



Charades

Act out a word or phrase without speaking so your team can guess it before the timer runs out.

Players 4–20 (best with 6–12)

Play time 20–45 min

Materials No materials

Movement Standing and moving

QUICK RULES

1. Split into two or more teams.
2. One player acts out a secret prompt with no words, sounds or mouthing.
3. Their team guesses before a 60–90 second timer ends.
4. One point per correct guess; teams alternate until everyone has acted.

SET UP

1. Clear a small "stage" where everyone can see the actor. Move drinks and anything breakable out of arm's reach.
2. Split into teams of 3–6. Mixed ages and mixed confidence levels on each team keep the game fair.
3. Agree on the prompt source — the host view on a phone, printed cards face down, or the opposing team whispering a prompt to the actor.
4. Agree on the round length. Ninety seconds is forgiving for new players; sixty seconds suits groups that play often.

HOW TO PLAY

1. The first team sends one actor to the stage. The actor looks at a prompt without showing anyone.
2. Start the timer. The actor may use gestures, facial expressions and movement only — no speaking, no sound effects, no mouthing words, and no pointing at objects in the room that are the answer.
3. Teammates call out guesses freely. The actor may nod, shake their head, or signal "keep going" to steer them.
4. If the team says the exact prompt, or a version everyone agrees is close enough, they score one point and the turn ends.
5. If the timer ends first, no point is scored. Reveal the answer so the room can enjoy it.
6. The actor may pass once per turn and take a new prompt, but the clock keeps running.
7. Teams alternate. Every player should act once before anyone acts twice.

HOW THE GAME ENDS

Play until every player has acted the same number of times — usually two full rotations — then the team with more points wins. If the evening is running long, announce a "final round" before the last rotation starts rather than stopping mid-way.

PLAYING SEATED

Play "tabletop charades": the actor stays seated and uses only hands, face and upper body. Choose prompts tagged as seated-friendly in the charades pack, and drop anything that needs walking, jumping or lying down.

TIPS FOR THE HOST

- Let reluctant actors pair up for their first turn. Two people acting one prompt together is still charades.
- Decide before starting how strict "close enough" is, and let the non-acting team be the judge.
- Keep a visible score only if the group enjoys competing. Many groups play happily with no score at all.
- For mixed ages, give younger or first-time actors the easy-tagged prompts and keep the hard ones for volunteers.

VARIATIONS

Category rounds. Announce the category before each turn — animals, occupations, household objects. Knowing the category makes guessing faster and is the kindest way to introduce the game to people who have never played.

Relay charades. Give each team the same list of five prompts. One actor at a time runs to the host, collects the next prompt, and acts it for their own team. The first team to finish all five wins. Use two rooms or opposite ends of a big room so teams cannot overhear each other.

STARTER IDEAS: EVERYDAY ACTIONS

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|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| ■ brushing your teeth | ■ folding a fitted sheet |
| ■ tying a shoelace | ■ peeling an orange |
| ■ untangling headphones | ■ blowing up a balloon |
| ■ threading a needle | ■ wrapping a present |

STARTER IDEAS: HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS

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|---------------------|--------------------|
| ■ an umbrella | ■ a vacuum cleaner |
| ■ a toaster | ■ an alarm clock |
| ■ a washing machine | ■ a pepper grinder |
| ■ a kettle | ■ an ironing board |

Times are editorial estimates, not test results. Editorially checked for clarity and consistency. We do not claim group playtesting for this page.