10.2 What's my answer?

Language focus
Yes/no questions with present simple

Level
Beginner or elementary

Type
Betting game

Topic
Open

Interaction
Groups of two to six

Time
15–20 minutes

Material
Set of cards (one per group)

Vocabulary

Verb *be* and other vocabulary items generated by students.

Comments

This game is excellent for learners to understand and master yes/no questions with *be* and other verbs, plus short answers with auxiliaries, with particular attention on the *be* and *do* contrast. This means they may ask and answer yes/no questions in the present simple, present continuous and/or future with *going to*. It is also a lot of fun to play, because it involves betting and tests how well acquainted learners are with one another.

Language output

A: Are you an English teacher?
B: No, I'm not.
A: Do you go to the movies every week?
B: Yes, I do.

Procedures

1. Before class, cut out one set of cards for every group.
2. Recap yes/no questions by writing a few short answers with *be* and *do* on the board, and eliciting correct and appropriate questions for them.
3. Demonstrate the game by taking a card (e.g. *Yes, we do*) and asking the class a question that will yield the answer on your card (e.g. *Do we have class on (day of the week when you actually have class)?*). When they have given you the answer, show them the card and tell them you can discard it. Then, pick another card (e.g. *Yes, we are*) and ask the class a question that will **not** yield the desired answer (e.g. *Are you English teachers?*). As they answer *No, we aren't*, show them the card and tell them you cannot discard it.
4. Divide the class into groups and hand out the material.
5. Playing the game:
   - Players shuffle and deal out the cards evenly, disregarding any cards left over.
   - The first player picks one of his or her cards, and thinks of a question that will yield the answer on that card. He or she then tries to guess who in the group will give him or her the answer on the card, and directs the question to that person.
   - If the respondent produces a short answer that equals the one on the card, the player may discard it; if not, he or she keeps the card.
   - Players take turns proceeding in this way. The first player to get rid of all of his or her cards wins the game.

Variation

You may use this game to practise other contrasts, such as simple past v. present perfect simple. All you have to do is produce a new set of cards containing the appropriate short answers with *did*, *have* and *has*.

Note on class size

The ideal group size for playing this game is four. If your class is very small, you may have students play it in pairs, but it will not be as much fun. For a very large class, use groups of six and have them play it twice.

Yes, I am.	Yes, he is.	Yes, she is.
Yes, it is.	Yes, we are.	Yes, they are.
Yes, I do.	Yes, he does.	Yes, she does.
Yes, it does.	Yes, they do.	No, I'm not.
No, he isn't.	No, she isn't.	No, we aren't.
No, they aren't.	No, I don't.	No, he doesn't.
No, she doesn't.	No, it doesn't.	No, they don't.

Activity 1

Tom Cruise	**Marilyn Manson**
Ricky Martin	**David Beckham**
Michael Jackson	**Brad Pitt**
Juan Carlos I	**Queen Elizabeth II**
Saddam Huessein	**William Shakespeare**
Elvis Presley	**John Paul II**
Tupac Shakur	**John Lennon**
Kurt Cobain	**Salvador Dali**