



## **Chat and play (Tala & Spila), Language Club**

How a library can host weekly language-learning sessions through play, conversation and games

During our Nordplus project “The library in a multilingual society” we explored ways to help immigrants practice the local language in low-pressure, enjoyable environments. We organized weekly language club built around board games, card games and playful communication that was hosted by an Icelandic teacher.

We call it Tala & Spila. It is a safe, friendly and informal space where participants practice speaking without fear of making mistakes, learn new vocabulary through action, and connect with others in the community.

### **Goals of the Language Club**

- Strengthen vocabulary and everyday communication skills
- Increase participants’ confidence when speaking the language
- Create social connections between new residents and locals
- Offer language learning through play, cooperation, and interaction
- Remove performance pressure and keep the atmosphere relaxed and fun

### **How we reached participants**

We invited immigrant participants through:

Website and social media, local immigrant support groups, community advisers, teachers and municipal staff.

## **Good practice before starting**

1. Make the space easy to find
2. Offer small refreshments
3. Use visual support
4. Keep the environment safe, friendly and pressure-free
5. Mix speaking levels

## **Structure of a 90-minute session**

### ***1. Warm-up (10 min)***

We begin by gathering in a circle to create a safe, relaxed and inclusive atmosphere. The teacher writes simple example sentences on the board to support participants. Each person briefly introduces themselves by saying their name, how they are feeling, and one thing they enjoy doing in Iceland.

We often use a soft ball to make the activity more interactive. The person who catches the ball repeats the previous speaker's name and one detail about them before introducing themselves.

The aim is to build confidence, encourage participants to speak, and help them learn each other's names in a fun and low-pressure way.

### ***2. Theme of the day (5 min)***

The teacher chooses a theme for the session and begins by asking participants questions related to that theme. Participants are encouraged to suggest words, expressions, or ideas connected to it.

All suggestions are written on the board. The teacher then adds additional relevant vocabulary to expand the discussion and introduce a few new words before starting the games.

The themes often reflect what is happening in Iceland during that time of year. For example:

Tax reports in March; Easter in April; Christmas in December.....

This helps participants learn practical, seasonal vocabulary that connects to real life in Iceland.

### ***3. Main activity: conversation according to the chosen theme (30 min)***

During the main part of the session, participants work with the theme through structured conversations and interactive games.

Participants are divided into smaller groups based on their language level.

The teacher prepares short conversation texts or dialogue scripts connected to the theme, including key vocabulary. Participants practice by role-playing the dialogues and then switching roles so everyone speaks.

After some time, groups can exchange dialogue tasks to practice different situations.

Throughout the activity, the teacher moves between groups, helping participants understand difficult words, clarifying meaning, correcting gently when needed, and offering guidance and speaking tips.

The focus remains on communication, participation, and confidence rather than perfect grammar.

### ***4. Coffee Break (10 minutes)***

A short break to relax and connect, have coffee, and talk informally.

### ***5. Games & Fun (30 minutes)***

language-based games connected to the theme and always related to the learned vocabulary of the day. These can include board games, card games, question games. Example. Kahoot.

### ***6. Closing (5 minutes)***

To finish, each participant is encouraged to share one new word or expression they learned and explain its meaning to the group.