

PREFACE

Fun and laughter are essential ingredients in the complex process known as learning. Yet for many children, school is not much fun. An underachieving child may have learning differences, attentional issues, or health or family problems. Many children have been defeated by chronic failure and are confused about their own learning styles. Bright children with academic problems fail to live up to the high expectations of their teachers and parents. Basic skills that come easily to some children confound others. Extra drill, worksheets, or writing assignments don't seem to solve the problem. For many students, there is little joy in learning, and school is a very serious place.

In my work as a Learning Specialist, I have found that games are powerful teaching tools. By combining the elements of intellectual stimulation, competition, chance, and humor, games can capture and maintain the attention of even the most reluctant learners. Educational games provide information, models for learning, application of newly acquired skills, and motivation typically absent from more traditional exercises.

Although some students fully grasp a new concept the first time it is taught, most students need to review new skills repeatedly in order to truly own them. In a creative and challenging way, games celebrate the exercise of *practice*. Their competitive and often humorous elements can sharpen a student's focus and inspire new energy for learning.

I offer this series, *Game Plan: Building Language Skills with Games*, to instructors who believe that a lesson that is enjoyed may be one that is better learned. Encourage your students to tap into their sense of humor and competitive spirit—and let the games begin.

THE GAME PLAN for Nouns

RACE-AROUND NOUNS

★ **Players:** 2 to 4

★ **Object**

On your mark, get set, show off your noun knowledge! Cross the finish line first.

★ **Materials**

- *Race-Around Nouns* game sheet (page 6)
- *Race-Around Nouns* sentence strips (pages 8–10)
- *Race-Around Nouns* spinner (page 7)
- Game pieces

★ **To Start**

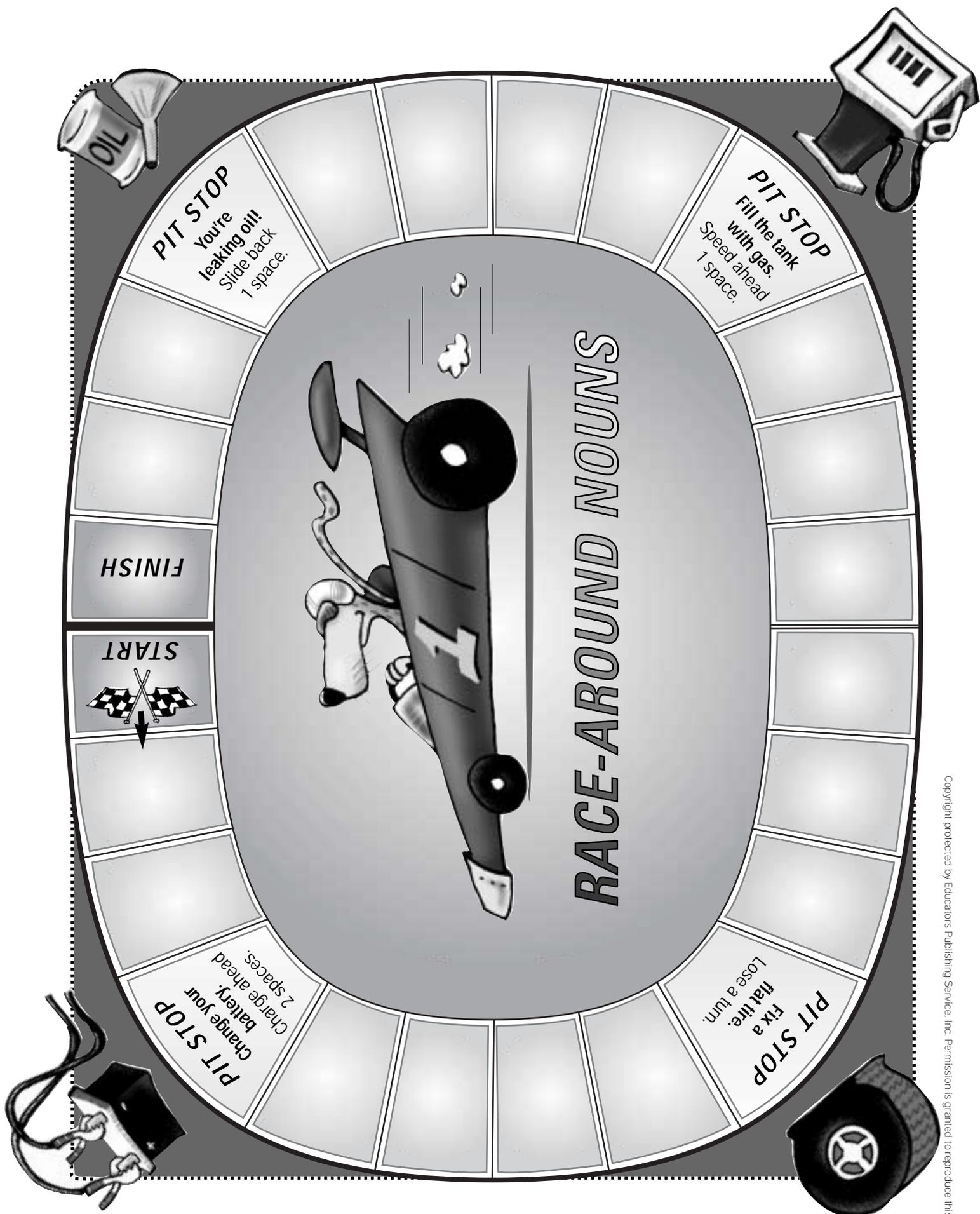
1. Put the sentence strips on the game table.
2. Place game pieces on the starting line.
3. Players should count the letters in their last names. The player with the most letters is the starting player. If there is a tie, count the number of letters in the players' first names as well.

★ **To Play**

1. Player 1 spins the spinner.
2. If the spinner lands on **1**, **2**, or **3**, the player draws a sentence strip. If the player can correctly identify every noun in the sentence, he or she advances the number of spaces on the spinner. (If the player misses a noun or incorrectly identifies another part of speech as a noun, he or she may not move ahead.)
3. **Bonus!** If the player has correctly identified all the nouns in the sentence, the player may speed ahead one extra space if he or she can correctly label them as common, proper, collective, or abstract.
4. If the spinner lands on **Decelerate**, play passes to the next player.
5. If the spinner lands on **Accelerate**, the player takes two turns in a row.
6. If the player lands on one of the **Pit Stop** spaces, he or she must follow the directions on the game sheet.
7. After player 1 completes his or her turn, he or she should place the sentence strip in a discard pile. Play passes to the left.
8. The winner is the first racer to cross the finish line.

★ **Variations**

1. To make this game easier, do not allow bonus moves. Players must only identify the nouns in each sentence—they do not have to label them by type.
2. To make this game harder, make the bonus move mandatory. The player must not only identify the nouns in the sentence, he or she must also correctly label them by type.
3. To make this game longer, players can complete two laps around the racetrack.



RACE-AROUND NOUNS

PIT STOP
 You're leaking oil!
 Slide back 1 space.

PIT STOP
 Fill the tank with gas.
 Speed ahead 1 space.

FINISH

START



PIT STOP
 Change your battery.
 Charge ahead 2 spaces.

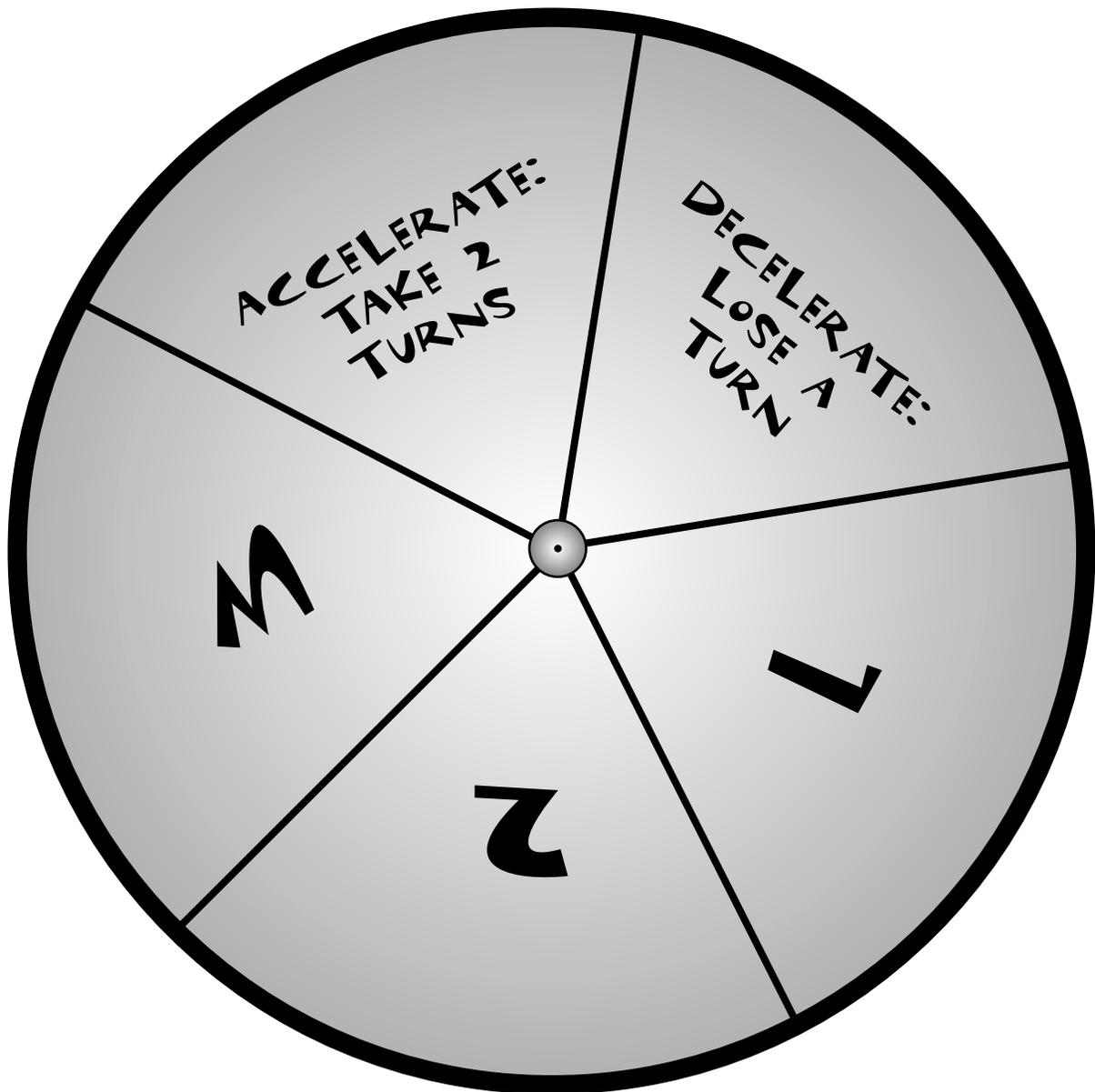
PIT STOP
 Fix a flat tire.
 Lose a turn.

GAME SPINNER

Race Around Nouns

To assemble spinner:

1. Copy and cut out the game spinner. For best results, mount the spinner on a piece of poster board or cardboard.
2. Pull apart the plastic spinner arrow, insert it through the center of the spinner, and snap it together. (If you do not have the plastic arrow, mount the spinner on a piece of foam board or thick cardboard. Then insert a push pin through the open end of a large paper clip and into the center of the spinner.)



SENTENCE STRIPS

Race Around Nouns

1. Samantha whistled to the puppy in her driveway.

2. Mark should iron his shirt and wrap his present before the party.

3. The jury of nine people entered the courtroom and gave their verdict.

4. Dr. Huang insisted that my father go to the hospital.

5. Misha entered the classroom and greeted her teacher, Ms. Johnson.

6. The traffic on Main Street makes it dangerous to ride bikes.

7. The young girl showed great patience during the long trip.

8. The fishermen could see the flock of geese flying over the pond.

9. Final exams began on the first Thursday in January.

10. My neighbor owns the complete set of plays by Shakespeare.

11. George complained of a sharp pain in his left foot.

12. People around the world must fight prejudice with determination.

13. Did your uncle see the Rocky Mountains in Colorado?

14. The final decision will be made by Ms. Smith and the committee.

15. Lee and Jackson were famous generals in the American Civil War.

16. My little brother A.J. is so proud of his new library card!

17. Mr. Goldstein struggled to help his daughters reach a compromise.

18. We admired the brilliant colors of the school of tropical fish.

19. On a clear night, you can see the lights of Manhattan over the bridge.

20. My mother loves the game of baseball, but Dad prefers tennis.

21. When did Anwar Sadat win the Nobel Prize?

22. It gave Julia great pleasure to see her old boyfriend at the reunion last month.

23. My family gathers for a feast at Thanksgiving every November.

24. In September, it is too cold to swim in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Canada.

25. Judge Johannsen reacted to the disorder in his courtroom with rage.

26. The fleet of tall ships sailed majestically up the Thames River.

27. Knowledge is the key to success.

28. Every day, Marta practices both the violin and the drums.

29. All the stores at Georgetown Mall are decorated for the holidays.

30. Will the Red Sox ever win the World Series?

31. James, eat your dinner and then you may go to the movies.

32. Friends must not be divided by petty arguments.

33. Mr. Reynolds baked a delicious batch of cookies for his class.

34. My mother was thrilled that I joined the Springfield High School debate team.

35. Grandma discovered a litter of kittens in an old barn.

36. Juan wrote a long letter to Senator Campbell about the election.

37. The view from the top of Mount Everest is amazing.

38. Our former neighbors, the Martins, have moved to Italy.

39. Fly-Right Airlines has just announced an increase in its fares to Chicago.

40. The owners of the lost hamster never gave up hope.

41. Mr. Singh will donate his painting by Matisse to the Museum of Modern Art.

42. My aunt reads the *Wall Street Journal* from cover to cover every day.

43. Have you ever witnessed the force of a powerful tornado?

44. Lisa, please bring me my reading glasses and *The Great Gatsby*.

45. Young people must face the future with confidence.

SENTENCE STRIPS ANSWERS

Race Around Nouns

CN = Common noun **PN** = Proper Noun **Coll. N.** = Collective Noun **Ab. N** = Abstract Noun

1. Samantha (PN); puppy (CN); driveway (CN)
2. Mark (PN); shirt (CN); present (CN); party (CN);
3. jury (Coll.N.); people (CN); courtroom (CN); verdict (CN)
4. Dr. Huang (PN); father (CN); hospital (CN)
5. Misha (PN); classroom (CN); teacher (CN); Ms. Johnson (PN)
6. traffic (CN); Main Street (PN); bikes (CN)
7. girl (CN); patience (Ab.N.); trip (CN)
8. fishermen (CN); flock (Coll.N.); geese (CN); pond (CN)
9. exams (CN); Thursday (PN); January (PN)
10. neighbor (CN); set (Coll.N.); plays (CN); Shakespeare (PN)
11. George (PN); pain (CN); foot (CN)
12. people (CN); world (CN); prejudice (Ab.N.); determination (Ab. N.)
13. uncle (CN); Rocky Mountains (PN); Colorado (PN)
14. decision (CN); Ms. Smith (PN); committee (Coll.N.)
15. Lee (PN); Jackson (PN); generals (CN); Civil War (PN)
16. brother (CN); A.J. (PN); card (CN)
17. Mr. Goldstein (PN); daughters (CN); compromise (Ab.N)
18. colors (CN); school (Coll. N.); fish (CN)
19. night (CN); lights (CN); Manhattan (PN); bridge (CN)
20. mother (CN); game (CN); baseball (CN); Dad (PN); tennis (CN)
21. Anwar Sadat (PN); Nobel Prize (PN)
22. Julia (PN); pleasure (Ab. N); boyfriend (CN) reunion (CN); month (CN)
23. family (CN); feast (CN); Thanksgiving (PN); November (PN)
24. September (PN); Atlantic Ocean (PN); coast (CN); Canada (PN)
25. Judge Johannsen (PN); disorder (Ab. N.); courtroom (CN); rage (Ab.N.)
26. fleet (Coll.N.); ships (CN); Thames River (PN)
27. Knowledge (Ab.N.); key (CN); success (Ab.N.)
28. day (CN); Marta (PN); violin (CN); drums (CN)
29. stores (CN); Georgetown Mall (PN); holidays (CN)
30. Red Sox (PN); World Series (PN)
31. James (PN); dinner (CN); movies (CN)
32. friends (CN.); arguments (CN)
33. Mr. Reynolds (PN); batch (Coll.N.); cookies (CN); class (Coll.N.)
34. mother (CN); Springfield High School (PN.); team (Coll.N.)
35. Grandma (PN); litter (Coll.N.); kittens (CN); barn (CN)
36. Juan (PN); letter (CN); Senator Campbell (PN); election (CN)
37. view (CN); top (CN); Mount Everest (PN)
38. neighbors (CN); Martins (PN); Italy (PN)
39. Fly-Right Airlines (PN); increase (CN); fares (CN); Chicago (PN)
40. owners (CN); hamster (CN); hope (Ab. N.)
41. Mr. Singh (PN); painting (CN); Matisse (PN); Museum of Modern Art (PN)
42. aunt (CN); *Wall Street Journal* (PN); cover (CN); cover (CN); day (CN)
43. force (CN); tornado (CN)
44. Lisa (PN); glasses (CN); *The Great Gatsby* (PN)
45. people (CN); future (Ab. N.); confidence (Ab. N)