



## How to...

### PUZZLE MASTERS

A team of four in Japan set a record in 2020 for attending the most escape rooms in a single day: 32.



# Make an escape room

With a little creativity, you can set up a fun challenge at home.

An escape room is a thrilling adventure: You must solve a series of puzzles to successfully “escape” a room in a set amount of time. The best part is you can problem-solve your way to victory with the help of friends or family. While there are many escape rooms you can visit, you can also create one at home, right in your living room. Here’s how you can get started.

### Select a theme

A theme can help get everyone excited before the game even begins, and it will help give you direction as you create your clues. You can base your escape room on a holiday like Halloween, a sports-themed challenge, or even a classic treasure hunt with a reward at the end.

### Gather props

Round up items you can use to create challenges to solve. Gather locks, small boxes or containers, paper, and a pen. You could also decorate your escape room with drawings or posters, and have simple costume props, like hats and flashlights.

### Write down the end goal

Prepare a short paragraph to read at the beginning of the game. For example, you can set the scene by

writing something like, “You are adventurers trapped in a haunted Halloween maze, and you must solve spooky puzzles to escape before the clock strikes 8.”

### Create small challenges

Each challenge can help players progress toward the ultimate goal of escaping. For example, make up a riddle that directs players to a clue. “I have four legs, but I don’t walk. I’m the place you sit and talk.” The answer would be a chair, and you can plan to hide the clue in a cushion. That clue might help players find a key or combination to a locked box. Then, players can unlock the box, which would hold the next clue.

### Hide the clues

Map the escape route: Start at the end and work backward, picking spots for each clue and challenge. You could opt to have a prize at the finish, like mini pumpkins or chocolate coins.

### Do a test run

Ask an adult to be a test player to make sure the steps work in order. When they are done, make whatever changes you need to. Then, at game time, welcome your players, set a timer, and go!



Locks help add suspense!

## Crack the code



To solve the puzzle of an escape room before time’s up, here are a few smart strategies.

**Look—and look again** Check for clues in high and low places and at eye level. Lift the corner of a rug, check inside books, and peek behind picture frames.

**Stay organized** Designate a table for your team to separate solved clues and unsolved clues.

**Rotate puzzles** If you get stuck on a clue, pass it to a teammate. You’ll save time, and a pair of fresh eyes may help solve it!

**Don’t overthink** Try not to get weighed down by complex calculations. Often the simple answer is the correct one!