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# A Number of Games You Could Play

And Some You Cannot

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## **Video Game (age 7-10)** *A1 G1: A game from your childhood.*

Draw random, simple lines at various angles on a blank sheet of paper. About 5-7 should do. At least half of them should go all the way off the edge. Many should intersect. Orient the paper in such a way that the lines present an interesting or difficult challenge for what follows:

You will navigate a stick figure across this landscape using sequential art and your imagination.

Choose a start point and draw a small stick figure there, about 1-1.5 inches tall. Then, without thinking too much about it, place the end point someplace that doesn't look easy or obvious to get to. Trust yourself to solve this problem soon.

Presuming a force similar to 1 Earth gravity pulls the figure "downward" (towards the bottom of the page), and that touching the page's edge spells death, navigate the unlucky adventurer safely to the exit.

To move the figure, draw it again, next to itself sequentially, performing the actions it must take to traverse its 2-dimensional environment. Often this will simply be running, jumping, and falling. The figure can jump about equal to its own height, a little more if it crouches first. Doing action-movie stuff is more effective, for instance tucking its knees in midair might make a daring long-jump just long enough to catch the edge with its hands and pull itself up. Think *Prince of Persia* (the game not the movie) and *Die Hard* (the movie not the game).

Occasionally, grit and determination will not be enough. Fortunately, the figure has an inexhaustible supply of tools and gadgets to aid this journey. The figure can reach "behind" itself to produce these at will – such as a handheld helicopter rotor, a pneumatic drill, or anything else you can draw. Each device may only be produced once per page, but alternative tools with the same function are allowed. A parachute and an umbrella, for instance, could each slow one long fall. A whip, a grapnel gun, and Spider-Man's web-shooters could each provide a way to swing across a gap.

The loophole to this is that the item remains wherever it was left (or continues falling, if it was left in midair, until it either lands on a line, or drops off the edge and vanishes). Should your figure re-cross its own path, any discarded reusable object it encounters can be picked up and reused.

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### **Treesync** A1 G2: *A game of motion.*

This won't take long. Observe a tree bough. Up high, one that's moving a little in the wind. Mimic its shape with your arms, and predict its motion. When you and the tree make the same motion at the same time, go about your day with the knowledge that you and the tree are share something.

### **The History Channel** A1 G4: *A game of unplayful objects.*

At a park, take a moment to note the park's inorganic features. Choose from among them something that you don't understand. Write down a historical reason for the feature that is no longer relevant. (Something to tie your horse to, for instance.) If you can't think of anything, take a picture of it, and for the rest of the day, try to find things in the world that are shaped similar to it. Write your explanation based on this similarity. If at the end of the day you still don't have an answer, write authoritatively about its extraterrestrial origins.

### **Occam's Bane** A1 G3: *A game of stillness.*

Place an inanimate object in an unlikely place. Return the next day and note any differences between where you left it and where it is now. Explain any and all changes with only the least likely reasons. If there are no observable changes, take note of at least two undetectable changes and explain those.

Examples of item placement:

Paper cup on the ground: Bad

Paper cup on the end of a handrail: Better  
in a tree: Good

Examples of explanation:

The wind moved it: Terrible

A squirrel found it interesting for a moment: Bad

A pigeon wore it as a hat: Better

It was involved in a mafia-related shootout: Good

Note: If the object is entirely gone, you've uncovered a conspiracy. If this is not your first object, they know you know! Search for patterns among your other observations. If this is your first object, you still have time. Gather more info.

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**Impossible to lose.** *A1 G5: An unplayable game.*

Fifteen minutes before winning a Formula 1 Grand Prix, throw fourteen crow feathers from a leather bag, out of the car. Note where they fall with gouache. Connect the gouache dots and name this new constellation. Place your new constellation in the night sky. If it battles another constellation and wins, you become the legal owner of Orion Releasing LLC. If your constellation loses the battle, you must start again from the beginning. If your constellation does *not* engage in battle, you must immediately wait twenty-five years before flipping an ancient coin. The value of the coin when it lands is your points total. If you score  $> 0$  points, you lose and must start over from the beginning. Otherwise you win, and get to play again. If you own Orion Releasing LLC, you must release all your film copyrights to the public domain.