

BY THIS • Rules

Source: <https://tablepress.space/by-this/rules/> · Rebuilds with the site.

BY THIS

Same things. New key. 2–4 players · 25 min · ages 8+ · 40 things + 8 Keys + 4 specials + 2 table cards (54)

> This game is about the same things living in many true orders, felt as the click of a drawer that is no longer the drawer, decided by whether you close the shelf now or spend a rare key to file it a new way.

A cabinet of forty things. Each one is true in four orders at once: ABC, size, weight, and age. You share one shelf. File what still fits. Or slam a new key and say BY THIS.

What is in the box

- 2 table cards — leave them out
- 40 thing cards. Kinds: Beast ○, Stone □, Made △, Food ◇. Each thing has four numbers, 1–10: ABC, Size, Weight, Age
- 8 Key cards (the four scales, each way)
- 4 special cards (By This, Dump the Shelf, Lock the Key, Same Number)

No dice. No app. No extra tokens. Print from <https://tablepress.space/by-this/print.html>

How to start

Put the 2 table cards out. Mix the 8 Keys. Flip 1 as the Key in play (set it above the empty shelf). Flip 2 as the face-up Keys you may take. The rest of the Keys sit face-down.

Mix the 40 things with the 4 specials. Give 5 each (3 people) or 4 each (4 people). Put 3 face-up as the Floor.

Youngest starts. Put the Key where everyone can see its word. Read only that word.

How you win

After 6 shelves have closed (3 people; 8 closes for 4 people), most points wins. If there is a tie, most same-number bonuses, then the longer single shelf.

A turn

Draw until you have a full hand (6 cards with 2 people, 5 with 3, 4 with 4). Then do exactly one: place a thing, or play a special.

If the shelf now has 4 or more things, you may close it.

Place

Add one thing from your hand or from the Floor to either end of the shelf, so the shelf stays sorted left-to-right on the Key in play.

- Empty shelf: any thing may start it. Specials cannot start it.
- Low → high Keys (A to Z, Small to Large, Light to Heavy, Old to New): the left end must be the same or smaller than the leftmost number; the right end must be the same or bigger than the rightmost number.
- High → low Keys: flip those rules.
- The same number is legal. Same numbers sit together.

If you cannot place and have no special you can play, put one thing from your hand onto the Floor.

If your hand is empty and you cannot place from the Floor, pass.

Specials

Play from your hand.

By This — Take a new Key from the two face-up Keys. Old Key goes under the Key pile. Flip a new face-up

Key. Slide, then place.

Dump the Shelf — Every shelf card goes to the Floor. The Key stays. Then place onto the empty shelf.

Lock the Key — This Key cannot be changed until the shelf closes. Dump the Shelf still works. Then place.

Same Number — Place a thing next to a matching number anywhere on the shelf, not only an end. If no match is showing, you cannot play this card.

Slide

After a new Key, read the shelf left to right. Keep cards until one is out of order with the card on its left. That card and every card to its right fall to the Floor. A single card is always legal.

Close

The shelf has 4 or more things (3 or more with 2 people). You just placed or played a special. You may close:

- Score how long it is
- Plus 1 for every extra card in a same-number pile (three 1s = +2)

Those things go out of the game. The Floor stays. The next person starts the new empty shelf. If Lock the Key was on, it ends.

Stuck shelf

If a whole round goes by with nobody placing or playing a special, close the shelf as it is (score the length, even if it is short) and go on. The game does not freeze.

If the pile is empty and hands are empty before the last close, close whatever is on the shelf (even short) and stop.

Sample turn

Key: Small → Large. Floor: Stamp (Size 2), Brick (6), Crow (7).

Shelf, left to right: Ant (1) · Rice (1) · Sand (1).

Ana places Needle (2) on the right. Shelf is four: 1, 1, 1, 2. Three 1s. She could close for $4 + 2 = 6$. She does not.

Bo plays By This, takes A to Z. Slide on ABC: Ant, Rice, Sand, Needle → A, R, S, N. Sand to Needle (S then N) breaks. Needle falls. Shelf left: Ant (ABC 1) · Rice (8) · Sand (9). Bo places Apple (ABC 1) on the left of Ant — same number is legal. Coffee (ABC 2) would be illegal on either end. The cabinet is no longer about size.

Stuck? Read this

Only the person whose turn it is may close, and only after they placed or played a special.

Empty pile. Skip drawing. Play on.

Full hand. 2 people: 6. 3 people: 5. 4 people: 4. Draw until you reach that count; never past it.

Empty Floor. Place from your hand.

Empty shelf. Any thing starts it.

Empty hand, cannot place from Floor. Pass.

Hand is only specials you cannot play. Put one special out of the game. Do not draw.

Does Beast / Stone / Made / Food change the order? No. Only the Key's word counts.

Lock the Key vs By This. Lock wins until that shelf closes. Dump the Shelf does not change the Key, so it is still legal.

Same Number on an empty shelf. No. There is no match.

Ice looks old. Read the line: an ice cube. The numbers follow the thing on the card, not ice in a glacier.

2 people

Give 6. Floor 3. Close at 3 or more. Still 6 closes. Two face-up Keys.

Young table (8–9 years)

First close: no By This until someone has closed once. An adult may read the table cards out loud once. Cover the three numbers you are not using with a thumb.

So everyone can play

- Kinds have a word and a mark. Do not teach them by color.
- The four numbers always print in the same order: ABC, Size, Weight, Age. Cover the other three with a thumb.
- Keys say the words and the arrow.
- Typical hand is 4–6 cards. The shelf lives on the table.
- Names are common nouns (ant, loaf, ice cube).