

A Game of Secret Societies (A Party Game)

by [Mike Young](#) This is a good game for a party as it can take place in the background. Each player is a member of one or more secret societies. Each secret society has a secret phrase. The object for each player is to figure out the most secret phrases by observing the other party members and trying to blend into the different secret societies.

Game Prep

Before the game, you must make up secret phrases for each society. The length of each phrase should be the same. A good rule of thumb for length is to take the number of players and divide it by the number of societies, so if you have thirty players and five societies, each phrase should be six words long. Examples might be: THE RED DOG BARKS AT MIDNIGHT or MY FRIEND MELVIN ATE THE BEANS. The best phrases have an obvious sentence structure and seem like they might be coded instructions or information of some kind.

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Next, you have to make up your secret societies. Each society needs three things: a recognition code, a clever concept, and a spiffy name. Here are a few I came up with, but you should make up your own. After all, they are supposed to be *secret*.

- The Handmaiden's Society: Made up of those who secretly worship unmarried women. When shaking hands, touch thumbs of the opposing hands.
- The Vanishing Wombat: A society from a prestigious New England university. Must leave the room whenever "wombat" is spoken.
- Small's Club: A fraternal order. When you say the word "tiny," you must scratch your nose. If someone does this in conversation to you, you must use the word "little" in your next sentence.
- The Yellow Shoelace Society: Desires world domination through footwear. If someone mentions the word "shoes" to you, you must touch your foot to that person's foot.
- Tippler's Boys: A collection of barflies. Always carry a drink with you. Toast someone upon introduction.

Your final bit of setup business is to take each code phrase and write each word on a small piece of paper or index card. Also write the description of the secret society on the card. I suggest typing up the descriptions, photocopying them, cutting them up, and then writing the words on the copies.

Running the Game

Now you are ready for the party, either read the words in the box labeled "**A Game of Secret Societies: The Rules**" to the players at the start of the party, or copy the box and hand it out to your party guests along with the slip of paper. Then just sit back and watch the chaos as your players not only try to guess the phrases for their secret society, but try to figure out the pass codes for the other societies.

You'll want to collect code phrases at the end of the party and maybe even have a prize or two for best guesses and most humorous attempts.

Handouts

Copy these, cut 'em out, and give them to players.

A Game of Secret Societies: The Rules

This party is more than just a gathering of friends. Oh no, there are a number of secret societies meeting tonight, each with its own agenda.

Your mission as a society member is twofold. You must determine who the other members of your society are. You will be given a recognition code which will explain how to identify members of your society. You will also be given a word which is part of a secret phrase for your society. Your first task is to collect all the words for your secret phrase by identifying and talking with other members of your secret society.

Your second task is to observe the other people at the party and determine the recognition codes for their societies. Infiltrate their societies and puzzle out their code phrases.

When you have determined that someone is a member of your society, you must include your code word as the first or last word of your next sentence. If you have infiltrated the society, you have no such limitations of speech.

Good luck agents. Your society is counting on you.

Example Handout for Players:

Your Society Info:
The Yellow Shoelace Society: Desires world

domination through footwear. If someone mentions the word "shoes" to you, you must touch your foot to that person's foot.

Your Word: FRIEND

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