

# VERBAL GERBIL

A game by Joseph Rhea | Published by Moveable Feast Games

3+

Players

10-15

Time

8+

Age



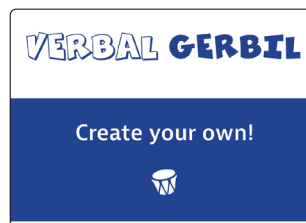
## COMPONENTS

Also needed to play:

1. A 30-second timer
2. A way to keep score



90 Phrase Cards



10  
Create Your Own Cards

## OVERVIEW

Decide how many rounds you want to play (a round means each player takes a turn as the Verbal Gerbil).

When you're the Verbal Gerbil, you have 30 seconds to give clues to get other players to guess one of the phrases on your cards. If someone guesses it, you give them that card, draw another, and keep going.

Once the time is up, **you and they** score points for every correctly guessed phrase: each phrase is worth either 1 point (1 drum) or 2 points (2 drums). Then the next player to the left is the Verbal Gerbil.

Once your rounds are done, the player with the most points wins!

## SETUP

Find a 30-second timer and a means to keep score (not included).

Shuffle all game cards (including expansions) into a single deck. Deal each player two (2) cards, and place the deck in easy reach of all players if possible.

Decide how many rounds you want to play, and choose a player to be the first Verbal Gerbil. The game will run until all players have had a turn being Verbal Gerbil (or two turns if you play two rounds, etc.).

The Verbal Gerbil looks at the cards in their hand and chooses their first phrase. When they are ready, the timer is started and their round begins.

## NOTE FROM THE DESIGNER:

Every phrase in this game consists of two rhyming **trochees**. A trochee (rhymes with "smoky") is a two-syllable word with the accent on the first syllable.

I learned that, and got the seed of this game idea, from [this XKCD comic](#).



# PLAYING A ROUND

When I am the Verbal Gerbil, I have 30 seconds to give verbal and nonverbal clues (gestures/pointing) to get other players to guess as many phrases as possible from my cards. I may switch to a different phrase or the other card in my hand if I get stuck, but may not discard a card, unless I am holding two Create Your Own! cards.

When working with a phrase, I should hold up my card so other players can see the back (especially if I'm playing with expansions).

Guessing players may blurt out phrases whenever they like, but must say the right words in the right order to count.



## Rules for clues:

1. Generally, you may use any verbal or nonverbal clues you like, with the special notes and exceptions below.
2. You may use synonyms (like "cat" for "kitty").
3. You can give clues for either word first, as long as people guess the phrase correctly.
4. You may not use part of a word, or a word that contains that word (so no saying "farm," "farms," "farming," "charming," etc. in the example above).
5. You may not give "rhymes with" or "sounds like" clues.

As soon as a player guesses my phrase, I hand them that card and draw one to replace it.

## Scoring and Moving On

When my turn is done, we tally the score for the round. Every correctly guessed phrase scores for both the Verbal Gerbil and the player who guessed the phrase. So if someone guessed "farmer charmer," both they and the Verbal Gerbil would score two points (for the two drums).

Each "Create your own!" card is worth one point.

After my round is scored, the player to my left becomes Verbal Gerbil. They look at their cards, choose a phrase, and when they are ready, their turn begins!

# GAME END

The game ends when the predetermined number of rounds is finished. If one player has most points, they win!

If two or more players tie, they take turns drawing a card and doing "one-shot clues" (they can say only one clue, like "someone who impresses a shepherd" for "farmer charmer") to get other players to guess a phrase. As soon as one player outscores the others in a round of this, they win!



This is the end of the standard rules for Verbal Gerbil. The next page has some alternate ways to play if you want to mix up your game.

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# ALTERNATE RULES: ONE-SHOT WONDER

For an extra challenge, play the same way, except the Verbal Gerbil can only give one phrase as a clue. So "Farmer charmer" might be "someone who woos a vegetable grower."

Other players can make as many guesses as they want, but if they get stuck, the Verbal Gerbil has to pick a different phrase from their cards.

## TEAM VERSION

If you want to play in teams, divide into teams of at least two people. (You can have as many teams as you like) Remove the Create Your Own! cards, then deal each player two cards as usual.

Each player will still have a chance to be the Verbal Gerbil; but only their teammates will be able to guess on their turn.

You can play either the regular version or the one-shot wonder version, with a 30-second timer.

In terms of scoring, your team only scores each phrase once - so if you score a 1-point phrase, you get 1 point.

## EXPANSIONS!

We have five sets of expansions currently available on Drive Thru Cards! Each one adds 20 cards with riddles based on a theme:

- Creature Feature: Animals
- Moody Foodie: Food
- Richer Pitcher: Sports
- Nerdy Birdie: Sci-fi / Fantasy
- Summer Drummer: Music

