



American Expression E2768 Balance game

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A balance game is a conversation game in which players must choose between two contrasting options. The choices are usually designed to be difficult, amusing, unusual, or thought-provoking, so neither answer is immediately obvious. In Korea, the term “balance game” is commonly used for this activity, while English speakers more often call it a “Would You Rather” game. Its simple structure makes it suitable for friends, families, students, coworkers, and strangers.

The basic rule is straightforward. A player is presented with two alternatives and must select one, usually without creating a third option or avoiding the decision. For example, someone might be asked, “Would you rather have a high-paying job you hate or a low-paying job you love?” After choosing, the player can explain the reason. The explanation often becomes more interesting than the choice because it reveals priorities, experiences, and values.

Balance games can range from silly questions to serious dilemmas. Light questions might ask whether someone would prefer to eat only sweet food or only salty food for a month. Imaginative questions may involve superpowers, time travel, or impossible situations. More serious questions can explore career choices, relationships, money, freedom, success, or morality. Because the game can cover almost any subject, it can easily be adapted to different groups, ages, and purposes.

One major attraction of a balance game is its ability to start conversations. People who have just met may struggle to find interesting topics, but choosing between two unusual possibilities gives them something specific to discuss. A person’s answer may lead to follow-up questions, disagreement, laughter, or debate. As participants explain their choices, they often discover unexpected similarities and differences. Therefore, the game can function as an effective icebreaker in social or educational settings.

The game is also useful for language learning, particularly in conversation classes. English learners can practice expressions such as “I would rather,” “I prefer,” “If I had to choose,” and “The reason is that.” They can also learn to compare advantages and disadvantages before making decisions. Teachers may ask students to defend their choices or persuade classmates to change sides. This encourages spontaneous speaking, critical thinking, vocabulary development, and active listening in an enjoyable format.

A successful balance game depends on well-designed choices. If one alternative is clearly more attractive, players will probably choose it immediately, leaving little room for discussion. The best questions create a genuine conflict between two appealing benefits or two uncomfortable disadvantages. However, participants should consider personal boundaries. Questions about sensitive matters may cause embarrassment or discomfort. Players should be allowed to skip a question, especially when the game is used among coworkers, students, or people who do not know one another well.

In conclusion, a balance game is a simple but engaging activity built around choosing between two alternatives. Although the expression “balance game” is familiar in Korea, “Would You Rather” is the more natural English name. The game provides entertainment while encouraging communication, decision-making, imagination, and discussion. It can reveal people’s personalities, preferences, priorities, and values without requiring complicated rules or equipment. When questions are balanced, creative, and appropriate, the game can transform an ordinary conversation into an enjoyable opportunity to understand how other people think and why they make particular choices.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think balance games are popular among people of different ages?
2. What makes a balance game question interesting and difficult to answer?
3. How can balance games help people understand each other’s personalities and values?
4. Do you think balance games are useful for improving English conversation skills? Why or why not?
5. What kinds of topics make the best balance game questions, and which topics should be avoided?