

# **The Pocket Dangerous Book for Boys: Things to Do**

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Extract

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# THE POCKET DANGEROUS BOOK FOR BOYS: THINGS TO DO

Many of the pieces in this edition have been selected from the much loved *The Dangerous Book for Boys*. They have been chosen to give readers things to do, inside and out, during the long summer days.

This edition is a perfect pocket format for readers to take everywhere with them. It has new drawings and new activities.

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# INTRODUCTION



THERE'S SOMETHING MAGICAL about small books. Somehow you *own* them more than large ones. You can keep them in a secret box, or the crook of a tree. You can fit them into a coat pocket, or a rucksack. The original *Dangerous Book for Boys* couldn't have been made any smaller; we wanted to fit everything into it. The only problem was that it wasn't very portable, which is a shame when you want it to be taken outside every now and then. What we've done here is conjured two pocket versions out of the book: *Things to Do* and *Things to Know*\*. We've added extra chapters too – you're going to love the Garden Rocket – but if you're holding this, you'll know it's just the right size to take with you on adventures. The only thing we couldn't do was make it fireproof and waterproof, but who knows? Maybe we will, yet.

*Conn Iggulden and Hal Iggulden*

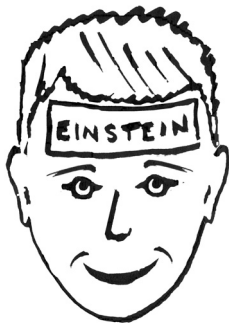
\* Coming later

# GAMES



**M**OST GROUP GAMES involve a large number of children, like Murder in the Dark, Tug of War and British Bulldog. You'll play them at parties, or at Cub Scouts.

*These* games are the sort you can play with the family in a car, or at home. We haven't included charades, because everyone knows it already. We also haven't included I Spy, because it's the dullest game on earth. With any luck, you don't know all of these and you'll find a few worth trying.



## *Who Am I?*

You'll need Post-It notes for this. One person writes a name on the sticky paper, then puts it on the next person's forehead so that everyone else can read the name. That person then asks questions like 'Am I a man?' and 'Am I dead?' until they guess who they are. Only 'yes' or 'no' questions are allowed. It doesn't sound like fun, but it is.

One of the authors had the odd experience of seeing someone with 'Genghis Khan' on her forehead. With desperate hints, she got as far as 'He was a Mongol leader, who lived eight centuries ago – second name "Khan".' She didn't get it, so it doesn't always work. Pick names that have some chance of success.

## *Memory Games*

These involve a lengthening list that always starts with the same phrase. For example: 'I went to the party and I brought apples.' The next person then has to come up with something beginning with 'b': 'I went to the party and I brought apples and books.' You continue down the alphabet, seeing how long you can keep it going. 'I went to the party and I brought apples, books, a cat, dinosaurs, an elephant, foxes, goats, hats, ink...'

## *Handshake Puzzle*

This next one is just a simple mental puzzle, but it's fun to work out.

**Question:** If there are two people in a room and each one shakes hands once with every other person in the room, how many handshakes are there?

**Answer:** One handshake.

Not too hard.

**Question:** If there are three people in a room and everyone shakes hands only once with everyone else, how many handshakes are there?

**Answer:** Three handshakes.

Now, how many handshakes will there be for *five* people in the room, with everyone shaking hands once with everyone else? [See the end of the chapter for the answer.]

## *Cheat*

This is one for the home rather than the car. You need four people and a pack of cards.

Deal out all the cards. Each player then arranges them so that multiples of numbers or picture cards are together, like three sevens, or three kings. The aim of the game is to get rid of all your cards without someone calling ‘Cheat!’

Clockwise from the dealer, each player takes it in turns to lay cards face down, so that no one else can see them. At the same time, he or she says what they are. They might lay down three cards and say ‘Three eights’, for example.

The next player can now lay down only eights, nines or sevens – the same card or one up or down. If they don’t have a card with the right number, they can risk cheating by laying down just one card, saying the number and keeping a very straight face.

Obvious cheats are when you are sitting there with three nines and someone lays two cards, saying ‘Two nines’ with great confidence. There are only four of each number, so you call ‘Cheat!’

At that point, they turn over the cards. If they have been caught cheating, they have to pick up the whole



pile – and they usually discover all the other cheating that’s been going on.

As the game is called Cheat, you can try putting three cards down while only declaring two. If no one notices, that’s fine. As the game goes on, you have a good idea what other people have in their hands, so you can force them to cheat and pick up the pile.

With the exception of poker, this is one of the best card games we’ve ever played.

### *Beggar-My-Neighbour*

A card game for two players. Deal out all the cards, so you have one half of the pack each. In turns, lay down one card at a time, face up. If an ace appears, the other player must put four cards on top of it. For a king, it’s three. For a queen, it’s two, and just one for a jack. If another jack, queen, king or ace appears as the penalty cards are laid down, it becomes the first player’s turn to add more. If it doesn’t, the player must pick up the pile. The aim of the game is to win all of your opponent’s cards

## *Crossing the River*

This is a classic mental puzzle that you can do in your head.

A farmer is on the side of a river with a fox, a hen and a sack of grain. His boat will only carry him and one other item. He needs to get them all across the river, but he cannot leave the fox with the hen, or the hen will be eaten. He also cannot leave the hen with the grain, or that will be eaten. How does he get all three across the river?

[Answer at the end of the chapter.]

## *Questions*

Simple and fun. One person begins with a question such as ‘Is your name David?’ and the next must reply with another question: ‘Why would you say that?’ for instance. This goes on until someone hesitates or misses a question.

### *Hesitation/Deviation or Repetition*

You'll need a stopwatch for this. The aim is to keep talking on a random subject for a minute without hesitation - a long pause, deviation - going off the subject, or repetition - saying the same word twice. If you are successfully interrupted for one of these points (a buzzer noise is always good) your opponent wins one point. The stopwatch is paused and he takes over the subject. Start the clock on him. The person talking at the end of the minute also wins a point. (Keep careful score, interruptions can happen a lot.)

### *The Yes/No Game*

Again, you'll need a watch to time this. One person asks questions and the other has to avoid saying either 'yes' or 'no' or hesitating. They also cannot shake or nod their head.

For example:

*Is it raining?* It is.

*Are you sure?* I am.

*Do you like the rain?* I do

*You do?* Yes.

It is surprisingly hard to resist saying yes or no.

### *Word Association*

One player says a word and the next has to reply with the first word that pops into their head – as fast as possible.

### *Blow Football*

Definitely not one for the car as you need a table, two straws, a ping-pong ball and either four boxes of matches or four books to make the goals.

Begin with the ball in the middle, then both players try to blow it into the opponent's goal.

### *Penny-up-the-Wall or Shove Ha'Penny*

A real old favourite, this, for two or more players. Standing a set distance from a wall, each player takes the same kind of coin – and tosses or rolls it towards the wall. The closest throw wins all the coins.

### *Fast Draw*

You will need enough family and friends to make teams, large sheets of paper, pens and a timer. One person thinks of a film name and then draws a picture of it. The other members of the team try to guess it in less than sixty seconds.

## *Board Games*

It's a good idea to get the classic family board games as well. No home is complete without Snakes and Ladders, Monopoly, Cluedo, Ludo, Scrabble, Trivial Pursuit and Risk.

### *Answers*

**Handshake Puzzle:** Ten handshakes. For six people, it's fifteen; for seven, twenty-one.

**Crossing the River Puzzle:** First the farmer takes the hen across, leaving the fox and the grain. Leaving the hen on the far bank, he returns and takes the fox across. On his second return journey, he takes the hen with him, leaving the fox on the far bank. He puts the hen down and takes the grain across, so that it sits once more with the fox, then finally, he returns a third time and once again takes the hen across. There are a number of other ways to solve the puzzle.

# SKIMMING STONES

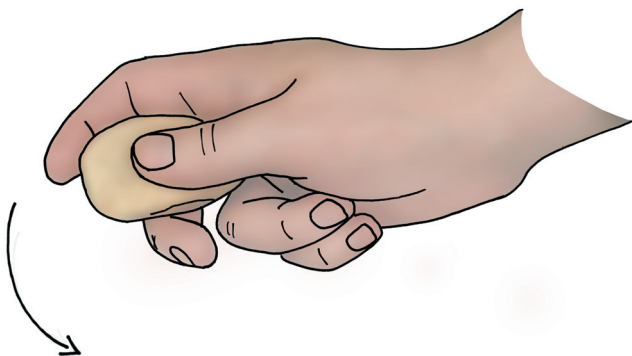


**T**HIS IS QUITE A TRICKY skill, but it is possible to bounce a stone on water five or six times without too much trouble. Barnes Wallis used the same principle when designing the bouncing bomb for raids on the Ruhr Valley in Germany. You will need several things in your favour to skim like the Dambusters.

First of all you need to pick your stone, as flat as possible without being too thin. It needs some weight to carry, but if it weighs much more than an apple, you won't get the range. Most beaches will have a variety of stones to choose from but if you find the perfect 'skimmer' in the park, hang on to it.

Skimming on the sea is harder because of the waves. If you try it on a lake, watch out for swimmers, who object to having stones thrown at them.

The skill is in the grip and the angle. Curl your forefinger around the stone, resting it on your middle finger. Secure it with your thumb.



The action of throwing the stone is all important – too steep and the stone will just plonk into the water. Bend your knees to keep the angle of descent around  $25^\circ$  and try to get the flat side to hit the water when you release, to help it bounce on the surface.

The power you use to throw the stone can be increased once you get the hang of the technique.

More than one bounce and you are ‘skimming’, though you will have a way to go to beat the current world record of *thirty eight* skims.