

50 REVIEW GAMES GAME 05

Partner Teach

Students become the teacher – and find out what they really know

Partner Teach transforms students from learners into teachers. By explaining, demonstrating, and practicing vocabulary with a partner, students deepen their understanding while building confidence and communication skills.

TIME NEEDED

15–20 minutes

GROUP SIZE

Pairs

GRADE LEVELS

Middle, High, College

01 Purpose & Objective

Strengthen vocabulary retention by having students teach and coach one another using previously learned ASL. A student who can produce a sign has learned it; a student who can teach it has understood it – and the gap between those two is where the real review happens.

Students will accurately demonstrate, explain, and practice vocabulary while providing constructive feedback to a partner.

02 Materials & Skills

Materials

- Vocabulary cards or lesson list
- ASLdeafined lesson (*optional*)
- Whiteboard (*optional*)
- Timer for role switches (*optional*)

ASL Skills Practiced

- Expressive and receptive ASL
- Vocabulary recall
- Peer coaching and corrective feedback
- Explaining sign parameters in ASL

03 Setup

1. **Pair students together**, mixing stronger and developing signers where you can.
2. **Assign each pair 5–10 vocabulary words** or concepts to review, or let them choose from the task list on page 3.
3. **Explain the two roles.** Each student will be the teacher for part of the activity and the learner for the other part.
4. **Set the switch signal.** Decide in advance how you will call the role change so both partners get equal time.
5. **Name what good coaching sounds like** before they start — see the coaching language on the next page.

Before You Start

The most common failure of this activity is that the stronger signer teaches for the full period and the other student never takes the teacher role. Time the switch rather than trusting the pairs to manage it.

04 Directions

1. Student A teaches the assigned vocabulary by demonstrating each sign.
2. Student B watches, copies the sign, and asks questions if needed.
3. Student A provides encouragement and gentle corrections.
4. Switch roles so Student B becomes the teacher.
5. Finish with both partners using at least five vocabulary words in a short ASL conversation.

Coaching Language

Teach students to correct by naming a parameter and modeling it, rather than saying *good job* or *that's wrong*. Post these four moves: ask for a repeat (**AGAIN, SLOW?**), name the parameter that is off — handshape, location, movement, or palm orientation — show the correction instead of describing it, and praise something specific rather than the whole attempt.

05 Suggested Review Tasks

Assign a task to each pair, or let pairs draw one at random.

1. Teach five food vocabulary signs.
2. Teach five family signs.
3. Teach five animal signs.
4. Teach five school vocabulary signs.
5. Teach five emotion signs.
6. Teach the days of the week.
7. Teach the months of the year.
8. Teach numbers 1–20.
9. Teach five verbs from the current lesson.
10. Create a short conversation using at least five review signs.

06 Variations

Beginning

Use picture or vocabulary cards for support so the teacher has a prompt to work from.

Intermediate

Require complete ASL sentences while teaching, not isolated signs with English explanation.

Advanced

Partners build a mini-lesson — introduce, model, practice, check — and teach it to another pair.

Challenge Mode

After teaching, partners join another pair and teach two of the vocabulary concepts they reviewed. The receiving pair must then teach those same two signs back, which reveals immediately whether the first lesson landed.

07 Assessment Ideas

Observe students for:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Accuracy of the signs demonstrated | ☐ Ability to explain, not just produce |
| ☐ Receptive understanding while learning | ☐ Specific, constructive peer feedback |
| ☐ Willingness to be corrected | ☐ Participation in both roles |

08 Troubleshooting

IF THIS HAPPENS	TRY THIS
One partner teaches the whole time	Time the switch yourself and call it out loud. Do not leave the changeover to the pairs.
Feedback is only “good job”	Require one comment that names a parameter — handshape, location, movement, or palm orientation.
Pairs finish in three minutes	They demonstrated rather than taught. Require the learner to teach all five signs back.
The stronger signer corrects constantly	Cap it at two corrections per sign, and have them note the rest for the end.

Paul's Best Practice

One of the best ways to discover whether students truly understand a concept is to ask them to teach it. Teaching requires deeper thinking than simply repeating a sign.

You find the gaps the moment a student has to explain it.

Why It Works

Students remember more when they explain, demonstrate, and practice with others. The activity also builds confidence because students learn from classmates in a relaxed setting. Teaching a sign forces attention to the details a learner can skate past — where the hand starts, how the movement ends, which nonmanual marker belongs with it.

Quick Tips

- ✓ Rotate partners often so students read many signing styles.
- ✓ Mix stronger and developing signers.
- ✓ Encourage specific, positive feedback.
- ✓ Time the switch so both students teach.
- ✓ End with the teach-back — it is the fastest check for understanding.

Continue Exploring

Next in the collection:

▶ **Game #6: Around the Circle**

▶ **Game #7: Story Builder**

▶ **Game #8: Four Corners**

Paul A. Fugate

PAUL A. FUGATE

Founder & CEO, ASLdeafined