

MEMORY GAMES

Playing memory games improves concentration, observation and reasoning. Even better, they're fun to play with all ages, just adjust the timings to suit. Try some of these at your next family gathering – if you can remember where you've left this magazine!

Pairs

Take a pack of cards and place them all face down on a table. Each player takes it in turns to flip over two cards and if the numbers and colours match they keep the pair and have another go. So, you could match the 7 of clubs with the 7 of spades. The winner is the person with the most pairs at the end.

You can buy all sorts of memory-pairs games with pictures ranging from favourite film characters to works of art. But why not make your own set using ready-made blank tiles or completely from scratch?

They could be personalised using photos of family or pets or with your own artwork. Instead of two identical images, match in a different way – the title of a book or TV show paired with its main character, for instance. Or you could make ones specific to your family. Maybe a hockey stick matched to your sports-mad cousin, or a cake to match with a brother who's always baking (or eating) cakes.

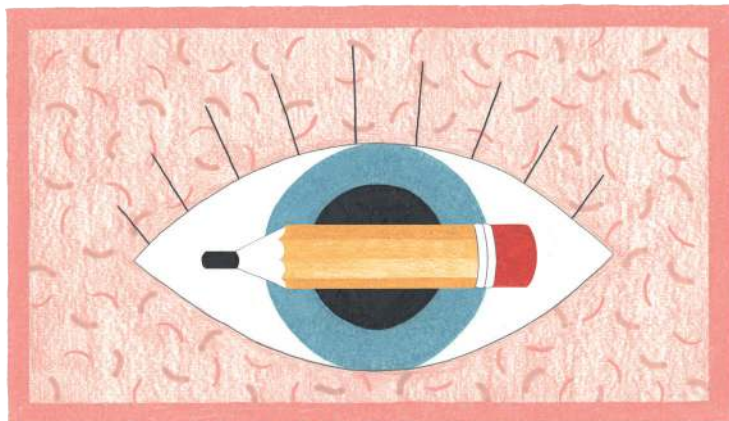
Giant spot the difference

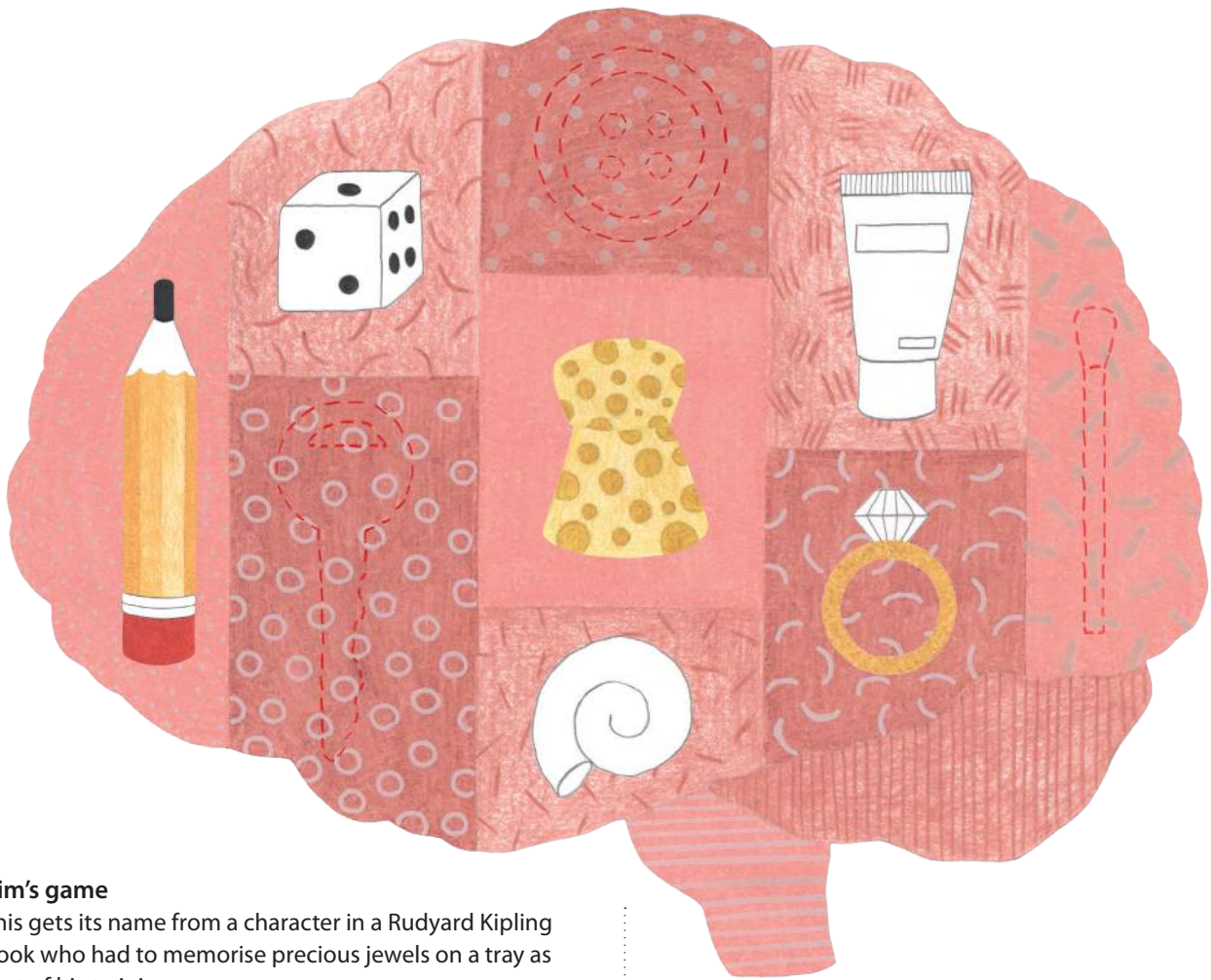
Choose a room – the sitting room is a good choice. One team leaves the room while the other makes five changes. Do something like swapping cushions, placing a rug the other way round, switching on a light, moving the remote control or closing one curtain. Give the other team three minutes to spot the difference. The possibilities are endless – just don't make the differences too difficult and try not to break anything.

I went on holiday and I packed in my suitcase...

You've probably played this listing game on long car journeys. Another version is I went to market and I bought... But you can start with any phrase you like that's relevant to you. The next player repeats the phrase and the first item and then adds an item of their own. Each subsequent player then repeats the phrase – and any items already added – before adding their own word, building a longer and longer list as everyone takes their turn. Make a mistake and you're out until there's only one player left, who wins.

- » **Test your music knowledge**, too, with I went on a talent show and I sang... (*Break Free* by Ariana Grande...)
- » **Or test your book knowledge** with I went to the library and I borrowed... (*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen...)
- » **Be creative with a story version** Once upon a time... where each player adds a sentence to a story. Listen carefully because these tales can become very weird and wonderful. The last player left who's able to tell the story correctly is the winner.





Kim's game

This gets its name from a character in a Rudyard Kipling book who had to memorise precious jewels on a tray as part of his training.

Gather a selection of 15 to 20 small items like a coin, keys, teaspoon or a pen. Put them on a tray and cover with a tea towel. Place it in front of the players and remove the cloth for 30 seconds only. Each player then has to write a list of the items and the winner is the one who correctly remembers the most. If you don't want to use pens and paper, play the alternative version where you remove one item and ask what's missing.

Building brick describing game

This game uses memory, communication skills and teamwork. The host builds a small Lego model, say an animal or a vehicle, using about 10 pieces in different colours. The model is placed out of sight in a cardboard box. One member of each team comes up and gets one minute looking at the model. They cannot speak or take any notes. They return to their team and have to describe the model completely from memory. The winning team is the one that builds the most accurate reconstruction.

Memory maestro

You can buy memory games on topics like countries or nature or you can improvise your own version using books and magazines. The first player gets 10 seconds to study a page full of pictures and information from a non-fiction book or a magazine (it could be *Teen Breathe*). The second player then thinks up one question based on the page, so maybe, what colour hat is the girl wearing? Or, how many animals are shown? Then swap around. The person who gets most points after three rounds, wins.

So, one last game, without looking back:

I looked at an article in *Teen Breathe* magazine and learned how to play... Giant spot the difference, plus... How many did you remember?

