

LONG BEFORE • Rules

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LONG BEFORE

No years. 2–4 players · 25 min · ages 8+ · 52 events + 3 table cards (55) · a Judge with the Key page · two coins each to Ask.

> This game is about claiming the true order of a private history before anyone else dares, felt as the itch to shout while a neighbor's stare might still save you, decided by whether you spend a turn asking which came first — and leaking it — or lock the line and say the name.

History Bored Games. The shout is the title. Faces have no dates.

What is in the box

- 3 table cards — leave them out
- 52 event cards. Kinds: Rock ○, Hand □, Crown △, Mouth ◇. A word and a mark, not a year.
- 1 Judge Key page — years live only here
- Optional: two coins each (Asks)

How to start

Put the 3 table cards out. Give the Judge the Key. Mix the other 52. Give 8 each. Put 4 face-up as Rumors. Each person takes 2 Ask coins.

Each person makes a line in front of them, face-up, left = earliest, right = latest. You may move your own cards at any time.

Youngest starts. The Judge holds the Key and does not play. At a table of four with no extra adult, one person hosts the Key and sits out (three people play). With two people, each looks up their own shout on the Key — no separate Judge.

How you win

Be first to shout LONG BEFORE with a line that is true left to right. If nobody is all true, the longest true start from the left wins.

A turn

Fix your line. Then do exactly one: swap a rumor, ask, or shout.

Swap — trade one card from your line with one Rumor. Put a new Rumor out from the pile right away.

Ask — spend a coin. Name two cards on the table. At least one is not in your line. The Judge points to which happened first. Everyone hears. No years. Two asks each round.

Shout — say LONG BEFORE. Play stops. The Judge checks your line left to right.

- All true: you win.
- Not all true: count how many cards are true from the left, then stop at the first mistake. You sit. That true start stays known. You may look up later asks so the Judge can keep hosting. Your true start can still win if nobody else is perfect.

When it ends

A perfect shout ends the round. If everyone has shouted and nobody was perfect, longest true start wins. If two people match, the earlier shout wins.

If the pile is empty and a whole round is only swaps, the Judge says lock: everyone freezes; count true starts; longest wins.

Stuck? Read this

I have no coins and there are no Rumors. You must shout.

I have no coins but there are Rumors. You may swap or shout.

Empty pile. Do not put out a new Rumor.

Two people shout at once. The person closer to the Judge's left is first.

May I ask about two cards that are not mine? Yes.

May I ask about a Rumor? Yes, as one of the two cards.

Does the kind (Rock, Hand...) tell me when? No. Rock is earth and disaster across all time.

Years on the Key. The Judge never reads them out loud. Point, or say "this one is earlier."

You always have 8 cards until you sit. You cannot empty your hand.

Sample turn

Ana swaps a mystery into Rumors and takes Pillars Before Farms. Temples before planting, so the hill sits left of her wheel.

Bo asks that hill against his Clay Baked into Pots. The Judge points at the hill. The table just learned a fact.

Cam shouts too soon. True start: 1. Cam sits. Ana later locks a true line and wins.

2 people

Give 10 each. 4 Rumors. 3 asks each. Cover the Key with paper; look up only the two named cards.

Young table (8-9 years)

Give 6 each. 1 ask each. An adult is the Judge and may read names, never years. First round: no fibbing.

So everyone can play

- Kinds have a word and a mark. Do not teach them by color.
- No years on play cards. The Judge reads names, not numbers, to the table.
- A line of 8 cards sits on the table.
- Short sentences. A picture you can see in your head on every face.
- One-handed: lines live on the table. Track asks on paper if coins are fiddly.