

Road Trip Games & Activities For Kids

33 original and classic games for back seat fun

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Sweet or Sour



Categories:

- Guessing
- Teamwork
- Out the window

One of the best parts of travel is meeting new people—something you can even do while driving. Sort of.

Here, you’ll turn this into a game by waving at folks you pass on the road. Will they wave back?

One reason I like this game is it takes the focus off the *inside* of the car, which is excellent if kids are getting on each other’s nerves. There are also endless variations, some of which I’ll cover below, that involve math and estimating!

Will you make friends on your next road trip? Play this game and find out.

Directions

Together, pick a car, pedestrian or other person you see outside. As a group, wave to them. (The driver shouldn’t do this if it’s unsafe.)

If they wave back, they count as “sweet.” If they don’t wave back, they count as “sour.”

Keep track of how many sweets you get vs. sours. Will friendly folks win the day? Or will the grouches outnumber them?

Make it easier

This game is already super easy: Even toddlers can play! You can mix things up by taking turns choosing different “greetings.” Instead of a wave, you might flap your arms

like a chicken, have an in-seat dance party or make your hands into binoculars to peer at the passing cars. Will other people gesture back at you?

Make it harder

Decide on a time limit for the game—5 or 10 minutes, for example. Each passenger predicts if they'll see more sweets or sour. Tally the sweets and sour to see how many of each you have by the end of the time period. The people who estimated correctly win.

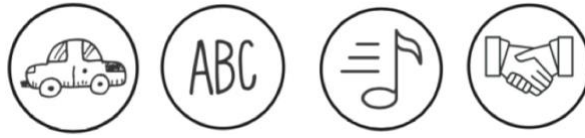
Alternatively, you can bet on each group you wave to. Start by picking a carful of people or a pedestrian. Each player bets if the group will be sweet or sour. If you bet correctly, you get a point. If you bet incorrectly, you lose a point. The person with the most points at the end wins.

Fun Facts

A wave can have different meanings in different cultures. In Japan, waving near your face can mean that you don't understand; in Deaf communities, waving while wiggling your fingers can mean applause.

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Poetry in Motion



Categories:

- Driver-safe
- Word games
- Music
- Teamwork

Could it be that you're a poet and you don't even know it? Or that you can sing in the car as you drive from near to far?

In this road trip game, you'll attempt to do both.

This collaborative game will have you writing a poem, song or rap—together.

Directions

One person begins by starting with a phrase. It can be anything; it's often fun to begin a story or say something that relates to what you're doing. The next person says another phrase that continues the idea of the first. The trick: The final word of that phrase must rhyme with the previous phrase.

The next person says another phrase, which doesn't have to rhyme with the previous one. The fourth person completes that idea with a rhyming phrase. They should all relate to each other, just as a song, poem or rap sticks to a common theme or narrative.

For example, a round might begin like this:

We were driving down the road, yeah we were driving down the highway /
We passed a hitchhiker. He asked, "Are you going my way?"

The hitchhiker hopped in and buckled up his seat belt /
But then his face turned pale and green. I asked him how he felt.

Continue as long as you like, or until you feel like your poem/song is complete.

**Note: This game works best with an odd number of players. That way, everyone gets a turn starting and completing the rhymes.*

Make it easier

The shorter the phrase, the easier it is to rhyme. You might try something like:

I see a lot of trees /
I want to climb one, please.

I hear some cows go *moo* /
Are we driving to the zoo?

Don't worry too much about the lyrics making sense or adding up to a coherent poem.
With younger kids, it's just fun to rhyme!

Make it harder

One passenger can look up and play instrumental beats on their phone. This music will be the backbone of your song or rap.

The challenge: Come up with lyrics that fit the beat *and* say them before the next verse starts!

Fun Facts

Humans have used rhyme in music and spoken word for millennia. It both sounds nice to the ear and helps with memorization.

A handful of words in English don't have a perfect rhyme, but you can still match them to similar sounding words. For example, you could pair *orange* and *door hinge* or *purple* and *whirlpool*. This is called a "slant rhyme."

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Group Effort Storytelling



Categories:

- Driver-safe
- Teamwork
- Word games
- Printable

You know when your kids says, does or asks something totally out of the blue? Like when you're making dinner and your little asks where the end of the universe is? Or when you're driving along and they suddenly announce what they want to be for Halloween?

Those non-sequiturs—aka something unrelated to the previous thing—are just part of the game here!

You'll use the printable from a previous road trip game, Law & Disorder (game #18), that will take your stories to unexpected places. You can download this printable for free at ToAndFroFam.com/games.

Directions

Before you leave home, print and cut out the Law & Disorder printable; keep the squares in a baggie. To begin, one person starts a story. It can begin "Once upon a time..." or "The other day I..." or however else you'd like. That person continues for a few sentences.

When they're done with their part of the story, they include a transition for the next person. Here are some ideas for transitions:

- Then...

- To her surprise...
- All of a sudden...
- Next...
- In the meantime...
- After that...
- Soon...
- Later that day...
- Before he knew it...
- The following day...

The next person pulls a square from the baggie. They continue the story—and have to incorporate whatever the square represents into the next part.

For example, if the first person began, “Once upon a time, there was a tiger who thought she was a llama. So she began eating grass. Little did she know, ...”

If the next person pulled a square with a bicycle on it, they might continue, “Little did she know, she was actually a new species of bicycle-riding llama that just looked like a tiger! She rode her bike to the nearby llama farm.”

And so on. You may want to write down these hilarious stories because you’ll never want to forget them!

Make it easier

Kids tend to take to this game really easily. They’re natural storytellers and already have inventive imaginations!

If kids (or adults!) are having trouble, come up with the next part of the story as a team.

Make it harder

Instead of picking one square, pick two. You have to incorporate *both* items into your part of the story.

Fun Facts

The United Nations cultural agency UNESCO estimates that more than 2 million new books are published every year. The country that publishes the most? China. Will your story ever make it to print?

When you listen to a good story, your body releases the feel-good chemical oxytocin. Nicknamed the love hormone, oxytocin is involved in empathy, bonding with others and building relationships.