



Describe and Draw

Describe a simple picture using words alone so that a partner, who cannot see it, can draw it as accurately as possible.

Players 2–16 (best with 4–10)**Play time** 10–25 min**Materials** Paper and pen**Movement** Seated

QUICK RULES

1. Pair up. One person describes, the other draws.
2. The describer sees a simple picture; the drawer must not.
3. Describe using shapes, sizes and positions only — never say what the picture is.
4. After three minutes, compare the drawing with the original, then swap roles.

SET UP

1. Give every drawer a sheet of paper, a pen or pencil, and something firm to lean on.
2. Form pairs. Pairing people who do not know each other well makes this a gentle icebreaker.
3. Seat each pair so that the drawer cannot see the describer's picture.
4. Hand each describer a picture — a printed card, the host view on a phone, or a quick sketch made by the host.
5. Set a three-minute timer for the round.

HOW TO PLAY

1. When the timer starts, the describer begins describing the picture.
2. The describer may use only shapes, lines, sizes, directions and positions — 'a large circle in the middle of the page', 'a short line from its top edge'.
3. The describer may not name the object or any part of it. Saying 'it is a house' or 'draw a roof' is not allowed.
4. The drawer may ask questions at any time, and the describer may answer them.
5. The describer may not look at the drawing while it is in progress.
6. When the timer ends, pens go down and each pair compares the drawing with the original.
7. Swap roles and play again with a new picture.

HOW THE GAME ENDS

A full game is two rounds, so that everyone describes once and draws once. For a friendly finish, lay all the drawings out next to their originals and let the room choose the closest match and the most gloriously wrong one.

PLAYING SEATED

Played seated. Pairs sit back to back, or simply face each other with the picture held behind a menu, book or raised hand if turning chairs around is awkward.

TIPS FOR THE HOST

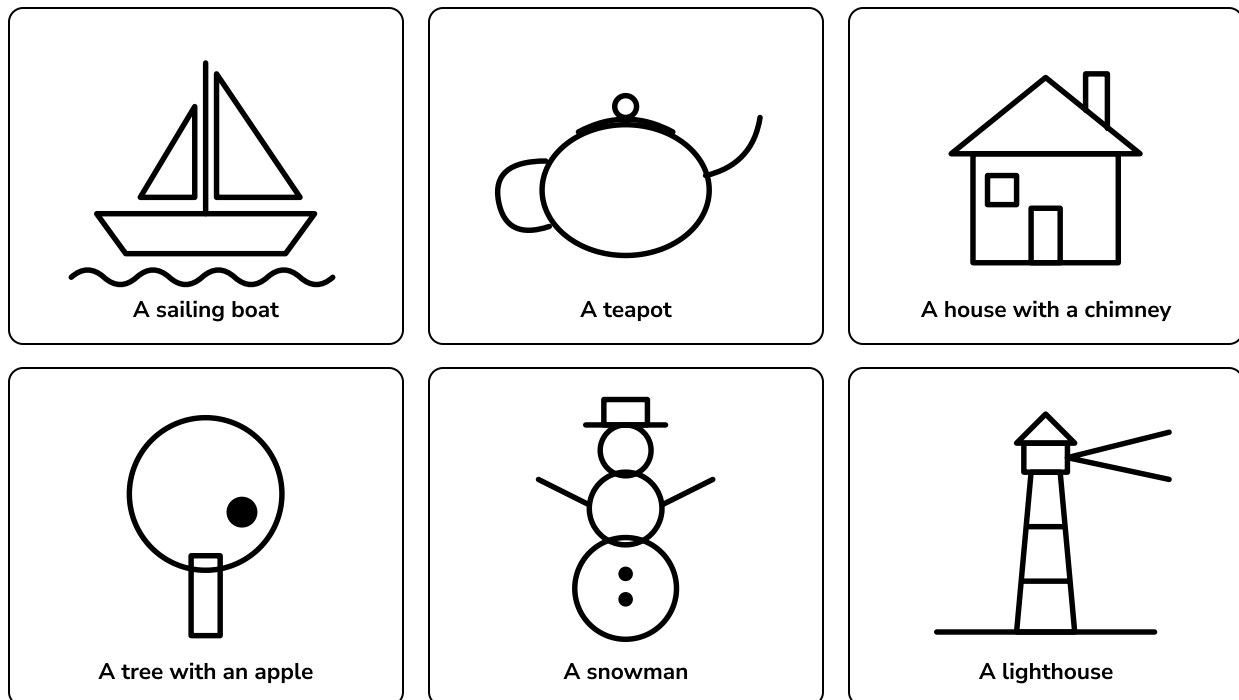
- Begin with very simple pictures made of four or five shapes. Difficulty rises quickly.
- Remind describers to say where on the page to start. Most disasters begin with the first shape in the wrong place.
- Good-natured laughter at the results is the point. Praise the description as well as the drawing.
- If anyone has difficulty drawing or seeing fine detail, let them be the describer in both rounds, or use the thick-marker, large-shape pictures.

VARIATIONS

One describer. One person describes the same picture to the whole room, and everyone draws at once. Then all the drawings are held up together. It is the best format for a large group and needs only one picture.

No questions. The drawer has to stay silent, so the describer gets no feedback at all. It is noticeably harder, and it shows how much we rely on being able to check that we have been understood.

STARTER IDEAS: SIMPLE PICTURES



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

