

# PHRASELL

*Inventing amusing little phrases*

**15-30** minutes      **5-15** players

## Overview

Everyone races to shout 4-word phrases, using 4 letters as initials and trying to relate to a topic chosen by the judge. The judge picks their favourite, awards points, and the process is repeated.

## Choose the first judge

I recommend whomever most recently read this sentence - probably the owner of the game, or whoever is teaching it.

## The judge chooses a topic

Flip a card face up and use it to inspire any subject you wish. *E.g. 'OC' might inspire 'octopuses', 'the sea', 'letters with curves', 'obsessive-compulsive behaviour', 'circles', 'Orange County', 'OAPs', 'colds' or 'Count Olaf'.*

## The judge reveals 4 more letters

Flip over 2 more cards, revealing 4 letters.  
*These are the letters that will be used as initials.*

## Everyone else makes up phrases

Now, all the other players race to invent 4-word phrases that use those 4 letters as initials.  
*They should try to relate to the subject you picked. They could be interesting, factual, silly, true, ridiculous, insightful or just whatever occurs. Anything you say is valid.*

*[deck] [oc] [ou][ic]*

*Example: Liz picks 'the sea' as a topic, then flips over 'OU' and 'IC'. People shout:*

*"Creatures In Our Underbellies!"*

*"In Canals, Oceans Unite!"*

*"Crazy Universes Inside Oceans"*

*"Can I Use Oceans?"*

## The judge picks a winner

At any time, the judge can end the round. *You can end it as soon as you hear a phrase you particularly like, or wait a while and let the creative juices flow.*

Give the 3 cards to your favourite phrase. You may, alternatively, give 2 cards to your favourite phrase and 1 card to your 2nd favourite. Use any judging criteria. *Maybe a phrase that made you laugh, an insightful observation, one you found particularly poignant, or even one you enjoyed because of the flattery.*

## Repeat the Process

The person who won 2 or 3 cards is the next judge. They will flip a card, pick a topic, flip 2 more cards, then award the 3 cards to their favourite(s).

## Finish the deck

Once the deck is finished, and the last 3 cards are awarded as points, the game is over.

Whoever collected the most cards wins the game. *It is appropriate to nod approvingly at the winner - perhaps even clap - for they have proven to be the person with the best empathy, wit and mastery of language.*

## TIPS FOR FUN

### **More people is generally better.**

If you can fit more than 15 players around the deck, you can play with more. As long as everyone can see the main 4 letters, you're good to go.

### **Only start saying your phrases when you have worked out the entire phrase.**

If you stop half-way through to work out your last word, it's less impressive and exciting.

### **Don't be afraid to repeat words that have already been used.**

Maybe you can improve on a previous phrase. Or maybe you can use a word in an entirely new context!

### **Don't be afraid to say something underwhelming, specially if you think of it straight away!**

### **You are allowed multiple phrases.**

Keep thinking and feel free shout something new, specially if you think it's quite different to/better than your last phrase.

### **As a judge, your main responsibility is timekeeping.**

Don't be afraid to end the round early if everyone is struggling and you've heard a phrase that seems OK. Conversely, don't end the round too soon - give folk time to ponder.

## OPTIONAL: SHORTER GAME

If you have limited time, you can treat the game as an activity and simply stop whenever you wish.

## OPTIONAL: JURY VOTING

When judging, you do not determine the winner. Instead, your role is that of time keeper. You stop the round whenever you wish, after which EVERYONE (on the count of 3) votes for their favourite phrase-maker that round. The winner (whoever has most fingers pointing at them) gets the 3 cards and is the next judge. If there's a tie, the judge decides who gets 1 card and who gets 2 (and becomes the next judge).

## CREDITS/THANKS/HISTORY

Designed and developed by Bez, with the help of many playtesters. Special thanks to PlaytestUK as a whole, Ben Neumann for continuing support and ideas before he went away, Dave Wetherall for frequent playtesting early on, Matt Leacock for the idea of 'splitting' the vote, Miquette, Liz and Stew for their energy, love and emotional support. These rules were proof-read by \_\_\_\_\_ .

Originally, you just had to give a 4 word phrase, following a particular order. I believe it was Ben Neumann who suggested being allowed to change the order of the letters. I can't remember who thought of the topics (maybe even me) or in what order those 2 developments happened.

After that, the game was essentially done.

I was made aware of the 'license plate game' and a few other similar games after this point and I felt that Phrasell is different enough to existing stuff.

Because of this game and Faybell, I did pay special attention to how easy it is for letters in the deck to be used at the start of a word - not just those that can be used within a word. That helped inform the letter distribution within the deck as a whole, but not much change was required.

If you ever have any feedback, questions, comments, or favourite phrases, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I love to hear about people having fun with my stuff!

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