

Parlour Games to develop thinking and communication skills and just have fun (use your discretion whether they are suitable for your children and family)

## **FICTIONARY**

Whether they're played in the form of board games or mobile apps, word games are incredibly popular. They were also a hit with Victorian audiences, though the options they had back then were severely limited. Instead of pulling up a game on their phone, players would pull out a dictionary. To play Fictionary, one person reads an obscure word from the dictionary while everyone else jots down their made-up definitions. After the person with the dictionary reads the fake definitions out loud along with the real one, players vote on whichever definition they think is true. Fake submissions earn points for each vote they receive and players earn points for guessing the right answer. If no one guesses correctly, whoever is holding the dictionary gets a point.

## **SQUEAK PIGGY SQUEAK (Assess the risk for this one)**

Also known as Oink Piggy Oink or Grunt Piggy Grunt, Squeak Piggy Squeak is a spin off Blind Man's Bluff. One player chosen to be the "farmer" gets blindfolded and sits on a pillow in the centre of a circle of "piggies." After spinning around a few times, the farmer stumbles over to a random piggy and places the pillow on their lap. When he sits down and says "Squeak Piggy Squeak" the piggy must make a squeaking sound: If the farmer can guess who he's sitting on based on the noise alone the piggy becomes the new farmer.

## **THE MINISTER'S CAT**

The Minister's Cat follows the formula of many classic word games: Players sit around in a circle and take turns describing the minister's cat with a different adjective. Each adjective must start with a different letter of the alphabet, starting with "A." For example, the first player might say, "The minister's cat is an angry cat," followed next by, "The minister's cat is a brilliant cat." Players are eliminated if they repeat an adjective or fail to come up with a new one.

## **THE SCULPTOR**

This game gives players a chance to show off their inner artist. Players stand still while the person chosen to be "the sculptor" walks around positioning everyone into silly poses. Participants aren't allowed to laugh,

move, or smile. If this happens the sculptor becomes a statue and the player who broke character assumes the role. Everyone should get to be the sculptor at least once, since he or she obviously has the most fun of anyone.

### **ARE YOU THERE, MORIARTY?**

Are You There, Moriarty? is similar to Marco Polo, except instead of playing in a pool, a pair of players lay face-down on the floor about arm's length apart. Both participants are blindfolded and each is equipped with a rolled-up newspaper. The game begins when the first player calls out "Are you there, Moriarty?" When the second player responds, the caller attempts to bop him over the head with his makeshift weapon. The newspaper swordfight proceeds until both parties feel too silly to continue.

### **CONSEQUENCES**

If you've ever made up a story one piece at a time as a group, you know the basic concept of Consequences. This version can lead to even more hilarious, and often horrifying results. The first player kicks things off by drawing a head (whether human, animal, or mythical) on a sheet of paper, then folds it over to cover the creation. After passing it on, the next player draws a torso, the next legs, and so on. Once the sheet has made the rounds, players can unfold it to marvel at whatever monstrosity they created as a team.

### **THE LAUGHING GAME**

The rules of the Laughing Game are straightforward. One player begins by saying the word "ha" with a straight face. The second player continues saying "ha ha," followed by "ha ha ha" and so forth in a circle. The object is to keep going as long as possible without cracking up. If a player breaks so much as a smile, they're out of the game.

### **ELEPHANT'S FOOT UMBRELLA STAND**

Elephant's foot umbrella stands may not be as common as they were in the Victorian Era, but the game named after them is still fun to play. The leader starts the game by saying "I went to the store and bought..." followed by an object. Whatever object the leader names has to fit a secret rule they've decided to follow throughout the game. For example, if the rule is that every object must end with the letter "E," the leader might say "I went to the store and bought an orange." Players then take turns guessing the rule by naming objects they think apply. If a player says "I went to the store and bought a boat" the leader would say

something like “They’re all out of boats.” But if they said they bought a kite instead, the leader would approve their purchase without sharing why. The game becomes more fun the longer you play, assuming you’re not the last player to catch on.

## **LOOKABOUT**

The only thing you need to play Lookabout is an object. The host shows the selected item—whether it’s a shoe, a vase, or a pillow—to the party guests and asks them to leave the room. Once it’s hidden, guests are allowed to return and attempt to locate the object. Players take a seat whenever they spot it, and the last person remaining becomes the next hider.

## **Kim's Game**

*This is a simple memory game, named after Rudyard Kiplings novel, Kim, published in 1901. It is a good way of quietening things down after more rowdy games.*

A tray is prepared containing a selection of small articles, preferably unrelated items. The children are given a time to look at the tray and try to remember the contents. The tray is covered or removed, and the children then try to make a list of the articles. It is much harder than it sounds and the memory plays many tricks.