

# A Fun Game for EFL Learners

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## Abstract

This paper aims to introduce a technique in teaching English Grammar through a game. The researchers implemented define, design, and develop, adapted from 4-D model. From the need analysis, it was found that students in junior high school faced difficulties in learning Simple Present Tense through a lecture model. Interactive activities through games in the classroom can be alternative for teachers to integrate subject materials while playing. Thus, the researchers designed a medium for playing game and learning Simple Present Tense at the same time. The design process started from collecting information from students' characteristics and English grammar teaching style in junior high school, focus group discussion, and interview with a Teaching Media lecturer to decide indicators and the appropriate activities for the game design. Finally, step three walks game prototype was set, and it was selected as the name in accordance to the basic rule when playing it, namely each group has to pass three posts to finish. Competition value and point reward contributed to make this game more challenging during the practice. In a nutshell, this game offers an easy and fun way for the target learners learn and develop the concept of Simple Present Tense as the very basic concept in learning English.

**Keywords :** *language games; interactive; step; English learning; posts*

## 1. Introduction

To master English language skills, learners are required to comprehend language components appropriately. One of the significant components to help learners construct proper writings or utterances is Grammar. English teachers seem to find it hard explaining how to make learners understand how to differentiate Tenses. Different country has different rule of language, including between English and Indonesian due to its different culture, meaning, and structure [1]. Accordingly, many English learners failed to write effectively because they have little understanding of grammar in addition to low vocabulary mastery [2],[3]. In the real practice, the techniques applied by the teachers for introducing Tenses seem to be unattractive since the mindset to most teachers is to make students remember the rules. It is admitted that Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is still used until this era although it has been modified with more interesting and communicative way. Thus, the learning activities tend to be less interactive, especially for the beginners.

The common rule introduced for the first time to English learners in Indonesia is Simple Present Tense. This tense is quite general for daily use due to its function for explaining habits or routine, general truths, facts, fixed arrangements, and instruction or direction [4]. The pattern is quite simple, and we use base form of the verb after the subject. Although it looks easy, it does not mean that all English teachers are able to explain it well. Based on some investigation to junior high school students, it is found that the learning situation when they have English subject was boring because they were asked to read the book and did the practice with plenty number of questions. For the low proficient learners, this is considered not effective as they were able to cheat their friends if there was no control from the teacher. Consequently, the concept of structure cannot

be grasped optimally, and it makes them hard to follow the explanation of the next different tenses. Accordingly, the teacher is supposed to be more aware to read the need of students during the classroom activities. Creating joyful and interactive learning is highly expected for today's curriculum. It encourages students' active learning and stimulates their motivation to learn deeply about the concept. Games can overcome the teachers' confusion and students' frustration because it can be an alternative for language instruction.

Several studies have promoted the effectiveness Grammar games for English class. [5] discuss the benefits of instructionist game models for learning grammar, particularly to produce good writing. [6] promote board games to avoid boring situation in Grammar class through their experiment. Another interesting game was also researched, called Time Trap Board game which find that the game enhanced the learner's confidence as well as structure accuracy [7]. Furthermore, after word by word game applied by the teacher, the students gave their positive attitude toward grammar class [8]. The studies agree that learning grammar is required to be fun for students. The games can be online or offline depending on the situation and supporting facilities of the schools. Considering the need of presenting more entertaining and challenging way to teach Grammar and limited references discussing about classroom games for learning Simple Present Tense, the researchers are interested to promote a prototype of game called Step Three Walks.

## **2. Method**

This study adapted 4-d model from [9]. The researchers explain how the prototype of game was made by applying define, design, and develop. It began from a need analysis of junior high school students when they learn grammar, specifically with the topic of simple present tense. When the game was designed, focus group discussion was carried out intensively for about two weeks. The activities were conducted in even semester, academic year 2017/2018. Determining learning indicators as well as the way how to construct and implement the game inside the classroom were the dominant activities during the meetings. To get supporting data for the constructed game prototype, the researchers had consulted the design to a teaching media lecturer through unstructured interview. Finally, the result formulated two learning indicators and appropriate action to be achieved in the form of giving response from the teacher's clues and forming sentences based on the picture. For the implementation of the activities, 12 pictures were selected based on the relevance.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### **3.1 Basic Concept (Maze Game into Step Three Walks Game)**

This game actually has been inspired by game on the website of <http://www.toolsforeducators.com/>, called maze game. Then the researchers modified that game in accordance to the need analysis. This game was able to be used for a whole students in the class on a large number. To play this game, the students should work in a group consisting of three students. This game was specifically designed for English subject in Indonesian recent curriculum, Curriculum 2013, specifically for Basic Competence 3.6 for eighth grade students.

One of the indicators of this basic competence is to identify actions or events that are carried out daily or general truths in the context of their use. Furthermore, the second indicator is to arrange oral or written text regarding actions or events that are carried out daily or general truths in the context of their use. With the goal of achieving of this basic competence, on the first indicator,

the students are given instructions on daily events or general truth, so they can identify actions or events that are carried out daily or general truths in the context of their use. Meanwhile, on the second indicator, the students are given pictures of daily activities or general truth in order to write oral or written texts about actions or events that are carried out in daily life general truths in the context of their use.

From the elaboration of basic competencies, indicators and goals to be achieved in this learning, this game is considered suitable, and it is expected to improve cognitive and psychomotor skills of the students in learning English in eighth grade basic competence number 3.6 concerning Simple Present tense that leads to daily activities and general truth. Besides, another function of this game is to facilitate students in contextual learning because this game used concrete things, and it is commonly found in everyday life.

### 3. 2 How to play Step Three Walks

Step three walks game is played by a group that each group consists of three students. In each of the group, students have to choose one of them to be a captain or a leader. Each group is allowed to go to a picture post after getting instructions from their teacher (post 1), that is giving a clue to be discussed with a group (see Table 1). After arriving in picture post (post 2), the students have to finish a mission. The mission asks the students to make a simple sentence with appropriate verb, and write a simple sentence to answer a question *where and when* the students do the activity based on the picture that has been chosen in the picture post. During the period of finishing the missions, students are not allowed to discuss with another group. If it happens, the group will get disqualified. For a group who can finish a mission correctly in a short time, they are allowed to go to the final post (post 3). A lucky point in final post can be taken in accordance with the provisions. In this game, there are three types of lucky point with different category. Category *very good* is about 70-90, and it is given to the first four groups who had finished a mission in a short time. Category *good* is about 40-60, it is given to the second four groups who had finished a mission quickly. While, sector *not bad* is about 10-30, it is given to the third four groups who had finished a mission in a short time. Each group gets a chance to take only one lucky point randomly.

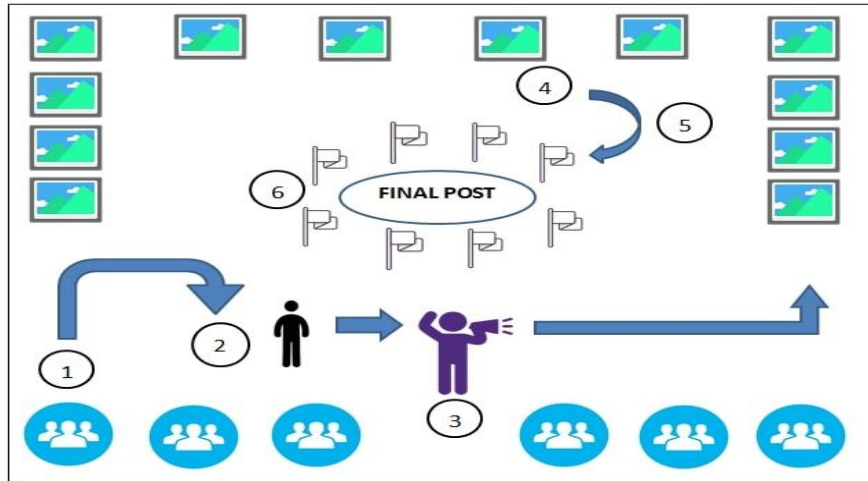
**Table 1.**  
 Clues for Picture Post

Picture Post	Clues
Picture 1	You are fresh and relax after doing this activity in the night, what activity am I?
Picture 2	I can make your body clean and fragrant, what activity am I?
Picture 3	When I am hungry I need this activity, what activity am I?
Picture 4	I can make you more beautiful and confident, what activity am I?
Picture 5	I do this activity every day except on Sunday, what activity am I?
Picture 6	I always do this activity on Monday and never forget to sing Indonesia Raya song, what activity am I?
Picture 7	I make your plate, spoon, bowl, etc. cleaner, what activity am I?
Picture 8	My house is always clean after I do this activity, what activity am I?

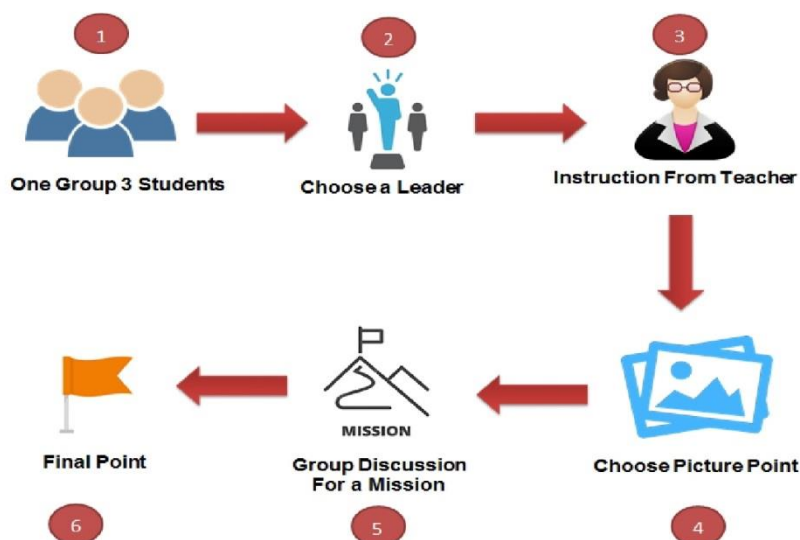
- Picture 9 I always do activity to repeat the lesson at school or just do homework, what activity am I?
  - Picture 10 When I'm so stressful on the day I always give time to relax by doing this activity, what activity am I?
  - Picture 11 When I'm sleepy, but my homework have not been done, I will do this activity to make me more motivated, what activity am I?
  - Picture 12 I'm the last activity when you are tired after do all of activities in the day, what activity am I?
- 

### 3.3 Activities for Achieving the Learning Indicators

Step three walks game is designed to make the students easier to study English, especially studying about simple present tense. The game is also suitable with indicators 3.6.1 as cognitive development and 4.6.1 as psychomotor development. In the game, it is shown when the teacher gives a clue to choose a picture suitable with a clue given by the teacher. Then it is also shown through a mission that must be finished by the students. The mission is done by making a simple sentence (positive, negative, and interrogative) in appropriate verb for simple present tense. The second one is the students write a simple sentence to answer the questions about the time and the place where the students do the activity based on the picture that has been chosen in picture post. By showing a picture and finishing a mission, students are expected to be able to identify habitual actions, general truth and daily activities around the students' range.



**Figure 1.**  
Classroom Setting



**Figure 2.**  
Flowchart of Step Three Walks Game

This game provides three aspects in language learning. Firstly, it builds learning community through collaborative work [10]. Working with a group makes students more open toward friends' opinion. Sharing ideas give an opportunity to train their critical thinking from their agreement and disagreement before they select the most appropriate answer. Sometimes it gives positive as well as negative effect. If the group has high spirit to do the game, of course, the result will be optimal. In contrast, if the group cannot work together, probably the member will not play the game seriously. Second, competitive atmosphere in the game is believed to boost the motivation in which each team will try hard to do the best for the group. In this case, the role of students will be more interactive, and the teacher needs to give control to their performance. Therefore, by providing lucky point which will affect the students score, it is expected that no student feels unmotivated or depends on their leader. Being sportive is also built through this game. Although at the final point they cannot get the highest score, they are still able to learn the concept that what they have done is correct or not from the teacher's feedback. Third, creating activities in the form of classroom games provide fearless environment for the language learners [11]. Joyful activities tend to bring happiness in learning, and if other grammar structures are introduced in interesting way, the mindset of low proficient students towards English will potentially be changed into positive response [12].

#### 4. Conclusion

In brief, classroom game for Grammar is still important for EFL learner due to its eminent features that can accommodate students' need, mainly building grammatical awareness and accuracy. Teachers can modify the games based on the learning indicators and the possibility to be implemented in the classroom. One important thing is that students centered learning can be easier to be conducted through games. The researchers believe that what is expressed in this paper will be more meaningful with empirical data support. Therefore, for further researchers, it is recommended that the presented prototype in this article can provide new insight to be developed and implemented for different research method and participants.

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