

Sport is a universal language, understood from Milan to Manila, Montreal to Montevideo. It engages and brings our world together in a way few, if any other activity can manage.

H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan Sport Accord International Convention Dubai, 29 April 2010



## International Language Week: 17-23 August 2014

Sport is an excellent topic for the language classroom. It is a universal topic that appeals to many students and can make learning about a language or culture more interesting. In celebrating International Language Week 2014 (17-23 August 2014), the National Language Advisors from China, France, Germany, Japan and Spain have selected an unusual or popular sport from each of their countries to introduce a possible resource for the classroom. They have provided a basic introduction to the sport as well as a vocabulary list and a fun game to do in class. The ILEP team hopes that your students will enjoy learning about these popular sports while extending their vocabulary.

### CHINESE

#### Pīngpāng qiú - 乒乓球

pīngpāng qiú 乒乓球 – table tennis

qiú 球 – ball yíng 赢 – win

qiúpāi 球拍 – paddle

zhuōzi 桌子 – table dǎ 打 – hit

fēn 分 – score diǎn 点 – point

Table tennis, which originated in the UK, is a popular ball sport around the world, particularly in China. Table tennis is known as ping-pong in mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao, which comes from the 'ping pang' sound made by the celluloid or plastic ball while playing the sport.

Table tennis is China's national sport, and China occupies a high position in the table tennis rankings. Since the 1960s, Chinese table tennis players have won most championships of the game. Table tennis has a strong mass base in China, and is a very popular children's sport. Not only is it an excellent form of exercise, but it also helps to regulate mood, improve thinking ability, and promote intellectual development. It is equally suitable for children, adolescents, youth and elderly people who like sports.

Table tennis is played on a hard table which is divided by a net. Two players stand at opposite sides of the table and block, draw, cut, twist, pull the paddle to hit the ball back and forth to win points. It is a very fast game that demands quick responses from the players.

**Game:** You don't need paddles or balls to play vocabulary ping pong. Pair the students up and get them practising their vocabulary by playing verbal ping pong. Student 1 says a word and student 2 has to respond with a word that begins with the last letter of student 1's word and vice versa. Other variations can include using opposites, numbers or word association.

### FRENCH

#### Escargot

un - 1	deux - 2	trois - 3
quatre - 4	cinq - 5	six - 6
sept - 7	huit - 8	neuf - 9
	dix - 10	

Could it be possible there is a better version of hopscotch out there? And that France would have it? It is true! France's version of hopscotch is called Escargot or snail and this is a great one to try with your kids. It isn't difficult and it's loads of fun!

Escargot is one of the traditional European children's games from which hopscotch draws inspiration. Instead of linear diagram, French children draw the board in the shape of a giant snail, or 'escargot' in French, with 15 to 20 numbered squares leading towards the blank centre square. Throughout the game, players must hop on one foot to and from the centre square without landing on any drawn lines or opponents square or they lose a turn. They cannot claim a square. If they complete the circular journey, however, they get to choose a square to initial as their own exclusive place of rest instead of throwing pucks or markers. As the game progresses and players claim more territories, the journey to and from the centre square becomes more challenging and ends when it is impossible for players to hop to the centre square, with the winner claiming the most spaces

**Game:** Instead of filling the snail with numbers, fill it with target vocabulary or verbs to conjugate. Student 1 starts in the centre and says the vocabulary words in French, stopping when he can no longer give or say a correct answer.

### GERMAN

#### Entenrennen

Ente - duck	Rennen – race
Fluss – river	anfeuern – cheer
gewinnen – win	Preis – prize

'Germany and sports' – who would not first think of Fußball (football) and motor races (especially Formula 1), both sports at which German teams or German sportsmen excel and which draw millions of spectators. But while these rather traditional sports are nowadays criticised for their commercialism, a new idea has recently gained ground which is just the opposite: a rather slow race, done with fund-raising intentions and still drawing an ever-increasing number of fans: Entenrennen. 'Ente' is the German word for 'duck', but we are not taking here about real ducks but the cute bathtub version made of rubber and mostly bright yellow in colour, which is an all-time favourite of children and adults alike, at least in Germany

For the Entenrennen you would not bring your own duck but pay for a ticket on the spot, get allocated a number, which is also written on the back of 'your' adopted duck – and off it goes: while hundreds or thousands of ducks are released into the river, all you can do is watch how they get carried along by the stream. Spectators anxiously cheer them from parks along the river or from one of those romantic bridges you find in many German towns. What a lovely setting for an event like this! And although only the ducks coming in first or as runner-ups win their





## Celebrate with Sports from Around the World

patrons a prize, this seems not to be the main incentive for people to buy a ticket. "It is a great fund-raiser and fun to look at", most of them say.

By now the idea has spread throughout the country and become a real fad, well supported by the community. The season starts in spring and ends in autumn and in 2014 more than 150 Entenrennen are scheduled for towns all over Germany.

**Game:** Why not hold your own rubber duck race at school? Before the race get your students to create their own duck and then take turns introducing their ducks to the class. After all the presentations are done, the students could vote on the best duck or the duck most likely to win the race. Then let the students race their ducks.

### JAPANESE

#### Ekiden - 駅伝

ekiden - long-distance relay race  
 watasu 渡す - pass tasuki たすき - sash  
 chiimu チーム - team doro 道路 - road  
 hashiru 走る - run katsu 勝つ - win  
 ganbatte がんばって - cheer up

Ekiden is a long-distance running race, typically on roads. In Japan, they have many Ekiden races all over the country from junior high level to corporate level. The race is considered to display many aspects of Japanese culture and spirit, including individual perseverance or identity within a group. Long distance races are not unique to any country, but the term 'Ekiden - character for 'station' (駅:eki) and 'transmit' (伝:den) are combined - was originated in Japan. The concept of the race is said to be based on 東海道五十三次 (fifty-three Stages of the Tokaido) which was an old Japanese transportation system with stations posted at intervals along the road.

In the race, each runner on a team runs the distance from one station to the next, and then hands off a cloth sash to the next runner. The lengths of Ekiden can vary greatly depending on the race. One of the most popular ones is the Hakone Ekiden, which features teams of ten male students from various universities of the Tokyo region. They start at central Tokyo along Tokyo Bay, pass Yokohama to Hakone and run

back over two days at the New Year (January 2nd and 3rd) covering 219 kilometres. It is a popular spectator sport that draws large crowds, more than a million along the whole route. It also receives full network television coverage nationwide.

**Game:** Hold a language relay race with your class. Prepare sentence or question packs that review target language covered in class for each team. Divide your students into teams and get them to stand or sit in rows. Each team nominates one person to ask the questions and then let the race begin. Each student must answer correctly before they can pass the pack on to the next person in their team. The first team to reach the finish line wins.

### SPANISH

#### Hockey Sobre Patines

patinador - skater bola - ball  
 portero - goalkeeper gol - goal  
 patines - roller skates  
 stick - stick guantes - gloves  
 porteria - goal post  
 árbitro - referee marcador - score

Hockey sobre patines, roller hockey, is a team sport very popular in Spain and in a number of Latin American countries (especially Argentina and Chile), besides other countries (Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, France etc.).

Each team is made up of five players: four skaters and one goalkeeper. The skaters try to drive the ball with their sticks into the opponents' goal. The ball can only be put in motion by a stick. The game has two 25-minute halves. Roller hockey is a very fast sport.

The most important clubs are found in Spain and Portugal. The best national teams are Italy Argentina, Portugal and Spain. Spain holds the record for the country with most world titles in History.

**Game:** Set up a virtual hockey tournament in the classroom with the board as the goal. Have language related prompts ready and divide the class into two teams. Students on each team have a chance to answer your prompt. If they think they know the answer they can go for goals or they can pass to another student if they do not know. Award different points for goals made first time and goals made after passing.



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