

Bingo.

This past Friday night, I was settling in for the evening, when my youngest son said, "Mum, can we go to the family bingo night at school?" I groaned inside, not wanting to go anywhere. I had received an automated voice message from the school a few days previously about the fundraising night. Bingo was on the agenda, and the winners would win large baskets, or hampers, filled with all kinds of goodies. These hampers had been donated from various businesses in town to help the school raise money. I had actually never been to any of the bingo nights, but I had heard that they are very popular. So, being a push-over, and wanting to please my kids, I took my two youngest. My older two wanted to stay at home and hang out with their dad; anyway, they are far too sophisticated for school bingo, now that they are eleven and twelve.....As we turned up at the school, it was starting to snow. The parking lot was full of cars, so I knew that it would be a full event. We walked in and found the whole gym full of people sitting at tables, concentrating on their bingo cards, and munching away on snacks that they had bought at the concession stand. There was a table where you could rent bingo cards for five dollars for the evening. "Which one do you want?" said the lady who was in charge. "Oh, I don't care. Just give me any of them," I replied. "You're obviously not a serious bingoer," she said to me laughing. She's right; I'm not. I've barely ever played it. But we sat down and started to cover the numbers that were called out. My children really got into it. We didn't win anything at all. I was hoping that we could take home one of the Christmas hampers, but it wasn't to be. What made it worse was that a couple of people each won three hampers. Three! There should be a rule against that! But we tried our best. My kids were very disappointed that we went home empty-handed. I told them, "Most of the time, you don't win anything. Only a few people ever win in these games, but there is always a chance." That didn't cheer them up, but I suppose it was a good lesson in reality.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: a hamper, a push-over, to hang-out, to be in charge.

1. The first prize will be a hamper full of all kinds of coffee products.
2. She is such a push-over; you can ask her for anything and she'll give it to you.
3. How about we stay in and just hang out together?
4. When you train your dogs, you have to be in charge.

