

Games

Children played tag, follow the leader, king of the hill, hopscotch, hide and go seek, catch, riddle games, and versions of charades. Here are a few more.

MIEW

One of the players must be blindfolded and given a short stick. He is turned round three times, so that he cannot remember exactly where each one is sitting, and then has to point his stick at someone who must miew like a cat, disguising his voice as best he can. The person blindfolded has to guess to whom the voice belongs, and if the guess is correct, he sits down and the other takes his place. Those sitting round should change their places occasionally.

Another way of playing the game.

“The Cat” kneels at the feet of one of the players who sit round the room, and gazes into his or her face, saying “miew” in the most pathetic voice he can command. The one miewed to has to say “Poor Pussy” without even the ghost of a smile. This is repeated three times. If he smiles, he takes the place of the Cat; if not, the Cat goes to the next player and tries to make him smile in the same way. It is always difficult for the rest of the company to keep a solemn face during the performance, but they should try to.

HEAD, BODY, LEGS

To each player is given a strip of paper, on which he draws a head of some sort, without telling or showing anyone the kind of head he has drawn. He then folds the paper in such a way that nothing but the two lines of the neck are visible. The paper is then passed on to his neighbor, who attaches to the neck some sort of body. The paper is again folded, leaving only the lines for the beginning of the legs, and passed on to the next person, who has to add the legs, though he has no idea what the body is like. The completed drawing is passed on again and then opened, and sent round for all to see. The completed animals are usually very funny.

The Hat Game

A hat is placed on the ground, and the players (standing two or three paces from it) try to throw cards, one at a time, into it. This sounds much easier to do than it really is.

Earth, Air, Fire, and Water

The players form a circle, and one stands in the center holding a handkerchief knotted into a ball. He counts up to ten, then throws the ball into someone’s lap, calling out either “Earth,” “Air,” “Fire,” or “Water.” If he cries “Earth,” the person in whose lap the

handkerchief has fallen must instantly name some animal which lives on the earth; if “Water,” then some fish; if “Fire,” something that can exist in fire; if “Air,” some bird. If he allows the ball-thrower to count up to ten without his answering he must pay a forfeit. (In 19th century games, a forfeit was some minor action like hopping around the circle, answering a question, or sitting out a round.)

Hiding the Thimble

Players are sent out of the room while someone hides a thimble in a place where it can be seen. The players are then called in, and as each one discovers the thimble, he sits down in silence. The person who first sees it, hides it next time.

Buz

This is a very old game. All the players sit in a circle and begin to count in turn, but when the number 7 or any multiple of 7 comes, they say buz instead. If anyone forgets this, he is put out and the game commences over again. Fizz for five makes a variety.

General Post

One person is selected as “postman” and blindfolded, the others all take the names of different places, except one, who is chosen as leader and has a written list of all the places chosen by the players. He then calls out: “The post is going from London to York” or any other names as the case may be. The persons named must then exchange seats, the “postman” trying to catch them as they move. Sometimes “general post” is called out, when all change their seats. Whoever is left out becomes “postman.”

HOT POTATOES

All the players sit round the room in a circle with the exception of one who stands in the centre. A napkin or handkerchief is then thrown to one of the players who must immediately throw it to someone else, not waiting even to make it into a better and tighter bundle. The one in the centre tries to catch the napkin as it passes from one to another, and if he succeeds the one from whom it is sent or through whose fault it is secured must take his place in the centre.

Games with capital letters are quoted from *How to Entertain Your Guests*, 1911. The other games were found in *Kate Greenaway’s Book of Games*, published in the late 19th century.