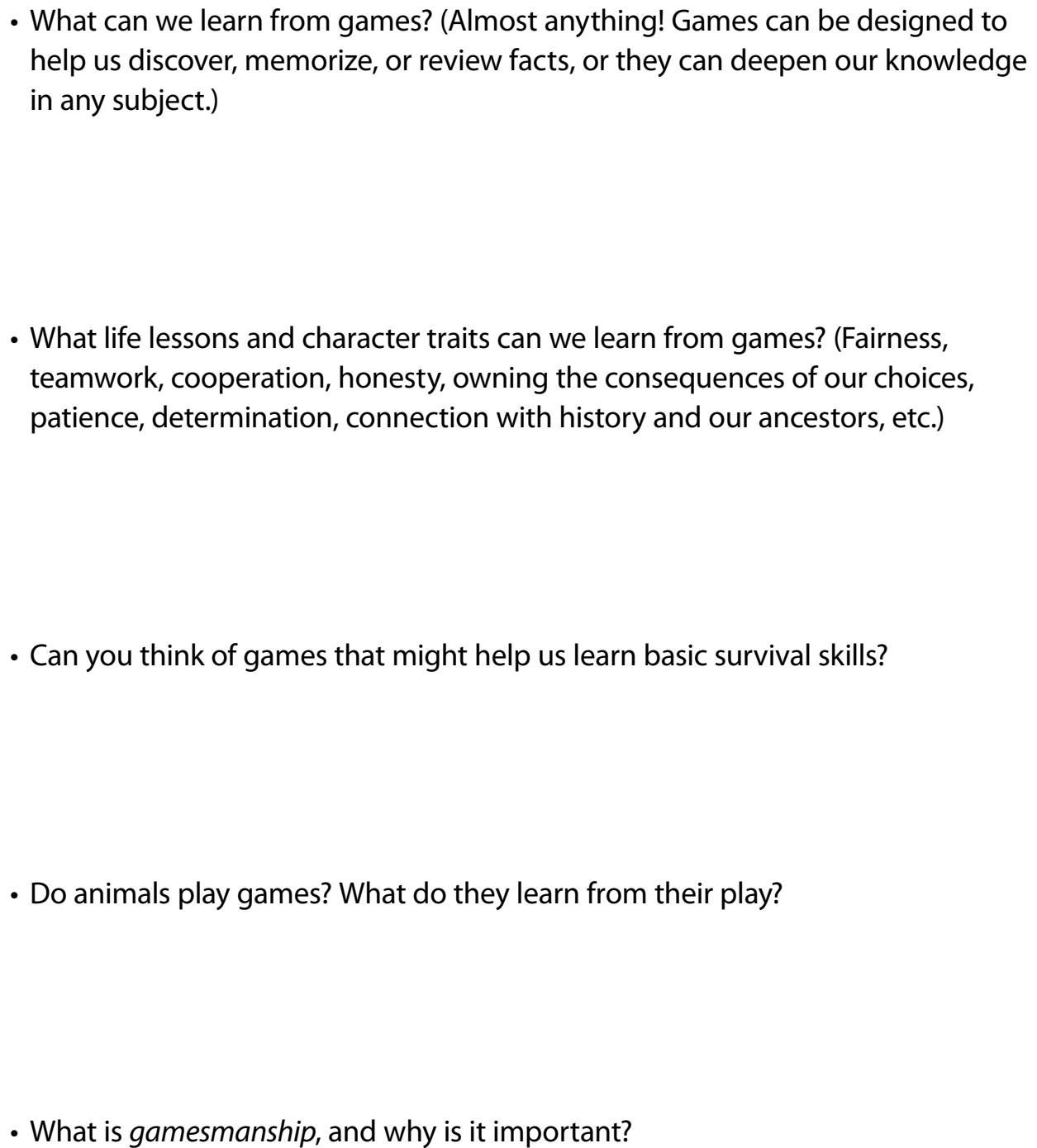


Fun and Games Discussion Guide

Use or adapt these prompts to explore the roles games play in our lives. Supplement discussion with booktalks about *Native American Games and Stories*, *How Animals Play*, or other titles that explain the cultural use of games to teach important life skills and lessons. Use the sections on gamesmanship in *Great Games!* to expand on the concept.

- Many people play games for fun and relaxation. What are your favorite non-sport games?
- What are some of the different kinds of games we play? What are some categories that we could put games into? (Card, board, sidewalk, playground, imagination, video or computer, trivia, arcade, car or travel, word puzzles, brain teasers, TV game shows, etc.)
- What do we gain from playing games, besides fun and relaxation?
- What skills can we learn from games? (Social skills, coordination, quick thinking, math computation, spelling, etc.)

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- What can we learn from games? (Almost anything! Games can be designed to help us discover, memorize, or review facts, or they can deepen our knowledge in any subject.)
 - What life lessons and character traits can we learn from games? (Fairness, teamwork, cooperation, honesty, owning the consequences of our choices, patience, determination, connection with history and our ancestors, etc.)
 - Can you think of games that might help us learn basic survival skills?
 - Do animals play games? What do they learn from their play?
 - What is *gamesmanship*, and why is it important?

Games Book Discussion Guide

Part 1

Respond to these prompts on a separate paper:

- Book Title and Author
- Setting: where and when the story takes place
- Main Characters: the names of the most important characters and a one-sentence description of each
- Plot: a one-paragraph summary of what happens in the book
- Tone: overall feeling of the book (funny, scary, dramatic, serious, exciting, ...)
- Genre: fantasy, mystery, realistic fiction, historical fiction, science fiction, or a combination?
- Your Evaluation: Rate this book from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Would you recommend it to a friend? Why or why not?

Part 2

Compare thoughts and exchange ideas in group discussion with classmates who read the same book. Choose a group secretary to take notes, and work together to write a one-page summary of the book that shares important information about setting, plot, characters, tone, and the nature and outcome of the game. Compare and discuss your ratings and evaluations.

Discussion prompts:

- What kind of game does this story feature?
- What are the stakes—what do the players stand to win or lose?
- Who are the main character's friends/teammates and foes/opponents in the game?
- What skills or character traits does the main character bring to the game? What about his or her teammates?
- If there is a specific foe or opponent, describe his or her character. How does he or she interact with the main character?
- Is any character in danger during the game? Explain.
- What is the outcome of the game? What is won or lost?
- What does the main character learn by playing the game?

Part 3

Gather with your class. Each group secretary will read the group's summary to introduce the group's book and share the group's opinions of it. Your teacher will lead a discussion, using prompts from your guide to compare and contrast the books. You'll end by voting, by show of hands, for the book that seems most interesting to you and rating the books in order of class preference.