



**Language Hunt  
Game Set  
2014 Edition**

**includes game board, cards, and  
instructions for play**

**Ages  
10+**



# LANGUAGE HUNTERS

<http://languagehunters.org>

*Presents*



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Welcome to ***Language Hunt***, a fluency-first game of language acquisition for individuals and most of all...  
communities!

In this packet are everything you need to guide you through having fluent conversations in a language of your choice. **This guide assumes you are both the fluent speaker and the game leader.** If you don't speak your target language, you will of course need a fluent (hopefully native) speaker or a text resource that you can use to generate accurate conversation.

There are Five Rules that, when you play in accord with them, make the game tick. Everything else is somewhat flexible - though you'll hear game leaders say this or that is "against the rules". This means until you've mastered that part of play, don't change it.

**#1. KEEP IT ALIVE** - Keep the game moving, keep it fun, keep it comfortable, keep up with the game leader, don't let the conversation stop or stagnate.

**#2. HUNT FLUENCY** - You're playing to say as much as possible as soon as possible. Learn by doing.

**#3. START OBVIOUS** - Anytime play stagnates, start over, make the situation and props crystal-clear, remove all doubt and ambiguity.

**#4. STAY FOCUSED** - The definition of a **bite-sized piece** is the smallest, meaningful, lively thing to say, that moves you forward deeper into the language.

**#5. SETTING FIRST** - Make sure the situation on the table and the environment around you are driving the language in play according to the first four rules.

Now that we have that out of the way, here are 9 specific guidelines for leading and playing *Language Hunt* games.



1. This is a follow-the-leader game, not a “learning” or “memorization” or “remembering” game. You must **keep up** and let go of any attempts to memorize or recall anything.



2. The primary rule of the game is **Copy-Cat** - imitate the most fluent player or game leader. There is no time to take notes. Keep up. Keep talking. Keep gesturing. And **Game Leaders** - never let your players flounder “trying to remember”. Jump in and pull them through it **right before they need your help**. Trying to remember is against the rules!



3. Everything on your play table is “in play” - i.e, a possible subject of the conversation - make sure no extraneous objects are present (used napkins, to-go mugs, notebooks, pens, etc.)



4. It's handy to audio record your games so you can play them again later on your own - since note-taking is against the rules and won't help much anyway.



5. Immersion segments are timed, lasting between 15-25 minutes - your choice. Adjust to your players' endurance.



6. English (or other bridge language besides sign and gesture) during timed immersion segments is banned - against the rules.



7. **Play To Find Out.** The goal of the game is to discover and experience meaning through conversation - avoid any translation during play. However, between timed segments, in a pinch, you can refer to your own texts or notes away from the table, for yourself.



8. Within each timed immersion segment, there are two kinds of play. **Repetition Rounds**, where you first get a **bite-sized piece** of language to copy and use, and **Free Play Rounds**, where you take that piece of language and do something silly or creative with it. Like a pendulum swing, first take a bite-sized piece all the way around the table in the **Repetition Round**, then go all the way around the table with it in the **Free Play Round**. Tick-tock!



9. The goal of this game is to become a Language Hunter - someone who thrives in immersion scenarios and can pick up and share languages on the fly, no matter where they are. Cool!

Watch an introductory video here to get a sense for using the ***Language Hunt*** game board and cards:

[to be added]

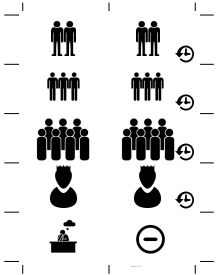
Enjoy all our language videos at <http://youtube.com/languagehunters>.



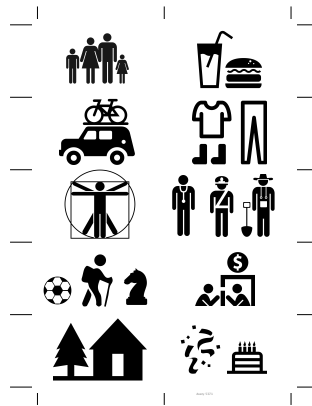
In this packet you'll find these materials:



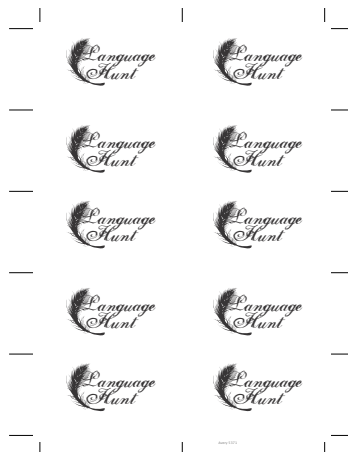
1. A color game board. Print it off on heavy card stock. In order, going counter-clockwise about the game board, the icons represent Question Conversations about What, Who/Whose, Where, How Many, Which, When, Why, and How. Use a playing piece to keep track of what square you are on.



2. One set of Novice Center Cards. Print them double-sided using the Avery 5371 business card stock. Each card limits play up to a certain number of “persons”, in the past or present tense. For example, three people indicate “I/You/He/She” play. With a clock in the corner, it makes it “past *and* present tense”. Stack Center Cards face-up in the center of the board, in order of planned play. There are a few extra cards in case your language is picky about formality (the King card), Negation (circle with a line) or other structures.



3. One set of **Intermediate Center Cards**. Print them double-sided on Avery 5371 business card stock. Each of these represents one of 10 topics that limit conversation: **Food & Drink, Hygiene & the Body, Home, Transportation, Clothing, Work, Play, Family & Friends, Holidays and Celebrations**. Novice play usually defaults to a **Food & Drink** conversation about having Tea. Once you've gone through all the Novice cards, fully around the board in **Repetition** and **Free Play**, switch the deck to the **Intermediate Center Cards**. Just like with Novice play, draw a new **Center Card** every time you make it around the board.



4. One set of one-sided **Free Play Cards** (with Language Hunt logo on back) - these are purposely left blank on one side for you to fill out with a black sharpie. Set the deck to the side of the board, face-down, and draw one from it for every **Free Play Round**.

Here is a list of good **Free Play Moves** to get you started (see play videos above for more info on what these are) - you decide which moves will be most fun to start out with. Write the first ten that catch your eye on the blank side of your **Free Play Cards**.

Close your right eye	Close your left eye	Touch your nose	No hands or sign
Close both eyes	Face Away From Table	Sing it in song	Whisper it
Shout it	Distracted by Dinosaur	Everyone switch chairs	Speed round
Sign only	Say it in gibberish	Silent and no hands	Say it standing
Distracted by fly	Slow motion	Pat head, rub belly	Say it suspiciously
Negate it	Lie	Steal something	Be Formal

## LET'S GET STARTED

There are Three Roles:

1. Game Leader - you know the rules and are the traffic cop for play.
2. Language Guide - you are fluent in the target language.
3. Player - you may not necessarily know the rules, or the language, but you are excited to get talking.

Assign the roles in the most common sense way. As Game Leader, the easiest way to lead a game is with a language you already know, sharing it with the other players. This in effect makes you both the Language Guide, and the Game Leader. That's cool.



## ORGANIZE YOUR PLAY SPACE

As Game Leader, pick a table with chairs for each of your player. Set the game board in the corner of the table next to you so it doesn't interfere with play. Select a play piece to keep track of your position on the board.

To start with, Give each player a simple prop - an empty cup, for example.



## ORGANIZE THE CARDS

Place your deck of **Novice Center Cards** in the middle of the board, face up in the order you want to play, starting with the top. Unless you specifically want it different, start with the order "I-You" Present, "I-You-S/he" Present, "Us/You All/They" Present, then repeat that order with the past cards (they have the clock in the corner), then have the last card on the bottom, and "I-You" Present on the top, all face-up.

Set **Free Play Cards** to the side of the board, face down.



## “WHAT?”

Place your playing piece on the “What?” cup icon.

Starting with “What?”, your job is to use the question “What?” to select a **bite-sized piece** of language that contains both a question and its answer. Again, a **bite-sized piece** is the *smallest, meaningful, lively* piece of language that keeps play moving *forward*. **Bite-sized pieces** are always full sentences.

Yes - **you** choose the piece of language you want for each square, and it can change from game to game, leader to leader, as you learn more about what works, what doesn't, and what your players want. There is no one right **bite-sized piece**. Half the fun is changing your mind from game to game.

A good starting piece for this square is, “What is that?” - “That is a cup.” Easy!

**Start the immersion segment timer** - 15 minutes is good for your first round. For the next 15 minutes only the target language and gestures are allowed!

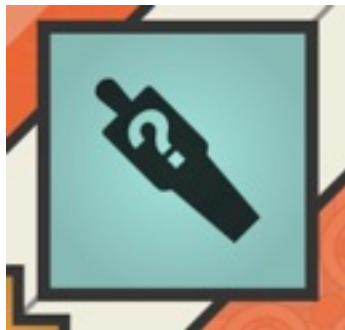
Between immersion segments take 5-10 minute breaks. This is a good time to answer any questions or explain confusing rules in English.

# The Core of Play

## Repetition Rounds and Free Play Rounds

The Game Leader starts off play.

1. **Sign your players to copy-cat (imitate) exactly along with you** as you speak the first question (“What is that?”) and answer (“That is a cup.”).
2. **Each player then gets a chance ask the question**, while the rest of the players answer. Go all the way around the table.
3. **When it’s back to you, the Game Leader, draw a Free Play Card**, place it face up next to the deck.
4. **Ask/answer the same question but with the new twist** dictated by the card, each player getting a turn.
5. **Once it’s your turn to lead again**, move your playing piece to the next square.



**“WHO/WHOSE?”**

Again, pick a **bite-sized piece** of language that fits this square’s question. A good one to start with is “Is that my cup?” - “Yes, that is your cup,” but you can choose any you’d like that fits.

Though that doesn’t have the “Who/Whose?” question words in the sentence, it fits the context so it’s all cool.

Move your play piece once you’ve done both **Repetition** and **Free Play Rounds**.



## “WHERE?”

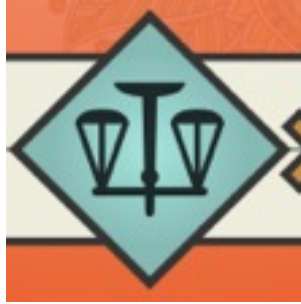
A good “Where?” **bite-sized piece** is “Where is your cup?” - “My cup is here.” - “Oh, yes, your cup is there.”

Pretty simple.



## “HOW MANY?”

A good “How Many?” **bite-sized piece** is “How many cups are there?” - “There are...one...two...three...four....four cups.”

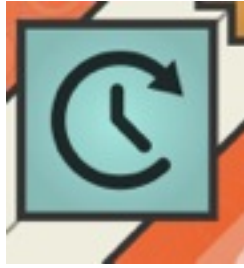


## “WHICH?”

A good “Which?” **bite-sized piece** is “Which cup is my cup?” - “That is your cup, this is my cup.”

This requires changing the **SETTING** however - before asking the question, adjust the cups so that yours and the next player’s are sitting right next to each other. This helps making sure you’re following **START OBVIOUS**.





## “WHEN?”

This can be a toughie. A good starter **bite-sized piece** for “When?” is “When do you drink your tea, do you drink it in the mornings, or in the evenings?” - “I drink my tea in the mornings.”

However, if we haven’t filled our cups with tea already, and the whole time been asking “What is that?” - “That is a cup of tea”, “Is that your cup of tea?” - “Yes, that is my cup of tea,” and so on, this question will definitely break **START OBVIOUS**. We don’t yet know tea, drinking, mornings, or evenings, or even I or You. That’s not a **bite-sized piece**!

For this reason you may want to start over at the first square, fill everyone’s cups with tea, and try again. Then you can at least capture the word “tea”. That’s still leaves a lot, and if you can reduce it somehow, try, but too much less and the **bite-sized piece** is no longer *meaningful*.

You could also try “What time is it?” - “It’s 1 o’clock” - but then you’d need another prop - a clock. And what does that have to do with your cup props?

This is central to the game - this is part of learning how to **STAY FOCUSED** - i.e., experimenting with a steady progression of **bite-sized pieces** that allow you to seamlessly stack more and more complex concepts as you go deeper

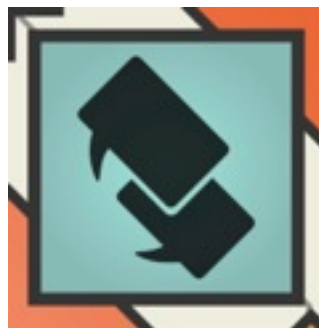
into the language. How small can you make each bite-sized piece and still keep it meaningful, lively, and moving you forward?



**“WHY?”**

A good starter piece for this is, “Why do you drink tea?” - “I drink tea because I like it.”

If someone doesn't drink tea, it will probably come up in the **Free Play Round** - you'll need to pull them through the negation. “Why do you drink tea?” - “I don't drink tea!” - “Why don't you drink tea?” - “Because I don't like tea!”



**“HOW?”**

A good starter piece for “How?” is just the courtesy of asking “How are you?” - “I am fine.”

Once you've finished that in both Repetition and Free Play, you're done with a whole turn around the board.

## **Congratulations!**

Take the top **Novice Center Card**, put it on the bottom, and start over at "What?" with "I-You-S/He".

Once you've moved through all the **Novice Center Cards**, you'll switch them out for the **Intermediate Center Cards**.

Remember, **SETTING FIRST** - switch out your cups for basic, simple props that fit the topic on the cards.

You'll treat the **Intermediate Center Cards** the same as the Novice, running **Repetition** and **Free Play Rounds** for each question square and **bite-sized piece** as you travel around the board. Once you finish with "How?", it's time to switch to another topic card and start with "What?"

When you've gone through the whole **Intermediate Center Card** deck once, do it again, starting with making the first **Food and Drink** conversation richer with everything that you've learned in the other topics.

Keep going through all the **Intermediate** topics in rotation, building up richer and richer conversations each time you repeat a card.

On the following page is a list of good simple props and possible conversations you can use for each topic card.

**CLOTHING** - Hat and gloves that belong to each player. Put them on, take them off, etc.

**FAMILY AND FRIENDS** - Pictures of each player's family, and/or a phone for "calling them". Who is each person? Do you like them? How many people in your family?

**HOME** - A dollhouse with furniture.

**TRANSPORTATION** - A toy car, bicycle, and dolls all in the right scale. Where are you going? Who is driving?

**FOOD AND DRINK** - You started with a cup of tea. Add some cookies, milk, sugar, make a complete tea-set.

**HYGIENE AND THE BODY** - You have the best props on you - I'd start with your left and right hands. Which hand hurts? Are you left or right handed?

**WORK** - Use your own jobs, or bring costumes - white lab coat for a doctor, farmer's overalls, shopkeeper. What is your job? Who do you work for? Where is it? When do you work?

**PLAY** - Pick your favorite simple board game (checkers) or sport (tag?) and learn to play them.

**BUYING AND SELLING** - Get out the play - or real! - money and use what you've had in the other conversations.

**HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS** - Drop a calendar on the table, and a gift-wrapped box, and talk about your birthdays.

## **ADVANCED PLAY**

You know you're ready for **Advanced Center Cards** when you've played through the **Intermediate** deck enough that players are naturally stacking three or more sentences consistently in their questions and answers. Email me, [willem@languagehunters.org](mailto:willem@languagehunters.org), and I'll help you level up to **Advanced**.



## **USING SIGN AND GESTURE**

**If you watch our videos, or play the game in-person,** you'll see that we pair spoken language with sign, as needed, to clarify what we're saying and to use as a cue and a mnemonic.

**Sign language also gives us another tool,** besides English, to use to communicate our intent when things get tough. This keeps us in immersion.

**You can use any sign** - we often use a mix of American Sign Language and invented "contract sign" - but there is no one right sign. The best sign is one that you know and can use - the worst sign is one that is "right" or one that you have to jump through a bunch of hoops to learn.

**Sign and gesture is there to serve the spoken language** - if you find yourself really trying to perfect the sign you use in play (assuming you're not actually hunting a signed language), you've fallen off the path of language hunting.

We're here to have conversations in our target language.  
Always remember that.



## 7 Things to Remember About Gestures

1. **Spend as little time** as possible inventing sign for your games.
2. **Use the fewest signs** necessary for play. Start with using 1 sign for every major word in a sentence. For example: “What [shrug] is that [point] on the table [smack one palm on the back of your other hand]?”
3. **Add signs** whenever players consistently forget a word or part of a sentence, and you have no sign to cue them with. This is what the signs are for!
4. **View the selection of American Sign Language apps** for iPhone, iPad, or Android
5. **Check out online video dictionaries** for signed languages, such as <http://aslpro.com>.
6. **Notice the gestures that you already use**; watch what your hands do when you have everyday conversations; watch other people's hands; you can all of these to invent sign for your games.
7. **Borrow signs from other language hunters.**

Thanks to the following for the Icons:

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