



Good for Groups

Icebreakers, party games, challenges, and contests designed for a crowd.

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Animal Olympics

Crawl like a crab, creep like a cat, or run like a cheetah. How far in five seconds?

Before beginning

Mark a starting line with chalk or masking tape.

1 Get in character

Choose an animal. Practice moving like that animal.

2 Predict

Everyone lines up along the starting line.

Talk About

How far do you think you can go in five seconds when you're moving like your animal? Make a prediction.

(Optional) Get a sense of five seconds by counting together: one Mississippi, two Mississippi, three Mississippi, four Mississippi, five Mississippi.

3 Go!

Move like your animal while someone times five seconds.

4 Compare or measure

Mark your ending point with chalk or tape.

Talk About

Did you go as far as you thought in five seconds?

Closest prediction wins.

Levels: Medium (Easy)

Group size: 3 or more

Materials:

watch or clock that shows seconds

chalk or masking tape

ruler or tape measure



Variation

Cross the room (Easy). Could you cross the room in five seconds when you're moving like your animal? Could you get half way across the room? Predict, then try it.

Jump, clap, and snap on time or you're out. Last one standing wins!

Levels: Easy, Medium, Hard

Group size: 4 or more

Materials:
none

1 Get in a circle and start counting by 1s

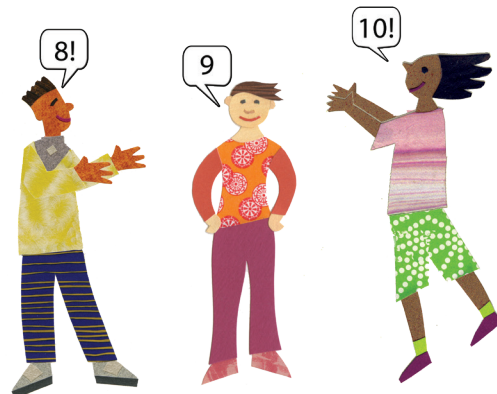
Easy. Jump whenever you say 10, 20, or another multiple of 10.

Medium. Start with the Easy version, and then add another action: clap whenever you say 2, 4, 6, or another even number. On multiples of 10, jump *and* clap.

Hard. Start with the Medium version, and then add another action: snap your fingers whenever you say 3, 6, 9, or other multiples of 3.

Talk About

Which numbers get a jump, snap, and clap?



If you miss a jump, snap, or clap, you're out.

2 Keep going until just one person is left

Last one standing wins.

Variations

Everyone wins (Easy, Medium, Hard). Everyone stays in the game. Keep going until the group reaches 100.

Add another action (Medium, Hard). For instance, stamp your foot on multiples of 4. For extra challenge, count by $\frac{1}{2}$ s, $\frac{3}{2}$ s, 3s, 5s, or 7s instead of 1s.

If we stood on each others' shoulders, could we reach the ceiling?

Before beginning

Decide on a question about how far, long, or high the group could reach together.

Easy. Choose something the group can try out:

If we lie head to foot, could we reach across the playground?

Medium. Choose something the group can figure out by trying out or measuring:

If we all joined hands and stretched out, could we reach all the way down the hallway?

Hard. Choose something the group will need to estimate:

If we stood on each other's shoulders, could we reach the top of the building?

Levels: Easy, Medium, Hard

Group size: 6 or more

Materials:

ruler or measuring tape
(Medium, Hard)

calculator (optional)

1 Predict

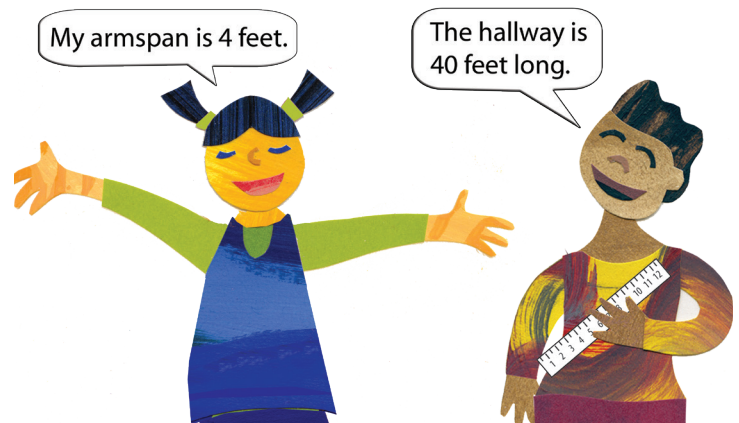
**Talk
About**

Could we reach that far? Why do you think so?

2 Find out!

Try it or estimate.

Compare predictions and results.



Variation

Could we reach 1,000? (Hard). Make a prediction about 1,000. For instance, if we all stood on each other's heads, would we be more than 1,000 inches tall? If we all got on a giant scale, would we weigh more than 1,000 pounds?

Try this as an icebreaker, or play the game variation—fastest finder wins!

Levels: Easy, Medium, Hard

Group size: 4 or more

Materials:

copy of "Find Someone" list for each person

pencils

rulers (Medium, Hard)

Before beginning

Make up a "Find Someone" list. Include about 10 items.

Easy. Include items about counting, comparing, and basic shapes (e.g., circle).

Find someone
who lives with more pets than people.
wearing more than 5 buttons.

Medium. Include Easy items and some items about measurements.

Find someone
with hair about 6 inches long.
more than 5 feet tall.

Hard. Include Medium items and some items about shapes and patterns on clothing.

Find someone
wearing parallel lines.
wearing a shape with more than 4 sides.



1 Find someone

Everyone gets a list. Write down who you find for each item.

There could be some items no one fits.

2 Share findings

Talk About

Who did you find wearing parallel lines? Is anyone else wearing parallel lines?

Variation

Find it fastest (Easy, Medium, Hard). Play it as a game. First person to find someone for each item wins.

Quick Questions

Ask a quick question to break the ice.

Before beginning

Come up with a multiple choice question the group will enjoy answering. Write the question at the top of a large sheet of paper.

Put possible answers along the bottom of the paper.

How many letters are in your first name?									
Less than 3	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	more than 10

Levels: Medium (Easy, Hard)

Group size: 6 or more

Materials:

large piece of paper
markers or stickers

1 Predict

Talk
About

What do you think the most common answer will be? the least common?

2 Everyone answers

Use markers or stickers to show your answer.

3 Compare predictions and results

Look over the answers. Any surprises?

What's your favorite season?			
X X X	X	X X	X X X X X X X X
Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer

I picked spring, but summer got the most votes.



Variations

Yes or no (Easy). Use a question with just two answers. For instance, "Do you have a pet?"

Ask two groups (Medium). Each group responds in a different color. For instance, adults in red and children in blue. Do the groups answer in the same way?

It's about time (Hard). Use a question that involves time or another measurement. For instance, "How many hours of sleep did you get last night?" (6 or less, 6.5, 7, 7.5 ...) Or, "How tall are you?" (48 inches or less, 49, 50 ...).

Curtains up! You have ten minutes to make up a skit using everything in the bag.

Levels: Medium (Hard)

Group size: groups of 3-4

Materials:

watch or clock

per group of 3-4:

one paper bag, two objects (e.g., penny, hat), a ruler, two index cards, and (optional) a world records book

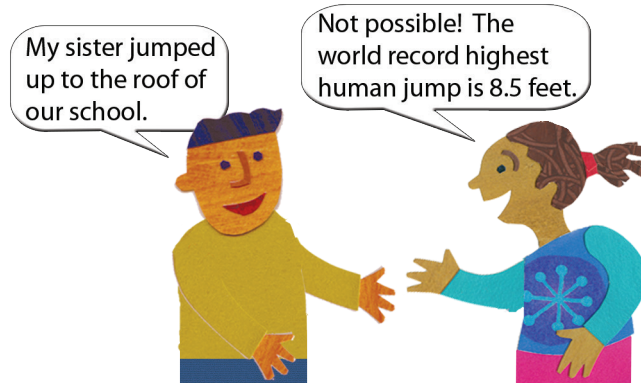
Before beginning

Make up skit bags. Put in each bag: two objects, a ruler, two index cards, and, optionally, a world records book. On one index card, write a measurement. On the other, write a number or price.



1 Distribute bags and plan skits

Groups have ten minutes to plan a short skit using everything in their bags. There must be a disagreement about sizes.



2 Perform

Set a maximum of five minutes per skit.

Talk About

How would you resolve the disagreement?

Variations

Use the news (Hard). Include information you cut from a newspaper in each skit bag. Use three numbers, sports scores, or temperatures and three movie titles or headlines for each bag.

Tall tales (Medium, Hard). Each skit must include three claims involving sizes or numbers. Two must be possible (e.g., my brother weighed 7 pounds at birth), and one must be impossible (e.g., my sister weighed 20 pounds at birth). The audience needs to guess which is impossible. Try to trick the audience!

Two Way Split

Got a big group? Divide into two teams.

1 Predict

Talk About

Can we break into two equal groups? How do you know?



Levels: Easy (Medium)

Group size: 6 or more

Materials:

none

2 Team up

Pick a way to divide into two groups (e.g., count 1, 2, 1, 2 and break into 1s and 2s; count off 1, 2, 3, 4 for a group of four).

Then, split!

If you can't make two equal groups, decide what to do.

Variations

Three way split (Medium). Predict whether the group could form three equal teams. Talk about different ways to find out and choose one. Try it and see.

Station rotation (Medium). Breaking into groups so you can rotate among activity stations? Come up with a rotation plan: how much time each group spends at each station, and the order in which they rotate.

Follow the clues to find five puzzle pieces. First to find and assemble them wins.

Levels: Easy, Medium

Group size: 1 or 2 per team

Materials:

letter-size envelopes: 5

clue list: 1 per team

recipe, image, or special message for the puzzle: 1 sheet per team

rulers

tape

recipe ingredients (optional)

Before beginning

Create a clue list of five clues. Each clue should lead to the place you will hide an envelope of puzzle pieces.

Easy. Use clues about sizes and counting.

1. Look under the box with 10 crayons.
2. Find the tallest chair. Look under it.

Medium. Use clues about measuring and shapes.

1. Look 10 inches above the book shelf.
2. Find the window with 9 rectangles. Look below it.



Make the puzzle pieces.

- Cut each puzzle sheet into five pieces.
- Put all copies of the same piece into an envelope. Write the number of the clue on the envelope.

Hide the envelopes in the locations that match the clues.

1 Look for puzzle pieces

Each team gets a clue list. To avoid crowding at any one location, each team finds clues in a different order. When they find the envelope for a clue, they take one puzzle piece.

Talk About

How did you count the window panes? Did you count squares as rectangles?

Each team finds five puzzle pieces.

2 Assemble the pieces

Teams tape the pieces together. First to finish wins.

3 Make the recipe (optional)

If the puzzle is a recipe, cook and eat!



Line Up

Pass the time when you're waiting in line—or play the Detective game (Variation).

Before beginning

Choose a size or number characteristic everyone can see and compare, such as hair length, height, or number of shirt buttons.

1 Predict

Talk About

If we line up from shortest to longest arm span, do you think you'll be at the start, middle, or end of the line?

Level: Easy

Group size: 4 or more

Materials:
none

2 Line up

Make comparisons and stand in order. If two people have the same measurement, they stand side by side.

3 Are we in order?

Check and change places if needed. The last person in line chooses how to line up next time.



Variations

Detective (Easy). On each round, one person, the Detective, leaves the room. The others line up in order by a secret characteristic they pick (e.g. number of buttons). The Detective returns and asks yes-or-no questions to figure out the characteristic (Is it about clothing? Is it about length?).

Play enough rounds so everyone gets a turn as the Detective. Keep track of how many questions each Detective asks. The Detective who asks the fewest questions wins.

Ready, set, go! You have two minutes to build a tower.

Levels: Easy, Medium, Hard

Group size: 1-2 per tower

Materials per tower:

20-30 containers of different sizes, small boxes, or other objects that can be stacked

ruler, yardstick, or tape measure: 1 per tower (Medium, Hard)

clock or watch that shows minutes (for whole group)

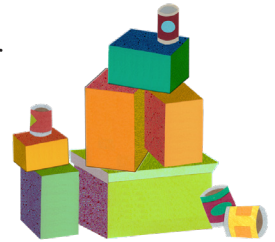
1 Practice

Use the materials to practice building a tower that meets the goal.

Easy. Build the tallest tower you can.

Medium. Build a tower as close as possible to 4 feet high.

Hard. Build a tower at least 4 feet high with the smallest possible "footprint" (area in contact with the floor).



Talk About

Which shapes make for a good tower base? Which work well in the middle?

I used the biggest box at the bottom to make a strong base.



2 Get ready, get set

Take apart your practice towers.

Choose someone to be the timekeeper for the tournament.

3 Go!

You have exactly two minutes to build a tower that meets the goal.

4 Find the winner

The tower closest to the goal wins.

(continued on next page)

Tower Tournament (cont'd)

Variations

Everyone wins (Easy, Medium, Hard). Each tower wins an award for size or shape. Everyone decides on awards together.

Less is more (Medium). Build the tallest tower using the fewest items.

Which holds the most? (Hard). Make a silo. Build the tower that would hold the most grain.

Symmetrical designs (Hard). Build the tallest symmetrical tower.

