



# ***Pairing is Sharing game***

designed by Matteo Menapace

*A pocket guide for Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers*



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# Introduction

*Pairing is Sharing* is a word-association card game designed to support Red Cross Red Crescent (RC/RC) staff and volunteers in community engagement.

The game is designed to be **played by anyone**: RC/RC staff and volunteers, migrants, members of the host communities.

*Pairing is Sharing* is *not* a needs assessment tool. It's about having conversation, not interrogations. Reciprocity can help in building trust, which means that as a volunteer you should play the game too, sharing your stories, not just listening in.

*Pairing is Sharing* is a **cooperative storytelling game**.

- **Cooperative.** Instead of competing against the other players to hoard cards, in *Pairing is Sharing* all players work together towards a shared goal. This establishes a sense of connectedness, belonging and safety.
- **Storytelling.** *Pairing is Sharing* uses a very light game system to create the conditions for people to unearth stories from the past and share them without judgement. Turn after turn, everybody gets a fair chance to be heard, and listens actively to what the other players are sharing.

## Scope of the game

The game can be used for several scopes: as a playful conversation starter, as a conversation practice tool to build vocabulary of the host country language, and to get to know each other.

**There is no individual winner or loser!** Players win all together when they find all the matching cards. Players lose all together when the deck of translucent cards runs out.

**Duration:** On average, a game lasts about 45 minutes (after the rules have been explained). For a quicker game, less cards can be used.

## Materials

There are two types of cards in *Pairing is Sharing*:

1. **Memory** cards. These are the cards you will lay face down on the table and use to prompt word associations, two at a time.
2. **Memory Loss** cards. These are the cards you will pile up in the middle of the table and use as the game's common enemy: if these cards run out, then everyone loses.

You can download [all the cards, in various languages and combinations, from this folder](#). Each PDF document in the folder contains both Memory and Memory Loss cards, as well as some blank cards you can use to ask players to contribute their own ideas.

## How many cards do I need to play a game?

You will need 30 **Memory** cards.

- ❑ Print 2 copies of each page, ideally on thick paper so that players can't read the words when cards are face-down.

You will also need 16 **Memory Loss** cards.

- ❑ Print 1 copy of each page, ideally on translucent paper, so that when laid on top of Memory cards, they fade but not completely hide them.

You can experiment with different quantities and ratios. On average, a game with 30/16 lasts about 45 minutes (after the rules have been explained). If you want a quicker game, you could play with less cards (say 20/12). If you want an easier game, you can add more *Memory Loss* cards (say 30/20).

## How can I pre-select the cards to play with?

Each PDF document contains more cards than can fit into a single game. You can pre-select them and build decks tailored for the group of people you are playing the game with.

There are 2 groups of words (please see Appendix):

1. Group A are words about nature, colours and light-hearted activities, more suitable for an initial game.
2. Group B are words about experiences and connections, to be included in subsequent games.

## Players and Facilitators

Gather a minimum of 4 participants and include one or more facilitators.

Before a game, facilitators should pre-select a **subset of cards** to play based on: participants, scope and duration of the session.

**Suggestion:** Select words players will likely have an association with and focus on words that could highlight commonalities that are beyond participants identity.

**Recommendation:** Begin with group A and to move on to group B only if players are willing to continue and express consent to play with them.

# Rules → how to play

On your turn you pick 2 *Memory* cards. If their words don't match, you **tell a story** that revolves around those words, then cover them with 2 *Memory Loss* cards.

In order to pick a covered *Memory* card, you have to retell its story (which means you should **listen** to and **remember** the stories told by other players).

This is a **cooperative** game:

- Each *Memory* card has a word that matches another *Memory* card. You **win all together** when you pair all the *Memory* cards.
- You **lose all together** when the *Memory Loss* cards run out.

Can you pair all the *Memory* cards before you run out of *Memory Loss* cards?

## How to set up

Shuffle the **16 *Memory Loss* cards** (semi-transparent) into a deck in the middle of the table.

Shuffle the **30 *Memory* cards** and place them face-down around the *Memory Loss* cards.

Close your eyes. The first player to open their eyes starts. Play proceeds clockwise.

## On your turn

1. **Flip two *Memory* cards** Pick two *Memory* cards to reveal the words written on them.
2. **Tell a story** Say “*I remember...*” and share a story which revolves around the words on those two cards. Your story can be real or made up. Add details and flavour to make it memorable!
3. **Cover those two *Memory* cards** Take two cards from the *Memory Loss* deck and lay one on top of each *Memory* card you flipped. Unless you picked matching *Memory* cards, your turn is over.

👉 **Only the current player can pick cards.** The rest of the team can suggest which cards to pick, but can *never* say the exact words on the *Memory Loss* cards they are suggesting.

## Is it a match?

👉 **Before** you can claim two (possibly matching) *Memory* cards, you must tell what you remember about any story previously shared in relation to those cards.

👍 If you picked **two matching cards**, take any *Memory Loss* cards on top of them and put them at the bottom of the *Memory Loss* deck. **Bonus!** You can take another turn.

👎 If you picked **two cards that don't match**, tell a story that revolves around the words on them, then *fade* them both. Your turn is over.

# Recommendations for facilitators

## Before the game

- We recommend playing the game a couple of times with fellow volunteers or family and friends, so that you can explain it to other players in your own words.
- Carefully choose the cards according to the participants and the objective of the game.
- Select the facilitators according to the areas of expertise that can be useful (for example: a volunteer with basic psycho-social skills, a mediator) and must know the referral mechanism in place in case there is a need to do a referral.
- Think about some possible problematic reactions and agree on how to handle them properly.

## During the game - practical tips

### What if a player shares a traumatic memory?

A suggestion could be to pause for a moment, express gratitude to the player for sharing their story and ask everyone if they are comfortable to continue playing. Make it clear that there is no obligation to finish the game, or to rush to the next turn if players want to take a break.

### What if a player does not want to share anything on their turn?

Explain that there is no obligation to share something. If a player picks two cards that do not stimulate any association, or if they do not want to share what is coming up for them, reassure them they can pass their turn and ask if someone else would like to jump in. If everyone passes, you can flip those words back and pick another two. There is no shame or penalty in doing that.

### What if a player is struggling with a couple of cards?

Silence can be daunting, when everyone is looking at you and expecting you to tell an interesting story. You can try and diffuse the tension by gently stimulating the player's memory. For example, reminding them they can talk about a real-life event that happened recently, or earlier in their life. It could be something that happened to them directly, or something they heard from someone else. Or it could be something entirely made-up. It may also help to think about the "who, when and what" of their story (who are the protagonists, what happens, and when).

## What if someone does not play by the rules?

Try not to stick to the rules for the sake of it. Instead, use the rules as a flexible structure with the function of helping people to tell stories and speak up. In general, you can stick to the principle that if bending the rules can help players open up and talk, then it is actually good to do so. For example, if someone volunteers a story when it is not their turn, you can encourage them to speak, provided they are not interrupting/overtaking someone else. If someone tells a story with two words different from those on the cards they picked, you can let them continue and then ask them to include the words on the cards in their story. As a group, you can decide whether and how much to twist the rules.

## After the game

### How can I support players after a game?

Apply your basic psycho- social skills or, if necessary and with the consent of the participant, refer him/her to the person in charge of psycho-social support at your local branch.

### How can I seek support for myself?

Do not hesitate to share your feelings with fellow volunteers or ask for support to your manager or the psycho-social focal point.

# APPENDIX

## Group A

[You can find all the cards in printable format, in all the agreed languages and combinations, in this folder](#)

Words about nature, colours and light-hearted activities

<b>EN</b>	<b>IT</b>	<b>FR</b>	<b>ES</b>
BEE	APE	ABEILLE	ABEJA
BIRD	VOLARE	OISEAU	PÁJARO
BLUE	BLU	BLEU	AZUL
CAT	GATTO	CHAT	GATO
DANCE	BALLARE	DANSER	BAILAR
DOG	CANE	CHIEN	PERRO
FISH	PESCE	POISSON	PEZ
FLOWER	FIORE	FLEUR	FLOR
GREEN	VERDE	VERT	VERDE
GREY	GRIGIO	GRIS	GRIS
JOKE	SCHERZO	BLAGUE	BROMA
LAUGH	RIDERE	RIRE	REIR
LEAF	FOGLIA	FEUILLE	HOJA
MUSIC	MUSICA	MUSIQUE	MÚSICA
ORANGE	ARANCIO	ORANGE	NARANJA
PET	ANIMALE	ANIMAL	MASCOTA
PLAY	GIOCARE	JOUER	JUGAR
RED	ROSSO	ROUGE	ROJO
SING	CANTARE	CHANTER	CANTAR
SMILE	SORRISO	SOURIRE	SONREÍR
TREE	ALBERO	ARBRE	ÁRBOL
YELLOW	GIALLO	JAUNE	AMARILLO



## Group B

Words about life experiences and connections:

<b>EN</b>	<b>IT</b>	<b>FR</b>	<b>ES</b>
BOOK	LIBRO	LIVRE	LIBRO
BUILD	COSTRUIRE	CONSTRUIRE	CONSTRUIR
CALL	CHIAMARE	APPELER	LLAMAR
CHILD	BAMBIN*	ENFANT	NIÑO/A
DREAM	SOGNARE	RÊVER	SUEÑO
EAT	MANGIARE	MANGER	COMER
FAMILY	FAMIGLIA	FAMILLE	FAMILIA
FOOD	CIBO	NOURRITURE	COMIDA
FRIEND	AMIC*	AMI	AMIGA/O
GROW	CRESCERE	GRANDIR	CRECER
HELP	AIUTO	AIDE	AYUDAR
HOME	CASA	MAISON	HOGAR
IMAGINE	IMMAGINARE	IMAGINER	IMAGINAR
LEARN	IMPARARE	APPRENDRE	APRENDER
LEAVE	LASCIARE	LAISSER	SALIR
LISTEN	ASCOLTARE	ECOUTER	ESCUCHAR
LOOK	GUARDARE	REGARDER	MIRAR
MAKE	FARE	FAIRE	HACER
MEET	INCONTRO	RENCONTRER	REUNIRSE
PARTY	FESTA	FÊTE	FIESTA
PLAN	PIANO	PLAN	PLANIFICAR
READ	LEGGERE	LIRE	LEER
SAFE	SICURO	SÛR	SEGURO
SCHOOL	SCUOLA	ÉCOLE	COLEGIO
SHARE	CONDIVIDERE	PARTAGER	COMPARTIR
STUDY	STUDIARE	ÉTUDIER	ESTUDIAR
TALK	PARLARE	PARLER	HABLAR
TRANSLATE	TRADURRE	TRADUIRE	TRADUCIR
WATER	ACQUA	EAU	AGUA
WRITE	SCRIVERE	ÉCRIRE	ESCRIBIR