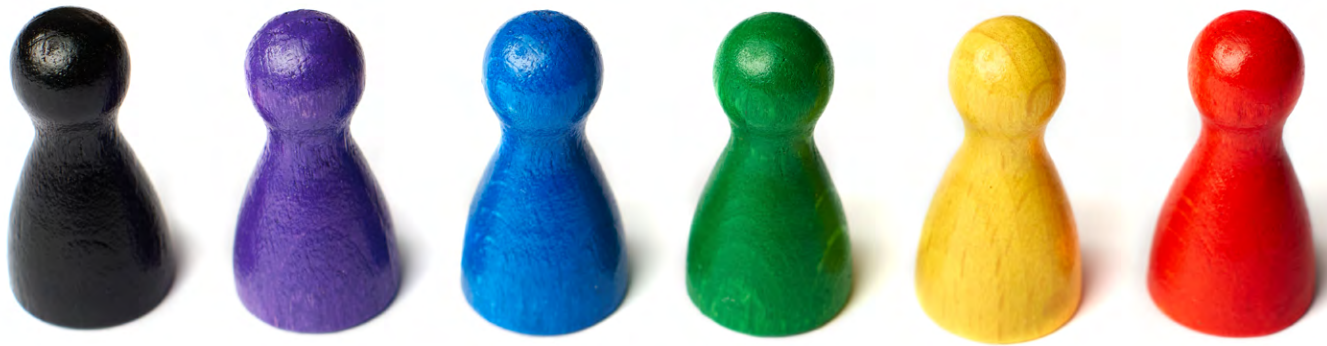


# Live, Laugh and



# Learn in French

BY **LAETITIA WALBERT** FSL INSTRUCTOR, CERTIFIED TRANSLATOR AND  
FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COORDINATOR, GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

TRANSLATED BY **ANNE-MARIE TUGWELL** LANGUAGE PORTAL OF CANADA

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<https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/blogue-blog/apprendre-vivre-rire-en-francais-live-laugh-learn-in-french-eng>

**A**s an educator who teaches adults French as a second language (FSL), I've always thought it important to include fun, game-based learning in my classroom. If learning a foreign or second language as an adult requires a healthy dose of courage and perseverance, then being shy is the biggest obstacle to learning that language. So learning through play has many benefits, even for adults. It decreases the student's fear of making mistakes or failing, allows the teacher to vary the learning materials and encourages even the most timid learner to participate and work with others. It also puts everyone in a good mood, which is the icing on the cake!

For my FSL students, I initially explored role-playing games in the classroom. Then, I turned to board games. With the rules adapted, board games prove to be a really effective way

to implement learning objectives. For example, a popular deduction game gives my students the chance to practise describing physical traits; picture dice games help them tell a story based on the images that come up; and a detective game encourages them to formulate questions correctly. These card, quiz, word, memory and knowledge-based games, which I gleaned from independent bookstores and thrift stores, became an opportunity for my students to learn while breaking into fits of laughter. Success was guaranteed!

## Then the pandemic hit.

We all reinvented ourselves. Learning now takes place online, and my games are online too. We've learned to live



differently and to work surrounded by our children. With everything from public health measures to lockdowns, our world suddenly got a whole lot smaller.

Like many children, my daughter no longer had any extracurricular activities. No more swimming, no more art classes, no more outings to museums or amusement parks. I then realized that, since we live in a minority setting, the fun part of my daughter's life had been in English up until then. Her educational life (school, home) was essentially all in French, and her recreational life was in English. For my daughter, French was the language of "must" and "should," never the language of "what if?" I was profoundly shocked by that realization. It was crucial that I bring back fun activities in French.

Naturally, I turned to my precious collection of board games that have now become part of our family life. Spending time doing fun activities as a family has certainly strengthened our relationships and contributed to our daughter's development. But above all, it's given us a daily dose of fun in French. I've bought new games that suit my daughter's interests and age level, and discovered some *Québécois* gems. The teacher in me couldn't resist buying verb conjugation and synonym games (yes, they do exist!) to complement what she's learning at school. Obviously, these moments have also helped us get away from our screens and social media for a little while. Our time together has brought us laughter and reduced the stress created by the pandemic while serving an even loftier goal: making memories ... in French!

What about you? How do you create happy moments in French? ■

