

50 REVIEW GAMES GAME 06

Around the Circle

Five rounds, one circle, and every student in the rotation

Around the Circle is a flexible review activity that strengthens vocabulary, memory, sequencing, and storytelling while giving every student an opportunity to participate. Five different rounds share one setup, so the format can carry a full class period or fill the last ten minutes.

TIME NEEDED

10–20 minutes

GROUP SIZE

Whole class

GRADE LEVELS

Middle, High, College

01 Purpose & Objective

Review previously learned vocabulary while improving memory, receptive skills, expressive signing, sequencing, and confidence. The circle makes participation visible and predictable — every student knows their turn is coming, and every student watches everyone else's.

Students will build on one another's responses while accurately recalling and producing previously learned signs.

02 Materials & Skills

Materials

None required.

- Vocabulary cards (*optional*)
- Timer (*optional*)
- Whiteboard to track signs already used (*optional*)

ASL Skills Practiced

- Expressive and receptive ASL
- Vocabulary recall and memory
- Sequencing and storytelling
- Use of signing space and role shifting

03 Setup

1. Have students stand or sit in a circle with a clear line of sight to every other student.
2. Choose a review topic or vocabulary unit, or draw one from the category list on page 3.
3. Explain the round. Each of the five rounds works differently — name which one you are running before you begin.
4. Set the help rule. A student who is stuck may ask the circle for help; no one is eliminated.
5. Pick a starting point, and change it each round so the same student is not always first.

Before You Start

With more than about eighteen students, split into two circles. A single large circle means long waits between turns, and the students across from you are too far away to read clearly.

04 Directions

Run one round or work through several. Each uses the same circle.

ROUND

HOW IT WORKS

1 – Warm-Up	Each student signs one vocabulary word from the review topic.
2 – Category	Students sign a word fitting a teacher-given category – food, animals, school, emotions. No repeats.
3 – Memory Challenge	Each student repeats all previous signs in order, then adds one new sign.
4 – Story Circle	Each student contributes one signed sentence to build a class story.
5 – Timed Challenge	Complete one full trip around the circle within a time limit, without repeating vocabulary.

05 Suggested Circle Categories

Draw one at random, or work through a column across several sessions.

Animals	Food	Family
School	Sports	Weather
Transportation	Emotions	Colors
Clothing	Verbs	Classifiers
Questions	Daily Routine	Occupations

06 Variations

Beginning

Allow vocabulary posters or lesson lists in view, and keep the memory chain short.

Intermediate

Require complete ASL sentences rather than isolated signs, with correct nonmanual markers.

Advanced

Build a connected story using classifiers and role shifting, so each turn must match what came before.

Challenge Mode

Reverse the direction of the circle mid-round, increase the speed, or require students to use only vocabulary from previous units. Reversing is the sharpest of the three — students who were rehearsing their turn suddenly have to watch instead.

07 Assessment Ideas

Observe students for:

- ☐ Vocabulary accuracy
- ☐ Nonmanual markers
- ☐ Use of signing space in story rounds
- ☐ Memory recall and sequencing
- ☐ Clarity of production at pace
- ☐ Participation and support of classmates

08 Troubleshooting

IF THIS HAPPENS

TRY THIS

The memory chain collapses

Cap it at six or eight signs, then restart the chain with a new anchor student.

Students wait a long time between turns

Split into two circles, or run two rounds at once from opposite sides.

Signs get repeated

Give one student the job of listing signs already used on the whiteboard.

Students rehearse instead of watching

Reverse direction without warning, or call turns at random rather than in order.

Paul's Best Practice

If a student forgets a sign, let classmates help rather than eliminating the student. The goal is collaborative learning and confidence.

A circle should never end with someone standing outside it.

Why It Works

Every student participates, repetition happens naturally, and the activity can be adapted for any lesson or proficiency level. The circle also puts students in a genuine visual environment — they are reading peers from every angle and distance, which is closer to real conversation than watching one signer at the front of the room.

Quick Tips

- ✓ Keep the pace moving.
- ✓ Change categories often.
- ✓ Celebrate teamwork more than speed.
- ✓ Change the starting point every round.
- ✓ Split large classes into two circles so no one waits long.

Continue Exploring

Next in the collection:

▶ **Game #7: Story Builder**

▶ **Game #8: Four Corners**

▶ **Game #9: Speed Signing**

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