of your country/region of origin, mixing in a few falsehoods. They have to guess which parts are lies or false information. Make it hard for them....

### 2 HOW MANY QUESTIONS?

- In pairs, student A has a minute to ask student B all the questions he or she can think of.
- Then, student B answers the questions that he or she can remember in whatever order he or she wants, but must include a lie.
- Student A has to guess which response is the lie.
- They switch roles.

### 3. TALK ABOUT YOUR DAILY ROUTINE, TASTES AND INTERESTS:

- Using the same technique, you can tell them about your daily life, about your life when you were in grade school, about your tastes and hobbies, etc. depending on the grammar principal that you want to reinforce... And mix in a lie for them to guess.

# ACTIVITIES USING PHYSICAL MOVEMENT:

## 1. WE ARE THE SENTENCE:

Assign each student a word and have them form a sentence by standing in a line in the correct order.

- ASSIGNMENT ON THE USE AND VALUE OF HELPING VERBS AND ON WORD ORDER IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, INTERROGATIVE AND NEGATIVE FORMS.
- OTHER VARIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE.

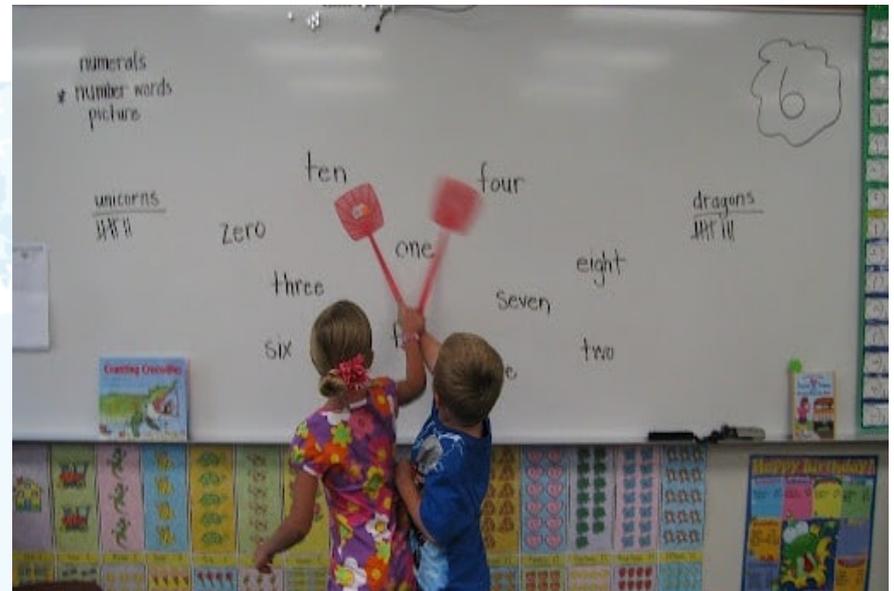


## 2. MUSICAL CHAIRS:

- Identify 3 or 4 topics that students can talk about. Eg. If they are learning to talk about preferences you may ask them to think about what they would say about their tastes in fashion, food, music, etc.
- The students think of 2 or 3 things that they could say about themselves. (It's very important that students have time to think, because that allows them to mentally generate sentences in their second language before expressing them verbally.)
- In groups of 5-7, students put their chairs in circles with the backs towards the center of the circle. There should be one chair fewer than the total number of students in the group.
- They walk or dance in a circle around the chairs while the music plays. When the teacher stops the music, the students sit. The student who is left standing must say at least 2 sentences about what they like.
- The game continues. No one is eliminated.

### 3. THE FLY SWATTER GAME:

- Excellent for reviewing vocabulary.
- Materials: two fly swatters and a PowerPoint projector and screen, or words written on the board if there is no projector.
- How to play:
  1. Project the words onto the screen, spaced out and in a random order, and have a list of definitions ready to read.
  2. To make it more fun, write the words inside the outline of some flies.
  3. Divide the class into two groups. Each group chooses a team name.
  4. Each team sends a person to the front of the class where they are handed the fly swatter.
  5. Read the definition out loud and the first student to hit the correct word with the fly swatter wins a point for his or her team.



\*Note: You may ask the same question or use the same word several times; repetition helps learning.

You can set rules, for example: You can only hit one word per question (in order to avoid random swatting).

## 4. TELEPHONE:

This game develops listening skills.

1. Have students stand or sit in a row or in a circle.
2. Make up a sentence and whisper it in the ear of the first student in the row, who in turn whispers it to the next student, until the sentence reaches the last student.
3. If a student needs the sentence to be repeated, he or she must ask for it by using a code word. Eg. "Operator!" However, each person may only do this once.
4. The last student in the line or circle says out loud the sentence that he or she heard.
5. You may ask students at random to repeat the sentence that they had understood.
6. Tell the students the original sentence in order to compare it with those that circulated among the students.
7. Telephone may be made competitive by dividing the class into two groups: the one that produces a sentence most similar to the original wins.



# FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND:

**TALK TO YOUR NEIGHBOR ABOUT HOW THESE FACTORS WOULD AFFECT HOW YOU DESIGN THE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**

- Students' age
- Their language level/different levels within the same class.
- How far the students are into the day/school year and how tired they may be.
- Possible problems including some students in the group.
- Some students may feel nervous about using their second language.
- Requirements from the teacher responsible for the class; your own abilities and educational vision.
- Cultural and social factors that affect the student body.
- Possible disciplinary issues.
- Running out of ideas or resources.



**ARE THESE IMPORTANT FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND?  
WHAT OTHER FACTORS ARE IMPORTANT?**

# ONLINE ideas and resources

<http://busyteacher.org/13611-7-best-games-for-conversation-class.html>

<http://busyteacher.org/22210-7-no-prep-games-with-scrapper.html>

<http://www.onlinetefltraining.com/the-humble-post-it-15-ways-you-can-use-them-in-class/>

<https://globalgraduates.com/articles/lesson-plan-ideas-for-english-language-assistants>

## **Manual for the linguistic assistant of the British Council**

[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/whole\\_manual.pdf](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/whole_manual.pdf)

**Thousands of free resources to print and use (English):**<http://busyteacher.org/>

***Jobs, Worksheets, and Flashcards for the ESL and TEFL Teacher:***

<http://bogglesworldesl.com/>



**More ideas for language assistant lessons:**

<https://globalgraduates.com/articles/lesson-plan-ideas-for-english-language-assistants>

**BINGO CARD CREATOR**

[www.toolsforeducators.com/bingo/](http://www.toolsforeducators.com/bingo/)

**IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH, FRENCH AND GERMAN:**

<https://auxiliaresconversacionasturias.wordpress.com/2015/04/07/algunas-ideas-las-clases/>

**IDEAS FOR FUN PRONUNCIATION ACTIVITIES(English)**

<https://www.soundsofenglish.org/lessonsactivities>

**Interesting blog with links to activities in English, French and German:**

<https://morwennatakesoneurope.wordpress.com/2012/12/05/a-language-assistants-top-most-useful-websites-of-all-time/>

**Ideas for teaching about your country's culture:**

<http://busyteacher.org/7080-top-10-ways-to-teach-culture.html>

[http://www.teaching-culture.de/en/products/lesson\\_plans/lesson\\_plans.htm](http://www.teaching-culture.de/en/products/lesson_plans/lesson_plans.htm)

<http://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator/teaching-culture-in-the-foreign-language-classroom/>



### **BOARD GAME MAKER:**

<http://www.toolsforeducators.com/boardgames/>

### **FLASHCARD MAKER (EDUCATIONAL FLASHCARDS IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES):**

<http://www.aulaplaneta.com/2016/02/29/recursos-tic/ocho-herramientas-tic-para-crear-flashcards-o-tarjetas-didacticas/>

### **USING STICKY NOTES IN A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS:**

<http://www.onlinetefltraining.com/the-humble-post-it-15-ways-you-can-use-them-in-class/>

<http://minds-in-bloom.com/35-uses-for-post-it-notes-in-classroom/>

<http://busyteacher.org/13617-7-easy-ice-breakers-pos-it-notes.html>

### **CLASSROOM DICTATION ACTIVITIES:**

<https://www.tefl.net/esl-activities/dictation.htm>

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-dictation>

<http://busyteacher.org/25011-8-great-ways-to-use-dictation-with-esl-students.html>

<http://www.onlinetefltraining.com/10-dictation-activites-for-efl-classes/>

### **SHORT STORIES FOR CLASSROOM DICTATION ACTIVITIES (OR OTHER USES):**

<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories>



## DICTATIONS ORGANIZED BY LEVELS. Here are a few examples in

### English:

<https://www.englishclub.com/listening/dictation.htm>

<https://www.rong-chang.com/eslread/eslread/dict/contents.htm>

<https://www.eslfast.com/begin4/dict/>

### A few examples in French:

<http://fondationpjl.ca/audio/>

<http://francesmaeserodrigo.blogspot.com.es/p/dictados.html>

### A few examples of German dictations:

<http://www.aprendealeman.com/dictados/>

<http://www.aprendealeman.com/blog/12-nuevos-dictados-en-aleman/>

<https://www.gramatica-alemana.es/dictados-aleman/>

# ACTIVITIES INVOLVING PHYSICAL MOVEMENT:

<http://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator-english/esl-physical-activities/>

<http://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator-english/esl-games-for-students/>

<http://busyteacher.org/4246-tptr-tricks-5-fabulous-ways-to-use-total-physical.html>

<http://busyteacher.org/4246-tptr-tricks-5-fabulous-ways-to-use-total-physical.html>

[http://www.mgu.ac.jp/~ic/helgesen/physical/physical\\_prehtml.htm](http://www.mgu.ac.jp/~ic/helgesen/physical/physical_prehtml.htm)





**THANK YOU AND  
GOOD LUCK!**

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