



Games Guide

**10 Great Games to Help Kids
Learn About Their Strengths**

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All Our Strengths





These fun games will help kids and families learn to recognize the strengths* in themselves and others. The games can all be played using a simple deck of strengths cards that anyone can make using index cards and markers, along with a few other materials that are readily available at school or at home.

Making Your Strengths Cards

Use index cards that have the name of the strength printed on one side, and a simple definition of that same strength, without the name, printed on the other side. Click here:

www.allourstrengths.com/resources for a kid-friendly list of the 24 VIA Character Strengths along with their definitions. And remember, if it's playful and fun, the learning will come! So relax and enjoy helping kids "play with their strengths!"

Note: Although many of these games focus on learning to recognize the names and definitions of the strengths, at any time the game leader can ask additional questions to encourage deeper awareness and self-reflection. Consider making some extra bonus question cards to use with any of the games. For example, after naming a strength, participants can be asked questions such as:

- ◆ Name someone you know who seems to have this strength. How do they show it?
- ◆ What are some ways that you demonstrate this strength?
- ◆ Do you think this is one of your signature strengths? Why or why not?
- ◆ Name a book or movie character who demonstrates this strength and tell us how they use it.
- ◆ Do any of your heroes show this strength? How?
- ◆ How can this strength be used to help others?
- ◆ What would be good about having this strength?
- ◆ What would the world (or our school, or our community, etc.) be like if this strength did not exist or if not enough people used this strength?

**Although these games can be used with any list of strengths or strengths assessment tool, I especially recommend their use with the VIA Character Strengths survey. The VIA Survey is a free, scientifically-validated self-assessment tool that helps individuals determine their top signature strengths out of a list of 24 character strengths that are valued in almost every culture, including qualities such as: love, forgiveness, leadership, humor, bravery, curiosity, and creativity. There are youth and adult versions of the VIA Survey in multiple languages making it an excellent choice for working with schools and families, in addition to organizations and workplaces.*

www.viacharacter.org



All Our Strengths

Game Instructions

1. Strengths Ah-Um Game

Players take turns drawing a strengths cards from the deck without letting anyone else see what they have drawn. After reading the definition of the strength to themselves, they have to tell the group anything they can think of about the strength for 1 minute without using the phrases "Ah, Um, Like, or You Know." The time can also be shortened to 30 or 45 seconds depending upon the size of your group and the maturity and age of your players.

2. Strengths and Consequences

Write down lots of fun or silly simple actions on separate slips of paper. Examples of simple actions include: Moo like a cow, Jump five times, Do the Funky Chicken, Sing Happy Birthday, Do two sit-ups, Make a monkey face, Do ten jumping jacks, Touch your toes, Sing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Do seven push-ups, Act like a horse, Give your neighbor a high-five, and "Do the Hokey-Pokey and turn yourself around." Put the slips of paper in a large envelope. When it is a player's turn, they must draw an action out of the envelope. The game leader will then read one Strengths Card definition to the player. If they name the strength correctly, everyone in the group has to do the action that the player has drawn from the envelope.

3. Strengths Charades

Players take turns drawing a strengths card from the deck and acting it out. The other players try to guess which strength is being acted out. Since there are only 24 terms from which to guess, guesses are limited to 3 chances to keep teams from just calling out the entire list of strengths each time. If no one makes a correct guess, the actor(s) can tell which strength they were acting out and explain what they were doing to represent that strength.

4. Strengths Dancing!

Each player takes a turn randomly picking a strengths card from the deck and making up a dance move for that strength that everyone else has to follow. The rest of the group should get 3 chances to guess the strength that the dance move represents before the answer is revealed. To add a level of challenge, each player's dance move can be added to the previous dance moves and everyone can try to do them all together. The game leader can call out the names of all the strengths that have been drawn, and the players can try to switch to that dance move when they hear it called out.

5. Strengths In a Minute

The timer is set for one minute and the player tries to see how many strengths they can guess correctly as the definitions from the strengths cards are read out to them. The person reading the cards can also provide other descriptions and hints as long as they don't use the name of the strength or offer any spelling hints. The person doing the guessing can also say "pass" if they get stuck on a particular description and the caller will move on to the next card. Depending upon how many timers are available, the group can be divided into many pairs that play the game simultaneously, or 1 pair can play at a time while the group watches.



All Our Strengths

6. Strengths Password

Divide group into equal teams of at least 3 players. Each team selects one member to be "It." The rest of the team then draws a strength card from the envelope without letting the other team or their "It" person see what has been drawn. The person who is "It" has to guess which strength card has been drawn based only on one or two word clues from the team. The team cannot use any of the actual words in the name of the strength as clues. The "It" person only gets to guess one time per clue. If the "It" person guesses incorrectly, they cannot guess again until the team provides another one-word clue. The team should try to use as few clues as possible to get the "It" person to name the correct strength. When the correct strength is guessed, the team should shout "Password!" The team that gets their "It" person to guess the correct strength first wins the round. Several rounds can be played until the groups run out of strengths cards...or time...or until everyone gets tired.

7. Strengths Pictionary

Each player takes a turn randomly picking a strengths card from the deck and then drawing a picture of the strength for the rest of the group to guess. No letters or references to spelling can be used. Since there are only 24 terms from which to guess, guesses are limited to 5 chances. This keeps teams from just calling out the entire list of strengths each time.

8. Strengths Sparkle

This is a collaborative spelling game that encourages good listening, strengths knowledge...and celebration! Players stand in a circle. The game leader will draw a strengths card out of the envelope and read out the strength and its definition. The first player repeats the name of the strength. The second player then starts off the spelling of the strength by saying the first letter. Moving around the circle, each player says the next letter in the term until the strength has been completely spelled. The next person in line will then repeat the strength that the group has tried to spell and the next person in line has to say "Sparkle!", do some type of funny celebration dance or movement and then sit down. If the word has been spelled correctly by the group, the game leader will let them know and a new round with a new strengths term will begin. If the word has been misspelled, the group will need to either try to spell the word again...or if someone who is still standing can correctly describe or define the strength, the group can move on to a new strengths term. The person who provides the correct definition of the strength (to the game leader's satisfaction) can also say "Sparkle!" and sit down. The game continues until everyone has had a chance to "sparkle" and sit down...or until you run out of time.

9. Strengths Volleyball

Divide the group into two equally numbered teams. Separate the room into two equal sides using masking tape with one team on each side of the tape. Explain the rules as follows: The teams must hit the balloon back and forth to each other without crossing the masking tape and without letting the balloon touch the floor. If the balloon lands on the floor, the team whose side it is on will have a Strengths card definition read out to them and they must name the correct strength. If the team gets the correct answer, they get a point. If the team gives the incorrect answer, the other team wins a point. There cannot be any "slams" on the balloon or rough play. The team that reaches five points first wins the game.



All Our Strengths

10. That Sounds Like Me!

Use masking tape to make a long line on the floor representing a scale of 1 to 10. Use a piece of paper or poster board to label one end of the masking tape as "1 - Not Usually." Use another piece of paper or poster board to label the other end of the masking tape as "10 - Usually." Finally, use a third piece of paper or poster board to mark the exact center of the masking tape as "5 - Sometimes." The game leader will pick one strengths card at a time and read the definition out loud. Then the game leader will ask "Does this strength like you: Usually, Sometimes, or Not Usually?" Players will move around and place themselves along the masking tape line according to how much they think the strengths card that has just been read aloud sounds like them. The game leader might also ask particular players to explain why they chose their particular spot along the tape line. In this game, it is fine for several players to place themselves in the same spot along the line.

11. What Strength Am I?*

Tape a strengths card to the back of each player. Each person must then walk around and ask the other players questions to find out which strength is taped to their back. They can only ask one question per person. They cannot ask any questions related to spelling the strengths or the number of words in the strengths. Questions can only be about how the strength is used. You get to sit down once you have correctly guessed your strength.

**Wait a minute! Some of you might have noticed that this is actually the 11th game on a list entitled "10 Great Games to Help Kids Learn about Strengths." There's a good reason for this and it's not that I can't count! Rather I want to remind you that when we are using our strengths, we are naturally energized and inspired to do more than just the minimum and to go that extra mile. This is one of the main reasons it is so important to help our kids start learning about their personal strengths as early as possible. Through understanding strengths, they can learn how to motivate and inspire themselves and others. So let's get started. Go play with your strengths!*



All Our Strengths

About All Our Strengths

The mission of All Our Strengths is to help communities become places where people know and grow the strengths within themselves and each other. It is our vision to help create a world where every person's strengths are recognized, valued, and encouraged.

We are committed to:

- ◆ Bringing strengths awareness, coaching, and resources to communities;
- ◆ Inspiring and developing Community Strengths Champions™;
- ◆ Helping schools, communities, and organizations understand why encouraging strengths is essential for their success and well-being;
- ◆ Showing people how to use their strengths for their own well-being and to contribute to the common good;
- ◆ Helping foster positive strength-based cultures which emphasize well-being, engagement, collaboration, civic responsibility, empathy, and respect for diversity.

About Sonya Tinsley-Hook



I am a coach with a passion for helping people "know, grow, and show" their own strengths. My mission is teaching people how to become strengths champions in their own communities, families, schools, and organizations. I believe each person's strengths should be nurtured and cultivated because the world needs all our strengths.

In addition to coaching, Sonya's varied professional experiences have included directing an inner-city youth program, community organizing, and being a performing singer-songwriter. She currently works in human resources and talent delivery within a global professional services organization.

Sonya is an active and committed community volunteer and is featured in Paul Loeb's classic books on citizenship and civic engagement, *The Soul of a Citizen* and *The Impossible Will Take a Little While*. She is passionate about the way engaged parent and community groups can create and support positive change within our public schools and is just finishing a two-year term as the PTA Co-President at her daughter's elementary school. Under Sonya's leadership, her PTA local unit received several honors including a Model PTA Award from Georgia PTA and was named a 2016-18 National PTA School of Excellence.

Sonya has a B.A. in English and a Master's degree in Psychology and Leadership Coaching. She is passionate about taking strengths coaching to people who would not ordinarily have access to it, so she loves to work with nonprofit organizations, congregations, schools, and community groups.

Sonya lives in Decatur with her daughter, Sophia Joi, and her husband Jeep Hook, a musician, songwriter, and producer. She is available for workshops, coaching, and speaking engagements to help people discover their own strengths and learn how to recognize and encourage strengths in others.

Sonya's signature VIA character strengths are: **Forgiveness, Curiosity, Humor, Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence, Love, Fairness, Love of Learning, and Perspective.**



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