

Yiddish Games

by Philip "Fishl" Kutner

We usually think about games being for children although professional sports are an adult activity. With the exception of chess (shokh) and cards (kortn), adult Jews did not participate in games.

Yiddish Clubs and teachers often look for a novel way of bringing excitement and something new to the meetings/classroom. Below is an initial list of Yiddish games and there will be additions regularly posted. If you would like to have an addition added please send to Fishl.

Der Bay's new page of games is on the website at: <http://www.derbay.org/yiddishgames.html> lists eleven games and information including word lists for the particular game.

YIDISHE SHPILN - YIDDISH GAMES

Etl Betl - Cat's Cradle

As a child, Fishl played this game with his Mama. Read about it in *Der Bay*.

Yidishe tsung plonters (tangle, muddle) Tongue Twisters

Frume, froyen, fargesn, frier tsu fregn frages

Shimon zogt - Simon says in Yiddish

Shortly a male and female diagram will be posted with sixty body parts. A list of 73 body parts is one of 40 *Der Bay's word* lists. It is at:

<http://www.derbay.org/words/body.html>

Yidish talyen - Hangman

You can play using the Hebrew/Yiddish letters or in transliteration. There are 40 Yiddish word lists in English and transliterated at:

<http://www.derbay.org/words/index.html>

Decide on the form of spelling. If it is transliteration (Romanization) decide if you are using the YIVO Standard. Do not use short words. Words that are prefixed are great. Some prefixes are: (anider, ant, arayn ariber, arop, aroys, aruf, arunter, der, far, iber, oyf, oys, unter.

Yidish bingo - Yiddish Bingo

Bingo is played on cards with 5 columns with 5 rows in each column. This gives 25 boxes with the center one being FREE. In regular bingo each column has 5 boxes that range from 1-15, 16-30 up til 61-75. Thus the odds are that one has 5 out of 15 or one-third of the time you will have a match. Irving Lehrbaum made a set he calls SHOKL instead of BINGO. He used YIVO Standard Transliteration. Cards are drawn and the words

and column are matched. When a person gets BINGO, one stands up and gives a SHOKL and "hollers out" SHOKL. One can made up a set using your own words.

Tsvantsik frages af yidish - 20 questions

Start with asking khaye, grins oder mineral = animal, vegetable or mineral. The last time I played the game it was an oyg fun a nodl. You can find the Yiddish word for 123 animals, 24 birds, 31 farm animals, 23 fish, 20 insects, 48 mammals, 33 fruit, 8 grains, 33 flowers/trees and 34 vegetables at:

<http://www.derbay.org/words/index.html>

We are compiling a list of minerals.

Yidish skrabl -Yiddish Scrabble

The November 2008 issue of *Der Bay*, page 5 is entitled, "A Yiddish Club Activity, Alphabet Games - Scrabble." It has a table of letters and point values.

Yidish geografie - Jewish Geography

Akin to Geography where you say a place (city state, country, etc.) that starts with the last letter of the previous place. An example would be oysstralye and eyngland. A list of continents, countries is one of 40 *Der Bay's word* lists. It is at:

www.derbay.org/words/geography.html#lands

Dreydl - Dreidel

The name comes from the word drey meaning to spin. A dreykop is a person who drives you crazy with nonsense. The letters spell Nes, Gadol, Haya and Sham = A great miracle happened there.

Each person puts in an item or several; candy, coins etc. in the pool, pot or kitty.

Spin the dreydl

Nun = nisht, None - Next person spins

Giml = geb, Give - Takes the entire "pot"

Hey = halb, Half - Takes half the "pot"

Shin = shtel, Set (put in) - Places one of his "pieces" in the "pot."

Pinokl - Pinochle

Pinochle is a popular card game played with a deck of 48 cards. There are 2 cards of each from nine to ace. The game can be played with 2, 3 or 4 players and 1 or 2 decks. The Yiddish terms are found at:

<http://www.derbay.org/words/pinochle.html>

Shokh - Chess

Jews have played a major role at international chess matches. A list of 26 words relating to the game of chess is at: www.derbay.org/words/chess.htm

If you have any terms you wish included or have started a list, please send it to Fishl.