

Language-Boosting Games for Primary School Children

Here are **fun, low-prep games** that primary-school children can play at home to build language skills. They all work well for ages 5–11 and can be adapted for different abilities.

1. Describe and Draw

What you need: Paper, pencils

How to play:

One person describes a picture (real or imagined) while the other draws it *without seeing it*.

Skills: Listening, following instructions, descriptive vocabulary

Variations:

- Use simple shapes for younger children.
- Add time limits for older children.

2. The 5-Word Story Challenge

How to play:

Give your child five random words (e.g., *dog, space, muddy, picnic, giant*).

They must create a short story that includes them all.

Skills: Storytelling, creativity, sentence structure, vocabulary

Extension: Take turns adding sentences to build a shared story.

3. What's in the Bag?

What you need: A bag with everyday objects

How to play:

The child pulls out an object (without looking) and describes it using as many adjectives as possible before naming it.

Skills: Vocabulary, sensory language, categorisation

Variation: Use themed bags—*kitchen, toy box, mystery objects*.

4. Barrier Games

What you need: Blocks, toys, Lego, or pictures

How to play:

Each person has the same set of objects. One builds a structure or arranges items and explains how to recreate it—without the other seeing it.

Skills: Precise language, listening, clarifying

Perfect for: Siblings working together

5. Guess My Word

How to play:

Give clues about a word without saying the word itself.

Example: “I’m thinking of an animal that lives in the jungle, has stripes, and starts with *t*.”

Skills: Inference, topic vocabulary, verbal reasoning

Variation: Reverse the roles—children love making clues.

6. Word Scavenger Hunt

How to play:

Give your child a list such as:

- Find something *smooth*
- Find something that *makes a sound*
- Find something *beginning with S*

They bring the items and explain why they match the category.

Skills: Vocabulary, reasoning, description

7. Would You Rather...?

How to play:

Ask playful questions such as:

“Would you rather have wings or be invisible?”

Encourage children to explain their thinking.

Skills: Expressive language, justification, conversation skills

8. Build a Creature

What you need: Paper and crayons

How to play:

Create a creature by taking turns adding features (“It has 3 eyes...”, “It lives in the sea...”). Then name it and describe its powers.

Skills: Adjectives, imagination, oral storytelling

Extension: Write a character profile or short story about it.

9. Alphabet Categories

How to play:

Pick a category (animals, foods, places) and take turns naming one item for each letter of the alphabet.

Skills: Word retrieval, category knowledge

Easier version: Choose only 5 letters.

10. I Went to the Shop... (Memory Chain Game)

How to play:

Start with “I went to the shop and bought...”

Each player repeats the list and adds a new item.

Skills: Memory, vocabulary, sequencing

Variation: Change the theme—*the zoo, holiday packing, party planning*.