

# VIRAL



## A 5-Minute Game of Truth vs. Attention

*1 piece of paper and pen per player, 1 timer. Go!*

**Designed by Shaun Bartlett**

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**Players:** 4–10

**Duration:** 5 minutes | **Age:** 10+

## WHAT YOU NEED

- 1 piece of paper per player (any size, any type)
- 1 pen or pencil per player
- Timer (phone works)

## GOAL

Score the most points after all sheets return to their original Author for the second time.

## SETUP

On your paper, write:

1. **Top of page:** Your name / initials + one true fact. This will be your Post.

Example: "Maya: Octopuses have three hearts"

2. **Leave space below** for other players to write (approximately  $2 \times$  the number of players + 1 entries)

You're ready to play.

## HOW TO PLAY

### GAME STRUCTURE

Each round, everyone is simultaneously working on someone else's sheet.

1. **Set timer to 30–60 seconds** (use same time throughout game)
2. **All Authors pass their sheets left at the same time**
3. **Everyone takes their turn simultaneously** (see Actions below)
4. **When timer ends, all players pass sheets left at the same time**
5. **Repeat for TWO full rotations** (everyone gets each sheet twice)
6. **Sheets return to their Authors**
7. **Authors take one final turn**
8. **Authors score their own sheets**

## THE THREE ACTIONS

When you receive a sheet, write your initials or name under the previous turn immediately.

**Read only the most recent Post / Update** (the last thing written that is not a Pass or Share).

Choose ONE action before the timer ends:

### 1. PASS

Write "Pass" or "P"

You're not supporting this content.

**Three consecutive Pass actions bury (cancel) the latest Post.**

**If you are the third player to Pass in a row, that version is BURIED (cancelled):**

- Cross out the three Pass actions, and any Share actions for the latest Post / Update.
- Cross out the latest Post / Update as well.
- Any future actions apply to the previous surviving version unless Updated.
- Next player continues from there.

### 2. SHARE

Write a checkmark ✓ or "Share"

You're amplifying this version as-is, guaranteeing +1 points provided that the Post / Update is not Buried.

### 3. UPDATE

You're rewriting the original Post or latest Update to be more interesting.

Rules:

- Must relate to the previous version only (you only see what's in front of you)
- Can shift tone, narrative, perspective
- Cannot change the subject entirely
- You can Update multiple times (including your own Updates)

## END GAME & SCORING (Final Phase)

After two rotations, each Author scores their own sheet:

### **Step 1: Read Aloud (Optional)**

Authors can share the amusing story of their post's journey back to them.

### **Step 2: Check for Cancelled Posts / Updates**

### **Step 3: Find Who's TRENDING**

Player with most total Shares on your sheet scores 3 points. This includes shares on the original post (if the Author) and any subsequent Update. **Tiebreaker:** The most recent update wins.

**Step 4: Assign Bonus points.**

Award +1 point for each active Share to the respective initials or name.

**Step 5: Total your own points across all player sheets.**

The player with the highest total is the winner.

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 **GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE (5 PLAYERS)**

Timer starts (**45 seconds**). Each Author has written their fact.

Everyone passes their sheet left simultaneously.

**What each player sees and does:**

- **Maya** receives Diego's sheet, reads "Flamingos are pink because they eat shrimp"
  - Decides to **SHARE** → writes ✓
- **Jamal** receives Maya's sheet, reads "Octopuses have three hearts"
  - Decides to **SHARE** → writes ✓
- **Chen** receives Jamal's sheet, reads "Honey never spoils"
  - Decides to **UPDATE** → writes "Chen: Honey never spoils—scientists use it as time capsules"
- **Priya** receives Chen's sheet, reads "Sharks existed before trees"
  - Decides to **PASS** → writes P
- **Diego** receives Priya's sheet, reads "Wombat poop is cube-shaped"
  - Decides to **UPDATE** → writes "Diego: Wombat poop is cube-shaped and used as dice by Australian gamblers"

**TIMER ENDS**

Everyone passes sheets left simultaneously.

**This continues for two complete rotations, then sheets return to Authors.**

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## EXAMPLE PAPER

**Maya's sheet after two rotations:**

Author: Maya

"Octopuses have three hearts"

Jamal ✓

Chen ✓

Priya "Octopuses have three hearts and use them to play cards"

Diego ✗

Maya - Pass

Jamal - Pass

Chen - Pass

Priya "Octopus suffers two of three broken hearts according to marine biologists"

Diego ✓

*End of rotation 2, returns to Author*

**Maya's Final Turn:** ✓ (Maya Shares Priya's Update)

**Scoring:**

**Priya goes viral and wins this sheet with 2 shares and latest Update (tie-breaker with Maya's original Post) = 3 Points**

Maya: 1 Share = **1 Point**

Jamal: 1 Share = **1 Point**

Chen: 1 Share = **1 Point**

Diego: 1 Share = **1 Point**

## ❓ FAQ

*Whispers from the Court*

**Q:** What if I don't finish my Update before the timer ends?

**A:** Cross it out. The sheet passes anyway. This is intentional—the timer creates pressure.

**Q:** Can I see previous versions when deciding my action?

**A:** There is unlikely to be enough time. Only read the most recent entry. This simulates information cascades where each person reacts to what's immediately in front of them.

**Q:** What if a version is Buried and there's no previous version?

**A:** If the original fact is Buried, the sheet continues with no active version. Players must Update to create entirely new content, or Pass (adding to the burial count but scoring no points).

**Q:** Can I Update my own previous Update?

**A:** Yes, when the sheet comes back to you in the second rotation. All your Updates count toward your total Shares.

**Q:** Do we all pass sheets at exactly the same time?

**A:** Yes. When the timer ends, everyone passes left simultaneously. This keeps the game moving and prevents lag.

**Q:** Do Shares from Buried versions count?

**A:** No. Buried = 0 points for Shares. Cross them out.

**Q:** What counts as "clearly related" for Updates?

**A:** The subject must remain recognizable. You can change tone, narrative, or perspective. You cannot switch to a completely different subject. When in doubt, the group decides. Illegal Updates are treated as Buried (0 Shares).