

50 REVIEW GAMES GAME 23

ASL Pictionary

Draw the idea, then sign it

ASL Pictionary combines drawing, observation, and communication to review vocabulary in a highly visual way. A student sketches; teammates guess; and then someone has to produce the sign and use it in a sentence. The drawing gets the word on the table — the ASL is what scores it.

TIME NEEDED

15–25 minutes

GROUP SIZE

Pairs, groups, or whole class

GRADE LEVELS

Middle, High, College

01 Purpose & Objective

Review vocabulary through visual thinking, observation, and expressive ASL. Drawing and signing are both visual-spatial tasks, so the sketch is not a detour from the language — it works the same kind of thinking the signs themselves rely on.

Students identify vocabulary from simple drawings, then correctly sign and use the vocabulary in context.

02 Materials & Skills

Materials

- Whiteboard or paper
- Markers
- Timer
- Vocabulary cards (optional)

ASL Skills Practiced

- Expressive ASL
- Receptive ASL
- Vocabulary recall
- Visual thinking
- Descriptive language

03 Setup

1. **Prepare vocabulary cards.** Concrete nouns draw easily; abstract words like BIRTHDAY force more inventive sketches.
2. **Divide students into teams.** Four or five per team keeps guesses coming quickly without everyone shouting at once.
3. **Review the drawing rules before beginning.** They are on the next page, split by what happens while drawing and what happens after the guess.

Before You Start

Say plainly that drawing ability is not being graded, and mean it. One student who feels judged on their sketch will stop volunteering to be the artist, and the artist role is where the vocabulary thinking is hardest.

04 Drawing Rules

WHILE DRAWING

- No letters, numbers, or written words.
- No fingerspelling the answer.
- Keep the drawing simple.

AFTER THE GUESS

- A teammate produces the correct ASL sign.
- That teammate uses it in a complete sentence.
- Only then does the point count.

05 Printable Vocabulary List

Fifteen words to start with. Print and cut, then build the rest from your unit.

APPLE	DOG	HOSPITAL	BICYCLE	RAIN
BOOK	TEACHER	AIRPLANE	SOCCER	PIZZA
LIBRARY	FAMILY	COMPUTER	FISH	BIRTHDAY

ALSO SEE

Many of these words also appear in **Game #18: Guess My Word**. Running the same list both ways — drawn here, described there — gives students two routes to the same vocabulary.

06 Directions

1. One student draws a vocabulary card.
2. They sketch a simple picture representing the word.
3. Teammates guess the vocabulary.
4. A teammate then signs the word and uses it in an ASL sentence.
5. Rotate artists and continue.

Challenge Mode

Students draw an entire situation or event rather than a single object. Classmates identify several vocabulary words and then describe the whole scene in ASL – which is where classifiers start doing the work.

07 Variations

Beginning

Familiar vocabulary and unlimited drawing time.

Intermediate

A one-minute timer and complete ASL sentences.

Advanced

Scenes needing several words, classifiers, or a short story.

08 Assessment Ideas

Observe students for:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Vocabulary accuracy | ☐ Descriptive language in the sentence |
| ☐ Sign production after the guess | ☐ Creativity in solving a hard word |
| ☐ Participation as artist and guesser | ☐ Use of classifiers in scene rounds |

The sketch is not the assessment. What matters is the sign that follows it and the sentence that follows that – a rough drawing that produced clean ASL did its whole job.

Paul's Best Practice

Remind students that artistic ability is not important. The goal is to communicate an idea clearly and then reinforce it with accurate ASL. The worst drawing in the room can win the round, and saying so out loud is what gets hesitant students to the board.

Nobody is being graded on the drawing. They are being graded on the sign.

Why It Works

Students connect visual images with ASL concepts, which makes vocabulary easier to remember and more enjoyable to review. There is a deeper fit here than in the English version of the game: ASL is a visual-spatial language, and a student deciding how to show RAIN or BIRTHDAY on a whiteboard is doing something close to what a signer does when choosing a classifier. The guessing keeps every teammate watching, and the required sentence at the end makes sure the round finishes in the language rather than in the drawing.

Quick Tips

- ✓ Rotate artists often so the same confident student is not always drawing.
- ✓ Mix current and previous lessons in the same stack.
- ✓ Let students create their own vocabulary cards.
- ✓ Keep a timer visible — a slow sketch loses the room.
- ✓ Praise the sentence at the end as loudly as the correct guess.

Continue Exploring

Next in the collection:

- ▶ **Game #24: Silent Telephone**
- ▶ **Game #25: Vocabulary Bingo**
- ▶ **Game #26: Classifier Challenge**

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Extend the Activity

Keep the finished drawings and use them as prompts the next day — students sign the vocabulary from a classmate's sketch without any guessing involved. A picture drawn by a peer carries more memory than a flashcard ever will.