

# Car Games for Kids of all Ages

by Barbara Bernstein

**K**eeping kids entertained on a long car or RV trip is a challenge, as all parents know. And the greater the age spread between the children, the greater the challenge. Our family has solved this problem by playing some unique games. All are thinking-oriented, and since no supplies are required, you can play them anywhere. In addition, anyone — from pre-school age children to adults — can enjoy these games.

A game that occupied us for quite some time on a recent trip was listing names that rhyme. Each family member had to say two names that rhyme (for example "Phil" and "Bill"). We included nicknames. We took turns, and a player was out when they could not think of any rhyming names on their turn. When only one player remained in the game, that player was the winner.

The rhyming game evoked some laughter when odd nicknames, such as "Pee Wee," a six-foot-plus swimming teacher, came up. (I assume he earned this nickname as the youngest child in his family.) As the game progressed, we decided to give credit for two turns to any player who could say three rhyming names. This moved the game along and made it more challenging.

Another game we played is "Name That Sport." Players take turns naming sports of all kinds. We began with the classics — tennis, golf, swimming, horseback riding, football, baseball and soccer — and then moved on to lesser-known sports, such as squash and handball. By the end, we were naming children's games, such as hopscotch, Red Rover, and Mother-May-I. Finally, one by one, we could no longer think of anything and started to drop out. But it always takes a long time to get to that point, as we are stubborn and tenacious game players.

A related game that we played on the same trip is "Name That Board Game." Our family knows a great deal about board games, because we have played them together from the time the children were small. We named common board games such as Candy Land, Chutes and Ladders, Monopoly, and Careers, and then moved on to more obscure games, some of which are only marginally board games, such as Twister, Mousetrap, Toppie, and Kerplunk. When I ran low on ideas, I tried to picture the section of Toys R Us where the board games are carried in alphabetical order. This image helped me to think of a few additional games. Eventually we exhausted all games that we knew, and my husband was the winner.

A game that we played after leaving my sister's house one Christmas vacation was listing things they have in their house that we don't have in ours. We named such things as ceiling fans, a grand piano, people who live there, curling irons and Barbie dolls. This proved to be an amusing game, because it highlighted the differences between the families.

A somewhat different game we play is naming a common household item and taking turns listing different ways it can be used. For example, someone might name a nail file. All the players then have to think of uses for a nail file — as a knife for spreading butter or cutting cake, an implement for writing in the sand and a back-scratcher, for example.

All these games are fun both to make up and to play, and they occupy a surprising amount of time. They also keep everyone engaged on long trips and provide mental exercise. With a little advance planning, parents can think of games like these that suit their children's interests and add a whole new dimension to family travel fun. ☺

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