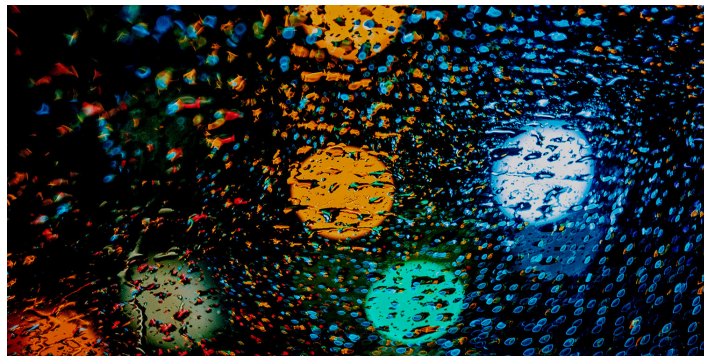


November-ish games

In Victoria Wood's *dinnerladies*, Wood's character, Bren, describes the workforce in the canteen as feeling November-ish – they were bad-tempered and fractious because they'd all got a "had Bonfire Night, long time till Christmas' type feeling". In the pandemic, you might also feel like November is stretching ahead of you (although time in lockdown seems to be obeying no real laws of physics). So here are some ongoing games you can try that might last the whole month (and leave you feeling less November-ish).



REAL-TIME BOARD GAME

You will need: your chosen board game; paper; felt-tip pens; Blu Tack; a space in a common place where the game can be set out long-term

Set up your chosen game in a place in your home where people pass, but where it can stay out for a long time – this could be a dining table or coffee table. Make a chart of all the players in the family and stick it up next to the game. Make a small arrow or circle, and write 'It's your turn' on it.

The first player makes a move in the game, then sticks the 'It's your turn' marker on the next player's name. The next time this player passes the board, they make their move, and then move the marker to the next person. Play continues until the game is finished; players can only play when they pass, they cannot sit down and play for an extended period of time. Players are trusted not to cheat, to steal any money in the game or look at anything they shouldn't. Can you complete a whole game in a month?

SAY THE WORD

You will need: slips of paper; pens

Write people's names on slips of paper (lots of times, so each person has lots slips of paper with their name on) and fold them up. Encourage everyone to think of four or five words and write each one on a different slip of paper. These words shouldn't be ones that come up in everyday conversation: flamingo, poncho, libretto, calypso (they don't all have to end in 'o'...).

Each player should pick a person and pick a word. Over the coming weeks, they have to make that person say that word, without them realising what you're trying to get them to do. Once they are successful, they should take another name and word. The person with the most words said by others at the end of November is the winner.

You could play this if your group is meeting over Zoom too, with a leader picking names and words and messaging them to each player.

CRESS GROWING CONTEST

You will need: clean yogurt pots; marker pens; cotton wool or biodegradable alternative; cress seeds; water

Give each person a yogurt pot and some pens, and ask them to personalise the pot, so that everyone knows whose is whose. Put some cotton wool (or biodegradable alternative) at the bottom of the pot and sprinkle with cress seeds. Water the seeds and then challenge each player to choose a place to put their pot where they think they can grow the best. Keep checking back each day to see whose cress is growing most luxuriantly!

You could do this with young people in different households by delivering identical kits to each person. On Zoom (or equivalent), all plant your seeds at the same time and then have a progress report each time you meet together.

IMMEDIATE DISCO

You will need: disco song and the means to play it

Explain the rules of this game to your household or online group. Say that at any time during November (either at home or during group meet-ups) you'll play your chosen disco track. The last person to start dancing gets a point. The player with the fewest points wins.

Choose a classic disco track as your dance trigger, such as 'Boogie wonderland' or 'Disco inferno'. You could try to catch people out by playing the wrong track occasionally, giving a point to everyone who starts dancing when they shouldn't.

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