

THREE THINGS

How long does it take you to come up with a character's name? Or to describe what's in a room? (GMs, this is always that one room that you hadn't fleshed out in your notes, but of course the one that the players decide to explore first.) Taking ten minutes to scour name lists may lead to analysis paralysis, and stumbling to come up with ideas off the top of your head while everyone's looking at you can feel awkward.

We've got to face that anxiety and be comfortable with spontaneous creativity. In this "word salad" exercise, you'll limber up your creativity by saying whatever comes to mind, rapid fire.

- **Everyone stands in a circle.**
- **Someone (Player A) turns to the person on their left (Player B) and asks them to name three things to fit a specific category. (Such as "What are three things you would wear on your head?" or "What are three things that are blue?" or "What are three things in your fridge?")**
- **Player B lists three things to fit that category, as quickly as possible. ("A fez! A bird nest! A fancy wig!")**
- **Everyone in the circle shouts, "Three things!" and mimes beating a drum with their fists.**
- **Player B turns to Player C and asks for three things in a different category.**
- **Continue until everyone has asked and answered at least once.**

WHY THE HAND GESTURES?

They help punctuate the intensity of saying "Three things!" and gives everyone else a bit of physical engagement, since you're mostly standing still in this exercise. Also, it's fun! You'll find a few other exercises with silly gestures, such as "Yes! Character Building" (page 26), "Animal Secrets" (page 60), and "Classic Cast" (page 50).



Expansion!

Try “Character Three Things.” As a group, start by brainstorming basic characters (cheerleader, spy, athlete, doctor, vampire, etc.). Then play a round of “Three Things,” but Player A will ask their question in the style of a specific character (“Soldier! What are three things that should not be in your bunk!”). Player B will mimic that character when giving their response. After that, Player B assumes a new character and gives Player C a category, and so on.

You can also switch it up by embodying different emotions (shy, sad, bubbly, strict, etc.). Be careful with regional accents; they can be difficult to master and easily slide into stereotypes.

DARE TO BE DULL

Sometimes your offer may be so utterly bizarre that you didn’t even know you were going to say it until it came out of your mouth. That’s magical. But it can be equally satisfying when someone makes the obvious choice. As Keith Johnstone says, “dare to be dull.” We’re not in a competition to be the wackiest, and what seems obvious to you may be delightfully absurd to someone else.

Go with your gut and don’t focus too hard on finding the “most interesting” idea. Remember the group agreement from page 4 to be positive—your fellow players are prepared to meet your ideas with enthusiasm.