



Fun With Lots of Purposes

Do you ever remember a time when you didn't play games? Probably not. Most of us start playing games such as hide and seek as toddlers, and we keep playing games of one sort or another throughout our lives.

For thousands of years, in every culture, and across every part of the globe, people have played games. Games are fun—unless you're getting trounced by an opponent!—but they're more than simple diversions. They challenge us to overcome long odds, tell compelling stories, and give us the chance to work with or against one another. They give structure to play. We are motivated to think of creative solutions, practice new skills, and share with those around us.

Games also come in almost every shape and size, format and flavor imaginable. Games can be fast-paced, slow, or anything in between. Some are competitive. Some are cooperative. They may be for individuals, small groups, or thousands of players at a time. They might take seconds to complete or last for years. However you slice it, everyone has played games, and games help make us who we are.

This month, you'll play a lot of games at meetings and during the main event. But you'll also go behind the scenes to analyze why games work or why they don't. You can even get a jumpstart on the Game Design merit badge if you want to dive deeper into the world of games.

Objectives

This month's activities should:

- Introduce Scouts to a variety of game types.
- Encourage critical thinking.
- Build teamwork.
- Prompt Scouts to explore the Game Design merit badge.
- Be fun.

RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

Game Design, Scouting Heritage, and Signs, Signals, and Codes merit badges



Leadership Planning

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing games as your program feature during your planning meetings:

1. What will our main event be?
2. Where will we do our main event?
3. What games do our members like to play?
4. What games would our members like to learn?
5. What game experts can we contact for assistance?
6. How can we involve parents?
7. What parts of the Game Design merit badge can we focus on?
8. How can we use games to attract new members?
9. To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

PARENTS CAN HELP WITH THE GAMES PROGRAM FEATURE BY:

1. Sharing their expertise, especially if they are serious gamers
2. Loaning game supplies and equipment
3. Providing transportation for the main event
4. Helping Scouts develop their game ideas
5. Maintaining current Youth Protection certification, which is required of all adults providing transportation for or participating in camping outings

GAMES THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Egyptian hieroglyphs from 5200 B.C. show a rock throwing game that is the predecessor to bocce and bowling. Here are some other dates of interest:

3500 B.C.	An Egyptian tomb housed the pieces of the first known board game.
2000	The Persians developed polo as a way to train cavalry soldiers.
1400	Latin American temple ruins showed evidence of a ball game called ulama.
A.D. 600	Indians played chatrang, a predecessor to checkers and chess.
1100	French monks developed a game that later evolved to racquetball.
1529	Englishmen played a trick-taking game that evolved into bridge, euchre, and hearts.
1791	The first known reference to baseball appeared in a law prohibiting it near the town meeting house in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.
1934	The modern form of Monopoly® was published.
1966	The party game Twister® appeared.
1972	Pong®, the first electronic game to reach mainstream popularity, appeared.
1974	Dungeons and Dragons®, the first pen-and-paper role-playing game, was released.
1993	Magic: the Gathering® created the genre of collectible card games.
2004	World of Warcraft® launched; it became the largest massively multiplayer game in the world with 12 million subscribers.
2009	Angry Birds™ redefined the way people interact with mobile electronic devices.



TYPES OF GAMES

One of the most obvious ways to categorize games is by medium or form of a game. Newspapers, magazines, and books are different printed media. In the same way, games can be described by the shape they take and the way players interact with them.



Physical Games and Sports

Ball games and sports are physical games, as are other games like capture the flag. They are typically competitive. These games involve athletic activities and are played with special equipment like balls, nets, and sticks. Generally, the gameplay revolves around one or more specific physical actions and rewards players who most skillfully perform those actions.



Board Games

Board games involve everything from Candyland to chess. In some, players compete to claim one another's game pieces. In others, they try to conquer territory. In still others, they try to get from one point on the board to another.

Card Games

Countless games can be played with an ordinary deck of playing cards, of course. But card games can also be played with special decks like those used in collectible card games.



Party Games

Because they are meant for larger social situations, party games emphasize interaction between players and typically involve some form of creativity. Drawing, acting, singing, and giving word clues are all common activities in party games.

Pen-and-Paper Role-Playing Games (RPGs)

RPGs are best described as interactive storytelling. Players assume the roles of distinct characters and take action based on their characters' capabilities. Typically, these capabilities increase over time as the players practice skills, acquire knowledge, or gain equipment.

Electronic Games

Electronic games present information to players through video screens and audio signals. Players interact with the games through electronic sensors. Buttons, control sticks, and computer mice are common inputs, but newer technologies include touchscreens, sensors that respond to physical motion, and cameras that detect the position and movements of each player.

Electronic games are limited by the game hardware and fall into several categories: personal computer games, console games, games for mobile devices, and internet games.





E.D.G.E. Ideas

Explain how it is done—Tell them.

Demonstrate the steps—Show them.

Guide learners as they practice—Watch them do it.

Enable them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

EXPLAIN

- Teach the history of games.
- Discuss different types of games.
- Explain the rules of an unfamiliar game.
- Teach terminology used in game design.

DEMONSTRATE

- Show a video that illustrates game technique.
- Demonstrate how to do a game-related task like throwing a football or hitting a baseball.
- Show how to set up a tournament bracket for use in the main event.
- Do a show-and-tell with various types of game equipment.
- Invite a highly skilled player to a meeting to demonstrate game technique.

GUIDE

- Run Scouts through a drill on specific game techniques.
- Have skilled players give Scouts feedback as they play games.
- After Scouts play a new game, give them a chance to reflect on the experience.
- Help Scouts develop a plan for getting better at a specific game.

ENABLE

- Have older Scouts use the EDGE method to teach younger Scouts how to play new games.
- Round up a variety of game equipment so Scouts can plan a game tournament.
- Teach Scouts the fundamentals of game design so they can create their own games.
- Encourage youth leaders to research new games to be used during meetings in the future (rather than relying on old standbys they usually play).

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

● ESSENTIAL	■ CHALLENGING	◆ ADVANCED
Day Activity	Overnight Activity	Overnight Activity
Games field day—Have a day of individual or team games. Pick games in a variety of categories and create a schedule for the day. Award points to the winner of each game and determine an overall winner for the day.	Games lock-in/recruiting event—If it's too cold to camp, hold a lock-in where you play basketball, board games, and video games. Find a location that offers plenty of recreational options (like a church youth center), and invite potential members to join the fun.	Game design weekend—Camp in a favorite spot and use part of the time to work on the Game Design merit badge. Be sure to take advantage of other activity and advancement options at the campsite.



GAMES

Meeting Plan: Game Basics



Week 1 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	As members arrive, have them play a simple two-person game like arm wrestling.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	Have youth brainstorm different types of games (card, role-playing, athletic, computer, etc.). Talk about how these game types are similar and different.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a simple card game like Go Fish. • Use the EDGE method to teach the game to someone who hasn't played it before. • Make a list of the game rules. • Evaluate the game. 		7:20 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a simple card game like Go Fish. • Evaluate the game. • Make a simple change to the rules, then play the game again. • Discuss how the rule change affected game play and how fun the game was. • Repeat this process if you have time. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a simple card game like Go Fish. • Play a simple physical game like Tag. • Discuss ways to combine the games you played into a single game or ways to incorporate rules from one game into the other. • Play the hybrid game and then evaluate it. 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New members practice basic Scout skills. • Review advancement needs of older members. • Review last main event and discuss what would have made it better. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Wheelbarrow Relay. (See <i>Troop Program Resources</i> .)		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



GAMES

Meeting Plan: Rules



Week 2 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	As members arrive, have a magnetic dartboard available for play. See who can earn the best score.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about the history of games and how individual games or types of games have evolved, e.g., football adding safety rules, video games taking advantage of increased computing memory and power). Show an internet video of an early football game or a computer simulation of an early videogame. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide into two groups. Have one group learn the signals used by football referees, and have the other group learn the signals used by baseball umpires. Have each group use the EDGE method to teach the other group what it learned. 		7:25 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a set of rules for a game your troop often plays on campouts, such as capture the flag. Talk about the need to add referees to the game. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debate any or all of these topics: What would happen in games like basketball if there were no officials enforcing the rules? How do rules improve games or take away enjoyment for fans and players? Is it okay as a strategy to break the rules sometimes? How would you change the rules in your favorite game if you could? 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New members practice basic Scout skills. Review advancement needs of older members. Begin meal planning and create a duty roster for the main event. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Sports True-False Steal the Bacon. (See <i>Troop Program Resources</i> .)		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



GAMES

Meeting Plan: Gaming Skills



Week 3 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	As Scouts arrive, have cornhole or hillbilly golf games set up for them to play.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	Invite a serious gamer, varsity athlete, or member of a group like a chess club to talk about the differences between casual game playing and serious game playing.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Indian Leg Wrestling. (See <i>Troop Program Resources</i>.) • Compete against each other in tournament format so you end up with one winner. • Discuss the keys to the winner's success. 		7:25 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Indian Leg Wrestling. (See <i>Troop Program Resources</i>.) • Determine one or two things, such as stretching or doing specific leg exercises, that players could do to improve their performance. • Spend the rest of your time doing those stretches and exercises. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide on a game the group enjoys. If possible, spend some time playing that game. • Develop a three-month plan for improving your ability in that game. • If possible, try some of the things in your plan. 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	Finalize planning for the main event.		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Paper-Wad Tennis. (See <i>Troop Program Resources</i> .)		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



GAMES

Meeting Plan: Game Design



Week 4 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Have Scouts play The Struggle. (See <i>Troop Program Resources</i> .)		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 20 minutes	Discuss game design terms and the steps in designing a new game.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin developing the concept for a new game. Determine the game type, objectives, and number of players. 		7:30 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin developing the concept for a new game. Determine the game type, objectives, and number of players. Make a preliminary list of rules. Sketch the key game elements. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin developing the concept for a new game. Determine the game type, objectives, and number of players. Make a preliminary list of rules. Sketch the key game elements. Discuss a plan for creating a prototype of your game. 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	Review plans for the main event and requirements for the Game Design merit badge.		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Moonball. (See <i>Troop Program Resources</i> .)		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



GAMES

Main Event: Games Field Day



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 4 to 6 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____

Essential (Tier I)

Have a day of individual or team games. Pick games in a variety of categories and create a schedule for the day. Award points to the winner of each game and determine an overall winner for the day.

Equipment List

- Game supplies and equipment
- Posterboard or easel pad and pens for keeping score
- Prizes for the winners
- Lunch (decide on individual or group)
- Water
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

Activity

- Decide whether you want to focus on team or individual games.
- Relying on input from members, decide what games you want to play during the day.
- Make sure the games selected are varied and require different skills (physical ability, dexterity, endurance, strategic thinking, etc.).
- Set up a competition schedule, including practice time. If necessary, create tournament brackets for each event.
- Make sure all needed game equipment is available.
- Run the field day, and have an adult leader keep score.
- Award prizes to the winners.

Safety

Always use the buddy system, and have cellphone numbers and a first-aid kit on hand. Use sunscreen, and be alert for the potential for sports injuries.

Notes



GAMES

Main Event: Games Lock-In/Recruiting Event



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Overnight

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____

Challenging (Tier II)

If it's too cold to camp, hold a lock-in where you play basketball, board games, and video games. Find a location that offers plenty of recreational options (like a church youth center), and invite potential members to join the fun.

Equipment List

- Game supplies and equipment
- Computers with cabling and internet connection for video games
- Personal gear for sleeping over
- Food
- Water
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

Activity

- Find and reserve a location with amenities like a gym, game room, and/or pool room, as well as space for sleeping and eating/preparing meals (if necessary).
- Make sure plenty of game equipment is available.
- Develop a plan for inviting potential members to participate.
- Decide whether other activities (such as a movie) should be part of the event.
- Set up a schedule that allows plenty of time for eating and sleeping.

Safety

Always use the buddy system, and have cellphone numbers and a first-aid kit on hand.

Notes



GAMES

Main Event: Game Design Weekend



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Weekend

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____



Advanced (Tier III)

Camp in a favorite spot and use part of the time to work on the Game Design merit badge. Be sure to take advantage of other activity and advancement options at the campsite.

Equipment List

- Paper and pens
- Materials for creating game prototypes (cardboard, tape, markers, etc.)
- Camping gear (individual and group)
- Food
- Water
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

Activity

- Find and reserve a campsite. If you want to work on indoor games, look for a place with a shelter or building where you can work.
- At meetings, review the basics of game design.
- During the morning, have teams work on their game ideas and create prototypes. Use the *Game Design* merit badge pamphlet as a resource.
- After lunch, have teams take turns playing each other's games while the creators look on.
- Take time during the day for hiking or other activities.

Safety

Always use the buddy system, and have cellphone numbers and a first-aid kit on hand.

Notes



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Books

Game Design, Scouting Heritage, and Signs, Signals, and Codes merit badge pamphlets

Troop Program Resources

Bell, R.C. *Board and Table Games From Many Civilizations*, rev. ed. Dover Publications, 1979.

Botermans, Jack. *The Book of Games: Strategy, Tactics & History*. Sterling Publishing, 2008.

Brathwaite, Brenda, and Ian Schreiber. *Challenges for Game Designers*. Charles River Media, 2009.

Koster, Raph. *A Theory of Fun for Game Design*. Paraglyph Press, 2005.

Morehead, Albert H., Geoffrey Mott-Smith, and Philip D. Morehead. *Hoyle's Rules of Games*, 3rd rev. and updated ed. Signet, 2001.

Websites

Adventure Game Studio

Website: <http://www.adventuregamestudio.co.uk>

Entertainment Software Rating Board

Website: <http://www.esrb.org>

Game Design Concepts

Website: <http://gamedesignconcepts.wordpress.com>

RPG Maker

Website: <http://www.rpgmakerweb.com>

Scratch Project

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Website: <http://scratch.mit.edu>

Unity 3D

Website: <http://unity3d.com>

YoYo Games/GameMaker: Studio

Website: <http://yoyogames.com/gamemaker/studio>

Related Program Features

Communication, Spectator Sports

Photo and Illustration Credits

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