

THIS WEEKEND'S FAMILY ACTIVITY

The 60-Second Expert

GAME

SKILL: LEARNING HONESTY

45 MINUTES

RECOMMENDED AGE RANGE

Ages 8–14; old enough to research with AI independently, young enough that the game format keeps the check on their own understanding visible and fun.

WHAT YOU NEED

Paper and a pen for topic slips

A bowl or hat to draw from

Phones or tablets with AI access

A timer

ACTIVITY STEPS

- 01 Write the Topic Slips.** Together, write 10 to 12 fun topics on slips of paper and fold them into a bowl or hat. Good topics: why we dream, how volcanoes form, why cats purr, how chocolate is made, why the sky is blue, how planes stay in the air, why onions make you cry, how magnets work, why leaves change color, how memory works. Each player draws one slip and keeps their topic secret.
- 02 Research With AI.** Set a 5-minute timer. Everyone researches their topic using any AI tool or search engine they want. The goal: learn enough to explain it to the family in 60 seconds. Players can take notes on paper, but no reading from notes during the presentation. When the timer goes off, all devices go face-down.
- 03 The 60-Second Presentation.** One player at a time becomes "the Expert." They have exactly 60 seconds to explain their topic from memory. No devices, no notes. The family listens and does not interrupt. Time it. When the 60 seconds are up, move immediately to the next step.
- 04 The Two-Question Round.** After each Expert finishes, two other family members each ask one genuine question about the topic. Real curiosity only, not trick questions. The Expert answers from memory. After both questions, the family briefly looks up the topic together to check accuracy. Getting stuck is fine and is actually the point.
- 05 The Honest Self-Rating.** After all players have presented, each person privately rates their own performance on paper: "I could explain this to a friend tomorrow" / "I got the main idea but missed a lot" / "I remember reading it but could not really explain it." Everyone shares their rating out loud. Discuss: what made some topics stick better? The self-rating is the most important part because it builds the habit of checking your own understanding honestly.

THE DEEPER LESSON

This game makes the gap between having information and having understanding impossible to ignore. When kids use AI to research a topic and then close the device, they discover which parts transferred to memory and which were borrowed on loan. The two-question round is where the gap shows up most clearly: a family member asks something slightly off the main summary, and the Expert finds out whether they understood the concept or only memorized a sentence. A Common Sense Media survey found that 40 percent of teens already sense they miss real learning when they use AI for schoolwork. This game makes that feeling specific, low-stakes, and something you can talk about together.

CONVERSATION STARTER

If AI could follow you around all day and answer every question the moment you had it, would you actually know more, or would you just never need to know anything yourself?

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