



Traveling Car Games



Player one spots an object in the car, such as a pencil, and doesn't tell the other players what she's found. She simply gives one clue, such as, "I spy something that begins with a 'p'." The other players take turns trying to figure out what she's "spied" by asking "yes" or "no" questions. After each player guesses once, another clue is offered. In this case, the second clue might be, "I spy something that begins with 'p' and is yellow." The first player to guess correctly spies the next object.

Some objects you might "spy" in the car: gloves, pens, pencils, a lighter, a mirror, a wallet, a pocketbook, a map, a book, a shoe, sun glasses, golf clubs, an umbrella, an ice scraper, a sun visor, a blanket, a hat, candy wrappers, matches, cigarettes, tissues, a briefcase, a dog's leash, dirty laundry, sneakers, change, french fries (believe it or not, we've all got them), etc.

20 Questions is truly a classic game. It can be played by children of all ages. There are many variations of the game. We will describe only one variation of the game.

One person thinks of something which falls under the category of animal, mineral, or vegetable and then tells the other players which category is correct. The players then take turns asking questions which can be answered with a YES or NO. For instance, if the category is animal a player might ask "Can it fly?" or "Does it have four legs?" And after 20 questions are asked, if the players have not already guessed the answer, each player gets a last chance to make a guess. Afterwards, a new player tries to stump the group.

GEOGRAPHY

Geography is another classic game. But Geography is not for younger children. This game is best for children ages 8 and up. Not only do they enjoy the game, they know enough locations to be able to play the game well. Although the fine points of the game may vary from place to place, this is how the basic game is played. Someone starts by naming a country such as Japan. The next person must name a country whose name begins with the last letter of the previously named country. In this case, Japan ends in N, so a country which begins with N must be named such as Nigeria. And then, since Nigeria ends in an A, the next person's country must start with an A. And so on until someone gets stumped. Please note, some people play the game with city names; names of rivers or other bodies of water; and in the United States it is often played with state names. Set your own rules and have fun!



NAME GAME

This is a simple, yet a fun game for children of all ages. Think of a name. Then tell the group whether it is a boy's or girl's name, and tell them the first letter of the name. The group then tries to guess the name by calling out all the names they can think of which start with the appropriate letter. That's it. Simple, but fun!

ALPHABET MEMORY GAME

This is a great for children of all ages. An excellent way to help reinforce a preschooler's ABCs, yet fun for the elementary school aged child too!



The first person starts with the letter A and say "A is for ---" filling in the blank with any word beginning with the letter A such as APPLE, ARTICHOKE, AIRPLANE, etc. Let's use APPLE. The second person then does the letter B, but must also remember what A was! So, let's say the second person decides to use the word BOOK for B, the second person would say "A is for APPLE and B is for BOOK." You continue your way through the alphabet. By the time you get up to the letter Z the player will have to recite each and every letter with its corresponding item. The game takes a while and kids love it, particularly if you throw in some silly words or phrases like S IS FOR SMELLY TOES.

LICENSE PLATE GAME



Spot a license plate and call out the letters on it. Then everyone tries to come up with a different phrase using the letters in the order they appear on the license plate as the first letter of each word. For instance KEW could be "kittens eating watermelon" or "kiss every warthog." When you can't think of any more look for another license plate.

Count blue vans, or count red cars, find 10 horses, count signs, billboards, police cars. Count water towers. How many people pass you on the highway? -- count them too!

Start with the letter "A" and find one on a sign, truck, building or license plate, say the word and then move on to the next letter. You can do this as a competition or together as a family for the younger beginning readers. The first one to get to the letter "Z" is the winner!

GAS MILEAGE/DISTANCE/TIME

Help your children figure out the gas mileage you've been getting. Have them predict how much it will cost to fill the tank based on the price per gallon. Have them calculate how long it will take to get to your destination given your average speed. Have them read a map and figure the distance to your destination by road vs. as -the-crow-flies.



THINKING GAMES

Think of an object, it can be anything as long as it is general. The first question the players will ask is: "Is it classified as Animal, Vegetable, or Mineral", or you can do "Person, Place or Thing". The players can then ask anything they want about the object as long as you are able to answer "yes" or "no" to their question. They try to ask questions that will help them narrow down their ideas until they are able to guess the object. If they can do it in less than 20 questions, they win!

This game helps teach kids to look at the bright side of things in a silly way. For example, you say, "Unfortunately, there's a tiger in the car." Your son says, "Fortunately, he doesn't eat boys." Your daughter says, "Unfortunately, he's looking at me and licking his lips." You say, "Fortunately, I brought along my tiger-jaw-clamper." And so on, alternating between fortunate and unfortunate things. An added bonus - it's a real hoot to hear a 2-year-old use the word "unfortunately"!

Think of someone you know, friend or relative. Give a few hints like "She has blonde hair and glasses". Let everyone go around one time with their guess. If no one guesses add another hint like "she laughs funny."

COUNTING AND JOURNALING GAME

This is a twist on the usual counting games. Choose a couple of types of vehicles to count such as VW Bugs and motorcycles. Tally them on a clip board or in a travel journal and break them down by color. At the start of the trip, have the kids guess which will be the most popular colors for each vehicle. One reader notes that on a particular trip, her kids learned that most motorcycle drivers prefer black, while the Bug drivers preferred silver.



I SPY

Pick out an object that everyone can see. Then give them a clue by saying, "I spy something ..." (Say its shape, color or size) The other players ask questions about what you see and you only answer with "yes" or "no". The first player who guesses right becomes the new spy.

ALPHABET SIGNS: [A variation of the ABC game above]

One person chose the right side of the road and the other person had the left. The object of the game was to cite all of the letters of the alphabet, in order, from a to z. You could only use a sign for one letter. The person on the left side usually had to sit sideways and read signs as they receded. The first person to z won.

THE ABC GAME- Object to complete the alphabet first.



As you see the letters on billboards & license plates you shout out your letter and point. Once a letter has been claimed other players cannot use the same letter. Make it harder by limiting to only license plates or billboard signs.

Guess what I am- One person states they are either a person, place or thing and the others then ask questions (are you blue, can you speak, do you bark, can you be eaten, etc) until they guess what the person is, then they are next.

ANIMALS/CITIES/GEOGRAPHY

We also played a game we took turns naming animals (for example). Each person would have to name another animal (no repeating) that started with the last letter of the last animal named. This game could be played with cities (as we got older) or geographical regions (as we got older still). We even have an 'expert' version where all the geographical regions must start and end with an 'a'. (AsiA, Aegean SeA, AmericA, AtlantA, etc.)

ODD OR EVEN What are the chances?

Game for two players - Have each child guess if there are more license plates that end in an odd or even number. (plates that end in a letter do not count)

1. Give each child a blank sheet of paper and a pencil, or something to mark with.
2. Set a time limit, usually 10-15 minutes.
3. Have one child look for plates that end in an odd number, and the other look for an even number.
4. A tick mark or dash should be marked for each car they find. (For extra learning, have them group the marks in sets of 5)
4. At the end of the time limit, have the children add up their marks. (Counting by 5's if grouping was used)

A to Z

Find words beginning with "A", on signs around you. Have the players take turns, after "A", go to "B", and so on. Can you get to "Z" and finish the alphabet? Alternate the starting person at the start of a new game, so that everyone gets a chance with the challenging letters. (For younger players you may want to skip the difficult letters.)

WHAT DID I BRING ON MY TRIP?

Start this game out by saying, "I'm going on a trip and I'm bringing..." . The first player should name an item that starts with the letter "A". After "A" , the next player will say the same thing but with the letter "B", and so on.

GUESS THE NUMBER

Let your child think of a number between a stated range of numbers. You try to guess the number by asking questions. Here's a sample of how it might go: Your child: *I'm thinking of a number between 1 and 100.* You ask: *Is it more than 50?* Your child: *No.* You: *Is it an even number?* Child: *No.* You: *Can you divide this number into three equal parts?* And so forth. After you have guessed the number, let your child guess a number that you are thinking of by asking similar questions. One benefit of this game is that, by asking questions about numbers, it helps the child to develop an understanding of some concepts, characteristics and meanings of numbers. If your child doesn't know the difference between odd and even numbers, this is an opportunity to explain and help them understand.



ARE WE THERE YET?

Try grappling with the *Are we there yet?* questions with a little diversionary questioning of your own. Ask your child questions about how far you're traveling. Yards? Miles? Kilometers maybe? How fast are we going? If it's 3:15 now, and it takes us two hours to get there, what time will we arrive? How far have we gone? Some of the other activities you might try while in transit is to have the kids watch for numbers on streets and buildings, phone numbers on the sides of trucks and other vehicles, dates on buildings, or business signs with numbers in them.