

Games to Play with Friends Without Needing Anything

You know that moment at a get-together when everyone's just kind of... standing around? Music's on, drinks are out, and someone says, "We should play a game."

The problem is, nobody wants to buy a bunch of stuff, read a rule book, or spend 20 minutes setting anything up.

Good news: there are a bunch of **actually fun** games you can play with adults that require **nothing** (or close to it). These work at house parties, cabins, hotel hangouts, bonfires, ski trips, youth groups, and anywhere you've got a group.

The last one is a classic we played in high school – a lot.

Ground Rules to Keep it Fun for Everyone:

- **Keep the drinking light:** Sips > chugs. If someone's not drinking, they can hand out "points" instead.
- **Use a 2-second rule:** If a game is about reacting quickly, hesitation = consequence. No debates.
- **Don't make it painful:** If you're doing anything like the "States" rolled-up newspaper thing, keep it playful. No full swings.

1. "Signs" (Fast, Competitive, and Weirdly Addictive)

Best for: 6–15 people in a circle

You need: Nothing

How to set it up:

1. Everyone sits in a circle.
2. Each person chooses a **unique "sign"** (ear tug, peace sign, nose tap, finger guns, etc.).
3. Go around once and show everyone your sign. (If two people pick similar signs, change one.)

How to play:

1. Pick someone to start as "It" in the middle (or just "It" without the middle if you want it calmer).
2. "It" calls someone by doing **their** sign (not saying anything).
3. The person who was called must immediately do **their own sign**, then quickly do **someone else's sign**.
4. That person is now the caller, and it continues.

How you get out / lose the round:

- You hesitate too long
- You do the wrong sign
- You forget to do your own sign first

2. “Categories” (a.k.a. “Bomb”)

Best for: Any group size, especially 6–12

You need: A phone timer (optional: anything to pass around)

How to play:

1. Sit or stand in a circle.
2. Pick a category (examples: pizza toppings, car brands, things at a wedding, athletes, dog breeds, excuses for being late).
3. Set a timer for **10–20 seconds**.
4. Start the timer and pick a person to begin. They name something in the category and then pass the “bomb” to the next person.
5. Keep going until someone:
 - hesitates too long
 - repeats an answer
 - says something that clearly doesn't fit
 - is holding the “bomb” when the timer goes off

3. “Wink Murder” (Simple, Suspicious, and Loud)

Best for: 8–20 people

You need: Nothing

How to set it up:

1. Pick one person to be the “Dealer.”
2. Everyone closes their eyes.
3. The Dealer taps one person on the shoulder. That person is the **Killer**.
4. Everyone opens their eyes. Game on.

How to play:

1. Everyone mingles or sits around making eye contact.
2. The Killer “kills” by **winking** at someone.
3. If you get winked at, you silently count to 5, then dramatically “die” (fall back, make it funny, whatever).
4. Anyone can accuse at any time, but it's cleaner if you require:
 - “I accuse ____.”
 - A second person must say “I second.”

- Then the accused reveals if they are the Killer.

Win conditions:

- The group wins if they correctly identify the Killer.
- The Killer wins if they “kill” everyone (or a set number, like 5).

4. “Psychiatrist” (A Classic That Gets Weird Fast)

Best for: 6–15 people

You need: Nothing

How to set it up:

1. Pick one person to be the Psychiatrist. They leave the room or turn around with eyes closed.
2. Everyone else picks a “condition” that controls how they answer questions.

Great “condition” ideas:

- You answer as the person to your left
- You answer as if you’re jealous of the Psychiatrist
- You can only answer questions with a question
- Every answer must include the word “absolutely”
- You’re all pretending you’re hiding a secret

How to play:

1. The Psychiatrist returns and starts asking individuals questions.
2. Everyone must answer according to the condition, without breaking character.
3. The Psychiatrist can guess the condition at any time.

Win condition:

- Psychiatrist wins if they correctly guess the condition.
- The group wins if they keep the Psychiatrist confused for a set time (example: 5 minutes).

5. “Two Truths and a Lie” (Best When People Know Each Other)

Best for: 4–12 people

You need: Nothing

How to play:

1. One person says three statements about themselves: two true, one false.
2. Everyone guesses which one is the lie.
3. Reveal the lie, then move to the next person.

Make it better:

- Require a short story after the reveal (30–60 seconds max).
- Encourage “believable lies” (the best lies are close to true).

Drinking / penalty ideas:

- If you guess wrong = sip
- If nobody guesses your lie = everyone else sips

6. “Most Likely To” (Easy, Loud, and Great for Groups)

Best for: 6+ people

You need: Nothing

How to play

1. Someone says: “Most likely to _____.”
2. Everyone points at the person they think fits best.
3. Whoever gets the most votes gets a point (or drinks a sip).
4. Go around the circle so different people come up with prompts.

Prompt ideas

- Most likely to get kicked out of a wedding
- Most likely to survive a zombie apocalypse
- Most likely to accidentally text the wrong person
- Most likely to start a rumor and not realize it

7. “Never Have I Ever” (Make It Themed So It’s Not Boring)

Best for: 5–12 people

You need: Nothing

How to play

1. Everyone holds up 5 fingers.
2. One person says: “Never have I ever...” and finishes the sentence.
3. If you **have** done it, put a finger down.
4. First person to lose all fingers “loses” (or just laugh and keep playing).

Make it better with themes

- **Work theme:** “Never have I ever... lied in a meeting.”
- **Wedding theme:** “Never have I ever... hooked up at a wedding.”
- **Travel theme:** “Never have I ever... missed a flight.”
- **College theme:** “Never have I ever... slept through an exam.”

8. “States” Style Game (My Favorite)

Best for: 6–15 people

You need: Nothing (optional: a rolled-up paper towel or soft towel)

This is the one you described: everyone picks a state, and the person in the middle tries to tag someone when their state is called before they can call another state.

We played this last week at a party I hosted and it was a huge success. It was so fun. We added a really fun twist/rule that we used in high school (I think we made it up). It’s that before you sit down, you have to call another state. This results in people thinking they get to sit, but then they’re “it” again. It gets even funnier when it happens again at the same time and the person gets up and the other one sits down and forgets. So hilarious.

How to play:

1. Everyone sits in a circle.
2. Each person chooses a unique state (or any category: cities, bands, movies, NFL teams).
3. One person stands in the middle as “It.”
4. “It” calls out a state name.
5. The person whose state was called must immediately call a different person’s state before “It” tags them.
6. If they get tagged (or hesitate), they become “It.”

Optional safety upgrade:

- Instead of hitting, “It” must lightly tap shoulder/arm.
- If you do use a rolled-up paper, keep it gentle and goofy. This game gets out of hand fast if people swing.

Online Party Games That Are Free

If your friend group is split across different cities (or you want something you can play from the couch), online party games can be surprisingly fun, even if you don't want to spend anything.

- **Free browser games:** Look for simple “draw and guess” games, trivia rooms, or word games that let people join with a link.
- **Video-call games:** A lot of the “no props” games above still work on Zoom/FaceTime (Categories, Two Truths and a Lie, Most Likely To).

Try OnYourMark.app (Free online “secret mission” party game)

If you want something that feels like an actual party game without printing anything or buying a box, check out **OnYourMark.app**.

The idea is simple: you get fun “secret mission” style challenges that you can play with a group. It's built for hangouts, trips, and nights where you want everyone laughing and interacting instead of staring at their phones.

- **No setup:** Just open it and start playing.
- **Great for adults:** You can keep it light, competitive, or a little chaotic.
- **Perfect for groups:** Especially when not everyone knows each other well yet.

Tip: If there's drinking involved, keep penalties small (sips, not chugs). The goal is to keep the game going, not end the party early.

Original article: <https://tonyherman.com/games-to-play-with-friends-without-needing-anything/>

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