

Bingo Games

How to Get Started

Bingo should generally be played by teams, for reasons psychological, educational and logistical. Two to a card is ideal. For uneven groups, put three younger or slower ones together, or let a bright brimmer of confidence play alone. Teacher chooses teams unless there's no danger of the unwanted classmate problem. Before passing out the cards, take one, hold it up and go over the colors, words or whatever once or twice quickly. (Don't make a big project out of it; they'll learn while playing.) Do this the first 2 or 3 times you play a new bingo game.

Children should sit in a circle, of which the teacher will be a part, on the floor or at a table. Pass out cards and chips. Teacher does not need a card but should be watching kids' cards and surreptitiously calling from them. Children should ask for, not grab, the chips they want by saying, e.g., "Red chips, please." (One group of chips to a team.)

How to Proceed

1. The game should be kept moving, winners abundantly praised and a sense of excitement conveyed by the teacher. (Be dramatic, ham it up.)
2. On each turn, watch to see that everyone has found the right square before proceeding. Kids looking at where other teams have placed their chips is OK and should not be discouraged. The slow ones will gradually shape up. If still a team can't manage it, the teacher may unobtrusively point to the proper square for them. Or, the teacher might remove from the board (but not keep) chips from incorrectly placed positions and let them then find the right square by themselves.
3. While waiting for all teams to place their chips on the board. Be sure to give extra input. This will help prepare the students for the next step when they must give the output.
4. Kids must keep relatively quiet during game. When 'Bingo' is called, all must look at card of team with bingo, listen to that team's words and not look at their own cards.
5. Chips are kept on all cards until the teacher says, "That's a good bingo!" at which time hand clapping and cheering is in order.

6. As kids say back colors, words, etc., in their bingo line, they replace each chip on its square after saying each one. If they miss one, only that chip is taken by teacher. All other chips staying in place, they still have a chance for another bingo as game continues.
7. When 2 or 3 teams get bingos at the same time, priority is given according to the order of “Bingo!” yells. Each is acknowledged and given a number, e.g., No. 1, No. 2, No. 3. If team which called out first fails, then No. 2 team can try, and No. 3 if the second in turn fails. But if one team succeeds in getting a ‘good bingo’, others who called later are not further acknowledged except perhaps with a word of sympathy. — Chips are dumped, cards exchanged, and start again. Only one good bingo per time; more would dilute the satisfaction of winning.
8. After each bingo, cards are not ‘exchanged’ actually, rather they are passed and always in the same direction, (e.g., to the right). Getting the same card again, a result of haphazard exchanging, has proven to be unacceptable to those who take the game seriously.

Color Bingo

This is the one to start with regardless of the age of the children. Kindergarten kids as young as 4 can learn it with no trouble — all right, with a *little* trouble, what with lights and darks and all, but for five-year-olds it’s a breeze. Also it has proven easier to master than ‘Number Bingo,’ which we would advise you to teach second (after reaching step 3 or 4 with Color Bingo). Further, Color Bingo, being simple and unambiguous, is a good one for them to gain confidence and learn the rules with. We recommend that you stay with this one not simply till they get the colors down but until they are very squared away on the rules which apply to all the bingo games and are following them flawlessly. When first playing the game, concentrate on the easy colors and gradually expand as their skill improves.



Steps:

1. Simple bingo — 4 in a row makes it — Congratulations!
2. Must say the colors back — first 3, then all 4 before it’s a ‘good bingo.’
3. Teacher asks, “What color is this?” Reply, “It’s red.”
4. Kids say in unison, “This is red.” etc. (Pronunciation requirement gradually

becomes strict.)

5. “This is red,” plus, teacher: “Which color do you like?” (from bingo line)
Reply, “I like red.” Mate says either, “I like yellow.” or “I like red, too.”
6. “This is red,” plus, teacher: “What’s your favorite color?” Reply (from any square), “My favorite color is mauve.”
7. Same as No. 6 except that teammates ask and answer each other — in true conversational style.
8. Teacher: “Do you have something red?” Reply: “Yes, I have a red sweater.” or “No, I don’t.” (Answers should be true.)
9. Teacher: “Name something red.” Reply: “An apple is red.” — “Her socks are red”, etc.

You must be the judge of the right time to proceed from one step to the next with each class. As a rough guideline we would suggest that step No. 5 be stood on by the end of the kindergarten year (age 6).

Steps No. 6 through No. 8 are about enough for 1st grade and step No. 9 seems to us 2nd grade level. If you start with 1st, 2nd grade or older children we still think you should take them through all the steps, only faster.

Number Bingo

1. Team with ‘bingo’ reads back all 4 numbers.
2. Team members take turn reading them back (i.e. 2 numbers each). (No help from partner.)
3. Teacher: “What number is that (this)?” Reply: “It’s 10.”
4. Pupils: “This is 10.” (First together, later in turn.)
5. Teacher: “Add 2 numbers.” Reply: “6 and 4 is (are) 10.”
6. Teacher: “Subtract one number from another.” Reply: “8 minus 5 is 3.” or “5 from 8 is 3.”
7. Teacher: “Multiply two numbers.” Reply: “2 times 11 is 22.”



That’s about as far into mathematics we want to go — and not much below where we’re able to.

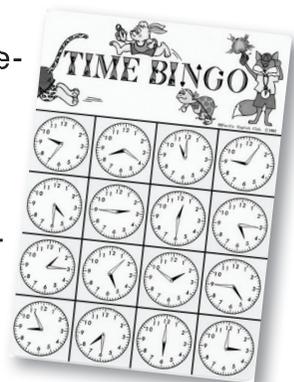
At any step an error in pronunciation is fatal to the cause of winning. Step No. 4, especially, is essentially a pronunciation exercise, containing as it does the ‘th,’ ‘i’ and ‘r’ problem sounds, as well as whatever must be negotiated in pronouncing the numbers themselves.

ABC/abc Bingo



1. Read them back.
2. Alternate team members read — ‘perfect’ pronunciation.
3. Instead of saying letters, teacher says most common phonetic sound of each; kids cover them, then read back sounds when they get a bingo.
4. Teacher says words which begin with letters to be covered. Kids say back either same words or sound of letters.
5. Teacher pronounces sounds of letters. Kids cover letters and after a bingo give any word which each letter begins.
6. Kids say words which contain the letter but are not begun with it.

Time Bingo



1. Teacher calls ‘3 o’clock’, ‘nine -o (oh) - five’, ‘eight-fifty five’, etc. Students who get bingos win if they can say the same times shown on the clocks in their bingo lines.
2. As above but teammates take turns in asking “What time is it?” and answering each other. (E.g., “It’s 9:35.”)
3. Teach the time-telling variations. E.g., “It’s a quarter past five.” — “It’s five minutes to (till) nine,” etc. Require that these be repeated, following step 2 procedure.

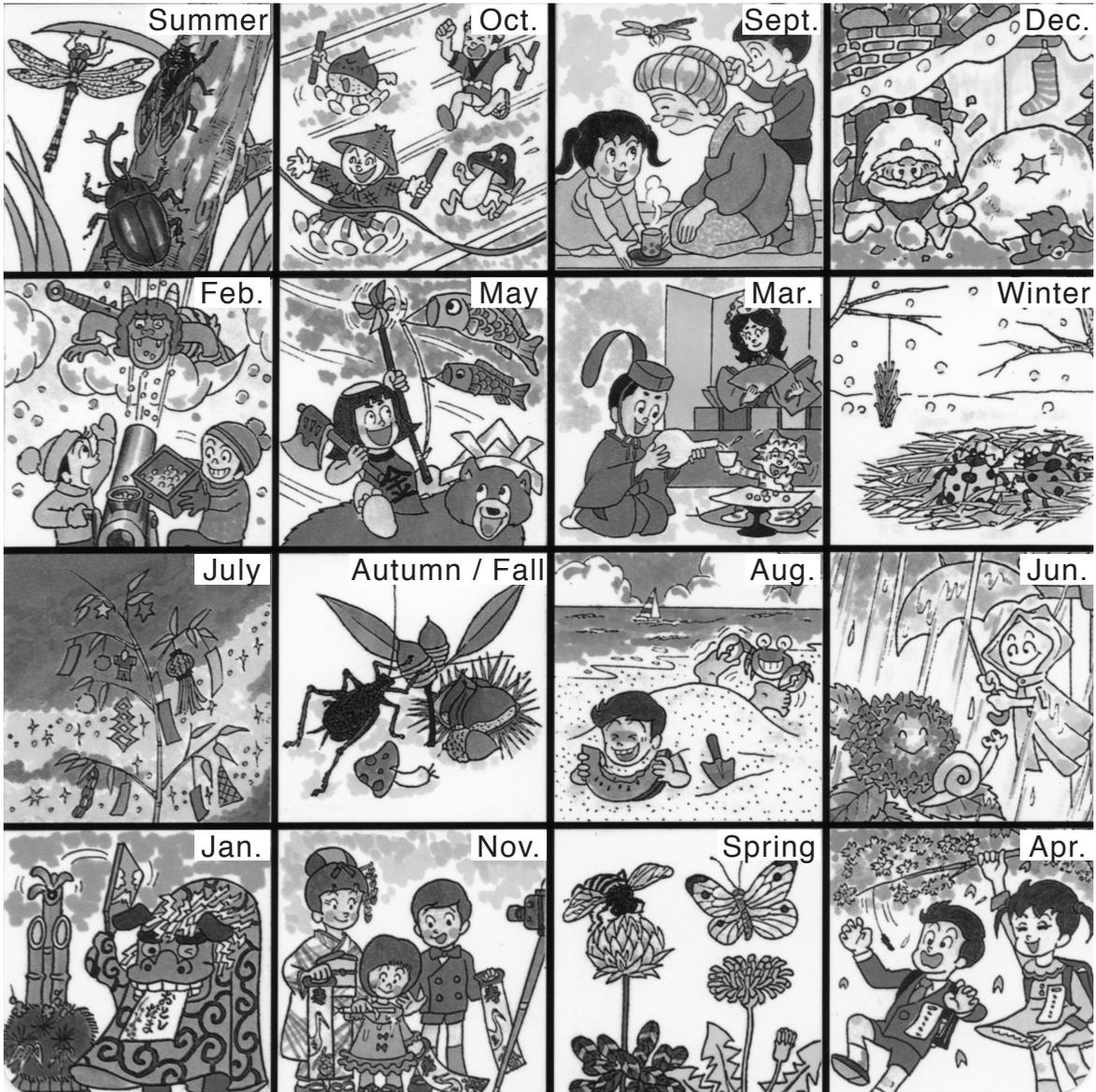
Month & Season Bingo

If you’re a foreigner and these pictures, except for the obvious December, don’t mean anything to you, let your Japanese students teach you. They’ll figure them out rapidly. (Or you could cheat and look at the hints on the next page of this manual.)

About the only thing you’ll need to tell them is that the four pictures with the large insects (*mushi*), represent the respective seasons. (The beach scene, therefore, must be August and not summer.)

Most but not all of the months are indicated by holidays, observed in Japan, which fall within them.

Steps/variations:



(The 4 seasons' illustrations contain insects; months do not.)

January (1st)	New Year's Day Oshōgatsu	July (7th)	Star Festival Tanabata
February (3rd)	Bean Throwing Day Setsubun	August	Summer Vacation Natsu yasumi
March (3rd)	Doll Festival Hina matsuri	September (15th)	Old People's Day Keirō no hi
April	Start of School Year Shingakki no hajimari	(The second Monday of) October	Sports Day Taiiku no hi
May (5th)	Children's Day Kodomo no hi	November (15th)	7-5-3 Day Shichi-go-san
June	Start of Rainy Season Tsuyu	December (25th)	Christmas (Day) Kurisumasu

- Call events/holidays: “Summer vacation” for August, etc.
- Call “the month before August, the season after winter.”
- Call “Christmas is in this month” or “Christmas is the 25th of this month” — kids, to earn bingo, say, “Christmas is December 25th (the 25th of December).” Call, “Tomoki’s birthday is in this month / season.”

Other available bingo game sets

We also have sets (some hand-made) for teaching 3-letter words (Reading Bingo 1A/1B and 2A/2B), blends and digraphs (Blendi Bingo), present progressive (-ing) and past tense sentence making (Aniverb/Anoccoverb Bingo), and hard-to-distinguish larger numbers like 13/30, 14/40, 15/50, etc. (Number Bingo B).

There is something about bingo games which fascinate. Perhaps it’s related to the gambler spirit. We’re not sure. However, it remains true that a game is only as good as it’s played. These games can be merely enjoyable with minimal educational results, or great fun with much learning taking place. Played well, the fun and learning will be mutually enhancing. It’s up to you to make them swing.

Notes

- We suggest an ‘only one chip in hand at a time’ rule. First, this saves time and argument over exact division of the chips between team members. Second, it eliminates any shaking, scraping and dropping of chips which can, even without vocal accompaniment, set up quite a racket.
- Older kids may want to race each other to see who can cover the right square first. This is permissible if by mutual consent. But younger ones should be instructed to politely take turns in putting chips on the board. As defender of the meek, the teacher should watch carefully to see that this rule is being strictly followed during the first several games until it becomes a firmly established habit.
- In our opinion, bingo should not be played longer than about 5 or 10 minutes per class—one or two versions, e.g., ‘Color’ and ‘Number’, or ‘abc’ and ‘Time’. Stopping when they want more beats continuing till they don’t.
- How often? If kept, short, fast and exciting, bingo in one form or another could be played in every class throughout the year and enthusiasm main-

tained throughout. However, we don't recommend that. After introducing a new type or a new step, it should be played weekly until a reasonable level of proficiency is reached. Then take a break for a week or two and have a good time in other ways.

- Always bear in mind that these games are, not least, pronunciation exercises. Bad pronunciation does not achieve 'Good Bingos.' — Of course, some tolerance is allowed when learning the new words of a new game or step, but very soon superlative speech should be mandatory.
- The new card of the team which got the first bingo will be the teacher's secret call card for the second set. And it will just so happen that this team will not get a second bingo in succession. If a certain team has not won recently, their morale will need a boost. Don't over-employ the law of averages — see that they get a bingo. There are no losers in these games, only winners. Everybody wins! (Though only one team at a time, 'cause when they win, they win big, with singular honors accorded.)
- Double bingos: First of all, we must distinguish between true and spurious double bingos. A valid one, of course, is made when the last word called causes the crossing or intersection of 2 complete lines. And the invalid type (often the case) is when a bingo was unnoticed and uncalled until 2 adjoining lines were discovered on the board. Simply check to see if the last word called was or was not the one which brought about the situation. Invalid double displaying teams can still, with proper contrition and pronunciation, get credit for one of the single bingos, but that's all.

Now, a genuine, verified 'double bingo' situation is a thing of great moment. The teacher will be briefly stunned (eyes wide, mouth open), able only to point to the evidence for all to see, and to gasp '*a double bingo!*' Then, drawing close, speaking in hushed and measured tones, the challenge is issued. This will probably be to perform the proper requirement for the level under attack, but for each line.

And no mistakes of any kind from either partner, as nothing less than absolute perfection will gain this highest of awards. After brief but futile protest at the unprecedented demands, contestants will invariably '*gambarō*' and begin. Silence reigns — pressure's on — stakes are high. One by one each chip is raised as they proceed with utmost caution, controlling every lip and tongue movement with desperate precision. One slip and all is lost. As the

end draws near, anxiety mounts — The final square is reached. — It's a *Good Double Bingo!!!* Cheering and celebration are in order. Teacher rushes to secret hiding place and extracts valuable prizes (nothing less than the likes of imported bubble gum or rare foreign stamps would be appropriate). All, of course, will share in the fruits of victory, but the big winners will receive a double portion as just recognition that through their achievement a milestone in the history of the class has been reached.