Go on a scavenger hunt

In this friendly game, players compete to find items on a list before time is up.

If you’re looking for a fun activity for a group, consider planning a scavenger hunt. This is a game in which individuals or teams try to find a list of items in a backyard, park, or other place. The person or team who finds all the items first, or has found the most items when time is up, is the winner. Here’s how to plan one.

Choose a location
First, decide where the scavenger hunt will be held. It could be in your home or backyard, around your neighborhood, or in a local park. Whatever area you choose, take a walk around and search for interesting things that people could be asked to find on the hunt. Look for a mix of objects that participants can pick up and take with them (such as a type of leaf on the ground in a park or a paper clip at your house) and items they can find and take a picture of (a street sign in your neighborhood or a bridge over a stream in the park).

Create the list
Once you’ve brainstormed ideas, narrow the list down to 10 to 15 objects. Write them down on a piece of paper or type them up on a computer. Then make copies of the list so each participant has a list to follow. Be sure to distribute pens or pencils on the day of the hunt so people can check off each item they find.

Invite friends
Set a date and time for the scavenger hunt and invite people over for the big event. An adult can help you text or email friends and family. Consider having some snacks and drinks at your home to enjoy after the hunt.

Set the rules
Pick a starting point where your friends can gather to begin the hunt. If you have a small number of players (five or fewer), each person can do their own hunt. If you have more than that, you might want to split people into teams. If you decide to leave your yard, ask an adult to play on each team to make sure everyone stays safe. Have each team set a timer for 30 minutes. Once time is up, they have to return to the starting point. The first person or group to find all the items on the list, or find the most items on the list when time is up, wins.

Celebrate everyone
It’s a fun idea to have a small prize for the winning person or team. This could be a special bag of treats or a gift card to a local store. You could also consider having prizes for the non-winning teams, such as an award for the team with the most spirit or the silliest team. After all, the best part about a scavenger hunt is the fun you have along the way!

4 steps to host a treasure hunt

A treasure hunt is similar to a scavenger hunt, but they’re slightly different. Here’s how to plan one.

Use the clues
The main difference between a treasure hunt and a scavenger hunt is that a treasure hunt involves solving clues. For example, a clue might say “a place where kids can fly” and you have to figure out that it means the swing set and go there to find the next clue.

Select a place
With an adult, decide when and where to host a treasure hunt. It could be in your home, your yard, or a local park. Invite the participants.

Build the hunt
For your first treasure hunt, aim to come up with five to seven clues. Write them down on paper and put them in their hiding spots. Give people the first clue at the starting point, then have them find the rest.

Deckle on the treasure
Part of the fun of a treasure hunt is deciding what the treasure will be at the end. It could be stickers for everyone or even a small treat, such as gum or candy. Another idea: Paint a large rock gold and call it the treasure hunt trophy.