Librarians of India

bachpan manao

GAMES *in the* LIBRARY

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries are more than just places to read - they are vibrant spaces where curiosity, imagination, and play come together. This primer brings to you a collection of games designed for the library, where books and play meet to spark joy, deepen engagement, and make reading irresistible.

Each game included here is simple to set up, flexible for different age groups, can be played in any language, and is rooted in the spirit of reading response and discovery. From wordplay that strengthens vocabulary to cover-based challenges that sharpen observation, these activities invite children (and adults!) to connect with books in surprising, memorable ways.

Whether you are a librarian, educator, or reading advocate, this guide is meant to help you turn your collection into a playground of ideas. Think of it as your **Bookish Playbook** - where fun isn't an extra, but an essential pathway to reading.

GENRE BINGO

MATERIALS

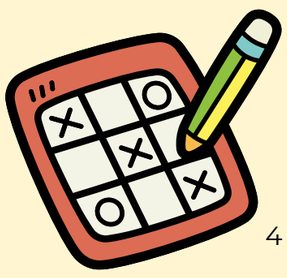
- Bingo cards (3×3 grid works well, but you can also do 5 squares for younger readers)
- Each square contains the name of a genre (e.g., Mystery, Fantasy, Biography, Graphic Novel, Folktale, Poetry, Historical Fiction, Science Fiction, Non-fiction, Adventure, Humor, etc.)
- Tokens/markers (buttons, coins, slips of paper, or just a pen to cross off)
- A list of genre definitions to call out **(Refer to page 16)**

HOW TO PLAY

- Each player gets a card with a randomized set of genres.
- Cards should vary so players don't all have the same layout.
- The facilitator calls out the definitions of genre
- Players identify the genre and mark that square if it's on their card.
- For E.g.: If the facilitator says: *stories that take us to imaginary worlds filled with magic, unusual creatures, or adventures that could not happen in real life*, the player marks "FANTASY" if it's on the card.
- First player to get three in a row (horizontal, vertical, diagonal) or (or all five squares in the version for younger children) calls out "Bingo!"
- The player reads out the row of genres.
- The facilitator double-checks the cards and announces the winner

PRO TIPS

- Players can choose the words on their own to fill the grid/squares
- You can also use a list or deck of book covers/titles from your collection to call out (or show digitally)



ROLL AND RESPOND

MATERIALS

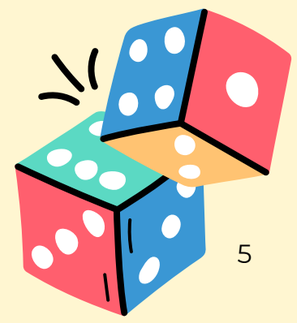
- A regular six-sided die (physical or online version).
- A list of six reading response prompts, each linked to a die number.
- Books the children are currently reading OR a book to be read aloud by the facilitator
- Paper/pens (optional, if you want them to write responses)

HOW TO PLAY

- Each player rolls the die on their turn. The number on the die decides which reading response prompt they answer. They can respond aloud or write their answer. Players take turns until everyone has had a chance to roll at least once.
- Example Prompts
- 1 – Name your favorite character and explain why you like them.
- 2 – What was the most exciting part of the story?
- 3 – If you could change one thing in the story, what would it be?
- 4 – Which part of the book made you curious or left you with a question?
- 5 – Imagine a new ending for the story. Share it in one or two lines.
- 6 – Connect this story to your own life - did something similar ever happen to you?

PRO TIPS

- Choice power – Allow students to re-roll once if they don’t connect with a question - this keeps participation positive.
- Collaborative play – Sometimes let the whole group answer the same die roll for richer discussion.



LIBRARY SCAVENGER HUNT

MATERIALS

- A list of scavenger hunt prompts (printed sheets or projected on screen).
- Pens/pencils for players or teams.
- (Optional) Small tokens/stickers to place on found books.
- A timer/stopwatch to keep rounds exciting.

HOW TO PLAY

- Divide players into individuals or small teams.
- Give each team a scavenger hunt list (e.g., *Find a book with an animal on the cover, Find a mystery story, Find a book by an author whose name starts with S*).
- Set a time limit (10–20 minutes depending on age group).
- Players search the library to find books that match the prompts and record the title/author, or bring the book back to a designated spot.
- At the end, everyone gathers and shares findings

PRO TIPS

- Vary difficulty – Mix easy prompts (colours, animals) with challenging ones (genre, author, year published) so everyone can shine.
- Make it visual – Include picture-based prompts for younger children who can't read yet.

REVERSE CHARADES

MATERIALS

- A stack/list of book titles from your library collection (mix of popular, classic, and age-appropriate).
- Slips of paper or cards with one title on each.
- A timer (1–2 minutes per round).

HOW TO PLAY

- Divide players into two or more teams.
- In each round, **one player guesses** while the rest of their team acts out clues together to represent the book title.
- The “guesser” sits facing away from the card or slip, while the rest of the team sees it.
- Team members act silently - no words, only actions. Props are allowed if handy.
- The guesser must name the correct book title before time runs out.
- After each round, briefly show the book cover so everyone becomes familiar with the title.

PRO TIPS

- Mix difficulty – Use some very recognizable titles (The Very Hungry Caterpillar) and some trickier ones (जब मैं मोती को घर लायी) to keep it fun.
- Encourage creativity – Let players use exaggerated actions, group formations, or even sound effects (but no speaking words).

RACE TO READ

MATERIALS

- A selection of books from the library (mix of picture books, short passages, or easy-to-read texts depending on age group).
- Slips of paper with short reading tasks
- Space in the library for movement (clear aisles or designated relay spots).
- A timer/stopwatch.

HOW TO PLAY

- Divide children into teams (4–6 players each works best).
- Place a stack of books + reading task slips at one end of the library.
- On “Go,” the first player from each team runs to the book stack, picks one slip, and completes the task with the chosen book.
- Once the task is done, they run back and tag the next teammate.
- The relay continues until all team members have had a turn.
- The first team to finish correctly wins.

Sample Tasks:

- Read aloud the first sentence from page 3.
- Find a word with 5 letters and say it.
- Read the last line of the book.
- Say one describing word (adjective) from page 2.

PRO TIPS

- Mix task types – Some quick (find a word), some slower (read aloud a sentence) to balance pace.
- Encourage teamwork – Allow teammates to help if someone is stuck.

BOOK TABOO

MATERIALS

- A stack of cards/slips with library-related words written at the top.
- Under each word, list 3–4 “taboo words” that cannot be used when describing.
- A timer (30–45 seconds per round).

HOW TO PLAY

- Divide the group into teams of 4 members each
- One player draws a card with a target word.
- The player must describe the word to their team without using the taboo words.
- The team has to guess the word within the time limit.
- Switch turns between teams.

Sample cards
Target Word: Shelf
Taboo Words: Books, Row, Wood, Keep

Target Word: Author
Taboo Words: Write, Story, Creator, Book

Target Word: Genre
Taboo Words: Type, Category, Kind, Section

PRO TIPS

- Differentiate by age - For younger children, use concrete, everyday words (book, shelf, borrow). For older children, mix in abstract or technical ones (periodical, catalogue, archive).
- Team inclusivity - Allow teammates to “pass” after 10 seconds if stuck so no one feels pressured.

POETRY GRAB BAG

MATERIALS

- Slips of paper with short lines poems or interesting phrases (you can handwrite or quickly print a few from poetry books in your library)
- A bag to place the slips of paper
- Poetry books on display for browsing

HOW TO PLAY

- Each player draws one slip from the bowl.
- They read the line aloud to the group.
- Then they:
- Say what they think/feel/imagine from that line.
- Go to a poetry book on display and try to find another line/poem that could continue or “match” their slip.

PRO TIPS

- Mix familiar & surprising - Use some well-known poems and some fresh ones to spark curiosity.
- Encourage feelings - Remind children there are no right answers; any personal reaction is valid.

NONFICTION NEWS FLASH

MATERIALS

- Nonfiction books, newspapers, or magazines
- A timer
- Optional: A “prop microphone” (can be a rolled-up paper or marker) for the anchor effect

HOW TO PLAY

- Each player is given a short nonfiction passage
- They have 90 seconds to read silently and prepare.
- They must “go live” as a news anchor and report the key idea to the group in under 20 seconds.
- Players can start with phrases like “Breaking news…”, “We’re live at the scene…”, or “In today’s top story…”.
- Add drama - Encourage tone, expression, and gestures to make it lively.

PRO TIPS

- Model first – Show an example of a too-long vs. sharp summary so children get the idea.
- Mix levels - Younger children can simply share one fun fact as “breaking news.” Older students can attempt fuller reports.
- Build excitement - Create a mock “news bulletin” atmosphere (background music, a sign saying Live From The Library)

WHEEL OF WONDER

MATERIALS

- Spinner (store-bought or DIY)
- 6–8 nonfiction reading response tasks (one per spinner section)
- A set of nonfiction books, magazines, or newspapers (age-appropriate)

HOW TO PLAY

- Begin by giving each child 5 minutes of quiet browsing/reading from the nonfiction pile.
- They can pick any page, picture, or article that interests them.
- Once reading time is over, gather as a group.
- Players take turns spinning the spinner.
- Wherever the spinner lands, they must respond using something from what they just read.

SAMPLE TASKS:

- Read aloud one fact you found.
- Share a new word and explain it in your own way.
- Show a picture/diagram and describe it.
- Connect something you read to your life.
- Turn one fact into a question.
- Tell one thing that made you curious to know more.

PRO TIPS

- Keep it light – Allow short answers; the game should feel like play, not a test.
- Borrowing boost – End by inviting children to borrow the book or magazine they used in the game.

DICTIONARY DETECTIVES

MATERIALS

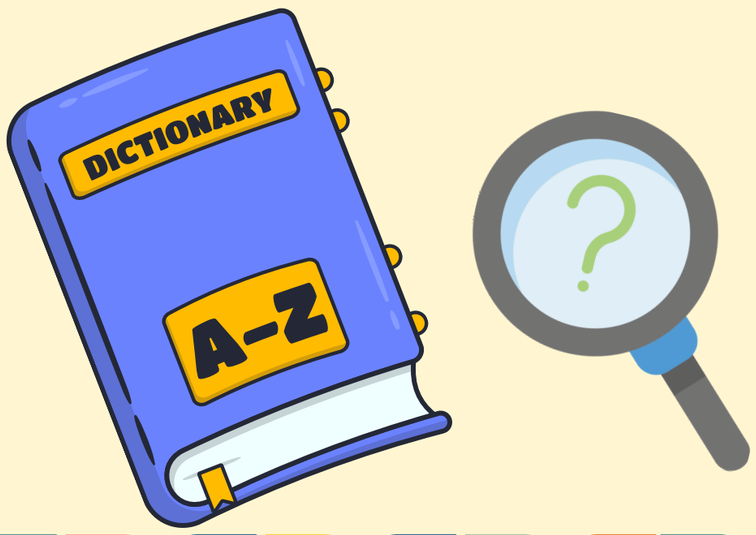
- A dictionary (print or online) or word lists prepared in advance
- Slips of paper or cards to write words/definitions on
- A timer (optional)

HOW TO PLAY

- One player (the “Word Master”) chooses a word from the dictionary.
- The Word Master writes down or reads aloud three definitions:
- Two are true (the real meaning + one correct alternate if the word has multiple meanings).
- One is made up (a false definition)
- Other players listen to the three definitions and try to guess which one is the bluff. They can discuss briefly before voting.
- The Word Master reveals the true definition(s) and the bluff.
- Next round, a new Word Master is chosen.

PRO TIPS

- Start simple - Use short, clear words for younger players (bark, spring, bat - which already have multiple meanings).
- Thematic rounds - Pick words from genres (science words, poetry words, animal words).
- Link to reading - After revealing, challenge players to find and share a sentence in a book/magazine/newspaper where the word is used.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

Wordwall

Boggle

Jeopardy

Taboo

Word search

Grammar games

Reading games

CLICK TO FOLLOW THE LINK

WORD GAMES

SCRABBLE

TABOO

BOGGLE

FLETTER

QUIDDLER

UPWORDS

PICTIONARY

CODENAMES

SCATTEGORIES

WORD-A-ROUND

CLICK TO FOLLOW THE LINK

LIST FOR GENRE BINGO

FICTION

- Fantasy – Stories with magic, imaginary worlds, or impossible creatures.
- Science Fiction – Stories about the future, technology, or space.
- Mystery – A puzzle or crime to be solved.
- Adventure – Exciting journeys and challenges with lots of action.
- Historical Fiction – Made-up stories set in real times from the past.
- Realistic Fiction – Stories that could happen in real life with believable characters.
- Humour – Stories written to make you laugh.
- Poetry – Writing that uses rhythm, rhyme, or vivid images to share feelings and ideas.

NONFICTION

- Biography – A true story of someone's life written by someone else
- Autobiography - An account of a person's life written by that person.
- Informational Nonfiction – Books that explain facts about real topics
- Memoir – A personal account of someone's experiences with a focus on a specific period, theme, or significant events
- Atlas – A book of maps.
- Encyclopaedia – A big reference book (or set of books) that explains many topics usually arranged in alphabetical order.
- Newspaper – A collection of article that gives information current events.
- Dictionary – A book that lists meanings of words
- Magazine – A publication that comes out regularly with articles on specific topics
- Activity Books – Books with puzzles, colouring, and fun tasks.
- Process Books – Step-by-step books that teach you how to do something

FOLKLORE & TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

- Folk Tale – Traditional stories passed down, often teaching a lesson.
- Fairy Tale – Magical stories with fairies, witches, or talking animals.
- Myth – Stories about gods, heroes, and how the world began.
- Legend – Stories about heroes or events, sometimes based on truth but exaggerated.
- Fable – Very short stories, often with animal characters, that teach a moral.
- Tall Tale – A story with exaggerated characters and events, told in a funny or unbelievable way

LINKS

Watch the session here

FROM PAGES TO PLAY
Fun And Games In The Library

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PRATHAM BOOKS
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