

HOW TO PLAY THE PRETENDER®

PLAYERS: 4-6 AGE: 12+ MINUTES: 15+

THE AIM OF THE GAME

The Pretender is a hilarious game of mini-charades, bluffing and suspicion, that will make you laugh and get you thinking creatively.

Each round, every player knows a secret word, except for the Pretender, who only knows which category the word is in. Taking turns, each player will perform a mini-charade, related to the secret word.

The aim of the game for the other players is to work out who the Pretender is, while the Pretender must fake their way through, escaping detection and trying to work out what the secret word is.

SETTING UP THE PRETENDER

To start a game, lay out the cards on the table, face down in 18 category piles. Select a category and take as many cards from this category as there are players. Make sure you include the one 'Pretender' card. Shuffle the cards and deal one card to each player.

All players except one will now have a card with a list of 10 secret words or phrases that relate to the category. One player will have the Pretender card - they are playing blind and must bluff their way through the round.

PERFORMING MINI-CHARADES

The first player to shout out a number or letter chooses the word on the list that everyone will be acting out this round. Starting with this player and moving clockwise, all players take turns making one mini-charade that relates, in some way, to the secret word.

The key to this game is creativity and using just the right amount of subtlety! Be too obvious with your mini-charade and The Pretender will guess the secret word straight away and will fit right in – too subtle or obscure and you risk putting yourself under suspicion.

Meanwhile, the Pretender must either try and guess the secret word before their turn so they have some idea what to act out, or act out an action vague enough that it could fit many things within the category.

MAKING ACCUSATIONS AND WINNING THE GAME

After one round of mini-charades, players can express their suspicions and make accusations, trying to catch out The Pretender. The only rule is that you can't mention the secret word! If you are the Pretender, you'll want to try and throw suspicion on someone else.

When all players have secretly decided who they think is the Pretender, on the count of three, all players point to who they think the Pretender is.

Turn me over, there's more on the back

The player (or players) with the most votes must reveal their identity...
If the Pretender has escaped, then they automatically win!
If the Pretender has been caught, then the rest of the players win
UNLESS the Pretender, with one guess, manages to correctly identify the secret word.

TOP TIPS FOR PLAYING THE PRETENDER

- If the Pretender is guessing the secret word too often, then your mini charades are too obvious. Use your imagination and think more creatively! Tiny, subtle charades are a good start. But don't be afraid to go big and do a longer but more obscure charade - for example, if the word is 'spaghetti' you might act out a day in Italy, without referring to food at all!
- The better you get at this game, the harder it will be for the Pretender to guess the secret word. The more you play The Pretender, the more creative and imaginative you will need to be!
- You might assume that whoever shouts out a letter or number first isn't The Pretender, but actually this, combined with a fairly generic category-specific charade, can be a pretty good move from a bold Pretender.

SCORING IN THE PRETENDER

Scoring is completely optional. If you want to keep score, decide in advance how many rounds you'll play (we recommend 6 for a mini game, 12 for a standard game and 18 for an epic game) and nominate someone to keep score.

Each round, award one point to the Pretender if they win, and one point to every other player if the Pretender loses. At the end of the game the player with the most points wins.

In the case of a tie, it's tiebreaker time - another player should choose a category and a secret word on the list. They then make as many mini charades as needed until one of the tied players shouts out the word and steals the victory!

HOUSE RULES FOR THE PRETENDER

You can adapt this game however you choose. For example, sometimes we like to leave out the discussion phase before the accusations. This speeds up the game and means there's less pressure on the Pretender to be good at bluffing, as everyone makes their guesses based solely on the mini-charades. Feel free to make up your own rules and let us know how you get on!

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CREDITS

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Huge thanks to our amazing playtesters and supporters.