

Home is Where the Board Games Are

Alvaro Perez



BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Did you (or do you) play games with your family? If so, which games?
2. What are some of the conflicts that come up when you play games? How do you navigate those conflicts?
3. Some games involve *competition*. Others involve *cooperation*. Some games involve *teamwork*, and some are played *individually*. Which kinds of game do you prefer?
4. Note the sentence in the first paragraph that includes *em dashes*. What is the role of the *em dashes* in this sentence?

A Good Way to Learn

When I was little, my family always enjoyed playing board games. My wife and I decided we wanted our children to have this same experience. We believe that if you give children the tools to entertain themselves with things *other* than screens – which seems to be the only thing they can entertain themselves with these days – they will have a better relationship with their siblings and their parents.

We started by teaching them simple card games and board games. Then we moved on to Parcheesi, and after that, we let them discover different games on their own. We have games that

focus on different skills, such as math, logic, and strategy.

A Good Way to Have Fun and Connect

Now that they're a little older, the game they like best is a strategy game called Catan. Before starting, they set up the board, which has several parts. Once we start playing and everyone takes their positions on the board, that's when we have the most fun, because each one has their own strategy, and it almost always clashes with someone else's. There's usually someone who thinks we're all playing against them.

The moments we share together are a great chance to strengthen our relationships. From time to time, big feelings surface, and home is the perfect place for that. In the safety of family, my wife and I can help our kids navigate frustration, learn that life doesn't always unfold as expected, and develop healthy ways to cope with disappointment. We try to do this in a relaxed, playful way that keeps everyone feeling supported and connected.

Those fun times we spend playing as a family are what define a home for me.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. According to the author, why are board games good for his family?
2. Write a paragraph describing a game you play. It could be a card game, board game, or outdoor game. Start with a topic sentence. Then explain the rules and skills needed to play. Use sequencing words, like *first*, *then*, and *next*. Finally, end your paragraph with a concluding sentence.
3. Write another paragraph explaining why you like the game. Make sure to use a topic sentence and include at least three details about why you like it. Finish with a concluding sentence.

Alvaro Perez is a student at Eastconn Adult Education in Willimantic, Connecticut. Two years ago, he moved to the United States with his wife and their three children after his wife received a job opportunity here. The transition was challenging at first, especially because Alvaro did not speak English. However, as he began learning the language, he discovered the opportunities the U.S. has to offer. Over time, he came to feel at home in his new community.



How to Play Checkers

Bring to class several checkerboards and sets of 12 white and 12 dark pieces. Alternatively, make your own in class. Ask someone who knows the game to explain the rules. Make time for everyone to play. Then, when everyone knows the game, write down the rules of the game. You can do this as a group project or in pairs or individually. Look up images and diagrams on the internet that help explain the game. Publish your work on a Google doc or on Google slides.

