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Games Of The Past Meet The Present

By Brandie Valenzuela

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Recently, our family had the opportunity to care for sisters' children for a couple days, when she and her husband traveled to a bed and breakfast for some much need rest and relaxation. They don't have a chance to get away that often, so I was more than happy to help them out for this little getaway. And, well, I would hope that she would do the same thing for me.

Once I agreed to taking care of her children, reality set in. My sister has six children, and while the youngest wouldn't be staying with me, all the others would be. Add those five children to my three, you have eight, and add that to my small apartment and you have enough to drive any mom up a wall! How would I keep eight children occupied in my small home, without spending a lot of money?

One of the first activities we played was Twister. Twister was a gift for Christmas, so it was a game the children were still learning. As I watched them play, my I started thinking about the games my siblings and I played as children --- those easy games that usually required no extra supplies. There were six of us, and I can remember keeping ourselves occupied with old favorites such as "Mother May I?" and "Old Maid". After reminiscing, I decided that I would take this opportunity to teach them these favorite games.

I am not sure who had more fun with it, but I taught them several of the games I played as a young child, and everyone had the greatest time. I taught them "Red Light, Green Light" and "Red Rover", among others. Even the older children had fun playing "London Bridge" for the sake of the little ones. Want to know the best part? It has been over a week since I taught the kids these games, and on several occasions, I have caught them playing them on their own. Now, what could be better than that?

I encourage you to think back to some of your favorite childhood games. Did you love to play "Simon Says"? When was the last time you built a hopscotch? Do your children even know that there is actually a way to play marbles? Think of your favorites, and start teaching them to your children. Not only do most of these games require very little supplies, if any, but they show your children that there

are fun activities that don't have to be plugged in.

If you need some inspiration, the following websites offer instructions on many popular childhood games:

"Games Kids Play" <http://www.gameskidsplay.net/index.html>

"Parent Soup: Games" <http://www.parentsoup.com/archive/0,9372,263145,00.html>

"PBS: Zoom" <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/zoom/games/index.html>

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Brandie is a freelance writing mother of three children. She is also the editor of the Family First Newsletter, the HomeMade Living ezine, and other services for parents. To find out more about Brandie's creations, visit:

Understanding Plot Time Frames

By Gary R. Hess

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When writing your story, either fiction or non, it is important to keep in mind the time frame.

Many writers, especially of mystery, are expanding the power of the pen by creating time frames which bounce from one period to the next. To do this it takes concentration, a good layout, a great sense of mind and of course an astounding imagination.

Some of the most common plot time frames are as follows:

Present =>

Present – Past – Present =>

Future – Past – Present =>

When using a non-normal time frame, ie: present – past – present, it is important to keep the tenses within your writing related to the period.

For example: when writing events that already happened, use the past tense.

Using a non-normal time frame can be confusing to readers, however when used correctly and with a great plot it can be an interesting twist to the story. Just remember, the power of the pen is only as powerful as the author's imagination.

Gary is a writer/webmaster for

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