



iCEBREAKERS & iNDOOR GAMES FOR RAiNY DAYS

A collection of games and activities suitable for icebreakers or rainy days. While most of these are “children’s games” adults and youth can enjoy these as well during retreats and workshops.

Icebreakers and Indoor Games for Rainy Days

Educational Consultants

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WINK

WHERE TO PLAY

In an area large enough to contain a circle of chairs

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

15 is ideal. There must be an uneven number of players

EQUIPMENT

1 chair for every 2 players, and another for "It"

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To change chairs when winked at before being caught by your partner

Arrange the chairs in a circle, leaving plenty of room between each chair and in the center of the circle. The players should arrange themselves around the circle with one player behind and one player seated in each chair. One chair will remain empty; this is "It's" chair.

"It" stands behind his or her chair and initiated the game by winking as secretly as possible to a seated player. The seated player must then jump up and try to get into the empty chair in front of "It" before being tagged by the person standing behind him or her (this player must act quickly to try to tag the winked-at player from his or her position as this player is not allowed to move from behind the chair).

If the winked-at player succeeds in reaching the new chair (without having been tagged), the abandoned partner with the empty chair becomes "It" and must wink at another seated player in order to find a new partner. If the winked-at player is tagged by his or her partners, he or she remains seated, and "It" must wink again.

SEWING UP THE GAP

WHERE TO PLAY

In a large area suitable for running

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 10--larger groups make it more challenging!

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For the chased player to close all the gaps in the circle before being tagged by the chaser

The group forms a circle, standing arm's distance apart, with two players—the chaser and the chased—remaining on the outside. Two outside players stand on opposite sides of the circle.

When given a signal to go, the chaser begins chasing the other player around the circle. The chased player begins to weave in and out of the circle.

When the chased player passes from the outside of the circle to the inside through two players, they join hands in order to "sew up the gap." The player being chased aims to sew up all the gaps so he or she is safely on the inside and therefore cannot be tagged by the chaser. If he or she is caught by the chaser, they exchange roles.

CAPTURE THE FLAG

WHERE TO PLAY

Outdoors or large, open indoor space

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 8

EQUIPMENT

A handkerchief, bandanna, or scarf for every player

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For one team to capture all the handkerchiefs of the opposing team

Designate a play area, about thirty by thirty feet for eight players. A center dividing line should also be established.

Divide the players into two equal teams, each team lining up behind one of the end lines. Both sides place their handkerchiefs just inside the boundary.

At the starting signal, each team rushes for the other team's handkerchiefs. Any players tagged before they have a handkerchief in hand are considered captured and must stand behind the enemy flags.

If a player succeeds in grabbing a handkerchief, he or she is safe from tagging and may run it back behind his or her own team's line. Players may also free their teammates by tagging them behind the enemy line. They may not, however, free a player and capture a flag in the same run: two separate runs are necessary.

The first team to capture all the other team's flags are the winner. If teams are equally matched, this may take along time to happen. The game may also be ended after a predetermined period of time; the team that has the greater number of handkerchiefs is the winner.

ODD BEAN

WHERE TO PLAY

In any space large enough to accommodate the group of players comfortably, seated on the floor or around a table

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 2

EQUIPMENT

A bag of dried beans, enough so that each player may have 12; small bags to hold the beans

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To collect all the beans from the other players

This game is related to Jan-Ken-Pon (paper-rock-scissors) but the winner is determined by the number of beans he or she has at the end of the game.

Each player is given a bag filled with twelve beans. The first player hides a number of beans in one fist and asks the next player, "Odds or evens?"

If the next player correctly guesses whether the fist holds an odd or even number of beans, he or she collects those beans from the first player. If the guess is wrong, the second player must forfeit the same number of beans to the first player.

The second player then places a number of beans in his or her hand. He or she turns to the third player and asks, "Odds or evens?" and the game continues.

Any player to lose all of his or her beans must drop out of the game. The winner is the player with the most beans when a set period of time expires, or, if time permits, the player who has collected all the beans.

DRAWING IN THE DARK

WHERE TO PLAY

Indoors after sunset or in a room that can easily be darkened

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

2 or more

EQUIPMENT

Pencil and paper for each player

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To draw a picture according to a story told by one of the other players, without being able to see the paper

An adult or older child should serve as the storyteller. Give a sheet of paper and a pencil to each of the players. When everyone is prepared, turn the lights out and darken the room.

The storyteller must invent a short tale which will be illustrated by the other players. The story doesn't have to be very elaborate, but it should include a number of different figures and objects which will be drawn by the other players.

For example, the story teller may begin, "Once there was a girl named Denise. Please draw Denise." All the players should finish up their drawings and the story will continue.

For example: "Denise put her dog, Spot, in a leash and took him to a pet show. Now draw Spot and his leash, which Denise holds in her hand. Denise and Spot admired the beautiful trophy that sat on the judges' table. Now add the trophy and a table to your drawing. Denise entered Spot in the Pet show. Spot didn't win the trophy, but Denise gave him a bone for being her favorite. Now put the bone in Spot's mouth and finish up your drawing."

When the drawings are completed, turn on the lights. The illustration that comes out closest to resembling the scene described, as determined by the storyteller or by vote, is the winner.

BARNYARD PEANUT HUNT

WHERE TO PLAY

In a large room or area suitable for hiding peanuts

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 12

EQUIPMENT

1 or 2 pounds of unshelled peanuts, depending on the number of players; a small bag for each team

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To find as many peanuts as possible

Before the game begins, the peanuts are hidden around the playing area. The players should be divided into an even number of teams. Each group selects a captain and an animal such as a cat, dog, cow, horse, or bird, whose cry it will imitate.

At the start of an allotted period of time, all players begin searching for peanuts. When a non-captain player finds a peanut, he or she must imitate the sound made by his or her group's animal in order to get the attention of the captain, so he or she will pick up the peanuts. If there are many peanuts and many players, the ruckus will suggest a barnyard!

At the end of the search period, the team with the most peanuts wins. Peanuts found can be divided and eaten as a prize.

DUCK DUCK GOOSE

WHERE TO PLAY

On a reasonably flat lawn or large grassy area

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

A minimum of 10 for the most suspense and exercise

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For the player who is tapped to catch "It" (or risk becoming "It")

One player is chosen to be "It." This player stands while all others sit cross-legged in a wide circle.

"It" walks around the outside of the circle while tapping each seated player lightly on the head, saying, "Duck" with each tap. He or she eventually taps one player and says, "Goose." This tapped player must quickly stand and run to try to catch the person who is "It" as he or she runs around the circle, trying to reach the spot abandoned by the "Goose."

If "It" outruns Goose and has taken Goose's place in the circle before being tagged, Goose becomes the new "It." If tagged, "It" must start the process of tapping again.

WESTERN UNION

WHERE TO PLAY

Anywhere

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 8

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To pass a "message" around the circle by squeezing hands without being caught by "It"

The players join hands to form a circle around "It," who stands in the center and covers his or her eyes. One player selects another player in the circle as the recipient of a "telegram" and announces, "I am going to send a telegram to _____ [name of one of the players in the circle]."

With this announcement, he or she squeezes the hand of a player on either side in order to begin the transmission, and "It" opens his or her eyes, hoping to see the message being transmitted by squeeze. If "It" catches someone squeezing, that person must become "It." The direction in which the telegram is being sent can change at any time.

When the player announced as the recipient of the telegram gets the message (in the form of a squeeze), he or she announces so, and the process must begin again until "It" catches someone.

RUN FOR YOUR SUPPER

WHERE TO PLAY

In any area with plenty of room for running

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 10 (works best with lots of players!)

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To run around the circle fast enough to get to an empty space

One player is designated as “It,” while the others join hands in a circle. “It” remains outside the circle.

As “It” walks around the circle, he or she chooses two players who are next to each other and pulls their joined hands apart, calling, “Run for your supper!” These two players run in opposite directions around the outside of the circle in a race back to their original spot.

“It” takes one of the vacated places. The first runner to return and slap the outstretched hands of “It” completes the circle. The player left outside the circle becomes the next “It”.

VARIATION

Instead of running for their suppers, players can also hop, skip, crawl, march, and so forth.

MOVING STATUES

WHERE TO PLAY

On the grass, playground, or open room

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 4; it is more fun with more players!

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To reach the finish line without being caught moving by the caller

Establish a starting line and a finish line about fifty feet apart. The player chosen to be the caller stands at the finish and the other players line up at the start.

The caller turns his or her back to the other players and begins counting to ten. The other players rush toward the finish line quickly but carefully, because they must be motionless, like “statues” when the caller finishes counting and turns around to face them.

Any player caught moving by the caller must return to the starting line. The first player to the finish line becomes the caller for the next game.

DRESS ME

WHERE TO PLAY

Anywhere. This is a great icebreaker for a party!

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 4

EQUIPMENT

A big old shirt

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To move the shirt from one player to another while they hold hands.

The first player puts on the big shirt and takes the hand of the next player. The rest of the players try to take the shirt off the first player and put it onto the second breaking their handhold.

The only way that this can be done is to turn the shirt inside out as it goes over the next player's head. Once it is over the player's head and onto the next player, another player joins hands with the player wearing the shirt, and the first player becomes a dresser.

Depending on the number of players, the line can be extended until all the players have had the shirt on and taken off. If there are enough players and shirts available, this can be played in teams as a race.

AESOP'S MISSION

WHERE TO PLAY

Anywhere

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

4 or more

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To discover the letter that "Aesop" has forbidden before being eliminated from the game.

One player is designated as "Aesop," and the other players are the "animals" of Aesop's fables. Aesop must secretly choose one letter that must be avoided by the players.

Play begins when Aesop asks the first player a question that can require only a one word answer. A crafty Aesop will try to ask a question that is likely to be answered with a word containing the forbidden letter.

For example, if the forbidden letter is s, Aesop might ask, "Which is your favorite season of the year?" hoping the player will respond with "summer" or "spring."

If the player responds to Aesop's question with a word containing the prohibited letter, he or she loses one life. The next player is given a chance to guess the forbidden letter before being asked a question.

After losing three lives, a player is dropped from the game. The players try to discover the taboo letter before using up all three lives. The player who guesses the forbidden letter first becomes the next Aesop.

BRONCO TAG

WHERE TO PLAY

In a yard or on a playground

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 10

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To join the other players in becoming "broncos"

Assuming there are ten players, divide these players into groups of three with one remaining as the chaser. The groups of three form broncos: one player is the "head," and the other two line up behind, holding onto the player in front at the waist; they are the "tails."

After the broncos begin running, the chaser must try to join one of them by getting hold of the waist of a tail player.

If the chaser successfully joins a bronco, the head of the bronco must break off and become the chaser, while the next player in line now becomes the head.

This game has no real winner or loser. The object is simply to elude the chaser if you are part of a bronco and to join a bronco if you are the chaser. The broncos should twist and turn, trying to keep the head facing the chaser in order to avoid a new tail.

This game is also called Hook on Tag.

HUMAN HURDLE

WHERE TO PLAY

On dry ground

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 10

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To be the first team to complete a series of human hurdles

Divide the players into two equal teams. Both teams should assign their players numbers (for example, 1 through 6 if there are six players on a team).

Each team forms a large circle according to a numerical order. Players should lie on their backs with heads toward the center of the circle and feet pointing out.

At a starting signal, player number 1 from each team jumps up and runs around the circle, vaulting players 2,3, 4, and so on, until reaching his or her original starting place. Player number 1 then lies back down.

Once player number 1 is back in place, player number 2 stands and continues the hurdling, over player 3 and the rest in succession, until returning to the starting point.

Each player in succession leaps over all the other players. When the last player has completed the circuit and has returned to position, his or her team shouts to indicate that they are done. The first team to finish wins.

ICE CUBES

WHERE TO PLAY

Outdoors, on a warm day

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 8

EQUIPMENT

An ice cube for each team

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To melt an ice cube by passing it from team member to team member

Divide the players into two equal teams. At a starting signal, each team picks up an ice cube and tries to melt it as quickly as possible.

Players can rub it between their hands or against their clothes, but they aren't allowed to put it in their mouths. While they are trying to melt the ice cube, it should be passed around the team frequently--no player should keep it for more than a few seconds at a time. Players should keep it off the ground too.

The first team to melt its ice cube wins. On a really hot day, you may want to play more than one round of this game!

MUSICAL CHAIRS

WHERE TO PLAY

In a room that can hold enough chairs to accommodate the number of players

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

6 to 20 is most manageable

EQUIPMENT

1 chair for every player except 1 (example: for 10 players, use 9 chairs); music.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To be the last remaining player sitting in a chair when the music stops.

The chairs should be placed in a straight line with every other chair facing in the opposite direction. (If there is a large group of players, chairs can be placed back to save room.)

Before beginning, a leader should be chosen, and the players should distribute themselves evenly around the chairs. When the leader begins the music, the players march in one direction around the chairs.

After a moment, the leader surprises the group by turning the music off. This is a signal to the players to find a seat as quickly as possible and sit down. The player left without a chair is eliminated from the game.

One chair is then removed in order to keep the number of chairs one less than that of players. The leader then starts up the music again, stops it, and the players repeat the dash for seats.

A player and a chair are removed with each round until two players are left to duel for the last chair. The player to capture this final chair wins.

UP, JENKINS!

WHERE TO PLAY

At a table

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 8

EQUIPMENT

A quarter

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To discover the person who has the quarter

Divide the players into two equal teams and seat the teams on opposite sides of the table. Choose a leader for each team. One side should have possession of the quarter.

At a starting signal, the team with the quarter passes it back and forth with their hands beneath the tabletop.

After counting slowly to ten, the leader of the team without the quarter calls, "Up, Jenkins!" The players of the opposing team must immediately raise their closed fists above the table.

The leader of the other team will then call, "Down, Jenkins!" With this signal the players on the team with the quarter must slap their opened hands down upon the table. The other team should listen carefully for the sound of the quarter hitting the table before it is covered by a hand.

The team without the quarter takes a moment to discuss in secret whom they think might have the coin. They make a guess among themselves and then return to the game/

One by one, the leader calls the names of the players from the other team, trying to eliminate those he or she believes do not have the quarter. Each player must pick up his or her hands from the table when named.

If the quarter appears before the last player is called, the team with the coin may hide it again. If the other team is correct in identifying the player who is hiding the coin, they may now hide it.

Score can be kept according to how many times a team discovers the location of the quarter within a given time limit of ten to fifteen minutes. The leaders can be rotated if other players want to get the chance to call, "Up, Jenkins!"

VARIATION

To add to the challenge, the guessing team should attempt to identify not only the coin holder but under which hand the coin is hidden as well.

WHAT ARE WE SHOUTING?

WHERE TO PLAY

Anyplace where shouting won't disturb anyone

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

10 or more

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To guess the phrase being shouted by the opposing team

Divide the players onto two equal teams. The team elected to shout first leaves the room to choose something to shout. They should select an easily recognizable phrase or title from suitable sources such as nursery rhymes, the names of TV shows or song lyrics. The phrase should have as many words as the team has players—each player should be assigned one word from the phrase to shout.

After picking a phrase, the shouting team should return to the room where the other team is waiting. At the count of three, each player should simultaneously shout his or her word.

The opposing team must try to make sense out of the shout and guess the selected saying. The shout may be repeated once, but then the other team must attempt to guess.

If a team guesses correctly, it is awarded a point and can become the team that shouts. If it guesses incorrectly, the shouting team gets a point and is allowed another turn to shout a new phrase. The team with the most correct guesses at the end of the game wins.

FOUL PLAY RACE

WHERE TO PLAY

Outdoors

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

6 or more

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To win the race if you are a fast runner, but to keep your opponents from reaching the finish line if you lose an early heat

Line up the runners at the starting line as in a normal race. For this first heat, everyone runs for the finish line. The player who comes in last, however, is allowed to stand in the path of the race during the next heat.

As the racers come toward the finish line, the player standing in the race path may try to run players out of bounds and into each other, while the racers attempt to avoid any hindrance.

The last runner in the second heat joins the other player in the race path, as do the final runners in succeeding heats. The runner of the last two remaining in the race who manages to get past all the others now standing in the way is the winner.

i PACKED MY BAG

WHERE TO PLAY

Anywhere

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

2 or more

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To remember a growing verbal list made by the players of all the items packed in a bag

The first player initiated the game by choosing an item to complete the phrase, "I packed my bag and in it I put a(n) _____." For example, "I packed my bag and in it I put a toothbrush."

The second player continues the game by repeating what the first person packed in the bag and adding something of his or her own: "I packed my bag and in it I put a toothbrush and a volleyball."

Each player in turn adds another word to the string and repeats the preceding items in order. Any player who forgets an item or recites the list out of order is dropped from the game. The player who remembers the longest string of objects wins.

HOW DO YOU DO, SHOE?

WHERE TO PLAY

Anywhere

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

8 or more

EQUIPMENT

None, except the shoes on your feet

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To pass your shoes around the circle and get them back again

The players remove their shoes and place them in front of them as they sit in a circle of the floor.

At the signal of the leader, all the players pick up their shoes and begin passing them around the circle in one direction as fast as possible.

When the leader calls, "Change!" the shoes should be moved in the other direction. When the leader calls, "Find!" all players should try to get their own shoes as they are passed around. The shoes are kept going around the circle until everyone has their own pack back.

HUNT THE KEY

WHERE TO PLAY

Anywhere

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

8 or more

EQUIPMENT

A small object: a key, a pebble, a coin, a token, etc.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For the “hunter” to discover who has the key and for the other players to try to conceal the location of the key from the “hunter”

The players form a closely knit circle seated on the ground. One player is chosen to be the “hunter” and must sit in the center of the circle.

While the hunter’s eyes are closed, a key (or whatever object) is given to one of the players in the circle. The players begin passing the key around the circle without actually showing the key, while the hunter watches. At the same time, those players without the key should pretend that they are passing it in order to fool the hunter.

When the hunter suspects someone of having the key, he or she calls the name of that player. The passing stops, and the called player must reveal whether he or she has the key.

If this player has the key, he or she becomes the hunter. If the hunter has guessed incorrectly, the game continues.

COFFEEPOT

WHERE TO PLAY

Anywhere

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

3 or more

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For "It" to guess the verb known to all the other players by asking questions

One player is chosen to be "It." A second player chooses a verb and whispers it to the remaining player, or shows it by writing and then erasing it on a board or easel.

When everyone knows the selected verb, "It" asks a question of each of the players in order to discover the word, substituting "coffeepot" for the unknown verb in the questions.

For example, "ski" is the designated verb. In attempting to guess the word, "It" might ask: "Do you 'coffeepot' indoors?" The player would reply "No." "It" might then ask, "Do you 'coffeepot' during the summer?" etc.

At time limit of two or three minutes or 10 questions can be set. The last player to give an answer before the word is guessed must be "It" for the next round.

ASSASSIN

WHERE TO PLAY

Seated in a circle on the floor or around a table

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

6 or more

EQUIPMENT

Pencil or pen and scraps of paper

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For the “assassin” to eliminate all other players from the game by winking at them, while avoiding being caught

Cut up or tear off a small piece of paper for each player. Mark one of these sheets with an X, fold, shuffle, and distribute them among the players. The players should open them secretly. The player whose paper is marked with the X will be the assassin.

After all the papers have been checked, the players form a circle around a table or seat themselves on the floor. Players examine the faces of the others around the circle, trying to discover who the assassin is. When the assassin winks at another player, that player must say, “I’ve been hit” and must drop out of the game.

If a player catches the assassin in the act of winking, the game is over, and the sharp-eyed player is the winner. But if the assassin succeeds in winking at all the players (except the last), he or she is the winner.

CALL BALL

WHERE TO PLAY

On a grassy playground

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

8 or more

EQUIPMENT

A rubber playground ball

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For the player whose name is called to catch the ball

The players make a circle around one person who stands in the middle with a ball. The player tosses the ball straight up, high into the air, and calls the name of one of the other players.

The player whose name was called tries to catch the ball before it bounces more than once. If the catch is good, that player becomes the center person. If not, the player who originally threw the ball begins again.

For “Spud” the person called catches the ball, takes three steps, and tries to hit a running player with the ball to get them “out.”

CAT AND MOUSE

WHERE TO PLAY

Outdoors or large room

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 8

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

For the “cat” to catch the “mouse”

Before the game begins, designate one player as the “cat” and the other as the “mouse.” The rest of the players join hands and form a circle around the mouse, while the cat remains outside the circle.

The mouse starts the game by darting outside the circle and around the players. The cat must try to tag the mouse, while staying on the outside of the circle. The players may lift their arms over the mouse’s head in order to help him or her, but they will block the cat.

When the cat finally tags the mouse, the mouse becomes the new cat, and cat joins the circle, and another player becomes the mouse.

CONTRARY CHILDREN

WHERE TO PLAY

Anywhere

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

At least 6

EQUIPMENT

None

OBJECT OF THE GAME

To do the opposite of the leader’s comments, and by doing so correctly, to be the last player remaining in the game

This is a twist on **Simon Says**. Instead of following the leader’s commands, players try to do the opposite of what they are told.

For example, if the leader says, “Take three hops toward me,” all the players should hop three steps *away* from the leader. When told, “Touch your right foot with your left hand,” players are to touch the left foot with the right hand.

This requires the leader to be more alert than in Simon Says. The leader should not demonstrate any of the movements: he or she should concentrate on watching for players following, rather than opposing, instruction.

Players not doing the opposite of the command are eliminated. Last person left in the game wins.



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