3.3.2 Guess Who?

Brief description, and rules of the game

Guess Who? is a two-player board game in which both players have an identical board filled with illustrated faces of different characters. Each player secretly chooses one character as their mystery person. The goal is to be the first to guess which character the opponent has chosen by asking smart yes/no questions and eliminating possibilities.

Skill focus

- **Primary Skill Focus**
  - Problem-solving
- **Complementary/Secondary Skill Focus**
  - Critical thinking
  - Creativity
  - Flexibility

Age group	Student number	Duration
6-10 years old	2-4 children	1 round: 5 minutes

How to play - brief game rules

Setup:

1. Each player sets up their own board with all the face cards standing upright.
2. Both players draw a card from a separate pile or secretly choose one character to be their mystery person; this card is kept hidden from the opponent.

How to play:

3. Players take turns asking yes/no questions about the opponent's mystery person, such as: "Does your person wear glasses?", "Is it a man?", "Do they have a hat?"
4. Based on the answer (yes or no), the player flips down all characters on their board that do not match the answer, narrowing the possibilities.
5. You may continue asking questions until you want to make a guess.

Guessing and winning:

6. When you think you know your opponent's mystery person, you can make a guess. If you guess correctly, you win the game. If you guess incorrectly, you usually lose immediately (depending on the edition, but this is the standard rule).

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom layout notes

Indoor: Set up tables or mats on the floor where small groups can comfortably sit. This makes it easy for everyone to ask each other questions.

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How does this game develop the primary skill?

Playing Guess Who? actively engages learners in a structured form of problem-solving that mirrors real-world reasoning. Each turn demands a tactical approach to narrowing down possibilities, interpreting clues, and adapting strategies—all essential components of problem solving.

- Deductive reasoning is sharpened as players use clues to systematically eliminate options. Each question helps rule out entire categories, training learners to think in terms of exclusion and logical constraints.
- Strategic thinking is reinforced through the selection of optimal questions. Players must decide which attributes will yield the most informative answers, learning to prioritize high-impact queries that reduce uncertainty.
- Critical thinking is developed by analysing responses and their implications. A single answer can shift the direction of the game, prompting players to reassess assumptions and refine their approach in real time.
- Decision-making under uncertainty is practiced, as players often work with incomplete information. They learn to make calculated guesses, balancing risk and logic while continuously updating their mental model.
- Adaptability is cultivated through the dynamic nature of each round. New characters and fresh clues require learners to adjust their tactics, encouraging flexible thinking and resilience in the face of changing conditions.

What do we want to achieve regarding primary skill development (student understanding and/or behaviour)?

As a result of the game, learners are:

- Able to think deductively in accordance with their age characteristics and, based on given clues (with simple assistance), systematically narrow down possible options.
- Able to ask relevant and specific questions that help gather the most useful information while reducing the number of possible answers.
- Able to analyse answers and their implications critically, adjusting strategies as new information becomes available.
- Able to make informed decisions based on partial or limited data and refine their approach as they progress.
- Able to adapt thinking and tactics to new challenges and clues presented in each round.
- Able to demonstrate patience and persistence by engaging in careful thought and multiple attempts to solve the puzzle.
- Able to collaborate effectively by discussing strategies and communicating clearly to agree on the best questions to ask.

Suggested use, and practical examples

Step 1: Start with broad questions

“Is your person a man?”

- Yes → cross out all the women.
- No → cross out all the men.

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Step 2: Check hair colour

“Does your person have blond hair?”

- Yes → keep the blond ones.
- No → cross them out.

Step 3: Look for accessories

“Does your person wear glasses?”

- Yes → keep the ones with glasses.
- No → cross them out.

Step 4: Notice facial hair

“Does your person have a beard or moustache?”

- Yes → keep the ones with facial hair.
- No → cross them out.

Step 5: Another distinctive feature

“Does your person wear a hat?”

- Yes → keep the ones with hats.
- No → cross them out.

Step 6: Make your final guess

“Is your person Richard?”



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Materials and tools needed for implementation

- Board game 'Guess Who?

Guiding questions

Helpful questions before the game (preparation & strategy)

- How can you ask questions in a way that helps you quickly gather a lot of information about the opponent's mystery character?
- Which category do you think is most useful to rule out first (e.g., gender, hair colour, accessories like glasses or hats)?
- What could you do if you are unsure about the answer or if the information seems unclear?

Tips for asking questions

- Start with broad questions that eliminate roughly half of the characters (e.g., gender, hair colour, glasses).
- Ask questions that split the remaining options roughly in half. This rules out many possibilities at once.
- Think in opposites. Framing a question to separate two big groups (e.g., "Does my person have short hair?" vs "Does my person have long hair?") helps narrow the field quickly.
- Pay attention to combinations of features (clothing + hairstyle) to eliminate faster.
- Watch what others are asking. Good example questions from other players can inspire your next move.
- Keep track of answers. Remember what's already been ruled out so you don't repeat questions and can combine clues effectively.

Helpful questions during the game (process guidance)

- Which questions have helped you eliminate many characters, and which ones have not been useful?
- Can you try a different strategy to narrow down the possibilities more quickly?
- What do you think another player might ask if they were in your position?
- Can you combine information from multiple answers to rule out additional characters?

Tips and Tricks for dealing with challenges

- **Challenge:** Difficulty asking effective questions. Problem: Students ask questions that are too specific (e.g., "Does my person have a blue hat?"), which eliminates very few options.
  Tip: Provide examples of broad, strategic questions beforehand (e.g., "Does my person wear glasses?"). Use a short activity where students brainstorm good questions together. Encourage thinking in groups and opposites (e.g., "short hair" vs. "long hair").
- **Challenge:** Losing track during the game. Problem: Students forget which answers have already been given and repeat questions.
  Tip: Allow students to use a note sheet to keep track of answers. Show an example of how to make a list and cross out eliminated options. Remind them to use combinations of features (e.g., clothing + hairstyle).

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- **Challenge:** Guessing too early. Problem: Some students make a guess before they have enough information, which often leads to mistakes.
  Tip: Explain that patience and strategy are important. Set a rule: at least three questions must be asked before guessing. Be patient. Don't guess too early — sometimes asking one or two more targeted questions prevents a wrong guess. After the game, discuss why asking one more question can be better than guessing too soon.
- **Challenge:** Difficulty with logical reasoning. Problem: Students struggle to combine answers and draw conclusions.
  Tip: Provide an example situation: show how to move from a series of answers to a logical choice. Use think-aloud moments: play one round together and explain your reasoning step by step. Encourage students to ask themselves after each question: "Which options can I eliminate now?" Think logically. Use the answers you've collected to focus only on the remaining candidates.
- **Challenge:** Lack of confidence or hesitation. Problem: Some students hesitate to ask questions or doubt their choices.
  Tip: Create a safe, playful environment where making mistakes is okay. Encourage teamwork: let students play in pairs so they can discuss ideas. Praise smart questions, not just correct guesses.

Difficulty level tailoring

Beginners (6-7 years old):

- For younger children: Let students play in pairs. Two children can work together to guess the mystery character. They can discuss possible questions, combine ideas, and help each other decide what to eliminate.
- They may only use simple and visible characteristics:
  - boy or girl
  - glasses or no glasses

You can give them a list of example questions to help them, such as:

- "Does your person wear glasses?"
- "Is their hair blond?"

This way, they learn that broad questions can eliminate many cards at once. They also discover that it's best to reason from broad to specific.

Advanced learners (8-9 years old):

- You can choose to allow a maximum of 10 questions.

They must write down their questions in advance.

- This teaches them to plan instead of choosing impulsively.

- A Required Question Order

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They must begin with questions that eliminate many characters at once. For example, they follow this sequence:

- Gender (usually eliminates about half of the group)
- Hair (hair colour or hair length)
- Accessories (glasses, hat, moustache)
- Clothing (bright colours, sweater, shirt)

Only after these broad questions are they allowed to ask more detailed ones.

Experts (9–10 years old):

- Smart Halving Questions

Teach students to ask questions that eliminate about half of the characters at once.

Examples:

- "Is your person wearing something on their head?"
- "Does your person have dark hair?"
- "Does your person wear glasses or a moustache?" (a question about multiple features at once)

- Forbidden Questions
  - Ban simple, low-impact questions such as:
  - "Does your person have blue eyes?"
  - "Is it Rob?" (except on the final turn)
  - Students must think about why these questions don't help much.
- Colour-Coding and Clustering
  - Before starting, have students create a chart where they group characters based on hair – gender – accessories - face shape

They must plan their first three questions before the round begins.

- Competition: As Few Questions as Possible

Maximum of 7 questions

- +1 point for any question that eliminates more than 4 characters
- –1 point for any question that eliminates fewer than 2 characters.

Debriefing and reflection questions

- Which strategy worked best to find the answer? Why?
- Which questions were less effective and what would you do differently next time?
- Did you discover new ways of thinking during the game that you can use for other problems?
- How can you better plan which questions to ask first?

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