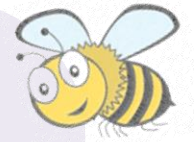


# Let's beat the hungry monster!

Age  
3 to 6



## Reasons for choosing this activity:

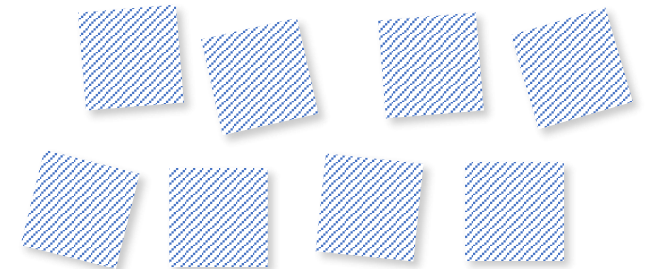
- Generally, children like to play memory games. These require observation and concentration skills as well as a good memory. However, language is generally not vital to win a game. When turning a card, the picture immediately becomes visible to everyone and there is little in naming or describing it. Besides, if the two cards turned over are different, a child's motivation to describe the pictures will probably be rather low as he/she won't be able to keep them but will have to put them back.
- 'Let's beat the hungry monster' is a variation of the well-known memory game. It is part of a collection of activities edited by the Luxembourgish Ministry of Education, Children and Youth that supports professionals in designing cross-curricular learning scenarios that foster language learning with regard to all the languages present in their group/class. This game increases children's motivation not only to verbally describe the pictures but to describe them as accurately as possible (→ active language learning). Pairs are formed only by listening to verbal descriptions and by memorizing the position of the cards in the game (→ multimodal approach). Children don't play against each other; they play together against a 'hungry' monster that tries to 'eat' their cards. In order to get to the cards, the monster has to cross a path of stones (constructed of beer mats).



This is an output of the project "Inspiring language learning in the early years - Why it matters and what it looks like for children age 3-12" (2016-2019) of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). The ECML is a Council of Europe institution promoting excellence in language education in its member states. [www.ecml.at/inspiringearlylearning](http://www.ecml.at/inspiringearlylearning).

## Description:

- All you need to play this game are a monster/monster-like toy, memory cards and beer mats.
- The cards are mixed up and laid out in rows, face down. A path of 'stones' made of beer mats leads from the monster to the cards.
- The first player takes a card and describes it without showing it to his fellow players. He replaces the card face down, takes a second card and describes it. If both cards match, the player keeps them; if they don't, the second card is also replaced. The fellow players, who have been listening carefully, try to remember the position of the two cards.
- If the two cards chosen by a player don't match, the monster takes a step forward. If it succeeds in crossing the path before all pairs have been identified, it eats the remaining cards and wins the game. If the players succeed in identifying all pairs of cards before the monster reaches the last stone, they win the game.



## Variation:

- The content of the cards may vary: from single objects (e.g. a plane, a house, an animal) evoking one word descriptions towards more elaborated scenarios (pictures taken out of books that describe scenes from a well-known story which lead children to form whole sentences). This activity may follow the telling of a story, in order to consolidate the relevant vocabulary or some major aspects of the story.

*Three cats are singing a song. They sing very loudly.*



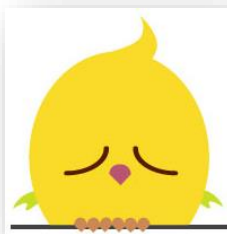
*The hedgehog and the black bird read a book.*



- A series of cards with similar designs spurs children to describe pictures in more detail in order to differentiate them from one another.



*A green bird with one small and one big*



*The yellow bird is sleeping.*



*A pink bird ...with 3 hairs on the top of his head.*

- Children design their own cards (→ meaningful and active language learning).
- Pairs of cards with written text and matching pictures are formed. The text is read aloud and the image is described.
- The game may be played in a multilingual mode, meaning that children look for pairs of semiotic friends (e.g. in German and French): Auto [aʊto]– Auto \o.to\; Tomate [to'ma:tə]– tomate \to.mat\ ).

## Observation:

- How do children describe the objects/scenes pictured on the cards? By using one or more single words (e.g. “car”; “green apple”); simple sentences (e.g. “There’s an apple”; “I see a car”); more elaborate sentences (e.g. “There’s an apple like the one Ana has today”; “The car is driving very fast”).
- Which children are primarily listening to what others say? Which children take an active part by describing the pictures?
- Do those children who don’t speak much, show signs of understanding e.g. by keeping eye contact with the speakers?
- Which languages do children use? The school language(s)? Other languages (e.g. their home language(s))? Do they switch languages? When? Why?

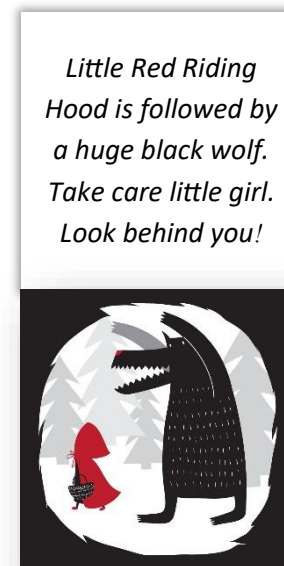


Image: Shutterstock