

## Educational Board Games for Family Fun

### Educational Board Games for Early Learners and Preschoolers

**Magne Talk Match-up Adventures Kit** (appropriate for ages 3 - 7) This barrier game activity targets a variety of language and listening skills. The format is perfect for following directions, giving directions, storytelling, improving vocabulary, deductive reasoning, auditory memory, rhyming, basic concepts and categorization.

**Hisss** (2-5 players, age 3+) This simple card game asks players to build snakes using a stack of cards that includes heads, middles, and tails. As players complete their snakes and tally up their score, they're practicing color and pattern recognition, logic, and basic counting skills.

**Memory** (2 or more players, age 3+) Sometimes called Concentration, there are hundreds of versions of this classic game, all with the same basic concept. Players take turns flipping over cards and attempt to find matching pairs. As you might guess, the game can help kids build concentration and memory skills, and practice logic and planning. Variations on the game that use numbers, math problems, or sight words can also help build skills in these areas.

**Zingo!** (2-9 players, age 4+) In this variation on Bingo, kids match pictures and words as they try to fill their card and be the first to shout "Zingo!" The game can help kids improve vocabulary and reading skills, matching, and memory.

**Hoot Hoot Owl** (2-4 players, age 4+) Much like the classic children's game Candyland, this game is a good choice for pre-readers, since gameplay relies only on color matching. Unlike similar games however, the goal of this one is cooperation, not competition. Rather than a race to the finish, players must work together to get all their owls back to the nest before sunrise. The game encourages color practice, strategy, and social skills development.

**HiHo! Cherry-O** (2-3 players, age 3+) As they compete to be the first to pick all the fruit off their trees, kids are practicing number recognition, counting, addition, and subtraction skills.

**Twister** (2-4 players, age 6+) This classic game is a great way to get kids up and moving! Requiring no reading, it's a fun way to practice colors and body awareness, as well as great reinforcement for kids who are just learning right from left.

## Educational Board Games for Elementary School Kids

Story Stunts Game Board 2 - 6 players, grades 2 through 6) The Super Duper® Story Stunts board game is a motivating game that helps increase students' understanding and use of narrative skills. As they play the game, children identify and sequence story grammar elements and build complete stories while circling the extreme-sport board.

BLURT! (all ages) This hilarious game of rapid word recall will strengthen your child's vocabulary and quick-thinking skills. The game is perfect for family game night as it includes separate rules for a junior version.

Cranium Cadoo (2 or more players, age 7+) In this kid-friendly version of the family favorite, Cranium, kids act, sketch, sculpt, crack codes, and solve puzzles. What a fun way to get kids thinking, creating, and laughing! This game is also easy enough for younger kids, but not too boring for adults or older siblings.

What's Gnu? (2-6 players, age 5-8) This is a fun game for new readers, and a great confidence builder. Kids create words using the letter cards and build reading, word recognition, vocabulary, and spelling skills.

Uno (2-10 players, age 7+) Here's an "oldie but goodie" card game that the whole family can enjoy! Younger kids can play with a partner, and practice number and color recognition. Older kids will be practicing strategizing and planning, and at the end of the game, they can add up everyone's points for some addition practice.

Blokus (2-4 players, ages 5+) This game is appropriate for kids as young as 5, but is equally challenging and enjoyable for adults. It was named a Mensa Select Game, a distinction that means it's original, challenging, and well-designed. While it doesn't teach traditional subjects like math and English, it's a great abstract strategy game that encourages spatial thinking and creativity.

Bananagrams (2-4 players, age 8+) Players race against each other to build a crossword grid and use up all their tiles. Kids will be practicing spelling and vocabulary skills.

## Educational Board Games for Middle School and High School Students

**Settlers of Catan** (3-4 players, age 10+) In this popular strategy game, players collect resources, like bricks and lumber, and build roads, settlements and cities. Players plan and strategize, and learn resource-management skills.

**Taboo** (4 or more players, age 12+) Players must think creatively and stretch their vocabulary and descriptive skills in this fun party game, as they attempt to get teammates to guess a secret word. **Taboo Junior** is a good choice for play with elementary age children.

**Apples to Apples** (4 or more players, age 12+) Another Mensa Select game, **Apples to Apples** encourages fast, creative thinking. For older kids and teens, it's good practice for learning to compare different things and form analogies. For the younger set, there's also an **Apples to Apples Jr.**

**Scattergories** (2-6 players, 12+) Another classic party game, **Scattergories** encourages players to think creatively as they brainstorm words to fit into certain categories. With some categories more obscure than others, players will have to stretch their vocabularies if they hope to win!

**Balderdash** (2 or more players, age 12+) In this bluffing game, players try to fool each other by writing convincing answers to questions. Players must write their answers in an authoritative style, and use their reading and logic skills in order to fool others and distinguish the real answer from the fake.

**Scrabble** (2-4 players, age 8+) Of course, no list of educational games would be complete without the classic crossword game! Players must think creatively and use their vocabulary and spelling skills as they form words and compete for points.