Spoken word games

BOTTICELLI (2+) The Thinker thinks of a person and says the first letter of their surname. Others take turns to add yet another letter where the asker has a person in mind for “yes” (who fits all confirmed information about the mystery person); the Thinker either says “No, I am not [name],” naming someone who fits but is not the mystery person, or concedes. If conceding, the asker reveals who they had in mind and may ask direct yes/no questions to the Thinker until they answer “no” to one. If the Thinker answers yes to “Are you [name]?”, the guesser wins.

BREAKFAST COMBO (2+) The Server thinks of an object. Another player makes a guess as to what this object might be, and this automatically becomes the best guess so far. Other players then make guesses. For each guess: if it is closer than the current best guess, the Server announces that this is the new best guess; otherwise, the Server declines it but names something that the guess has in common with the object. (e.g. “A wasp” “No, a calculator is still the best guess, but like a wasp, my object has a sharp point.”) A correct guess wins.

CONVERGENCE (2) Both players think of their own four word key sentence. Each turn, a player announces their chosen sentence, and their opponent indicates whether each word in their own key sentence is alphabetically before or after ("up") or after ("down") the corresponding word in the test. (For example, if a player’s key sentence was “HAVE A NICE DAY” and the other tested with “LET THERE BE LIGHT”, the player would answer “up, up, down, up.”) Repeat until a sentence is guessed. To shorten the game, announce when a word has reached the correct initial letter. JOTTO (2) Each player secretly notes down a five-letter word. Players take turns to call out five-letter words, their opponent responding by saying how many times the called word’s letters appear in their word (e.g. a call of ‘WORLD’ against a secret word of HELLO results in “3”). If the called word is the secret word, the caller wins. Players may note down an alphabet and cross out letters as they are eliminated, for reference.

KOLDONY’S GAME (2+) One player chooses a secret rule that any given sentence may or may not fit (e.g. “ends with a vowel”). Other players ask yes/no questions, which the rule chooser answers with “yes” if the question sentence fits the rule and “no” if it does not. If the first player guesses the rule wins.

NO MORE JOCKEYS (2+) Players take turns to name a person and then exclude a category that the person fits as “Buster Keaton: No more actors.” Categories can be qualities of the person, or of the words or letters of their name. Once a category is excluded, people covers cannot be named. If a player can’t think of a person, or has any player correctly challenge them for a move that breaks earlier exclusions, they are eliminated. (Upon excluding a category, a player may be asked to confirm “name another” who also fits it; if they can’t, they are eliminated.)

Card games

ABSTRACT (2) Remove 2s through 8s. Shuffle and deal the 24 cards as a face-up line, overlapping so that values are visible. Dealer chooses whether to play or pass. Players then take turns to claim one, two or three consecutive cards from the “top” end of the line, placing claimed cards in front of them. When the line’s gone, total your score for claim sets (3-of-a-kind = 3, 4-of-a-kind = 8) and sequences within a suit (3 scores 3, 4-4, 5-6, 6-12), then multiply it by the number of cards your opponent drew. If a single player scores nothing, swap scores.

ACES AND FACES (2) Lay all ace and face cards face-up on the table. Each has four relevant characteristics: red or black; rounded (club/heart) or pointed suit top; male or female (aces are female); name or rank/number. Shuffle. Take turns to select a face-up card and hand it to your opponent, who places it into an imaginary shared grid. Take turns to add one card, orthogonally adjacent to an existing card. After eight plays, Player 1 scores the highest-scoring row. Player 2 scores the highest-scoring column: a line scores its total face value (Queens 10 horizontal but 0 vertical, Kings vice versa, Jacks always 0); x2 if it has two cards of one suit, x3 for three in one colour, x5 for three of one suit. A line with a joker (“vampire”) scores zero. Play six rounds. GOPS (2-3) Give one player the spade cards and the other cards (If there’s a third player, give them hearts). Shuffle the diamonds. Each round, deal one diamond card face-up to the table: each player secretly bids a card of their choice from their hand - the highest bid (If any) takes the diamond, and bid cards are discarded. In a tie, the diamond is discarded. Highest diamond total wins. JAMES BOND (2-3) Deal six piles of four cards to each player (four piles for three players, four and four cards face-up into a middle row. Play is simultaneous: players swap cards from their piles with cards from the middle row, but may only pick up one pile at a time, and swap one card at a time. If all of a player’s piles contain four matching cards, they call “James Bond” and win. Liar! (2) Use the Jack, Queen and King from any three suits. Shuffle and deal four cards each, and one face-down to the table. Take turns to either play a card (you win if you are right, you lose if wrong) or play a card from your hand face-up to the table and ask your opponent either how many cards they have of that suit, or how many of that rank. Players must answer truthfully, but may lie once per game. Suspected lies may be challenged; if correct, the challenger wins, if mistaken they lose. MINI MAO (2+) Deal five cards per player. One player thinks up a secret rule regarding legal plays (e.g. “cannot play a club onto a heart”). Players take turns to play one card into a middle pile; if you break a secret rule, the player who invented the rule informs you that you have done this (without explaining the rule) and hands your card back, you draw one penalty card and your turn ends. First to empty their hand wins the round, and invents an additional secret rule for the next. With two players, both create a rule in the first round. OBSTACLE RACE (2-6) Discard 2s through 6s and deal out the remainder; put any leftovers into a discard pile and announce their total. Take turns to play a card to the discard pile and announce the new total of the pile. (Aces are worth 11, Kings 4. Queues plus or minus 3, Jacks 2 and others at face value.) The “obstacles” are 66, 88, 99 and 111: score 1 point for hitting an obstacle, lose 1 point for skipping over one in either direction. If the total exceeds 120, reset it to zero. Continue until all cards have been played. Ohio (2-5) Each player has 1-10 and the Jack (“Ohio”) of a single suit. The first player plays any card. Going clockwise, each player must either play a lower card, or retire from the round. Ohio is counted as 0.1 less than the previous played card. Repeat until all but one player has passed; that player wins the cards on the table and leads the next round, unless any player has no cards, in which case the game ends. Score total face value of won cards, minus face value of cards in hand; Ohio score -10 whenever they are. PIT (3-4) Prepare a deck of the numbers 1 through 9 for as many suits as there are players. Shuffle and deal nine cards each, plus a king (a wildcard) and a joker (cannot win while held). First player makes a trade with an opponent, who examines them privately and announces a poker hand, optionally naming specific cards (e.g. “a pair” or “pair of nines and a six”). The other player challenges the call or takes the hand. If they challenge, reveal and discard the hand: the challenge loser takes a penalty point and starts a new round. If they take the hand, they may discard (face-down) and redraw up to four cards, then claim a higher poker hand for the next player to judge. Play to a pre-agreed penalty total.
Three rounds, players take turns to play one card; highest wins and starts the next round. Best of three rounds wins the hand, first to win 5 hands wins the game. Before playing a card, a player may call "I put": opponent must either throw in their card (passing the hand) or announce that they are "seeing", playing out the current hand with its winner winning the entire game (if drawn, continue play instead).

**RUMMY (2-6)** Deal ten cards each (six for 5/6 players). Remove four face-up cards from each hand. Turn the remaining cards face-up to the discard pile. On your turn: draw a card from the top of the deck or discard pile; optionally play one "meld" (3+ cards of a rank, or a consecutive run of 3+ in a suit) onto the table; optionally add cards from your hand to expand any melds; discard one card (but not one you drew from the discard this turn). When your hand is empty, you win and score the total face value of cards in opponents' hands (face cards are worth 10).

**SIX CARD GOLF (2-4)** Deal each player a 3x2 grid of face-down cards, one face-up as the discards. Players flip two of their cards face up and cannot examine the others. Turns take: to draw a card from deck or discard, then either place it face-up replacing one of your cards (discarding the replaced card), or discard it. Round ends when a player has six cards face-up. Score: king = 0, jack/queen = 10, ace = 11. Score your highest card as a new face-up stack, or onto an existing stack. If a stack has two consecutive same-suit cards, that suit's player discards any card from that stack. If a stack has three of a kind, pick the lowest down. A suit (three of a kind are instead worth 30½).

**SIX GOLDEN SLEUTH (2+)** Put two chips per player in the middle. Take turns to: roll three dice, then (optionally) roll some of them, no more than twice, then score the total. If your dice total ever exceeds 15, you are eliminated and take a chip. After each round, the player(s) with the lowest score that round takes a chip, unless they are the only uneliminated player. When all chips are taken, many points are scored. The player who made the last move wins.) Play to 30 points.

**VERISH'NE VERISH (2-6)** For a 2/3 player game, remove 2 dice. Remove one random card from the deck. Deal the remaining out. Each turn, play one to three cards face-down and announce them (eg. "two sevens"). You may lie. The next player either accepts or challenges; if they accept, they take their turn, naming the same card rank; if they challenge, played cards are revealed, the loser draws the discard pile, may optionally discard a single four-of-a-kind, and play continues to the loser's left, naming any rank. Retire when your hand is empty; last player remaining loses.

**Dice games**

**CATEGO (2-4)** Draw a grid of eleven columns numbered 2-12, with a row for each player. Take turns to roll two dice and enter the total into any column on your row. When a column is full, the player with the highest score in that column (if any) scores the number of the column. Tally the scores as you go. The game ends when the grid is full. **CINCO (2-6)** Take six dice, one of a different colour as the "hi/lo" dice (1-3 = low, 4-6 = high). Roll any number of unbanked dice, then "bank" one or more. Repeat up to five times. If your hi/lo dice was low, score 14 minus the total of the other dice (minimum 1), multiplied by the hi/lo die. If it was high, score the total of the other dice minus 21 (minimum 1), multiplied by three less than the hi/lo die. A straight and five-of-a-kind always score 10 before others. If the hi/lo die is 1 or 6, score 1 if it is a straight, 5 if you have a five-of-a-kind. **FARKLE (2-6)** Take turns to roll six dice. Whenever you roll, if you roll any scoring combinations (100 times the face value for a triple, 1000 for a triple 1, 100 for a 1 outside of a triple, 50 for a 5 outside a triple) set at least one combination aside and either reroll what's left, or end your turn, scoring the combinations you set aside. If you ever make a roll that scores zero, your turn ends immediately, scoring zero. If you set aside all six, remember those combinations' total and continue with six fresh dice. First to 10,000 wins.

**GOLDEN SIXTEEN (2+)** Put two chips per player in the middle. Take turns to: roll three dice, then (optionally) roll some of them, no more than twice, then score the total. If your dice total ever exceeds 15, you are eliminated and take a chip. After each round, the player(s) with the lowest score that round takes a chip, unless they are the only uneliminated player. When all chips are taken, many points are scored. The player who made the last move wins.) Play to 30 points. Take turns to: roll five dice, then reroll any number of them, twice. Pick a category and score it for your final roll; each player can only score each category once. If you score a "full house" further Yahtzees score 100. Scoring at least 63 in first six categories gives 35 bonus points.

**Miscellaneous games**

**THE DICTIONARY GAME (4-6)** The Reader selects an obscure word from the dictionary, reads the word aloud (checking that no player knows its meaning) and copies the definition onto a piece of paper. The other players write their own definitions on identical papers. The Reader collects the papers to read aloud in a random order. Going clockwise, other players vote aloud on which definition they believe to be correct. Then: score 1 for selecting the true definition and 1 for each player who selected your false definition. If nobody guessed correctly, the Reader scores as many points as players. Take turns to be Reader. **LYNX (2)** Take an empty crossword grid. Players take turns to write a word or crossword-suitable phrase into an empty clue space. First move must be into one of the shortest spaces, subsequent moves must cross at least one existing word. The first move scores 2 points per letter in the word or phrase; subsequent moves score 1 point per letter, multiplied by the number of words the moves cross. Continue until both players resign; the first to resign gets a 10 point bonus.

**Mafia (7+)** Prepare as many cards as players: two "Mafia", one "Detective" and the rest "Citizens". A Moderator deals these out secretly then moderates repeating Night and Day phases. Night: Players close their eyes, the Moderator asks the Mafia to open theirs, silently nominate a player, and then close their eyes. Moderator asks Detective to open their eyes and indicate a player, and gives a thumbs-up if they are Mafia. Day: Everyone opens their eyes, the Mafia-targeted player is eliminated and players vote on one player to eliminate. Mafia lose if eliminated, and win if only two non-Mafia remain. **DICTIONARY GAME**

"Full House (triplet=pair)" (score 25), "Small Straight (sequence of four)" (30), "Large Straight (five)" (40), "Yahtzee (5-of-a-kind)" (50) and "Chance (any dice)" (score total on dice). Take turns to: roll five dice, then reroll any number of them, twice. Pick a category and score it for your final roll; each player can only score each category once. If you score a "full house" further Yahtzees score 100. Scoring at least 63 in first six categories gives 35 bonus points.
NOMIC (4+) Rule 1: Going clockwise, players take turns to roll a die and add the result to their score, then propose the enactment, repeal or amendment of any rule. Rule 2: When a proposal is made, every player must vote for or against it; if the vote is unanimous in favour, the proposal changes immediately; otherwise the proposer loses 10 points. Rule 3: If there is a disagreement about interpretation, the player to the left of the current player resolves the dispute. Their decision is binding. Rule 4: The first player to reach 100 points wins. The first player to reach 150 points wins. The first player to reach 200 points wins. The first player to reach 250 points wins.

Pencil-and-paper games

ACROSTICALS (2+) Pick a ten letter word. Each player writes it vertically on a sheet of paper, then privately fills in ten words that can be assembled from the letters of the original word, one starting with each letter. For duplicate initials, different letters must be chosen. When one player has finished, they call "stop" and the game ends: score 1 point per letter for each word.

ALPHACROSS (2-4) Draw an 11x11 grid (or 13x13 for three players, 15x15 for four), and next to it complete a alphabet for each player. Take turns to add any word to the grid (connecting to at least one existing word, and forming non-words) and cross out any letters in your alphabet which you added to the grid that turn. The first to use up their entire alphabet wins; if the game reaches a stalemate, the player who has used most letters wins. For scoring across games, the winner scores the number of letters the second-place player has not used.

BATTLESHIP: SALVO (2) Each draw a private 10x10 "fleet" grid and a 10x10 "strike" grid. On your fleet grid, draw an Aircraft Carrier (a line of 5 adjacent, non-diagonal squares), a Battleship (4), a Cruiser (3), a Submarine (3) and a Destroyer (2); ships cannot touch. Take turns to call as many grid-reference shots as you have unused ships: your opponent announces how many (but not which) shots were "hits", and marks them on their fleet grid. Make notes on your strike grid. If a ship is hit, it sinks and all of its remaining squares identified. A sunk fleet loses. BLOCK (2+) Draw an 8x8 grid of squares. Take turns to claim a square by marking a personal symbol in it. When the grid is full, look for an orthogonally-connected group of squares that is the winner.

BOGGLE (2+) Generate a 4x4 grid of random letters (by, say, picking a random sentence and writing the first eight letters in a checkerboard pattern, and the next eight in the gaps). Each player privately lists words that can be made from a path of sequentially adjacent letters (including diagonals). A single word cannot use the same grid square twice. The game ends after three minutes; players reveal their words, strike out any which more than one player found, then score by word length (3/4 letters=1 point, 5-2=6, 3-5=7, 5-8=11). For a sharper game, disallow 2-letter words and 8-10.

BRIGITTE (2) On a 6x5 grid of black dots. Take turns to add your personal symbol (a "stone") in a square. Each move must be adjacent to a previous player's move; if this is not possible, the player has the "freedom" to place their stone in any square. When the board is full, score 1 point for each "live" stone you have; a stone is live if it is part of a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line of exactly 4 stones of the same colour.

CRYSTALS (2+) Draw a 5x5 grid of black dots. At the centre of each grid square, draw a small black empty circle (a "white dot") then draw five more white dots above and below the top and bottom rows, to produce two interlocking 5x5 grids of black and white dots. Each player takes a turn to draw a personal symbol ("a stone") in a square. Each move must be adjacent to a previous player's move; if this is not possible, the player has the "freedom" to place their stone in any square. When the board is full, score 1 point for each "live" stone you have; a stone is live if it is part of a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line of exactly 4 stones of the same colour.

DASH (2+) Each player draws the same large 5x5 grid, each row labelled with a randomly chosen letter and each column titled with a category (eg. "cities", "colours", "mammals"). Players fill in the grid with answers that match the category and begin with the letter. When a player's grid is full, they call "done"; when only one player has yet to call, the game ends. Score 2 points for each unique answer, 1 point for each shared answer, 0 for an answer voted to be incorrect.

FLAX (2) On a 10x10 or 8x8 grid, players take turns to draw a personal symbol (a "stone") in a square. Each move must be adjacent to a previous player's move; if this is not possible, the player has the "freedom" to place their stone in any square. When the board is full, score 1 point for each "live" stone you have; a stone is live if it is part of a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line of exactly 4 stones of the same colour.

GAMES (2) Draw ten large circles, and join them with lines to make a symmetrical pattern, such that each circle has between two and seven connections. Players take turns to write a word within an empty circle; upon doing so, they score a point for each filled circle which is both connected adjacent to their move, and for which they can argue some logical connection between the circles' contents. The second turn of the game must be unadjacent to the first. KROPKI (2+) On a square grid of any size, players take turns to add a dot of their colour (or an identifying symbol) to an intersection. After placing a dot, you may connect a loop of your own adjacent dots (not including diagonals) by drawing a line through them. This forms a "territory". If one territory encloses another, the enclosed one is no longer counted as a territory. At the end of the game, score one point for each empty dot of an opponent inside your territories. Alternate scoring: score the total size of your territories.

GLOBE GAMES (2) Draw a 5x5 grid. Take turns to add your own symbol to an empty square. If by placing your own symbol you have surrounded an opponent's symbol on two opposite, sides (including diagonals), scribble out the opponent's symbol. Scribbled out symbols take no further part in the game. Play until one empty square remains; the player who has the most surviving symbols wins.

HUGGENHEIM (2+) Each player draws the same large 5x5 grid, each row labelled with a randomly chosen letter and each column titled with a category (eg. "cities", "colours", "mammals"). Players fill in the grid with their symbols. If a player has no line to cut, they lose. Variant: draw lines in two or three colours, each player picks one colour and cannot cut lines of their opponent's colour.

HYPNOBOMBES (2) Draw ten large circles, and join them with lines to make a symmetrical pattern, such that each circle has between two and seven connections. Players take turns to write a word within an empty circle; upon doing so, they score a point for each filled circle which is both connected adjacent to their move, and for which they can argue some logical connection between the circles' contents. The second turn of the game must be unadjacent to the first. KROPKI (2+) On a square grid of any size, players take turns to add a dot of their colour (or an identifying symbol) to an intersection. After placing a dot, you may connect a loop of your own adjacent dots (not including diagonals) by drawing a line through them. This forms a "territory". If one territory encloses another, the enclosed one is no longer counted as a territory. At the end of the game, score one point for each empty dot of an opponent inside your territories. Alternate scoring: score the total size of your territories.

KROPKI (2+) Each player draws a 5x5 grid. Take turns to add your own symbol to an empty square. If by placing your own symbol you have surrounded an opponent's symbol on two opposite, sides (including diagonals), scribble out the opponent's symbol. Scribbled out symbols take no further part in the game. Play until one empty square remains; the player who has the most surviving symbols wins.
answer to, with spaces to write three answers to their own sheet of paper, and thinks up and writes formed in any direction; the other player ("Chaos") player ("Order") wins if a line of five Xs or Os is square. After adding a stone, if any group of your take turns to draw a stone of their colour into any ONE-CAPTURE (eg. "ABC: ABaCk", but not "ABCD: ABduCt" because one space, starting with Red. Red wins if they moves, if any, that one specific colour will receive. The other player chooses which colour to play. Free moves are taken, then players take turns to colour one space, starting with Red. Red wins if they create their pattern. Blue wins if the grid becomes full with no pattern. NYPHABET (2) Write out the alphabet (optionally starting from any letter and looping back to A, or in an entirely random order). Take turns to think of a word that starts with the leftmost uncrossed letter and contains a number of those immediately following it, in the same order (eg. "ABC: ABaCk", but not "ABCD: ABduCt" because the D precedes the C), and cross out the ordered letters used. Whoever writes the final word loses. ONE-CAPTURE (2) Draw a 10x10 grid. Players take turns to draw a stone of their colour into any square. After adding a stone, if any group of your opponent surrounds it, the stone must belong to a group that a stone belongs to, there are no empty squares adjacent to any stone in that group), you win the game. ORDER AND CHAOS (2) On a 6x6 grid, players take turns to mark an "O" or "X" in any square - each player may add either mark. One player ("Order") wins if a line of five Xs or Os is formed in any direction; the other player ("Chaos") wins if the grid is filled without any such lines being formed. POORMAN'S TRIVIA (4+) Each player has their own sheet of paper, and thinks up and writes down three trivia questions that they know the answer to, with spaces to write three answers to each of the other players’ questions. Going around the table, each player asks one of their questions and the other players write down an answer. When all questions have been asked, score the game: each question is worth 2*X points to its questioner and those who answered correctly, where X is the number of players who answered incorrectly (unless everyone answered incorrectly, in which case each questioner loses 2*X points). QUOD (2) Draw an 11x11 grid and mark dots ("quasars") in the four corner squares. Each player has a pool of six quasars, and besides taking turns to add a single stone, you can add any number of your quasars to the grid, plus a single personal symbol ("quad") in any empty square. If four of a player’s quads form a square (of any size and orientation), that player wins. If each player has played 20 quads, the game ends and the player with most unplayed quasars wins. (Alternatively: score 1 point per square and play 20 quads each.) RAGAMAN (2-6) Draw a 5x5 grid. Write any vowel in the middle square. Take turns to add a letter adjacent to an existing letter, then score for the longest words you can make in each of four directions (vertical, horizontal and two diagonals). Letters of a claimed word must lie consecutively, and must include the added letter, but need not be in order. Add the lengths of the words together for your score that turn. (Scoring variants: multiply instead of adding; or score 2 for 2 letters, 6 for 3, 10 for 4, 15 for 5). Play until the grid is full. RUMBLE (2+) Players start with 100 Energy. Each player designs two game-modifying Superpowers with an effect (eg. "Regeneration: Gain 3 Energy after each round", "Lancers: Spend 20 to do 5 unblockable damage") and these are secretly bid upon; highest bid pays that much Energy and gets the power. Each round, each player secretly divides their Energy between Defence, Attacks against other players and (if relevant) their Superpowers; this is then revealed, and if a player sustains Attacks greater than their Defence, they lose the dinners they have arranged to be eaten, and are eliminated at zero Energy. Repeat combat rounds until one player survives. RUSH (2) Prepare a 19x19 grid (or any odd-sized square). Take turns to add or mark a stone in any grid cell. You can’t add a stone to a square where two or more orthogonally adjacent cells contain your own stones, unless an orthogonally adjacent cell also contains an opponent’s stone – in which case, you get another turn. Play until the board is full, and the player with most stones on the board wins. SAINT MARK’S (2+) Draw a 12x12 grid. One player writes a letter in any square. Players then take turns to add a letter adjacent to an existing one, crossword-grid-style. If a player completes a word of three or more letters, they lose. Instead of their turn, a player may challenge the last move; if their opponent can show that every horizontal and vertical sequence of two or more letters can be extended to form a word, former illegal letters in the process, the opponent scores the longest. Otherwise the challenger wins. SCOREWORDS (2-6) Each player draws their own 5x5 grid (6x6 for a game with five players, 7x7 for six). Players take turns to call out a letter; for each letter, every player scores 1 point if a group of three or more of that letter’s is a single square in their own grid. When only one square remains, each player fills it in with a letter of their choice, and the game ends. Score points equal to the length of each word in your grid which is not wholly inside another word; 3 for 3 letters, 4 for 4, 10 for 5 (12 for 6, 15 for 7). SHANNON SWITCHING GAME (2) Draw an arbitrary network of small circles connected by lines. Emphasise any two circles as targets. Players are known as "Short" and "Cut", and take turns, starting with Cut. On Short’s turn, he or she colours (or otherwise emphasises) a line. On Cut’s turn, he or she erases (or crosses out) a non-coloured line. If a coloured path exists between the two target circles, Short wins; if no path exists between them, Cut wins. SLIMTRAIL (2) Draw any rectangular grid of squares, and mark two “goal” squares in it as shown. A player has 20 quads, the game ends and the player with most unplayed quasars wins. (2-6) Each player draws their own network of small circles connected by lines. Letters of a claimed word must lie diagonally. If you draw the final line that forms a “taijitu” in any pair of empty, orthogonally connected dots in the four corners, each owned by one player. A player marks a Slime in any square, and the other player chooses who will play first. Players take turns to add a Slime to an empty space adjacent (orthogonally or diagonally) to the most recently added Slime. If a player’s goal square contains a Slime (irrespective of who marked it), that player wins. SOS (2+) Draw any grid, at least 3x3 in size. Players take turns to add a letter to a square: either “S” or “O”, as they choose. If doing so completes an “SOS” in any direction, draw a line through it and take another turn. When the grid is full, the player who completes the most SOSes wins. (Optionally players mark completed SOSes in different ways, for ease of counting.) SPROUTS (2) Draw a few thick arrows. Players take turns to: add a new circle and the other player scores. If each player completes a word of three or more letters, they lose. Instead of their turn, a player may challenge the last move; if their opponent can show that every horizontal and vertical sequence of two or more letters can be extended to form a word, former illegal letters in the process, the opponent scores the longest. Otherwise the challenger wins. TWIXT (2) Prepare a 2x4-24 grid of dots but don’t draw the dots in the four corners. Give each player a differently coloured pen, and mark the top and bottom edges of the grid in one colour, the two corners in the other. Take turns to claim any unclaimed dot by marking it your colour, then draw any number of links between dots you have claimed which are exactly a knight’s move apart. Your links may cross your own links, but not your opponent’s. You may not claim dots on your opponent’s board edges. First player to link their own two borders wins. URBANIZATION (2) Draw a grid of 6x6 dots. Take turns to connect two adjacent dots (including diagonals), or a line of three adjacent dots (again including diagonals). If you draw the final line that encloses an area, claim it by marking it with a symbol. Play until the grid is full; the player whose claimed areas have the largest combined areas wins. VERSAL SPROUTS (2) Write a four-letter word across four circles connected by left-to-right arrows. Players take turns to: add a new circle anywhere on the paper containing a previously unused letter, draw any number of connecting arrows, then spell out any number of words from connecting paths of letters. Each word must use the new letter, and all added arrows must be used that turn. Score 1 point per letter for each word; if one is a substring of another, score only the longest. Maximum 4 arrows per circle, arrows may not overlap, and no double-arrows between a pair.