

Purpose

Teaching responsibility is an important part of character building. Children who learn to do the right thing—even when no one is watching—gain self-confidence, learn self-control, and have fewer problems in life. They are more likely to use good judgment, resist peer pressure, and behave decently even when tempted to do otherwise.

This game teaches children:

- What it means to be responsible
- How to distinguish between responsible and irresponsible behavior
- How to make good decisions

The goal is to help children develop the habit of behaving responsibly.

Contents

45 Decision Cards	1 Secret Envelope
9 <i>Who?</i> Cards	1 Poster
9 <i>What?</i> Cards	1 Game Board
9 <i>Where?</i> Cards	25 Red Chips
4 Sneaker Tokens	50 Black Chips

Ages

7 to 12 years

Number of Players

2 to 4 players and a leader who guides the process

Object of the Game

Play revolves primarily around three sets of cards:

1. *Who?* Cards, representing characters (e.g., “Rosa”)
2. *What?* Cards, representing responsible acts (e.g., “picks up litter”)
3. *Where?* Cards, representing locations (e.g., “the classroom”)

As in the classic detective game *Clue*, one card of each type is placed in a Secret Envelope. Then players are dealt the remaining *Who?* *What?* and *Where?* Cards. Working together, they try to discover which three cards are in the Secret Envelope. Their goal is to find out *who* commits a responsible act, *what* that act is, and *where* it takes place. (For example, the cards in the Secret Envelope may indicate that “Rosa” “picks up litter” in “the classroom.”) Along the way, players also answer questions posed on Decision Cards. Although these Decision Cards do not help players deduce the contents of the Secret Envelope, they do require them to think about responsibility and evaluate behavioral choices. Through the Decision Cards, children learn as they play.

Introducing the Game

Hang up the poster that’s included with the game. Ask the children what it means to “be responsible.” Let them offer examples of responsible behavior. Help them understand that acting responsibly means more than doing your homework or finishing your chores. For example, it also means being kind rather than cruel, honest rather than deceitful, and careful rather than reckless. It means doing what’s right even when others are urging you not to.

Remind players that in any given situation it’s not always clear what the responsible choice is. Sometimes actions that are well intentioned are not necessarily responsible. And sometimes there may be more than one choice that’s responsible. (Several of the Decision Cards in this game involve this sort of ambiguity.) Point out the poster on the wall and call attention to the five questions that kids should ask themselves when they’re making behavioral choices.

When your discussion is finished, explain the object of the game (above) and begin play.

How to Play

1. Place the Secret Envelope and the deck of Decision Cards on the game board. Make sure the Decision Cards are face down.
2. Give each player a Sneaker Token.
3. Sort the remaining cards into three groups (*Who?* *What?* and *Where?*). Shuffle each group separately and place the cards face down in three piles.
4. Take the top card from each of the three decks (*Who?* *What?* and *Where?*). Make sure players can’t see which cards you’ve pulled. Place these three cards in the Secret Envelope.
5. Collect the remaining *Who?* *What?* and *Where?* Cards and deal them to the players. Ask them to sort their cards into three groups (*Who?* *What?* and *Where?*) and place each group face down in front of them.
6. Tell players that they will begin each turn by drawing a Decision Card.
7. Designate a player to go first. Ask that player to draw a Decision Card and respond to the question posed. Give the group a chance to discuss the answer. Then place the Decision Card in a discard pile.
8. Now begin the process of discovering what’s in the Secret Envelope. Tell players that they are going to solve the *Who?* question first, then the *What?* question, and finally the *Where?* question.
9. Tell the first player:
 - Pick up your *Who?* Cards and see which characters you have.
 - Under *Who?* on the game board, place your Sneaker Token *on one of the characters you don’t have*.
 - Ask the other players to check their *Who?* Cards and see if anyone has that character.

If someone has the character in question, the original player places a *black* chip on the circle next to that character on the game board and removes his Sneaker Token. (The character card is placed in the discard pile.) If nobody has the character, it must be in the Secret Envelope. In that case, the player places a *red* chip on the circle next to that character, and the *Who?* question is now solved.

For example:

- The player places his Sneaker Token on “Rosa” on the board game.
- Then he asks, “Does anyone have Rosa?”
- If someone says, “Yes,” he puts a black chip on the circle next to “Rosa” on the game board and removes his Sneaker Token. (The player holding “Rosa” puts the card in the discard pile.)
- If everyone says, “No,” the player puts a red chip on the circle next to “Rosa” on the game board.

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Usually, the Who? question is not solved on the first turn. So the next player takes her turn, following the same process in trying to discover "who" is responsible. She draws a Decision Card and responds to it. Then she places her Sneaker Token on one of the characters on the game board (one that is *not* among her cards), asks if anyone has that character, and places the appropriate chip next to that character on the game board. This continues on each turn until the Who? question is solved. When it is, players can discard any remaining Who? Cards in their hands.

10. Now ask the group to solve the What? question. The player whose turn is next responds to a Decision Card, then checks his What? Cards, and places his Sneaker Token on an act listed on the game board but not in his hand. Play proceeds in the manner described above until players have identified a responsible act. When that happens, players move on to answer the Where? question.

This process continues until players have placed a red chip under each column on the game board—Who? What? and Where?—thereby discovering the three cards that should be in the Secret Envelope.

11. Instruct players to open the Secret Envelope and find out if their deductions are correct.

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Who's Responsible?

The game that teaches kids
to do the right thing . . .
even when nobody's looking

by Max Nass, LMHC, and Marcia Nass, MS

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