ESCAPE ROOMS:
HOW TO USE PUZZLES AND POP CULTURE
TO CREATE MULTI-GENERATIONAL PROGRAMS

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After attending our session, participants will be able to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify</th>
<th>fandoms that appeal to all ages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create</td>
<td>a sequential escape room plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>props and décor on a budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapt</td>
<td>puzzles to meet different developmental needs</td>
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STEPS FOR CREATING AN ORIGINAL ESCAPE ROOM

1. Choose a fandom
2. Build a narrative
3. Know your space
4. Pick your puzzles
5. Link the puzzles to the story
CHOOSING A FANDOM

• Spans many generations, either continuous or reboots
• Appeals to a range of ages
• Has iconic characters or easily identifiable components
• Family friendly
• Don’t choose a fandom you know nothing about
• Bonus points: inclusive
BUILDING A NARRATIVE

• Keep it simple
• Use established story lines, at least for inspiration
• Incorporate iconic characters
• Include the participants as key players
• Don’t be afraid to get involved
• Above all, make sure it’s fun and engaging!
FINDING A SPACE

• You don’t need a room to host an Escape Room
• Size doesn’t matter
• Make efficient use of props and décor
PUZZLES

- Variety is key
- Stick to common knowledge
- Should be reflective of the fandom
**LINKING THE STORY TO THE PUZZLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow</th>
<th>your narrative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Map</td>
<td>out your plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make</td>
<td>adaptations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do</td>
<td>a run through</td>
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### Step 1: Clue Board Reveals Order of Puzzle

- Botted in small areas, the puzzle sequence is: Couch, Blanket, Table, Lab.

### Step 2: Decode Anagram

On the wall to open the letter lock.

- Letterbox reveals: Blacklight + half eaten waffle

### Step 3: Blanket Fort

In invisible ink on fabric there is a map where to place DVD pawns. Use blacklight to see it. Will reveal code to 4-digit lock.

### Step 4.1: Use Vials to Follow Solution in the Lab Report

- Numbers on cylinders: Order when mixed will create colors corresponding to color lock.

### Step 4.2: Venture Into the Upside Down to Dig for Key

- Hopper's office
DÉCOR AND PROPS

• Make what you can
• Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
• Ask for donations
• Use your mind palace
TO REGISTER OR NOT TO REGISTER?

Pros:
• You know approximately how many to expect
• It’s easier to create consumable puzzles and props
• You can plan to host multiple groups
• There’s a more even disbursement of people
• You can adjust for various ages, groups, or personalities

Cons:
• You limit who can attend a program
• Sometimes people are no-shows
Take a look at the puzzle on your table and try to solve for the clue.
ADAPTING PUZZLES

- Adjusting puzzle complexity - build your onion
- Use your senses - touch, see, hear, smell, and taste
- Not every puzzle needs to work for everyone
EXAMPLE ONE: TRANSPARENCY AND PAPER CLUES

- Easy to make & good for multiple sessions
- Low cost & easy to share
- Often encourage literacy & logic skills

Examples of paper puzzles:
- Word search
- Rebus or shape puzzles
- Word scramble or anagram
- Files or dossiers

Examples of Transparency puzzles:
- Layer to reveal
- Color-changing
EXAMPLE TWO: CIPHERS AND MAPS

• Ciphers are a classic clue
• Can be added as an additional layer or step
• Maps can help bolster the narrative
• Both are good for encouraging collaboration
EXAMPLE THREE: SENSORY CLUES

• Provide a sensory experience
• Test a different type of intelligence
• Can help inclusivity

• Examples of tactile clues:
  • Digging for keys in _______
  • Building keys or putting together puzzles
  • Identifying smells, flavors, or sounds
  • Mixing colored substances
  • Using actions to trigger new events or clues
GETTING THE MOST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

**Multiple Sessions**
- Back to back
- Across multiple days
- Multiple rooms simultaneously

**Share Resources**
- Within your system
- Outside your system
- Online
RESOURCES

Breakout EDU
https://www.breakoutedu.com/

Lock Paper Scissors
https://lockpaperscissors.co/

Bath Bomb Recipe
https://www.100daysofrealfood.com/homemade-bath-bombs/

Slime Recipes
https://www.elmers.com/slime

Word Search Generator
https://www.puzzle-maker.com/WS/

Rebus Puzzle Generator
https://rebus.club/

Maze Generator
http://www.mazegenerator.net/
WANT TO KNOW MORE? REACH OUT!

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