



The Beginner's Guide To
ESCAPE ROOMS

**EPIC TIPS
FOR YOUR
FIRST TIME**

SHEVVI

Not sure what all the fuss is about?

Maybe you're curious but feel silly asking. Why are some people so hooked on escape rooms?

Or you've been invited to play and your game is looming. Are you hurtling towards an embarrassing catastrophe?



Wouldn't it be an incredible relief to feel empowered to play any escape room?

Complete beginners. Absolute newbies. Welcome. This is for you.

All the glorious details you need to know in one place. So you can instantly shatter any fears. Power-up before you play your first escape room.

This astounding handbook is bursting at the seams with free must-have know-how. And essential practical tips from behind the scenes. All easy to digest with no jargon.

But we had a humongous amount of eye-opening info to share with you. That's why we've made this a bumper bonanza guide to escape rooms for beginners.

You can click on the table of contents to jump to a section. We recommend you check it all out. You won't wanna miss any of this.

Make sure you read to the end to get our special tips for first timers. You'll find out what we've learnt from watching hundreds of players in our escape room, The Test Chamber.

Let's do this.



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Now it's your turn

WHAT IS AN

ESCAPE ROOM?

An escape room is an exciting way to spend time together properly. A hands-on activity where you'll make lasting memories. The chance to bond as a team and help each other achieve a shared goal. It's fun, challenging, and rewarding.

The [Cambridge Dictionary](#) defines an escape room as:



a game where people are locked into a room and have to find a way to escape by finding clues (= signs or information that help you to find the answer to a problem or mystery) in it, and solving puzzles, or a special room where this is done



Well, it's a start. But we promised you we'd go much deeper than that. Ready?



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WHAT SHOULD I

EXPECT IN MY FIRST

ESCAPE ROOM?

Here's what happens when you do your first real life escape room activity.

- 1 You arrive on time for your game
- 2 Your friendly hosts welcome you and give you a fun safety briefing
- 3 Your hosts tell you the exciting story about the game you're about to play
- 4 You go into the special room and your 60-minute game begins
- 5 Your hosts watch on CCTV and listen the whole time
- 6 You work together as a team with the goal to escape through an unknown exit
- 7 Your team finds clues and solves puzzles

... and hopefully you'll be bursting through the exit door before your timer hits zero!

Let's get our magnifying glasses out and look more closely.



Your first time at an escape room

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN?

- Arrive on time at Exit Door in Bacup
- Listen to the fun safety briefing and the exciting storyline for the game
- Go into the escape room and your exhilarating 60-minute game begins
- Your hosts watch on CCTV and listen the whole time to give you great clues
- Work together as a team to discover clues, solve unique puzzles, and escape through the secret exit door



Arrive on time

Your game is for the time slot you booked. If you miss it, it's gone. You need every second to get the full experience. Like how the band won't wait for you if you're late to a concert.

Your friendly hosts

Hiya! We're the owners who created and run Exit Door. We're also your new friends. Officially we're called research technicians but you can call us your hosts or game masters.

Safety briefing

Escape rooms are safe. The briefing reminds you how you can keep yourself safe. You'll learn useful information. Like things to avoid or to use the mats provided if you need to kneel down.

The escape room story

The captivating storyline matches the escape room's theme. It explains what you're entangled in and what's at stake. You'll step inside this story and become the main characters.



Inside the escape room

This is the room your game takes place in. It's the setting of your adventure, designed to make you feel like you've entered another world. Everything you need to play your game is here.

60-minute game

The game is created so each challenge takes a certain amount of time. An hour lets you experience all of them. Racing against the clock adds a compelling sense of urgency and tension.

Hosts watch and listen

There are cameras in the room so your hosts can see where you're up to. They can hear you, too. They observe how your game's going and know how long you need to solve each puzzle.

Work together as a team

You choose your brilliant team of two to six players. You'll help each other to beat different challenges. Your teamwork will shine and you'll combine your skills and ideas to escape in time.

Find the unknown exit

The door that you enter through will remain unlocked for the whole game. That's your emergency exit. But that's not how you escape. You'll need to find a different exit door for that.

Find clues

You won't just be thrown in at the deep end with no idea where to start. You'll find clues in the room that guide you on what to do next. And you'll get helpful hints and clues from your hosts.

Solve puzzles

This is what it's all about. You'll have an assortment of fun and unique challenges, games, and problems to solve. You'll try loadsa different puzzle styles and experiment with genius solutions.



When you arrive, be yourself. Let your hosts know if you're nervous or have a question. We want you as an individual to have a great time with us.

Excited to take
your first thrilling
look inside an
escape room?
Here we go.



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A universe inside an escape room

LIKE A MOVIE SET THAT MATCHES THE STORYLINE

The inside of an escape room is designed and decorated so you feel like you've been teleported to a whole new world.

This creates "immersion" where you forget you're playing a game.

You'll even hear the bespoke soundtrack we made that plays during your game.



exit
door

WHAT IS INSIDE AN ESCAPE ROOM?

Imagine the sort of sets used in TV shows and movies. Like the local pub in a soap opera. Or a spaceship in an alien blockbuster.

Stepping inside the escape room is like teleporting into a scene out of a movie. Everything looks and feels realistic. Except what is inside an escape room is unique to its particular story and theme.

All the little details work together to feel believable.

These elements create "immersion." That's the feeling where you're so involved you almost forget you're playing a game.

We've even created our own soundtrack. So the bespoke music you'll hear in the room enhances your game. Ramps up the tension. Adds to our special brand of ambience.

And yes, there are clues and puzzles. But we'll get to them later.



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WHAT DO YOU DO IN AN ESCAPE ROOM?

Imagine a movie about six gutsy students who've messed up on an important test. They decide to sneak into their teacher's office. They're gonna change the answers on their exam papers.

But the door slams shut behind them. They're locked in. Their teacher will be back from lunch in an hour. If they get caught they're expelled.

Oh, and they don't know their teacher is a vampire.

Put yourselves in the movie and in the shoes of our plucky heroes. Pretend you and your teammates are now the students. The main characters. The story is happening to you.

What are you gonna want to do?

Find your way out of there before you get busted, right?

You'll need to get into a particular mindset to help these characters. This is the same mindset that you'll need in the escape room.

So what would you do first?

Look for obvious solutions

It's likely that without having to think about it you'd:

- Find out if the door needs a key, fob, or card to open
- Check if the windows are locked
- Look in any unlocked cupboards and drawers for a spare key

OK, so you try all that. No luck. You can't solve the problem with these ideas.

Is there anything else in the room that could help?



Use your detective skills to investigate further

You notice one of the drawers has a number padlock on it. How many digits does it need to open? Four digits. Hmm.

How would you figure out what those numbers are?

You decide to check the room and see if you can find any significant numbers. You notice a calendar with a date circled to mark the teacher's dog's birthday. The tenth of February.

That's a special number to the teacher. Easy to remember. It's got passcode potential.

A number padlock needs digits

FIND NUMBERS THAT SEEM IMPORTANT

Check how many digits the number padlock needs to open. Search the room.

This calendar has February 10th circled. Looks like it's a special doggy's birthday.

If your number lock needs four digits to open you can try 1002 or 0210. Woof.



exit
door

Test your ideas to see if they work

You line up the numbers 1002 on the padlock. It doesn't budge. You try 0210. It opens.

You pull out the drawer and see the spare key you need inside. Great. Change your answers and get outta there, you beautiful rebels. To freedom!



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Keep going

Except... only finding one code and getting out straight away doesn't make a very good movie.

Would you watch that? Where's the conflict? The suspense?

The same goes for escape rooms. They're an action-packed activity filled with challenges.

So what do you do in an escape room? The same thing you've just done here.

When you were locked in the classroom it was natural to find an escape route. You managed to flee these fangy consequences by investigating your surroundings.

Shall we explore
searching in an
escape room?



SEARCHING THE

ESCAPE ROOM

Picture this: you walk into an escape room. There are four locked boxes on the floor. Besides each box is the key you need to unlock them.

Ummm... are we missing something here?

What a yawnfest that would be!

Don't worry. It won't be like that for you. You're going on a treasure hunt.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO SEARCH AN ESCAPE ROOM?

You'll be searching for anything that can "change the paradigm." So, change your perspective on your current situation.

You're in one paradigm when you go to make yourself a delicious cup of tea. And quite another when you realise the milk you poured is chunky and rancid.

You need to search an escape room because you're looking for a positive paradigm shift. One moment you've got a locked padlock. You take action by searching. You find a key that fits.

Your paradigm has moved forward, to a better place. You're now closer to finding the exit door.



HOW DO YOU SEARCH THE ESCAPE ROOM?

You'll have searched before in real life. It was the natural thing to do when you were locked in the vampire teacher's room. Most of us have had to find our lost keys when we're running late. Searching in an escape room is the same.

But you want to be a bit more methodical.

In real life when you've lost your keys you might tear up the place looking for them. Charge between rooms. Chuck the pile of folded laundry. Pull your coats off their hooks and sit on the heap, rifling through each pocket.

Finally you feel cold metal at your fingertips - your keys.

But now you can't find your phone. And your home looks like a freak tornado passed through. You've created so many extra places you need to look to find it.

Let's lovingly refer to this as unhinged searching.

If you:

- Fling things around
- Sweep items off shelves
- Dump contents on the floor

... you end up making it harder on yourself later.

So how do you search the escape room the right way?



Don't ignore normal-looking items

SEARCH WITH YOUR EYES AND YOUR HANDS

Does that framed painting twist or come off the wall? What's behind it?

Can the drawers open in that desk? Is the middle solid wood or does it hide a mysterious secret compartment?

And we know you can't wait to investigate those enticing symbols.



**exit
door**

Search everywhere in the escape room

You'll want to investigate the whole room. You'll be told not to touch certain things like the cameras and screens. But you can still look at the surrounding area.

Don't be fooled by things that look normal. Or like they're decorations.

Is that painting hanging on a hook? Look at the wall behind it.

Is that desk solid wood, or does it have drawers? See if they open.

If something opens, search it with your eyes AND your hands.

Look inside what you've just opened for symbols or codes. Feel inside for a secret compartment or hidden item.

Notice what's missing, too. Perhaps there are jars displayed in order of size but a gap in the middle. Where could that other jar be hiding?



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Remember what you've found

Make a mental note of things that can open but are locked. How is it locked? Does it need numbers to unlock? Letters? How many?

It's OK to move things. Moving an object to inspect it can't spoil your game. But you can get stuck if that object is important and you lose it. That's why it's unhelpful to make a huge mess.

And risky to put things you find in your pocket.

It's so easy to forget you've done it. This costs you precious time.

Save time by searching wisely

Here's an insider tip. The escape room is cleaned and tidied after each game. Ready for the next team. So you won't be expected to search in ways that permanently alter the room.

Say there's a sofa in the room. The game designer wouldn't make a puzzle where you had to unzip every cushion cover and pull out all the stuffing.

Imagine that. Grabbing handful after handful of foam with aching fists.

But it would be a great idea to lift the whole cushion up. Take a peek at what's underneath or behind it.

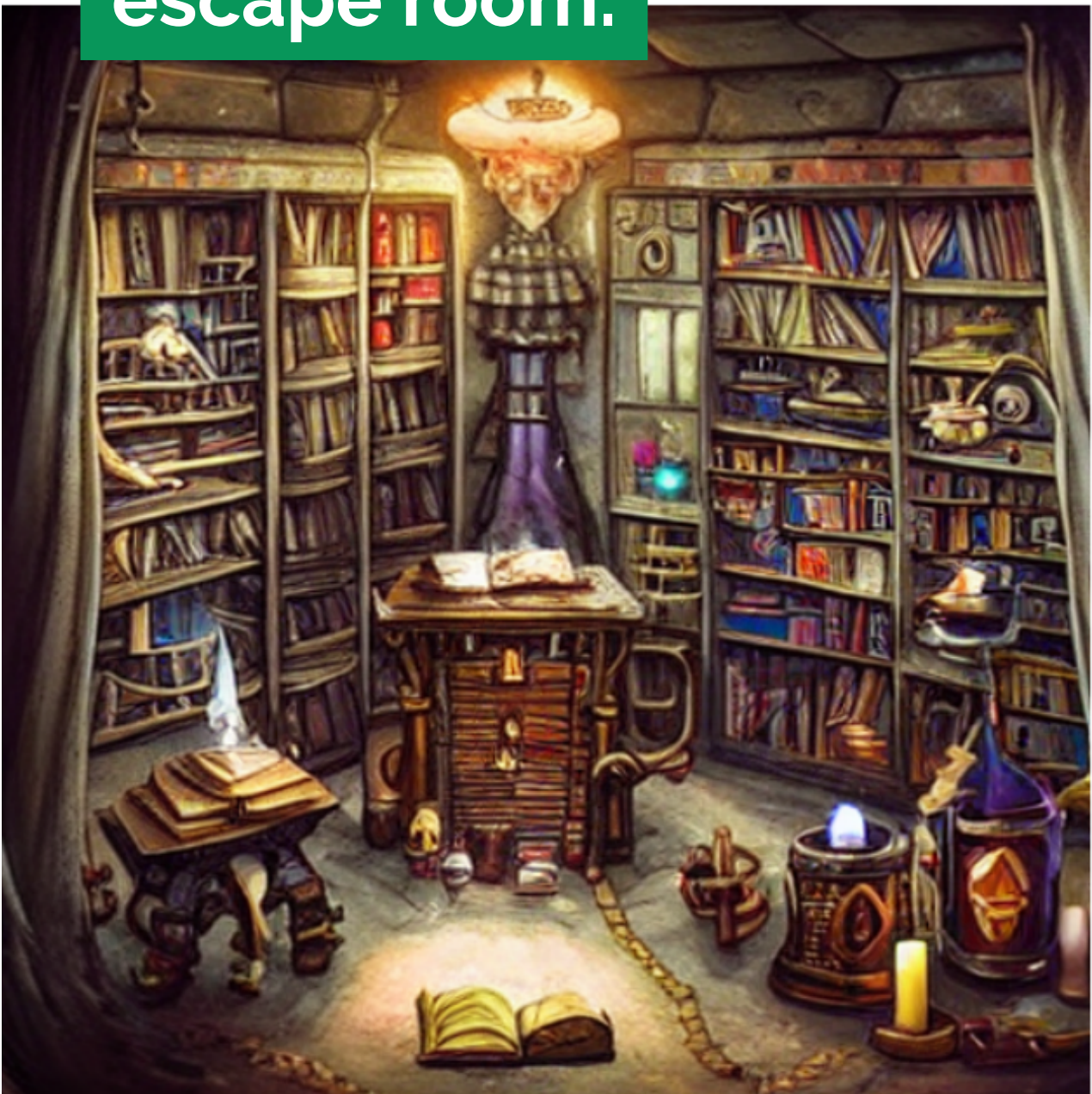
This is just an example. Don't blame us if you play an escape room where you do need to dismantle the upholstery of an entire sofa.

If in doubt, always announce what you're thinking of doing. So before you strip that wallpaper. Shout out to your hosts and ask if that's a good idea first.



Now you know how to search to find things to help you play your game. Awesome.

Let's discover how clues work in an escape room.



ESCAPE ROOM

CLUES

DO ESCAPE ROOMS GIVE YOU CLUES?

Yup. Clues are woven into the game. And they work the same way they do in real life. Maybe this has happened to you at some point.

Someone said, “Guess what?”

You replied, “What?”

But they didn't budge. “No, you have to guess.”

And you said, “Erm... Give me a clue!”

It's no different in an escape room.

WHAT TYPES OF CLUES DO YOU GET IN AN ESCAPE ROOM?

Escape rooms give you clues in two ways. Some clues are built into the game. These are the same for every group.

And some are sent by your research technicians. These change every time depending on your individual circumstances.



Listen out for the **awooga** sound

YOUR GAME HOSTS SEND CLUES ON THE SCREENS

And you can ask for clues whenever you want. Clues are super helpful when you:

- Want a nudge in the right direction
- Misplaced an important item
- Forgot to search what you opened or use a solution you found



Clues sent via the TV screens

Your game masters can type and send you instant clues on the TV screen. These are unique to your team and relate to what's happening. They help you decide your next move.

Hear that **awooga** sound? It's clue o'clock. Check the screen. Clues remain up for as long as you need to read and understand them.

They might be cryptic, like riddles. Or mention something that seems unrelated. They could be more to the point if needed.

But they're v. useful. And they don't spoil surprises or ruin the game.

Clues are good. Clues keep things running smoothly.

Why it's good to get clues in an escape room

People who have played loadsa games sometimes don't want to be given any clues. Or they want to only get clues if they ask for them.

But this is a beginner's guide to escape rooms. So take this as encouragement to absolutely use yer clues. Indulge yourself.

Getting clues doesn't take anything away from your achievements. It's the norm. They guarantee you get the most out of your experience. Clues = fun.



Your game masters might give you a clue in an escape room because you:

- Want to look at things from a fresh angle
- Have invented a method that is interesting but won't work here
- Have lost an important item
- Opened something but didn't search it
- Got the solution to a puzzle but didn't use it
- Need a tiny nudge in the right direction

Your hosts know how long you need to complete puzzles. They can nudge you along so you don't get stuck. Or fall behind.

Clues allow you to experience as much of the gameplay as possible. We've jam-packed our room with puzzles so pacing counts.

Why play your first escape room on the highest difficulty? Beginner players often feel a boost of confidence when they embrace clues. Like the game hosts are extra members of their team.

Feel free to shout out and ask for a clue at any time. You don't need to wait to be given one. You're the boss. Your hosts love to help.

We can hear you so you can ask questions. Just yell over the music. Give us a second to type our answer back.

If you write a note to us and hold it up to the camera we can't read it. Which always leaves us full of an insatiable curiosity. What did it say?!

Oh, and the screen messages might not just be clues. We love sending cheeky comments. A little gentle teasing gets big laughs from our players.



Types of clues in an escape room

SIGNPOSTS, SIGNALS, AND SIRENS

Clues can be signposts. Always investigate where an arrow is pointing.

And signals. Symbols on multiple items suggests you should combine them.

Or sirens. You might hear some useful audio hints while you're playing.



You also get items in the room that act as clues.

Clues found in the room

You get different types of clues in an escape room.

Clues in the room could be signposts. Like an arrow pointing to a hiding place. Check that.

Or signals. Like a symbol on multiple objects. This is a suggestion to combine them.

Or sirens. You might hear some useful audio hints while you're playing, so keep an ear out.



Is it a clue or a prop?

You'll find some props in the room to enhance that immersion factor. The room will be filled with decorations that set the scene.

A vampire teacher's office is going to have a desk. A stained mug with leftover cold coffee. A coffin for naps.

How do we know if these are just part of the set or important clues?

Let's inspect the mug. If it's just that - a plain old mug - then it's a prop. But what if you check it and see a symbol written on it? Now it's a clue.

Items might appear to be props at first. Then later on in the game their real purpose will reveal itself.

Have a "not sure yet" pile

You might not be sure what an item's for. That's OK. You can just leave it where it is. Or put it in a safe little pile and come back to it later.

Maybe you can't even use it yet because you need to do something else first. It might not be a clue at all.

It's better if you don't all drop everything to focus only on this mysterious item. You don't want to waste time on a dead end.

Red herrings

"Red herrings" are items that trick you into believing they're useful but are actually useless. It's not the same as a "sleight of hand" puzzle. This is where a clue or item reveals a different purpose than you initially suspected.

A red herring might be a wall covered in maths sums. You spend time solving them all. But the numbers don't do anything. We don't use them at Exit Door. You'll be far too busy with real purposeful challenges.

But players can create their own red herrings in their minds. You can avoid this by not getting too fixated on an object. That's what your "not sure yet" pile is for.

Don't worry if you do get convinced something's important that turns out not to be. It shows you're developing the right level of suspicion needed to do well in escape rooms.



So now you know clues are your friend in an escape room. But where will they be?

WHERE ARE CLUES HIDDEN IN ESCAPE ROOMS?

They won't be in areas that you've been told are out of bounds. And it's unlikely they'd be inside furniture you'd need to destroy to access. Like within the sofa stuffing from earlier.

Other than that clues can be hidden anywhere in an escape room.

Sorry we can't be of more help. Lol.

But seriously. Clue locations might be genius or surprising but they'll be sensible.

You wouldn't be expected to do anything dangerous to find clues, like:

- Lift something heavy
- Drag weighty furniture
- Climb (unless there's a climbing wall, helmets, and harnesses)
- Dig tunnels
- Kick through walls
- Take apart electrical items
- Pry up the floorboards

These inconspicuous clues can be almost anywhere. Ask yourself if you've looked:

- Between
- Underneath
- Besides
- Inside
- Behind
- On top

So when searching for clues remember to think BUBIBO. We totally just made that acronym up. But hey, if it helps.



Notice what stands out in a scene

CLUES ARE HIDDEN BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND

If there's a chest full of notebooks you won't be expected to read every page.

The notebooks might be stored in boxes which have symbols painted on the front.

Important loose pages will be highlighted. They could be a different colour or have their corners folded over.



exit
door

Use your judgement to decide if things are likely to be props to create immersion. Like you'd find on a movie set. Or a clue that's designed to blend into the surroundings.

And remember to ask yourself:

- Is it realistic I'd have to do this?
- Is there enough time?
- Would it be fun to do?

Let's imagine you enter the escape room lair and find a chest filled with old notebooks.

Is it realistic that you'd be expected to read every page of these? Within 60 minutes? Plus solve all the other puzzles? And not be furious by the end?

Or is it more likely that those notebooks are props? There may be clues linked to them, but not written on every single page.

Scan props for clues that stand out

So how are you gonna handle all these notebooks and loose sheets of paper? Before you resign yourself to an intense speed reading session. Inspect the scene first.

You might notice some of these notebooks are grouped together in boxes. On the front of these boxes are painted symbols.

Or there are wooden clips grouping pages together. These clips have numbers on them.



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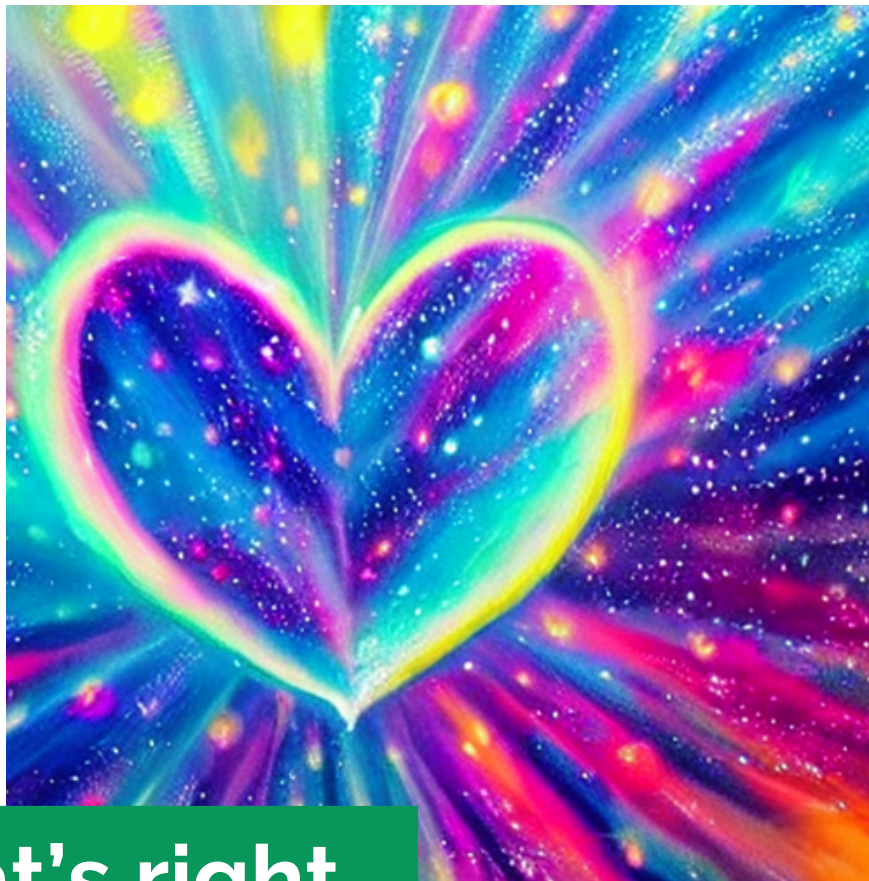
Maybe the front of the chest has a riddle carved into it.

Some specific sheets of paper might be important, but they'll stand out if they are. Perhaps:

- They're a different colour
- The corners are folded over
- They're noticeably poking up above the other pages
- They're laminated

When it comes to where clues are hidden in an escape room you'll be challenged. They won't be labelled with "This is a Clue." But your game hosts aren't evil.

Now you're all clued up on clues. Shall we get to the beating heart of the escape room?



**That's right.
It's time to talk
about puzzles.**

ESCAPE ROOM

PUZZLES

WHAT ARE ESCAPE ROOM PUZZLES?

So why have we been searching for clues? Or asking our game master for them?

Well, clues have two jobs.

1. They lead us to puzzles
2. They help us to solve puzzles

And what exactly are escape room puzzles? By “puzzles” we don’t mean you’ll be sitting down to complete a full 10,000-piece jigsaw. You won’t be handed this week’s papers and told to crack on with the crosswords.

There are lots of different puzzles unique to the room, rather than one big one. And puzzles in an escape room are games or problems. Your mission is to find the answer or method that lets you complete or solve them.

There may be a challenge that involves assembling pieces. Or finding letters that fit somewhere. But the puzzles are bespoke. Designed just for this escape room.

Let’s see what other types of puzzles you can expect.



Your brain loves to solve puzzles

YOU PRACTICE IN YOUR REAL LIFE ALL THE TIME

You got this. You solve puzzles when you:

- Follow a recipe
- Solve a crossword clue
- Build a house of cards
- Park a car in a tight spot
- Find the right box to send a parcel in
- Mix paint colours
- Hook-a-duck at the fair
- Calculate if you have enough cash



exit
door

WHAT KIND OF PUZZLES ARE IN AN ESCAPE ROOM?

First time players have their mind blown by escape room puzzles. We don't want to spoil it by giving the mechanics of escape rooms away. You don't want to know how the magician does their tricks.

If you've ever:

- Solved a crossword clue
- Followed a recipe
- Calculated whether you have enough cash to afford cake with your coffee
- Parked a car in a tight spot
- Built something out of toy bricks
- Potted a ball in a game of pool
- Hooked a duck at a fairground
- Spelt a different word with the letters of your name
- Worked out which sized box you need to send a parcel
- Found a spelling mistake in a document
- Guessed the answer to a riddle
- Mixed paints to make a new colour
- Built a house of cards
- Played spot the difference

... then you've done puzzles. Hey, you're not a complete beginner after all.



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Escape room puzzles tend to be more elaborate than these examples. Take playing hook-a-duck at the fair. You use a fishing rod to hook and pick up a plastic duck. The number on the bottom tells you which prize you've won.

In an escape room the duck might have a magnet inside it. You use this magnet to open a secret door. Or the duck is a certain weight. You put it on scales to move a lever so a key slides towards you.

Escape room puzzles won't all be separate and unrelated either. They'll match the theme of the escape room storyline. The puzzles will be designed to look like the set, or even blend completely into it.

Let's investigate the kind of puzzles you find in an escape room.

ESCAPE ROOM PUZZLE EXAMPLES

Actual puzzles in escape rooms are closely guarded secrets. But we can imagine some made-up puzzles to see how they can vary in complexity. Or, how many steps you need to take to solve them.

The easiest puzzle

Getting a piece of chocolate out of an advent calendar. Open the door to get your sweet. That's a one and done puzzle. You figured out how to do that straight away.

It's fine to do that 24 more times in December. But that's not enough to keep you entertained in an escape room.

A tad less easy puzzle

Managing to pull that fiddly little plastic strip off a box of chocolates. Then you can lift open the lid and liberate that cocoa goodness.

A more involved puzzle

A chocolate in a locked wooden box. The padlock needs a three digit code to open. You're going to need to find the right numbers. Then line them up on the padlock in the right order.



A complex blend of multiple puzzles

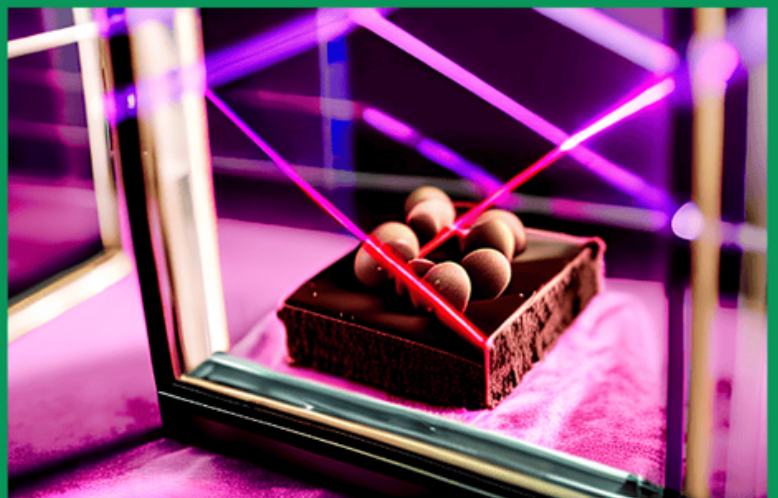
Imagine a priceless chocolate nestled on a purple velvet pillow. It's surrounded by ruby red laser beams. If you touch the lasers an alarm will go off.

There's a shatterproof glass pane. Through it you see the adjoining room has a control panel. This is where you can turn the lasers off. But that's out of reach behind a locked door.

Every step leads you to freedom

A BLEND OF MULTIPLE INTERLINKING PUZZLES

Opening an advent calendar door to grab your chocolate is a very easy puzzle. Compare that to liberating a priceless chocolate from a purple velvet pillow surrounded by ruby red laser beams. If you touch the lasers an alarm will sound. In the next room behind a locked door you can see the control panel where you can turn the alarm off. There's more to do!



exit
door

You're going to be solving lots of different puzzles here, aren't you?

You'll be figuring out the many different steps to take to:

- Get what you need without touching the lasers and activating the alarm
- Unlock the door and enter the other room
- Find how to turn the lasers off using the control panel
- Rescue the chocolate without it melting in your hand
- Find the exit door

Oh, and you only have 60 minutes. Then the Chocolate Guardian is due back from his important chocolate meeting.

Is he a guardian of chocolate or a guardian made of chocolate? Fail to escape and find out.



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Anyway, enough about chocolate. Now you've seen how escape room puzzle examples can go from easy to complex.

Want to see how you'll solve them?

HOW DO YOU SOLVE ESCAPE ROOM PUZZLES?

Every escape room will have different puzzles. They're designed so you can figure out how to solve them during your game. You won't need any prior knowledge. Or to revise before you play.

But the simple techniques below can benefit your approach to solving escape room puzzles.

Look closely

We've discussed searching in depth but it's worth saying again.

Remember to inspect everything when you search the escape room. It's so, so easy to miss what's right in front of you. You'd be surprised by how often players overlook clues that are out in the open.

On the flip side, loads of players spot them immediately. So give yourself a better chance of being one of the latter by looking carefully.

Know what's in the room and what it needs

Identify what in the room is locked. Then what you'll need to open it with. Here's an example.

You search and find five locks. You check how to unlock each of them. So you make a mental note like this:

- 2 word locks. One needs three letters and the other needs ten letters
- 1 directional lock. It needs directions (up, down, left, right)
- 1 number lock. It needs five digits
- 1 padlock. It needs a key

This is great information. Now you're sure you're looking for letters, numbers, directions, and a key.



Let's say you'd found the correct key but no numbers. You know right now you only need one key. So you can focus on searching for those missing digits. Rather than more keys.

The things you want to prioritise will change as your understanding changes.

It's really helpful if as you're playing you're checking off what you're opening. "Right, so there are five locks and we've opened two now." That sort of thing.

This leads us to the next point.

Use what you find

You've solved a puzzle and were rewarded with a ten letter word. Wahoo. Onto the next puzzle.

Hold on a second. Now, we know from our list above that you have a word lock. It needs ten letters to open.

Try the letters in that lock!

If you don't try clues as they reveal themselves you might create a bottleneck.

Stay observant in the escape room

HOW TO SOLVE PUZZLES

- Look closely at items and be nice and suspicious about what you see
- Identify how to unlock the locks and what items a task needs to be solved
- When you get a new item or code test if you can use it straight away and keep it safe if not
- The order you can use codes, keys, etc., will reveal itself so divide your team to solve multiple puzzles at once



**exit
door**



The Beginner's Guide to
ESCAPE ROOMS

How do you know the order you need to solve escape room puzzles in? You don't. Only the game designers (who happen to be your hosts at Exit Door) know.

So try clues as you find them. It only takes a sec. If they don't work right now you can try them again later.

But remember what can happen to ignored clues. They get forgotten about. Or find their way under piles and into pockets...

Say you're at a restaurant. The waiter has bought you your sloppy spaghetti but no cutlery. There's a counter in the corner of the room with sauces, utensils, and so on. You and your friend go and get what you think you need.

You bring back a knife and fork. But then you put them to one side, ignore your spaghetti, and start reading the dessert menu. Because maybe you'll need a knife and fork for pudding.

Great thinking, but first use that cutlery for your spaghetti. Yes, you might need it later. Or maybe when it's time for pudding it'll come with a tiny spoon. Whatever may happen then, you can definitely use that knife and fork now.

Your friend decided against any cutlery. They grabbed a little jug of milk. This won't help them eat their spaghetti. But you'll need the milk for your after dinner coffees, so you keep it to use then.

When something you've done in the room reveals a key, a code, some letters, or whatever it may be. Try them as you find them. And don't lose them if you can't yet use them.

Solve multiple puzzles at once

The puzzles won't be displayed in a straight line for you to open. Like a row of toppling dominoes. There will be some puzzles that need to be solved before others. But some won't matter when you solve them.

Think of it like following a recipe. Sometimes it requires a strict order. Other times order doesn't really matter. But you still need all the ingredients.

Imagine you're making a cake. You can crack your eggs and measure your flour or sugar in any order. You can forget the eggshells. You can even put them in your pocket if you want.

It doesn't matter whether you put the flour or sugar in the bowl first. But you can't put that mixture you've made in the oven without the eggs.



The game's flow encourages team members to work on different puzzles at once.

Recap: how to solve escape room puzzles

Take a closer look and don't miss what's right in front of you.

Identify how to unlock the locks and what items a task needs to be solved.

When a new number, word, item, or element is revealed, see if you can use it now. Don't sit on it. You might need to save it for later but test it first.

The order you can use codes, words, keys, etc., will reveal itself. Divide your team up and solve multiple puzzles at once.

So escape rooms are built for teams.

**Shall we take a look at
why escape rooms
are so good for
team building?**



TEAM BUILDING IN

ESCAPE ROOMS

Escape rooms are made for teams

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY

You can take lots of individuals who might not have much in common in real life. They've got different jobs, hobbies, and interests. But in an escape room they share a goal that unites them.

They all want to find the exit door!



exit
door

CAN YOU DO AN ESCAPE ROOM ON YOUR OWN?

Even if you were amazing at puzzles you can't do an escape room on your own. The puzzles are designed to need teamwork to solve.

The smallest team size is a pair. The Test Chamber is a good escape room for couples. They'll be busy. But having two players doesn't put you at the disadvantage you might think.



The Beginner's Guide to
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It's all about how you work together. Take a team of six players who ignore each other. They won't do better than a couple that communicates well.

So whether you have two, three, four, five, or six members of your team. It all comes down to how you work together.

WHY ARE ESCAPE ROOMS A GOOD TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY?

You can take lots of individuals who might not have much in common in real life. They've got different jobs, hobbies, and interests. But in an escape room they share a goal that unites them. *They all want to find the exit door!*

Teamwork is literally built into escape rooms. The puzzles are designed so that players have to work together. They need each other to escape.

Teams experience joint highs and lows. Tension and release. Anticipation and satisfaction.

Teams see each other's strengths and communication styles in action. They grow together. And they have an amazing time doing it. You can read why players love The Test Chamber [here](#).

Escape rooms can bring out the best in people working in teams. Teams need to be:

- Flexible
- Thoughtful
- Considerate
- Encouraging
- Open-minded
- Up for some fun

Anyone can enjoy escape rooms. You don't need to have a particular background or be a puzzle fiend. But there are certain roles players take on in escape rooms which help their team succeed. Let's get to know them.



WHAT MAKES A GOOD TEAM IN AN ESCAPE ROOM?

Hundreds of players have taken on The Test Chamber. We've seen lots of team dynamics and personalities. We've used our insider knowledge to identify six roles that keep showing up in successful teams. These roles work really well in an escape room.

We call them our Six Ls. Or L-L-L-L-L-L. Try saying it. It's fun.

Team roles in an escape room

THE SIX LS OF SUCCESS

We've watched hundreds of players in our escape room, The Test Chamber. We noticed the best teams play these roles:

- The Leader
- The Looker
- The Linker
- The Listener
- The Lover
- The Lawyer



THE SIX LS OF SUCCESS IN AN ESCAPE ROOM

The Leader

The Leader steps in to keep up the momentum. You give everyone a puzzle-solving activity to get on with. And you're not phased by making those vital split second decisions.

Most likely to say: "Let's try this now."

Least likely to say: "I don't know what to do."



The Looker

The Looker has superhuman searching skills. If it's there, you'll find it. Like a metal detector for hidden clues. You're happy to look again where teammates tell you there's nothing to be found.

Most likely to say: "Look what I've found."

Least likely to say: "Nah, I doubt there's anything there."

The Linker

The Linker finds patterns. Spots the differences. Matches pairs. Identifies missing links. Your brain lights up when it sees something that can join with something else.

Most likely to say: "Remember this?"

Least likely to say: "That probably doesn't mean anything."

The Listener

The Listener values everyone's voice. You hear when a shy teammate makes a quiet suggestion. You race to check the screen at the sound of a clue from your hosts.

Most likely to say: "Tell me more."

Least likely to say: "Let's ignore that."

The Lover

The Lover is full of smiles and kind words. You heap praise on your teammates. You compliment them for every achievement. And are full of reassurance when it doesn't go to plan.

Most likely to say: "Wow, well done."

Least likely to say: "You're rubbish at that."

The Lawyer

The Lawyer absorbs all the rules. Values logic. You analyse clues and make decisions based on what you find. Your reasoning pulls back teammates who could drift off on wild tangents.

Most likely to say: "We need to follow these steps."

Least likely to say: "Just make something up."



Do any of these jump out as how you think you'll act? It doesn't matter if you don't know. People doing an escape room for the first time surprise themselves. They can't believe how capable and awesome they are.

In the space of one hour you might play all six of these parts.

Now let's meet an imaginary group who'll show us what not to do. They didn't read to the end of this beginner's guide to escape rooms. What are their roles and what sort of questionable behaviour might they act out?

Team roles in an escape room

THE SIX BAD APPLE LS

We've watched hundreds of players in our escape room, The Test Chamber. We noticed these are the least helpful roles:

- The Loser
- The Leaver
- The Languisher
- The Lemming
- The Loner
- The Lemon



exit
door

THE SIX BAD APPLE LS IN AN ESCAPE ROOM TEAM

The Loser

The Loser doesn't tell the team when they find something useful. They leave important items in dark corners never to be found again.

Most likely to say: "There's nothing of use in this cupboard."

Least likely to say: "Hey guys, this looks useful."



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The Leaver

The Leaver starts something but doesn't finish it. They get distracted from what they're doing and wander off before they reach a conclusion.

Most likely to say: "Let's forget about this puzzle and do something else."

Least likely to say: "We need to focus on this until we've sussed it out."

The Languisher

The Languisher takes defeat badly. They fixate on an idea and when it doesn't work the first time they can't change up their thinking.

Most likely to say: "This is the only possible solution."

Least likely to say: "I wonder if we need to try a different approach."

The Lemming

The Lemming is a follower, easily carried away in other people's thinking without challenging them with their own ideas.

Most likely to say: "Err, whatever you think."

Least likely to say: "We should try my idea."

The Loner

The Loner wants to do it all by themselves. They expect everyone to watch them solve every single puzzle. They get angry when people think for themselves.

Most likely to say: "Just let me do it."

Least likely to say: "Who wants a go?"

The Lemon

The Lemon makes things harder by doing nothing. They stand around looking confused and frustrated without actually getting stuck in.

Most likely to say: "I don't get it, this is stupid!"

Least likely to say: "Let me see if I can figure this out."

Oh dear, bless 'em. But here's something encouraging. Every single one of those players can change.



If you notice a teammate is showing some of these negative traits don't worry. Don't take it personally. And never let it ruin your game. Have more fun out of spite.

We're just joking. Honestly though, trying new things can be uncomfortable at first. And it's OK to need time to adapt. Some people seem like they're complaining but that's actually how they enjoy themselves.

What if - shock horror - it's you that's got a bit stressed out? No problem at all. You can:

- Take a breather
- Try a different puzzle
- Ask for a clue
- Forget about escaping and focus on enjoying the challenges
- Let someone else take the lead for a bit
- Admit you're being a grumpyboots and laugh with your team about it

You're an important member of your team. Add a dash of the six Ls of success into your actions.

The very good news is working in a team is a skill that can be improved. It takes practice. And with so many escape rooms to try there's nothing stopping you.

So now you know loads about escape rooms. Some of it you instinctively knew already. Like what you'd do when locked in a vampire's lair with an hour to escape.

You've learnt how to search. You're on Team Use Yer Clues. You've pictured how you would approach solving different puzzles at once. And you can't wait to work together as a team.

**We bet you wanna hear our
escape room tips for first
timers. Let's go.**



ESCAPE ROOM

TIPS AND TRICKS

Explore the wonder of a new world

HOW DO YOU BEAT AN ESCAPE ROOM?

Escape room beginners needn't worry about smashing through puzzles and beating record times. You have to get a lil stuck to experience those epic eureka moments. Don't worry about "beating" rooms. Focus on getting the most out of your time in them and enjoying yourself.



exit
door

HOW DO YOU BEAT AN ESCAPE ROOM?

Escape room beginners needn't worry about smashing through puzzles and beating record times. You're here to lose yourself in this new world. Throw yourself into it, investigate, explore, and discover. Enjoy the support of your lovely game hosts.

Yes, it's good to escape before your timer runs out. This means you got to play all the puzzles. But don't sacrifice enjoyment for speed. You have to get a lil stuck to experience those epic eureka moments.



The Beginner's Guide to
ESCAPE ROOMS

Don't worry about "beating" rooms. Focus on getting the most out of your time in them.

WHAT ARE THE BEST ESCAPE ROOM TIPS?

When we hear the word "tips" we think **Timely Insightful Puzzle Solving**. Here's our practical advice you can use in your first escape room game.

We've watched hundreds of players in our escape room in Bacup, The Test Chamber. So you probably wouldn't be satisfied if our suggestion was just:

"We got seven words for ya. Stay positive, have fun, and ????? ??????????" (It is an escape room after all.)

You want a bit more than that. Our tips will hopefully help you have an incredible first time in an escape room.

Let's start with what to do when you're struggling with a puzzle.

Find the right person for a puzzle

IDENTIFY WHAT SKILL EACH PUZZLE NEEDS

Ask yourself why you can't do the puzzle. Imagine you're struggling to hook-a-duck at a fairground. What's stopping you?

Then you can say, "This puzzle needs a steady hand. Who would like to try?"

Your friend who paints miniature figurines will know they have a great chance.



exit
door



The Beginner's Guide to
ESCAPE ROOMS

Identify the skill the puzzle needs

You won't all be working on the same puzzle at once. Your team members might not have seen what you're doing yet.

So when you're trying a puzzle and you're struggling with it. Figure out why. You want to identify what at that moment means you can't complete it.

You have plenty of strengths. But something about your approach here isn't working. So what gap needs to be filled to solve the puzzle?

Imagine a group of friends playing at a fairground. One of them is getting increasingly flustered with a hook-a-duck game. They're huffing and puffing. "This game is stupid, it's impossible," they say.

That isn't helping them. And it makes it hard for others to help them. Based on what they've said, maybe the game *is* impossible. Why bother?

Now imagine they stop and figure out why they can't do it. Then they say:

"Would someone like to try hooking the duck with this thin fishing rod? It's fiddly and needs a steady hand."

If one of the group is shaking with excitement they'll know not to volunteer. But the other friend who paints miniature figurines will hear that and say, "Oh, me please! I'm good at that."

Always give a reason why you can't do a puzzle and let someone suited have a go.

You also need to share when you do solve something.

Tell each other what you solve

Imagine going to do the weekly shop with your partner. You have a joint shopping list.

You both go down the list. You're in your own worlds, putting items into the same trolley. But you're not telling each other. What would happen if neither of you noticed?

At the checkout your shopping bill has doubled. At home the unneeded food goes off.

If you don't tell your team what you're up to then tasks get repeated. People are trying to work out how to solve a puzzle that's already been done.



Tell each other what you're doing. The escape room is in charge of all the secrets. You won't need to keep any. Including what you discover while searching or solving.

Call out what you find

It's naughty to find something in an escape room and not tell anyone. What if that's exactly what your teammates need? Even if it looks unremarkable to you. Let everyone know it exists.

You don't need to be quiet or reserved in the escape room. Running commentaries are welcome.

It's good to check in with each other every now and then. Just call out where you're up to. You can also tell everyone you want them to keep an eye out for something.

Here's an example of good team talk in an escape room:

Player 1: "Bruce and I are looking for triangles to try and unlock the big hexagon."

Player 2: "Great, Nina and I are juggling with fire to awaken a slumbering revenge demon."

Player 3: "Hey Brucie, there's a triangle you might need down here."

You get the idea.

Remember you're a team. How your team communicates is important. So is keeping a positive outlook.

Always believe you'll escape

Time gets warped inside an escape room. What do you do when it feels like you've spent ages on a puzzle? Does this mean your team is doomed to failure?

No way.

Don't lose hope while you're playing. We've seen teams stall on one puzzle to absolutely blaze through the next couple. They made back all their lost time.

Another way to keep spirits high is to be flexible and welcome suggestions.



Share more to find the exit door

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR TEAMMATES

You don't have to be quiet and reserved in an escape room. Tell your teammates (nice and loud) whenever you:

- Find a clue
- Solve a puzzle
- Do something silly or super cool

The escape room is the only thing that should be keeping hushed secrets.



exit
door

Be open to new ideas

Playing with work colleagues? That doesn't mean the boss will always have the solution. Playing with family? The youngest might know exactly what to do next.

Don't always do what the most assertive person says. Listen to everyone. You don't know whose thinking has synced up perfectly with what puzzle.

In an escape room everyone's got an equal chance to get the right answer. When someone makes a suggestion don't dismiss it straight away. At the very least see if it:

- Is a logical next step on from a clue or hint
- Wouldn't hurt to try
- Doesn't break any rules or instructions

It's especially important if you've been trying the same thing for a while. Perhaps your hosts send you a clue that seems bizarre. This could mean you're stuck on the wrong track. They're trying to draw your attention to something else that can help you.

You want to combine all of your unique viewpoints. Cherish different angles and approaches. Every brain in the team is making a valuable contribution. So make sure you don't miss any of them.

There we go. Nice and simple to get you started.



The Beginner's Guide to
ESCAPE ROOMS

Recap: escape room tips and tricks

If you can't do a puzzle, work out what skill it needs. Then ask who thinks they'd be good at it. Let them try.

Tell your teammates when you solve a puzzle or use an item.

Ask each other to keep an eye out if you're looking for something.

Stay hopeful. Keep going. There are no impossible-to-solve puzzles in an escape room.

Be open and flexible to new ideas. You never know which cleverclogs will come up with the right answer.

And we don't need to remind you about searching thoroughly. Or knowing where your locks, clues, and important items are.

Timely Insightful Puzzle Solving

BEST ESCAPE ROOM TIPS

- Work out the skill a puzzle needs and who would be good at it
- Tell your teammates whenever you solve a puzzle or use an item
- Share what you're seeking with each other and be on the lookout
- Keep going. There are no impossible-to-solve puzzles in an escape room
- Be flexible and open to new ideas
- Search it real good. Learn the location of locks, clues, and important items



exit
door

Now we're feeling confident about what to do to get the most out of your game. Even exhilarating entertainment has to have some rules...



The Beginner's Guide to
ESCAPE ROOMS

WHAT SHOULD YOU

NOT DO IN AN

ESCAPE ROOM?

So what shouldn't you do in an escape room? Escape rooms are fun and safe. But like anywhere people can sometimes:

- Get carried away
- Be heavy handed
- Create solutions that cause problems

You'll be given health and safety guidance specific to the room before your game. But let's remind ourselves of some things to avoid.

Don't use brute force

Brute force means using way too much strength. Far more than the puzzle requires. Remember to take a pause if what you expected to happen didn't. Think about what you might be missing.

Don't think, "I expected this to turn in a full circle. It didn't. So I'll force it to turn 360 degrees."

Imagine using a key in real life. Say the key to your bike lock didn't work. You might jiggle it and try with more force.

That's OK when you know 100% it's the right key for that lock.

In an escape room you don't have that certainty. So waggling things around harder might break them.



Let's do a quick quiz about brute force in escape rooms. If you use something that doesn't seem to work it means:

- a) You should break it and make it suffer
- b) You might not be using it in the right place
- c) You might need to complete something else before you can use it

If you chose b) and c) then congrats. You know in an escape room the best strength is brain power.

You don't succeed at Tetris by smashing the pieces in with a sledgehammer.

Don't create physical dangers

You won't need to get on each other's shoulders. Climb up furniture. Swing heavy things around like a lasso. No human pyramids, acrobatics, or daring balancing acts necessary.

Don't drink alcohol

One of the great things about escape rooms is they don't need alcohol to be enjoyable. You'll buzz with excitement, adrenaline, satisfaction, pride, and more pleasant feelings.

It won't help to have a drink to steady your nerves before playing. Firstly, you've read this guide. You have no reason to be nervous.

Secondly, alcohol muddles your thinking. It... slows... reaction... times...

Booze makes you more likely to get distracted. Take unnecessary risks. And need the loo more often.

It's fun to keep a clear head. You can do escape rooms on a school night.

Don't take photos or videos inside the room

Every team deserves to enjoy the thrill of seeing new puzzles for the first time. An escape room is like a closet full of precious, valuable skeletons. Surprise is a big part of how we delight you.

We're so grateful to all our amazing players who keep our secrets safe.

Nail the perfect pose in your team photo taken in reception after the game instead. Let your phones have a little rest.



Easy peasy rules for maximum fun

WHAT SHOULD YOU NOT DO IN AN ESCAPE ROOM?

- No brute force. It breaks puzzles and props and can ruin your enjoyment
- Don't physically endanger yourself
- No alcohol before or during the game
- Don't take photos or videos inside the room. Keep the precious secrets safe

If the escape room looks like this picture when you leave... something went wrong.



exit
door

Don't use your phones

You can step out of the room and take an important call if necessary. But everything you need to solve the puzzles is in the room. Using your phone could give you an unfair advantage. So no using your mobile for torches, calculators... or calling for help.

There we have it. Staying safe and treating the room with respect is cool and you know it.

But what about cheating?

CAN YOU CHEAT IN AN ESCAPE ROOM?

You can. But cheating rarely happens. Why?

Because cheating *sucks*. Not only can it break puzzles. It annihilates the satisfaction of solving them. It steals that joy from the rest of the team.

Cheaters obliterate all the fun. Forget cheating. Help yourself to a juicy clue instead.

Next you'll find the answers to three common questions.



The Beginner's Guide to
ESCAPE ROOMS

COMMONLY ASKED

QUESTIONS ABOUT

ESCAPE ROOMS

CAN I DO AN ESCAPE ROOM IF I'M CLAUSTROPHOBIC?

Generally yes. It's a good idea to contact the escape room before you play. Explain how your claustrophobia affects you. They'll be more than happy to describe the room so you can judge for yourself.

Escape rooms aren't usually smaller than the size of a public toilet stall or lift. But they may involve nooks and crannies.

A good escape room will have handy workarounds for players who can't do these bits. They'll help you avoid it. Or ensure your other team members can do it for you.

This goes for any restrictions you might have. Always let your hosts know before your game. Your comfort and safety is the number one priority. OK, with FUN in joint first place.

Talking of comfort, let's move on to the next burning question.



ARE ESCAPE ROOMS ACTUALLY SCARY?

Some are. But you'd always know before you booked if it was a horror game. The Test Chamber is PG, not 18. It's atmospheric and has a creepy theme. But it's not scary. There are no actors or jumpscares.

BOO!

Just kidding. The decor includes no scarier items than you'd see in a shop's Halloween display.

This is the theme to The Test Chamber:

"Escape rooms weren't always just harmless fun. They were originally designed as experiments carried out in secret by the Government between the 1940s-1960s. Hundreds of British citizens were experimented on against their will. Very few made it out alive. Now it's your turn. Re-live the banned experiments that inspired modern escape rooms where you are the Test Subjects."

Exit Door escape room in Bacup

THE TEST CHAMBER

Escape rooms weren't always just harmless fun. They were originally designed as experiments carried out in secret by the Government between the 1940s-1960s. Hundreds of British citizens were experimented on against their will. Very few made it out alive. Now it's your turn. Re-live the banned experiments that inspired modern escape rooms where you are the Test Subjects.



exit
door



The Beginner's Guide to
ESCAPE ROOMS

Your hosts can adapt the tone of the story you're told for your team. But they won't assume that because a player is younger they wouldn't enjoy the story. Plenty of parents reveal it was their sci-fi-obsessed tween who begged to play *The Test Chamber*.

And younger players with at least one adult in their team won't struggle with the puzzles, either.

Which leads us to the next commonly asked question about escape rooms.

ARE ESCAPE ROOMS ACTUALLY HARD?

Escape rooms are challenging, engaging, and satisfying. *The Test Chamber* is packed full of puzzles so you'll have lots to do. It'll be all hands on deck. But it won't be "hard."

You'll warm up and ease into the zone. With creative thinking and problem solving possibilities easily flowing through you.

Before playing an escape room first timers can worry that it'll be too hard. They wonder how they'll know where to start. But they happily tell us afterwards that they felt the exact moment "something clicked." That something was their brains switching into **Escape Room Mode!**



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

PLAY YOUR FIRST ESCAPE ROOM

Wowee. Thank you for sticking with us to the end. We hope this monster guide has shown you what an escape room is. And that you're brimming with confidence to try one.

We'll ask you to use your imagination one more time before we finish. Picture the following scenes. They both take place in a green-lit room with a cloud ceiling. The first scene is Before. The second scene is After.

Before

People shuffle in. They seem disconnected. Their minds are wandering. Daydreaming about when they'll get home later. Wondering if this is a waste of time. Checking their phones. They're thinking, "I'm not sure about this."

After

People fizzing with energy bounce in. They're glowing. Eyes sparkling. Beaming smiles on their faces. Their minds are sharp and focused. All talking excitedly at once, laughing as they share their highlights. They're thinking, "When can we do this again?"

Where are they? And what happened to these people that made them switch from the Before scene to the After scene?

Well, the room is the reception area at Exit Door escape room in Bacup. And these people have just played The Test Chamber.

This is the amazing change we see in teams who do their first escape room with us. We hope we get to see your team very soon.

Laughter. Amazement. Satisfaction. Quality time together is waiting for you in The Test Chamber. [Book your game now.](#)

