

Tray Detectives

Host card | 3-8 players | Approx. 10-15 minutes | 1.0.0

Look closely at a tray, hide it, then reconstruct the collection together. Each round changes what the team needs to notice.

Bring and set up

A tray or clear table space; Eight large, familiar objects; A cloth, paper and pencils.

Choose objects that are easy to distinguish, such as a spoon, sock, book, glove, cup, brush, envelope and pencil. Keep sharp or breakable objects away from the table.

Arrange six objects. Let everyone see them from a comfortable seat; use the same viewing time for the whole group.

How to play

1. Show the tray for about 30 seconds, then cover it. Players silently think of one object before the group begins sharing.
2. Go around once, taking one remembered object from each player. Write each different correct object once; allow a pass.
3. Reveal the tray and compare the list with the actual objects. Celebrate accurate observations, then change the tray for the next round.

A shared recall

The tray held a spoon, sock, book, glove, cup and brush. Two people remember the cup: count it once. If somebody remembers a plate, check the uncovered tray together rather than taking away a point.

Three-part session

1. Six objects: Show six objects. Aim to name all six after covering them.
2. One change: Show the same collection, cover it, then replace one object. Reveal it and identify what changed.
3. Positions matter: Show four objects in a row. Cover them and reconstruct their left-to-right order.

Offer support

Use four objects, give a longer viewing time, or let children describe an object without naming it. Make objects available to inspect closely before the round.

If something goes wrong

If one confident player supplies every answer, collect one contribution per person before opening discussion. Do not add unseen objects to settle an uncertain memory.

Finish together

Uncover the tray and check every claim. Ask the group which detail or grouping strategy helped most.

Party Puzzle Parcel | Free host materials | Adult-led session; time is a planning estimate.

Rules reference: Project Gutenberg 25660; observation. Original modern host instructions.