

## Requirements

- ★ 6–16 players, preferably an even number.
- ★ A score pad
- ★ A one minute timer.
- ★ A hat or bag, and 4 or 5 slips of paper per player, or 4 to 5 stiff cards (index cards or the like) per player
- ★ Some pencils and pens or such for writing on the slips.

# Celebrities

## Setup

- ★ All players secretly write names of celebrities, one name per slip of paper. Anybody real or imaginary, living or dead is acceptable. Some people ask “how famous?” apparently trying to write down somebody obscure. In fact, nobody is “too famous;” players should try to come up with *really* famous, not sort-of famous, names.
- ★ Generally, the name should be just long enough to leave little doubt as to who is meant. “Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart” is unnecessarily long; just “Mozart” would do. “George Bush” is a bit short, although acceptable; “George W. Bush” is better. Players can provide extra hints in parentheses. “(General) George Patton”
- ★ Players should write neatly and legibly.
- ★ The papers are folded and placed in the titular chapeau or brown paper bag. Alternatively, if index cards are used, the names can be held as a deck. The deck is the recommended method.
- ★ The players divide into teams of two persons each, ideally seated in two rows more or less facing each other. It’s also permissible, although not ideal, to have teams of three, but the teams should all be the same size.
- ★ The hat is handed to a member of the first team and a 1-minute timer readied.
- ★ *Hint:* It’s usually better to not let couples or siblings be teammates. Mixing up generations (if you’re playing at a family gathering or the like) is excellent.

## Round One

- ★ When “start” is called, the team member holding the hat draws a piece of paper from it (or a card from the deck) and tries to get their teammate(s) to say the name. They may use any means to this end except actually saying anything written on the card, except that they may use articles in their clues (“a,” “an,” “the”), even if they’re part of the name. A player can use ‘rhymes with’ clues, as long as they don’t say the word that the answer *actually* sounds like. For example, if the name they are trying to get is ‘Mike,’ then they cannot say “it rhymes with bike.” They can say “it rhymes with the two-wheeled form of transportation popular with kids and Lance Armstrong.” This prohibition includes anything in parentheses.
- ★ When the teammate guesses a name, the clue is placed in that team’s ‘score pile,’ and another one drawn, until time runs out. In Round One, passing is not allowed. If the clue-giver fouls (says part of the name, or gives an invalid “sounds like” clue), the clue is set aside in a different pile, and returned to the hat after time is up.
- ★ The teams receive one point for each name guessed. A guess is not correct unless it matches the name as it is written on the card. “Cassius Clay” is not a correct guess for “Mohammed Ali,” “Dr. J” is not “Julius Irving,” and “George Herbert Walker Bush” is not a correct answer if the card says “George H. W. Bush.” A correct guess does *not* have to match anything in parentheses.
- ★ The clue-giver may not “ready” more than one clue at a time. If using a bag, only one piece of paper may be drawn, and the other hand can’t be rummaging about for the next name until the current one is guessed. If using a deck, no flipping the next card until the current one is guessed.
- ★ The hat/bag/deck then passes to the next team, and so on, until the last name is pulled. (If playing with a deck, it should be shuffled when it’s passed.) If the hat goes all the way around to the first team, another player should take a turn drawing names. (That is, if everybody’s sitting in two rows facing each other, the bag goes all the way down one side, then starts over on the other side.) The team that pulls the last name from the hat may not get a full minute for their last turn. Too bad.

- ★ *Hint:* People often forget that it's legal to say things like "No, the full name. The middle name! The whole

middle name!"

### *Between Round One and Round Two*

- ★ Now players may ask the burning "Who the heck is so-and-so?" questions that have been eating away at them. In fact, players should make sure that everybody who didn't recognize one of the celebrities gets to hear a short biography (very short, like a couple of sentences) about them.

- ★ Once that's taken care of, each team counts the pieces of paper or cards in their score piles, somebody writes the scores down on a piece of paper, and all the names go back into the hat/deck.

### *Round Two*

- ★ The second round begins where the last one left off, with the replenished hat moving to whomever's turn was next.
- ★ The bad news is that the prompters may now only say *one word per celebrity*. The good news is that they can still hum, grunt, gesticulate wildly, and/or prance about the room. Also, the prompter can say their one word over and over again if they like. ("Diva. Diiiiiiiiivaaaa! DiVA!")
- ★ The guesser gets *only one guess*. If they guess incorrectly, the prompter sets that name aside and moves on to the next one.
- ★ If the prompter uses more than one word, ("Pop superstar"), that's a foul, and they must set that celebrity aside and draw the next one. Whether a hyphenated word counts as one or two may be put to a vote, although generally, it's two words if each part is a word in and of itself. "Pan-galactic," one word. "Extra-crispy," two.
- ★ If the *guesser* feels totally stuck, they can pass by simply calling out anything, including "pass." That counts as an incorrect guess, so the prompter sets the name aside and

moves on. The prompter may not pass, although they can stare desperately at the guesser to try to make *them* pass.

- ★ Scoring for this round is similar to Round One, with one point per correct guess, and zero points for a pass, incorrect guess, or foul.
- ★ Note that in Rounds Two and Three, the rule about not "reading" clues before the current one is guessed is more likely to be broken. If somebody breaks this rule more than once or twice, you might have to start deducting points, or slapping their hand.
- ★ If a team runs out of clues before their time is up, they cannot go back to names that they've set aside. They have to stop, throw the unguessed names back in the hat, and pass it to the next team.
- ★ *Hint:* Halfway through Round One, it will seem as if Round Two will be completely impossible. However, in this round, *everybody knows what names are in the hat*, or at least, they do if they were paying attention in Round One! That's very important for getting the names of people you don't know!

### *Round Three*

- ★ The third round begins as the second one did, with the replenished hat moving to whomever's turn was next.
- ★ In this round, speaking is forbidden. Clues may use non-word sounds and gestures only.
- ★ Other rules are the same as they were in Round Two.

- ★ *Hint:* People often play Round Three like Charades. You don't have to be silent! Humming theme music, or making sounds like a typewriter or jackhammer or race car are completely legal.

### *Finish*

- ★ When the last name is drawn and guessed, total up the points from all three rounds. The team with the most points wins. The team that made everybody laugh the hardest gets first runner-up.

These rules are a hybrid based on the rules as I first learned them from Peter Sarrett at the Origins '94 game convention, Paul David Unwin's "Names in a Hat" as posted on the Seattle Cosmic Game Night wiki, and a review of "Time's Up!" the commercial version of this game, by Christian Monterroso, from the BoardGameGeek website. This is version 1.3, copyright 2005, 2009, 2010 by Dave Howell.