

# WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY?

Improv games are a great tool for informal education, as they don't require a lot of preparation and can be played almost anywhere! Here's a series of Israel-themed games you can play with participants—some relate to food, all are guaranteed to be fun.

Each of these games can be played in about 15 minutes, making them ideal for a quick activity. Feel free to mix it up and challenge participants with multiple rounds—or a few different games.

## GAME 1: PARTY QUIRKS

Ask for a really brave volunteer—who will be called the 'host of the party'—and send them far enough away or in another room so that the volunteer can't hear what's going on in the space where the game is being played.

Then ask for six volunteers to come stand up front. Each of these volunteers will be 'guests' at the party that the 'host' is throwing. The catch? Each volunteer has to be a famous person or inanimate object from Israel's history. Get ideas from the audience, and use the [Israel Resource Cards](#) for inspiration.

Once everyone has their identities picked out, the host can come back in and mock 'set-up' his/her party. As each new guest enters, the 'host' needs to try to figure out who the 'guest' is; don't let the party get too crowded—space out the arrivals so the 'host' has some time to guess the identity of each guest based on their behavior. The rest of the audience can offer hints.

## GAME 2: ISRAELI RESTAURANT

Tell participants that it is time to visit an Israeli restaurant and sample the best of Israeli cuisine. Participants get a chance to role-play patrons and waiters as they learn about Israeli food, and everyone has a lot of fun in the process!

If you have the time and/or inclination to create a restaurant setting, you can set a table for two diners, decorate a space with Israeli posters and play Israeli music in the background. Of course, participants will probably have just as much fun if they



### Tip

*This program can have even more impact if you connect it to Jewish values that your participants may be exploring elsewhere. Here are some that may work well: **Courage, Joy, Creativity, Curiosity, Decency & Social Intelligence, Calm & Composure.***



sit on benches or on the ground. Either way, two volunteers should sit facing each other, and a third volunteer should be their waiter.

This restaurant does not have menus. The waiter recites the specials of the day verbally, and they're all Israeli delicacies. The diners can ask questions about the options, and then they place their order.

A minute later, the waiter returns with their food, and the fun begins! After receiving (imaginary) plates of food, the diners must describe the food they're mock-eating in great detail. Remember—it's all Israeli food, so it might be a challenge for your participants to describe hummus, burekas, shakshuka, couscous, Israeli salad, falafel, rugelach, and other Middle Eastern foods in detail.

Members of the audience are encouraged to shout out suggestions about how to describe the foods, add their own interpretations of the foods on the table, and ask questions of the diners and the waiter.

### GAME 3: NEWS TEAM

Ask for four volunteers to stand in front of the group. They will be members of the news team, based at the foot of Har Herzl in front of a huge celebration honoring Israel's Independence Day.

Identify two anchors (who will stand in the middle), one weather person (who will stand to one side of the anchors), and one sports reporter (who will stand on the other side).

Inform the 'audience' that each of these news team members has a flaw. Go one by one to establish (through suggestions from the audience) what those flaws are. (Examples: this person is allergic to what? this person thinks he/she is which inanimate object? this person thinks this is not a news show, but what kind of tv show?, etc.) Once each news team member has been given a flaw, they should also receive a notecard with one fact. The news team members have to incorporate the info on their cards along with showcasing their flaws.

Explain out loud that the anchors will begin and end the broadcast and at certain points pass the broadcast over to the weather and sports person, respectively, before signing off for the end of the broadcast. The leader should then say "3, 2, 1, Action!" and let the news team go!

### GAME 4: QUOTE BUBBLES

Ask for two volunteers to stand in the middle of the room facing each other and engage in a conversation in a nonsense language that they make up. Ask



#### Tip

*The [Israel Resource Cards](#) can be a helpful guide to come up with some facts. Ask your Israeli friends for suggestions, or use a few of these:*

- > **News fact:** Israel is the only country in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees.
- > **News fact:** Voicemail technology was developed in Israel.
- > **Sports fact:** In 2014, Israel's Maccabi basketball team won the European championships for the sixth time.
- > **Weather fact:** When it gets very, very hot in Israel, people sometimes call it "a hamsin." Hamsin is the Arabic word for "50" and it refers to the 50 degrees of Pentecost for Egyptian Christians, similar to Judaism's 50 days of the omer. It is during these 50 days in Egypt each spring that southern winds blow sandy, desert air making it very hot indeed!

for two more volunteers to stand behind each person to act as ‘translator.’ Every time Person A speaks, the translator translates what Person A was really saying. Then the same for Person B.

After assigning roles and explaining the game, ask the audience to suggest scenarios—make sure they are Israel-related by asking for an Israel-based location and a scene/conversation that could take place there. To keep things exciting and moving, swap out the roles as often as you want, and take new location and scenario suggestions from the audience.

### GAME 5: PRESS CONFERENCE

Ask for a volunteer to ‘stand behind a podium.’ The volunteer is at a press conference and must deduce his/her own identity and the event being discussed from the questions posed by the audience/reporters. The volunteer must try to answer the questions appropriately and accurately.

The subject of the press conference is a known figure making an announcement about a big event in modern Israeli history. Options include: 1979 Peace Treaty with Egypt, Omri Casspi becoming first Israeli to join an NBA team, Israel winning its first Olympic gold medal, Ilan Ramon entering space as Israel's first astronaut, or any other subject you might choose from the [Israel Resource Cards](#). Write questions on note cards in advance and hand them to the audience members when the round begins.

Have the volunteer try to guess who s/he is as s/he goes along with answering the questions being posed by the audience.



#### Tip

*A great way to bring Israel to life here is to encourage participants to choose locations based on stories they've heard from Israelis, or elsewhere.*