



50+ Fun Pencil & Paper Games for Kids

1 CATEGORIES

Draw a grid on a piece of paper. On the left side, put some letters from the alphabet. On the top, make some fun categories (animals, foods, names, etc.). Take turns writing things that start with the letter on the left side and match the category on top.

2 BATTLESHIP

Draw a battleship grid on four pieces of paper. Each player will have two grids—one for taking shots at the other player, one for recording the other player's shots. Each player marks three or four ships on their "battlefield". The first to sink all ships of the other wins.

3 HANGMAN

One person chooses a word, the other person guesses letters in the word until the full man is drawn.

4 DOTS AND SQUARES

All you do is make rows of dots, and the goal of the game is to make as many boxes as possible by connecting one dot to the one next to it. If you get a square, you get to take an extra turn. Once all the boxes are made, whoever has the most wins.

5 SPROUTS

You start by drawing dots randomly and each person takes a turn connecting one dot to another. Once you do, draw another dot in the center of the line you drew. The point of the game is to go until no more dots can be connected, but you don't have to draw in a straight line—you can make swirls, loopdy-loops, whatever. Each dot can only have three lines coming from it. The last person to draw a line wins!

6 FOLDOVERS

One person starts with a piece of paper, where they draw a head on the top. Then, that person folds their paper over so you can no longer see the head and passes it to the next person. That person draws a chest, then does the same, passing it until the fourth person draws feet. Then, fold back the paper and see what you created!

7 WORDS

This can be done on paper or out loud. One person starts with a letter, thinking of making a word. The next person adds a letter with the intention to make their own word. This goes on until either a word is created or gibberish is made. You may quiz your teammates on what word they are trying to make, if they didn't have a word in mind they lose.

8 MAKE YOUR OWN BINGO

For car rides, include spaces like “a police car, or a Chik-fil-A”. Or if the game is for something like the doctor’s office or vet, include “someone wearing a funny hat” or “an orange cat”.

9 TIC TAC TOE

A classic. Can even be played on iced windows!

10 WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING

This will work better for older kids while on car rides, and can likely only be used once. After someone falls asleep, those who were awake create an elaborate story about what the sleepy passenger missed while asleep. The goal is to get the person to believe it.

11 21 QUESTIONS

Think of something. Everyone else gets 21 questions to guess what it is.

12 THE SINGING GAME

A lot like some of the scenes in Pitch Perfect, the first person starts by singing a line in a song. The next person uses the line or a word in the line to connect it to another song. The winner is the last person to be able to sing.

13 ALPHABET CATEGORIES

Choose a category. Take turns naming something in that category starting from A and ending at Z. The winner is the last person to name something. For younger kids, remove letters like X and Z.

14 LICENSE PLATE GAME

Make a list of each state and try to find a license plate from each state. The person with the most states at the end of the day wins! This can be replaced by things like names or brands if needed.

15 PARADE GAME

The first person starts by saying “I saw a parade with... (insert item or person here)”. The next person continues the parade by saying the first person’s parade item followed by their own. The next person repeats the previous and so on until someone slips up.

16 CONNECT THE DOTS

Make your own for your children. Just make some dots in the shape of an object and number them. Have them connect the dots by number!

17 CREATIVE CONNECT THE DOTS

It's the same as connect the dots, but omit the number. Let your kid make their own drawing by connecting the dots.

18 I SPY

We've all played this. Start with "I spy with my little eye..." and add an object that you see. For example, if you're at a grocery store you might say "I spy with my little eye something orange" and your child guesses until they get the correct object.

19 FIND THE ALPHABET

Start with A, each person looks until they find something that starts with the letter. Then find a B object, all the way to Z.

20 ROCK PAPER SCISSORS

Rock beats scissors. Paper beats rock. Scissors beat paper.

21 SPELLING BEE

Name a word, have your child spell it. To add more people, take turns saying a letter in the word.

22 SPEAKING CHARADES

It's the same concept as charades, you want the other person to guess a person, place, or thing without saying it. But for places where you can't act out, have your child try to explain the thing to you without saying its name.

23 STORYTELLER

The first person starts by saying a sentence in the story. The next person says the next sentence until you make your own story.

24 BANANA GAME

This one is a classic for car rides. The first person to see a yellow car wins! If you're inside you can play the same game with yellow t-shirts, shoes, etc.

25 FORTUNATELY, UNFORTUNATELY

The first person starts by saying an unfortunate statement. The second person uses the same statement but says something fortunate about it. The game goes on until nobody can say something fortunate.

26 WHO AM I?

Think of someone everyone knows. Act them out or talk about them until everyone else can guess who you are.

27 TELEPHONE

The first person whispers a phrase to the next. That person then whispers the same phrase to the person after them, until the last person says the phrase out loud to see how close it was to the original.

28 ANIMAL NAME GAME

The first person names an animal. The person after them names an animal that starts with the last letter of that name. So the first person might say dog, so the next person says gorilla.

29 THE SONG GAME

One person hums a song, everyone else tries to guess what it is.

30 THE LINE GAME

One person quotes a line to a song or movie, everyone else guesses.

31 SPELLING BEE

Hide something, like a piece of candy. Then, make clues to find the object. Give your kids the first clue and watch as they find it! If you don't have a lot of space you can ask your kids the clues without having them move around.

32 RESTAURANT RACE

Each player chooses a restaurant. Players get points when they see their restaurant. You can replace a restaurant with brand names or food, or something that can be easily spotted where you are.

33 BACK AND FORTH

The first person draws a shape. The next person draws another shape, then the next draws another. The goal is to draw shapes to make some sort of drawing.

34 SCRIBBLES

Draw some scribbles, loops, etc. on a piece of paper. Give it to your child and have them make it into some sort of drawing.

35 FORTUNATELY, UNFORTUNATELY

Play Simon Says, but have your kids draw shapes, nature, etc.

36 SIM

Draw six dots in the shape of a hexagon. Two players take turns drawing lines connecting two dots in their color of pen. The goal of the game is to avoid making triangles entirely in your own pen color.

37 Pictionary

The drawer thinks of something and draws it until the other player can guess what it is. Whoever makes the most number of successful drawings wins.

38 Celebrities

One player names facts about a celebrity until the other can guess who the celebrity is.

39 Password

Think of a password. Give your players one word clues until they can guess the password.

40 M.A.S.H.

You know the drill. Marry, kids, house, car.

41 Maze

Draw your own maze for your kids. Or if they're old enough, have them draw one for you.

42 Existential Rock Paper Scissors

A variation of rock paper scissors, except each player draws (or says) an object that can beat the other person's. For example, the first player might say a giant, so the second person says a T-Rex.

43 Checkers

Draw a checker board (8x8 squares, alternating white and black), and then rip 24 pieces of paper for your pieces. Mark 12 pieces of paper with an X so you can tell whose belongs to who.

44 Drawing Sentences

The first person starts by writing a sentence. The second person folds the paper and draws what's happening in the sentence, then folds the paper so you can only see the drawing. The third person writes a sentence about what they think is happening in the drawing, then the next draws the sentence and so on until you run out of people and find out what you created.

45 Attack and Defend

Two players draw stick figures. The first person draws something to "attack" the other player, then the second draws something to "defend". The next round, the defender draws something to attack and the attacker defends, until someone is unable to defend. You cannot repeat attacks/defense.

46 Stories

Tell your child a story where they're the main character. Make their character run into a problem, and ask your child how their character will solve it.

47 DRAWING

Just give your child a piece of paper and a pen. Let them go at it.

48 LETTER STORY

Give your child five letters and have them find five objects that match those letters. Have them tell you a story about those five things, like how they got there, or about a prince using each of them for battle.

49 WORD SEARCH

Make your own word search! Write some words in a grid and then add random letters around those words. Have your child find the words you've hidden.

50 FAVORITE THINGS

Give your child a place, event, or thing. Have them write their favorite or least favorite things about it to tell you.

51 FUTURE ME, PAST ME

Have your child write to their future selves or past selves.